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**Re-presenting Māori and Indigenous understandings of  
Being:  
Deconstructing the notion of mental illness**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines metaphysics in order to re-present Māori and indigenous understandings of Being and deconstruct the notion of mental illness. A holistic understanding of Being is crucial to Māori and indigenous worldviews and takes priority as a focus for this thesis. Holistic notions of Being allow indigenous peoples to reimagine potentiality in general and the possibility of a renewed experience of being-in-the-world more specifically. Through an exploration of Māori and indigenous (complex) holism, I seek to re-turn to the influence of things in the world that exist outside of the self-contained individual - that is, beyond the cognitive rational agent. Doing so shifts the concept of well-being to reside not simply within the person (or the individual's reactions), but within the entire world in which we live.

It is posited that a dominant Western metaphysics poses a fundamental risk to Māori and indigenous expressions of Being. This deeper layer of influence – the metaphysics of presence - is examined to expose its structure – one that insists that things in the world will be represented as fully discernible objects. The implications that a dominant Western metaphysics has for the notion of mental illness are explored within the context of the metaphysics of presence that sets up things in the world as Beings whose essential meaning is identified only through qualities that can be seen, measured, described and defined. Within this view of the world, the notion of mental illness is solidified, reflected in a focus on the most discernible aspects of Being – the observable and physical parts of a person that can be examined through science. To counter this, the more mysterious and unthinkable aspects of Being reflected in Māori and indigenous metaphysics are highlighted as a way of re-turning to holism, to the extent that they resist the expectation that things in the world will be reduced to fit the dominant (metaphysical) framework.

I engage the relational holistic research approach of whaiwhakaaro (a non-method implicating the more-than-human entities that push thinking and characterised by a free-flowing style of reflection), to draw out the possibilities that exist for re-presenting Māori and indigenous metaphysics and the notion of mental illness. Eleven interviews were conducted with participants from varying professional and

community-based backgrounds. While the participants represent different views on metaphysics and mental illness, each has a passion for exploring the philosophies that shape the experience of being-in-the-world and how we understand ourselves in relation to all other things. Their responses provide important signals for how human nature, more-than-human nature, and (mental) well-being are re-conceptualised.

The main ideas that emerged through the interviews and the process of reflecting on participant responses (whaiwhakaaro) provoked thinking about the possibilities of holism in reconsidering the notion of mental illness. Māori and indigenous understandings of Being were used to re-turn to ideas of well-being as a collective experience. I posit that, if there is illness, then it resides in the world rather than being centred solely on the individual who experiences the world. If there is a way to talk about illness and well-being, then it need not be restricted to assigned concepts or pre-determined categories that explain behaviour. Through a re-turn to complex holism – to Māori and indigenous metaphysical premises – I suggest we can engage with people’s experiences on different terms. These are the terms that carry excessive meaning, that allow for mystery – to break from conventions and categories. These terms support a different view of individualism where the person is free to express their experience of thorough interconnection – of whakapapa. In its broadest sense, the re-turn to holism is an understanding of the self as part of a thoroughly connected whole.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## **Metaphysics, Being, and the notion of mental illness**

This thesis seeks to explore how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being can be re-presented in order to deconstruct the notion of mental illness, exposing its role as a ‘disciple’ of a dominant metaphysics. The term ‘re-present’, constructed here to give the prefix ‘re’ its own space and emphasis, carries the intention of signalling a re-turn to something. The original meaning of the term ‘represent’ in fact signals an act of repetition, to re-turn again and again. It is within this context that I aim to re-present Māori and indigenous worldviews as a re-turn to a non-dominant metaphysical ground. From this, the metaphysical premises that support both dominant Western and Māori and indigenous worldviews will be explored to expose the premises that support the notion of mental illness.

Engaging in re-presentation, repetition and re-turn is done in two ways: firstly, there is a significant repetition of focus on what I posit is a fundamental issue impacting on Māori and indigenous Being or metaphysics. This fundamental issue, discussed at length later in this chapter, is referred to throughout the thesis as a ‘dominant Western metaphysics’ or ‘the metaphysics of presence’. My writing reiterates what I argue is an insidious influence that has significantly re-structured Māori and indigenous understandings. My position here is that the problem needs repeating throughout the thesis to steadily unwind the normality that has wrapped itself around the issue by countless repetitions over time. This influence is something that sits beneath the immediate surface of our expressions, demanding that what is presented adheres to a certain structure of representation. The structure that I am referring to has been characterised by its insistence on clear representation, of solid descriptions that provide a particular type of certainty that ‘brings things into the light’. I assert that these solid representations expect the essential nature of a thing to be made visible, to be explainable, and to be things that we can ‘think’ or things that have been made intelligible. It is this expectation that, I argue, impacts on Māori and indigenous expressions and the intangible aspects of Being. Secondly, the act of re-turn is reflected in an attempt to present Māori and indigenous metaphysics (or understandings of Being), in ways that allow for and acknowledge

the unknowable and intangible but that also acknowledges the constant presence of things in the world as whanaunga.

If I were to use a more conventional linguistic structure to discuss the representation of Māori and indigenous metaphysics (if I were, that is, to use the term ‘represent’), I would be signalling something altogether different. The term representation signals a claim to speak on behalf of something - to hold a certain position in the naming of things. To represent through naming is to denote a full, singular nature of any one thing in the world, giving an account of its limits, its essential nature and shape, its qualities and boundaries. Naming as representation carries an authority: a strong and overpowering presence that observes the world, going about the business of discovery and identification. Each thing that is named is subjected to a separation or a definition that casts a hard line of division between this thing and that. In this context, representation is an act of assumed agency and of silencing other voices. It is, as I will argue, a type of ‘ordering on behalf of things’: a concept that Māori and indigenous peoples know well. The act of ‘speaking on behalf of’ is one that is recognised by Māori and indigenous peoples in the stories that are told *about* Māori and indigenous realities. It is also an act of authority that has formed a significant part of the experience of those that have been labelled as experiencing ‘mental illness’.

Mika and Stewart (2016) describe this sense of authority in reference to Foucault’s ‘Gaze’: an authoritative systemic surveillance of the subject that seeks to normalise and bring order. Bringing the idea of the Gaze into a Māori philosophical framework, Mika and Stewart explain how the system of normalisation, ordering and surveillance, characterised by its powerful imposition of order and naming, takes on, from a Māori perspective, an entitized quality. This observant entity imposes a metaphysical expectation that the Māori and indigenous self will be presented in line with what has been deemed “normal for native or Māori tendencies” (p. 302). Further, these normal traits must be available as visible or ‘thinkable’ qualities that can be observed and conceptualised in order to assign,

describe, limit and shape identities, constructing things in the world as objects that can be 'known'.

The question of what is correct, or 'what is the essential nature of a thing' is one that is central to the idea of the Gaze as a mechanism for ordering. The ordered representation that is imposed by the Gaze, with its insistence on the identification of essential traits that are used to construct an understanding of what is normal for a group, requires that things are represented *as* certain things. It is also the expectation that these representations will follow an order of pre-determined notions: of actions, thoughts, beliefs, values and cultural expressions. However, the re-presentation that I aim to convey in this thesis departs from these principles of expectation, aligning instead with what Deloria and Wildcat (2001) call, "an active reconstruction of indigenous metaphysical systems" (p. 10), that I interpret as having a sense of the world as a far more complex entity.

A re-presentation of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being is captured in the term '(k)new knowledge' that Ahenakew, de Oliveira Andreotti, Cooper and Hireme (2014) use to invoke a view of knowledge as a creative, holistic experience that is something other than the individual subject's rational and intellectual uptake and discovery of things in the world.<sup>1</sup> (K)new knowledge is regarded as a thoroughly holistic relational positioning that opposes the view of the self and the world as separate Beings in which the concept of relationship is represented as the human subject observing the world as a detached object of study. As Ahenakew et al., state, "knowing itself literally comes from the ground, above, and beyond, from the wisdoms of continuous metaphysical engagements and familiarity with "all our relations" (p.222). They reflect on this view of knowledge as a type of re-positioning of the indigenous self - shifting our view of Being to reside within the world rather than as a rational subject that surveys a world as a separate entity. Further, this re-positioning of Being is described as a type of (alternate)

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<sup>1</sup> The term (k)new knowledge will be repeated throughout the thesis to capture this sense of reaching into holistic creative spaces where Being within the world accounts for how we know. It also reflects the temporal collapse that characterises Maori and indigenous understandings of time where all our relations - past, present and future - are a continuous influential presence in our lived experience.

metaphysical inheritance or “what our ancestors have known and tried to pass down, but we are yet to fully appreciate (as)...(k)new knowledge.” (p. 222).

Re-presenting Māori and indigenous understandings of Being is an act of re-turn that acknowledges both autonomy and relationship. This might seem like a paradox, but it is, within Māori and indigenous relational Being, also a comfortable complexity that reflects an understanding of the world as a thoroughly interconnected whole and as an entity that retains something of itself, denying the ‘business of discovery’ a full and essential view. Within Māori and indigenous metaphysics, things in the world are more than objects to be discovered or contained within tidy and efficient conceptual frames. In this thesis, things in the world are discussed as entities that stand on their own accord, presenting themselves in their own way (sometimes for our regard and sometimes not). It is, in this sense, the recognition of what Mika (2017a) calls ‘worlding’: an understanding of Being that is thoroughly holistic, suggesting that any one thing is constituted by all other things in the world.

A ‘worlded’ view of Being invites a consideration of how this holistic constitution of the self implicates the influence of things in the world that ‘dance in our thoughts’, going beyond simple considerations of human agency and self-contained rational thinking. But it is also a consideration of how things resist full representation, retaining (as entities with agency), a mystery of Being – the unthinkable aspect of a thoroughly complex world, discussed in this thesis as an ‘excess of meaning’.<sup>2</sup> It is a far more complex view that implicates all things in a more than human spiritual ecology (McIntosh, 2008) or what might be referred to as a holistic framework – or simply holism.

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<sup>2</sup> The ‘excess of meaning’ is discussed in chapter six in reference to Jacques Derrida’s (1978) essay *Cogito and the History of Madness* in which Derrida asserts that madness itself is the excess of meaning that cannot fit within the structure of order. Excessive meaning (or mystery), is what Derrida believes is the disorder that dominant Western philosophy seeks to suppress through a metaphysics that proposes a rational uptake of the world in which things can be known by their (assigned) measurable, quantifiable and discernible qualities. Derrida would also refer to this metaphysics as logocentrism.

## **Holistic Being, holistic health**

While Māori and indigenous metaphysics might appeal to a holism constituted by an irreducible interconnection between all things in the world, there are other existing representations of holism that appear to follow more conventional (metaphysical) understandings. These representations of holism are important to considering the idea that the notion of mental illness, and the dominant conceptualisation of mental illness, are constructed by a particular metaphysics. The form of metaphysics I am referring to has been described by Mika (2015a) as “a ground of ontological assumption that underpins all thinking and conceptions in the West and that prefers the presence of an object ...[that]...would be thought of as this or that, in advance” (p. 4). Further, this preference for presence equates to the pre-determination of a thing through the setting of concepts that would then represent a things essential nature.

An example of pre-determination can be found in health policy where holism is often framed in terms of tangible phenomena, represented in a ‘whole person’ approach that includes a consideration of what has been referred to as the ‘determinants of health’ encompassing the various aspects of a person’s life (such as mental health and addiction needs, physical health, housing, employment, and social supports). In addition, a holistic approach has been described as the co-ordination of services across sectors (including, for example, health, education, and justice sectors), aligning services with the diverse needs of the person (e.g., Ministry of Health, 2002). Holism has also been discussed as the tangible and evident aspects of health and well-being within the field of Precision Driven Health: an approach that aims to identify and predict how the different aspects of a person’s life might interact to cause illness. Vogt, Hofmann and Getz (2016) call this the ‘new holism’, describing it as “holistic medicalization” (p. 314), in which a person’s whole life process is defined and translated into biomedical risks and technoscientific solutions aimed at disease prevention and ensuring optimal health and well-being. The result is an all-encompassing quantification of the individual’s life process that is, “directed at all levels of functioning, from the molecular to the social, continual throughout life and aimed at managing the whole continuum from

cure of disease to optimization of health” or “the medicalization of health and life itself” (p. 314).

The idea of determining health and well-being in terms of precision is highly problematic when considered from the viewpoint of Māori and indigenous holism. This is not because the variables being measured are completely insignificant but rather that these variables, when positioned as the central indicators of well-being, are provided with a privileged (type of) validity that overshadows other possible ways of understanding well-being. For Māori and indigenous peoples, this has implications for other possible experiences of holism that are constituted by the (collapsed) co-existence of both tangible and intangible things.

Conceptualising holism as an all-encompassing quantification of the individual also implicates the idea of the ‘Gaze’ discussed earlier in relation to Mika and Stewart’s (2016) description of a surveillant expectation that things will appear in an ordered manner. This ordering of things happens to such an extent that even holism becomes a list of visible and measurable variables: the visible aspects of a person’s physical and social existence. In terms of the notion of mental illness, the Gaze has been described as a mechanism for ordering individual experience to support the development of objective explanations of behaviour. Foucault’s (1989) term ‘medical Gaze’, for example, explains how the notion of mental illness could be explained as something constructed upon a ground of thinking that favours the solid presence of things that can be seen and interpreted as explainable, fixed and ordered objects within clinical categories. As Foucault (1988) explains, the “body was regarded as the visible and solid presence of [the patient’s] disease” (p.159), a physical, tangible site of illness that can be examined and medically separated from the entirety of the person’s identity and Being.

These examples of how holism is framed within health institutions provide some insight into the issue that I aim to address in this research. Talking about holism as a tangible phenomenon is, I suggest, a symptom of what was earlier referred to as a ‘metaphysical inheritance’. This inheritance, while not immediately referenced within health systems as a ground of thought that contributes to constructions of solid representations of holism, continues to exert a pervasive influence. This

influence is one that I posit takes the form of an expectation reflected in the development of quantifiable, highly present frames in which to represent things. I propose that dominant Western metaphysics (the metaphysics of presence), has continued to influence how things in the world are constructed as objects that are known by their discernible qualities.

In relation to the notion of mental illness, the expectation of solid representation – the construction of people’s experiences and Being as measurable qualities and properties of disease or wellness – has been criticised for its tendency to reduce complex lived realities into (for example) medical classifications (e.g., Gordon, 1998). Critiques of reductionism (and essentialism) in relation to the notion of mental illness are discussed at length in chapter six. Here, however, I simply aim to introduce the general problem of the construction of human experience and behaviour as objective pre-determined variables whose meaning is contained (and constrained) within conceptual frames that can include only what is intelligible, measurable and present in terms of what is (rationally) conceivable.

### **Framing culture**

Already in this chapter I have alluded to the nature of Māori and indigenous metaphysics and the understanding of Being as a complex holism that is constituted by an irreducible interconnection between all things in the world. Within this metaphysics, things in the world would resist full containment within conceptual frames, retaining a certain mystery that is reflected in an excessive ‘overplus’ (Otto, 1958), of meaning. The notion of mental illness, and its representation as objective, discernible and quantifiable behavioural variables, would appear to sit at odds with a more complex metaphysics in which meaning is excessive – unable to be reduced to fit within a limited structure. Despite this, it has been noted that Māori and indigenous metaphysics, when included within the disciplined fields of practice that deal with what is labelled as mental illness, are often restricted by the expectation that Māori and indigenous worldviews will be presented as fixed concepts with definable features.

Taitimu (2007), in discussing the various types of modern Western psychiatry that attempt to engage with indigenous worldviews, points out that many cross-cultural disciplines within psychiatry work to identify how indigenous perspectives can be understood in generalised clinical terms. For example, early attempts to extend the epistemic and cultural bases of clinical perspectives are captured in terms such as ‘culture bound syndrome’ which has been used in cross-cultural psychiatry since the 1950s (e.g., Yap, 1965). The term ‘culture bound syndrome’ was officially included in the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition, American Psychiatric Association, 1994), along with other more general considerations of the interplay of culture and diagnosis. Mezzich, Lewis-Fernandez and Ruiperez (2008) outline the 3 main types of cultural considerations incorporated into the DSM-IV including:

- (a) in the clinical presentation of disorders, a discussion of cultural variants of each disorder, called symptoms dependent on culture and gender;
- (b) guidelines for a “cultural formulation” of the clinical presentation to help clinicians perform a culturally sensitive diagnosis; and
- (c) a description of “culture-bound” syndromes, including the name of the disorder, the cultures in which it has been diagnosed, and a brief description of the psychopathology associated with each clinical presentation. (p. 648).

Cultural variants of disorder, cultural formulations of clinical presentations to aid the clinician in their work, and translating cultural meaning into psychopathology are all examples of what Yen and Wilbraham (2003) describe as a professional discourse that turns indigenous knowledges in mental health into accounts of illness and madness that can be policed by the medical gaze in its search for similarities. Psychiatric discourse is also recognised by Levett, Kottler, Burman, and Parker (1997) as a product of power relations that produce and/or position people and ideas as types of *subjects* who are affected through specific epistemes and ways of talking about the world. Within the context of cultural competency, Carey (2015) explains that considerations of culture have often resulted in essentialised identities and ideas that are strictly catalogued and distinguished from (and measured by), a superior

prior category. Further, Carey contends that fixed, essentialised conceptualisations of culture are necessary to the idea of cultural competency in order for cultures to make sense. Within this context, the tidy packaging of Māori and indigenous worldviews into essentialised ideas is, therefore, what would make Māori and indigenous understandings of Being intelligible to the medical profession.

### *Ethics and cultural suppression*

The tendency to define Māori and indigenous worldviews and understandings of Being as versions of dominant Western concepts that manifest in the representation of culture as visible qualities and concepts constitutes what I suggest is a type of spiritual or cultural suppression. The suppression of Māori and indigenous metaphysics (as the suppression of holistic spiritual or cultural worldviews), has been described by Walters (2012) as “a disruption in our ability to fulfil our original instructions” (p. 7). Original instructions have been discussed as “ethical systems that govern relations with the human and the more-than-human world” (Wall Kimmerer, 2018, p. 31), guided by wisdom that was given within what Goldtooth (2017) refers to as ‘the time of Creation’ (p.462). Similarly, Mikaere (2012) discusses tikanga Māori in this context in reference to whakapapa that she describes as “the core of the philosophical framework underpinning tikanga” (p.25), which brings forward a reciprocal obligation between all things.

The ethical reciprocity reflected in discussions of original instructions (elaborated on in chapter four), provides a view of holistic Being that foregrounds ethics as a recognition of “the eternal convergence of the world within any one thing, and (the) ethical outcome...that the individual person should implicate a sense of mystery within any one object” (Mika, 2017, p. 1). This view of ethics relates to a point made by Justice (2017) who explains that knowledge can be understood as a partial understanding of things in the world rather than seeing knowledge as having the ability to represent things through (the idea of) complete and full conceptualisation. However, the expression of holism, as a thorough co-constructive interrelationship, carries an intangibility that, within the disciplined fields of practice that deal with what is labelled as mental illness, is difficult to retain. In line with this, Ahenakew et al. (2014) point out that Māori and indigenous understandings of Being are

impacted on by dominant Western thinking which reduces “possibilities of articulation” (p.217). These reduced possibilities have the effect of forcing the Māori and indigenous experience of original instructions into conceptual frameworks that represent Māori and indigenous ontologies as formal instructions when taken up within institutions (including for example the institution that is Mental Health and Addictions).

The way that culture has been represented in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is one example of how meaning is constrained within disciplines and institutions seeking (paradoxically) to develop approaches within mental health that support diverse cultural worldviews. However, the extent to which institutional cultural frameworks suppress the deeper metaphysical fluidity of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being remains as a barrier to achieving respectful and ethical partnerships within these institutions. Ethics, as it relates to the notion of mental illness (and the experiences of those who have carried the label of mental illness), has of course been discussed in the context of reductive psychiatric classifications that emphasise symptoms in order to diagnose ‘disorders’, discarding the person’s lived social, historical and cultural context (Carr and Taggart, 2017). However, ethics as it relates to Māori and indigenous understandings of Being highlights the expectation that Māori and indigenous expressions will be reduced to fit the boundaries of conceptual classification in order to be taken up as ‘knowable’ phenomena. Ethics as a cultural metaphysical concern within mental health (and in relation to the notion of mental illness), therefore highlights the imposition of meaning that orders and disciplines complexity, representing the experience of being-in-the-world in more rigid terms, achieving a type of conceptual efficiency that forces us to “pass over whole realms” of meaning (Heidegger, 1967, p.8).<sup>3</sup>

The tendency to reduce Māori and indigenous metaphysics to fit frameworks of conceptual simplicity enables dominant Western disciplines and institutions to make sense of Māori and indigenous complexities. However, it is also this

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<sup>3</sup> Heidegger’s statement, of ‘passing over realms of meaning’, is discussed at length in chapter five in relation to metaphysics and the notion of things that are made absent because of the conceptual frames that will only deal with things that can fit within certain forms of representation.

reductionist tendency that threatens the ethical relational nature of Being reflected in the complexities of Māori and indigenous metaphysics where all things in the world have agency. It is important to consider, for example, how cultural representations within institutions work to suppress the ability for the indigenous self to engage with the world while retaining a sense of mystery that is part of respectful relational Being. Within this context, I would ask what relational and metaphysical ground sits beneath Māori and indigenous expressions of spiritual and complex holism when these are taken up within dominant institutions. If the frameworks for presenting diversity and difference are ones that rely on highly evident descriptions equating to types of static, unchanging definitions, then what happens to Maori and indigenous expressions when they are deposited within these frameworks?

### **Metaphysical disharmony in the mental health sector**

Māori and indigenous responses within mental health have made a valuable contribution in terms of developing perspectives that highlight systemic contributors to negative health trends. Māori and indigenous knowledges have also positively influenced models of care within health systems, enhancing service provision and shifting ideas about how to work with tāngata whaiora (mental health service users) (e.g., Taitimu, 2007; Boulton, 2005). However, despite making major gains in influencing mental health policy and practice, concerns remain about the degree to which Māori and indigenous worldviews affect change within the mental health sector (e.g., Lawson-Te Aho, 2013; Yen and Wilbraham, 2003).

Durie (2018) notes that important changes have taken place in the health system including gains that have been made in mental health policies and practice in Aotearoa since the mid-1980s. The underlying philosophy of mental health approaches was shifting at this time, marked by the beginnings of the deinstitutionalisation movement and the growing recognition of the need to ensure Māori participation (as part of a wider Treaty of Waitangi response), within societal institutions including the health and social sectors. Part of the concern driving changes also included recognising that Māori experiences in health care services were less than positive and services were often incongruent with Māori cultural

beliefs and values. In addition, according to Durie, Māori hospital admission rates had increased, exceeding non-Māori admissions rates from 1976. While it is noted that the reasons for the increase are complex (including for example changes in help seeking behaviour, changes in ethnicity data recording, and urbanisation's impact on the ability to access support from extended family), concern about the change in admission rates was sufficient to motivate Māori communities to seek opportunities for enhancing Māori participation and influence in the health sector. In terms of mental health, Māori aspirations were complemented in the early 80s by a recommendation to the Minister of Health that Psychiatric treatment broaden to provide for Māori "cultural values and spiritual beliefs" (The Committee of Inquiry into Procedures at Oakley Hospital and Related Matters, 1983. p.116).

Following on from the developments that emerged in the 1980s, Māori approaches within health have grown to include Māori service provision in both government organisations and in community based (Non-Government Organisation) services. Amohia Boulton's (2005) doctoral research highlighted the growth of Māori mental health providers as part of the response to recognising Māori needs within the health sector. As Boulton outlines, the move to increase the number of Māori mental health providers saw the growth of Kaupapa Māori based services that offered tāngata whaiora holistic, culturally relevant modes of treatment and support. Despite this, Boulton noted that Māori providers' experience of participation as partners with Government organisations has been marred by unequal power relationships that compel providers to 'play a part' within a dominant system that would favour highly structured practices developed within frameworks of efficiency. These frameworks restricted the potential for providers to implement and practice desired cultural approaches to supporting tāngata whaiora and raised concerns about Government service specifications that placed significantly more importance on clinical aspects of care. Further, this favouring of clinical approaches came at the expense of cultural considerations that participants in Boulton's research identified as including intangible, spiritual aspects of Being reflecting a holistic view of a person and their whānau.

More recently, criticisms of the government-led review of Mental Health and Addictions services (Government Inquiry into Mental Health Addiction - Oranga

Tāngata, Oranga Whānau), have surfaced following the release of an official report designed to inform on concerns voiced by Māori during the review process. Allen (2019) reports that Dr Lyn Russell, a researcher working as part of the inquiry, stated that Māori submissions were sanitised, resulting in “missing voices” (para. 6), and the deletion of crucial insights that could support (systemic and cultural) change for Māori and the mental health sector. Māori who responded during the review process note that there appears to be a number of points that have been deleted from an original report that has now been modified and officially released as the final record of what Māori respondents said. One deletion in particular appears to reflect the issue of cultural suppression raised earlier. As Allen reports,

An anecdote about the Panel being presented with pounamu remained, but the gifter's accompanying quote was deleted, which included: "These gifts are here to remind you that it's not just the face value of something - we want the panel to be mindful of the deeper meaning of what people have said". Instead, a separate quote was added, which read: "Thank you for the privilege of speaking, sharing and making a stand for change" (para. 21).

The issue of sanitising Māori responses and silencing voices is poignantly reflected in the changing of the words that were offered by the person described as gifting pounamu but who is, I suggest, also gifting a deeper sentiment about looking beneath the surface of what is able to be articulated through verbal and written responses. For example, Māori submissions also included a strong call for an increase in funding to grow Kaupapa Māori mental health services which could be framed as a fiscal request, but (I believe) could also be interpreted as a concern

related to the development of cultural space in which Māori worldviews can be privileged.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, there are tensions that continue to exist that have persisted beyond the early recognition of the need for culturally congruent health services for Māori. Marsden (2003), in reflecting on the extent to which dominant society has changed as a result of Māori efforts to bring issues such as institutional racism and reform to light, comments that an awareness of unequal status has merely resulted in a “shift in philosophical posture towards the tangata whenua” (p.99), preventing any real and fundamental change from taking place. In terms of Boulton’s (2005) research and the desire to have (systemic) support for Māori providers to use approaches that include a focus on intangible, holistic views of health, I would suggest that a slight shift in philosophical posture will do little to support fundamental changes that enable spiritual and holistic approaches to flourish.

In a report completed by Milne (2005), Māori who advocated for a more independent stance, opposing the integration of Māori knowledges into mainstream services, expressed concern that there is a deep and fundamental dissimilarity between Māori and Pākehā ‘thinking’. In fact, one of the key themes that emerged from the report was entitled, “Māori think differently from Pākehā” (p. 12). Among those that expressed concerns about this fundamental difference was a kaumatua who described his own experience in seeking help from a mainstream service. The kaumatua wondered how, without the right understanding of his state of unwellness and its relationship to fundamental parts of his Being (including a mauri that was “jarred and shaken”), a mainstream service would know what to do. In his own words, he wondered how this mainstream approach would, “help to reinstate my mana and my mauri” (p.13).

The report also included responses that signalled there is a willingness to integrate Māori knowledge into mainstream systems to form complementary epistemic bases for the treatment of what is broadly labelled as a mental disorder. However, considering how a person’s mana and mauri can be reinstated sets forth an inquiry

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<sup>4</sup> See earlier discussion of the privileging of clinical approaches in the development of mental health service specifications (Boulton, 2005).

that is prior to questions about how to approach and realise an integrative partnership inclusive of bicultural epistemes. It raises the issue of whether there is a fundamental difference between Māori and Pākehā thinking that must be explored before we step further into integrating Māori knowledge within non-Māori institutions and if so, what the nature of that difference is?

The desire to integrate and to work within a bicultural practice framework implies at least some common ground, both epistemological and ontological, on which Māori and mainstream understandings of Being can stand to share cultural versions of mental illness. But how would mana and mauri (for example), be understood within a Western ontological and epistemological frame and what types of epistemologies and ontologies are required to even begin to contemplate a person's mana and mauri? The question foregrounds yet another inquiry that is prior to considerations of epistemology and ontology and in this context, also constitutes and constructs the epistemic and ontological. Within this thesis, this most fundamental inquiry relates to metaphysics, described by Deloria (2001) as, “the set of first principles we must possess in order to make sense of the world in which we live” (p.2).

Ahenakew et al. (2014) describe the ‘first set of principles’ as the relationship between Being and knowing and in terms of Western metaphysics, (the set of first principles that makes sense of the world from a Western perspective), these principles represent a hidden system that structures what can and cannot be said or what is real and unreal. They propose that Western metaphysical principles assume a relationship between Being and knowing that is grounded in cognitive processes of rational thinking, Cartesian subjectivities or “Being defined solely as thinking” (p.217). In terms of indigenous inclusions into institutions such as mental health, defining Being as thinking has significant implications for which knowledges are considered legitimate and also for how knowledge production is understood.

One of the implications of defining the constitution of knowledge production (and therefore what counts as legitimate knowledge), in terms of Cartesian subjectivities relates to the possibilities of articulation that were discussed earlier in this chapter, the limits of which, I argue, are set by a specific metaphysics. In order to understand

how a dominant Western metaphysics might influence Māori and indigenous expressions and understandings of Being, it is important to understand the nature of metaphysics as a foundational philosophy that shapes worldviews. The ‘first set of principles’ that I am concerned with in this research, and one that I contend heavily influences, restricts and suppresses Māori and indigenous metaphysics, is what will be discussed in the following section as an ‘essentialist’ metaphysics or what was referred to earlier as ‘the metaphysics of presence’.

## **Metaphysics - The first set of principles**

The concept of metaphysics is not easily defined and there is no obvious consensus about its exact meaning within philosophy. Ancient and medieval philosophers may have spoken of metaphysics in ways that are similar to Deloria’s (2001) description of the ‘first principles’ that help us make sense of the world: “the first causes of things” or “things that do not change” that relate to Being (Van Inwagen, and Sullivan, 2018, para.1) and the nature of reality (e.g., Fine, 1994). Tahko (2013), referring to Aristotle’s definition of metaphysics, describes it as “the first philosophy” (p.49), highlighting its inherent relationship with the notion of the fundamental. As Tahko explains,

The first philosophy is an account of what is, or what it means to be, fundamental. Things that are the most fundamental are not grounded in anything more fundamental, they are ontologically independent. This does not necessarily mean that first philosophy attempts to list the most fundamental things, although this could be a part of the discipline. Rather, the study of fundamentality focuses on giving an account of what it is for something to be fundamental. So, first philosophy studies a certain type of being – the fundamental type,

and it may also involve an account of which (kinds of) things are, or could be, fundamental (p.49).

Cook (2013) summarises some of the major contentious issues that have motivated vigorous debate among Western philosophers who have sought to position their metaphysics as the correct “accurate and coherent account of reality as it is, and as we experience it” (p. 9). These issues include familiar subjects of debate such as the mind/body dualism, fixed versus fluid views of reality, and the nature of space and time. However (perhaps at the fundamental base of these issues), Cook asserts that essentialism is *the* doctrine within metaphysics that impacts most profoundly on theories of reality. Using the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle as a compass for dominant Western philosophy and an essentialist metaphysics, Cook explains that, while there are necessary differences between Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies, common to both is the idea that a thing’s nature is determined by its essence. Essence – the essential nature of things – is the primary substance and intelligible identity of things in the world such that they are able to be marked by definition (Perl, 2014). Essentialism and essence bring forward a view of the world where things have intrinsic properties (Austin, 2017) or “fixed, universal, immutable sameness” (Cook, 2013 p.13).

Richard Rorty (1979) contends that essentialist metaphysics is inseparable from epistemology; the search for knowledge – where and how knowledge might be found. Rorty attributes epistemology’s place in essentialism to the positivist tradition and the belief that man’s essence is in fact to discover essences,

The notion that our chief task is to mirror accurately, in our own Glassy Essence, the universe around us is the complement of the notion, common to Democritus and Descartes, that the universe is made up of very simple, clearly and distinctly knowable things, knowledge of whose essences provides the master-vocabulary which permits commensuration of all discourses (p. 357).

Arola (2007) also relates the idea of having knowledge of the essence of things to the creation of concepts. Arola (2007) describes concepts as a central element in making the world into an intelligible entity: bringing things under concepts as sense-making universals that represent a things essential nature. Conceptualising the world as an intelligible entity highlights the relationship between metaphysics and epistemology that Rorty (1979) describes: the question of where and how knowledge can be found. The assertion that things in the world are knowable is based, therefore, on a set of fundamental premises or a ground of thought that posits the world as being an entity that is separate from the self and ‘present’ for study and identification.

Another way of describing the idea of essence is found in the term logocentrism, which was first introduced by philosopher Ludwig Klages and later taken up by Jacques Derrida (Backman, 2012). Klages (2017) provides a definition of the Greek term logos as “an ordered rational method of thought that explains the nature or origin of a phenomenon...the concept of rational thought, as opposed to desire, which is irrational...the idea of the word as representative of the mind's rational processes” (p. 245).

Similarly, Derrida’s (1998) early critique of logocentrism emerges through a critique of the privileging of speech over writing that Derrida attributed to the Early Greeks and Classical philosophy. For Derrida, in the metaphysical tradition since Aristotle, speech has been positioned as comprising of primary signifiers; the spoken word signifying an object’s meaning. Writing, on the other hand, is simply a *representation* of primary signifiers, removed from the origin of meaning presented through speech. Derrida’s (1998) concern and dissatisfaction with the privileging of speech over writing is such that he uses the term “repression” (p.28), to illustrate the impact of this hierarchical dualism. The act of repression for Derrida is intimately linked to the idea of logocentrism and its association with logos as something that explains the nature of a phenomenon. The presence of speech, intimately connected to the internal workings of the mind, ensures that logos (meaning, reason) is readily at hand in the presence of the speaker. Writing, open to unchecked interpretation, on the other hand, threatens that assurance (Lüdemann, 2014). For Derrida, it is the idea of logos, represented through the

primacy of voice and speech, that is the offending character; it promotes a belief in an unchanging central meaning of a thing that flows from the internal voice to speech as the symbol of mental experience (Reynolds, n.d.).

Derrida's (1998) opposition to the primary position of the spoken word is an opposition to the idea that writing fails to signify the unchanging central meaning of a thing - not because writing is equal to speech in achieving this natural attachment to an object's essence, but because the idea of essence (essentialism) is highly problematic. The definitive presence of meaning, in Derrida's critique, is an illusion of classical philosophy and one that stems from a metaphysical legacy that we continue to encounter in our style of representation. According to Derrida, we are forced to slip into the form and logic of signifiers. In a broader and more basic sense Derrida (1978) urges us to consider that words signify things, that there is a connection between our sense of things and the signifiers we assign to them but it is a connection that, through an inherited metaphysical expectation, produces calcified meaning and privileged signifiers that limit and deny the unlimited play of signification. Derrida's reference to an unlimited play of signification is a reference to an active and complex world with equally complex meaning that cannot be constrained by the terms and words (or signifiers) that are believed to be accurate representations of a thing's essential nature. There is, according to Derrida, always something more at play than what can be said about a thing.

Extending the critique of the centrality of certain linguistic representations, Broekman (2016) asks, "what does it mean in general when the 'Word' [as signifier] is at the absolute center of each linguistic articulation?" (p.14). Focussing on logocentrism and a "cosmic silence" (p. 14) that denies a voice to the other, Broekman describes a metaphysics that bans that which is contradictory - that which denies constancy and articulates something other than the order of coherent visible meaning. As Broekman explains,

a word-directed approach creates a veiled silence in all articulation processes but one: that of the word, which inhibits a deeper insight into meaning. One should not forget that this cosmology of the separate, this

dominance of partitioning is typical for Occidental metaphysics, as already Plato unveiled. That cosmology is based on the principle of identity and of noncontradiction—both principles are foundational for Western philosophy. As a result, philosophy demanding presence, constancy and coherence becomes a power of silence, because any contradiction, disorder or marginality is banned, and wholeness is not necessarily the result of such a ban (p.14-15).

Essentialism, in both the Derridean sense of signifiers, and in Broekman's (2016) explanation, positions the 'word', the signifier of things, as that which confuses having the *experience* of a thing with the act of pure speech, "the thought of a thing as *what it is*" (Derrida, 1978, p. 8). The implications of this understanding of essentialism (and logocentrism) relate to what has already been mentioned in terms of the inherited metaphysics that Derrida believes creates a form of representation of the world – one we are forced to slip into. This inheritance is what Derrida (and philosophers such as Heidegger) called 'the metaphysics of presence': the idea that presence in traditional philosophy is the fundamental principle of being that can be found in all its expressions. In Derrida's (1978) own words it is,

the determination of Being [de l'être] as presence [présence] in all senses [les sens] of this word. It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated an invariable [l'invariant] presence—*eidōs*, *archē*, *telos*, *energeia*, *ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject) *alētheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth (pp. 279-80).

The metaphysics of presence is explored further in chapter five; however, here it is important to introduce the idea of presence as an expectation – a metaphysical interpretation of the world. According to Derrida (1982), Being as presence is an enduring Being of *what is*, an unchanging constant that equates to essence. Being

in this sense is also the existence of a reality that is present to mind and the adequate representation of reality from within human knowledge.

Deconstructing the notion of mental illness requires a critical investigation of the philosophies and theories that have supported the development of this notion. It requires that the notion of mental illness be explored in the context of early philosophies that are firmly embedded in both colonial histories and geographies. And it also requires that we look at how early philosophies influence how we talk about phenomena (including behaviour and emotions) as positive, identifiable and knowable things. This journey into the beginnings of the metaphysics of presence and its relationship to the notion of mental illness is one component of this thesis.

### **Mental illness, the metaphysics of presence and essentialism**

Challenges to the idea of mental illness and related professional concepts such as diagnosis are well represented in critical analyses that question the legitimacy of the notion of mental illness including within the context of structuralism (Foucault, 1988), biological essentialism (Szasz, 1961), and historical philosophical sexism (e.g., Cook, 2013). Much that has been written about mental illness as a problematic notion has focussed on how the idea of mental illness has emerged as a constructed concept embedded in cultural and historical perspectives (e.g., Walker, 2006; McCann, 2016).

While there are many authors who support a constructionist view of the notion of mental illness, others have expressed concern about these critiques and the view that mental illness (as a concept) has no legitimate validity. For example, Shorter (1997) characterises critiques of the notion of mental illness as a “new orthodoxy” (p. ix), that betray the fundamental truth that mental illness is, in fact, real. For Shorter, what makes mental illness ‘real’ is the “biological brain events” (p. 59), that govern behaviour and form the basis of mental disease. This biological model of mental illness (explored later in chapter six), has invited its own specific critiques; however, here I highlight the theoretical (and philosophical) bases of Shorter’s belief that mental illness is a ‘real’ phenomenon. This belief in the factual basis of (the notion of) mental illness illustrates a common theme that is often

deconstructed within critical literature. The idea is that there are ahistorical, universal explanations of human behaviour that, rather than representing culturally constructed beliefs about human nature, explain natural kinds of behaviour or natural behavioural categories.

The concept of natural categories and universal explanations of behaviour can be linked to the early philosophies, which so far have been identified and discussed as (generally) essentialist. Again, these early teachings exist within a wider philosophical (metaphysical) tradition (Carr, 2014) that is characterised by a desire to know and understand the *ultimate* and *essential* nature of the world and existence. To the ancient Greeks, this desire to know the world would require a certain type of metaphysics that would allow for accurate knowledge of what is real and in such a way that there could be lasting knowledge of those ‘real’ things. This lasting knowledge would be predicated on a view of the world as having an essential unchanging and discoverable nature (Cook, 2013).

We might recognise this metaphysics today in terms that signal a particular approach to interacting with and understanding the world that include, for example, ‘predication’, ‘extrapolation’, and ‘measurement’. Indeed, as Shields (2012) observes, ancient metaphysics mirrors a “deep impulse” that seems to drive scientific inquiry, centring on the idea that there is some “basic and irreducible stuff” (p.3), forming the basis of universal and ultimate explanations.

While Shields is referring to physical sciences (the kinds that look at things like atoms and molecules), he also makes the point that the search for universal and ultimate explanations is a metaphysical inheritance that is demonstrated in our responses to the expectation of “scientific systematicity” (p.4). Further, Shields contends that this systematic approach demands a step away from what we sense and feel in order to discover and present “projectible explanations” (p.4), that can be taken as general truths. Holbraad and Pedersen (2017) observe how this approach to inquiring about the world is based on a “no- nonsense pragmatism [that] bleeds into more elaborate theoretical models, in terms of universal human traits or other underlying mechanisms that may explain cross-cultural variations” (p.2). These explanations of underlying mechanisms may include, for example, socio-

political functions, symbolic structures, and cognitive processing of social information.

The implications that an essentialist and universalist view of the world has for the notion of mental illness concern both the constructionist view of mental illness (that mental illness is simply a created concept), and the view that mental illness is a factual, real, ahistorical ‘object’. In terms of constructionism, those that are critical of the notion of mental illness (positing that mental illness is a constructed, historical and cultural concept), oppose the idea that there are universal human traits that explain behaviour. For those subscribing to the view that mental illness is real, the concern centres on identifying the essential, universal qualities of human behaviour, which include, for example, the universal applicability of psychiatric disorders across cultural groups (Canino and Algeria, 2008). However, I argue, despite the tensions that exist between each of these two broad and opposing views, there is something more insidious lurking beneath the debates that often escapes full critique, particularly when the notion of (spiritual) holism or holistic being is considered. This more insidious influence is described by McIntosh (2012) as “iceberg-like structures of...epistemology which are largely invisible until struck.” (p.59), or what has so far been discussed as the expectation that things will be represented as objects with conceptual clarity; making things present to the rational self who can take things up as thinkable phenomena. I argue that Māori and indigenous explanations of Being have not been immune to this expectation, perhaps signalling that there is a deeper form of cultural suppression at play than what can be addressed through offering Māori and indigenous versions of mental illness as a way of resisting the essentialised concepts that have been applied to the idea of human behaviour.

The expectation of clear (conceptual) representation is what, I argue, makes madness out of Māori and indigenous expressions when more mysterious (unthinkable) presentations of Being are expressed. For example, Cermolacce, Sass, and Parnas (2010) explain that the DSM has previously included a discussion of the concept of ‘bizarreness’ or Bizarre Delusions (BD) including notions about peoples’ beliefs being, “patently absurd (with) ... no possible basis in fact” (DSM-III), and “clearly implausible and not understandable and not derived from ordinary

life experiences” (DSM-IV). While the concept of bizarreness has since been excluded from the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition, American Psychiatric Association, 2013), the features of bizarreness, embedded in a clinical frame of understanding the way that people represent the world, remain as a standard of assessing and of sense making. As Llewellyn and Van Heugten-van der Kloet (2018) explain,

since (the) multiple features and expressions, such as incongruities, contradictions, and paradoxes occurring in natural and human domains prevent subjects to engage in credible representations and appropriate actions, the concept of mental bizarreness still constitutes a relevant empirical and theoretical challenge (p.76).

The more inexplicable qualities of Māori and indigenous metaphysical grounding may therefore continue to be impacted on by an expectation of ordered Being in which paradoxes, contradictions, multiple features and expressions are cast as deficits and are filtered out. The dissatisfaction with a complex metaphysics might also perpetuate the expectation that Māori and indigenous expressions succumb to the order of clear conceptual representation or become alternative expressions that harbour (divergent) essentialisms.

## **Kaupapa Māori and indigenous approaches within mental health**

### ***Kaupapa Māori Psychology***

Within Aotearoa, Kaupapa Māori psychology has developed from a dissatisfaction with mainstream research and behavioural theories that were seen as disruptive to Māori worldviews (Bishop, 1999). In a 2002 keynote address, Mason Durie asked the important question, “is there a distinctive Māori Psychology?” (p.19). In line with wider challenges to assumptions about the universal applicability of mainstream psychology, Durie explored the question of whether Māori people have “ways of thinking, feeling and behaving that derive from customary Māori worldviews.” (p. 19). Using “marae encounters” (p.19), as a point of focus, Durie

discusses interactions and activities on the marae as “domains, (and) broad conceptual zones within which distinctive psychological and behavioural” (p.19) actions take place. While much of what is described addresses the practical implications of these encounters, the metaphysical nature of the domains that are discussed (including space, time, the circular nature of relational being, and synchronicity), locates people within a broader context of existence that challenges the individualised focus of mainstream Western psychology (Tamatea, 2008).

An important theme emerging from Durie’s analysis is the use of metaphorical language to convey a philosophy that presents transformational meaning and “shifts the focus onto another plane” (p. 21), not governed by the laws of exactness that connect what is meant only to what is said. Durie states that “Metaphor allows comparisons to be made, a wider context to be established and allusions to be suggested avoiding a micro-focus and positioning the subject within a broader perspective” (p. 21). Durie also discusses metaphor in relation to the domain of interconnectedness that shifts attention to spiritual planes. Rather than presenting a romanticised notion of spirituality, Durie’s description positions all things in relation to one another: in that locus, the spiritual symbolises the interconnectedness of Being from a Māori perspective.

The implications that this understanding has for Māori psychology lies in valuing the connectedness of phenomena as opposed to focusing on individual phenomena as a primary mode of seeing the world. Durie (2002) concludes by considering the potential for a distinctive Māori psychology to effectively respond to Māori ways of Being (and thinking) by basing assessments in worldviews that are not structured by patterns of thinking and behaviour relied on by mainstream Western psychology. However, as Tamatea (2008) observes, localized worldviews that include ancestral knowledge (that Tamatea conceptualises as pre-industrial or non-scientific), while able to disrupt dominant Western paradigms, may be undermined by inevitable interactions that stem from the development of indigenous Māori psychologies. This sentiment is echoed by Cruikshank (2012) who warns that one of the consequences of placing indigenous knowledge into non-indigenous spaces is that it becomes like, “fragments without reference to the contexts and relationships from which these [indigenous] practices emerged” (p. 247). This may lead to situations

where, even if accepted, Māori knowledge may be misunderstood, or worse, misunderstood and then spread in a corrupted form that only exacerbates misunderstandings.

A recent publication by a group of Māori psychologists within Aotearoa presented an implicit challenge to the idea that Māori and indigenous practitioners must work solely within Western (clinical) conceptual frameworks. Levy and Waitoki (2016) conceptualise indigenous psychology practice as, “a place of opportunity where we privilege our meta-knowledge about the seen and unseen, of knowing and not knowing and being comfortable with how we interpret and makes sense of Māori realities and experiences” (p.18). This description of indigenous psychology, and in particular the contrast and inclusion of both the seen and unseen, of knowing and not knowing, aligns with the research question that guides this thesis. The unseen and the unknowable present possibilities that negate the epistemic structure seeking to codify indigenous knowledges into classifications, universal explanations of the intangible, and cultural variations of the norms associated with clinical knowledge. These possibilities are reflected in Swinton’s (2001) discussion of the intangible, as an “experience that (moves) beyond that which is available at a mundane level” (p.20).

Rather than remarking on common or familiar explanations of things, Swinton (2001), when referring to things that are beyond that which is available at the mundane level, is pointing to things that are unthinkable - things that are not present to the mind. This unthinkable experience supports the ideas of meta-knowledge that Levy and Waitoki (2016) describe. Privileging indigenous meta-knowledge creates a space for indigenous knowledges to move beyond the epistemic corner afforded to indigenous worldviews in institutions such as mental health. As Durie (2009) states,

Both indigenous knowledge and science are shaped by particular worldviews and each is bounded by a set of conventions that confer credibility and consistency as well as limitations. Importantly, the tools of one should

not be used to analyse and understand the foundations of the other (p.242).

The gains made within the mental health sector in developing policies that carve out a space for Māori worldviews within services have enabled Māori to make inroads into developing and providing Māori centred and Kaupapa Māori models of care. Nationally, the intangible aspects of health are recognised as a cornerstone of a Māori approach to health and well-being. He Korowai Oranga, Māori Health Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Health, 2002), includes the objective of recognising and valuing Māori models of health and traditional healing that include spiritual, unobservable aspects of health. Mika (2017a) explains that tangible aspects of health (e.g., access to appropriate food resources, clean environments), must be considered alongside non-tangible aspects that include our ability to,

resonate properly with one's place, perceive other things in the world as if they are all connected and living, acknowledge and name the self as one animate entity among many others with essentially no separation from them, and label a concept along holistic lines (p.45).

Holism, when taken as an understanding of Being within which all things are indivisible is, therefore, an important ontological premise that can guide our consideration of how the intangible aspects of health and well-being are reflected in health care systems.

### ***Global partnerships in indigenous psychologies***

The wider context of health and well-being reflected in holistic indigenous views is also being developed internationally through global partnerships of knowledge sharing between indigenous practitioners and communities. These partnerships have led to the development of research that is intended to influence how the mental health sector conceptualises mental dis-ease and subsequent models of care that result from translating research into practice. One of the key areas of work focuses

on historical trauma theory, a framework for intergenerational trauma first introduced into Aotearoa by Native American scholars including Eduardo Duran, Karina Walters, and Bonnie Duran (Pihama, Reynolds, Smith, Reid, Smith, and Te Nana, 2014).

While dominant Western views on trauma tend to focus on individual experiences, indigenous models are turning the focus towards trauma resulting from historical (and current) events that have continued to impact across generations. The DSM 5 provides a clear example of an individualised trauma focus, describing trauma as “exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 271). In contrast, indigenous perspectives consider more complex forms of trauma including collective trauma resulting from colonial practices.

Two major Māori led research projects completed in Aotearoa provide examples of local indigenous research that has developed from intergenerational trauma work being undertaken in indigenous communities in America and Canada. These projects aim to develop Māori Trauma Informed Care approaches and trauma healing strategies based on Māori and indigenous worldviews. Within these projects, trauma is conceptualised as a collective (as opposed to individual) experience and is also linked to intangible aspects of health and well-being<sup>5</sup>. A significant goal of the global intergenerational research programme is to move beyond a focus on individual, surface level manifestations of trauma (Beltran and Begun, 2014) to address what Duran (2006) describes as soul wounding caused by historical events that have impacted on not only visible physical and psychological aspects of well-being but also on spiritual well-being.

Global indigenous research and indigenous psychologies have provided valuable frameworks for understanding concepts associated with mental health and well-being from diverse perspectives. According to Duran (2006), there is a strong post-colonial philosophy that drives the development of indigenous frameworks

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<sup>5</sup> Maori and Indigenous models of trauma are also discussed in chapter six and are offered as one of the examples of approaches in mental health that aim to disrupt the limited (clinical) frame that the notion of mental illness is ‘fixed’ within.

acknowledging the legitimacy of indigenous knowledges. As Duran explains, "A postcolonial paradigm would accept knowledge from differing cosmologies as valid in their own right, without their having to adhere to a separate cultural body for legitimacy" (p.6). However, the degree to which indigenous and Māori psychologies represent a post-colonial paradigm continues to be questioned. As discussed earlier, some indigenous scholars are cautious about the potential consequences that may come from interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous knowledges and the inevitable exchanges that occur.

## **Conclusion**

The relationship between the notion of mental illness, associated treatment settings and Māori and indigenous understandings of Being is complex. In a service development context, Māori and indigenous peoples are both contributing to knowledge that is integrated into mainstream mental health systems and continuing to seek ways to grow and implement approaches that are largely independent of the mainstream. It is important to point out that the disciplines within the mental health system have not rejected (wholesale) calls for frameworks that represent the identities and subjectivities of marginalised, non-dominant groups. However, in the development of more culturally responsive treatment settings, the 'integration' of Māori and indigenous knowledges may reflect what was referred to earlier as a "shift in philosophical posture" (Marsden, 2003, p. 99), as opposed to a fundamental shift in understanding how notions of Being construct systems of care. This is particularly concerning for things that sit outside the conceptual space afforded through the notion of (cultural) frameworks – the things that cannot be captured by the frame.

The way in which holistic Being is translated into health systems represents a type of "cognitive familiarity" (Gordon, 2008, p.37), with spiritual holism. However, simply having familiarity with Māori and indigenous spiritual holism does little to ensure that the fundamental basis of a health system is congruent with (and therefore supportive of), Māori and indigenous re-presentations of holistic Being. Going beyond cognitive familiarity with indigenous worldviews requires a deeper consideration of how things that cannot fit within the limits of available concepts

can be engaged with. There is, within this context, a deeper holism that exists outside of any conceptual description that we might apply in, for example, health policy. This is particularly significant where it has been noted that Māori and indigenous concerns are framed in ways that are described as a type of reductionism or as a softening of Māori and indigenous expressions (Russell, 2019). As Green (2018) notes, discussions about the intangible aspects of Māori and indigenous knowledge tends not to venture past a certain point, often ending at the mention of the intangible and seldom venturing into more murky territory - into the realm of things that in Māori metaphysics would render holism as a complex (and, from a dominant Western perspective, unintelligible) interconnection.

As I will argue, Māori and indigenous responses within mental health continue to sit at a crossroads where clinical frameworks are evolving to increase a focus on physicalist explanations of behaviour. As clinical frameworks evolve to solidify a position based on the preference for highly evident representations of human (centred) behaviour, new challenges may be emerging. These challenges raise questions about the ability for Māori and indigenous understandings to be (easily) integrated into the systems of knowledge that underpin mental health and the notion of mental illness. From the translation of Māori terms into clinical language, to the development of cultural frameworks that deliver cultural constructs as readily and easily decipherable concepts, Māori and indigenous complexities are constantly open to a type of (metaphysical) reductionism. Having an understanding of the philosophical and metaphysical ground that the tendency for reductionism emerges from provides a pathway to meeting the challenge of essentialised, limited representation and to engage a re-presentation of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being.

## **Thesis structure**

Before providing a detailed overview of each of the chapters in this thesis, I want to first provide some direction to the reader about how the thesis is structured and about how I have approached the task of deconstructing the notion of mental illness and re-presenting Māori and indigenous understandings of Being. There are some points of departure from a conventional presentation of a thesis, intended as a way

of highlighting issues related to the indigenous researchers place in the research. In line with this, chapter two (outlined below), introduces some ideas about the researcher's location, conceptualised as a description of how an indigenous researcher is positioned within the world. Chapter three follows on from this consideration of location and position, launching from ideas introduced in chapter two to address the question of method, thereby suspending a direct discussion of metaphysics until chapter four.

The approach of suspending a direct discussion of the notion of mental illness continues through chapters four and five. Rather than attempting to immediately get at the problem of how mental illness is constructed, I have first sought to lay a ground of thinking. This groundwork enables a critical analysis of how mental illness (as a concept), has been set up by a dominant metaphysics and (most importantly) how it may be re-presented through a Māori and indigenous lens. For this reason, chapters four and five focus on both Māori and indigenous metaphysics (chapter four) and a dominant Western metaphysics: the metaphysics of presence (chapter five). These two opposing metaphysics are then brought together in chapter six to focus on the task of deconstructing the notion of mental illness, clearing ground for a reimagining of possibilities: a (k)new presentation of experience that might contribute to how Māori and indigenous approaches are taken up within mental health.

### *Content of chapters*

In chapter two, metaphysics is explored in relation to the onto-epistemic location of the researcher. The idea of the relational experience of research is highlighted to expose those things that call on the indigenous researcher, implicating the more-than-human aspects of research and how other things in the world help shape the researcher's work. Whaiwhakaaro (presented as a holistic understanding of 'thinking' from a Māori perspective), is introduced in this chapter as a way of considering what might replace a view of research as a human contained and centred activity. The overall aim within this chapter is to disrupt the conceptualisation of research as an individual and primarily cognitively driven endeavour. Through a focus on whakapapa as the researcher's experience of

multiple connections and influences, the research process is understood as a spiritually collaborative exercise: a collab of creation with the more-than-human.

Chapter three continues a focus on the influence of the more-than-human in research by bringing the ideas discussed in chapter two into a consideration of method. Here, the idea of engaging with things in the world through whaiwhakaaro is discussed in more detail. Method is related to the dominant Western metaphysics that prefers a structural approach and an ordered representation of things in the world: a process of extracting the essential qualities of a phenomena. In questioning the place of method within a thesis that is focussed on the things that exist outside of the structure of representation (regardless of whether a method of analysis highlights their existence), I seek to disrupt the notion that a thing's meaning can be captured by the application of method. I also seek to further disrupt the idea that an individual researcher, engaging in cognitive human centred activities, is alone in the process of thinking and of finding meaning within research. Whaiwhakaaro (discussed as a holistic research experience), expands the idea of participation to reflect the co-constructive nature of Being and how this is expressed through the researcher's experience.

Chapter four begins the exploration of metaphysics: of the premises and principles that shape Māori and indigenous understandings of Being. In this chapter, I lay the ground of thinking that will further support a view of Being as holistic and interconnected. This necessary grounding in Māori and indigenous metaphysics provides a basis for the emergence of (k)new ideas that re-shape and dislodge the dominant onto-epistemic framework. The indigenous self is presented as part of a cosmological whole: as fully immersed within the world, requiring that a particular approach to healing within mental health is considered. The premises of Māori and indigenous metaphysics are presented as a foundation on which we might understand the notion of healing as a (spiritually) holistic exercise.

In chapter five, I describe the metaphysical opposite of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being – the metaphysics of presence. This oppositional worldview has already been characterised in the introduction chapter as a dominant and expectant influence that encases non-dominant onto-epistememes. In order to

understand what threatens Māori and indigenous expressions (and opportunities for re-presentation), I aim, in chapter six, to expose the underlying predicates of a dominant Western metaphysics. Through this, I seek to show how this pervasive structure apprehends all things in the world, interning them to its own language of objectification – the representation of things in terms of their present qualities. Exposing the dominant structure supports an understanding of how the idea of presence interrupts the holistic indigenous self, shutting down the excessive meaning that stems from a complete interconnection with the spiritual, mysterious world. It also supports an understanding of how the meaning of people’s experiences have been reduced to fit the frame of mental illness.

Chapter six brings together both Māori and indigenous and dominant Western metaphysics in examining the notion of mental illness. The genesis of mental illness as a broad theory that explains an individual’s behaviour and experience is analysed within an historical philosophical context. The notion of mental illness is examined as a disciple of the metaphysics of presence: specifically, as the idea that a person’s well-being is dependent upon the type of order that eliminates irrational excesses. Through exploring the dominant West’s focus on creating order (of discarding things that do not fit the rational frame), the idea of creating Māori and indigenous versions of mental illness and mental health concepts is problematised. The issue of exposing and addressing the deeper structure of a dominant metaphysics is raised here. Highlighting this more fundamental metaphysical ground aims to expose how the notion of the mind, the philosophy of presence, and the idea of rational balance potentially restricts Māori and indigenous expressions of Being and cosmologies.

Chapters seven and eight present the findings of the research<sup>6</sup>, drawing from the participant responses to reflect on how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being (and the notion of mental illness) can be re-presented. These chapters are

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that I have problematised the term ‘findings’ in the prologue to chapters seven and eight. As I explain, the conventional view of a findings chapter is closely related to the idea of method and a belief that method allows the researcher to find types of truths about phenomena – to identify their essential qualities. In line with my intended departure from using (a conventional) method, I also move away from presenting findings as a representation of essential things – of central truths about Maori and indigenous understandings of Being or the notion of mental illness.

where the experience of whaiwhakaaro comes into play, demonstrating what might be seen as an unconventional approach that detracts from the process of using normal research methods of data analysis. Rather than searching for themes, whaiwhakaaro allows for a free-flowing engagement that highlights how different terms, sentences and ideas provoke thinking. The provocation of thinking is conceptualised as thoughts that arrive from the relational influence of the participants, from me as the researcher, and from the more-than-human participants that place things in view: things that show up on their own accord. In keeping with the structure of this thesis, where I initially deal with first principles and *then* with the human manifestation of those, I present the idea of a complete indivisibility in chapter seven and then the lived experience of the more-than-human relationship, emerging through the notion of mental health, in chapter eight.

Those two chapters (seven and eight), together with the rest of the thesis, establish the potential of creative speculation, and I conclude the thesis in chapter nine, reiterating the idea of a free-flowing approach to research by resisting the convention of providing a prescriptive discussion of the research findings. In this chapter, building on the main thoughts that emerged through whaiwhakaaro in chapters seven and eight, I imagine the possibilities for re-presenting Māori and indigenous understanding of Being and the notion of mental illness. There are no firm strategies presented in this chapter – no fully determined approaches to implement. Instead, I present a (k)new ground of thinking within which divergent articulations and multiple approaches to healing might unfold. The concluding chapter is therefore non-foundational. I conclude in chapter nine by reiterating (but also adding to), the main principles that I suggest can support a re-turn to Māori and indigenous holism.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LOCATING THE RESEARCHER**

This chapter presents a narrative that provides an understanding of how the research developed. The description that is offered in this section provides an explanation of how I, as an indigenous researcher, became drawn to this piece of work. It is a way of orientating the reader to the kaupapa of the research, and to my relationship with this kaupapa. Any statement I, as a researcher, make about the world, is paradoxically constructed by the world. Here, perhaps, is the first overt gesture towards the aforementioned mystery of things in the world as they inform my research. This chapter points to an understanding that there is a particular Māori and indigenous metaphysics at work in those acts that are conventionally understood as being banal.

My experience of being Māori is one of treading softly into our interactions with each other, locating ourselves as a first step in a process of connection. Lavalley (2009) states that locating ourselves as researchers is often viewed as an exercise in declaring bias within a post-positivist epistemological framework, recognising the influence of constructivism and interpretation. As Lavalley states, “Indigenous research is not objective, nor does it see itself as unbiased” (p. 23). Issues of bias and constructivism are important in this research; however, I also value Lavalley’s assertion that, for indigenous researchers, locating ourselves is more significantly about “who we are, where we are from (and) who our ancestors are” (p. 26).

### **The knowledge creation process**

In discussing the value of presenting a narrative that describes the complex relationships that converge when engaging in research, I made a comment to my supervisors that exploring my approach to research in this way would be like a mihi to all that has been involved in the research, including the reader. One of my supervisors, reflecting on how this could be conceptualised, talked about acknowledging both the tangible and intangible aspects of the research as creative participants in the research process. This fits with a description of research offered by Absolon and Willett (2005) who state that indigenous research fosters “a

knowledge creation process that takes into account the underlying and often hidden factors of the researcher and producer of knowledge” (p.106).

As part of this experience of knowledge creation, I bring the reader's attention to some surprising encounters that I have had during this research. These encounters (described in chapters four and nine),<sup>7</sup> demonstrate what I experienced as hidden factors that I believe influence the research process. They are examples of what in a Māori worldview may be called *tohu* or what could be described as things in the world showing themselves for our regard. The encounters (described later in the thesis), are related to the researcher's relational journey - how ideas show up through our connections with things that are both seen and unseen. This view of the world's influence on our thinking is discussed throughout this thesis; however, the examples in chapter four and nine help to answer a question that I have constantly reflected on during the research process - wondering how a more spiritual understanding of Being shows up in academic work. This chapter begins the task of taking seriously the view that academic work (as with all things in the world), is more than a rational self-contained activity.

This section aims to locate the researcher and the research within Māori and indigenous worlds conceptualised as both physical and philosophical place. Place, as an understanding of where something or someone is connected, is an important aspect of indigenous research (and indigeneity as a whole). It orientates and locates both the research as a complex web of concepts and the researcher in relation to those concepts. Deloria (2001), when discussing principles of Indian forms of knowledge, describes place as “the relationship of things to each other” (p.23). Deloria also discusses the principle of power or life-force as it engages with place to form personality. Wildcat (2001) describes Deloria's conceptualisation of personality as,

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<sup>7</sup> See the description of Indranil Chakravarty's PhD journey in chapter four for an explanation of the world's influence as seen through the lens of Sanskrit spirituality. In chapter nine, see the description of a comment made by Dr Naomi Simmonds and how this pushed me to reflect on Papatūānuku as spiritual nourishment within the context of mental health.

the substantive embodiment, the unique realization, of all the relations and power we embody. Because each of us is someplace and, but for a few exceptions, never in exactly the same place as anybody else, our personalities are unique. Our phenomenal existence entails a spatial dimension and variations in power relations with other persons in the world. Therefore, personality as Deloria uses the term is a metaphysical concept, fundamentally different from the popular science view that what and who we are can be reduced to genetics or biochemical mechanisms (p.145).

What Deloria describes is a living world that we have a personal relationship with, and a way of engaging with the world in a personal manner. What we offer in our writing is a personal expression of our relationship with and within the world.

My relationship to the research is explored through the idea of subjective co-creation. This idea acknowledges the deeper connections that are at play in the development of the thesis and the subjective approach that characterises my engagement with those things that are involved in these deeper connections. The articulation of these connections explains my position as a researcher, including where I am located physically, spiritually, and conceptually. From an indigenous perspective, subjectivity is an important concept related to understanding how ideas are represented. As Absolon and Willett (2005) state,

You might say that any part of my experience accounts for my opinion and that is the whole point—that who I am mitigates what I say. I might make any number of seemingly radical statements and the reason I might say any one of those things is based in part on my personal experience. We locate because what you remember about what anyone says depends in large part on who is doing the talking (p. 105).

Subjective representations are common within indigenous research (e.g., Pihama, 2001; Kainamu, 2013); however, when indigenous notions of location are also considered, these subjectivities are constructed in ways that extend beyond simply presenting individual accounts of an experience. Location, symbolic of our connections, includes both the physical connections that we have (such as our connections with people and land), and our connections to those things that are not immediately visible or easily definable.

Location can also be conceptualised as an epistemological standpoint. Daniel Heath Justice (2016) discusses Western epistemological standpoints as equating the concept of knowledge with mastery. As Justice explains, knowledge, conceptualised in this way, is akin to domination over things, characterised by a violent possession that grounds the concept of understanding in acts of “stripping bare the mysteries of human experience...an extractive exercise of epistemic privilege, with violence at its center” (p.23). As Hunt (2014) explains, however, there is another standpoint that presents a different relationship with the world that retains mystery and the unknowable:

One starting place might be accepting the partiality of knowledge. Its relational, alive, emergent nature means that as we come to know something, as we attempt to fix its meaning, we are always at risk of just missing something. If we accept the alive and ongoing nature of colonial relations, and the lived aspects of Indigeneity as critical to indigenous ontologies, any attempts to fix indigenous knowledge can only be partial (p. 31).

The idea of knowledge that is partial opens up the potential of the self in relationship with other things in the world that may influence our work. It is also an important consideration in understanding how mystery relates to Māori and indigenous metaphysics, and moreover how it disrupts the idea that Māori and indigenous

knowledges can be represented in ways that mirror a dominant Western epistemic structure of representation.

### **Whakapapa and co-creation in research**

Cherryl Smith (2000) explains how Māori cosmologies transform what we encounter as written work into a more profound and personal expression of relationship with things in the world reflecting a dynamic process of co-creation. Referencing her own act of writing, Smith explains:

According to Māori belief all things have a mauri or life aspect, a piece of writing or a speech therefore has its own mauri. As a writer of a paper I am engaged in the act of creation which stems from the way that I see creation occurring. Just as the carvers who carve the houses by `hanga whare' (building houses) so too as Māori academics we build thoughts/feelings (hanga whakaaro) and build discourses (hanga kōrero). I am not alone in this work, all my ancestors, past, present and future also have to bear with me (p.43).

Smith (2000) relates the co-creative process to whakapapa that she describes as the participation of ancestors in the work. Elsewhere in her paper, Smith describes the expansive nature of relationships that the term whakapapa relates to pointing to the endless connections that are at play when referring to ancestors or relations and their involvement in work that is created, including research. My writing in this section is intended as an explanation of a deeper connection to the research that is reflected in thinking about understandings of place as relationship and understandings of power as life force or mauri. My discussion of these things includes focussing on how power and place can be an expression of conversations with the world that leads us to understand our work in ways that differ from empirical research.

In relation to the ideas that are explored within this thesis, the acts of creation that mirror what Smith (2000) describes do not rely on evidence or the gathering of data to measure something in the world, but locates the research within my own experience that, I contend, cannot produce objective measurements. The research is completely bound with a whakapapa that is my own in a genealogical sense but also expands to include things that genealogy as a notion does not constitute. This understanding of whakapapa is also described by Smith (2000) who states that,

Whakapapa, which is usually translated as genealogy or descent, lays out Māori views of existence by showing the connections between states of existence, the human and natural world. It provides an explanation for existence and also articulates the human role within that existence. Within whakapapa there are origins and explanations for trees, birds, parts of the human body, words and speaking, the cosmos, the gods, karakia, the moon, the wind and stones. All life is connected and interrelated. Appropriate behaviour is also indicated to all aspects of life within whakapapa (p.45).

Whakapapa, as a state of Being, describes my understanding of how this research has developed and continues to unfold. The co-creative process for me undoubtedly includes the involvement of my tūpuna. But in line with a deeper and more complex understanding of whakapapa, I understand that co-creation also includes the influence of other things in the world. My tūpuna may show up in what I recognise as thinking or through the sudden rise of an idea. Other things in the world may also come forward to play upon the field of conscious thinking. It is also possible that things may choose to show up as a physical feeling that gives a sense of something that cannot be defined, only making sense when someone makes a remark in passing, or an image that catches my eye when I turn in response to a noise that has invited me to look in a certain direction. These experiences make sense to me in a way that is hard to express in academic writing that demands I

explain what is happening and that I engage with the belief that I can name it and give it a quality and quantity.

The showing of the world in this way is perhaps reflected in the following quote from Royal (2008): [m]ā te Ao te tangata e *tohu* e oho ai tōna ngākau, tōna wairua e mārama ai ia ki ētahi mea” (p. 37). Royal’s quote has been translated by Mika (2013) as “the world represents itself to humanity, awakens humanity’s heart and spirit, and brings it to understand something” (p.76). Discussing the rise of ideas as the intentional act of an external hidden Being disrupts the conventional view of thinking as an individual’s single act of intuition. Mika (2017a) describes the agency of ideas as “living material entities” (p. 3), that reveal and conceal themselves at will. Further, what seems like the disappearance of the idea is simply its movement into concealment while remaining in hidden spaces that our senses (such as hearing and seeing), do not easily enter into. As Mika explains,

In indigenous thought... the idea is a material entity that is constituted by all other things in the world; it is as equal to the situation as my own neurological decision to think is. So, it should come as no surprise – to me while writing, or to anyone else – that an idea should decide of its own accord to seemingly drift away and allow another to take its place. Whether the former idea has indeed moved on or has just decided to slip into the background of the current idea can only be speculated on. And this ability to speculate is itself the convergence of both the human and non-human worlds, the latter including the world of the idea. That we can think at all, shows that the external world makes us up, or forms us. Like all other things, the idea may have moved on, or it may have simply withdrawn on its own account for a time but remain there in a hidden sense, whilst still influencing us in ways we do not apprehend. (p.1)

My relationship to those things, conceptualised here as ideas, is expressed in this research as my understanding of creation occurring, though it is not an understanding that is arrived at through autonomous subjectivity. Rather than conceptualising the process of thinking and writing as an individual's intellectual activity, co-creation is an ethical stance that recognises the agency of all things. Co-creation recognises things in the world, not as objects of our individual or collective observations (and subsequent descriptions or critiques), but as subjects that engage in incessant movements that show up in our experience as ideas or emotive responses. The researcher, in this process, is not the central creative figure. Instead the researcher is immersed in what Arola (2007) describes as the "ecstatic character of identity in Indigenous engagements with the world" (p. 2). This understanding of co-creation is one of the main themes in the research and includes a focus on metaphysics and Being where things in the world, rather than being represented as partial components to be discovered and explained, are acknowledged as co-creators with agency. How this co-creation manifests as a non-rational and non-intellectual experience is also important to the research process and to what the research is attempting to communicate.

It is difficult to argue for this view of knowledge creation in an academic setting because of the emphasis that is placed on an individual's ability to think and develop insight into a subject. Within this thesis, the conceptualisation of thinking as an individual cognitive exercise is traced back to classical philosophy and a metaphysics that sets up the world as consisting of objects that may be known through an individual's internal meditations, "to treat everything as though it were an object-in-general—as though it meant nothing to us and yet was predestined for our own use" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 159). The impact of classical philosophy on indigenous metaphysics is discussed at length later in the thesis. However, it is important here to introduce dominant Western metaphysics as a problematic perspective on knowledge and the disconnected observation of things in the world as objects with a universal essence that can be discovered and represented. From an indigenous perspective, the world is an ecstatic matrix of intentional entities and while we can present our experience of these entities, we cannot (ethically) claim to be able to represent them in essence (Mika, 2017a).

Throughout the thesis, the concept of ground or grounding is referenced as a way of describing where different philosophies have emerged from by attempting to locate their origins. The concept of ground can also be related to how we carry who we are, where we are from and who our ancestors are, into other conceptual locations. During this research, I was gifted with the anthology, *Critical Indigenous Studies: engagements in first world locations*, (Moreton-Robinson, 2016). The subtitle of this book, ‘engagements in first world locations’, is intended as a way of illustrating the political and cultural positioning of critical indigenous scholarship within a global community dominated by first world nations. The concept of ‘first world locations’ creates an imaginary that illustrates the complex work that indigenous researchers must undertake within locations that are invested in non-indigenous epistemes.

The concept of grounding can be discussed as a way of understanding where ‘things’ emerge from, including people but also extending to thoughts and ideas. The first world locations that are talked about in the *Critical Indigenous Studies* anthology are conceptualised as a form of ground from which understandings of the world emerge. Moreton–Robinson (2016) states that there is a separation between indigenous and non-indigenous analytics that is warranted because “Indigenous knowledges, modes of inquiry we employ, methods we develop, and ethical and cultural protocols that inform our academic practice are not the same as those of non-indigenous scholars” (p. 4). Indigenous methodologies create new places within these first world locations and as Moreton-Robinson states, “We are all constituted by kin and territory as owners or visitors. We are always in an indigenous place wherever we find our institutional location” (p.10). For the indigenous researcher, the challenge lies in presenting an experience of the world that avoids positively describing things as ‘this’ or ‘that’ or, as Arola (2007) explains in referring to Heidegger’s critique of classical philosophy, making the world into an intelligible phenomenon.

Despite the fundamental differences that mark indigenous and dominant Western metaphysics, the academic expectation that what is written about will fit under a taxonomy of concepts remains as a concern (Hokowhitu, 2016). As an indigenous researcher, I must continue to be mindful of the pull towards positivist

representations of things even as I aim to avoid this. As Robertson (2017) explains, indigenous knowledge needs to involve more than, “rational deliberation on culturally mediated meanings” (p.181). For me, the experience of being located within the world includes having an understanding that there are non-rational experiences which, rather than being hard to explain, do not necessarily require understanding that equates to Western reason. As Marsden (2003) states, the reality we experience subjectively is incapable of rational synthesis. These non-rational experiences are other ways of knowing the world without engaging a primarily cognitive calculation of what is being experienced.

The metaphysical understanding of Being that a co-creative whakapapa experience brings forward is a way of understanding knowledge (and indeed the concept of knowledge) that differs from the metaphysical foundations of ‘Cartesian subjectivity’ that largely defines Being as thinking (Ahenakew et al., 2014). The connected communication that the co-creative process involves also helps to illustrate the metaphysics of disconnection where, “The subject is simply the “I”, “soul”, or the “thinking substance” which is what it is even without the body and the world” (Cucen, n.d., para 4). In contrast, connected, co-creative, embodied knowledge shifts the orientation of the self as a thinking substance external to the world, to understanding the self as a body that is a localised site of a wider ecosystem of existence.

## **Whaiwhakaaro and its entities**

Within this research, engaging with the wider ecosystem in this way is called ‘whaiwhakaaro’. The term whaiwhakaaro (discussed at length in chapter three), was shared by Moana Jackson (2015) (quoting his grandfather) who translated it as “to follow the thought” (p. 60). The term was shared as a way of reflecting on Linda Smith’s insights into Kaupapa Māori Research: that it is, “more than a paradigm and less than a paradigm, more than a methodology and less than a methodology” (Jackson, 2015, p.60). Jackson is reflecting on Māori research and Māori knowledge being ‘something more and something less’ to capture a sense of fluidity characterised as an enabler of exploration and discovery. The fluidity of Māori

research and knowledge, explained in this way, is more than a product of cognitive thinking and other than a person's self-contained internal meditations.

Reflecting on how to engage with a kaupapa that is concerned with the presentation of things in non-fixed terms, I wonder how I would avoid fixing things as soon as I refer to them using the concepts and terms that are available to me. Each term that I use either has a fixed meaning, or a dominant meaning, or a range of meanings that can be applied. It is hard to escape this. I am not seeking to construct a new archetype but to disrupt the notion of archetypes, insofar as that is possible.

My understanding of the research process as co-creation and whakapapa is important not simply because it challenges what is often criticised as a dominant Western insistence on representing the world through the lens of rational thinking but (most importantly in my view), because the research seeks to discuss the unintelligible and indeterminable ways of knowing from my own experience which can be conceptualised as an expression of whakapapa. This expression is not simply recalling memories of experiences I have had that can be described as solid, positive representations of events that have taken place. Just as Jackson (2015) reflects on the nature of Māori research and Māori knowledge as 'something more and something less', I too understand that each idea presented in this thesis is an approximation of a much more profound meaning. Conceptualising the presentation of ideas as approximations of things is a part of the ethical stance that recognises the agency of all things.

The metaphysics that this experience and expression of whakapapa brings forward provides a basis for re-presenting Being from Māori and indigenous perspectives, but the presentation of ideas must be understood as a description of my relationship, including my non-verbal conversations with those seen and unseen things that help shape my understanding. As Absolon and Willett (2005) explain, "In our experience as Indigenous peoples, the process of telling a story is as much the point as the story itself." (2005, p. 98). In this way, re-presenting my work as a researcher as something that comes from relationship, and that produces a type of 'partial'

rather than definitive knowledge of things, is as significant as the information that is produced through the research.

## **Knowledge as embodiment**

While there is valuable research that describes our being-in-the-world as being influenced by physical, social, cultural and historical factors, this thesis explores Being as embodiment. A focus on Being as embodiment gestures to an understanding of a metaphysics that recalls the influence of things that are not visible or readily identifiable in documented physical, social, cultural and historical landscapes. Embodied knowledge is not a concept that is original to indigenous research. However, the way that some non-indigenous explanations of embodied knowledge conceptualise our relationships with the world maintains a reliance on measurable, visible phenomena. For example, Ott (2017), describes embodied cognition as a process of thinking,

to a large extent with the help of the things in our environment. The body itself has an extension and duration, and it can extend to other things, e.g. for a blind person, the stick becomes a sensing organ; when we drive a car, our perceived bodily dimensions extend to the car (so we can feel where we can pass and where not), etc. A very special way of extending embodied knowledge is to adopt another person's viewpoint. Other persons are very important "tools" for extending and correcting our knowledge and behaviour (p.68).

The embodied knowledge that is discussed in this thesis differs in that it describes an embodiment that exists in more than our spatial, psychological, or even conscious awareness of the world. Further, embodied knowledge relates to other bodies such that the objects in Ott's example may also be seen as a body rather than an extension of our own. Another way of understanding this view of embodiment is through a consideration the term 'worldedness' that Mika (2017a) uses to refer to the holistic understanding "that any one thing is constituted by all others...the

fullness of the world within one thing.” (p. 3). In this context, the extension that Ott associates with embodiment exists without obvious acts of extension because it already *is*, even if it is not made obvious. In this sense, the concept of embodied knowledge from a holistic indigenous perspective involves a relationship with the world - not simply embedded in the body through experience but existing through a common embeddedness shared by all things in the world. As Ingold (2000) explains when reflecting on the relationship between the world and Being:

it suddenly dawned on me that the organism and the person could be one and the same. Instead of trying to reconstruct the complete human being from two separate but complementary components, respectively biophysical and sociocultural, held together with a film of psychological cement, it struck me that we should be trying to find a way of talking about human life that eliminates the need to slice it up into these different layers (p.3).

What is helpful in the examples that Ott (2017) uses is that some aspect of the extensions that he describes can remain indescribable or unknowable. If the example of a blind person experiencing a stick as a sensory organ is viewed in a holistic sense in line with the concept of worldedness then the fullness of that experience cannot be fully known. As Mika (2017a) explains,

one thing is never alone, and all things actively construct and comprise it. As one thing presents itself to me, others within it may appear and hide, but even if I cannot perceive them (which I cannot) we can be assured that they are there. An object that I perceive is therefore fundamentally unknowable; I can speculate on it and give it a name, but all I can be certain of is that it is mysterious precisely because it is ‘worlded’ (p.4).

The idea that things present themselves to us in a complex communication that does not rely on our ability to perceive or explain things might be described as intuition thinking (Ingold, 2000; D. Smith, 2018) or knowledge that is unintelligible (Hokowhitu, 2016). Ingold's (2000) reflections on connected Being, in particular his insight that "the organism and the person could be one and the same" (p. 3), to some degree articulates the understanding of intangible things in the world that I am engaging with in this thesis. In coming to a new conceptualisation of being-in-the-world that no longer attempts to merely bridge biophysical and social understandings of human nature, Ingold's new orientation brings forward a holistic appreciation of Being that is helpful in reflecting on intuitive as opposed to cognitively derived communication. It makes the entire world at once a part of Being, where Being is the world in which we live.

## **CHAPTER THREE: WHAIWHAKAARO - A DIFFICULT DEPARTURE FROM METHOD**

Given that the focus of this thesis foregrounds those things in the world that are not fully tangible, I have had to consider other ways of engaging with utterance. This is particularly important in terms of how I understand my approach to engaging with the interviews conducted as part of this research. It is not enough to simply write about an intangible holism without bringing this worldview into the research process. In this chapter, I consider how this intangible holism can guide the research and, in particular, how it can guide the development of (and departure from) what would, in conventional research, be called method.

In chapter two of this thesis, the term whaiwhakaaro was discussed in relation to the act of engaging with the wider ecosystem of Being (both physical and non-physical), reflected in Moana Jackson's (2015) translation of this term which, as I noted earlier, was given by Jackson's grandfather and means "to follow the thought" (p. 60). In this chapter, I expand on the philosophical settings introduced in chapter two that foreground whaiwhakaaro. The movement and fluidity that accompanies whaiwhakaaro, for Jackson, suggest that the concepts commonly associated with research and academic analysis are unable to contain the rich meaning that the term and its concept reflect.

Whaiwhakaaro, as it applies to this research, concerns the active event of co-creation, or an expression of conversations with the world and the influence of those things that both manifest in conscious thought and influence the self in embodied, unthinkable ways. Whaiwhakaaro relates to the agency of things in the world that make this research (and all other things) something other than an individual's academic effort. This sense of the world's agency will be explored at length later in this chapter; however, here I re-cover the general ground of thought that has led to my concern with an aspect of research that I describe as a fundamental dissonance between the idea (and application) of method and a holistic understanding of engagement. This dissonance underlies what I have experienced as a dissatisfaction with the notion of method, which is often, at least in orthodox qualitative research,

conceptualised as an internal cognitive analysis (or interpretation) of external material or data.

In this chapter, I explore some of the main issues related to my engagement with the concept of method and the problem that method has presented for me throughout this research. From the outset, I want to make a declaration about my discomfort with the concept of method. I begin by discussing this discomfort in order to highlight the aspects of method that have led to what I view as a fundamental discord between the idea of the methodical and ordered treatment of information as data on the one hand, and a more holistic research experience on the other. I do this for two reasons: firstly, I aim to clear conceptual ground to make way for discussing this more holistic experience of research without the constraint of having to fit in with existing methods and approaches. This is not to say that existing methods are ignored; rather, it signals that these methods provide ideas that help articulate a view on method (and non-method) as opposed to providing frameworks to align to. Secondly, it allows me to disrupt the concept of method when discussing *whaiwhakaaro* as a term that relates to how I have experienced the research process.

## **Departure from method**

I set out, in this chapter, to defend my intended departure from conventional research through an attempt to disrupt the concept of method. This intended departure is meant as a radical move to push beyond the limits of method as an expectation of how the research will be conducted. I use the term radical here because it signals my intention to (attempt to) demonstrate what Mikaere (2015) refers to as a *radical* altering and re-ordering. This move demands what she describes as a rigorous examination of Māori research to avoid sliding “unwittingly towards the point where we are in fact conducting [research] in largely the same way as Pākehā researchers do, while hiding behind the Kaupapa Māori label” (p.78). Mikaere also challenges Māori researchers to pull away from colonised ways of thinking to instead traverse the path that is laid with Māori wisdom and theories of reality. It is within this call for a departure from colonial thought that I

address the concept of method and the dissatisfaction that has led to my attempt to change my path and escape its expectations.

In this chapter I argue that method expects a certain conformity that does not sit well with the holistic research experience I am attempting to articulate. It seems to be common, for example, within conventional research that data collection and analysis are leaned on heavily to justify what it is to research. While criticisms of rigidity in research methods are commonly applied to quantitative research that is seen as a reductive approach equating meaning with statistical representation (e.g., Verschuren, 2001), qualitative research methods are also of concern here because of the emphasis placed on certain components of research conceptualised as essential tools that ensure validity and reliability.

Chamberlain (2000) makes this point when discussing qualitative research and what she refers to as ‘methodolatry’, described as a combination of method and idolatry in which the mechanics of method preoccupy the concerns of researchers at the expense of the story that is being told. Chamberlain identifies specific aspects of method that are ‘idolised’ in the privileging of method over meaning including, “a focus on description at the expense of interpretation [and]... a concern with issues of validity and generalizability” (p. 285). Chamberlain also identifies measurement as a core tenet of qualitative research supporting a view of validity as the degree to which a researcher’s methods can be said to produce a valid measurement of an aspect of reality. However, as I will argue in this chapter, the conceptualisation of reality as measurement restricts our view of validity in research so that we perceive validity to reside (exclusively) in method’s epistemic territory. It also highlights the problematic clash of metaphysics within method demonstrated in Mika’s (2012) description of existence, “calcified” (p.1089), through the pre-eminence of “utterable data” (p. 1089), that affords the status of ‘realness’ only to what is made (methodically) visible. Here we see a link between one key theme of this thesis – the metaphysics of presence – and the expectation that we will encounter things in the world as individual objects, utterances and thoughts for grouping.

Where interviews are conducted in research, as they have been in this thesis, it would appear that there is an expectation that a conventional analysis of interviews

will follow where the interviews are treated as ‘data’. The data driven analytic style for me, as I have just identified, is tied to a strict expectation that responses from participants will be ordered and grouped into themes that identify the (apparent) significant points related to an area of inquiry. The ordering and grouping of themes and the relationship that this ordering has to presenting highly evident meaning is tied to the idea of objectivity and legitimating research through providing interpretations of data that are generalisable, landing on some type of universal meaning. As I will go on to explain, my process of interpreting the interviews detracts from conventional approaches that codify talk into patterns of repetition equating what is real with what is prominent. While the prominence of an idea or aspect of a participant’s response may still be presented through my own interpretation, the significance of participants’ responses will not depend (wholly) on their membership within a particular category of responses. It is entirely possible (and valid) that one word, sentence or thought shared by a participant will provoke thinking and in such a way that reporting about my response to that provocation will carry significant meaning for myself as the researcher and others who may read what is presented.

In attempting to articulate a holistic research experience I move across different theoretical (and non-theoretical) landscapes in what I experience as a complex web of contradictory thoughts about method, non-method, interviews as data, things that do not fit easily with the concept of data, and the process of analysis. I engage with contrasting ideas proposed by others who also express dissatisfaction with the current use and structure of method but whose critiques appear to be limited (and captured) by the parameters of method and the legitimated tools that are made available to make sense of the information gathered through research. These expressions of dissatisfaction, while not a perfect mirror of my own dissatisfaction, provide helpful points that approximate my own concerns.

Appealing to the critiques provided by other researchers has been helpful as I attempt to disrupt the term method and its function in order to conceive of holism as an approach to research and what might be conceptualised as a type of culturally informed analytic experience. As an indigenous researcher, I believe that disrupting the concept of method is a move that builds on the wider context of indigenous

discontent with dominant Western research methods and methodologies. I see in indigenous critiques of dominant research approaches the seeds of my own discontent - the acts of naming and claiming that characterise research and, in particular, research that has focussed on indigenous realities.

The discontent expressed in this chapter is reflected in the concerns of Smith, Maxwell, Puke and Temara (2016) who describe a “gnawing sense of mayhem at play” (p.131), when considering how indigenous knowledges are consolidating within the academy. This sense of mayhem is mirrored in a scepticism about academic research expectations - a wariness tied to the academy’s tendency to over-determine Māori and indigenous knowledges and attempts to ensure a structured alignment with institutional research regimes. As part of these regimes, they point out that method and methodologies provoke complex questions about research – is it friend or foe? Does research empower and expand Māori and indigenous worlds or are methodologies “simply new technologies of cultural assimilation”? (p. 133). Indeed, as Gordon (2011) observes,

That modes of producing knowledge can be enlisted in the service of colonization is evident. Frantz Fanon, for instance, reflected...that methods have a way of devouring themselves. In doing so, he brought into focus the problem of evaluating method itself, of assessing methodology. If the epistemic conditions of social life are colonized, would not that infection reach also the grammatical level as well? Put differently, couldn't there also be colonization at the methodological level? If so, then, any presumed method, especially from a subject living within a colonized framework, could generate continued colonization. To evaluate method, the best “method” is the suspension of method. This paradox leads to a demand for radical anti-colonial critique. But for such a reflection to be radical, it must also make even logic itself suspect (p. 97).

Within this scepticism, questions about the kind of Māori and indigenous knowledges that are being produced and constructed through research also arise, including research that claims to use methods from within indigenous knowledge frameworks. My own “gnawing sense of mayhem” is at play in this context as I question my use of method and what this means in claiming to produce Māori research and Māori knowledge.

### **Māori and indigenous critiques of method and methodologies**

Indigenous scholars have engaged in long-standing challenges to dominant research paradigms both within academia’s epistemic system and within the broader context of colonisation. It is widely understood that European colonizers applied standards of what is ‘right’ to the study of Indigenous communities, resulting in stories of backwards civilizations and imaginaries of the Indigenous Savage (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008). Historically, research has positioned indigenous peoples as the object of research rather than “initiator, manager or co-investigator” (Rigney, 2006, p. 32). Tied into the history of researching indigenous ways of life, the positivist research paradigm is recognised as a central feature of dominant research methods and methodology in which the distant expert engages in a detached, value-free study of phenomena (Fong, Braun, & Tsark, 2003).

Positivistic research constructs are also criticised for the partial cultural worldviews that they reflect (i.e. that of Euro-American society), and their role in perpetuating these worldviews through determining the validity of research practices (Wilson, 2008). Discussing the positivist approach through the example of qualitative scientific research, Denzin, Lincoln and Smith (2008) describe how research in this context becomes a metaphor for coloniality and the lens through which scientific investigation sees the world:

Sadly, qualitative research in many, if not all, of its forms (observation, participation, interviewing, and ethnography) serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge. The metaphor works this way: Research,

quantitative and qualitative, is scientific. Research provides the foundation for reports about and representations of the other. In a colonial context, research becomes an objective way of representing the dark skinned other to the White world. Colonising nations relied on human disciplines, especially sociology and anthropology, as well as other field note-taking journaling observers, to produce knowledge about strange and foreign worlds. This close involvement with the colonial project contributed, in significant ways, to qualitative research's long and anguished history (p.4).

The process of making “representations of the other” that is described here is a central concern for indigenous researchers and communities. Jahnke and Taipa (1999) describe traditional Western research methods and methodologies as a process whereby knowledge was taken, manipulated to fit a Eurocentric framework, and represented back to the rest of the world in a form that is unrecognisable to the original custodians. Indigenous responses to positivist colonial research have worked to resist (and re-tell) the stories created as descriptions of indigenous communities, resisting reports about ‘the other’ that emerge from the scientific gaze. This resistance has led to a strong commitment from indigenous peoples to ensure the stories that are told through research stem from indigenous accounts of lived realities and are connected to the communities that are involved, not only as participants, but also as investigators. Further, indigenous communities have made strong contributions to work that seeks to disrupt the central authoritative position of dominant Western epistemologies and methods of knowledge production as a means of decolonising approaches to research (Lavalee, 2009; Smith, 2009).

The term ‘decolonisation’ has been used in critical discussions on research practices referring to the potential to change research approaches to expel colonial, scientific, and positivist explanations of indigenous realities. Linda Smith's (1999) publication, *Decolonising Methodologies* is a prime example of the complex and intricate critiques that have emerged from within indigenous research communities.

In writing about the decolonisation of research, Smith describes indigenous peoples desire to “write our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes” (p. 29).

The imperative of engaging in decolonising research methods and methodology lies not only in re-telling stories from indigenous perspectives but also in understanding the methodical construction of stories and how the process or method of constructing stories through research has displaced indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing (Good-year-Ka’opua, 2013). As Bishop (1996) explains, in relation to Māori worldviews, Western research’s misrepresentation of Māori knowledges has had lasting impacts, creating myths out of, “misconstrued Māori cultural practices and meanings” (p.14), that are taken up as facts about the Māori world. He gives the example of research that measures Māori knowledge and worldviews against frameworks designed to legitimate colonial values, setting in place a false standard of what counts as real and what is considered positive (and progressive) in the context of human endeavours. This type of measurement is one that Bishop recognises as an embedded structure of methods that are a fundamental step in the process of positioning Māori knowledges as culturally inferior.

Smith (1999) explains that many critiques of research focus on empiricism as a theory of knowledge which gave way to the scientific paradigm of positivism. Braun, Browne, Ka’opua, Kim and Mokuau (2014) describe a core criticism of positivist knowledge and research as the tendency to position the researcher as expert, producing definitive knowledge or being cast as “distant, and value free” (p.118). While much indigenous scholarship within institutions of knowledge production has worked to oppose the positivist scientific paradigm, there is continued dissatisfaction with the philosophies that guide dominant Western knowledge systems (Rigney, 2001). Whether or not positivism has given way continues to be a matter of conjecture.

Kincheloe and Tobin (2009), in an article titled *The much-exaggerated death of positivism*, argue that while there are many claims that positivism has been discredited, knowledge production continues to follow core tenets of positivism through empirical research that frames the application of scientific methods as

pathways to obtain social truths. Kincheloe and Tobin describe the methods of historical positivism as observation, experimentation and predication that,

would lead to an understanding of social life in terms of causal, invariable, and universal laws and interrelations among them [and] positivism involved posing salient research questions, identifying important variables, obtaining measures for participants on all variables, and analysing data to produce causal relationships between variables. Empiricism was positivism's backbone as it evolved and thrived (p.515).

Using the term "crypto-positivism" (p.514), Kincheloe and Tobin (2009) propose that there are six epistemological and ontological (onto-epistemic) assumptions that characterise the "contemporary manifestations of the culture of positivism" (p. 518). These include: formalisation (a fundamental research methodology that resists circumstances and new ideas; usually taught in a step by step process), intractability (the ontological assumption that the world is inert, static and fixed, allowing for conceptual representation), decontextualization (phenomenon are removed from the contexts that they are intimately tied to and that give meaning e.g. IQ tests, psychological testing), universalism (a step by step process leads to the production of knowledge that is applicable to all domains), reductionism (reducing complex wholes to simple parts and assuming no information is lost), and uni-dimensional representation (representing the one true reality that can be identified and described through using the right research methods). Many of these assumptions are familiar to indigenous scholars who have worked to articulate culturally specific epistemologies that reflect local realities, defying the universalist, reductionist essentialism inherent in positivist research and representations of the world. However, Kincheloe and Tobin warn that positivism haunts our methods of inquiry (including the notion of methods itself), in such a way that the complexities of what are thought of as knowledge, and processes of

producing knowledge as validated epistemologies, remain (to differing degrees) unexamined in learning institutions.

This haunting legacy of positivism does not indicate that there is a lack of care from researchers (and this point is particularly relevant for those researchers that are intimately linked to indigenous communities). What it does indicate, however, is that there are ongoing complex challenges faced by indigenous researchers in attempting to articulate cultural knowledges from within dominant Western research paradigms. As Braun (2014) explains, researchers do not,

deliberately set out to cause harm through their research. However, most indigenous and non-indigenous researchers have been trained in the positivist research paradigm, which is heavily influenced by the research methods of the natural sciences dating back to the turn of the 20th century. Thus, we likely embrace it until challenged otherwise. At the same time, data are needed upon which to base social policy and service delivery, and researchers are applying quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain these data (p. 119).

Indigenous researchers tend to understand the importance of developing approaches to research that are consistent with indigenous philosophies, accounting for complex methodological and ethical issues (Smith, 1999). Yet vigilance is needed where dominant research approaches demand a distanced observation of objects (including people), thereby ensuring the measurement of a social world existing independently of messy, untrustworthy things, such as intuitive understandings of life that elude measure and experiences that do not form tidy patterns (Macguire, 1987).

While my own research includes activities that could be conceptualised as methods (including interviewing and reviewing literature), I am taking an approach that purposely resists rigid structure. I also aim to resist using a methodical style of

analysis that allows for measurement or produces findings to describe the central nature of a phenomenon. In this sense, while the terms I have at hand to describe the research are commonly associated with an empirical structured approach, the research is just as equally free flowing and ‘messy’, following the intuitive understandings of life and eluding measure and definitive representation. In considering whaiwhakaaro as a holistic research experience, I have tried to imagine how my approach to research is different from orthodox empirical research methods. I am also aware that I am traversing difficult terrain in opposing an empiricism that has (so far) supported many indigenous research efforts and, in this context, I have much to explain about the exact nature of my dissatisfaction with method and what I propose to do instead. I am, after all, telling a story in this research (as all research tells stories), so how do I avoid also producing “reports about and representations of the other”? (Denzin et al, 2008, p.5).

### **“What method have you adopted for your research?”**

The question, “what method have you adopted for your research” is taken from Luce Irigaray’s (1985) reflections on research and her experience as a student who was challenged about her resistance to using more formal methods while completing her doctoral thesis (see Irigaray, 1985, p. 150). Avery Gordon (2008) borrows from Irigaray’s experience in being asked this question, using it to highlight how she herself has experienced the challenge of resisting the rigidity of method and her attempts to defend what the academy views as unusual research territory. It is a common question – a familiar anticipation within an academy that expects research to fit the shapes left by research that has come before. The question “what method have you adopted for your research?” is loaded with the anticipation of reference - that the method selected already has a name, that the name will already have a theoretical position and place, and that the place will already contain familiar structures.

Gordon’s (2008) concern with method as a problematic construct is embedded in her own research question: she describes this murky exploration as a type of sociological haunting. She is compelled to look at the hidden spaces of meaning that are left by what is not said or written about: to acknowledge that same gnawing

sense of mayhem Smith et al. (2016) describe when imagining the workings of Māori and indigenous knowledges within the institutions that produce knowledge.

Gordon's (2008) research is, by disciplinary definition, located within sociology, but her research question cannot as easily find purchase within the disciplinary frame. She is concerned with what she calls, "the tracks of our fieldwork" (p. 36): that method hides these tracks, emboldens assumptions about real stories being told, and the assumptions about ethnography being "the capacity to say "This is so" (p.20). In attempting to explain her research, and a feeling of urgency in addressing sociology's role in the making of scientific stories, Gordon inevitably faces questions about method. In boldly asserting that social science research is in the habit of producing what she calls "real fictions" (p.38), Gordon explains that the latter stem from a culture of knowledge production characterised by,

Bloodless categories, narrow notions of the visible and the empirical, professional standards of indifference, institutional rules of distance and control, barely speakable fears of losing the footing that enables us to speak authoritatively and with greater value than anyone else who might (p.21).

Tied into these bloodless indifferent categories are the "strategically repressed marks of the so-called private" (Spivak, 1987, p.15). These are, in essence, the marks of imagined objectivities that claim, through normal social science method, to dispose of mayhem, unruliness, the researcher's personal markings and the trace of what Gordon refers to as "paths disavowed, left behind, covered over and [that] remain unseen" (p.41).

Gordon's (2008) concern for 'real fictions' is a concern for the 'real' as something produced: a concern that might seem familiar to indigenous researchers who have dealt with real fictions for generations in stories that are told about indigenous realities and observed cultural curiosities. Gordon's resistance to method (as an

insistence that we look to the traces created by the stories that are not told) provokes strong responses from the academy that poses,

a question demanding to know the implications of understanding the ethnography within an epistemology of truth as partial, as an artifact of the complex social rituals, bound historically to modernity and its uncertain aftermath, that produce an understanding, a truth, the real (p. 38).

My own concern about real fictions and about claims to find truth through methods that ensure the identification of the real is also a concern about the traces of things left behind by the expectation of true representations. These are the things that remain unseen or what Gordon eloquently describes as “the factual’s always encroaching other” (p.40). We are told in different ways that method will offer some assuredness and what we produce will have validity: our research, rigorous and methodical, will tell types of truths and, in line with academic expectations, will help determine a certainty about the thing being analysed. I reflect on this when thinking of what I have so far resisted calling a method, the act (or perhaps relational process) of *whaiwhakaaro* that is characterised by its haziness (Mika and Southey, 2016). This haziness is not a statement about ‘hazy thinking’ that can be misconstrued as a laziness of incomplete thought. As a whole, it is perhaps less about the type of thinking that is taking place and more, from a metaphysical perspective, about the input of the ‘other’ into the thinking; it engages the holistic experience as a relationship with things in the world that can affect thinking.

I reflect on these things not just as a way of witnessing the personal markings that I leave in developing research (the otherwise ‘strategically repressed marks’ that are left when engaging in the analysis of data), but also as an acknowledgement of those things that haunt. These are the “paths disavowed, left behind, covered over and (that) remain unseen” (Gordon, 2008, p. 41), which, from a Māori perspective, might be understood as the co-creators of our work that presents (as described in chapter two of this thesis), ‘the profound and personal expression of relationship with things in the world’. I am, of course, acutely aware of the expectations of

objectivity that are suspicious of a metaphysics locating the researcher within all that is part of the research, preferring an approach that is based on detachment. I understand the risks that are taken through attempting to not only disavow method but to assert (in necessary contrast therefore), a non-method, and to articulate how I have researched within this non-method, drawing on a thoughtful relational Being and the co-creative movement of whaiwhakaaro.

I cannot easily escape the potential consequences of attempting to disrupt the ground of methodical research simply through borrowing from existing techniques that have some purchase in academic research (though I might find the idea of some existing methods like, for example, Grounded Theory, useful and complementary). Even if we resort to a process of emerging meaning (such as with Grounded Theory), as opposed to utilising pre-set theories or ideas, the expectation of active and organised searching still holds sway. The researcher is the central agent of construction, denying methods that might allow for the kind of fluidity that I aim to demonstrate. For example, Morse (1994) critiques Grounded Theory research for utilising the idea of things emerging through analysis, rather than being predetermined, by arguing that,

Doing qualitative research is not a passive endeavor. Despite current perceptions and student's prayers, theory does not magically emerge from data. Nor is it true that, if only one is patient enough, insight wondrously enlightens the researcher. Rather, data analysis is a process that requires astute questioning, a relentless search for answers, active observation, and accurate recall. It is a process of piecing together data, of making the invisible obvious, of recognizing the significant from the insignificant, of linking seemingly unrelated facts logically, of fitting categories one with another, and of attributing consequences to antecedents. It is a process of conjecture and verification, of correction and modification, of suggestion and defence.

It is a creative process of organizing data so that the analytic scheme will appear obvious (p.25).

Reading this description, I can discern the image of a researcher who, through proper process and method, has discovered things external to the self. These things exist 'out there' waiting to be found, no longer invisible and, after proper method has been applied, clearly marked by their significance (as if this was a real quality to be discovered above other insignificant qualities). These obedient data, waiting to be homed in their proper place, are the passive objects in qualitative research that is not a passive endeavour. Within this view of research, and the researcher's central role, the researcher is permitted an agency that things (as objects of research), are completely denied. However, I wonder about this accusation of passivity - what is passive about the profound and personal expression of relationship with things in the world? In acknowledging the holistic experience as a relationship with things in the world that can affect thinking, is there not an active communication occurring? It is with this question in mind that I go further into exploring the term whaiwhakaaro and its implications for the notion of relationship and holism in research.

## **Whaiwhakaaro**

The term whaiwhakaaro will be explored here to assist in providing an explanation of the holistic research experience and the act of thinking as responsive and reflexive reaction. Whaiwhakaaro, in the context of how research is conducted, brings forward complex questions about the process of knowledge production and the acceptability of certain methods to produce what is deemed to be valid knowledge. This includes raising questions that interrogate perspectives that privilege knowledge stemming from seemingly rigorous approaches to investigating and/or measuring phenomena.

My own approach to research could easily be challenged within an academic framework that is shaped by notions of validity and rigorous measurement. Whaiwhakaaro is not a structured methodical process. It has so far been described (broadly) within this thesis as 'thinking', or 'thought', though not in the sense of

thought that can be defined within a cognitive context. As mentioned, it is a type of thinking that is characterised by its sense of conceptual haziness, resisting a full representation of any one thing. Whaiwhakaaro speaks to the researcher's vulnerability and openness to the influence of other things in the world (Mika and Southey, 2016). This vulnerability and influence can be understood in the context of Gordon's (2008) concern with the traces of things that linger outside of the limits of meaning we create in our descriptions, suspending our arrival at conceptual places of certainty.

As an ethical stance, whaiwhakaaro, and the researcher's vulnerability as a partial contributor, signal that there is more at play than an individual's detached value-free analysis. As I discussed in the introduction of this thesis in relation to Mika's (2017a) reflections on the interrelationship of things in the world, our drive to (over) determine sits at odds with the mystery that Māori and indigenous metaphysics conveys. This metaphysics has been described as the collapse of all things (of the world), into any one object. Within this collapse, the agency of things in the world, including ideas that form the self and the forming of thought through relationship with 'all that is', illustrates a powerful influence that shows up in thinking yet also impacts on the researcher in ways that are not obvious or fully discernible. The embodied knowledge that I described earlier in chapter two is implicated here. It provides an understanding that embodied knowledge relates to other bodies and that these bodies, while part of our experience, are not qualities that can always be discovered or known. As Mika explains,

It does strike me as a curious possibility with indigenous philosophy that, as soon as the ultimate, true ground of thought has been identified, it appears to swim out of view, to be replaced by an apparently similar idea of a ground. Another creature altogether may have moored itself (p.1).

Some might seek comfort in understanding whaiwhakaaro as a type of hermeneutics, which involves a methodology of interpretation dealing with meaningful human actions, particularly when interpreting written text

(Mantzavinos, 2016). Indeed, much work has been done by indigenous scholars to ensure that descriptions and interpretations of the world are more than simply stories told from a singular dominant worldview. However, *whaiwhakaaro*, while inclusive of a type of interpretation, is both a natural aspect of being-in-the-world and an active stance taken by an indigenous researcher. This stance is one that seeks to re-claim a relationship with Being that otherwise would be moved into the shadows of thinking, conceptualised merely as a mental activity and one that manages only to explore things that are visible to the thinker. The invisible, the absent, and the agency of other things in the world are wholly important in considering *whaiwhakaaro* as a personal relationship that re-imagines thinking as relational Being.

Here, I will explore *whaiwhakaaro* within a broader consideration of what traditional knowledge frameworks indicate about the nature of knowledge and the act of ‘thinking’ from Māori and indigenous perspectives. The term *whakaaro* is helpful as a starting point in this exploration because it provides an understanding of thinking outside of a dominant Western conceptualisation of thought as a rational process. Takirirangi Smith (2000), in breaking the term down to *whaka aro*, offers the translation, “to cast attention to” (p. 58), which, as I will go on to argue, carries a more appropriate meaning from within a Māori worldview. For example, my initial response to this translation is to imagine being called to attention by other things in the world that signal their presence with intention and that would, simultaneously, cast their own attention to things.

As T. Smith (2000) explains, the common translation of *whakaaro* merely as (cognitive) ‘thought’ is part of a wider process of marginalisation in which Māori discourses are submerged into dominant frameworks. The effects of this submergence, rather than representing a mere linguistic dissonance, are said to be deeply felt by the indigenous subject. Mika (2014) explains that the translation of Māori terms disrupts meaning and what traditionally would signal the connection of the self to things in the world. In translating *whakaaro* as the casting of attention towards a thing (beyond mere thought) we begin to see the sense of connection that thinking involves from a Māori perspective. This sense of connection implicates a holistic thinking that expands ideas of thought, moving past the (conceptual and

material) containment of thought as a mental process but also moving beyond the conceptualisation of thought as a self-contained activity.

The concept of embodied thought is highlighted here as one pathway to begin understanding thought as a more expansive notion. T. Smith (2000) describes embodied thought as the engaging of emotions, feeling and instinct, associated not with the mind or brain but instead, as evidenced in pre-colonial language, with other parts of the body and to things external to the body. T. Smith (2015) discusses knowledge in relation to the human body, describing the body as having a structure with components that are “influenced by particular *atua* and *poutiriao*” (p.259). Discussing contemplative and reflective thought, T. Smith (2015) describes how language indicates that ‘thinking’ and ‘thought’ occurs within the *ngākau*. Referring to descriptions of thought associated with the *ngākau*, he points to, ‘te whakaaro o te *ngākau*’ and ‘te hinengaro o te *ngākau*’, explaining that,

Early language references do not say that this activity occurs in the brain (*roro*), which suggests that responses centred within the brain were perceived as fleeting and impulsive. Therefore, most evidence indicates that rational thought was centred within the *ngākau* and was a holistic process (p.261).

Similarly, Marsden (2003) points to the heart as the place where knowledge is integrated as wisdom. Knowledge, Marsden explains, is “a thing of the head” or “an accumulation of facts” (p.59) that constitutes a grouping of unorganised ideas. Wisdom on the other hand is an inner awareness gained through the thought processes of the heart.

L. Smith (1999) also discusses the body’s role in thinking, contrasting an embodied view of knowledge with that of dominant Western philosophy. Smith’s concern is with the creation of cultural constructs that favour a view of the world marked by

separation, including the separation of sense and reason and the idea of separating mind and body exemplified by Cartesian Dualism. As she explains,

Whilst the workings of the mind may be associated in Western thinking primarily with the human brain, the mind itself is a concept or an idea. In Māori worldviews, for example, the closest equivalent to the idea of a 'mind' or intellect is associated with the entrails and other parts of the body. The head was considered tapu for other reasons (p.50).

Further from this, notions of rational thought that, in a dominant Western worldview, may be associated with cognitive abilities such as memory, are explained as an interconnected network. As T. Smith (2000) explains, this network involves 'Te Wananga a Rangi' (knowledge from above) and intuitive, instinctive knowledge; this includes knowing and learning associated with the ira tangata (earthly component of that which forms the basis of action), Papatūānuku (referenced earlier in Marsden's translation as 'rock foundation beyond expanse, the infinite) and "the ngākau, the stomach and the central region of the body" (p. 58), rather than resulting from the act of detached internalised thinking.

This interconnected phenomenon extends to what is apparently the most integral aspect of an entity. In the case of the human Being, the ira tangata aspect is commonly translated as 'gene', indicating a preference to equate ira with a highly visible (and, by using certain methods, measurable) phenomenon. From a Māori perspective, however, the connection between ira and the concept of knowledge (and thinking)<sup>8</sup> cannot be reduced to a biological function. Ira tangata has elsewhere been described as the human essence which comprises physical, spiritual and emotional needs (Walker, 2016), and humankind (Tamati, 2007). However, far from denoting a detached human condition, ira tangata, in the context of the interconnected process of knowledge generation, is intimately linked to ira atua

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<sup>8</sup> I have separated thinking and knowledge here to emphasise that I am not making any claims to knowledge as an outcome of the research; instead I am seeing where thinking takes me in relation to the research question.

(translated by Tamati, 2007, as supernatural life). Knowledge associated with the *ira tangata* aspect of Being has also been described in an embodied sense that does not restrict thinking to the conceptual mind or physical brain. This view of knowledge augurs a very different view to that of the West. As one participant in a study by Cram, Pihama, and Phillip-Barbara (2000) explained, “In terms of knowledge, it is very different from the occidental way of seeing knowledge, feeding knowledge into the head. We see that knowledge is already there and through learning it was brought to consciousness” (p. 65).

Whaiwhakaaro, translated as “to follow the thought” (Jackson, 2015, p. 60), implies a sense of movement towards a thing as well as providing a sense that a thought has presented itself with agency. I say this because it would appear that, in order to follow a thought, it must be something that is at once connected to the self (as we might understand a thought to be within our consciousness), and also something that has its own autonomous stance, presenting itself in order to be regarded. Marsden (2003) describes this co-existing autonomy and connection in relation to students of wananga who are approaching graduation, describing their task of learning “to commune with the spirit of their tutelary deity and (to) return with some original knowledge.” (p. 58). Kovach (2009) similarly describes rituals (such as fasting and other ceremonial practices) that lead to “inward knowledge” (p. 50), gained through spiritual connection.

In discussing Marsden’s own experience of communion as a student within wananga, Royal (2017) describes the expectation that the student would return with new knowledge, conceptualising it as “new knowledge arriving”, imbuing a sense of movement that, again, indicates the things showing of the self (in Marsden’s account, a spirit or deity) in order to be regarded. Again, this sense of movement and arrival connects back to the translation of whaiwhakaaro as “to follow the thought” (Jackson, 2015, p. 60), as a type of fluidity, implicating an animated entitized movement that we can engage with or follow. Similarly, Murphy (2011), discussing knowledge held by women, articulates the sense of an experience of

knowledge arriving through the use of the term ‘immaculate’.<sup>9</sup> Immaculate knowledge might be understood as something gained, not through rational focus or study, but rather through a process of receiving that is not fully explainable. Further, the communion that Marsden describes may indicate a potential source of knowledge but does not denote a fully describable, discernible (or intellectual) process.

This simultaneous engagement in the showing of the self (the autonomous aspect of things in the world), and communion or connected communication (the act of regarding as an internalisation of the external arrival of knowledge), can be related to the idea of co-creation introduced earlier in the thesis. The co-creation of thought and knowledge encapsulates the idea that what is produced in writing (and other forms of presentation) culminates from a communal process of knowledge production intrinsically formed from whakapapa. Rather than conceptualising knowledge as a human endeavour that reflects the “rhetoric of modernity and coloniality” (Ahenakew et al., 2014, p. 221), whakapapa as a conceptual frame for understanding knowledge production, disrupts the idea of knowledge as definitive understanding or as an endpoint of individual intellectualism.

Roberts and Wills (1998) describe how whakapapa frames knowledge as metaphor “with language [which] creates a ‘whakapapa of the mind,’ revealing and concealing the many layers of meaning of mātauranga and of wananga” (p. 62). This complex process of revealing and concealing allows for a legitimate uncertainty that (from a Māori worldview) is rich with meaning. This simultaneous revelation and concealment of meaning helps to illustrate how we might consider thinking as whaiwhakaaro that, from a metaphysical perspective, sits askew to other ways of relating to the world including relating through certainty and through the discovery of universal essence. As De Castro (1998) explains, understanding knowledge as certainty sits “at right angles” (p. 469), to other possibilities of

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<sup>9</sup> In reading Murphy’s description of women’s knowledge as immaculate, I did not get the impression that Murphy is connecting women’s knowledge with a Christian view of the ‘immaculate’. Rather, I read this as a clever use of the term that raises the possibility of knowledge being a type of influence on the person which aligns with T. Smith’s (2013) description of being “influenced by particular *atua* and *poutiriao*” (p.259).

knowing that represent what Hokowhitu (2016) describes as the “radical component of Indigenous studies” (p.84), including the unintelligible.

Within te ao Māori, metaphorical expressions of knowledge have also been related to pūrākau, which Lee (2015) describes as, “a traditional form of Māori narrative, [that] contains philosophical thought, epistemological constructs, cultural codes, and worldviews that are fundamental to our identity as Māori” (p. 96). As Lee explains, in research, pūrākau has provided the means to rethink “conventional research methods and academic styles of documentation and re-turn to our own narratives, to experiment with literary techniques to research, and disseminate knowledge in ways that are culturally relevant and accessible” (p.99). While whaiwhakaaro as a (non) method may not necessarily inform the development of pūrākau, the freedom to express in ways that the academy might deem unconventional is a point of difference that is shared with pūrākau within a research context.

Roberts (2013) describes pūrākau (as narratives), as guides for understanding a landscape or habitat including those cosmological aspects such as (collapsed) space and time. Roberts highlights the complexity of pūrākau, while also referring to their purpose in terms of human faculties, calling them “mental mind maps” (p. 97), of ecosystems. Roberts refers to these mental mind maps as a “cosmoscape” (p. 97), where the intangible is acknowledged, existing in unison with visible phenomena that are understood using cognitive capacities where person-centred understandings of the world are aided by narratives of relatives - Beings and ancestors. Further, Randal, Geekie, Lambrecht, and Taitimu (2008) describe these metaphorical presentations as an “alternative narrative” (p. 340) on states of Being.

### **Whaiwhakaaro, qualitative research and method**

Discussing knowledge and research as a holistic experience that implicates both physical and spiritual elements of Being illustrates a metaphysical consideration of whaiwhakaaro as the act of thinking. Whaiwhakaaro provides a cultural frame to describe how I intend to engage with the material that comes from interviews conducted as part of the research and with other things in the world (such as ideas

that come, incidental informal kōrero, and involvement in specific wananga that appear to provide synergistic answers to things I have been questioning). I argue that my engagement with these things cannot be reduced to an account of how I have analysed data as might be the case in most conventional qualitative research. I do not, for example, describe a method of analysis that details how I have coded interview transcripts. Part of my experience of dealing with the concept of method has been navigating the difference between method as a technical activity and as a philosophical idea. In a technical sense, I understand there is an expectation that as an academic researcher I will provide an explanation of how I have gathered information and how I have engaged with this information to produce findings and ideas related to these findings.

In research, method is used to describe the systemic process of investigation. The method section of a research report provides information that determines the validity of the research, including enough specific detail to enable others to replicate the research and for the audience to determine whether the findings and conclusion of the research hold true (that is, have validity) (Kallet, 2004). I understand that, in a traditional academic sense, there is much at stake in the selection, planning and application of a method. The validity of what I report in this research is at stake and is tied, in a very structured way, to how I have produced ‘knowledge’. Am I heading into an “improper defence of an institutional territory” (Gordon, 2008, p.39), or an improper defence of method?

I wonder about my own fate in the context of Luce Irigaray’s (1985) experience of defending, not an institutional territory, but its apparent opposite in engaging in an honest attempt to leave behind a rigid idea of method as an (expected) structured approach to ‘analysing data’. This is also a position on method that is full of messy contradiction. My own aversion to the notion of method and denial of this notion in areas of writing within this thesis co-exists with descriptions of activities like interviews, interview schedules and the review of literature. I wonder, as I defend my position on method, whether I have escaped the rigid use of method and if I have not, how do I describe this complex experience? Within this complex

experience there is a haunting sense of persistent metaphysics that upholds method – a monolithic philosophy that captures and shapes my approach to investigation.

In a philosophical sense, my relationship with method is a difficult one because of the nature of the research I am undertaking that, while inclusive of the appearances of a standard technical approach (i.e., semi structured interview schedule, interviews as ‘data collection’), aims to challenge strict notions of a structured method. The research also challenges notions of truth and ideas about what is real or what we are able to find through research and other means about the reality of the world. From an indigenous perspective, and in terms of research methodology and its relationship to considerations of theory, the philosophy of the research forms a broad framework of political, social and cultural complexities and specificities that shape the research from its conceptual beginnings (the shaping of the idea), to its technical applications (the ‘what methods should I use’ decisions) (Smith, 1999).

In conducting research that is wary of method’s relationship to objectivity and the implications of such claims to support notions of ‘truth’, ‘validity’, and ‘reality’ (including subjective reality), I am responsible (in the sense that Derrida used the term)<sup>10</sup> to ideas of divergence. These divergent ideas are not simply those that emerge in response to imposed meanings that have been visited upon Māori and indigenous identities as forms of resistance; they are also the divergence that is reflected in those things that cannot be made fully visible and exist with strong identity regardless of human activity. In this sense, and with an expansive, complex sense of whakapapa pulling at my thinking, I aim to ensure I follow through by engaging with the notion of method in ways that do not simply re-create the expectation of structure that I posit as problematic in the first place. In other words, I cannot critique notions of knowledge production as methodical structured pathways to representing objective (or subjective) understandings of things we can be sure of and then proceed unreflectively to present my analysis of interviews (or other material) in the same way.

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<sup>10</sup> See Derrida (1991), *Letter to a Japanese Friend*.

## **Whaiwhakaaro and qualitative research – considering a potential (mis) fit between whaiwhakaaro and method**

I recognise that this thesis has been developed within a methodological frame that is generally labelled as qualitative. In some ways, I am comfortable with this when considering qualitative research in a broad sense. There is common ground between Māori and indigenous descriptions of knowledge production and ways that qualitative research is described. For example, qualitative research is seen as a methodology that,

celebrates richness, depth, nuance, context, multidimensionality and complexity rather than being inconvenienced by them. Instead of editing these elements out in search of the general picture or the average, qualitative research factors them directly into its analyses and explanations. This means that it has an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about how things work in particular contexts (Mason, 2002, p.1).

The words that Mason uses here to describe qualitative research are compelling. References to “richness, depth, nuance, context, multidimensionality and complexity” appear to open possibilities for equally rich, complex and multidimensional engagements with things in the world that are not necessarily invested in arriving at conceptual points of certainty. However, in this quote, Mason also provides a steer towards the researcher’s role in determining ‘how things work’ albeit within the context of difference and the particular. In this thesis, I seek a more reflexive description of qualitative research to make sense of whaiwhakaaro as something that might replace the idea of a conventional main method within this research. In seeking this, there is something that edges me

towards an escape from the existing content of the qualitative framework to engage with what might be conceptualised as the outer limits of research.

The researcher's presence and role in the research is a significant consideration in Māori and indigenous methodologies. Holliday (2007) addresses issues of voice within qualitative research, describing the researchers "voice and person" as a "major ingredient" of the written study (p.122). However, Fine (2002) warns that, despite multiple references to the issue of researcher voice, there is a persistent naivety within qualitative research that assumes that our methods and methodologies, based on principles of giving voice, escape from acts of silencing. As Fine explains,

even a 'giving voice' approach 'involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments. Assumptions about giving voice and opening up analytics to account for diverse realities should not be naïve about the role of the researcher in shaping the stories that are told, particularly when using methods like thematic analysis that rely heavily on researcher interpretations and descriptions of the voices that are being heard. The claim of giving voice is problematic in this sense because it creates a belief (or claim) in which the stories of others, and the reporting of those stories, is framed by an altruistic expression of expressive empowerment while the way in which the stories are reported retains the imprint of the researcher's interpretation without necessarily dissolving the assumption of voice giving (p. 218).

This concern, related to the co-existing principle of giving voice and the strong influence of the researchers (often over-powering) hermeneutic voice, was a key part of early discussions that took place when considering my doctoral research, the 'method' of whaiwhakaaro, and wider issues related to the apparent principles of

qualitative research. In the quote above, Fine is concerned with claims of giving voice; however, in a broader sense, qualitative research, in the context of whaiwhakaaro, provides grounds for a Māori feeling of scepticism towards the ability of dominant research methods (both qualitative and quantitative), to allow for a Māori metaphysics of mystery. This appeal to mystery marks the inclusion of those other voices (described above as being part of a whakapapa of influence), that show up in intuition, attention to ideas, and (for example), highly personal responses to words and text. These non-human voices are, in orthodox research, at the mercy of the researcher's interpretation as much as the responses of human participants.

Whaiwhakaaro, as the presence of other voices (though not necessarily in the literal sense of being heard), allows for the influence of things other than the researcher's interpretive voice. In an ethical sense, whaiwhakaaro foregrounds, through an open, aware and voluntary vulnerability, the limitation of the researcher's voice. Moreover, it signals that personality shows up in how the researcher responds to interviews, not simply as a coded analysis, but as whakapapa or co-creative expression: the world's urging to "look here" and "experience that". Within this urging, the limitation of the researcher's voice, the tools with which the researcher can express the profound experience of intuition and co-creation as acts of regarding what shows up and "springs to mind", are again highlighted. This limitation might be expressed in the term 'unsayable' or as a sense of wonder expressed as a reflexive hybrid of thought and feeling that defies intelligible explanation.

What is produced in this research therefore is not a story of certainty but is perhaps a type of qualitative writing as storytelling. Richardson and St Pierre (2005) describe qualitative writing as,

an unfolding story in which the writer gradually makes sense, not only of her data, but of the total experience of which it is an artefact. This is an interactive process in which she tries to untangle and make reflexive sense of her own presence and role in the research. The written study thus becomes a complex train of thought

within which her voice and her image of others are interwoven. Therefore, ‘unlike quantitative work that can carry its meaning in its tables and summaries, qualitative work carries its meaning in its entire text... its meaning is in the reading (pp. 959-960).

In this quote, Richardson and St Pierre offer a description of research that is helpful to my own reflections on the research process as a holistic experience. I am particularly drawn to the description of research that includes a “reflexive sense” of presence and the “complex train of thought” in which the researcher’s voice, and indeed the voice of others, are interwoven. It is unclear whether Richardson and St Pierre have intended to describe qualitative research as something that cannot pinpoint precise meaning or find the essential nature of a thing. However, their description creates the image of a researcher’s relationship with things in the world that is dynamic and fluid, accompanied by an honest acknowledgement that research is often, instead of objectively orientated, a story that emerges from the interweaving of the researcher with those other things in the world that influence thought, writing, and research.

Whaiwhakaaro would present my own reflexive thinking with the things that provoke, grab attention, and subjectively, emotively emerge in an unapologetic flight from (claims of) objectivity. Whaiwhakaaro, as a sole approach to engaging with the conversations that emerge during interviews, treats the participants’ responses as something other than data to be coded or decoded. Rather, responding to words, expressions, and ideas takes on reflexive engagement as reactions to world and stories or as a reflex in thinking. This reflex might be provoked by what is heard and present (in one sense) but also acknowledges that there is much that is not heard or present to mind. These are the things that are at once absent and present, the “always encroaching other” (Gordon, 2008, p. 40), that might not be immediately highlighted in writing but whose existence should not be denied through a focus on only what can be made apparent. This view signifies that there is

much more at play than what we are able to present within the limits of the conceptual tools that we have at hand.

### **Interview schedules and thematic analysis**

Whaiwhakaaro, as a way of responding to interviews within a holistic research experience, is an attempt to engage in what Smith et al. (2016) call, “the ethical and culturally appropriate gathering and interpretation of data, discourse, ideas, experiences, perceptions, attitudes, memories and stories” (p. 143). Initially, a traditional form of method (thematic analysis), was going to be used to present the interviews. It was thought that this could simply be used as a structure in which to house the information that came through the conversations. Whaiwhakaaro as thinking would be presented elsewhere in the thesis, in separate chapters that would include a type of discussion conceptualised as a creative speculation. Thematic analysis would seem to provide some advantages. The interview responses could be synthesised: the complex stories that are told through interviews could be formed into packages of patterns - the repetition of ideas and expressions that might represent codes of meaning that emerge from interviews. Detouring from whaiwhakaaro to present interviews as thematic information would be a practical technical manoeuvre that would allow for the reporting of interview content.

While I will go on to explain how I eventually departed from the strict use of thematic analysis, it is important to acknowledge that research often includes an inherent structure that begins the thematic process early on, particularly when interviews are guided by set questions that reflect pre-determined ideas. The use of an interview schedule in research that is concerned with fluidity of meaning is difficult to reconcile from within a holistic Māori ethical framework. The researcher’s voice and interpretation are already taking charge in the shaping of the questions. The ethical issues that arise when considering holistic research and the representation of other voices is based on a Māori metaphysical worldview that is aware of not only visible phenomena but also the complexities of Being: that things

(and their meanings) emerge and conceal at will, reflecting their simultaneous interconnection and autonomy.

It must be acknowledged that interview questions provide a structure and security and are often used as a way of organising information, including interview responses (Vaughn and Turner, 2016). Interview schedules are often directly linked to thematic analysis, providing a type of pre-set scaffold from which to structure and code responses. Thematic analysis is described as a method that uses strategic analytical tools to provide a complex account of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is a method that identifies common threads within data along with apparent patterns that can be presented in an organised structure. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods (2008) defines thematic analysis as, “a data reduction and analysis strategy by which qualitative data are segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures the important concepts within the data set” (para. 1). Thematic analysis is also defined as, “a systematic approach to the analysis of qualitative data that involves identifying themes or patterns of cultural meaning; coding and classifying data, usually textual, according to themes; and interpreting the resulting thematic structures by seeking commonalities” (The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods, 2010, para 1).

The organised representation of information as data through coding and classification is related to an objective approach to analysis. However, there is contention related to how thematic analysis is conceptualised either as a visible method that provides instructive guidance, or as a more organic practice where interpretations come from relationships. The latter is sometimes described as thematic analysis that requires skills learned, not from a 'recipe' for how to conduct the method, but from a relationship built through complex engagement with those involved in the research or the ones who are sharing their stories (Potter, 1997). My intended approach is located within the more complex view of engagement and relationship, not solely based on an appeal to give voice to those who are participating in the interviews, but also because of the intention to take seriously the way in which other influences are at play. Again, whaiwhakaaro, and the

translation of whakaaro as the casting of attention, are highlighted as a holistic experience that is shared by all things involved in the research.

The use of an interview schedule in this research means that a type of thematic structure already exists, forming patterns of inquiry and shaping the flow of responses from those participating in the interviews. While some of the interviews developed into comfortable, informal, free-flowing conversations in which none of the formal written questions were used, others were more structured, relying on the interview schedule to encourage the continued flow of conversation. For this reason, claiming to have disposed of method completely would be naïve, regardless of the desire to become immersed in a holistic research experience with Māori metaphysics as the guiding principle. However, it would also be naïve from a qualitative research perspective to assume that the use of an interview schedule automatically leads to the treatment of interview responses as data.

Within this research, whaiwhakaaro is at once within the bounds of research activity and beyond its borders, engaged through the researcher's efforts to focus on and 'cast attention to' an idea, while also taking seriously that things in the world cast their own attention and influence. The holistic research experience also allows the researcher to be liberated by the nature of 'play' in the world and those things that are more than (and cannot be fully grasped by), the researcher's interpretations and expressions.

In trying to make sense of whaiwhakaaro from within a research frame, it has been useful to reflect on existing approaches to research and interpretation as a way of 'pushing off from' those methods and their character to reflect on whaiwhakaaro and its difference. One of the benefits of using this approach to understand whaiwhakaaro, as it is situated in (not as) a research activity, is the ability to reflect on analytic approaches. These approaches contain elements that both carry some likeness to whaiwhakaaro, as well as stark differences. They push and provoke thinking about how whaiwhakaaro participates in the research as opposed to arriving at a definition of method. These approaches allow me to explain the

experience of whaiwhakaaro and set the scene for understanding how I aim to engage with and present what is commonly referred to as research findings.

While I have not used thematic analysis to make sense of the interviews, some of the terms and ideas that have been applied to the experience of thematic analysis are useful in considering its likeness and contrast with whaiwhakaaro. One of the terms associated with thematic analysis that has resonated is ‘emergence’ or the idea that things emerge from the data (Vaughn and Turner, 2016). The idea of emergence and revealing is interesting in the context of whaiwhakaaro because it implies a sense of agency that does not belong solely to the researcher who is reading the text or hearing the words spoken by participants. Others argue that these are dangerous ideas - that thematic analysis must be understood as a product of the researcher’s cognitive activity. As Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul, (1997) state, ideas about themes emerging,

can be misinterpreted to mean that themes ‘reside’ in the data, and if we just look hard enough, they will ‘emerge’ like Venus on the half shell. If themes ‘reside’ anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them (pp. 205-206).

Similarly, Taylor and Ussher (2001) warn that,

An account of themes ‘emerging’ or being ‘discovered’ is a passive account of the process of analysis, and it denies the active role the researcher always plays in identifying patterns/themes, selecting which are of interest, and reporting them to the readers (p.4).

These accounts of a (preferred) agency (one that belongs to the researcher as the constructor of meaning), both support earlier critiques of qualitative research that are put forward in this chapter and illustrate the divide between conventional thematic analysis and whaiwhakaaro. Some might advocate for a purposeful

interpretive privilege that is afforded solely to the researcher while others describe at least an attempt to see 'data' as an active influencer. However, if both descriptions of thematic analysis aim to achieve the representation of things through discoverable patterns of meaning, then both are bound to a metaphysics of visible, thinkable phenomena that become highly visible through repetition that is equated with significance.

Ho, Chiang and Leung (2017) advocate a different approach to interpretation that hinges on the researcher's awareness about the role of the self in constructing pre-determined meaning that is (within conventional beliefs about methods value), commonly conceptualised as the objective reporting of results. Referring to Heidegger, they state that awareness (and, in particular, self-awareness of projecting pre-determination), enables us to engage with what he called 'ontological possibilities' as other ways of interpreting the world. Awareness in this sense is explained as the act of understanding the interpretive limitations that exist because of the automatic projections that researchers make when engaging with 'data' (including data that is developed from interviews). The ontological possibilities are the alternative interpretations that are potential meanings sitting outside a researcher's automatic view and, in a metaphysical sense, are the multiple existences that make possible multiple interpretations whether we attend to those things in our writing or not.

One example of this view of analysis and interpretation has been discussed in relation to theological study or the analysis of biblical texts as Exegetical analysis, or exegesis, in which meaning and mystery were understood to co-exist in biblical writing. Thomas Aquinas refers to Gregory Nyssa's description of biblical study that yields complex paradoxical insights in which "in one and the same sentence, while it describes a fact, it reveals a mystery" (Summa Theologica 1q.1a.10). Further, Leithart (2009) describes the personal and spontaneous energy of exegesis, stressing that many who study biblical text have based their interpretation on the exegetical interpretation of other scholars.

This type of relational analysis recognises the significance of the intimate analytic relationship that shows through in people's work and how analytic intimacy *makes*

meaning that, through an ongoing series of personal engagements, can be made anew with each subsequent reading. The meaning and mystery that marks exegesis as a spontaneous potentiality of thought, along with the sense of presence and absence, echoes the metaphysical nature of whaiwhakaaro that is at once a showing and concealing of meaning, of enduring mystery, or the “overplus” (Otto, 1958, p.5) of meaning that exists beyond perception and the intelligible or thinkable. It also privileges an understanding of ‘meaning making’ that is not restricted by the rules of finding universal meaning as we might see in conventional research. This more expansive view of interpretation has implications for how the researcher’s role is conceptualised and particularly as it relates to ideas of self-originating thought as a way of understanding how meaning is created through the interview process.

While the interview schedule might signal that the researcher has already taken charge in shaping the direction of research, the holistic research experience from within a Māori metaphysics also poses a challenge to the idea that the researcher is alone in their construction of any part of the research. The researcher’s awareness of interconnectedness and its role in the co-creation of research, I would argue, has a material effect on what is constructed, reported, written and expressed such that an individual’s interpretive efforts are diminished in favour of what Ho, Chiang and Leung call the crucial act of “‘dwelling’ (as neither subject nor object) in the language of participants.” (p. 1758), including non-human participants as co-creative influencers. I also wonder at the existence of this influence and experience in conventional research within the context of criticisms about the researcher’s voice as a dominant steer in the narratives that are produced. Are we always expressing our connections with things in the world despite being shaped to understand these expressions as objective findings or, in the case of more subjective approaches to research, as highly personal yet still intellectual and ordered reports? Does the conventional qualitative research experience veil an expression of personality (as interconnectedness) that always sits within our work but one that is superimposed by an over-reach towards producing certainty in meaning?

## **Participants, kōrero and whaiwhakaaro**

Often in research, there is an expectation that the researcher will describe, in detail, the process of recruiting participants that in turn is often linked to an existing method of recruitment that helps others makes sense of ideas of selection, inclusion (and exclusion) and representation. Within this thesis, the selection of participants has followed what might be described as a more organic process. In part, I can say that I have felt drawn to the participants because of the work that they have undertaken in different fields, but I also feel that my attention has been turned towards them through more than simply being aware of things that they have written or through having knowledge of their scholarship. For example, some of the participants are people who are seen as experts in Māori spirituality. They have seemed to be perfect as ‘expert’ informants in this research. But they are also people who have been pushed into my path by life, through different work that I have undertaken, or through other social ties. They are, however, not people I knew before I started to seriously consider this research. It’s as if they have shown up almost in response to the kaupapa. Of course, this is not something that can be proven. But it is something that has entered my thoughts as I have reflected on this research.

In line with what was earlier described as things arriving or ‘showing up’, each of the participants has ‘shown up’ in some way that might be explained within a certain metaphysical worldview, as something more in line with terms such as synchronicity or synergy. It could be said that there is a lack of rigour in seeing participant selection as the ‘showing up’ of a person (or an idea that synergistically aligns with a participants writing or public speaking event and signals a push to invite the person to engage in an interview). However, when viewed within the context of holistic Being as a research experience and whaiwhakaaro as an expression of the Being, there is a rigour and faithfulness at play, including an understanding that a thought will be followed by a possibility – a question will be answered by a person (participant) entering the scene.

In total, 11 participants were interviewed for this research. Each of the participants is recognised as having made significant contributions to different fields of study

and disciplines that both relate directly to mental health and to ideas that hold much potential in influencing how the mental health system and the notion of mental illness are understood. Some have worked in the mental health system for many years and have contributed to growing Māori knowledges within this system as practitioners, educators and researchers. Others have grown knowledge in a philosophical sense, deconstructing and re-presenting ideas, language and conceptualisations of Being. Again, I wonder about the participants entering the scene and the possibility that, rather than being selected solely through my own ‘thinking’ about who might provide meaningful and useful responses, they have been put in my path (so to speak). This aspect of ‘participant selection’, seen through this more expansive metaphysical lens, represents a re-turn to considering relationships with not only people (how we connect to other human subjects), but with other things in the world that may always be influencing our connections. And it is this influence, creating connections in this research, that is, I suggest, also at play in the way that the participant’s words push my thinking as a researcher: this impetus is one aspect of the active influence that is whaiwhakaaro.

### **Concluding thoughts: Reaction to another’s utterance**

The nature of whaiwhakaaro as thinking that is reflexive, responsive and emergent, brings forward a consideration of the researcher’s reaction to things that are said, particularly in the context of interviews. Within this thesis, kōrero is conceptualised as provocative utterance that sets up other ontological possibilities as alternatives to simply treating interview responses as data. As discussed earlier, in the conventional analysis of interviews there is an expectation that responses from participants will be ordered and grouped into themes that identify the apparent significant points of meaning related to an area of enquiry. Within this view, objective meaning, found through a thorough methodical analysis of interview responses (data), will present a type of truth that exists in the world even if the researcher has an intimate relationship to the research area. However, these truths, and the assumptions that are made about how research finds truths within data, have

been criticised for resting on a naivety about voice and the beliefs that researchers hold about giving voice to others.

Whaiwhakaaro, as an approach to responding to interviews, does not claim objectivity or deny the role of the researcher's voice in telling the story that emerges from the research. It also sits comfortably in uncertainty without giving way to the development of themes and patterns as a presentation of knowledge or the ability to determine qualities about a phenomenon. Subjectivity is embraced, not simply in the form of owning the influence of the researcher's voice, or as a Māori subjectivity where research focuses on Māori aspirations and needs (e.g. Te Awekotuku, 1991), but as a re-presentation of the researcher as the influenced subject whose thoughts are etched by and with an active and entitized world at play. At the heart of whaiwhakaaro is the acknowledgement and expression of relational Being and a metaphysics that places the researcher within the ground of thought. This relational understanding of the researcher has significant implications for how one attributes knowledge to things including attributing thinking (and the subsequent writing of ideas) to one's own independent analysis and reflections on data gathered in qualitative research.

In Mika and Southey's (2016) article that explored the idea of relational Being and thinking as method, participant kōrero was described as an "influence" or "provocateur for one's own creative speculation" (p. 3), as opposed to presenting the researcher with information that can be mined through analysis. Through this, the notion of voice is explicitly owned by the researcher who fully acknowledges their role in and with the world, offering their reactive thinking as a story that stems from the influence of the interviews (including words and phrases that push thinking) rather than offering a determination. That is not to say that ideas related to the area of research or interest will not emerge. As already mentioned, the nature of holistic Being as a research experience and whaiwhakaaro as an expression of the Being achieve a type of rigour that relates to thoughts arriving in response to faithful inquiry. This is the idea that thoughts will arise and be followed by a possibility and questions can, in a sense, be answered. The answers, however, are not ones that provide definitive description but rather thinking may be pushed in any direction through any number of influences. In the context of interviews, this

influence might be a word or an incidental sentence that is spoken at the same time as a thought comes to the researcher. This is the haziness mentioned earlier in relation to whaiwhakaaro and its apparent character. It is difficult to pin down and by its very nature (including the metaphysical understanding described by Mika, 2017, that things, of their own accord, will appear and swim out of view), defies conclusive description.

The idea of what comes from whaiwhakaaro, at this stage in attempting to describe it as *influence*, should be emerging. It relates to a highly personal response to interviews and to other things that ‘show up’ - both as the impetus to ‘wonder’ about particular phenomena and to receive ideas in response to wonder. When expressed in research and writing, these responses are the researcher’s personality, not in the sense of an individual’s character but as ‘power and place’, discussed in the preface as Deloria’s (2001) idea of personality: a metaphysical concept that encompasses our relationships with all persons (both human and non-human), in the world as substantive embodiment and unique realization. It is not simply that I have been pushed by an utterance to think in a certain direction or wonder at a term that is used but it is also that the participant, when understood from within a Māori metaphysics, has been pushed to make utterances. Their words are an expression of relational Being, of co-creation, of embodiment, unique realization and personality.

Responding to interviews in ways that detract from using the story or lesson that is apparent in a participant’s visible or discernible message raises questions about ethics and again foregrounds concerns about whose voice is being heard in the writing up of what, in conventional research, are conceptualised as findings. Ethics, in the context of whaiwhakaaro and interconnected thinking is, however, a complex issue that cannot be expected to follow dominant considerations of ethical researcher behaviour as might be prescribed within the academy’s stance on what is ‘right’ or normal in research practice. As discussed earlier, indigenous researchers’ awareness of ethical complexities is tempered with the need to remain vigilant about dominant research approaches that frame the central research

relationship as one where the researcher engages in a detached (or only seemingly connected) process of discovery.

The culturally appropriate gathering and interpretation of data does not necessarily rest solely within a consideration of what stories are told but also concerns *how* these stories are told which, in this thesis, resists ideas of data, discovery and certainty in favour of partial subjectivities. These partial subjectivities acknowledge that there are always other stories at play that Gordon (2008) refers to as things that ‘haunt’ (p. 5), or Derrida (1978, 1998) would call the ‘trace’ or ‘play’; these are the real spectres that sit behind what is verbalised and able to be written. The outcome that will emerge through the writing, I suspect, will be a story that provokes others to think in their own holistic, relational subjective capacities. I also have a growing feeling that the story is already coalescing (and at the same time fully coalesced), forming from things encountered today, encountered before and yet to arrive (though always already here).

The story feels like it rests within an ‘in between’ – both pending and already written. This is not meant as simply a more poetic description of a conventional research process in which the researcher is gathering their thoughts and is moving closer to reaching the goal of finding the essential components of a phenomenon that can then be described. It is, much more, an expression of a feeling that there is a holistic response to the questions I have been influenced to pose and that this holistic response, rather than being self-contained, arrives through what was described in chapter two as the world’s self-disclosure and giving of the self. There is, in this sense, no certainty in the story that I feel will be told through this research but there is, instead, a sense of relationship and response - a worlded Being reflected in an experience of holistic research.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: MĀORI AND INDIGENOUS NOTIONS OF BEING**

We cannot go further into this thesis without considering Māori and indigenous notions of Being. The idea of being-in-the-world, as a relational, holistic experience marked by an interconnection between all things, has been discussed in previous chapters as a personal experience of engagement giving way to a holistic research journey. While the previous chapters that have discussed a holistic experience of research have explored the nature of whaiwhakaaro as collective interconnection (as opposed to the translation of whaiwhakaaro and whakaaro as individual ‘thinking’), it is the metaphysical basis of whaiwhakaaro for expressions of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being that I will consider in this chapter. It is important to explore Māori and indigenous metaphysical premises as these will support the overall aim of re-presenting Māori and indigenous understandings of Being. Importantly, these premises also mark points of departure from a dominant Western metaphysics, supporting an exploration of how different metaphysical traditions consider and construct the self and world. These initial considerations will later be utilised to deconstruct the notion of mental illness that, I posit, is a product of a dominant Western metaphysical view of Being.

In this chapter I will explore this foundational metaphysics through a discussion of cultural concepts and, in doing so, speculate on the metaphysical narrative that Māori and indigenous cultural concepts present. The chapter builds on what I have already discussed and sets the scene for what in later chapters will be a more direct consideration of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being, aiming to disrupt conventional views of people’s experiences within mental health and in the context of the notion of mental illness.

Exploring Māori and indigenous understandings of Being relates to a question that was raised in the introduction of the thesis concerning what Deloria (2001) refers to as a most fundamental inquiry or “the set of first principles we must possess in order to make sense of the world in which we live” (p.2). These principles, when taken as an expression of indigenous metaphysics, are an important foundational

guide in considering how Being is conceptualised and, within this thesis, how that conceptualisation effects our understanding of the notion of mental illness.

As I will discuss at length in chapter six, many have argued that the notion of mental illness, in its diagnostic application, names behaviours and experiences as measurable, observable, individualised behavioural categories and through this application, frames the clinical and social response to those behaviours and experiences as the treatment of observable symptoms. In contrast, I suggest, Māori and indigenous metaphysics raises questions about the way that behaviours and experiences are framed and how this framing sets up clinical and social responses to a person who is labelled as experiencing mental illness.

Indeed, Māori and indigenous metaphysics, when considered as part of what guides a deconstructionist analysis of mental illness, brings into question the very basis of the term mental illness and the idea that a person's behaviour and experience is centred somewhere in their mental faculties. This application of Māori and indigenous metaphysics as a deconstructive 'other' that interrupts the framing of behaviour and experience also pushes us to raise questions about how we respond (clinically and socially), to people's experiences and behaviours. There is, within this context, a type of 're-framing' that occurs, urging us to shift our understanding based on a view of Being that foregrounds a relational interconnected self whose Being cannot be restricted by an overwhelming focus on individual, internalised 'mental' existence.

I illustrated this view of the relational affected self earlier in the thesis by citing a question raised by a kaumatua who, when reflecting on the ability for mainstream Mental Health services to respond effectively to Māori tāngata whaiora, asked how a mainstream service would respond to his mauri being "jarred and shaken" and how the Western approach would "help to reinstate my mana and mauri" (Milne 2005, p. 13). The question posed by the kaumatua has important implications when considering the lived experience of holism that emerges from within a Māori and indigenous metaphysical standpoint. For example, the idea of worldedness (Mika, 2017), discussed in the introduction of the thesis, describes the co-existing influence of things on the self with the self's (necessary therefore) influence on things in the

world (Mika, 2015), implicating a more than human agency that is at play in the world. These ideas will be explored further later in this chapter; however, at this early stage, we can consider the general concept of the shared or co-existing influence of all things in the world to reflect on how a mental health service responds to the need to consider the mauri of the person and the state of a person's mauri (as described by the kaumatua).

Inevitably, important questions arise about how a mental health service understands mauri (and other Māori terms) from within either a Māori (and indigenous) or dominant Western metaphysical viewpoint. The relational view of lived realities that are expressed through Māori terms such as whakapapa and whakawhanaungatanga (discussed earlier as both a lived expression of relational Being and as the experience of knowing the world that is characterised by embodiment), denotes a holistic rather than purely intellectual connection with the world. The jarred and shaken mauri in this sense, and in the wider sense of a Māori and indigenous worldview, immediately implicates the influence of other things, external to the self. This co-existing influence interrupts the conventional (metaphysical) view that conceptualises the self (and perhaps all things in the world), as an individual. It also interrupts the view of Being that is reliant on the conceptualisation of behaviours and experiences as highly evident, thereby discarding the sense of mystery (the unseen influences), that exists in considering how a person's mauri can be influenced.

It is in this context that I question the fundamental metaphysical foundations of dominant Western conceptualisations of non-relational Being and seek to highlight how dominant Western metaphysics might suppress Māori and indigenous views of holistic Being. After all, there is a certain type of holism, emerging from Māori and indigenous metaphysics, that may be necessary to effectively consider how to support tāngata whaiora Māori whose expressions signal things (in this example - mauri) that extend beyond the limits of conventional concepts in mental health.

While the nature of dominant Western metaphysics and the idea of having a primarily intellectual connection with the world will be discussed at length in the next chapter, it is important to begin here by noting, for the purpose of marking an

initial contrast, some key characteristics of a non-holistic metaphysics and how this metaphysics impacts on how the self is viewed as either separate from or connected to the world. Gillett (2009) offers a helpful description of the features of the philosophical framework that supports a dominant Western metaphysical conception of Being, favouring the separation of the self from things in the world. Gillett also offers insight into how this conception of Being relates to subsequent conceptions of knowledge or an ‘onto-epistemic’ view on the nature of being-in-the-world. As Gillett explains, Being, from a dominant Western perspective, is centred in the human mind that is distinct from the external world which allows for a state of separation. This state of separation then allows for a state of objectivity, enabling a view of the world that aligns with measurable, universal laws of discovery. Describing this separation in terms of the Cartesian position, Gillett explains that,

The underlying philosophical framework for metaphysics (and truth) according to the modernist worldview is Descartes’ *Res extensa* – the world as sharply distinct from the human mind and therefore objective. This objective world is viewed as a set of interwoven mechanical processes impersonally specifiable and obeying universal mathematical laws. For that reason, it is quite other than the *res cogitans* in which the human mind has its Being, something apart from the world as it is and from which the subject achieves ‘an objective view’ of what goes on there so as to discern the regularities and devise laws describing its operations. The laws are constrained in such a way that they must be articulated in terms of the favoured ‘objective’ descriptions of states of affair that preserve the separation of mind or spirit and material objects (p.5).

Within this view, there is an assumption that the world as an entity can be seen as inert and static, available and ready for conceptual representation (Kincheloe and

Tobin, 2009). What is important to note from this view is not just how we conceptually construct the world as an inert and static entity (and the contrasting possibilities of re-presenting the world as alive and sentient) but also how this view must metaphysically structure the self (Calderon, 2008), as a separate self-contained Being unaffected by the world in which we live. In line with Gillett's (2009) explanation of this dominant Western metaphysical structuring, we might conclude that the modernist underlying philosophical framework for metaphysics that Gillett describes, constructs and assembles the world and the self as entities that must follow certain rules of constraint.

Heidegger (1977) would also appeal to the notion of constraint (of the self and world), when raising the problem of enframing in which things in the world are subjected to a type of ordering. For Heidegger, there is a metaphysical structuring of things in the world that stands in for and replaces the complex nature of Being, rendering existence in reductive terms of material impersonal matter and instrumentality. Kisiel (2014) interprets Heidegger's enframing as a type of "synthetic compositioning" (p. 138), that creates artificial notions of being aligned to reductive conceptualisations, discarding excess meanings of existence and looking only to catalogue Being based on constructed identities that are characterised by their function.

In Heidegger's (1977) view, a thing, taken only as its function, is subject to being ordered as an item that is available for manipulation and control, "The forest is there for us *as* lumber, the river is there for us *as* electric power" (Bailey, 2014, para, 20). But it is also subject to a limitation of meaning (and Being) where a thing's functional relation replaces its "vitally lived relations" (Kisiel, 2014, p. 145), obscuring a thing's complex nature within the whole that is the entire living world. Both Heidegger's analysis of metaphysical structuring and Kisiel's interpretation of Heidegger's concern point to a deeper conditioning of self and world in which things are subject to an act of separation: the separating out of things in the world

through their conceptual representation, displacing them and casting each thing out from each other – from the whole.

The self, as a subscriber to a metaphysics that posits that the world is sharply distinct and separated (conceptualised within the Cartesian position as the human self or in Gillett's, 2009, description, the self *as* the human mind), can no longer be *with* the world (Mika and Tiakiwai, 2016), as might be reflected in an indigenous worldview. A type of relational restraint occurs where even the idea of holism can be affected, transforming the understanding of a holistic relational existence to one where individuals are merely connected to other individual things (Mika, 2016).

Mika (2017a) observes, when describing indigenous metaphysics, that the holistic presentation of a thing leaves room for the existence of the complex nature of any one thing in the world, preserving its personality as a “silent representative of all other things” (p. 25), as it retains points of mystery and resists, through its nature, full insight and the possibility of being revealed in its entirety. Within this view, no bright line can be drawn around this or any ‘thing’ that demarcates it from the rest of existence so even the term or concept of a thing takes on an altogether different meaning than what is represented from within a dominant Western viewpoint. As Mika explains, a metaphysics that insists on the representation of things in the world as objects of certainty must discount the play of other entities so that clarity can be achieved. Māori and indigenous metaphysics, therefore, would posit that holism (taken as meaning more than simply an interconnection between individual phenomena or the self's relationship with things that are out there in the world), is the thorough collapse of all things reflected in the term ‘worldedness’ that denotes a thorough holism.

Holism, as the idea that all things are connected, when understood within Mika's (2017) explanation of interconnection, is the view that a thing is constituted by all other things in the world (p. 34). This view, from within an indigenous metaphysics, brings an extreme understanding of relationship and holism into play such that no *thing* in the world can stand apart. This understanding of the world also makes certainty a highly problematic standpoint for the indigenous self as the world resists that more simple representation, asserting instead a complex interplay of entities

and a claim on the self as one entity among many (Mika, 2015), or, from within a Māori worldview, as whanaunga.

The complexity that is at play here can perhaps be understood as a full collapse of certainty in favour of a more dynamic worldview. This sense of collapse disrupts certainties and comfortable assuredness, exposing the synthetic nature of certainty as a constructed concept that is always haunted by what was earlier described as the “factual’s always encroaching other” (Gordon, 2008, p. 40). Māori and indigenous Being, presented here through a consideration of Māori and indigenous metaphysics, invites an exploration of complex philosophies and narratives about the nature of reality. Further, the importance of metaphysics as a guide for understanding the self has implications for the self’s well-being. Indeed, as Marsden (1988) explains, the implications of metaphysics are far reaching, influencing our lives in terms of our ethics and the foundations of our beliefs:

Metaphysics deals with the nature of reality, and is the sum total of one’s beliefs, basic convictions, and assumptions through which we direct our lives. The very nature of this being and existence is connected to these concepts. Descending from these broader principles are the ethical systems defining the nature of right and wrong, and also the epistemology of the theory of knowledge and the grounds of valid belief. In the Māori world these branches of philosophy are illustrated in the traditional creation stories and the general principles of tikanga Māori (Māori custom) (p. 13).

While Māori and indigenous metaphysics and its implications for how we understand the notion of mental illness will be discussed at length in chapter six, in this chapter, an exploration of Māori and indigenous metaphysics lays down a foundation for understanding Being, and the re-presentation of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being as a profoundly relational experience. As I develop these ideas within this chapter, however, I remain cognisant of the question

raised earlier about how mental health services would regard (and respond to) a person's experience that is expressed as a metaphysically holistic condition (i.e. the jarred and shaken mauri).

## **Whakapapa and 'Radical Ecology'**

It is not incidental that many indigenous writers have described Māori and indigenous philosophy and principles of Being within the disciplinary subject of ecology (e.g. Henare, 2001; Williams, 2012). Indigenous ecological knowledge has been discussed as "cultural landscapes [that] are produced by and reflect the long-term interactions between humans and nature" (Jiao, Li, Liang, Takeuchi, Okuro, Zhang, and Sun, 2012, p. 247). Berkes (1993), similarly speaks of 'Traditional Ecological Knowledge', defining it as "a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment" (p.3).

Often, these definitions of indigenous and traditional ecological knowledges share some similarities with how ecology is characterised in a wider disciplinary context and the study of environments. Loening (2012), for example, suggests that ecology, and particularly what he calls 'human ecology', is driven by an urgent inquiry that questions every aspect of how and where we live. For Loening, this most urgent inquiry must also include the question of "why we do things the way we do?" (p. 36). Though not necessarily intended as such by Loening, I interpret his query as a metaphysical question, much the same as Deloria (2001) had dealt with first principles or what he describes as, "the world, and all its possible experiences, [constituting] a social reality, a fabric of life in which everything had the possibility of intimate knowing relationships because, ultimately, everything was related" (p.2).

The human ecology that Loening (2012) describes emerged as a sub thread of ecological studies and generally refers to, "the study of the dynamic interrelationships between human populations and the physical, biotic, cultural and social characteristics of their environment and the biosphere" (Lawrence, 2003,

p.31). In addition, Conventional Human Ecology (as a study of relationships) has focussed on the relationship between ‘man’ and the environment (Quinn, 1940). It has also been defined as a subject that,

explores not only the influence of humans on their environment but also the influence of the environment on human behaviour, and their adaptive strategies as they come to understand those influences better. For us, Human Ecology is a methodology as much as an area of research. It is a way of thinking about the world, and a context in which we define our questions and ways to answer those questions (Environmental Change Institute, Oxford University, cited in Loening, 2012, p.35).

More recently, theorists have argued for the development of human ecology to move towards a radical shift to include non-material understandings of existence that McIntosh (2012) describes as metaphysical or spiritual. As McIntosh explains, this view of (radical) human ecology is part of a ‘premodern’ approach that,

poses an ancient but fundamental challenge to the very structure of knowledge... (requiring)... clarity about what our premises or starting points in seeking knowledge are. Specifically, it presses us to address the question of whether the basis or our values are derived from a purely physical or materialistic grounding, or whether there is also an underpinning to our being human that might be called metaphysical or “spiritual” (p. 51).

The premises of radical human ecology discussed by McIntosh are helpful in that these ideas push the boundaries of the ecological discipline to include the ‘spiritual’ and non-material. Building on this, I suggest the premises or starting points of Māori and indigenous philosophy that form the basis of this chapter can offer

insight into what might be seen as more radical views (or what Nelson, 2008, calls the “eco-spiritual”, p. 10), concerning not only the relationship between humans and the environment in which we live, but the relationship between all things.

Others might argue that any claims about Māori and indigenous philosophy’s radical departure from conventional ecological studies are simply a reflection of measuring non-dominant views against a normative standard. However, as Mikaere (2015) states, “there is nothing normal about Western theoretical frameworks assuming centrality in the space that is Aotearoa” (p.78). Whichever view is taken, critiques of conventional approaches to ecology and human ecology illustrate that the philosophical premises of Māori and indigenous understandings of relationship with the world, and relational ways of Being, go beyond the limits of disciplinary and metaphysical convention. As Williams (2012) explains when referencing conventional ecological perspectives,

These ways of thinking about Human Ecology remain implicitly bound up in the dualism of man and “other,” in this case the environment, rather than seeing people as a deeply interconnected and an integral part of biodiversity. Likewise, popular discourses on human agency - as the ability to exercise various forms of power in shaping our everyday realities - have also traditionally been rooted in modernist conceptualizations of reality. These conceptualize the “individual” as the unified, rational, sovereign, actor who shapes an environment as if he were separate from it (p.115).

The premises of Māori and indigenous metaphysics present a departure from what Williams describes here as the realm of the rational, sovereign actors or those with human agency, which constructs a divided dualistic view of Being. As a foundational premise of Māori understandings of Being, the idea that the world is holistic has found expression in many discourses that seek to describe how, as *tangata whenua*, we are interconnected with the natural environment, resisting the

modernist conceptualisations of reality that Williams describes above. The premise of holism is one example of a well-known (metaphysical) cultural concept that has found some purchase in, for example, public sector policies, but when we talk of holism, what do we really mean?

The premise of cultural holism has been conceptually incorporated into policy and practice within the New Zealand health system. For example, within mental health, holism is typically integrated into policy as a steer towards ensuring that whānau are involved in treatment and care planning (e.g., see chapter eight of *He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction*, 2018), or that a person's needs are considered across a number of social indices (such as cultural and socio-economic circumstances).<sup>11</sup> However, writers like Lawson -Te Aho (2013) and Green (2018) have criticised this approach for being too superficial.

What then lies beneath what have been criticised as superficial representations of holism? Schor (1989) points out that in efforts to be inclusive, institutions will engage in a behaviour she refers to as 'saming' in which the 'other' (and in the context of this thesis, the other's metaphysical premises), are subject to inclusive practices that result in the "universal applicability of categories" (Blaser, 2014, p. 52). In an effort to break from these practices of saming and universality, Mikaere (2015) calls for the "radical altering of our perceptions and...priorities" (p. 78), through a re-centring of mātauranga Māori.

In terms of health policy, and, in particular, mental health policy and practice, what does it mean to apply the concept of holism (from a mātauranga Māori perspective) and how might the cultural value of holistic well-being be presented from within a Māori and indigenous metaphysical frame? While these questions will be directly addressed in chapter six, here I aim to lay the foundation for that discussion by

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<sup>11</sup>This view of holism within health policy was discussed in the introduction, namely, the representation of health and well-being as measurable variables (e.g., *Precision Driven Health*, Vogt, Hofmann and Getz, 2016).

exploring the concept of holism by highlighting Māori and indigenous worldviews from within their metaphysical grounding.

## **Metaphysics and holistic Being**

As an attempt to engage in a radical departure from more superficial representations of holism, I turn to ideas that reflect the spiritual and metaphysical underpinnings of our being human that McIntosh (2012) refers to as a deeper inquiry into our existential reality. As an initial step into this inquiry, and borrowing again from McIntosh's directive, I explore the premise of the spiritual as a foundational element of the world and what this may mean from within Māori and indigenous worldviews.

Historically, indigenous views on spirituality have been seen through a colonial lens that has framed indigenous spiritual values (as a fundamental principle of Being in and with the world), as primitive expressions of anthropomorphism (the projection of human qualities onto non-human forms), or animism (viewing things in the world as 'objects' that are inhabited by spirits) (Williams, 2012). More modern Western representations of indigenous spirituality are discussed by Smith (1999) who points out that indigenous spirituality has become a profitable commodity among New Age groups who have their own interpretations of indigenous spiritual beliefs. Curiously, some of these beliefs, including from individuals who claim to be "inhabited by indigenous spirit guides" (p.105), mirror the colonial interpretation of indigenous spiritual values and the projection of a separate spiritual energy into objects and non-human forms.

The tendency to view spirit or the idea of spirituality as a separate entity that is then projected into things (as demonstrated by some non-indigenous interpretations) has been described by Khisty (2006) as a perception of separate spiritual systems. Further, Khisty contends that this conceptualisation of a separated spirituality exists only in the minds of human beings. In contrast, and in reference to North American peoples, Khisty explains that indigenous views of spirit equate to seeing spiritual systems and natural systems as the same beings. Māori and indigenous understandings of spirit present what might be called an inclusive (rather than

separate) view of the life world where spirit is an indivisible organising element (e.g. Marsden, 2003; Pere, 1982; Deloria, 2006). For example, in Lakota teachings, spirit has been referred to as a binding element and is presented as a key premise and organising principle that Walker (1976) refers to as the creator or Dakuskanskan, which may be translated as “that which moves all things that move” (p.24). Similarly, Metzner (1997) refers to this sense of generative spirit as “a unitive field or fabric of energy and consciousness” (p. 4).

From within a Māori worldview, the term *mauri* also imbues a sense of indivisible animation. Marsden (2003) uses the terms life principle and essence when discussing *mauri*, explaining that,

Immanent within all creation is *mauri* – the life-force which generates, regenerates and upholds creation. It is the bonding element that knits all the diverse elements within the Universal ‘Procession’ giving creation its unity in diversity. It is the bonding element that holds the fabric of the universe together (p.44).

Jahnke (2006), in reflecting on the work of Elsdon Best, remarks that there is “a productive interaction between materiality and spirituality” (p. 73), indicating an active relationship between form and spirit. Jahnke also refers to *mauri* as ‘life principle’ (p.73), stating that it is not something that can be grasped by the senses but that some believe it can be felt. Mika (2007), however, suggests that there are possible sensorial encounters with *mauri* that may include touch, smell and sight along with *tohu* (signs) and *matakite* (second sight). Mika also moderates his view by hinting at the mysterious nature of *mauri*, commenting that any attempts at holding *mauri* in constant perception are futile, implicating its dynamic nature, reflecting Marsden’s (2003) description of the “energy within creation” (p.49).

Barlow (1991) states that “*Mauri* is a special power possessed by *Io* which makes it possible for everything to move and live” (p.83). Like Barlow, Mika (2007) notes the place of *mauri* in creation, stating that, “whenever the various names of *Io* were mentioned, the context in which they were placed likewise possessed *mauri*”

(p.184). The contexts that Mika refers to are illustrated by Marsden (2003) in his depiction of ‘The Genealogy of the Cosmos’ (p.180) (see figure 1). Here, mauri is depicted as the “breath of the spirit and of life” (p. 95), but, if we are guided by Mika’s description of mauri within the process of creation, we might read Marsden’s cosmological genealogy in a holistic rather than linear sense. Mauri, therefore, would be manifest in the genealogy with Io, noted by Marsden as being the “first cause” (p.95).

Marsden (2003) also states that, “This essence (mauri) I am convinced, was originally regarded as elemental energy derived from the realm of *Te Korekore*, out of which the stuff of the universe was created” (p.6). *Te Korekore* also guides us to an understanding of the world as a dynamic space of movement. It is, according to Marsden, a realm of potentiality that, rather than fully denoting a space of emptiness and nothingness, imbues a sense of “latent being” (p. 20), symbolising the fullness of the notion of ‘becoming’ or what Marsden describes as,

the realm between non-being and being: that is, the realm of potential being. This is the realm of primal, elemental energy...It is here that the seed-stuff of the universe and all created things gestate. It is the womb from which all things proceed (p.20).

In terms of holistic Being, Māori and indigenous understandings of creative spiritual expression have implications for how we understand the concept of holism. As Quince (2007) explains, “Because the Māori of *te ao kōhatu* believed that the ultimate source of all being is spiritual, the idea of kinship can, and ultimately does, extend to all things” (p.3). Further, Fixico (2013) states that indigenous spirituality and holism involves all Beings, including all of human and non-human life (i.e., human, animal and plant life), along with things that do not take physical form such as “the metaphysical world of visions and dreams” (p.2). In this sense, when the relational nature of the world is highlighted in Māori philosophy, it extends beyond

the often-mundane translations of Māori terms that are used to provide a steer towards understanding the concept of holism from a Māori cultural viewpoint.

One of these terms, whakapapa, has been discussed in chapter two in order to present a view on Māori metaphysics and the act of co-creation (C, Smith, 2000) in writing and other endeavours where a Māori researcher is drawing on more than their own self-contained efforts to express ideas. This is the view that what is presented in writing (and in all other creative acts), is an expression of whakapapa and the constructive influence of things outside of the individual (who is the apparent agent of creation).

Whakapapa, when thought of outside of a limited definition linked to the idea of genealogy, can be considered as a holistic, constructive experience of Being. Henare (2001) describes this as a Māori “cosmic religious worldview” (p.198), that encompasses an understanding of creation as a process of constant emerging and unfolding. As Henare explains, “In traditional belief creation is described as a dynamic movement, which is expressed in Māori as “i te kore, ki te pō, ki te ao mārama,” and rendered as “out of the nothingness, into the night, into the world of light.” (p.198). This sense of dynamic movement and creation is also reflected in Salmond’s (1997) description of the connected, creative and co-constructive nature of Being as a type of generative relationship. Whakapapa as a generative relationship may therefore be understood as an expression of Being that is intimately connected to Māori cosmology and what Marsden (2003) describes as a “process of continuous creation and recreation” through a ‘three-world’ view “of potential being symbolised by Te Korekore, the world of becoming portrayed by Te Pō, and the world of being, Te Ao Mārama” (p.20).

Marsden also describes a sacred whakapapa that is the symbolic presentation of Being as that which derives from a spiritual centre (see figure 1 below).

- Io, the Creator and First Cause, begat:
- Te Korekore, Te Kōwhao, Te Pō (Void Abyss, Nights), the Realm of Potential Being, which begat:
- The seeking, pursuit, burgeoning, increase, elemental energy; i.e. the realm of energy and process, which begat:
- Latent memory, deep mind, emerging consciousness, sound – the Realm of Mind, which begat:
- Word and wisdom. Into that total milieu was infused:
- The Breath of the Spirit and of life – the realm of Mauri.
- Then was begotten light/shape/form; begetting in turn:
- Time and Space. Into this framework of Space/Time continuum was born:
- Rangi and Papa – Sky Father and Earth Mother – the world of sense perception. (p. 89).

**Figure 1: Māori Marsden's (2003) "World of Symbol", the Genealogy of the Cosmos**

This sacred whakapapa also reflects the view of what lies beyond what some might understand (if framing the idea of creation using Christian ideologies, for example), as a one-time event of creation (i.e., science might refer to this as the Big Bang). As Manuka (2001) states, "At the heart of this view of the creation process is an understanding that humanity and all things of the natural world are always emerging, always unfolding" (p.198). Sacred whakapapa would, therefore, imbue a sense of ongoing creation or the perpetual state of becoming.

Whakapapa as a state of relational Being may also be understood in the context of Royal's (2004) description of "a feature of the human condition to exist in relationship with the environments in which we dwell" and that our "environments 'speak into' human cultural manifestation in conscious and unconscious ways" (p.1). In offering a description of the human relationship with environments, Royal departs from what might be seen as more conventional views that, as mentioned earlier, premise the self's relationship with the world as one where the self maintains an autonomous individuality but is connected to things external to the self (Mika, 2016). Royal uses the term "correspondence" (p.4), to describe a sense

of active engagement between the self and the world that, when viewed from within a Māori metaphysics, presents an indivisible whakapapa of Being such that self and the world experience an inseparability (Raerino, 1999). According to Royal, this relationship manifests itself in Māori expressions of identity.

Williams (2012) also recognises the sense of the inseparable in the recitation of whakapapa, describing whakapapa as connections to land, sea, the sky and “the outer universe” (p.125). The significance of place, therefore, rather than simply representing a particular geographical location, is a spiritual significance in which the world “exerts conscious and unconscious influences” (Royal, 2004, p. 1). While possibly not intended as such, Royal’s description of conscious and unconscious influence raises the idea of the world as a dynamic space of movement and one that is inhabited by things that emerge and conceal at will (Mika, 2017).

In drawing on this understanding of influence, Mika (2016) states that, “any one entity is immediately and actively constituted by all things” (p.167). For example, this influence has been described in the context of well-being and identity. As an indigenous First Nations Elder who, when talking about his own journey of healing in terms of his place in (and with) the world, notes,

You know I find my identity within the fire, within the sacred fires, the rock, the water, the air. I find my identity within the sun, the earth, the moon and the stars, all the plant beings and all the animal beings, and all the human beings. Because these are the elements that give me my identity because they are a part of me, and I am a part of them. And this is the way (Waldram, 2012, p. 113).

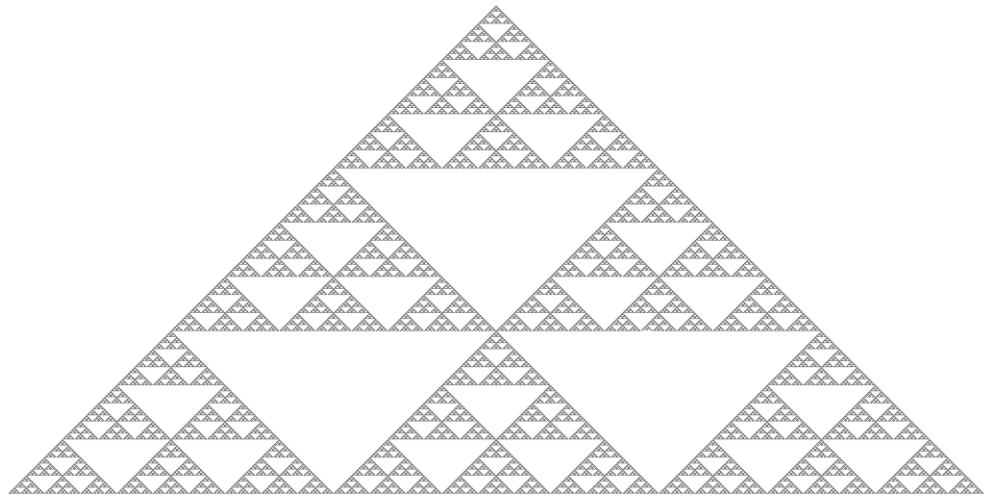
I turn again here to the term worldedness that was earlier discussed in relation to the notion of embodied, holistic and non-rational forms of thought that extend beyond conceptualisations of individual intellectual engagement. Worldedness, defined by Mika (2017a) as “the fullness of the world within any one thing” (p. 4), presents the underlying holism of Māori and indigenous concepts of Being.

Understanding things in the world as having a synchronistic existence extends our perception beyond a worldview where Being is largely understood within a human to human context. This worlded existence makes way for not only a relational worldview but also the necessity of understanding the co-constructive element of relationship (as described by the First Nations Elder who speaks of his identity as co-constitutive).

If we were to express this idea of worlded construction in scientific terms, we might use the concept of a fractal (Mandelbrot, 1983); a geometric shape with self-similarity in that the parts are in some way related to the whole or are a “never ending pattern that repeats itself at different scales” (Dekker, 2018, para). From a Māori perspective, Manuka (2001) alludes to this same sense of generative holism when discussing traditional Māori art that presents the “unfolding of the cosmos” (p.198), utilising images such as unfolding fern fronds (e.g., see figure 2) that also possess the self-similarity that the term fractal signifies. In a similar fashion, Pei Te Hurinui Jones (1959) links Māori carving that depicts a double spiral and chevron pattern with the process of creation.



**Figure 2: Fern frond, Akatarawa River, Aotearoa (Source: Karora Gallery, 2007)**



**Figure 3: Pascal's triangle modulo 3 (Source: Monnerot-Dumaine, 2006)**

What this signals is that, “the fullness of the world within any one thing” that Mika (2017, p. 4) refers to, is something that appears to be hinted at in what we can observe in nature and in (for example), computer generated fractals (see figure 3), that aim to mirror what natural fractals demonstrate by using the methods of mathematics and geometry. However, while fractals are visible in nature when examples of self-similarity are presented through images of a fern, or in computer generated fractals (such as that shown in figure 3), it is the principle of self-similarity, taken as a symbol of a complex process of holistic connected Being, or Mika’s reference to a complete constructive interconnection, that is of interest in the context of the metaphysical premises of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being.

Deloria (2006) suggests that there has been a radical shift in spiritual values that has led to a reliance on visible phenomena, trusting only what we can see (and feel). The principle of holistic self-similarity, however, when viewed through a Māori and indigenous philosophical lens, need not be restricted to visible examples but is perhaps a demonstration of the co-existing, co-constructive fabric of life that gives clues about the nature of our metaphysical reality. We may not be able to prove that the world in all its visible and non-visible forms follows a principle of relational holism - a dynamic ‘holding together of things’ or the world’s, “thoroughgoing collapse with the self” (Mika, 2017a, p. 34). However, as I will go on to discuss

later in this chapter, the notion of proof denies other Māori and indigenous spiritual principles that are integral to the idea of a relational co-constructed self. This includes the principle of mystery reflected in the world's agency in revealing and concealing its different layers of existence and Being.

## **Reciprocity**

Another term that connects to the idea of holistic Being and that has been taken up in popular representations of Māori and indigenous philosophy is reciprocity (e.g., Henry and Pene, 2001). Common representations of the term relate to whanaungatanga and the obligations of care that are inherent in whānau relationships (Ritchie, 2003). Kruger (2010) also sees reciprocity as a kinship philosophy that carries cultural obligations of care directly connected to relationships based on genealogical ties. It is possible, however, to engage with this term from a different viewpoint that implicates the spiritual holism discussed so far in this chapter. I turn to the idea of 'attunement' to illustrate a deeper perspective on reciprocity in an attempt to take account of a spiritual foundation in understanding the principle of generosity and acts of giving.

Attunement has been discussed by Williams (2012) in the context of the self's connection in and with the world, as a type of empathetic resonance that can be likened to a shamanic experience in which the principle of generosity was enacted as part of living in the world. While this view of Being from a dominant Western perspective has been associated with traditional (or perhaps primitive) practices, Williams states that,

This is not about going back. Rather, it represents the perceptual wisdom we must carry into the future. It was in the ancient communities of our ancestors that the shaman mediated between the human and non-human community, ensuring there was an appropriate flow of nourishment not just from the landscape to the human inhabitants, but from the human community back to the local earth (p. 117).

Williams description of attunement could be interpreted from the perspective of a metaphysics that relies on visible phenomenon, such as the physical landscape or usable resources that form a large part of a human focussed ecological study of human–environment relationships. But if we are to take seriously the spiritual foundation or essence that Māori and indigenous philosophers teach is the animating substance of the world, then the reciprocal engagement that Williams illustrates in the quote above becomes more than the exchange of things for nourishment in a physical sense. Cruden (1995) captures this sense of the ‘more than physical’ when recalling the teachings of Shaman Lewis Sawaquat, referring to an “attunement to the essence of what lies beneath forms” (p.6). When viewed as an expression of whakapapa - translated as more than human genealogy - reciprocity as attunement to what lies beneath visible phenomena or forms points to a relational experience that aligns with the “co-existence of the self and thing” (Mika, 2015b, p. 93), that is enacted in such a way that both the self and the world yield a simultaneous influence over the other. This view indicates a holistic attunement that also highlights the world as an active essence: the potent spiritual fabric of the world in which we live or what, from an ecological perspective, might be referred to as the environment (Cruden, 1995).

For Māori, attunement shows up in the more than physical expression and experience of relationship with cultural sites of significance (Kilgour, et al., 2014). For example, when speaking of wairua, (described by Valentine, 2009, as a fundamental attribute that enables Māori to engage with their reality or an ‘intuitive consciousness’), Hiroa (1958) indicates that it is strongly associated with the connections that Māori have to whenua. A sense of constructive co-existence between people and the land is also found in Barlow’s (1991) description of wairua where he remarks that people were “fashioned from the earth” (p.152). Marsden (2003) highlights the reciprocal nature of relationship with whenua, noting that it is also a term used for ‘afterbirth’ or placenta. Marsden goes on to explain that this translation reminds us that “we are born of the womb of the primeval mother” or Papatūānuku, who shares, through this sense of attunement, “a web of support systems” (p.45). In line with this, Quince (2006) describes Papatūānuku as “the primordial parent and nurturer of life.” (p. 5). Again, while descriptions of indigenous peoples’ relationship with whenua (translated as ‘land’) might raise

ideas about connections with solid visible phenomena, in terms of attunement, we need not restrict our view to this. The descriptions of whenua and of Papatūānuku that are offered by Marsden and Quince, along with Cruden's (1995) appeal to an essence that lies beneath forms, present something other than the physical, which is highlighted in Marsden's (2003) observation that the earth, or Papa-tua-nuku, is the "rock foundation beyond expanse, the infinite" (p. 22).

Language may also be regarded as an element of reciprocal attunement, particularly when conventional views on language are resisted, allowing us to look beyond the idea of language as words that represent human centred meaning. Abrams (1996) captures this sense of language and attunement through highlighting the world's perceptive state that, rather than representing the world as a static object to be studied and re-presented through human language and description, presents all things in the world as "sensorially resonant...expressive bodies" (p.80). Abrams describes what might be thought of as an 'ecology of language' that escapes the limitations of a view that insists on a structure of linguistic rules (Williams, 2012), that is restricted to human expression. Cajete (2005) describes language in terms of a spiritual orientation to and with the world or a "sacred expression of breath (that) incorporates this orientation in all its foundations" (p. 70). Similarly, when discussing Polynesian languages, Manuka (2001) describes this spiritual foundation as words and phrases that are "vitalistic (and) expressive of life forces, metaphysics, and cosmic energy" (p.199).

Similar to Cruden's (1995) steer towards a focus on what lies beneath forms, Mika (2015b) points to the spiritual movement of the world in terms of language, describing the connection between language and "the realm that ultimately stands behind utterance" (p. 98). Similarly, Williams (2012) discusses language as that which sits beneath the abstract; language includes the sensorial gestures towards things in the world that are reciprocated by all things as part of an "empathic resonance" (p. 117)

The spiritual foundation of reciprocity as attunement, demonstrated through language as vitalistic resonance and the connections that people have to whenua (both in the sense of being physically present at sites of significance and spiritual

in the sense of intangible connection), extends our view of reality to remain cognisant of the spiritual. Within this view, the idea of reciprocity is extended to bring through the intangible foundation that is expressed through what we observe in human centred reciprocity but that, in line with Māori and indigenous spiritual holism, is more than visible acts of generosity. It is, within the context of attunement, a far more complex expression that is demonstrated in all gestures: the empathic vitality of being-in-the-world.

### **The onto-epistemic nature of Being**

The premises of Māori and indigenous metaphysics that have been discussed in this chapter have laid the ground for considering another component of relational Being that will be explored here in the context of what was noted earlier in McIntosh's (2012) call for a recognition of "an ancient but fundamental challenge to the very structure of knowledge" (p.51). In this call to challenge, McIntosh urges us to look closely at the premises that underlie the notion of seeking knowledge, and to be wary of the conceptualisations of knowledge that follow from these notions. As discussed earlier, the premises that underlie a dominant Western metaphysical and philosophical framework posit that the world (as object) is a phenomenon that is separate from the (conceptualisation of the) human mind, and humanity as a whole. This separation allows for the study of the world as object and the observance of certain universal laws that in turn perpetuates the metaphysical structuring of the world and self as distinct subject (human) and object (the observable material world) (Gillett, 2009).

Here I use the term onto-epistemology or the onto-epistemic to refer to the ontological claims that are made when an epistemological structure and stance is advocated. The distinct separation that underlies the dominant Western orientation to the world, as a platform for objectivity, is one example of an epistemic stance that must carry with it an ontological claim, structuring and implicating the self in particular ways in order for objectivity to exist. In contrast to this view of a separated self and world, Māori and indigenous metaphysics present what has been discussed in this chapter as a self and world that experience a relational indivisibility. By the very nature of the term onto-epistemic, this contrasting

metaphysical view, steeped in premises of holism, must posit something other than objectivity and its necessary condition of separation as a foundation for epistemology or what some might refer to as knowledge.

The premises of Māori and indigenous knowledge seeking cannot be separated from the cosmological accounts that have been discussed in this chapter in exploring Māori and indigenous worldviews and the metaphysical premise of a holistic existence. Immediately we see a divide between Māori and indigenous holism and Gillett's description of a dominant Western structuring of the self as a separated objective human observer that is set against the world in order to discover reliable universal and natural laws or what might be conceptualised as certainty. For example, the spiritual foundation of Māori and indigenous creation narratives that present the premises of Māori and indigenous metaphysics also present a challenge to the idea that things in the world are assembled as measurable discoverable phenomena. As Marsden (2003) explains, "Spiritual values are always beyond the grasp of mortal man. They are ultimate and absolute in nature and yet always beckoning man onwards" (p.39). There are two lessons that might be taken from Marsden's description of the spiritual. Firstly, the world's fundamental spiritual nature denies full access and knowledge. Secondly, this denial of full access is a part of the nature of Being in the world that, when understood from the perspective of (sacred) whakapapa, is based on a constant movement of emergence and becoming that is then experienced as a state of Being and endless learning.

Nepia (2012), who completed a creative practice doctoral research project that focussed on Te Kore, describes the process of creation in a similar frame. As he explains,

Te Kore may articulate experience and feelings of absence, void, nothingness, loss and annihilation, and also notions of potentiality, a source or origin. The creative process for me often seemed a similarly conflicted state of emotional and physical awareness in which I found myself deliberating upon strategies to

introduce uncertainty, chance, and risk as positive features enhancing potential for discovery (p.28).

In Nepia's description of the search for spaces of uncertainty that enhance discovery, there appears to be a type of inverse process in the production of knowledge that (I interpret) as a different type of knowledge or perhaps a departure from knowledge as certainty in order to experience knowledge as creativity.

The divide between Māori and indigenous and dominant Western views on knowledge, and their claims on the self and the self's experience of relationship, are also demonstrated in an example provided by Anne Salmond (1985) who recounts a debate between tribal elders over which canoe first brought the kūmara to Aotearoa. In debating this issue, one of the elders challenges the genealogy provided by an elder of another tribe, "asserting a principle of absolute truth against which all accounts can be judged" (p. 251). This challenge is swiftly rebuked by the following speakers, one of whom implicates European ideas of validation as having impacted on the elder's perception of tribal histories. As one elder, Tamati Tautuhi of Mata-ahu explains,

Now young fellow, the old men of this area tell these stories as well. The elders of the ancient past saw certain things, and they told them to others and so on right down to this generation.... Those accounts are still being told today and they can be laid clearly before you whenever you like. It is not right (tika) to say that Major Ropata conjured up this information (mohiotanga) by himself, for he didn't invent it – the old men taught him this knowledge (mātauranga) and it was not a myth (tito) made up in the porch of his own house (cited in Salmond, 1985, p 252).

Salmond explains that, while each elder may present a different account of the arrival of kūmara, Māori thinking was able to accommodate variance, demonstrating an open epistemological worldview and (in the example provided

above), a valuing of relational knowledge sharing as opposed to ideas of absolute exclusive truth and verification. Salmond extends this critique of the dominant Western framing of knowledge by differentiating the term *mātauranga*, commonly translated as Māori knowledge (Mika, 2012), from what she calls the “parochial” (p. 240), pre-conception of European evaluation:

A particular form of *maatauranga* is *waananga*, ancestral knowledge which enabled its possessor to communicate directly with the ancestor gods and to activate their power. All of these forms of knowledge were stored in the belly (*puku*) where the various organs of thought and emotion were located; the *hinengaro* or spleen where thought, memory and emotions were originated; the *ngaakau* or entrails where thought and feeling were given expression; and the *manawa* or bowels, where thought and feeling associated with the life force or *manawa ora*. Thought (*mahara*, *whakaaro*) and desires (*hiahia*, *manako*) received their original impulse in the *hinengaro*, and welled up in the *ngaakau* or mind-heart to be expressed in words or actions: while the mind-heart received information about the phenomenal world through the senses: ‘*ka kite te kanohi, ka rongō te taringa, maatau ana ki te ngaakau*’ (the eyes see, the ear hears, the mind-heart understands). The head had nothing to do with cognition in this account (p. 240 – 241).

Mātauranga, rather than being conceptualised as knowledge that is an intellectual arrival at a conclusive point, comes through ‘impulse’ and the complex embodied unfolding of thought. Through placing mātauranga within a wider, embodied

process, Salmond resists the singularity and finality that the translation of mātauranga as knowledge implies.

In discussing the appropriation of the term mātauranga by the intellectual traditional, Mika (2012) explains the implications of the more mundane and singular representation of what carries, within a Māori metaphysics, a more complex and multifaceted character. As Mika explains, “the effects of the term (mātauranga) on Māori spiritual relationships with the world have not yet been sufficiently theorised, especially when it is rendered as ‘knowledge’” (p.1081). For Mika, these effects are the fixing of things in the world (that again rests on the separation of the human observer in order to attain an objective view), that denies the movement and agency of the world and its status as Being or its ‘impulse’. In departing from the view of mātauranga as a complex phenomenon, there is a danger that mātauranga is instead conflated with the term knowledge. This act of conflation puts in place a problematic restriction, denying the self a contemplative stance towards things in the world: a stance that privileges relationship rather than (the projection of) intellectual comprehension or ‘apprehension’. Mātauranga, when the term is equated with knowledge, instead renders the world as object - one that, rather than being embodied by the self, stands distanced and apart.

It is appropriate here to revisit the term whakapapa to consider its influence in the context of the onto-epistemic. Whakapapa, so far discussed in terms of a co-existing creativity (C. Smith, 2000) and the sacred connections inherent in the cosmological genealogy (Marsden, 2003), provides a further metaphorical representation of knowledge that signifies not only what can be sensed, seen, or consciously thought but also what cannot be immediately perceived. Mika (2015b) refers to this co-existence of the seen and unseen as the worlds, “fixed strata, their interstices, and the potential for thinking both of the layers themselves and the dark, mysterious spaces between them.” (p.104). Roberts and Williams (1998) similarly point to whakapapa as a thought process that is experienced (though not necessarily in a conscious perceptive sense) as meaning that exists in layers, shifting to reveal and conceal, as opposed to elucidating points of certainty. This sense of complexity and layered meaning is captured by Puhakka (cited in Esbjorn-Hargens and

Zimmerman, 2009) who, when talking about the complex (and therefore uncertain) nature of the world, states that,

We live in systems within systems, contexts within contexts indefinitely, and the systems are constantly sliding and the contexts shifting. The vision of an open universe unfolding and enfolded upwards and downwards without end effectively removes all bases for certainty and completeness (p. 75).

This sense of the world's uncertainty can be viewed alongside the ideas explored in the method chapter in relation to whakaaro and whaiwhakaaro that implicate the agency of things in the world and an interconnected process of knowledge generation. The notion of embodied knowledge within a Māori worldview implicates the influence of things on the self through the self's embeddedness in whakapapa. It also implicates the ira tangata aspect of Being intimately linked to ira atua, acknowledging the world's spiritual impetus and its active presentation that calls for our attention. The idea that things in the world have an influence on the self (and from within an eco-spiritual worldview, things that are sentient) suggests that the world is animate with agency or as Mika (2017a) states, the world moves and arranges itself. Further, Mehl-Madrona and Mainguy (2012) share a similar sense of the world's agency when they state that, "The spirits of the natural elements had their own order" (p. 237).

Mika (2016) describes the world and its entities as, "fundamentally unknowable and...nevertheless influential and constructive" (p. 171). In terms of the impact on the self, this view of the world sets us up with the understanding that what we think, or ideas that come to mind, are constructed from the influence of other things and are not simply constructions of our mind developed through intellectual contemplation. This experience of being holistically connected to a thing, characterised by the human being's inability to know the thing in its entirety, is

what Mika (2017b) refers to as ‘mystery’ or, put simply “a limit on what we know about an object, related to its ability to withhold part of itself from our view” (p.5).

For example, during the course of this PhD research I attended a conference presentation in which a researcher described the process of discovery that they experienced as part of shaping their research question. The researcher, Indranil Chakravarty (2017), described his work as an attempt to “write a screenplay on a man in 19th century India who is said to have killed a tiger with his bare hands at 14, became a globe-trotting circus performer, a surgeon and a triumphant Captain of the Brazilian Army.” He remarked that the man in question was, “Erased from public memory” and that as a researcher, Chakravarty feels that he has been forced to navigate the problem of having sparse evidence of the man’s life. This man’s story had for some time stayed concealed under a veil of obscurity, hardly touched by the interests of historians, but, as Chakravarty discovers after commencing his research, almost in synchronicity, other researchers have begun to search through the man’s history. He wonders what called him to form his relationship with the man’s story – what has drawn him to form what he describes as ‘obsession’. He also wonders what has called others to take on this search, and how it could be that their search has emerged at the same time as his own has begun.

In reflecting on what has driven this surge of interest in a historical figure that was previously out of the scope of popular attention, Chakravarty (2017) turns to what he calls, “an attitude of openness implicit in Sanskrit text” noting that “we can only understand ourselves in our relationship with others”. While Chakravarty did not speak directly (or more broadly) about the exact implications of Sanskrit teachings in the context of a seemingly spontaneous revival of a historical story that has arisen in the work of researchers (who have no visible connections) across the world, his subsequent reference to relationship hints at the nature of the openness that Chakravarty links to Sanskrit text. Chakravarty’s meditation on why the idea for the research has arisen for him, in the context of relationship, may be less of a question of why he has reached a self-originating decision to focus on a particular

research question and more about how relationship explains the movement of an idea towards a person.

The conceptualisation of ideas or things arriving in our thoughts was discussed in the method chapter in relation to the experiences of Māori Marsden who, as a student within wananga, was immersed in the process of communication with deities (Royal, 2017). This process, described as knowledge that arrives, and the sense of movement that it implies of a thing showing itself, can be related to Chakravarty's (2017) question of how to explain the re-emergence of an obscure historical figure. It also provides a pathway to imagine how this re-emergence has manifest (in the same space of time), in the work and interests of researchers worldwide who have largely shared no previous connection.

While this example demonstrates the potential influence of another on the researcher (perhaps even the influence of the memory of another person on the researcher, if we take seriously that memories are entities that influence), it can just as easily be applied to any other thing in the world influencing a person and participating in a type of formation of that person as thinker, actor, and Being. This may demonstrate that what we conceptualise as ideas (or even feelings) that are internally constructed can in fact be understood, from a different metaphysical viewpoint, as things that visit.

From within a Māori worldview we might reflect on the term *tohu* to understand how things in the world show themselves, laying claim to our attention. When discussing Māori relational modes of knowledge, Salmond (1985) remarks that there were “interpretations of *tohu* (signs, omens) in sickness, battle, and other meetings between people and ancestor gods, which could be reinterpreted if other information emerged; and it gave resonance (of reference to landscape, carvings, gods, and people)” (p.250). Salmond's description implies a sense of the world's disclosure and self-emergence. It could perhaps be described as the things that come into view, not through an individual's distanced observance of a landscape or other solid phenomenon, but through the movement of the world that is again

reflected in the generative relation that Salmond highlights in describing the co-constructive nature of Being or Manuka's (2001) reference to an 'unfolding'.

Williams (2012), reflecting on acts of influence, describes the experience as one where things lay claim to us. To illustrate this experience, Williams turns to the idea of dreams as a type of knowledge but one that is characterised by the ability to be within a psychic space, sharing in communication with the world in which all involved, "are viewed as constituting and re-constituting each other" (p. 120). Williams recalls a particular dream that holds significance in the context of a shared constitutive assembly of self and world:

I'm in the kitchen of my house in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. I'm at the bench, looking out the window, when suddenly to my shock there is a cobra rising in the air in front of me. I'm really frightened. I don't want this intruder in my house. I try to kill it. As soon as I cut off its head it immediately becomes two cobra. Now I am desperately lunging in for the kill at two of them; just as I reach them, they transform themselves into fish. Reflexively, I reach into the water for the fish, but just as I grab them, they slip from my grasp, transforming themselves into fireflies.

The instant I clutch at the air to catch the fireflies, they become deer, and we are standing on Prairie land, somewhere on the North American continent. "Kill them! Kill them!" the voice in my head insists. I'm filled with fear at the irrepressible life force that inhabits these animals that just keeps transmuting into one physical form after another. The instant I lunge towards the deer, they become a buffalo— a huge, powerful buffalo. The buffalo glowers at me, its energy filling the space. "I'M HERE! AND YOU'LL NEVER KILL

ME!’ it thunders at me. I wake, in terror, knowing that this irrepressible energy is far bigger than me (p. 130).

Williams interprets this dream as a deeply transformative message, describing the impact of the vision as, “being called awake” (p.130). This interpretation immediately raises the idea of an active communication that comes not from an isolated individual thinker but another entity, external and yet connected to the self – that which moves to call the self. In line with this, Williams further notes when reflecting on the dream that, “It (the dream) came “out of the blue” so to speak, as if from the deepest recesses of my psyche. I instinctively recognized that this dream was a “take note” kind of dream, one that had come from a place of spirit or mystery.” (p.122). The description of the dream may also be interpreted as a symbol of mystery or reaching for something only to have it slip from our grasp and change form - never fully knowable and resisting apprehension or certainty.

### **What replaces certainty?**

The question of “what replaces certainty” is one that I was asked during my PhD confirmation and one that I have reflected on throughout the writing of this thesis. It seems that the notion of certainty is one that has infiltrated the onto-epistemic experience, and in the context of doctoral research, shows up as an academic expectation. The expectation, as I interpret it in the context of academic work, is the anticipation of objective representation that dulls complex understanding, demanding that things in the world will be put forward (by the detached human observer) in neat packages of essential meaning. As discussed earlier, this type of (non) relational objective representation must discount the play of other entities so that clarity can be achieved. Further, the expectation of objective representation makes it difficult to argue for an alternative view of knowledge creation in an academic setting because of the emphasis that is placed on an individual ‘ability’ to think and develop insight into a subject. However, I will attempt to speculate on something that may counter certainty as a way of illustrating what Māori and indigenous metaphysics offers in terms of re-contextualising the notion of

knowledge, and also where it may lead us in our conclusions about what is learned through its application.

When viewing the notion of knowledge as (a positive) uncertainty through a Māori and indigenous metaphysical lens, it is possible to pick up on the sense of a complex, contextualised, moving knowledge as opposed to a fixed sense of knowledge that dominant Western epistemology upholds. In reflecting on this sense of movement and the uncertain terrain that it presents, I am drawn to indigenous notions of time as a way of understanding the world's self-disclosure (in its mysterious, never fully knowable nature), and what the world's giving of the self provides that is other than certain knowledge of a thing. Indigenous notions of time offer important insight when reflecting on the gift of uncertainty that makes way for something other than an arrival at a conclusion or the apprehension of things in fixed place and focus.

Roberts (2013) hints at the nature of time from a Māori worldview when she refers to the cosmological aspect of time as, “collapsed space-time framework” (p.107). The term ‘collapsed’ is important here because it links back to the idea of worldedness that was discussed earlier in the thesis that illustrates the nature of Being as a thorough enmeshing of things such that no one thing is independently constituted. Rather, worldedness highlights the notion of ‘collapse’ as being a thorough co-constitution of all things in the world. It is within this context that Māori and indigenous notions of time can be understood, not as a linear progression of past time from one point to another separate and distanced future, but as a circular movement (Marsden, 2003) in which “The present loops back to re-join the reality of past... rather than... marching steadily into an unknown future” (White, 1996, p.3). It is in this sense of circular collapse that time shifts as a metaphysical interpretation of experience and as a notion.

Rifkin (2017) offers an indigenous view of time with this same sense of collapse explaining that,

there is no singular unfolding of time, but, instead,  
varied temporal formations that have their own rhythms

- patterns of consistency and transformation that emerge immanently out of the multifaceted and shifting sets of relationships that constitute formations and out of the interactions among those formations (p.33).

Through Rifkin's description, time, rather than representing a singular (universal) now in which the past is a tattered relic, calcified in its no longer relevant state of has been, takes on a new temporalism that can be translated as relationship. The relationship between the past and the present 'lives' in a dynamic and constant dance of remembrance and re-turn but one that signals the immediate and constant presence of each. Within this relationship, all things in the world are at play, forming an indigenous temporal sovereignty, conceptualised as 'orientation'. Rifkin explains this temporal orientation as something that foregrounds the experience of Being as our (embodied) interpretations of experience, sensations, and the networks we are immersed in as part of a process of becoming as opposed to being fixed in time. We are immersed in the world at play, shaped by experience as multiple directions of feeling, thought and Being.

Within this conceptualisation of time, repetition and direction interrupt the notion of linear progression, bringing instead the imaginary of multiple points of departure and pathways of becoming that Rifkin (2017) refers to as a collective "unfolding" (p. 16). In exploring the idea of orientation, Rifkin turns to the works of Sara Ahmed (2006) who, in her book, *Queer Phenomenology*, asks, "What does it mean to be oriented? How do we begin to know or to feel where we are, or even where we are going, by lining ourselves up with the features of the grounds we inhabit, the sky that surrounds us, or the imaginary lines that cut through maps?" (p. xvii). Ahmed also interprets time as "shaping" (xiii), describing time in ways that mirrors the 'collapse' of time and space referred to by Roberts (2013). As Ahmed states, "Depending on which way one turns, different worlds might even come into view. If such turns are repeated over time, then bodies acquire the very shape of such direction" (p. xxvi).

It is this notion of time as orientation (as complex relational movement) that I speculate provides a potential escape from the concept of certainty. Orientation, as

the movement of bodies through non-linear time and unrestricted notions of space, invites us to understand ourselves (and all things in the world), not through intellectual deliberation that provides certainty, but as a 'cosmo-scape' of complex and shifting relationships.

Rather than observing the world through a distant objective lens that leads to a (dis) orientation, manifesting as the representation of things as static phenomena with knowable objective qualities, indigenous orientation immerses us within the world - within time as space. The cosmospaces that we are immersed within allows us to interact with things as relations and to find types of meaning, but the basis of our understanding would be necessarily measured, tempered by the experience of shifting people and landscapes: the shaping and re-shaping of the self and world as we take new directions. Deloria (2001) uses the term "discern" (p.3), to capture a different sense of knowledge that is reflected in how our relationships influence our Being. It is, according to Deloria, a different type of knowledge that is akin to wisdom: something felt in the body as it relates to other bodies. Deloria (2003) also uses the term 'revelation' (p. 67) in an attempt to capture what comes from the lived experience of relational orientation, explaining that,

The places where revelations were experienced were remembered and set aside as locations where, through rituals and ceremonials, the people could once again communicate with the spirits. Thousands of years of occupancy on their lands taught tribal peoples the sacred landscapes for which they were responsible and gradually the structure of ceremonial reality became clear. It was not what people believed to be true that was important but what they experienced as true. Hence revelation was seen as a continuous process of adjustment to the natural surrounding and not as a specific message valid for all times and places (pp. 65-66).

In Deloria's description of relational Being as a process of shaping understanding, the experience of what is 'true' sits in sharp contrast to the view of knowledge as the discovery of 'truths' that are fixed in time and place. Instead, place becomes the site of "epistemo-ontological cultural orientations" (Calderon, 2008, p.111), born from the experience of being-in-the-world, immersed within the ground of Being rather than standing (with authority) upon it.

### **Concluding thoughts: Revisiting mauri**

Having explored Māori and indigenous metaphysics and the possibilities for re-orientation that foreground the necessity of relational Being to re-presenting Māori and indigenous onto-epistemes, I now want to revisit the question that was considered at the beginning of this chapter. The question concerning the "jarred and shaken" mauri (Milne, 2005, p. 13), as an expression of a person's experience was considered within the context of how a mental health service would approach the task of responding to a person's need for culturally congruent healing.

Mauri, as a basis for considering what is observed as a person's emotions and behaviour, carries profound spiritual meaning requiring that the premises of support and healing are based in an equally profound and spiritual worldview. Mauri is not something that is divisible or easily apprehended by the clinical concepts that might be used to translate the experience a person is intending to articulate. The complexity reflected in mauri is something that permeates all things, whether they be physical 'objects' or ideas and thoughts (e.g., C. Smith, 2000). This understanding of mauri within a mental health context would require a shift in thinking from what Gillett (2009) describes as the dominant Western tendency to separate out all things in the world (to objectify things as separate knowable things), to seeing things as part of a complex, holistic and mysterious lived experiences.

The implications that this shift in thinking might have for the re-presentation of the notion of mental illness is discussed at length in chapter six. However, I conclude here by emphasising the metaphysical premises that are reflected in the principles of Being discussed in this chapter and how these premises highlight the need to re-consider a person's experience of illness or dis-ease. If the self and world are

holistically caught up in a complex co-constructive dance, then the frameworks employed to understand this experience of holism must be able to deal with the complexity that is at play. Indeed, the very idea of using frameworks (the tidy conceptual framing of experience), comes into question and is problematised. The framework of framing, disrupted by Māori and indigenous holism, must be addressed in order to clear ground for a re-presentation of Being and the potential for healing that Māori and indigenous metaphysics might offer. In order to clear this ground, to make way for Māori and indigenous holism in mental health, we will first need to address the dominant Western framework: the structure that Gillett (2009) describes as the act of separation and objectification. It is this framing of Being, or what is discussed in the next chapter as the metaphysics of presence, that I suggest is an insidious constructive influence that has captured Māori and indigenous understandings of Being – reforming ideas of complex holism to fit the dominant Western metaphysical frame.



## CHAPTER FIVE: METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE

We cannot re-present Māori and indigenous notions of Being without confronting its opposite. As mentioned, while this thesis is concerned with how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being can be re-presented, there is also a concern with how dominant Western metaphysics has interrupted Māori and indigenous worldviews. The exact form of interruption that I am concerned with runs deeper than considering the inclusion or exclusion of Māori and indigenous ideas within different onto-epistemic systems. Instead, I am concerned with how a dominant metaphysics shapes the way in which Māori and indigenous ideas (and indeed all ideas) are able to be articulated. In the introduction of this thesis, I referred to the notion of suppression to describe what I argue is a type of metaphysical conditioning of Māori and indigenous onto-epistemes. In order to understand the nature of this suppression and how it is enacted, it is imperative that the method of suppression is exposed and deconstructed. Within this chapter, this method of suppression is discussed as a metaphysical orientation: the metaphysics of presence. Having a solid understanding of the metaphysics of presence will lay ground for understanding how this metaphysics has, I suggest, constructed the notion of mental illness (examined in chapter six).

In the previous chapter, the holistic experience of being-in-the world was discussed in the context of Māori and indigenous metaphysics with the aim of exploring the first principles and premises of a Māori and indigenous orientation to the world. In this chapter, I will discuss a dominant Western metaphysics that, I will argue, sits counter to Māori and indigenous holism, departing from the premises of interconnection and relational Being. A conventional and dominant Western metaphysics was introduced in the previous chapter as a pervasive influence that disrupts indigenous expressions within the context of what Calderon (2008) describes as a metaphysical construction of self. This metaphysical construction was linked to ideas of an intellectual rather than holistic embodied connection to

things in the world set in place through the Cartesian position that Gillett (2009) characterises as a view of the self as a cognitively defined abstract agent.

The legacy of the Cartesian position has been described as the construction of the world as a passive and static object, available and ready for conceptual representation (Kincheloe and Tobin, 2009). Through the faculty of the superior human mind, which is sharply distinct from the external world, the Cartesian agent would attain an objective view allowing for the codification, description, and measurement, of an impersonal, specifiable, mechanical world in which what is observed obeys universal laws. In this chapter, I will be extending the analysis of the dominant Western metaphysics that has led to the construction of the Cartesian position in which the self and the world are separated as subject (the self) and object (the self's objective representation of the world).

While a specific metaphysical orientation (of presence) will be discussed at length later in the chapter, here I will simply highlight the invasive principle of presence that is at play in this dominant metaphysics, reflecting a preference for how things in the world will be represented. Already, I have considered certain premises stemming from a metaphysics that makes a particular proposition about the nature of the world and reality, framing the world in terms of observability and measurement. It is this sense of solid representation, reflected in the attitude of presence, that is the making of the world as an object available (to the human subject) for conceptual uptake. Presence (when viewed through the analytical lens of, for example, Jacques Derrida, 1982) constructs the world in terms of a conceptual clarity - of clear and present qualities that provide a means for measurement and identification or what we might call having (a proxy type of) knowledge of things.

In terms of a Māori and indigenous experience of dealing with the metaphysics of presence, we might recognise the effects of this insistence on conceptual solidity as the experience of conceptual containment that has shown up, for example, in highly structured indigenous identities. These markers of identity were discussed in the introduction chapter as 'expectations', acting as a type of disciplining of the indigenous self through determining normal indigenous traits. The dominant

Western epistemic structure insists on essentialisms that fix indigenous expressions of identity, appealing to bodies of knowledge that prefer solid representations of authentic indigenous ontologies. Often these authentic markers of indigenous identities are based on clear and formal ontological categories that raise questions about what it means to be indigenous. Hokowhitu (2016), for example, asks what holds Māori identities together? “Is it whakapapa (genealogy), blood, ontological markers such as the ability to speak te reo (the Māori language), the performance of culture, or is it hair colour? (p. 83). Similarly, Weaver (2001) questions the solidification of indigenous identity through different forms of measurement, asking how we can be sure that the variables of identity that we select will serve to achieve inclusion rather than excluding indigenous individuals who do not fit the constructed mould.

More recently, King, Hodgetts, Rua and Morgan (2017) note that indigenous identities are being quantified through inventories that enable self-categorisation in which individuals can select (and rate) particular (pre-determined) identity traits including variables such as spirituality and ‘socio-political consciousness’ (see Houkamau and Sibley, 2010). Further, King et al. describe these types of representations as ones that tend to force indigenous identities into reductionist frameworks turning complex phenomena into manageable entities.

In pushing back against imposed, reductionist identities, indigenous peoples have challenged notions of universality and essentialism, strongly resisting the representation of indigenous peoples as an essentialised ‘Other’ through “*rewriting and re-righting* our position in history” (Smith, 1999, p. 29). It is this sense of resistance that calls for a re-presentation of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being and also supports the drive to deconstruct the dominant Western metaphysics that has created universal, restrictive and exclusionary indigenous identities. However, while the casting of indigenous identities in terms of pre-determined formal traits is problematic, it is not the only consequence of conceptual containment that impacts on indigenous ontologies. Within Māori and indigenous metaphysics, the freedom of complex expression is also a concern for more-than-

human entities whose identities are intimately affected by our perception and (conceptual) representation of the world (Blaser, 2014).

Within this chapter, the deconstruction of dominant Western metaphysics represents an attempt to re-turn to holism and the complex expression of the self *and world* as phenomena that reflect more than our rational and conceptually limited representations. The philosophical history of clear divisibility and objectivity will be explored in this context to illustrate what has led to what I identify as a dominant and conventional onto-epistemic attitude. This attitude is one that I will argue has re-shaped our relationship with the world, disrupting holism and metaphysically re-structuring the self as the central, rational subject that must represent the world in objective terms through projecting pre-determined, rigid and limited qualities onto things (and each other). It is also, I will argue, what has led to the construction of those who are labelled as experiencing mental illness *as* clinical disorders, limiting the excessive meaning of experience that, from a Māori and indigenous perspective, disrupts the ability to speak of one's experience in holistic terms.

### **Moving beyond the ontological turn**

At first glance, some might read what is being discussed here as something akin to the ontological turn in anthropology which challenges the imposition of predetermined ideas about reality reflected in the interpretations of cultural expressions and practices observed by researchers entering other people's communities. Blaser (2014) describes the ontological turn as a rejection of the notion of 'culture' within anthropological contexts where culture is often discussed as different versions of universal concepts. As Blaser explains, the ontological turn signals a dissatisfaction with the term culture, seeking to displace its interpretive influence through recognising that "'cultural difference' is a function of the modernist ontological assumption that there is one reality or world out there and multiple perspectives or cultural representations of it" (p. 52). However, while Blaser supports the principle of disrupting a certain Eurocentric definition of culture (one that merely provides us with multiple representations of a universal reality), he asks that we do more, stressing the importance of embracing an understanding

of multiple ontologies (a position that is supportive of the ontological turn), which requires more than simply changing how different cultural expressions and ontologies are conceptualised. For Blaser, it is the act of conceptualisation and the tendency to create categories to house the multiple ontological expressions we encounter that is the problem.

Blaser (2014) discusses the task of taking multiple ontologies seriously by first challenging the idea that ontologies are inventories of types of Being. This view, according to Blaser, is set up within the power structures that construct knowledge systems and tends to favour the dominant view that things in the world exist only insofar as those things can fit the available categories created within (Eurocentric) systems of thought. As Blaser states, within dominant structures of categorisation, “we surrender any effort to hear about ‘things’ that our categories cannot grasp”. (p.52). Within this framework of ontological inventory, the ontological types of Being of the ‘subaltern’ would, rather than being excluded from ontological record, be included but as a version of whatever pre-existing category for understanding ‘things’ exists in the dominant taxonomy. For example, mātauranga Māori, described by Mika (2012) in the previous chapter as “impulse” (p. 241), and the embodied unfolding of thought, would be included in the category of knowledge which, in the dominant Western tradition, connects thought to the rational and cognitive.

Blaser (2014) calls for a radical alterity that would shift our reliance on categorisation. Within the current chapter, the radical alterity that Blaser seeks is discussed as the move to take seriously things that do not fit into existing dominant taxonomies or do not even comply with the idea of taxonomies. These are the things that do not provide the necessary material and conceptual framework that enables things to be cast as discernible, discrete objects and ideas. Here, I challenge not only the dominant constructed categories that are available as representations of reality but the notion of category and (conceptual) representation as statements about how things are expected to appear or be ‘taken up’.

The challenge of re-presenting things that do not fit into tidy categories of explanation was discussed in the previous chapter in reference to the question of

how a mental health service would respond to the presentation of a person who describes their experience as one in which their mauri was affected, “jarred and shaken” (Milne, 2005, p. 13), requiring a response that is altogether different from what clinical categories of behaviour allow for. In terms of Blaser’s (2014) concern regarding the surrender of effort “to hear about things that our categories cannot grasp”, it is the notion of categories, not simply in terms of their content, but as tools for participating in a particular way of treating the world – via acts of conceptual grasping – that, I argue, would restrict a full, holistic consideration of mauri.

Mauri, by its very nature, would resist full conceptualisation predicated on the ability to identify the essential and universal elements of any one thing in the world, seeking to lay bare its apparent mystery in favour of representing it as a thinkable concept. As noted earlier, like other terms within the Māori language, mauri carries with it a sense of the indivisible, described as an energetic element of creation or life force. Treating mauri as a concept, I suggest, would form a type of ontological imposition, enforced through the initial act of abstraction. I would call this a more fundamental composition of self and world (as a metaphysical rather than conceptual concern) that goes beyond ‘discursive’ social or cultural construction to form a thoroughly embodied, spiritual, ontological re-assembly.

Mika (2015c) laments this re-composition of self and world when describing the violence that is done through the rational assumption that reduces our connections to things to what can be taken up by an individual’s mind. Using the example of a mountain, Mika explains that, from a Māori perspective, we have a thorough connection to the mountain as whanaunga (rather than as object). This means that the mountain materially constitutes us and, in conjunction with the world as a whole, allows us to then perceive it. In contrast, a dominant metaphysics would restrict the mountain’s identity, ensuring that it is represented within the limits of the term ‘mountain’ that acts as a ready-made category with assigned properties, posited as the mountain’s essential (present and visible) and true composition. As Mika explains, this mental and conceptual uptake disrupts the former relational connection; it now proceeds on the individual’s (exclusive) ability to project thought (as the subject) onto things external to the self. These external things are

then rendered simply as static objects, rather than being intelligent entities that exist in a holistic, thorough co-constitution of the self and the world. Mika states that,

with the metaphysics of presence, the mountain only is a mountain insofar as it has been equated with the term by the speaker or onlooker. I have made the mountain what it is by virtue of my intervention on it through terminology. I have correctly identified it as a mountain because I have managed to connect it to a proper idea of it. The mountain is hence matched with its proper category. In this act, the mountain is capable of being permanently unanchored from its constitution by all other things in the world. Most important, I have domain over my representation of the mountain: it (and all other things) has not in any way brought my attention to it in its materiality, but instead, it is a cognitive tendency of mine to attend to it (pp. 89 – 90).

Holbraad and Petersen (2017) suggest that a more thorough and effective ontological turn would take account of the world's composition in such a way that we would surrender our tendency to engage with the world as a domain of cognitive representation. In a move to go beyond simply striving to re-conceptualise by using strategies that get us closer to grasping a different point of view, they describe “a basic reversal from striving to grasp ‘the native’s point of view’, to finding ways to overcome what one already grasps in order to better be grasped by it” (p.7). This view of engagement suggests that a full grasp of a thing by a central human thinking agent may not be an essential, primary ontological (or epistemological) possibility. Instead, in taking account of the world's ability to grasp the self, we might re-turn to a holism that accounts for the constructive nature of the self in relationship with the world as indivisible Beings, engaging in co-construction in ways that are not able to be fully conceptually represented.

## **Shifting metaphysics and onto-epistemic foundations**

The problematic notions of inventory, category, and conceptualisation expose the onto-epistemic ground that is often left intact despite the strong challenges aimed at the imposition of assumed universal onto-epistemic statements. Calderon (2008), in her doctoral research which focussed on the impacts of Western knowledge organisation on indigenous education, has expressed similar concerns about what she calls the “foundational categories of systems of thought” (p.72), often left untouched, resting beneath notions of ideology and worldviews. According to Calderon, these foundational systems maintain a dominant position, shaping knowledge production and dictating how knowledge production will be approached. As Calderon puts it when referring to multicultural education research, often we are involved in work that “fails to address the foundations of ideology, and in turn inadvertently smuggles western metaphysical ideas into our ideas” (p. 72).

For Calderon, metaphysics is *the* foundational issue that must be addressed in order to disrupt dominant Western onto-epistemes. Similarly, Trifonas and Jagger (2018) call for work that would, “displace the historical traces of the territorial imperative of imperialism as a conscious process of colonizing body and mind and refocusing a sense of world” (p.214). While the colonisation of body can be understood through, for example, representations on gender and sexualised Being (e.g., Cook, 2013), and through the imposition of ideologies (e.g., Freire, 1972), it is the metaphysical colonisation of mind and body within what Calderon (2008) refers to as “deeper cultural fissures” (p.75), that are highlighted here. These deeper cultural fissures are ones which, I argue, are located in a dominant Western metaphysics that encourages us to encounter things in a refocused sense of world, expecting things to be represented as discernible, thinkable objects.

The problem of making things into thinkable objects is linked to the idea of the metaphysical construction of the self as a rational, separated Being. This metaphysical separation, I would argue, continues to enforce the expectation of objective representation, disrupting our sense of self and world as holistic Beings. In terms of objective knowledge, any dissatisfaction about objectivity as knowledge

that imposes a one worldview onto all people, while a valid and critical problem to raise in a decolonisation context, must also address the structure of knowledge production that *underpins* objectivity. Borrowing again from Calderon's (2008) description, I posit that it is the structure that supports objective knowledge production (rather than simply the content of objective representations), that enables the smuggling of a dominant Western metaphysics into Māori and indigenous discourses. It is this structural influence of a dominant Western metaphysics that, I suggest, continues to influence how we express our worldviews, maintaining the expectation that things in the world will be described through human representation as objects that hold certain qualities as 'this' or 'that' (Mika and Stewart, 2016, p. 302). It is this "sense of world" (Trifonas and Jagger, 2018, p. 214), (a sense of the world as object), that I posit is central to the onto-epistemic expectation of objective representation that constructs the self and the world.

As I will argue in this chapter, the construction of the self and the world as fixed, objective, conceptual entities is part of a metaphysical inheritance and legacy that has influenced central tenets of ontology and knowledge production since early Greek philosophy. Once the premises of this metaphysical inheritance have been explored, I will then go on to show how the inheritance has been deconstructed in attempts to give way to what Derrida would call 'play' or trace that can be directly related to Māori and indigenous metaphysics and the sense of world as an ecstatic mix of intentional and fluid entities.

My focus on the foundations of a philosophy that sets up the world as an object of (conceptual) representation is driven by the desire to provide a clear picture of what I believe haunts Māori and indigenous expressions. While we may strive to articulate something other than a dominant explanation of a thing, or to resist an imposed, arbitrarily assigned description of Māori and indigenous Being, I believe there is something pervasive about the metaphysics of presence that demands we engage in the thorough deconstruction of its metaphysical premises. When we offer a Māori and indigenous perspective of things in the world, can we be sure that the onto-epistemic structure we use to share those insights is of our own making? Or are we forced to use a structure of articulation that is wholly caught up in the very system of thought that we are wary of or that we are attempting to escape? Through

providing an in-depth presentation of the metaphysics of presence in this chapter, I aim to expose the premises that I believe are suppressing Māori and indigenous onto-epistememes – pulling us back into line with a metaphysical tradition that has been in play from the time of early Greek philosophy.

## **The metaphysical re-construction of the self**

### ***Descartes' subject***

As discussed previously, Descartes' ideas on the nature of being-in-the-world (the Cartesian subject), form broad ontological statements that set up the conditions for constructing the self as a separate, self-contained individual, governed by thought (Gillett, 2009). While Descartes is not the first to posit ideas that signify a separation between the self and the external world (or separating the categories of 'human' and 'nature'), his particular configuring of rational ontology makes a strong contribution to the broader philosophy of ontological separation conceptualised as the separation of 'mind' and 'body' (Smith, 1999).

Descartes' notion of the subject, in which the human subject is split from the world, cast as the object of an individual's subjective uptake, is one that separates through setting up the subject's mind as the exclusive and fundamental centre of Being. Dreamson (2016) explains this separation in the context of what has been called the subject-object split in which the world becomes a "cognitive by-product" (p.42), existing primarily in terms of our mental representations. In line with this, Hong (2010) calls the subject-object split an ontological detachment where the individual is detached from the world in order to objectively represent it.

It is this abstract notion of world as an object that has been discussed earlier in reference to Gillett's (2009) dissatisfaction with dominant Western theories of knowledge. Gillett explains, for example, how this preference for abstraction sets up the conditions for being-in-the-world as a detached observer whose cognitive faculties are sharply distinct from a world that is viewed as "a set of interwoven mechanical processes impersonally specifiable and obeying universal mathematical laws" (p.5). Locating Gillett's dissatisfaction within Descartes' philosophy of detachment, we might think of the subject as the "thinking thing" while the object

is the thing “which does not think” (Cucen, n.d., para. 1). This view creates an ontological hierarchy that, while antithetic to Māori and indigenous thought, has, according to Justice (2016), re-shaped indigenous relationships with things in the world, casting them as objectively represented phenomena that we are able to master. As Justice explains, treating the world as objects of study is an “extractive” (p.23), rather than relational, exercise and it is one that has a certain (historical) violence and epistemic privilege at its core. The relational self (and world) is wholly impacted on through these structured conditions of separation and the casting of the world as other than (and through epistemic privilege less than), the self.

While Descartes is not the first Western philosopher to separate body and mind, Grosfoguel (2013) explains that it is Descartes positing of ‘cogito’ as the centre of Being that constructs the self as a cognitive actor, emphasising the idea of a human mind capable of achieving a “God-eye view” (p.75). As Grosfoguel explains, Descartes’ dualistic structure elevates the mind as the pure element of Being that is separate from and unaffected by the body, “floating in heaven”, and “undetermined by any particularity” (p.76). For Grosfoguel, Descartes has re-constructed the self as a Being (now the cognitive instrument of universal knowledge) that mirrors Christianity’s God. This separated and unconditioned self, having done away with bodily influences, *is* the uncontaminated mind that is free to engage in a detached, universal survey of the world. Further, as Grosfoguel explains, the legacy of Descartes’ dualism is seen in modes of knowledge production that form the structure of dominant Western knowledge systems within higher learning institutions today:

The “subject-object” split, “objectivity” understood as “neutrality,” the myth of an EGO that produces “unbiased” knowledge unconditioned by its body or space location, the idea of knowledge as produced through an internal monologue without links with other human beings and universality understood as beyond any particularity are still the criteria for valid

knowledge and science used in the disciplines of the Westernized university (p. 76).

It is also this notion of self, as an individual *res cogitans* Being, that for Grosfoguel sets the stage for possibilities in the types of relationships we have with the world and other things in general. While Descartes' role in mechanising the world as object is emphasised in Gillett's (2009) earlier critique of Cartesian dualism, it is the relational constructionism that drives Grosfoguel's concern. As Grosfoguel explains, Descartes disqualifies things in the world from having agency which, for him, is the purely human (European male) preserve that therefore would cast all other things as the objects available at hand for cognitive study.

However, while Descartes may be (justifiably) critiqued for his metaphysical construction of the self as a cognitive subject (placing the intellectual uptake of a thing at the centre of Being) there is something that sits prior to Descartes' move to make the (exclusively) human endeavour an intellectual pursuit. At work here are more insidious constructions of self and world found in earlier philosophies that show how Descartes' cognitive subject is connected to the deeper recesses of a pervasive dominant Western metaphysics. The cognitive subject has, therefore, already been constructed by a prior philosophical inheritance that centres on the idea of things in the world as separate entities that, through the notion of discernible, identifiable properties and essence, will present as detached, isolated forms. This prior metaphysical construction of essential separation is what makes Descartes' view of the world possible, but it is also, I would argue, what lies beneath all expressions of objectivity - the deeper principles of separation that rest comfortably (intact) despite our multiple challenges to dominant Western constructs.

### ***Plato, Forms and the essential separation of the self and world***

Here I turn to the metaphysics of Plato to illustrate the setting of a prior template or framework for considering the self as the central subject and an orientation to the world in which the question of the basic "what is" or "whatness" of a thing can be discovered. It is this turn to things in the world as objects with discernible qualities that is posited as being a crucial first step in setting up a certain (non-) relational

orientation to the world. This initial separation of self and world would set in place a philosophical path, leading to a dominant and pervasive Western metaphysics or what Derrida and Heidegger would call the metaphysics of presence. It is in this metaphysical construction that we would see the expectation that things in the world will be encountered as things separate from the self, taking up a separate (conceptual) space. Further, it is this metaphysics that would seek to lay bare the mysteries of existence (Justice, 2016), allowing for “the correct explanation, prediction and thus control of natural phenomena” (Cook, 2013, p. 1).

The metaphysics of presence, as a lens through which the world can be re-organised as a non-mysterious entity to be fully discovered, has been largely attributed to ancient Greek philosophers and the quest to know the world with certainty (e.g., Fuchs, 1976). It is, in other words, the basis of the philosophical inheritance that Derrida (1998) warns us about in his critique of logocentrism,<sup>12</sup> otherwise known as an ‘attitude’ towards Being and one that sets in place the premises of essential and universal, rational knowledge or the idea of a world fixed in place for study.

### ***Plato’s fixing of the world: Escaping fluidity and flux***

The development of Plato’s metaphysical orientation has been described as a response (at least in part) to an earlier philosophical standpoint in which the world was described as being in a constant state of flux (Cook, 2013; Guthrie, 1967). This view was put forward by Heraclitus of Ephesus who described the world in terms of its continuous movement characterised by a constant state of becoming, such that even those things that may be thought of as opposites with contradictory qualities (like sleep and waking), are connected in a process of transitional change from one state to another. For Heraclitus, things in the world are united through the *logos*: a divine generative principle that animates things in the world, making all things one (though not in the sense of sameness and fixed material Being) (Graham, 2015) through a divine and hidden order. Heraclitus’ metaphysics is famously represented through the analogy of a river, discussed in the following quote from Plato, “Heraclitus, I believe, says that all things pass and nothing stays, and comparing existing things to the flow of a river, he says you could not step twice into the same

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<sup>12</sup> See introduction chapter for an initial discussion of logocentrism.

river. (Plato Cratylus 402a = A6, cited in Graham, 2015, para. 19). For Heraclitus, any idea that there is permanency of form is simply an illusion of the senses.

Aristotle would claim that Plato had been interested in Heraclitus' ideas of flux from his early years and this interest held until Plato, in constructing his own ideas of the world, would combine the fluidity that characterised Heraclitus' metaphysics with the Socratic search for definitions. These two influences would lead Plato to search for ideas that would fix things in the world, thereby grounding our knowledge of things and what things are (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 987 a-b, cited in O'Grady, 2005). For Plato, the idea that all things pass in a constant state of flux presents a problem that is particularly relevant to his concern for the possibility of acquiring true, enduring and certain knowledge of things in the world. As Barnes (1982) explains, the problem that Heraclitus presented in positing a world of fluid, changing conditions in which things are always in a state of becoming is that it would violate the principles of logic that makes (certain and stable) knowledge of things possible. For Heraclitus, it was the comprehension of *logos* as the underlying unification of things rather than *knowledge of logos* as a thing's essential form that is *the* important element in understanding reality (Graham, 2015).

Heraclitus sees the world in terms of principles of change that would deny the Socratic definition and suggests that even apparently stable parts of the world are constantly in motion, even though, like the river, we see them as fixed things. However, rather than accepting the idea that things are only apparently fixed, Plato would attempt to explain the change, and subsequent uncertainty, of material physical things in such a way as to retain the possibility of knowing those things (their 'what is' or 'whatness') despite the appearance of flux. Plato would counter Heraclitus' principles of fluidity by positing that there is an illusion of the senses but one that fools us into believing that earthly material forms are true representations of reality when they are in fact simply imitations of the real 'Forms', existing only as transient changeable matter (Brickhouse and Smith, 1994). Retaining the idea of fluidity, Plato utilises the idea of flux to cast things in the world as corrupt versions of a higher order of Being that he expresses through a central doctrine called the theory of Forms. For Plato, reality is dualistic, made of both the material and immaterial. In his philosophy, the material forms are the

corrupt, imperfect versions of immaterial Forms (or souls) that exist outside of space and time (Rogers, 1935). These immaterial Forms, through their place in an eternal realm as perfect, enduring, fixed Forms, are the true and constant reality that is merely imitated by imperfect, earthly objects (Silverman, 2014).

Plato's belief in the illusion of earthly forms and the search for knowledge of true Forms that represent reality would manifest in his Allegory of the Cave (Petersen, 2017). In Plato's depiction, we are like people chained to a wall of a cave, believing shadows on the wall to be real objects when they are in fact mere shadows cast off from the real objects that we cannot yet perceive. Those of us who stay within the cave are doomed to live a life in which we are constantly deceived by our senses, continuing to perceive these murky shadows as true reality. To escape the cave is to engage our higher intellect - to glimpse the sunlight of the eternal Forms (the metaphysical moment) as the real objects that form these fleeting shadows (Partenie, 2018; Petersen, 2017).

Plato's cave is an attempt to explain the human condition in terms of what appears to be real against what is "really real" (Huard, 2007, p. 4) or what can be determined as an enduring and constant reality. The nature of the essential and true Forms within Plato's metaphysics is determined by their essence or '*ousia*', which also determines the essence of the material objects of imitation that exist in the physical world. Cook (2013) discusses the importance of *ousia* in Plato's metaphysics in the context of (the concept of) knowledge. In describing Plato's world of discoverable essence, Cook points out that,

the essence of each immortal Form is not only the first principle or cause of that soul/Form and its imperfect manifestations, but also fixedly delimits and defines them. It is therefore the essence or *ousia* of physical things that, in creating their stable, enduring, universal definition, presents Plato with the possibility of fixed truths and certain knowledge of reality (pp. 19-20).

As Cook (2013) explains, Plato believed that individuals could know the nature and essence of Forms and therefore the nature and essence of earthly material forms, because each individual, having encountered these Forms as immortal souls, has prior knowledge of these perfect entities. The true essence of worldly physical objects and their Forms could be known through an arduous process of recollection that culminates in what Fuchs (1976) describes as the metaphysical moment – the point of revelation that stems from an individual’s internal (rational) meditations.

Silverman (2014) describes this process of recollection in the context of the immortal soul, locating it in Plato’s middle period:

Here for the first time we find remarks about the immortality of the soul, about special entities called ‘Forms’ that exist outside of space and time and that are both the objects of knowledge and somehow the cause of whatever transpires in the physical world, and the doctrine of recollection, the thesis that the immortal soul, in a disembodied state prior to its incarceration in a body, viewed these Forms, knowledge of which is then recalled by incarcerated souls through a laborious process (para. 7).

As described in the quote above, it is here that we also find the idea of the mind-body dualism that constructs the body as an imperfect, corrupt, physical form and the mind as the superior, eternal soul. The mind or soul is, therefore, cast as the immortal connection to the eternal perfect Forms as objects of true, persisting, universal knowledge. Plato would avoid what he saw as a major complication in a philosophical orientation that did not allow for enduring knowledge, producing a metaphysics that would allow things to be represented as a determinant essence. As he states, “Since each of these things never appears the same, which thing can one

steadfastly maintain is this determinate thing and not something else, without embarrassing oneself?” (Plato, *Timaeus* 49c7-e7, quoted in Graham 2010, p. 89).

Plato’s idea of a reality, based on a dualistic structure in which the mind is separated from the body, produces (among other types of separation), the ‘separation of mind’, which is characterised as separation from world or the separation of, “what knows from what is known” (Silverman, 2009, p.29). Within Plato’s deterministic metaphysics, this essential separation would lead to the necessary quest to find the essence of a thing, the ‘*logos*’. To Plato, *logos* (rather than being a generative principle that animates an interconnected holistic and not fully knowable world as it is in Heraclitus’ metaphysics) would identify a thing’s ‘whatness’ or, as Silverman terms it, “what is X?... the definition or account that specifies the essence... of something” (p. 35). In terms of the deeper principles of separation referred to earlier as those structural premises that remain intact despite our multiple challenges to dominant Western constructs, Plato’s foregrounding of the essential nature of a thing as a rational concern is significant. It is this fundamental element (the question of “what is”) produced through Plato’s theory of Forms that constructs the basic conditions necessary to set the self apart from other things in the world. This separation would create a fundamental expectation that things in the world, as objects, will occupy separate space from the self in order for the thing to be grasped by the self as ‘what is known’ by ‘what knows’ (Arola, 2007).

I return here to Descartes to illustrate how this fundamental separation is developed further as an orientation to the world that casts things as objects of representation. Following the fundamental separation of self and world set up by Plato’s expectation of discoverable essences and a thing’s autonomous space, Arola (2007) describes Descartes’ contribution as the casting of the mind as the ‘I’ (I think therefore I am) which represents the special subject. Drawing again on Grosfoguel’s (2013) critique of Descartes’ use of detachment from body as a statement about the ontological status of the mind and the God-eye view he attains, we see that, “The entrance into modernity is characterized by taking the world as a domain of objects, the coherency of which is anchored by the human subject” (Arola, 2007, p.2). Arola (2007) describes this subjectivity in the context of

concepts that underpin the relational activity between self and world as acts of apprehension:

Taking the world as something that stands over and against me means to understand that world as something fundamentally other than me, and insofar as I am subject, this means that this world is an object; it is the Gegenstand that literally “stands against” me. Thus, I must encounter that which stands against me, the objectivity of things, and bring it under concepts—literally grasp it so as to be able to represent it to myself—so that it becomes thinkable for me. Why must I engage in this process of bringing this world under conceptual determination? Why must I represent things? The reason is that insofar as the world is not like me, or I do not belong to the world, or the materiality of the world of sensuous experience is not like my thoughts, I have to make the world accommodate itself to me (p. 3).

We might easily recognise in Arola’s description what is at stake in the context of our relational Being and in particular the construction of the self as being in opposition to the natural world. It could be argued, for example, that this oppositional construction has led to destructive ways of living in the world, including the treatment of the environment as an object rather than from within a Māori worldview, as whanaunga. However, the philosophical conditions that set up the world as object (the more insidious conditioning of self and world) are also fundamentally involved in acts of conceptualisation that Arola (2007) describes as making the world ‘thinkable’. It is on this point Ahenakew et al. (2014) warn that, while we may recognise the concept of universal essentialist knowledge is

problematic, we are often forced to resist these problematic concepts and contents by producing our own forms of universal representations.

The types of representations that Arola (2007) is referring to equate to Silverman's (2009) description of the "what is X?" (p. 35), move in knowledge production based on the central aspect of Plato's, and other subsequent philosophers', orientation to the world. As Arola states, "Throughout the history of philosophy, and all the way up through Husserl's early works at the very least, if you want to know what an entity is, you fasten on to its concept, the universal under which it belongs" (p. 3). This 'what is X' approach to knowledge is what makes the construction of the self as separate from the world a necessary condition. Things in the world, through acts of conceptual determination, must 'stand against' the self, cast as the object at hand for study. Once this essential space as separation has been set (as it has been in Plato's metaphysics), we are then free to follow Plato's search for essence and identify the discernible qualities of things to answer that central question - the "what is" of the thing. From that point, the thing can be cast - not as a deeply and profoundly connected and not fully knowable relation but as object.

It is this orientation to the world and the idea of the solid foundational ground of a thing represented through the identification of its 'whatness' in Plato's philosophy (and the philosophy of those who would follow and develop different versions of a world with discernible identifiable essences) that has come to be known as the metaphysics of presence (e.g. Heidegger, 1953; Derrida, 1982). It is in this metaphysics that we see the separation of self and world as a means of grasping a thing's essence (i.e. building concepts) that directly opposes Māori and indigenous understandings of being interrelated with things in the world. This conceptual and essential representation of things in the world is put forward as a silent ontological declaration that things will be set apart from the self – held at a distance in order to be studied. But it is also in this metaphysics that we see the expectation (through the idea of discoverable, identifiable essence), that things in the world, and their discernible qualities, will be physically, cognitively, and temporally 'present' in the here and now and made highly evident through objective language in order for them

to be identified, measured, defined, catalogued, limited and, ultimately, known (Fuchs, 1976).

This idea of a thing's presence disrupts and opposes what has been described by Mika (2017b) in discussing Māori metaphysics as 'mystery' or the space of absence that, not being immediately present in temporal, physical form or cognitive thought, resists the notion of revealing things in their entirety. In the method chapter, for example, I discussed Māori and indigenous understandings of what might be translated as a type of 'more than intellectual thought', reflected in the description of Māori women's knowledge as immaculate (Murphy, 2011), suggesting that there are other entities at play. In contrast, within the current chapter, it is the idea within early Greek philosophy of a latent but absolute knowledge of what a thing 'is' that, I posit, is a problematic attempt to contain thought within the intellectual realm. As Mika explains, a metaphysics that insists on the representation of things in the world as objects of certainty must discount the play of other entities in order to achieve clarity. Again, this orientation translates to the belief in the discernible properties of a thing as an object set apart from the self that supports a problematic metaphysics, constructing the self as a separate subject that 'takes up' the object in a separate (conceptual and seemingly therefore physical) space. This notion of presence, and its associated expectations of separation, present challenges for the Māori and indigenous self and indeed for the very idea of holism when holism is viewed as complete interconnection. From here, the disruption of holism, predicated on an essential separation, would allow for the conditions of a certain type of relationship between the self and world, cementing the stance of objectivity in a world where things are now fully available to the rational self.

## **Presence**

Having set out the conditions of the first step in the construction of the self as a separated Being existing in a distanced, autonomous space apart from things in the world, I will now address the subsequent intellectual uptake of those things. Through the metaphysics imposed by early Greek philosophy, things in the world are now available as solid and limited objects with discoverable essences and qualities from which we may develop certain knowledge. This notion of certainty

is tied to the fundamental metaphysics identified earlier as the metaphysics of presence.

The metaphysics of presence denotes a primordial presence, carrying such solidity of Being that it is immune to the fluid departure of Being which is a condition of the temporal. As Söderbäck (2013) explains, the question of Being has always been intimately connected to the question of time and it is this intimate connection that has driven the desire to make Being into something exempt from the fluidity associated with time's passing. The passing of time as the passing of Being is the very nature of time – the present's incessant passing away that would seem to defy the kind of solidity that could be perfectly captured by a discrete concept. Central questions concerning time would ask, for example, the following: how could things in the world be conceptually grasped within time if things remain vulnerable to a temporal succession that seems to reflect a world of constant change? How can we be sure of a thing's essential nature if we are not sure that it carries some quality that endures despite the movement of time and the apparent 'flux' suggested by time's temporal dance? What do we make of a present constantly shifting to become the past and what are the enduring and present qualities that can be wrestled from the temporal movement threatening in each new moment to wash away what is present before us? Each new moment haunts with the possibility of new potentialities, resisting the idea of enduring 'sameness' - of Plato's *logos*.

It is within this context that Söderbäck (2013) describes the task of classical ontology as that which would,

"save" presence from this condition of always already becoming absent. Being, to put it simply, has been conceptualized as exempt from and immune to time: if the sensible realm is subject to change, the intelligible is posited as a realm beyond becoming and change. This is what is commonly described as a metaphysics of presence (p. 254).

Here, Plato's metaphysics (a view that things in the world are able to be identified in terms of their essential and enduring qualities), is given a temporal framework as the desire to transcend time's movement and change. I recall here a statement from Plato discussed earlier in this chapter, illustrating his concern for ensuring that things can be identified as "determinate things" (Plato, *Timaeus* 49c7-e7 quoted in Graham 2010, p. 89), despite the apparent condition of change they appear to be subject to. The question of how there can be surety of (unchanging) meaning drives the construction of a framework for understanding the world based on the identification of essential qualities.

The importance of explanation and predication to ancient Greek philosophers is demonstrated in the frameworks for essential qualities that emerged from the metaphysical ground that formed the basis of their theories of reality. Plato's Forms (representing the unchanging, universal, and objective character of things) provided the framework for identifying the universal categories in which we can place things in the world to understand the qualities and properties that they possess. Aristotle would build on the idea of essential forms by developing a framework of essential properties (e.g., size, colour, shape), along with a framework for identifying a thing's essential form (e.g., man). For example, round objects, such as a ball and a wheel, will share the universal quality of roundness. If they are the same colour (perhaps red), they would share the universal quality of 'redness'. These qualities and properties ensure that things in the world exist *as* something – specific and measured – so that we might know these 'things' as objects with certain qualities. Things are taken up as being fully accessible and able to be known because they have been given a template on which their Being (their "whatness") can be understood.

In this way, through the assignment of qualities and properties, things are brought into the light and are ordered by qualities that are, thereafter, taken up - not as true, primordial aspects of nature, but as 'projections' of objective representation (Glazebrook, 2000). Heidegger, with a regard for this problem, would discuss what he called the mathematical projection of nature in which things are homogenised by the mathematical qualities that are assigned to them. For example, he would point out that while we might see in nature an array of beautiful colours (such as

when we look at a tree), science would reduce this experience to a measurement of light waves (Glazebrook, 2000). Once that original mathematical projection is in place, we can now understand the colour of the tree in advance as a unit of measurement that would bring certainty to what we can say about the tree's colour, thereby weeding out any variation in subjective representation of the tree's colour. This way of knowing a certain quality of the tree and its colour in advance, through the projected mathematical and scientific template of light wave, is what Heidegger would describe as an entity's pre-determination or,

that which man knows in advance in observing entities and dealing with things: the corporeality of bodies, the vegetable character of plants, the animality of animals, the humanness of man (Heidegger, 1950, pp. 71-72, cited in Rouse, 2014, p. 134).

It would also bring a homogeneity of Being to things in the world that could be the same things regardless of their contextual difference. The temporal flux that threatens the possibility of having knowledge of things, seemingly presenting endless new possibilities of form, appearance, and subjective experience, could be overcome by an enduring, fixed quality that, "drags the being clearly into the light" (GA 27, 180, cited in Glazebrook, 2012, p. 73). This stasis is akin to the metaphysical moment represented in Plato's allegory of the cave that Fuchs (1976) points to as the view of Being as that which has become immediately present to the self. Further, it is the presence of things that is consistently observed and is common to all things (rather than unique to things), that grounds a thing's Being and answers the question – what is a thing? In short, presence is what makes things real and it answers, through the assignment of certain qualities that form the template of a things essential Being, the questions that drove the search for the truth of Being – the what 'is' (it) that these beings 'are' (Glazebrook, 2012).

The metaphysics of presence is therefore predicated on an ontological and epistemic structure that prefers the solid and unchanging definition of things in the world in such a way as to defy the threatening movement of temporal change. In contrast, from a Māori and indigenous perspective, temporality and change carry a

potentiality that highlights the importance of relational Being. As discussed in chapter four, indigenous temporality is concerned with the shifting contexts in which we live, honouring the complexity of lived experience that orientates the indigenous self within the world. The dominant Western view, on the other hand, demonstrates a reliance on fixed meaning that can endure despite temporal change which carries a certain onto-epistemic claim suggesting that meaning is fully present. The idea of presence also suggests that things in the world are available for representation which is, in a sense, a statement about the type of relationship that we may have with things in the world. We cast a type of conceptual spell over things, denying a thing its complex expression and movement in favour of logical representation that forces things to stay fixed in place. This orientation to the world is what necessitates the self's separation from things – the dislodging of the self from within the world in order to take up the rational position.

### ***Being, temporality and “the present”***

Within the dominant Western metaphysics, the importance of the temporal and its relationship to presence rests within the notion of the thing's essential nature, which must be stable and unchanging in order to allow for a true and lasting account of 'what is', or what has been described as the apprehension of things in fixed place and focus. As Garrison (1999) states, “Traditional metaphysics places ultimate ontology somewhere beyond time, contingency, and change” (p.346). Fuchs (1976) demonstrates this in his critique of phenomenology as a discipline that is concerned with the meaning's things have in our experience and from within a “subjective first-person worldview” (Smith, 2018, para, 5). In examining the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Fuchs explains how objects, through their bodily presences that are then taken up by immediate empirical intuition, form the basis of what can be understood as (given) facts:

Regarding the "presence of facts," presence means that the object itself is given in immediate intuition and given as it is. It is given in profiles because that is the mode of givenness appropriate to the being of the object. The individual object is given in empirical

intuition, and it is given as a bodily presence. It is not a representation, nor a sign, but an immediate bodily presence. As revealed in immediate intuition, these objects manifest being. Facts are given as an unimpeachable source of knowledge of what is. This is in keeping with the doctrine of the metaphysics of presence (p. 35).

While Fuchs' description of Husserl's phenomenology speaks to Being in the mode of presence as the absolute physical presence of the thing, it also explains the temporal nature that is at play in the metaphysics of presence as it is the 'bodily' presence that would limit things to being real only in the here and now. Things in the past, for example, are those things that were discussed earlier as "having been" (Fuchs, 1976, p.7). Therefore, the objects that are revealed in immediate intuition must be those that are present in the present. White (1996), in discussing the metaphysics of presence, explains how the present is conceived in the term "to be" which has, since the time of Plato and Aristotle, been taken to mean "to endure through time" (p. 147).

To illustrate how this notion of time has captured conventional temporal orientations to the world, and in an attempt to break what she calls the "grip of presence" (p.148), White refers to the work of Jorge Luis Borges who challenges conventional views on time and present, enduring Being, through presenting an unconventional type of categorisation. This categorisation appears in a Chinese Encyclopedia entitled 'Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge' that divides animals into what, from a dominant Western perspective, might be seen as impossible categories, denying solid, logical representation. Borrowing from the Celestial taxonomy, the categories are presented as,

(a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they are mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k)

those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush, (l)  
others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n)  
those that resemble flies from a distance (p.148).

Within this representation an animal could change or fall into more than one of the categories in a fully contextualised, shifting, relational mode of Being. This view of Being is described by White (1996) as one that challenges the notion that, "Things stay put in their nature ... are defined by it in our sense, no matter at what present moment we examine them. A dog has been, is, and will be one" (p.148). I recall here the radical alterity that was discussed earlier in relation to Blaser's (2014) concern with moving beyond simple gestures of difference to embrace, and take seriously, not only that which does not fit existing dominant taxonomies but also that which will not fit the *idea* of taxonomy (or certainty) that would cast things as discernible, discreet, objects and ideas. Similarly, Foucault (1970) has commented on the ontological and epistemological ordering of conventional Western taxonomy and how it shapes and limits what it is possible to think. Kohn (2015) also raises this issue when he talks of things that are "not necessarily socially constructed in ways that allow us to do conceptual work with them" (p. 315). And so, it is within non-conventional, non-Western notions of time that things are not contained or forced to stay in place as they appear in the present.

White (1996) goes on to discuss conceptions of time in so-called mythological (Western) cultures by appealing to earlier historical periods in the Western sociological order. According to White, these mythological Western cultures did not adhere to the idea of linear temporal structures or see the world as made up of a series of identical "nows" (p.149). Drawing on Heidegger, White explains that it is within these cultures that we see the idea of "sacred time" marked by an invocation of bringing the (mythological) past into the present. As she states, the "present loops back to re-join the reality of the past rather than...marching steadily into an unknown future" (p.149). In keeping with Heidegger's thinking, White emphasises how circular, sacred or linear notions of time impact on our relationship with things in the world. According to White, we are either guided to live by the cycles and wisdom of what came before (sacred time) or forced to look at things as

tools at hand to help us as instruments in our (progressive) everyday life in the present (linear time).

In reflecting on the idea of sacred time, I imagine the sense of continuity that is expressed by Yates (2016) who, in discussing the term *Mauri-ora*, places *Mauri* in an “anterior time space” as that which has always been, and also as that which resides “before us”. Yates uses the terms “re-forwarding” and “re-turn” to capture a sense of something that always comes into presence but as recitation, remembering, and “re-counting” (p.266), rather than denoting a fully revealed bodily and absolute presence. It is in this sense of time that Yates is able to write of things as always present in the context of ‘immanence’ that resides within and “before us” and in such a way that hierarchical ideas of human centred Being, and knowledge and agency, are disrupted, giving way to an ethical time space relation. As she explains,

One can sense that in order to discuss *mauri-ora* as ethics, the question of time and relational order must be schematised. In this indigenous-Māori context, *whakapapa* is an immanent genealogy where the human (as centredness or master position) is deferred—consequent to the primal and agential capacity of the earth and sky, then the winds, clouds, the seas, the trees, and so on, after which comes the human, who are *teina* (youth) in this immanent ordering. *Mauri* exists as a fielding of the life forces of this genealogy—*mauri* comes first, as before human, before the mammoth, before the plesiosaurus and ichthyosaurus, before single-celled organisms, attendant to a primal land and skyscape electric with agential capacity. This time-space modality conjures up a vast and complex assemblage of life, so deferring human life to non-hierarchical recalibration within its ethical relations (p.266).

The ‘vast and complex assemblage of life’ that resists the hierarchical privileging of human-centredness denies the rational re-positioning of human existence and the casting of things in the world as objects whose meaning relies on their *appearance* in the present. Through this, Yates (2016) offers a pathway to disrupt not only essentialism but essentialism’s grasp on the self and the world, denying the representational structure that describes the dynamic movement of life in calcified terms. Caputo (2013) would call the disruption of essentialism “The haunting spectre of “perhaps” [that] provokes a more radical opening in the present [preventing]... the present from closing down upon itself; from being identical with itself” (p. 15–16). Within this view, the potential of ‘perhaps’, of a moving experience that is a reflection of the self immersed in the world, gives way to what Caputo calls, “the future to come” (p.16), or what might also be called ‘creativity’.

### ***Presence/ absence and the world at play***

The notion that things carry meaning only in terms of their presence sets up the conditions for constructing ‘absent things’. Fuchs (1976) identifies the duality of presence and absence as a fundamental principle in the metaphysics of presence. This particular duality provides a starting point for considering the general notion of duality as part of the structure of traditional dominant Western philosophy and onto-epistemes. Within the general notion of duality, presence (vs absence) would signal what Derrida (1978) refers to as ‘the center’; a primary signifier of a universal, true and morally good reality. Fuchs would describe the philosophical structure of a central, singular signifier as follows,

The notion of Being as absolute presence means that Being in itself, the eternal, immutable idea of Being, is the notion of absolute presence, and therefore the exclusion of the notions of the temporal, the incomplete, and the negative. The notion of Being, in its primordial manifestation is the exclusion of absence (p. 7).

We see in Fuchs’ description of presence what Derrida (1998) would call a logocentric structure in the form of an oppositional binary system of logic.

According to Derrida, within this structure, and following the acts of conceptualisation or the grasping of a thing that was discussed earlier, concepts (as signifiers of a central meaning and the presence of essential absolute Being) are hierarchically fixed in oppositional dualistic terms such as mind/body, male/female and presence/absence. Caputo (2013) would also note that these binaries extend to include epistemic and theological beliefs including, “knowledge and ignorance, belief and unbelief, certainty and uncertainty, actuality and potentiality, substance and accident, theism and atheism” (p. 14-15). This structure of duality would position the first term as the primary and valued signifier thereby rendering the second term as a negative and lesser *derivative* of the essential principle concept.

For indigenous peoples, this derivative structure would be seen in the discursive (metaphysical) construction of indigenous identities and ways of Being as civilised/**savage**, modern/**primitive**, and real/**mythical**. Further, As Cook (2013) explains, the onto-epistemic dominance of the primary term would position the lesser absent term - which has real world consequences in terms of subordination and exclusion - such that, “While both terms are therefore necessarily identified and defined in terms of (difference from) the other, the (privilege) ... granted by patriarchal metaphysics to all primary terms has depended upon the absence of the secondary terms from that and other dominant discourses (e.g. science, religion)” (p.84).

Derrida’s (1970) dissatisfaction with duality in classical metaphysics is a dissatisfaction with the West’s insistence on the discovery and fixing of the centre. The centre, in the context of the hierarchical privileging of certain primary concepts, is also hard to dislodge. In this sense, the centre is the philosophically constructed *structure* of the preference for present and highly evident meaning. As Derrida states,

From the basis of what we therefore call the centre (and which, because it can be either inside or outside, is as readily called the origin as the end, as readily arché as telos), the repetitions, the substitutions, the transformations, and the permutations are always taken

from a history of meaning [sens]—that is, a history, period—whose origin may always be revealed or whose end may always be anticipated in the form of presence (p.1).

This dissatisfaction with classical philosophy would lead Derrida to engage in what is commonly referred to as deconstruction. Some have described deconstruction as a type of method used to critically analyse and disrupt the centre, engaging in the act of pulling text apart to reveal that everything that is described is subject to a constraint that prevents us from ever finding the essential meaning of a thing (Rolfe, 2004).

While deconstruction has been described as a method of dismantling the structured dominance of primary signifiers and concepts (such as the primary male against the lesser derivative female), Derrida himself would point out that to think of deconstruction as a method would be to impose structure where none is intended or even possible. As Derrida (1991) states, “deconstruction loses nothing from admitting that it is impossible” (p. 272), and, “deconstruction is neither an analysis nor a critique ... Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one...It must also be made clear that deconstruction is not even an act or an operation” (p. 273).

To illustrate the impossibility of defining deconstruction as an act or method, Rolfe (2004) explains that deconstruction is something that is constantly occurring in text, both in writing and reading, existing in the tension between what is meant and the constrained meaning that language imposes through its pre-determination. Rolfe (2004) points out that, “There is no method to deconstruction because texts literally deconstruct themselves in their impossible attempt to employ language as a ‘transcendental signifier’” (p.274). For Derrida, the idea of a signifier that transcends change and remains fixed in place is always at the mercy of deconstruction and the other possibilities at ‘play’. Derrida, therefore, would speak

of a constant deferral of meaning and that which cannot be contained (or accurately and fixedly described) by the linguistic structure.

For Derrida, the world ‘at play’ is the impossibility of the singular or as Collins (2000) states, “Derrida's interest in the limits of language is precisely a recognition of the 'other' that can never be thought. Always escaping linguistic form that from a conventional onto-epistemic orientation presents an alterity that is an “impossible thought” (p.314), or what Mika (2017b) would describe as mystery or absence. To Derrida, trace is a rupture within the metaphysics of presence, dislodging the oppositional placement of the present/absent binary (Reynolds, n.d) exposing (though not as an alternative signifier) the ‘other’ that is present in its absence. Any attempts to arrest the world at play will be subject to *difference* and trace, meaning that the self - which, within conventional metaphysics is seen as being present through the ‘mental representation’ of true reality - is never fully present to the self. In this event, the self again retains a sense of absence or mystery (Bellou, 2013).

### ***Keeping things in ‘play’: (W)holism, mystery, and complex realms of meaning***

The trace is an opening of space that returns in each moment of attempted signification – an escape from linguistic form that is always at once the absent present other (Derrida, 1978). Within the idea of trace, there is the notion of something that is at once present and absent, an idea discussed in the previous chapter through an exploration of Māori and indigenous metaphysics. However, the question remains whether there can be a full escape from the expectation of signification in the sense that Derrida has described it, or what Derrida (1982) also warns are hidden “chains of predicates” that do not easily permit themselves to be displaced despite “multiple rupturing events”, retaining therefore the language, words and, more generally, the signifier (p.72).

Mika (2016) remarks that there is an absence of the term ‘is’ within Māori language (which acts as a partner to signification), which would signal that signification of a singular determinate and wholly visible thing (at least in terms of its absolute and certain presentation as what a thing ‘is’) was not traditionally used to represent things in the world or set a thing apart from the context in which it is embedded.

In contrast, Heidegger's (1953) "splitting asunder" (p. 170) would refer to precise signification, the reliance on what can be made present, in which things in the world through their conceptual representation are displaced from the whole. But Heidegger would also be concerned with that same question that Silverman (2014) identifies as a fundamental starting point for a dominant Western orientation to the world – the question of "what is X" (p. 29), or, in Heidegger's (1967) terms, "What is a thing?" (p.1).

For Heidegger (1967), this question, concerning those things that we take as material (animate and inanimate) everyday objects that are present-at-hand, seeks to determine the *unconditioned* 'thingness' of a thing, represented in the description of its essential and present material qualities. However, Heidegger warns that "everyday things still show another face" (p.12). Using the example of the jar, Heidegger (1971) explains how the jar can be defined through a scientific explanation that would latch onto its clear and present qualities, thus qualifying the jar in terms of its shape and function. As Heidegger states, "We represented the effective feature of the vessel, that which does its holding, the void, as a hollow filled with air" (p.71). The jar has therefore been reduced to its appearance and its technical use; however, Heidegger, in countering this reductive view, invokes what he calls the 'fourfold' in which, "The thing is a mirror-play of earth, sky, gods, and mortals" (Harman, 2009, p.292).

Within this fourfold of Being, Heidegger (1971) describes the gift of the jar, not as what the jar appears to be or how the jar appears to function, but as its mirror of the fourfold in which we dwell. The outpouring of the jar, rather than simply being the pouring of its contents as a gift that quenches thirst, takes on that wider meaning as libation – the gift, that is the jar's mirror-play of what Heidegger calls the "outpouring":

In the gift of the outpouring that is drink, mortals stay in their own way. In the gift of the outpouring that is a libation, the divinities stay in their own way, they who receive back the gift of giving as the gift of the donation. In the gift of the outpouring, mortals and divinities each

dwell in their different ways. Earth and sky dwell in the gift of the outpouring. In the gift of the outpouring earth and sky, divinities and mortals dwell together all at once. These four, at one because of what they themselves are, belong together. Preceding everything that is present, they are enfolded into a single fourfold (p.72).

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully engage with Heidegger's fourfold, what is offered here reflects Mika's (2016) observance of a measured signification of a thing within traditional Māori utterances that resists (and understands the metaphysical limitations of) the full representation of a thing. Absence, conventionally understood in classical philosophy and metaphysics as a lesser derivative *non-presence*, is now seen in an altogether different metaphysical context reflected in, for example, Yate's (2016) discussion of Mauri-ora as that which comes before us and dwells inside us. Within this view of things that are not fully present, the absent nature of things in the world as mystery rather than a lesser derivative non-presence points to a dynamic world at play such that any one thing, and the essence of any one thing, within a Māori and indigenous metaphysics, can only be presented in a speculative response to a thing. Indeed, recalling a statement made earlier in this chapter, Heidegger (1967) would contend that in seeking to answer and find knowledge of a thing's essence as a full and present 'whatness', we "pass over whole realms" (p.8), of meaning.

### **Concluding thoughts: Considering the impact of presence on the self and the notion of mental illness**

The dominance of presence as a philosophical frame of representation has been discussed here in relation to its metaphysical structure. The structure of presence as things that endure despite the threat of temporal flux, resisting unique presentations through the identification of common traits, and separating the self in order to achieve an objective, rational stance, has remained a central concern of dominant Western philosophy since the time of Plato and Aristotle (White, 1996). The mind/soul, as the superior faculty, constructs the self as a rational agent whose

internal meditations give way to discovery of essential intrinsic properties (Austin, 2017; Cook, 2013). This moment of revelation solidifies the self's search for truth, answering the essential question of what a thing 'is' (Glazebrook, 2012; Silverman, 2009), and setting up the conditions for the objectification of the world. Through Plato's philosophy of Forms, the self is set apart from the world in an intellectual liberation that in a Māori and indigenous metaphysics represents an act of dislodgement - displacing the self from within the world to reside instead in a separate ontological space.

Within this world of objective rationality, the ability to identify the essential qualities of a thing is supported by acts of pre-determination that limit our subjective expressions of experience through the application of certain objective (scientific and mathematical) projections (Glazebrook, 2000). The complex meaning carried by the world as entity is sacrificed in favour of a certainty reflected in a (metaphysical) attitude that prefers temporal, physical, and discernible presence (Heidegger, 1967). Within this context, the mysterious fullness of a holistic self and world, is denigrated as an absent, lesser non-thing, denying the significance of mystery (Mika, 2017), that speaks to the profound and excessive meaning the permeates existence.

Given the focus of this thesis, it is important to point out the potential implications that presence has for the notion of mental illness. While these implications will be discussed at length in the next chapter, here I simply aim to consider the idea that the notion of mental illness is a metaphysical disciple of a dominant Western metaphysics. In considering, for example, Heidegger's (1971) view of the jar and its rendering (in line with the metaphysics of presence), as a vessel that can be known in terms of its available and determinate qualities, we might draw a comparison with the jar's representation and the general representation of individuals who are labelled as experiencing mental illness.

One way of viewing Heidegger's (1971) critique of contained meaning within the context of mental illness is to consider the idea of reductionism which has been put forward as a critique of clinical diagnoses. Carr and Taggart (2017) for example, refer to clinical diagnoses and clinical language as "discursive fig leaves" (para. 5),

that mask deeper issues such as childhood trauma and other experiences external to the person (rather than being a product of personal conduct). As discussed in the introduction, anti-reductionist critiques also highlight the role that value judgements have in the development of diagnoses that, rather than representing natural kinds of behaviours, are viewed as sociological and cultural constructions. In line with this, biological reductionism has also been critiqued in terms of psychiatry's growing reliance on, and preference for, physicalist explanations of mental illness, reducing complex life experiences (classed as mental disorders) to 'brain disorders' (Gold, 2009), or what Rouf and Taggart call "biological pathology" (para. 4).

In merging Heidegger's (1967, 1971) concern for the more expansive meaning held by things in the world with the protests put forward by the (generally) anti-reductionist school of thinking, it is possible to draw attention to how things like clinical diagnosis and biological pathogenesis construct limits of meaning. Like the qualities assigned to the jar (its effective features of volume, shape and usage), I posit that diagnostic and biological explanations of behaviour assign certain (pre-determined) qualities that limit the deeper and more expansive complexity of a person's experience. This complexity of experience may not be easily accessible through tidy rational constructs or be available for scientific measurement, but it is an *opening of understanding* that allows for what does not fit into the clinical frame. Guthrie (1962) captures this sense of excessive meaning when describing personal experiences as "not only external and physical phenomena like rain and tempest, thunder and sunshine, illness and death, but also those overmastering psychological impulses through which a man feels no less that he is in the power of something beyond his own control" (p. 26). This view of experience as something more than what can be controlled (or explained) by the person problematises the idea of containing experience (labelled as mental illness or mental disorder) through a focus on internal functions or through the application of standardised clinical framing. From a Māori and indigenous perspective, however, it also raises the possibility of things as entities that do not fit into the idea of the frame – the complex

nature of things that resist the possibility of fiercely illuminating a thing (e.g., Glazebrook, 2012).

While I posit that these resistant and excessive meanings can be seen as a type of (k)new onto-epistemic ground from which we can draw a different understanding of people's experiences, the question of how this onto-epistemic re-turn can be made possible within the institution of mental health remains. A metaphysics that sets up the self and world as separate entities lays the ground for a relational severing and a subsequent impact on well-being (Mika, 2015). But it is also this metaphysics that sets up the expectation of clear, precise and essential representation and re-shapes the articulation of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being.

Representing things in clear, essential and present terms often involves using clinical concepts and the application of 'qualities' to explain experience and behaviour. These qualities are reflected in clinical language and form a conventional onto-epistemic frame (Canino and Algeria, 2008). As I will argue in the next chapter, Māori and indigenous expressions are often expected to fit in with this frame by providing equally clear (and essential) explanations of experience and behaviour or through providing translations of clinical terms, making Māori and indigenous worldview accessible to the system. Further, it would appear that clinical explanations of behaviour are becoming more reliant on the ability to pinpoint behaviour (and dysfunction) in terms of an identifiable, unchanging and present form. The apparent, ever-increasing solidification of the metaphysics of presence within mental health has implications for Māori and indigenous understandings of Being that must find a type of cultural onto-epistemic space for expression despite the (metaphysical) expectations that seek to discipline what cannot be easily stated. This includes the profound 'overplus' of meaning that is embedded in Māori and indigenous cosmologies, that resist (in a spiritual sense), the simple translation of the spiritually excessive into limited and pre-determined concepts.

## **CHAPTER SIX: METAPHYSICS OF MENTAL ILLNESS**

This thesis concerns itself in part with the notion of mental illness and, although I alluded briefly to that theme in the previous chapter, the reader may be wondering when it will be addressed more centrally. As I noted in the introduction chapter, my suspension of that topic was deliberate, allowing me to first address the ground of thought that, I would argue, constructs the notion of mental illness. This ground of thought, the metaphysics of presence, is one that I suggest is so pervasive in influencing how things in the world are described and understood that it has needed primary attention before any other topic is addressed. Without a fundamental understanding of how the metaphysics of presence constructs and frames the ways in which we relate to the world, my concern is that this subtly undermining influence would be disregarded in favour of critiquing the concepts that are used to describe mental illness.

My concern goes beyond a focus on the types of concepts that inform mental illness as a notion. It does not rest with a concern over whether or not Māori and indigenous peoples can offer our own concepts to describe mental illness; it is instead a dissatisfaction with the structure of concepts and how the idea of concepts relates to the metaphysics of presence - to the idea of human centred, rational knowledge, and the fixing experience within a frame of complete conceptual explanation. But it is, above all, a concern with what this metaphysics must then mean about the type of relationship we have with things in the world and how this then impacts on the indigenous self and well-being.

The overall aim of this chapter will be to show how the notion of mental illness is a disciple of the metaphysics of presence and to describe the relevance of this discipleship in terms of Māori and indigenous efforts to escape the metaphysics of presence within mental health. What I suggest is that the metaphysics of presence not only creates and perpetuates the notion of mental illness but it also (as I have identified earlier), creates and perpetuates the expectation of how things will be represented in the world. Escaping this expectation means understanding the form

that the expectation takes: the expectation that things will be presented (and therefore understood), in line with the structure of presence. In this chapter, I will be exploring the idea of metaphysical construction further by applying the analysis of metaphysical orientation to the tightly bound ordering of mental illness. I will also consider how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being offer positively divergent possibilities for reconsidering people's experiences and behaviour as something more than an internally focussed mental disease. This expanded view of experience and behaviour is intended as a way of re-turning to a view of the self as being fully immersed in and with the world as opposed to being conceptualised as a separate, rational and overwhelmingly cognitive agent.

In the previous chapter, the purpose of engaging in a deeper exploration of the premises of the metaphysics of presence has been to expose the ground on which I believe the notion of mental illness emerges from. The analytical approach will now shift from examining a foundational philosophy to examining a specific manifestation of this foundational philosophy. This chapter tells a story of what I posit is an ever-increasing move towards making things present and highly evident in the representation of mental illness. In order to demonstrate how I believe presence is being increasingly sought as a representative style and structure, I will be traversing the history of the metaphysics of presence in relation to the notion of mental illness. I aim to show how the structure of presence has shaped how we talk about mental illness today. Given the role of early Greek philosophy in the construction of the metaphysics of presence, it is no surprise that Plato and Aristotle will feature as central figures within this historical and philosophical trajectory. As I will show, Plato and Aristotle have contributed to a certain view of the self as a rational Being and have therefore contributed to modern representations of the notion of the mind.

I will also be exploring the notion of mental illness by focussing on how the metaphysics of presence has manifested in the construction of a type of 'madness' that is marked by excessive meaning. The intention here is to demonstrate that there is a wider context of historical notions of disorder that concern more than an individual's mental state. This wider context affects the understandings of Being

that are rendered as nonsensical, non-scientific, absent and perhaps primitive.<sup>13</sup> Within this view of disorder as excessive meaning, all things that do not fit the frame of present, essential meaning have the potential to represent a type of chaotic excess. In terms of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being, the expectation of ordered representation, of evident meanings that fix things within the frame of presence, may have particular consequences when considering the inclusion of Māori and indigenous knowledges within the field of mental health. Some examples of projects emerging from within the field of mental health (both indigenous and non-indigenous) will also be presented at the end of this chapter. It is intended that these examples will support a consideration of how different and divergent views are seeking to resist the expectation of highly evident and ordered representation.

As part of the task of addressing what lies beneath the expectation of ordered representation, this chapter includes a focus on a debate between the philosophers Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. The deeper problem of the metaphysics of presence as it relates to the idea of ‘madness’ comes to the fore in the works of, and the contestations between, Foucault (1965) and Derrida (1978). They are useful here – especially in a particular disagreement of one with the other – for opening the discussion of madness (and the notion of mental illness generally) away from simply an interrogation of the phenomenon of mental illness towards a much more expansive consideration of the validity of ‘mental illness’ in the first instance. Further, as I will argue through Derrida’s challenge of Foucault, the drive to determine things is manifesting in a quest to define mental illness in ways that leave no room for anything other than what can be seen, measured and fully represented. The idea of ‘excess’ will hence be an important term and concept for this chapter: ideas of ‘suspect’ worldviews that are sometimes deemed to be ‘mystical’ likewise become vital in this discussion.

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<sup>13</sup> See the previous chapter for an explanation of how things that do not fit within the frame of presence are marked as lesser derivatives of primary ‘present’ terms that are valued as ‘real things’. This hierarchy of meaning has also been referred to in terms of binaries such as civilised/**savage**, modern/**primitive**, and real/**mythical**

It is therefore important to note that in this chapter the notion of mental illness will not be taken up as a true objective state of Being. As discussed in the introduction, there is a vast range of views that apply to the notion of mental illness. Some of these views illustrate a tension that exists between those that challenge *explanations* of what mental illness actually is and those that reject any belief that mental illness can be taken for granted as being a true, objective, ahistorical object (irrespective of its changing definitions). The question of how mental illness is understood from within two very different metaphysical orientations will be approached using the same scepticism about the notion of mental illness (being a real object) to resist making any assumptions about its factual existence. In this sense, the use of the term ‘notion’ in association with the term mental illness is deliberate. As I will argue, mental illness as a *notion* implicates certain metaphysical premises that have constructed an assumption about objective and abstract aspects of ‘human nature’.

The view of the notion mental illness as a construct is not original to my analysis. However, the importance of clearly marking my analytic stance as one that reaches into metaphysical ground - and rejects the view of mental illness as an objective factual state of Being - relates to concerns raised in the introduction chapter. These concerns focus on whether there is sufficient onto-epistemic space for Māori and indigenous understandings of Being within the context of what might be called mental and emotional states. What was posited in the introduction is that there are certain expectations of how things in the world will be represented that restrict and suppress other ways of thinking (and Being) including those that follow from Māori and indigenous metaphysics. The nature of this expectation, which I have described as a dominant Western metaphysics, concerns not just constructed meaning that is framed as universal knowledge but also the many layers of construction and the structure of constructed meaning itself. It is, in other words, the expectation that things will be represented as objects with essential qualities that demonstrate a thing’s enduring and essential form. Within this structure, all things are vulnerable as objects to be (essentially) determined, including things that emerge from within Māori and indigenous worldviews. I will begin here by exploring the structure of construction as a way of exposing what I believe is a haunting influence that captures and limits Māori and indigenous articulations within mental health.

## **Metaphysical predicates and the notion of mental illness**

I want to repeat here two crucial points that were made in the previous chapter using a warning that was given by Derrida (1982) in his book, *Margins of Philosophy*. The following quote from Derrida includes two points that are critical to the analysis of the notion of mental illness that, as I have posited, represents a type of metaphysical discipleship, constructed upon the premises of the metaphysics of presence. These points are important within the wider context of considering what restricts Māori and indigenous articulations about Being. Further, these points provide an important steer when examining the influence of the metaphysics of presence and its embeddedness in the world as the underlying structure that insists on certain, restricted representations of meaning. Derrida warns that,

the chains of predicates which, even if not permanent, are still quite ample, not easily permitting themselves to be displaced or interrupted by multiple rupturing events, however fascinating and spectacular these events might be for the first unaccommodating glance... Unless one considers the order of language, words, and the signifier in general to be an accessory system... such an attitude also would derive from a philosophy, the most classical philosophy of the relations between sense and sign (p. 72).

The first point that I take from Derrida's quote is that there are those things (referred to as predicates) that extend from the metaphysics of presence that, despite multiple challenges, stay in place. These predicates remain beneath the alternate meanings that we attempt to install in order to displace or disrupt the constructed, imposed meanings we are dissatisfied with. In the next sentence of the quote Derrida points to the primary predicates of the structure that sit beneath the constructed meanings we might repeatedly critique. These predicates, according to Derrida, include language, words and the signifier.

Here, Derrida (1982), warns us that if we do not consider these predicates as the underlying structure of the constructs we are critiquing, we are in danger of also using them to develop our own alternate terms or descriptions. This might, for example, show up in a dissatisfaction with a universal meaning applied to a particular explanation of behaviour or emotion, but if we are to offer an equally rigid replacement, taken up as a universal and essential (alternative) explanation, then we remain within the framework of essential signification. We maintain, in other words, the structure of meaning that determines or over-determines what something essentially *is*.

To reiterate a point made earlier in the thesis: the expectation that things in the world will be represented as intelligible, discernible objects with conceptual limits is an expectation that structures and shapes all (academic) modes of knowledge production. This point has been explained at length in the previous chapter, but it bears repeating here because of its central role in the analytic approach that supports this chapter. It is in Derrida's warning about signification, and the idea of signifying a universal exactness through language and words, that I see the focus and orientation of my own analysis. I am looking for ways in which the constructed meaning shifts but the structure of discernible essence or a singular universal representation remains in place, including when this manifests in how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being are *expected* to be represented within certain institutions.

### **The structure and its grasp on meaning**

In seeking to address the issue of the (dominant) structure that influences how things are represented, I turn to the work of Maria Lugones (2010) who offers a particularly powerful insight that helps to shape an understanding of what I mean when referring to the solidity of the structure that lies beneath (the issue of) constructed meaning. In discussing the coloniality of gender, Lugones warns against searching for non-colonised constructions of gender because, "There is no such thing; "gender" does not travel away from colonial modernity" (p.746). In Lugones' warning, the solid unwavering structure that is colonial modernity would

continue its influence from within the new alternate term or explanation that has been introduced, remaining intact as the architect of meaning.<sup>14</sup>

The idea of concrete histories and equally concrete universal meanings has been resisted by indigenous and minority peoples throughout the world; however, Lugones is wary of resistance that seeks to subvert imposed meaning by offering non-colonial versions of colonial concepts. In this sense, Lugones exposes the hardness of the structure that rests comfortably beneath what Dube (2002) calls ‘divergent articulations’ (p. 197). I would suggest that the notion of mental illness can be conceptualised as one of these colonial concepts. It is, in this sense, a concept that exists within this hardy structure that, despite “multiple rupturing events” (Derrida, 1982, p. 72), remains and is solidified within the expectation of how the world will be represented through complete articulations of a thing’s essential ‘whatness’.

When applied to the notion of mental illness, Lugones’ warning about constructions that do not travel away from colonial modernity puts a spotlight on efforts that have been made to advance indigenous versions of mental illness. Within this understanding of a regnant structure of representation, I question whether indigenous versions of mental illness and mental health concepts could also be

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<sup>14</sup> I discuss Lugones’ critique of the notion of gender to highlight how colonialism problematises the creation of indigenous versions of categories emerging from dominant Western cultural frames. However, I recognise the importance of considering how a dominant Western metaphysics has created the notion of women (and more widely gender), and has then proceeded to oppress based on this created, gendered identity. For example, women, as a category largely created from ideas of biological determinism, has rendered the female body as a lesser, corrupt vessel (e.g., Plato’s view of women as lacking an essential soul and rational mind), justifying the creation of diagnostic labels like ‘hysteria’, described as a type of sex based madness where women could be determined as being mentally ill based on biologically driven emotional disruptions linked to the uterus (e.g., see Goldman, 2009). My concern in this thesis, however; goes beyond posing challenges to these imposed gender based, oppressive behavioural descriptions. I am instead concerned with the metaphysical structuring of things and how this represents the *possibility* of oppression based on the enforcing of strict categorisation. For this reason, while I recognise how gendered oppression has resulted from the category of gender (including gendered madness), Like Lugones, I am less occupied with addressing the content of the category of gender than with breaking the category apart, questioning the existence of gender or talking from outside the category – from the exterior. This critical positioning, exterior to the concept of gender, opens up the possibility for seeing indigenous resistance to gendered oppression and gendered racism on our own terms, and perhaps, these terms include a type of genderlessness? The task of breaking apart the category of gender requires a lot of attention and is outside the scope of this thesis. However, I encourage the reader to reflect on ideas of gender (and genderlessness) in relation to Māori terms and entities (for example, gender and Papatūānuku).

considered to be potentially problematic articulations. The idea is that indigenous versions of mental illness (or what, for example, Kingi, 2018, calls Māori understandings of ‘abnormal states of mind’), seek entry into an onto-epistemic frame that demands a re-iteration of a particular way of talking about the world, regardless of which alternative term or description is placed within the frame. This expected re-iteration of structure would affect both the content and meaning of indigenous expressions but, more fundamentally, the way in which indigenous understandings are presented. This problem is not original to the notion of mental illness but concerns the retention of structure that resists displacement by divergent articulations. In other words, it is not that the *meanings* themselves remain static across time and place but that the idea of the ‘object’ (the whatness of a thing) resists being disrupted.

Drawing again on Lugones’ (2010) insight into resistance against colonial constructions, I highlight a point she makes about how the perils of attempting to offer non-colonial versions of colonial constructs are tied into the issue of historical complexity. Here, Lugones is emphasising that same sense of caution that Derrida (1982) expresses in his focus on the ‘chains’ of meaning (i.e., predicates), that flow out from a concrete inner structure of signification acting as an enduring metaphysical nexus. I suggest that this metaphysical nexus captures expressions of resistance and forces these into becoming inadvertent conformities. The historical complexity that Lugones points to can be applied to both the notion of mental illness and the ways in which efforts to challenge this notion through articulating indigenous understandings of Being are impacted on by an enduring insistence on making things ‘present’. Again, the metaphysics of presence is in play here and it highlights an interesting intersection between metaphysics as presence and its necessary structure of representation on the one hand, and the concept of mind that is historically and metaphysically central to the notion of mental illness or abnormal states of mind on the other.

The idea of the rational subject has a central role in the enactment of the metaphysics of presence and it is this legacy of the mind’s role that I think is significant in terms of the context of historical complexities that re-emerge in different iterations across generations. I posit that, as with the colonial concept of

gender that Lugones (2010) critically highlighted, the concept of mind, as a central agent in the metaphysics of presence, does not travel away from its primary metaphysical ground. This entanglement then has certain implications for Māori and indigenous responses to the notion of mental illness, including when Māori and indigenous versions of mental illness (and the concept of mind) are put forward as a form of resistance to dominant Western discourse.

Moewaka Barnes (2008) has discussed the impact that epistemic expectations of how things will be represented have had in terms of the ability to articulate Māori metaphysics. Moewaka Barnes notes that expressing spirituality in science and research is a professionally and culturally perilous undertaking for Māori which impacts on the depth of the work that Māori academics are able to produce without facing professional scrutiny:

I am aware that there is much we, as indigenous academics, do not express in writing. There are ways of seeing that we leave out of proposals and research reports, but nevertheless acknowledge and talk about among ourselves...I became increasingly aware of the difficulties of expressing spirituality as a part of indigenous worldviews, including its place in science and research...These things are a part of our knowing, but they are not a part of the mainstream, legitimated ways of knowing...in western eyes, I would be seen as less of a scientist if I suggested that the place of spirituality may be broader and largely indefinable; as a result, these less tangible aspects are dealt with only lightly (pp. 7–8).

In discussing Māori metaphysics as this manifest in the possibilities of research and wairua, Moewaka Barnes et al. (2017) describe how they approached research that focussed on wairua, affect and emotion. Within this research, affect was conceptualised as an “embodied involvement in social life” with the aim of expanding the research beyond the “limited palette of ‘basic emotions’” (p. 316).

An important aspect of this research included recognising how epistemic structures impact on how Māori experiences can be presented when the complex meaning of those experiences are not easily articulated. These complexities highlight the difficulty of fitting Māori metaphysics and the ‘undefinable’ into a structure that expects the clear representation of things. As Moewaka Barnes et al. (2017) explain,

Attention to wairua...explores how Māori (including Māori researchers) make meaning beyond the usual routes recognised in settler societies; the intimations and resonances, sometimes subtle and fleeting, sometimes repressed, and sometimes strong and vivid (p. 316).

Notably absent from the discussion of wairua, affect and emotions are any solid and direct references to Western psychological concepts that might be used to orientate wairua and its relationship to affect and emotion back to a dominant framework. In their attempts to explain emotion, the authors do not appeal to notions of mind that are easily equated with clinical conceptualisations, instead looking to the work of Aluli-Meyer (2006) who raises the possibility of an alternative view of self – a holistic indigenous metaphysics of (something more than) the mind. Aluli-Meyer’s metaphysical representation presents the holistic inseparability of what might in Western taxonomies be listed as components of Being that include mind, body and spirit. This triangulation of Being is described by Aluli-Meyer as a new consciousness in which the idea of mind moves away from its association with objective representation. Instead, a triangulation of Being would embrace a subjectivity that reflects the complex experience of events and the multiple descriptions that come from what the body sees rather than from generalisable rational interpretations.<sup>15</sup>

These examples demonstrate how Māori and indigenous metaphysics present possibilities for how notions of mind, mental health and mental illness may be

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<sup>15</sup>While Aluli-Meyer’s description follows a type of explanatory structure that solidifies the idea of wairua and holistic Being through naming aspects of the person, there is also an attempt to depart

considered in ways that allow for a positive divergence. This type of divergence is one that, I suggest, attempts to avoid what Moewaka Barnes et al. (2017) describe as “neatly packaging within borders” the excesses of Māori spiritual expressions (p. 319). However, Moewaka Barnes (2008) observation of how these positively divergent expressions are taken up in the academy and how they are seen through the scientific gaze emphasises the “sense of mayhem” (to recall Smith et al., 2016), at play that was discussed in the method chapter of this thesis. This sense of mayhem speaks to the tensions created by a dominant expectation that pulls at Māori and indigenous onto-epistemic freedoms, haunting with the ever-present anticipation of objective representation.

Both of these points - of positive divergence and dominant Western onto-epistemic expectation - can be applied to Lugones’ discussion of indigenous versions of Western notions grounded in non-indigenous philosophies. They can also be applied to the view that we cannot easily escape dominant Western onto-epistemes simply through offering new definitions. Indigenous versions of non-indigenous concepts could, within this analytical frame, be seen as an example of the “rupturing events” that Derrida (1982) warns may be “fascinating” and “spectacular” (p.72), on the surface, but are not able to displace or disrupt the ground from which the concepts emerge. In terms of the notion of mental illness (and mental health), I speculate there are historical complexities that manifest as an enduring metaphysical influence in the construction of these notions. This metaphysical influence is what makes indigenous versions of mental illness and mental health important markers for considering not only where we are going in our work for recognition of Māori and indigenous metaphysics but to also consider what our modern expressions of Māori and indigenous versions of mental illness and mental health are metaphysically connected to. It is this connection to a metaphysical structure that I argue has significantly impacted on Māori and indigenous expressions. This structure is what sits solidly in place, constructing objects with essential qualities - reflecting a style of representation that does not move despite the different names we might provide in an attempt to carve out different conceptual

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from the idea of mind as a separate agent of the cognitively driven self. In other words, listing the components of mind, body and spirit appears to be an attempt to show the things that are indivisibly connected rather than emphasise a component like separation.

pathways. We might desire to ‘travel away’ from the colonial concepts that act as obvious signifiers of imposed meaning, but the structure of imposition, of objectivity, solid conceptual representation and rational agency, do not easily give way.

## **Discarding excess and its impetus for the notion of mental illness**

### *The metaphysical basis of the notion of mind*

As mentioned, within the historical construction of the notion of mental illness, there is a sense of disorder that goes beyond the individual to capture all things that are considered to carry an excessive meaning. Things that spill out of the frame of present and essential meaning are rendered as problematic anomalies, resisting the expectation of order that finds its genesis in ancient Greek philosophy. This notion of excess can also be related to historical theories about the individual rational agent which is central to understanding how the notion of mental illness has emerged in its modern form. The idea of an individual’s rational ordering and the ordering of all things in the world, can therefore be understood as intersecting philosophies.

In order to explore the metaphysical bases of the notion of mental illness and to understand the metaphysics of the notion of mind, the history of the notion of mental illness (or mental disease) must be explored to expose the origins of the notion of the mind from within a dominant Western metaphysics. I contend that the notion of mind is both a symbol of the metaphysics of presence and a direct instrument in the construction of things in the world as discernible, solid objects with essential qualities. It is, in this sense, a double-edged sword that upholds the notion (and structure) of objective representation while also providing the template for the (symbolic) construction of the self as a rational agent.

In order to identify how early philosophies may have contributed to a modern metaphor of mind (one that I suggest still influences how we understand the mind as a metaphysical and material concept today), there are certain historical philosophies that must be explored. The philosophies of Plato and Aristotle will play a main role in this exploration to determine how the notion of mind was discussed in early Greek philosophy. Importantly, examining these early

philosophies will also help in considering the relationship between Plato's and Aristotle's view of the world and how the concept of mind is discussed in a modern context.

More broadly, the notion of mental illness and its historical bases must be explored to also consider how mental illness has emerged from a certain metaphysical orientation. As I will argue, it is the metaphysics of presence, and its reliance on the discernible and present thing, that makes the notion of mental illness into a solid and measurable phenomenon. As such, I contend that the notion of mental illness persists regardless of the shifting historically fluid signifiers that have emerged in, for example, the different names we give for specific disorders. Further, it is the metaphysics of the rational subject, and the construction of the notion of mind related to the rational subject that, I suggest, enforces the idea of the individual having an internal mechanism that governs the person, producing balanced objective thought. Together, these two elements of the metaphysics of presence set up the conditions for the construction of the self as an individual rational subject but also for the *structure*: a style of representation that insists on an ordered objectivity, denying the existence and validation of things that do not fit within certain (rational) onto-epistemic boundaries.

It is difficult to discuss the origins of the notion of mental illness without also engaging in an analysis of the origins of the concept of mind. The concept of mind has (partly) been explored so far through exploring the metaphysics of presence as the dominant Western doctrine of being-in-the-world (e.g., Derrida, 1982; Heidegger, 1953). The mind as a concept is not easily separated from this wider metaphysics that posits that Being is centred on the idea of the autonomous, individual, rational agent (Gillett, 2009). This idea of the rational agent can be seen in Plato's philosophy of true ethereal Forms that an individual is able to discern through internal and intellectual meditations (Partenie, 2018). The mind and its transcendent nature are also reflected in Descartes' insistence that the mind is a non-physical substance that is other than the body or, more broadly, that the mind is a distinct and non-physical faculty (Tanney, 2009). Further, the mind's role in determining the essence of things in the world has been discussed in terms of a

hierarchy in which reason (as a central aspect of the soul/mind) is the superior faculty (Grosfoguel, 2013).

In Plato's philosophy, the soul or mind is made up of three distinct parts and it is this multiplicity that explains the complex and contradictory behaviours and thoughts that Plato believed was part of human nature and behaviour. The three aspects of the soul that Plato determined include the appetite (governing hunger, thirst and lust), the spirit (governing anger), and reason (governing critical thought). While Plato imagined that these parts of the soul each contained a cognitive aspect (such as with the spirit holding beliefs that caused anger), to Plato the superiority of reason was based on the belief that reason is that which is able to look over and consider the welfare of all three aspects of the soul. Plato's understanding of the soul and of the role that its parts play in achieving balance and harmony is centred on the idea of self-mastery that is reliant on reason as the necessary, central and controlling aspect (Seeskin, 2008).

Aristotle would further solidify the idea of reason as the central aspect of the soul (or mind) and would speak of it in terms of its necessary function. For Aristotle, this function reflects the very nature of nature itself which is to eliminate excess and deficiency (Kraut, 2018). It is within this frame of understanding of the soul (and the superior rational aspect of the soul) that the idea of mental health and its association with morality within Greek philosophy can be understood. Immorality was the condition of imbalance where the soul is divided against itself and Aristotle would describe this imbalance as a disease - a pathological condition in which the person (or a person's soul), is torn in different directions (Seeskin, 2008).

While there are ways in which this view of mental disease may be directly applied to a discussion about the modern notion of mental illness, it is the idea of a condition of psychic harmony and the mind as a function of psychic harmony contained within the individual that is of interest in this thesis. It is also the idea of the mind-body binary and the mind's capacity for reason as a function and faculty, superior to the body, that forms a framework for considering the continued influence that

the concept of mind has on current theories of mental disorder and, more generally, understandings of (more than) human nature.

Seeskin (2008) suggests that the idea of an individual's internal psychic harmony that stems from the early Greek philosophers' view of the mind's internal function, including ridding the individual of excess and deficiency, is a metaphor that we struggle to completely discard. As Seeskin points out, "history is instructive" (p. 492), giving us a map for understanding some of the common beliefs about mental health and mental disorder that exist and are continuing to develop today. In terms of the metaphysical bases of the notion of mental illness, I would agree with Seeskin's contention about the continued focus on the mind as a metaphor for the self's internal functioning, psychic harmony, balance and ability to rid the self of excess and deficiency. The mind, as the rational 'centre' of the self is, I would argue, still a pervasive symbol of a metaphysics that abhors excess and deficiency and seeks, through its various mechanisms, to rid the self of 'disorder'.

Returning again to Lugones' (2010) concern with the historical complexities that complicate attempts to create indigenous versions of colonial concepts, the issue is whether (like gender) the concept of the mind, as a fundamental component of a person's internalised state of Being, is one that also cannot travel away from coloniality. In other words, are the historical origins of Greek philosophy and the view of the person as a rational Being that must strive to achieve balance, and eliminate excessive disorder, able to be disconnected from the concept of mind even when that concept is presented through a different cultural lens? Or do these metaphysical bases remain steadfast beneath all references to the notion of mind regardless of the different versions that we might offer? Māori and indigenous versions of mental health concepts (and the concept of mind) can be considered within this context.

Māori and indigenous critiques of the notion of mental illness (and Being in general) have included a critical focus on the idea of the mind being a separate, wholly rational faculty (e.g., Jeffery, 2005) that in a physicalist view, is largely associated with the brain (Graham, 2010; Greenfeld, 2013; Gold, 2009). These critiques are wholly important to a consideration of how the concept of the mind is

evolving within mental health and to how the concept of the mind is applied to the notion of mental illness. The conceptualisation of mind has, for example, significant implications for how Māori and indigenous terms are taken up within mental health as translations of the terms mind and mental. The notion of mind and its evolution within mental health is also significant when considering how a preference for solid conceptualisations is manifesting in the way that the mind is being represented in (largely) scientific terms (Graham, 2010; Greenfeld, 2013; Gold, 2009).

Both of these implications will be discussed at length later in the chapter. However, here I aim to highlight what I think is a more fundamental and pervasive influence reflected in Plato and Aristotle's descriptions of 'mind'. I would argue that this more pervasive influence is the notion of excess and the reliance on and preference for the ordered, disciplined, balanced and non-excessive self and world. It is this imposed ordering of things that, within the frame of the metaphysics of presence, I suggest limits Māori and indigenous expressions within mental health and other institutions. Within this context, it is important to consider the notion of excess as it relates to the structure of a dominant Western metaphysics and the construction of a view of disorder that includes but also expands beyond the notion of mental illness. Within this expanded sense of disorder, the complex expressions that stem from a Māori and indigenous metaphysics (along with all expressions that resist full and ordered conceptualisation) are, I suggest, subject to the expectation of showing a limited, non-excessive presentation.

### **Nature abhors excess – Foucault and Derrida: Some signposts for Māori and indigenous thinking**

The idea of balance and excess has so far been discussed in relation to Plato and Aristotle's view of the function of the mind as an internal mechanism with a specific role in ensuring a harmonistic state of Being. Within this section I will be exploring the idea of excess using two critical and radical analyses that have brought the idea of the mind, rationality and mental illness into sharp focus. I use these particular analyses for a number of reasons. The material comes from two philosophers who have influenced my thinking about both metaphysics and the notion of mental

illness. The philosophers in question are Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida and both have produced work that has captured my imagination in thinking about the limitations and possibilities presented by metaphysics and by the historical construction of mental illness as a concept. The two philosophers have also engaged in a type of debate about mental illness, provoking each other's thinking and producing, from my perspective, a radical view that addresses what sits beneath the notion of mental illness and the idea of excessive meaning.

The first analytic work that I will be focussing on is Foucault's (1965) famous publication *Madness and Civilization* which presents a complex view of the social and cultural forces that led to the construction of the view of an affliction called 'madness' (now commonly referred to as mental illness or mental disease). The second analytic work is Jacques Derrida's (1978) *Cogito and the History of Madness* which is a critical response to Foucault's work. Derrida's reading of Foucault's project provokes a response from Derrida that pushes him to look beneath the surface of Foucault's analysis of the historical construction of madness. Derrida is not satisfied with the view of madness emerging as (the idea of) an individual affliction and the historical focus on rationality. It is instead, according to Derrida, a view of madness that is about the disorder represented in ideas that carry excessive meaning: things that do not fit the rational frame that the West seeks to discipline and bring into a certain (rational) order. Therefore, these two works in their relationship to each other have assisted me in developing an understanding of how culture and history have impacted on how mental illness is conceptualised but also on how metaphysics has impacted on our view of the 'irrational', including the unexplainable things that do not fit within the rational order.

Derrida's dissatisfaction with Foucault's treatment of the notion of madness is not centred on the view that Foucault has made an error in highlighting the historical events that created a view of certain people as irrational Beings (de Ville, 2010). Rather, Derrida is discontented with Foucault's analysis because he believes that it does not go far enough in exposing the attitude of rationality and order. To Derrida, the idea of madness as a loss of an individual's rational faculties is only one of the judgements that has been produced by the dominant structure. According to Derrida, we must go further into investigating what has created the notion of

madness because it is, at a deeper level, a metaphysical viewpoint that would continue to lay judgement on all things in the world to determine their value and legitimacy. I have chosen to utilise Derrida's more fundamental critique of rationality and order for this reason because it allows me to address the ways in which a dominant metaphysical viewpoint has impacted on Māori and indigenous worldviews. To Derrida, it is the things carrying of excessive meaning, retaining a sense of mystery and resisting full representation, that is seen as a specific type of madness, making things subject to the ordering of rationality. As I will go on to argue, Māori and indigenous understandings of Being have been impacted on by the metaphysical preference for rational, ordered and present meaning. This impact is one that I suggest shows itself in a modern attitude of the rational order experienced by Māori and indigenous peoples as an imposed imperative: the overbearing instruction that states, "you can't think that".

While I will be presenting these analytic works as two connected pieces of work in order to extract the analysis that is helpful to the focus of this thesis, it is useful to first outline Foucault's general narrative concerning the historical construction of madness. This general summary of Foucault's work will provide the ground in which Derrida's philosophical viewpoint (as a response to Foucault) can be located.

### ***Michel Foucault: Madness and Civilization***

Michel Foucault's (1965) analysis of the notion of madness is perhaps the most famous example of an historical and social deconstructionist critique of mental illness as a concept. While Foucault's focus on the history of madness necessarily examined the behaviour of those that were deemed sane and reasonable - the cultural constructors of the exile and imprisonment of society's undesirables - what is more useful in terms of this thesis is Foucault's focus on the importance that early European societies placed on preserving reason. For Foucault, madness finds its identity in the historical, social, and provincial particularities of the Renaissance and the Classical era. Though each era makes its own contributions to the construction of madness, common throughout these histories are the anxieties of a society that fears the state of a fallen 'human nature' characterised by folly and the abyss of "unreason" (p.13). The spectres of fools and folly, embodied by the insane,

project an imaginary that haunts society in the fifteenth century. As Foucault explains, a new imaginary emerges out of the mediaeval period leading into the Renaissance. While there is some genuine fascination associated with the 'freedoms' of unreason and madness, ultimately, unreason signifies the death of the body through the symbolic imaginations of the death of the mind. This fear of death and oblivion is also reflected in a fretful apprehension that Foucault links to spiritual anxieties. As he explains,

Apocalyptic dreams are not new...in the fifteenth century; they are, however, very different in nature from what they had been earlier. The delicately fantastic iconography of the fourteenth century, where castles are toppled like dice, where the Beast is always the traditional dragon held at bay by the Virgin, where the order of God and its imminent victory are always apparent, gives way to a vision of the world where all wisdom is annihilated. This is the great witches' Sabbath of nature: mountains melt and become plains, the earth vomits up the dead and bones tumble out of tombs; the stars fall, the earth catches fire, all life withers and comes to death (p.23).

To Foucault, the heightened anxiety associated with the foolishness of madness he describes is not merely a reflection of a growing cultural valuing of reason and intellect; it is moreover an anxiety, grounded in the fear of a nihilism that is represented in the images of madness.

The reference to the annihilation of wisdom, and its relationship to a nature that threatens to destroy, is a theme explored by others who highlight the anxieties that colour the social and cultural landscape of Europe in earlier centuries. Bordo (1986), for example, discusses the rationalist project of the seventeenth century as an escape from the anxiety of uncertainty and the turn to intellectual salvation as a response to those anxieties. Using Descartes' dreams of disorder as a focal point, Bordo explains how certainty and reason (which in a Foucauldian analysis

represents the antithesis of madness and unreason) stave off the chaos of nature that characterises both the natural world and the internal world of 'man'. As Bordo explains,

The culture in question, in the wake of the dissolution of the medieval intellectual and imaginative system, had lost a world in which the human being could feel nourished by the sense of oneness, of continuity between all things. The new, infinite universe was an indifferent home, an alien will, and the sense of separateness from her was acute. Not only was she "other" but she seemed a perverse and uncontrollable other: during the years 1550-1650, a century that had brought the worst food crisis in history, violent wars, plague, and devastating poverty, the Baconian imagery of nature as an unruly and malevolent virago is no paranoid fantasy. More important, the cruelty of the world could no longer be made palatable by the old medieval sense of organic justice—that is, justice on the level of the workings of a whole with which one's identity merged and that, while perhaps not fully comprehensible, was nonetheless to be trusted. Now there seemed no organic unity, but only "I" and "she" an unpredictable and seemingly arbitrary "she" whose actions could not be understood in any of the old, sympathetic (p. 454).

In Foucault's (1965) analysis, the anxiety of society, as with the anxiety of Descartes, is the fear of disorder. Madness as a symbol of disorder is married with fears of base desires. Characterised as animality, madness threatens through disclosing the "underlying realm of unreason" (p.83). It is the spectre of unrestrained animality that marks the disorder of madness and calls for the calming restraint of reason, symbolised in the order and constraint of those afflicted with madness. As Foucault states, "All this world of disorder, in perfect order,

pronounces, each in his turn, the Praise of Reason” (p.36). Further, Foucault would refer to the ordering of madness as the act of making silent an otherwise excessive and profound experience – a tempest of emotion and Being that is silenced by the restraining pull of the rational order.

### ***Derrida’s Cogito and excessive meaning: A response to Foucault***

I turn now to Derrida’s (1978) critical response to Foucault’s (1965) analysis of the historical construction of the notion of madness to highlight an aspect of Foucault’s work that is important to the idea of historical complexity, complicating the development of Māori and indigenous versions of Western concepts. This is particularly important as it applies to Plato and Aristotle’s premise of the function of reason in finding balance and eliminating excess. The summary of Foucault’s project presented so far already provides a sense of reason as an ordered balancing of a state of Being that calms the excesses of madness. It is within this understanding of excess and order that Derrida would respond most strongly to Foucault as a way of exposing the predicates preceding and also continuing to frame representations of madness (and all things) through what Derrida discusses as the continuous return to the *logos*.

To Derrida (1978), the task of presenting an historical account of madness and marking the conception of madness in the classical age silences a more fundamental predicate that comes prior to the notion of madness as a social and cultural construct. This fundamental predicate is one that Derrida would describe as the “making possible [of] all straitjackets” (p. 57). What Derrida is pointing to is the straightening of all things by the structure of order that would include the structure of language available to Foucault when writing about madness or “the language of objectification” (de Ville, 2010, p. 4).

Derrida’s (1978) observations about this language and its superstructure of logocentrism could be likened to the function of balance and the elimination of excess that Plato posited as a function of reason and Aristotle had talked of as the nature of nature itself (Seeskin, 2008). It is, therefore, those things that do not fit within a certain order that are the ‘mad’ excesses subject to restraint, rather than

any one cognitive or behavioural impairment that can be isolated and labelled as madness (that would inadvertently support the idea of a special madness such as that treated by psychiatrists). Further, Derrida would describe the restraint enforced by a return to logos as the act of “forced entry... putting into the world that which is not there” (p.57). Derrida describes this act of forced entry as type of violent oppression enforced through what he describes as a “narration” (p. 56): a project of attempting to think a totality that cannot be thought.

What Derrida (1978) is therefore concerned with, in marking that which oppresses the totality, is the suppression and silence of excess or meaning that spills out of and exceeds logocentrism. In this sense, madness as a division between reason and unreason, that Foucault locates in the classical age, “has neither absolute privilege nor archetypal exemplarity” (Derrida 1978, p. 42). To Derrida, madness is already marked as “the exclusion of a certain madness [that] is the condition of possibility of meaning and of language” (de Ville, 2010, p. 5). This containment of meaning would, in Derrida’s view, guard against the possibilities of excess and the expressions of meaning that do not fit within the essentialist logocentric structure of essence and essential, ordered representation. After all, Plato, for example, believed that the language we use to name things – the words for things – originated from some kind of immutable essence or the nature of the thing itself (Barbosa, 2015). Therefore, the names we give to things were not approximations of a thing’s essential Being; they were instead believed to be exact terms for things. These exact terms were what contained a thing’s meaning. It was not *possible* for them to be anything else or for things to be so complex that their meaning could spill out of the conceptual containers (the names) that represented them.

It is in this sense that Derrida (1978) argues that language can be applied to the concept of madness and its construction in order to intern it, thereby protecting the structure of logocentrism against a perceived total madness. Madness can be contained within certain terms that mean certain things, but it cannot be a complete excess of meaning (the perceived total madness) because that would threaten the rational order. Foucault (1965) would call this perceived total madness “the absence of reason” (p. 76), that Derrida would further radicalise as madness that is in fact the absence of the rational, objective and definitive order. Within Derrida’s

analysis, disorder is not simply an individual rational affliction; instead, it is the absence of a deeper order that disciplines all things in the world, fixing them in place by the limits of definition. It is, in other words, the determinate ordering of *what things are*.

Quite apart from the de-structuring effect of Derrida's (1978) response to Foucault (1965) in which the possibilities of liberating madness are unrestricted by a historical universal point of division between reason and unreason, Derrida's insight presents the possibility of focussing instead on the idea of excess. It also highlights the anxious response within early Greek (and subsequent) philosophies to the idea of unrestrained excessive meaning.

***Māori and indigenous expressions: Implications of the Derridean view of excessive meaning***

Derrida's (1978) position is instructive for a Māori and indigenous articulation of the more metaphysical designation of madness. In this sense, Māori and indigenous versions of the notion of mental illness must first be considered in terms of the historical construction of not only ideas of madness but of the metaphysics that constructs the idea of madness. This is a metaphysics that, I suggest, abhors excess and is apparent in Derrida's observation that (within the rational tradition), things that are uncontained, mystical and unsayable are rendered as a deeper and more fundamental type of madness.

In terms of Māori and indigenous onto-epistemes, I argue that there is a breaching of the limits of rational thinking and (more widely), of a metaphysics that would prefer an objective representation of a thing as a present and discernible entity. This breaching of the rational limit may put Māori and indigenous articulations of Being at risk within the rational order. The dominant metaphysical fixture, after all, is one that stays in place, expecting diverse articulations to mirror its essential features back to itself, albeit in different ways. There are two things at play here. Firstly, there is the idea of balance and excess that is important to the historical notion of mental dis-ease and the contemporary uptake of this idea. Secondly there is the wider rubric of objectification and ordered representation that is the ground from

which the logocentric structures of order emerge. Both of these present problematic restrictions when Māori and indigenous articulations are considered within the wider context of historical and modern complexities. Further, there is a corresponding restrictive impact that exists between historical ideas of ‘madness’ and the overarching structure of objective representation. This overarching structure is what, I argue, gives a particular shape to indigenous explanations of Being even when these explanations aim to depart from the idea of disorder and its primary association with mental states.

This sense of ordering and the elimination of excess presents a problematic expectation that shapes the idea of mental dis-ease in advance which in turn shapes the ways in which the idea of mental disease can be responded to. In other words, it shapes and rigidly frames the way that we are able to talk about it. Again, through considering the question of whether indigenous versions of colonial concepts can travel away from colonial modernity, we might consider, in a Derridean sense, whether Māori and indigenous versions of mental disease can travel away from the idea of the rational subject and the metaphysics of presence.

The formidable machinery of those first principles, as Derrida would suggest, poses immense challenges for the Māori and indigenous thinker when seeking to influence and disrupt the dominant onto-epistemes within the mental health system. Within this context, a re-presentation of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being within the mental health system will require looking at a deeper level of influence - one that rests beneath the surface of definitions and explanations of mental illness. I would argue that it requires we look at the metaphysical and onto-epistemic structure that forces Māori and indigenous understandings of Being into a re-presentation of the dominant order. Further, I suggest that it is the reclaiming of metaphysical ground (a celebration of excessive and complex meaning) that offers a pathway to a more fundamental liberation and our own re-presentations.

### ***Māori and indigenous Being and the notion of mental illness***

Reclaiming metaphysical ground in which Māori and indigenous understandings of Being can be liberated from strict expectations of ordered representation requires

that we first look at the ways in which Māori and indigenous knowledges are being applied and taken up within mental health. It also provides an opportunity to consider the meaning of Māori terms commonly associated with the notion of mental illness and mental health within Aotearoa. Examining these terms (and the wider context of Māori and indigenous knowledges) within mental health allows us to consider whether there is sufficient ground on which to base efforts to produce Māori and indigenous versions of the notion of mental illness. Conversely, it enables a reflection on whether Māori and indigenous metaphysics (as reflected in the terms included in this section) re-presents meaning that is difficult to fully grasp or contain within the common translations that are apparent in mental health policy and practice (i.e., where Māori terms are translated into dominant Western terms). The points made about Derrida's concern with excessive meaning and the dominant Western attitude towards excess - as an individual as well as onto-epistemic restriction - are important to these considerations. A vital question to ask is whether we can comfortably accept that Māori and indigenous understandings of Being share a sufficient metaphysical synergy with the dominant Western (onto-epistemic) attitude to support a relationship of alignment? Or, is it that the excesses of meaning apparent in Māori and indigenous metaphysics are re-structured to ensure that a certain order is not disrupted?

A recent publication by Kingi et al. (2018), *Maea te toi ora: Māori health transformations*, provides an example of how Māori understandings of the notion of mental illness have been discussed and presented historically and in modern times. In the introduction of *Maea te toi ora*, Te Kani Kingi outlines some of the important principles of what he calls 'Māori mental health'. As Kingi explains, there is a view supporting the idea that 'abnormal states' were recognised by Māori and that these abnormal states were explained using Māori cultural constructs. Kingi states that, "cultural frames were often used by Māori to explain issues that (in their mind at least) were clearly evidence of mental illness" (p. 4). Kingi also states that,

there are at least two broad conclusions that can be made about Māori mental health. The first is that mental illness (as defined according to Western criteria)

is likely to have existed in Māori communities before European contact. This conclusion is simply based on the notion that mental disorders have been known to occur within all cultures and ... it is most unlikely that Māori alone could have developed the means, biological or otherwise, by which such conditions (now termed mental disorders) could have been avoided. Linguistic and literary evidence also suggests the existence of problems specifically related to the mind. Terms such as pōrangī, wairangī, poorewarewa, haurangī, and pooteetee are often used by Māori to describe individuals considered to be mad or out of their mind (pp. 2-3).

I take Kingi's description to mean there are cultural variations that must be considered when the experience or condition of mental disorder is viewed from within diverse worldviews. Indeed, the idea of making conceptual space for Māori understandings of (states of) Being in order to expand our view beyond the common and dominant definitions of mental disorders is important. However, utilising cultural constructs to suggest that these are evidence that Māori have always had an understanding of mental illness returns us to focus on the question of whether the metaphysics of the notion of mental illness and the concept of mind are compatible with Māori and indigenous explanations of these states of Being. Looking at the terms that Kingi (2018) lists as descriptions used by Māori to describe, "individuals considered to be mad or out of their mind" (p.3), we find some clues about the metaphysics of these terms that might disrupt attempts to make any clear or simple connection between these terms and the notion of mental illness. Using two of these terms, wairangī and pōrangī, as a focal point for analysis, I will first present some descriptions of each term that have been offered from within te ao Māori. I will then discuss the implications of these descriptions in the context of making apparently straightforward associations between these terms and the notion of mental illness and mind.

Wairangi has been described as a spiritual condition that is associated with wairua which is indicated by the term 'wai' (meaning water) that can be taken to mean the essence of life (Rau Kapa, personal communication, cited in Taitimu, 2007). Wairangi is also described by Naida Glavish (2018) as being connected with water which indicates a state of floating or "trying to reach the heavens" (or reaching for rangi or atua). Glavish also describes the nature of wairangi and its association with the term wai as a potential source of healing. Taitimu (2007) presents an understanding of wairangi within her doctoral research, linking wairangi with wairua. As she reports, one participant stated that, "When wairua goes wandering that is wairangi" (p. 176). Wairangi has also been explained semantically by Ngamaru Raerino as 'wai', meaning motion and 'rangi', meaning rhythm (personal communication cited in McNeill, 2005).

In relation to the term porangi, Glavish (2018) describes an intense darkness and a state of trying to reach for help. McNeill (2005) recounts descriptions of porangi provided by Hohepa Kereopa and Ngamaru Raerino (2003), stating that, "Although Kereopa has a personal dislike for the term porangi he agreed with Raerino that in traditional conceptualisations porangi was associated with the darkness which Raerino translated to be the occult", or the unknown (p. 153). McNeill also highlights a description of porangi offered by a kaumatua who is quoted as saying, "Kaore e mohio ki nga rereketanga o te pō me te awatea (the inability to distinguish between night and day)" (p. 142). Further, McNeill explains that Hohepa Kereopa would go on to speak about his admiration for this account of pōrangi because "in eclectic Māori style, it is charged with meaning" (p. 142).

These descriptions of pōrangi and wairangi provide some important points of orientation from which to consider the potential for aligning Māori terms to the dominant Western concepts of mental illness or mental disease. In summarising descriptions of wairangi and pōrangi, McNeill (2005) states that, "the connotations are similar in that they imply a spiritual aspect that causes imbalance" (p. 153). The idea of a person experiencing a type of imbalance that affects behaviour is, therefore, implicated within Māori terminology. Further, this general aspect of wairangi and pōrangi would seem to have some relationship with the idea of balance that is apparent in Plato and Aristotle's philosophy of the mind where one of the

mind's central functions is to achieve balance and eliminate what may have been seen as a chaotic excess (such as that linked to the notion of animality that Foucault, 1965, points out as being a concern for those in the classical age who feared the excesses of unreason). However, the excesses of unreason, within a dominant Western metaphysics, are located within the individual and are ones that can be contained and ordered by a mind that follows proper functioning.

The imbalance that is implied by Māori terms such as wairangi and pōrangī is not centralised within an individual rational (or irrational) experience but is rather more expansive. As Mika (2015c) points out, Māori metaphysics is not synonymous with ideas of individual perception and representation. Instead, here in the example provided through an exploration of the terms pōrangī and wairangi, we see that Māori metaphysics implicates elements such as darkness and water and communication with the unseen, particularly where these indicate a desire to reach for or connect with ātua.

Again, the idea of historical complexities and how these complicate indigenous versions of colonial concepts come into play here. Returning again to Derrida's concern with the suppression of excessive meaning – the ordering of things in line with a logocentric preference for present and clear understanding – we begin to see how an excess of meaning (such as that implicated in descriptions of wairangi and pōrangī that gesture to the spiritual) may be rendered as problematic expressions. As I have already discussed, conceptualisations of mind (and the mind's association with mental illness or mental disease) have specific ties to early Greek philosophy. Within this philosophy, 'human nature' can be explained in terms of an internal rational exercise of achieving balance, eliminating excess and seeing the world through objective reasoning. It can also be applied to an onto-epistemic tradition that must make sense of things as discernible objects brought into line with a logical structure, eliminating ideas that gesture towards a type of spiritual excess and subsequent mysterious uncertainty. When contrasting this dominant Western conceptualisation of mind (and the associated conceptualisation of mental illness) with Māori terms such as pōrangī and wairangi, can we be sure that the metaphysical premises of each of these allow for a shared space of meaning. Or are Māori terms assigned places within a dominant Western metaphysics that

captures all meaning within the colonial rational structure, not permitting a re-turn home to the holistic, excessive meaning that is reflected in the various descriptions of pōrangi and wairangi that have been presented here?

Importantly, Kingi (2018) goes on to refer to the work of Sachdev (1989) to highlight that, rather than viewing certain states of Being as an illness that is located in the mental faculties of an individual, Māori are more likely to understanding certain types of distress in terms of a “transgression of sanctity” (p.3). This view of distress detracts from an understanding of an individual with a disordered, internal, and separated mind, appearing to instead support the idea of holistic entanglement that was discussed in chapter four. What we see here, then, are two strikingly different metaphysical statements. One is a holistic statement about a state of Being that implicates the entirety of experience (and the world), as the multifaceted site of the experience of dis-ease, while the other implicates the mind as something that is bound to the individual and the internal function of balancing excess to achieve harmony.

***Solidifying presence, eliminating Māori and indigenous excess: The mind as ‘function’***

Having explored the metaphysical bases that underlie dominant Western understandings of the concept of (rational) mind against Māori terms that denote an expansive spiritual gesturing to things that reside within not only the person but the (holistic) world, I now turn to exploring another premise of dominant Western metaphysics. The mind as function is another premise associated with the metaphysics of presence I wish to discuss here as an element of a metaphysical inheritance that lays the ground for modern perspectives on the idea of mind, mental illness or mental disease. This discussion is connected to a concern raised at the beginning of this chapter in relation to what I regard as being an ever-increasing move towards making things present and highly evident in the representation of mental illness. This intensifying focus on things as present, measurable objects represents what I believe is the evolution of the metaphysics of presence within mental health. This ‘evolution of representation’ has, I suggest, significant

implications for how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being are aligned with (and within) certain concepts in mental health.

As I have already suggested, the historical and philosophical ideas of excess and function and modern views of the mind (Seeskin, 2008) have implications for how Māori and indigenous peoples interpret and explain the mind in our own models of mental health. In particular, I posit that the historical, philosophical inheritance of the metaphysics of presence has implications for Māori and indigenous *versions* of the concept of mind as these relate to the notion of mental illness or mental disease. In line with this, a central question is whether the concept of mind has travelled away from the view of the mind as an element of the individual that performs a certain function, historically conceptualised as ordering, assessment and determination of well-being. In other worlds - in relation to the most recent iterations of the concept of mind - has the concept of function that Plato and Aristotle described as the role of rationality and reason remained as a central premise and, if so, how does this manifest in how the mind is viewed today?

When thinking about the degree to which dominant onto-epistemic traditions inform understandings about the concept of the mind, it is important to look at the available evidence and dominant definitions of the mind that indicate the parameters within which the mind or mental health can be conceptualised. To reiterate a point made earlier in this thesis: there is no consensus on what mental illness actually is (Shorter, 1997). However, in terms of dominant modern views of the mind in the context of its function, evidence suggests that function remains as a significant factor in how the mind is discussed. Seeskin (2008), for example, states that while Plato and Aristotle may have viewed the mind in terms of moral function and how this connects to living 'poorly' or living well, today we retain these ideas through judging the function of an individual based on the idea of successful or unsuccessful performance. Further, Seeskin explains that this performance is primarily evaluated using the principles and language of scientific legitimacy.

Today, we are more likely to see the idea of function demonstrated in medical scientific language associated with cognitive functions (e.g., Etkin, Gyurak, and

O'Hara, R, 2013), or in mental 'disorders' that are described as a form of dysfunction (e.g., Wakefield, 2007). The DSM-5, for example, defines a Mental Disorder as follows:

A mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 20).

Evidently, the language of function/dysfunction and order/disorder has been retained within the disciplines that practice and perpetuate the dominant epistemic viewpoints associated with the idea of mental illness and mental disorder.

In many ways, the idea of dysfunction has been well challenged by those that argue that what informs the idea of function (and dysfunction) are often value statements rather than factual statements about how someone or something should function (e.g., Fulford, Broome, Stanghellini, Thornton, 2005). In this sense, any arguments about whether the notion of function still influences how we talk about the mind or about mental processes are already well represented. What I aim to highlight, however, are the different ways that people are approaching the question of *how* the mind functions and what this tells us about modern (metaphysical) conceptualisations of mind. It is these conceptualisations and their metaphysical bases that, I argue, are what we should be wary of when considering Māori and indigenous versions of the concept of mind and, subsequently, when Māori and indigenous versions of the notion of mental illness are put forward into certain epistemic systems.

It is important here to point out that there is a difference between what has been traditionally called a 'functional brain disorder', associated with psychiatry and 'structural brain disorders' associated with neuroscience. Thibaut (2018) argues that the line between the two has become far less distinct; nevertheless, there are

ongoing debates between those that would favour the view of the mind as a type of consciousness that cannot be reduced to a physical substance (Chalmers, 1996) and those that favour a physicalist view of the mind where, “states and processes of the mind are identical to states and processes of the brain” (Smart, 2017, para 1). Smart (2017) points out that, “Idiomatically we do use ‘She has a good mind’ and ‘She has a good brain’” (para, 1); however, it is important to consider what lies beneath our idiomatic expressions about the idea of the mind.

The metaphysics of presence gains traction in seemingly the most innocent ways and exposing the basis of idiomatic expressions is particularly relevant within the context of what was discussed earlier in this thesis in terms of Blaser’s (2014) concern about taking indigenous ontologies seriously within different epistemic and social systems. The question of whether Māori and indigenous versions of the concept of mind would escape the steadfastness of the ‘mind’s’ metaphysical roots is raised. In other words, it raises the question of whether Māori and indigenous versions of the concept of mind and mental disease can be untethered from the non-indigenous metaphysics that underpin the concept being translated.

It is difficult to get a clear gauge on whether there are possibilities for indigenous versions of the concept of mind because there is such a rich discussion between (broadly) physicalist and non-physicalist camps. Both of these camps can be tied to the metaphysics of presence discussed in chapter five; the physicalist view demonstrating a reliance on solid, visible, physical objects (the brain), and the non-physicalist view demonstrating adherence to the idea of a transcendent mind that is superior to the body (i.e., consciousness). However, it is perhaps the non-physicalist idea of consciousness as a non-material substance that appears to open metaphysical possibilities, aligning with Māori and indigenous spirituality. This more expansive, less determined sense of the mind shows promising signs of according with Māori and indigenous metaphysics; however, the concept of function may haunt these possibilities in very specific ways.

It is perhaps this problem that Greenfeld (2013) had in mind when she stated that, today, the concept of mental health is seen through a “nearly exclusive biological focus” (para. 3). Further, Graham (2010) explains that while there are ongoing

debates between those that advocate for the retention of the term mental or mind (non-physicalist consciousness), and those who think mental facts are essentially physical facts (physicalist/brain), it is evident that there is a strong metaphysical scepticism about the idea of the mind as consciousness because it is non-measurable and non-visible. This departure from the idea of the mind as consciousness has also won considerable ground within the professional and epistemic systems that govern ideas about the mind and mental health. As Graham explains, scepticism about the mind as consciousness is centred on the view that, “Minds as such are not real, strictly speaking. Brains are real, of course, but minds are not. Insofar as minds are not real...there are no mental disorders or illnesses of mind” (p. 75). To illustrate the position that is taken within professional fields, Graham quotes the DSM (IV) which states that,

Although this book is titled the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the term mental disorder unfortunately implies a distinction between ‘mental’ and ‘physical’ disorders that is [an] . . . anachronism of mind/body dualism” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994: xxi).

While this description of mental and physical disorders may be taken as a positive step away from mind/body dualism, it is important to understand the metaphysical statement that is being made within the DSM as it relates to the concept of mind. We might imagine that a rejection of mind/body dualism could open possibilities for a metaphysics in which the mind and body are collapsed and are seen as a holistic organism. However, we may also understand the view that is presented within the DSM in line with how Graham (2010) describes physicalist metaphysical scepticism. As Graham explains, the DSM represents an explanatory evolution in which “reference to the mentality of a mental disorder should be and hopefully will be (if this has not already occurred in certain cases) superseded or displaced by a brain-centred or physicalistic and non-mentalistic understanding of mental disorder” (p. 71). According to Graham this metaphysical scepticism has implications for how the concept of mind explains the cause of things and it would appear that the concept of the mind - at least within the context of scientific

explanation - is failing to provide satisfactory and solid causal information. It would seem, therefore, that the idea of function, formerly applied to the mind, has been retained but has taken a metaphysical detour to represent ever more visible and measurable functions such as those that are evidenced through the neural processes of the brain.

If this is indeed the direction in which the notion of mind and the notion of mental health and mental illness are travelling, then this could have significant implications for Māori and indigenous versions of the concepts of mind, mental health and mental illness. The metaphysical scepticism that Graham (2010) describes, which is suspect of the idea of a consciousness that cannot be explained in solid physical terms, would surely take exception to a Māori and indigenous metaphysics that posits an indefinable, indeterminate, spiritual and holistic state of Being.

The growing focus on scientifically determined (and therefore legitimate) characteristics of the mind as the physical brain and its implications for Māori and indigenous understandings of Being is particularly relevant within the medical field. As Pihama (2010) notes, medical discourse is more resistant to deconstruction and transformation. Similarly, Green (2015) discusses the view of medical legitimacy (which would include language and discourse) in the context of Western medicine's emergence out of the Western rationalist tradition that lays claims to objectivity through the idea of value-free scientific research. This notion of scientific objectivity has been described as the possibility of extracting the true nature of a thing, and of providing a unified representation of a thing as object, despite the existence of varying perspectives. Importantly, Reiss and Sprenger (2017) call this objectivity 'absolute conception' which produces the language of objective scientific research or 'the *language* of absolute conception' (para. 14).

The framework of objectivity that supports the notion of absolute conception and its resistance to deconstruction and transformation is troubling when Māori and indigenous attempts to deconstruct notions of mental illness and mental health are considered. These terms become part of the lexicon of medical discourse that is seen as objective and, I suggest, are continuing to evolve into ever more present, visible, and quantifiable forms. Further, I posit that the entrenchment of

(biological) quantification solidifies the idea of objectivity as the notion of mental illness continues to be re-constructed producing different iterations across time. In this sense, the names for mental illness might change but the structure of objectification does not.

It must of course be recognised that there are numerous contributions that Māori and indigenous thinkers have made in providing explanations of mental illness that do not strictly adhere to clinical explanations (e.g. see Milne, 2005; Taitimu, 2007; Waitoki and Levy, 2016) or that avoid simply reproducing Western theory and ideology (Lock and Gordon, 1988). However, I would argue that the epistemic structures governing the institutions that take up Māori and indigenous worldviews create a metaphysical impasse that is becoming more rigid as certain conceptualisations of mind and mental illness develop. This impasse is demonstrated in a preference for the type of representation that would continue the work of eliminating excess meaning in ways that recall Derrida's concerns related to the central characteristics of logocentrism. Extending this to include a metaphysical viewpoint, what I am suggesting is that the metaphysics that prefers the representation of a thing as an object with discernible, visible qualities suppresses and limits how Māori and indigenous peoples can think (and feel) about the self, including the mind, mental health and well-being.

### ***Hinengaro***

To illustrate the implications of the apparent rational and logical parameters that influence the conceptualisation of mental health and mind (and that represent a potential suppression of different cultural understandings), I want to first explore a term that has been conceptualised as a Māori explanation of mind. This term, *Hinengaro*, is often used as a translation of mind within mental health literature (e.g., Ministry of Health, 2017). I will first present various descriptions of *Hinengaro* and will then discuss the implications of modern translations of

Hinengaro and how these relate to modern Western views and conceptualisations of mind, mental illness and mental health.

Hinengaro is a term that is commonly referred to within health policy in Aotearoa as the aspect of Being that relates to mental health. Discussed within a mental health policy framework, there is some indication that Hinengaro is broadly conceptualised and equated to the concept of mind or is associated with the idea of ‘mental’ well-being. Hinengaro is included within ‘te whare tapa whā’: a contemporary model of health that has been described as a Māori philosophy of well-being that includes four dimensions; taha wairua (spiritual), taha hinengaro (psychic), taha tinana (bodily) and, taha whānau (family) (Durie, 1994). The Ministry of Health (2017) describes te whare tapa whā within the context of modern health services, noting that these services often lack recognition of the “spiritual dimension” (para. 4). The Ministry states that, “In a traditional Māori approach, the inclusion of the wairua, the role of the whānau (family) and the balance of the hinengaro (mind) are as important as the physical manifestations of illness.” (para, 4). The Ministry goes on to equate Hinengaro with mental health describing the connection between mind and body or thoughts and emotions.<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere, Hinengaro has been translated, when using the term Oranga Hinengaro, as “Māori mental health and addiction” (Ministry of Health, 2008, p. iii).

Outside of health policy and frameworks, Hinengaro has been described as being associated with feminine energy or as an energy field that involves thoughts, feelings and emotions. Ngaro has been described as things that are not visible to the human eye. Wairua and Hinengaro are said to be in constant communication with each other and are experienced as embodied entities that hold an intelligence that, rather than being understood as an intelligence usually associated with the rational mind, is linked to ātua (Glavish, 2018).

Raerino (1999) offers some helpful insight into the spiritual nature of intelligence in the context of mātauranga that Raerino describes as energy flowing between atua

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<sup>16</sup> For the ministry’s visual representation of Te Whare Tapa Whā see <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/maori-health-models/maori-health-models-te-whare-tapa-wha>

and tangata. This expanded understanding of intellectualism as a spiritual movement has also been discussed in the method chapter of this thesis as an aspect of Hinengaro or 'te hinengaro o te ngākau' that T. Smith (2015) associates with thinking as an active and dynamic embodied intellectualism that does not occur in the brain (roro). As Smith explains, "Early language references do not say that this activity [thinking] occurs in the brain (roro), which suggests that responses centred within the brain were perceived as fleeting and impulsive. Therefore, most evidence indicates that...thought was centred within the ngākau and was a holistic process" (p.261). Further, Salmond (1985) describes Hinengaro as the spleen "where thought, memory and emotions were originated" (p. 240). Interestingly, the Rev Richard Taylor (Church of England Missionary, Whanganui), rather than directly translating Hinengaro as thought, would refer to thought as hihiri (Te Ao Hou, 1955) that Marsden (2003) would describe as the elemental energy coalescing around mauri. Rev Taylor would instead represent Hinengaro within cosmology as 'consciousness' that, within the process of creation, gives birth to desire (te manako).

Already we see quite a marked difference between the descriptions of Hinengaro that are presented in health policy and those that are presented from outside of health systems and policy frameworks. The cosmological and spiritual nature of Hinengaro reflected in the descriptions of it as a creative consciousness and the understanding of thought as a more than cognitive experience departs significantly from the simple translation of Hinengaro and thought as a mental state. While, in the Ministry of Health (2017) description of Hinengaro, there is a reference to the indivisibility of the mind and body (and reference to the interconnected between body and soul), the allusion to mental states remains a prominent feature of the description. An expanded view of the activity of thinking that moves thought beyond the individual's cognitive biology to account for wider interconnections (including cosmological interconnections), while hinted at in the Ministry's description, is, I argue, overshadowed by the prominence of the term mental and its association with the rational. In other words, a reference to the inseparable connection between mind and body does not go far enough in ensuring that the description of Hinengaro within health policy would travel away from the metaphysical bases of the notion of mind. Further, as discussed in relation to the

view of the mind in terms of its function, the connection between body and mind is also a prominent feature of modern dominant Western clinical perspective that solidifies the place of the physical body in explaining the experience of mental illness.

The implications of the differences between institutional descriptions of Hinengaro and those that emerge from within te ao Māori are reflected in the concerns raised earlier in this chapter by Moewaka Barnes et al. (2017) and Aluli-Meyer (2006) who are wary of knowledge systems that must take up indigenous spirituality in a reductionist style. This concern includes a consideration of mental health research, where states of Being are represented using limited explanations of emotions. Further, this tendency to reduce Māori and indigenous expressions in ways that bring order and that makes things ‘knowable’ has, in Moewaka Barnes’s (2008) experience, restricted what can be said, raising onto-epistemic expectations that things will be signified as intelligible entities.

It could be argued that dominant Western notions of mind, and the translation of Māori terms such as Hinengaro that equate this term with the notion of mind, would not necessarily restrict the ways in which Māori can express Māori ontologies within mental health. However, as Green (2015) points out, health policy (and the medical discourse that dominates health policy), is constructive. A significant aspect of this construction is supported by what Green describes as the, “foregrounding (of) Western scientific research and back-grounding of Māori community research” (p.213). In a metaphysical sense, the backgrounding of Māori community research may represent more than an epistemic imbalance but also implicates the spiritual bases of Māori onto-epistemes that extend beyond issues of gaining entry into knowledge systems. As discussed in chapter four, there are “deeper cultural fissures” (Calderon, 2008, p.75) exposed that position metaphysics as the primary constructive element impacting on the indigenous self, reshaping relational Being to align with expectations of representing the world in ways that reflect the dominant logical and rational order (Grosfoguel, 2013).

Objectification of the self within mental health has also been raised as an issue and has been directly linked to Western scientific research (and discourse) where Sadler

(2004) observes that many patients begin to think of themselves as “DSM jargon” (p.359), developing “self-identity in a diagnostic concept” (p. 358). While this is a significant issue that highlights how those labelled as having a mental illness are discursively constructed, there is perhaps a more significant constructive element of the metaphysics that forms the basis of what we recognise as medical discourse, Western scientific research, and “the language of absolute conception” (Reiss and Sprenger, 2017, para. 14). Turning again to Derrida’s (1978) radical deconstruction of the concept of madness that foregrounds logocentrism as constriction, I argue that it is the suppression and silence of excess, as meaning that spills out of and exceeds the logos, that is a fundamental metaphysical restriction placed on Māori understandings of Being (including Māori holistic and spiritual understandings of mind) that continues to re-construct Māori metaphysics as versions of dominant Western clinical, medical concepts. Within this, I would argue that Hinengaro is stripped of profound cosmological beauty, instead co-opted and interned to a prior category or aspect of Being that dominant Western metaphysics conceptualises as the (physical, functional) mind. Further, I would argue that the metaphysics of presence (manifest in modern versions of early Western philosophies of mind and retaining ideas of internal, individual functioning) is continuing to put in place ever more present, visible and measurable iterations of the concept of mind that travel further away from Māori and indigenous understandings of Being.

### **Considering Māori and indigenous understandings of Being in mental health: Expressing an excessive meaning**

The idea of excessive meaning - of things that cannot be contained within a scientific conceptual structure - is at the centre of my concern for how Māori and indigenous onto-epistemes can be taken seriously within mental health. During the course of this research, two significant examples of Māori and indigenous models of mental health have caught my attention in considering Māori and indigenous onto-epistemes. These examples provide insight into how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being are contributing to approaches within mental health that are steeped in Māori and indigenous thinking. They also support an analysis of how a scientific conceptual structure might suppress the excessive (spiritual) expression

of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being within mental health. In addition, there is one interesting example of a new approach to working in the field of psychotherapy that I think demonstrates the potential for expanding beyond the view of finding meaning only in what we can conceptually grasp or visibly measure. Each of these examples will be presented here and will then be discussed to offer some concluding thoughts on the expression of excessive meaning within mental health.

***Manawanui gathering: Imagining the potential of ‘wairua healing’***

On the 9th of March 2018, the Waitematā and Auckland District Health Boards hosted key partners from a range of community and government organisations at Manawanui Oranga Hinengaro kaupapa Māori Mental Health site (Pt Chevalier, Auckland). The key partners were invited to discuss what was viewed as a growing drug addiction crisis within Māori communities. While it is recognised that Māori have for some time experienced disproportionate rates of addiction, the community felt that recent trends indicated an increase in the impact of addictions on Māori whānau and communities.

It was clear from the discussions that there is a strong desire for Māori models of care (driven by tikanga Māori), to be utilised as a basis of addictions support as opposed to simply integrating Māori knowledge into clinical settings. Māori understandings of how people are connected, both visibly (in social, cultural, and economic terms), and spiritually in terms of intangible aspects of well-being, were described throughout the hui as key elements of a Māori centred approach. Wairua was discussed as a cornerstone of a Māori model of care and was described during the gathering as a pathway to re-claiming spiritual concepts. A significant outcome of re-claiming spiritual concepts within the context of a Māori model of care would be a re-conceptualisation of addiction including moving away from seeing people as a (individual) problem.

The idea of re-framing a view of those experiencing addictions centred on seeing people as rangatira, inherently connected to atua and whenua. Rather than provide treatment for individuals, the person experiencing addiction and their whānau

would primarily be understood as being part of a whakapapa. To illustrate the potential of focussing on whakapapa as a way of understanding healing, key partners discussed the idea of historical trauma which included a focus on ‘place’ or whenua. As one Māori psychologist attending the hui explained, there are sites of disruption caused by historically traumatic events that require healing rituals such as the spiritual clearing of whenua (whakawātea). In this way, the proposed model of care would include a focus on recovery that seeks to address both the physical elements of addiction and the non-physical, intangible aspects of well-being or what one community member called ‘wairua healing’.

### ***Māori and indigenous Trauma Informed Care***

Two major Māori led research projects in Aotearoa provide examples of the types of Māori knowledge that can be utilised to support the implementation of Māori approaches within mental health. One of these projects (led by Associate Professor Leonie Pihama, Te Kotahi Research Institute, The University of Waikato), aims to develop Māori Trauma Informed Care approaches. The other project (Led by Dr Cheryl Smith, Te Atawhai o te Ao, Whanganui), also aims to develop trauma healing strategies based on Māori and indigenous understandings of trauma, conceptualised as collective as opposed to individual experiences. As part of this work, Dr Eduardo Duran, a leading indigenous psychologist, visited the Taranaki Region in 2014 to educate communities about historical trauma. Dr Duran described sites (whenua) of trauma within the United States of America, including places where massacres of indigenous communities have taken place. Dr Duran explained that trauma from these massacres is passed down through generations and manifests in what is labelled from a clinical perspective as mental illness and addictions.

### ***Demons in the consulting room***

The phrase, *demons in the consulting room*, comes from the title of a book written by Harris, Kalb and Klebanoff (2017). The book focuses on the potential that resides in the hidden and often unsaid stories carried by people who engage with therapists and particularly psychotherapists. The authors use the term ‘demons’

(and in other publications refer to ‘ghost’), intentionally as a way of locating their work in the liminal spaces that cut across the domains of clinical life and cultural thought. In this way, they hope to avoid being pulled back into the strict parameters of clinical concepts and language, clearing the way for an opening of sorts: the authors are open to what they call the “present-absence and absent-presence” (p.3-4) that emerges from people’s histories.

Part of the focus of describing a project in which therapists work with demons – with ghosts and memories that haunt – includes supporting those that live with histories that have come before, in generations that precede the lived experience of the individuals who engage in therapy. The ‘patients’ include the children of those who survived the Holocaust, and whose whakapapa bears the marks of slavery and other painful traumas. The authors describe the experience of re-turning to these points in time: the re-enactment of what has (through a certain perspective on the temporal) been put neatly in the past through the concept of having been “laid to rest as ancestors” (Kalb, 2017, p.19). What the authors imagine through their dance with demons and ghosts (as therapists who have felt the shared experience of haunting with their clients) is that there are things that haunt our experience - ghosts that are “insistently undead” (Kalb, 2017, p.19), who continue to move around and within us.

The experience of being affected by things that are not fully present in a temporal or physical sense, or in the sense of being solid thinkable and explainable ideas, is one that Harris, Kalb and Klebanoff (2017) feel is significantly important to the role of supporting people to reach a place of healing and well-being. As they explain, while it may be difficult to work with ideas that are beyond conventional language and conceptualisation - too excessive to fit a conventional frame – striving to “put into narrative what is often beyond explaining in words” (p. 7), may serve to suppress important and complex expressions of Being and experience. Recognising the movements of things that continue in our lives in their absent-present influence

makes room for the expression of an experience even if it cannot fit into the readily available concepts and terms constructed through clinical language.

There is a theme that appears to run through each of the three examples that have been outlined here. The theme relates to the idea of how we may be impacted by things unseen and how approaches to supporting people in mental health can be (un) structured in ways that are cognisant of their absent presence. The connection between *atua*, *tangata* and *whenua* described at the Manawanui gathering speaks to an intangible presence and connection: the ‘thorough collapse’ (Mika, 2017) of things in the world such that they fully constitute each other. The implications of this co-constitutive Being have been recognised by community members at Manawanui as the potential of the intangible and of thorough interconnection in our healing approaches. This view of healing foregrounds the spiritual, not as a separate component, but as an indivisible condition of Being. There is, in this view of the person as a completely interconnected part of the whole, the potential for departing from the perspective that it is the individual that is predominantly the ‘site’ of illness. Instead, if there is distress (or what in conventional health systems is conceptualised as illness), then the genesis of that experience is multiple - holistic.

A holistic view of distress or illness is also implicated in the example of treatment and healing through psychotherapy that recognises what haunts the person: the demons in the consulting room that are a person’s personal history or what a person is connected to. The perception of people’s histories as real entities reflects an appeal to the mysterious influences that are not easily described through traditional clinical concepts in psychotherapy. There is instead an attempt to open the possibilities of meaning: to push past epistemic boundaries to find meaning that expands beyond the concept. There is a sense of an unsayable experience reflected in the idea of haunting: things that have profound effect even if we cannot name them. In this understanding of the unsayable, I see reflections of Māori and indigenous metaphysics: things that cannot be fully explained, arriving and swimming in and out of view (e.g., Mika, 2017) of their own accord. The example of Māori and indigenous trauma informed care also appeals to the idea that we are connected to things that are not fully present in the temporal sense of ‘here and

now'. In line with this, a Māori and indigenous view of trauma informed care also points to an understanding of trauma as an experience that spans generations.

### **Concluding thoughts: The unseen and its absent presence**

The dominant Western metaphysics that has been explored in this chapter, and the conventional understanding of certain experiences as an individual disorder, pose a challenge to the metaphysically complex ideas that are raised in Māori and indigenous metaphysics. This challenge, I suggest, is demonstrated in the apparent divide between the way in which Māori terms are described from within either the Māori world or the clinical world or mental health system. Within this chapter, the terms *wairangi* and *pōrangi* have been explored to consider whether their translation within a mental health context, as terms that denote a Māori view of mental disorder or mental illness, reflects an adequate presentation of the metaphysical complexity that each term carries. Similarly, *Hinengaro* as *atua* has been discussed in contrast to the translation of *Hinengaro* as mental health or mind, foregrounding the profound, mysterious, cosmological Being of *Hinengaro* that cannot be conceptually contained.

The structure that sits beneath the translation of Māori terms, and more broadly beneath all utterances, has been exposed in this chapter to highlight the challenge of resisting a dominant Western influence. Simply offering an alternative construction that would give different names for what fundamentally remains as a view of a person's experience as mental disorder does little to dismantle the framework that supports the preference for a rational structure. From the view of the person as a Being whose wellness depends on rational and ordered balance, to the insistence of representing all things in the world in the order of present, discernible, highly evident and knowable qualities, the underlying structure of rationalism remains. Laying different terms over this structure, rather than escaping the expectation of putting things in a certain order, would, as Derrida argues, simply intern those terms to the dominant frame – reducing their meaning in a gesture of apprehension. At risk is a freedom of expression that accounts for the indivisible

interconnection of person and world – the complex relational experience of Being that cannot be contained or easily explained.

There is an excessive meaning within each of the terms that have been discussed in this chapter that speaks to the often unsayable and unthinkable nature of the world reflected in Māori and indigenous understandings of Being. If, as Derrida (1978) suggests, the metaphysics of presence creates a type of madness – a view of excessive meaning that resists order and conceptual containment as representing a type of metaphysical dis-order – then Māori and indigenous expressions are at constant risk of being maintained, contained and restricted. In order to fit the order, the excessive, mysterious and complex holism that Māori and indigenous Being is grounded in must be suppressed. The (k)new expressions that are emerging from within Māori and indigenous projects in mental health (those that resist restriction and the expectation that meaning will be modified to fit a dominant onto-epistemic frame) offer possibilities for liberation from this limitation and restraint. The excesses of Māori and indigenous onto-epistemes, of the potentiality that rests within spaces of uncertainty (the places where creativity can emerge from complexity) are like points of re-turn: the re-turn to holism as a different metaphysical possibility.



## **PROLOGUE TO CHAPTERS SEVEN AND EIGHT: ENGAGING WITH INTERVIEWS THROUGH WHAIWHAKAARO**

Chapters seven and eight present information from the participant interviews. The purpose of chapters seven and eight is to raise the idea of ‘different possibilities’ that might dislodge the notion of mental illness from its place of prominence in explaining people’s experiences and behaviour. Participants’ descriptions of Māori and indigenous worldviews foreground certain metaphysical premises, disrupting the idea of the self as a cognitive agent and the world as a mechanical object. Already in the preceding chapters, the philosophical settings that ground this thesis have been presented as a way of raising possibilities of the more excessive, more complex and sometimes unexplainable effects that things have on the person (and the world).

Within the following two chapters, I aim to present ideas that carry excessive and complex meaning. This is demonstrated in chapters seven and eight in two ways; firstly, the participants’ insights into the complex nature of the world provide an expanded view that re-presents Māori and indigenous understandings of Being. While there are some direct references to mental health, for the most part, the participants have not presented their views as direct commentaries about Māori and indigenous views of mental health or of the notion of mental illness. Rather, participant responses are largely grounded in Māori and indigenous metaphysics and focussed on discussing Māori and indigenous views about Being in the world. Secondly, the ‘story’ I present in this chapter is shaped by my personal (yet holistically worlded) <sup>17</sup> reaction to the participants’ responses rather than being presented as findings that identify truths about Māori and indigenous views on mental illness.

Chapters seven and eight present information from the interviews conducted as part of this research. In more conventional research, the presentation of interviews

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<sup>17</sup>The reader is asked to refer again to chapters two and three for an explanation of worldedness.

might be conceptualised as research ‘findings’ or the main points drawn from interview data that align with the research question. However, as discussed in chapter three, the way in which I aim to engage with the material emerging from the interviews reflects an intentional departure from conventional ideas of analysis and method. This departure from convention was discussed in chapter three as a move to resist objectivity and the presentation of interviews in terms of the generalisable – the idea that I might land on some essential and universal meaning. In this sense, how I engage with the interviews is different from a conventional approach where participant responses are codified into patterns of repetition, equating what is real with what is prominent. Instead, I will engage in what has so far been described as ‘whaiwhakaaro’: a complex embodied process of reflection that allows the researcher to present a deeply personal response to what has been shared by the research participants. Whaiwhakaaro is, therefore, intended as a highly subjective holistic research approach that implicates something more than the researcher’s self-contained (cognitive) thinking.

Whaiwhakaaro will be used as an approach that allows for the presentation of highly personal reactions to ‘utterances’ that have had an impact on me as a researcher. Within this chapter, these utterances are presented as terms and sentences within the participants’ quotes that have been highlighted in bold to help the reader identify what has pushed my thinking. These highlighted terms and sentences are then discussed in text boxes that are presented directly beneath each relevant quote. Each term and sentence highlighted within a quote represents a (personal) impact that was felt from the play of the words, the intonation of voice or a sense of a ‘message’ emerging.

It is important to note that not all quotes include highlighted terms or ideas. However, where quotes have been included without highlighted terms or sentences, they nevertheless provide rich context, adding another layer of meaning to the overall story emerging from participant responses.

The idea of ‘co-creation’ within writing and research has been discussed as something that implicates the relational self where the researcher, rather than being a central creator of description and meaning, is wholly and holistically ‘caught up’

in and with the world. This experience of being ‘caught up’ has been related to a Māori understanding of things in the world as whanaunga rather than objects of study. Co-creation in this sense is ‘whakapapa’ and the understanding that what is written, what is thought, attended to and taken up in reflection is not simply an individual cognitive processing of external data. It is, instead, an expression of relationship – the impetus to write, think and reflect, fully influenced by an indivisible state of Being in dynamic relationship with things in the world. It is in the context of this indivisibility of Being and the influence that the self’s relationship with the world has on writing and reflection that I understand my own experience of engaging, not just with what participants in this research have shared, but with other things that have emerged throughout the research process.

This approach to engaging with the interview responses reflects the metaphysical ground that whaiwhakaaro and the idea of co-creation emerges from. But it is not simply an opportunity for me as the researcher to engage with ‘whakapapa’ as a pathway to presenting a type of intuitive response.<sup>18</sup> As Mika and Southey (2016) explain,

Any user of the whakaaro method will...undoubtedly acknowledge its limitations for orthodoxy, which are simultaneously its benefits: that it is unpredictable; that it is non-foundational; that it results in unprovable work; and that it itself could provide fuel for another researcher’s creative thinking (p.8).

I want the reader to bear this in mind when going through each of the chapters. The material presented in this chapter may provide an impetus for your own thinking, reflecting your own experience of being called to attend to things – the invitation to co-create with your own whakapapa.

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<sup>18</sup> See chapter two for an example of how whakapapa is discussed as the co-creation of writing and other aspects of work.

## Content of chapters seven and eight

Each of the chapters is split into two conversation areas that organise participant responses into particular principles of Being. It is intended that each conversation area will illustrate the ways in which Māori and indigenous worldviews implicate the influence of things in the world, representing a departure from a human-centred view of Being. This departure lays the ground for understanding how the notion of mental illness can be re-imagined from Māori and indigenous perspectives. Each of the chapters, therefore, draws out and elaborates on particular metaphysical premises that have emerged from participant responses.

Chapter seven focuses on the idea of the more-than-human nature of Being in order to highlight how the world and self are fully caught up in a relational interconnection. The idea of the more-than-human nature of Being is reflected in the conversation areas of *whakapapa* and *wairua*. In chapter eight, the human self is made more explicit: the notion of mental illness as it apparently impacts the human is addressed more directly through a focus on Māori and indigenous knowledges (the onto-epistemic bases of Māori and indigenous metaphysics) and on expanding an understanding of well-being. An exploration of Māori and indigenous knowledges and of Māori and indigenous understandings of well-being is reflected in the conversation areas of *mātauranga* and *Hinengaro* (see chapters for further explanation of content).

While there is a type of thematic structure that has been applied to the participant interviews (and my response to the interviews) this structure does not imply that the themes or groupings represent the identification of essential variables. Instead I would liken the structure presented in each chapter to the approach used by McNeill (2005) who, in presenting findings from her research, conceptualises the presentation of interviews as broad conversation areas. McNeill talks about the intention to present an “unobtrusive reporting style” (p.139) emphasising the significance of participants’ ideas, emerging not simply from repeated messages that are common across interviews but also from single utterances of individual participants. As McNeill states, “What [participants] actually said, was as significant to the study as [participant] agreement on specific topics” (p.142).

Within this context, the expression of an idea or viewpoint by one single participant could be just as significant as a consensus about an idea or viewpoint.

Going forward, the ideas that have emerged from chapters seven and eight have been used to inform the development of chapter nine. Chapter nine takes the place of a conventional discussion section, instead offering a creative speculation on the possibilities that arise from Māori and indigenous metaphysics in re-imagining the notion of mental illness. This act of re-imagining through creative speculation is guided by what participants have shared (including their own acts of re-imagining the notion of mental illness and well-being). It is, however, also strongly guided by the influence of things that push thinking, disrupting certainty and pre-determined meaning in order to encourage creativity. Together, these three chapters (seven, eight, and nine), foreground Māori and indigenous understandings of Being as a basis for considering holism as a metaphysical premise that disrupts conventional notions of mental illness.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN: INDIVISIBLE BEING - THE THOROUGH INTERCONNECTION OF SELF AND WORLD**

The metaphysical premise reflected in chapter seven relates to the idea of a thorough, holistic interconnection between all things in the world. Participants' responses demonstrate a view of Being that implicates the self as a relational Being and of connection to 'place' in a more than physical sense. There appears to be a normalising of the experience of spiritual connection that implicates an intangible influence on the self through an indivisible connection to all things. In my reflections, this intangible influence indicates more than the self's connection to external things, also signalling that there is an integral co-construction of self and world at play. As mentioned in the prologue to chapters seven and eight, the current chapter is separated into two conversation areas. Each of these conversation areas are outlined below.

Conversation areas:

### ***Whakapapa***

Whakapapa concerns the lived experience of holistic interconnection. Participant responses related to whakapapa included a focus on being connected to whenua (physically and spiritually) and being connected to unseen influences (sometimes described as entities). These relational influences not only disrupt the idea of individualism but also disrupt other ideas that impact on how the entities that we are connected to are conceptualised from a dominant Western perspective. For example, participants discussed the conceptualisation of Hine-nui-te-pō as a type of 'grim reaper' character, relating this view to the West's tendency to conceive of life and death as a separation – an ending that solidifies the self's state of disconnection or a final departure. In general, the dominant Western metaphysical orientation of separation was contrasted with Māori and indigenous holistic interconnection to foreground the understanding of the self (and all things) as thoroughly enmeshed. This view of Being sits in sharp contrast to an understanding

of the self as an isolated part of the whole or (at best), a single Being that is only loosely connected to other things.

### ***Wairua***

Wairua relates to the idea of the intangible, an ever-present (absent) influence reflected in Māori and indigenous metaphysics. Participants' responses indicated an awareness of something other than the physical forms that are visually, physically, materially and immediately available to our perception. The intangible was also discussed as something that moves in and out of view, showing up in feelings or bodily sensations: the impulse to think of different things or share 'messages' with people but not for easily discernible reasons. This sense of an intangible influence was something that participants viewed as a normal aspect of Being: an experience of spirituality that is an indivisible part of lived experience.

### **Whakapapa**

#### ***The holistic connection of all things***

One of the participants described a Māori worldview as the understanding that all life has come from the earth which accounts for relational Being and the interconnection of all things. The participant explained that a holistic view of Being also shapes thinking about relationships between human beings and other forms of life including shaping thoughts about hierarchies of Being and equality of Being:

*when I'm talking about an indigenous worldview... the idea that first of all we burst from the earth. This is the critical, this is the foundational idea of all indigenous worldviews that all life is born from the earth and because all life is born from the earth we are therefore all kin with one another...it leads to certain ways of thinking about how we interact with all life around us. Chief amongst them is the idea that we are not superior to the natural world, but we are inherent and a part of*

*the natural life...doing something at one part of the fabric of life has effects in the other part of the fabric of life.*

Another participant talked about traditional Māori worldviews in the context of modern influences and the impacts that colonisation has had on perceptions of being in relationship with the world including relationships held with entities that make up the world. The participant emphasised that Beings, including Ranginui and Papatūānuku, are real entities that are a part of whakapapa. In this context, the participant extended the meaning of whakapapa to include more than human genealogical relationships. The participant emphasised the place of entities in our everyday lives as part of a lived whakapapa. This view of entities as a lived whakapapa was supported by a comment from another participant who emphasised that Māori identity is ‘episodic’ and relates to material experiences:

*I think as contemporary Māori we're looking at whakapapa and trying to understand what that means, given that it's been colonised by the notion of genealogical connections and that it's somehow lineal back into the past ... I'm attempting to decolonise my understanding of whakapapa. How I see it is that it is more kind of the natural existence and that it is Ranginui and Papatūānuku are very much real Beings and we're descended from those Beings, that there is really no separation for us....Whakapapa is experiential in this sense but also, it's central to our understanding of how the world exists.*

When talking of Ranginui and Papatūānuku as real entities, the participant attempted to approximate the state of Being that an entitized understanding of Ranginui and Papatūānuku represents. The term energy was used to attempt to articulate this state of Being; however, the participant pointed out that there are a number of Māori terms that include an intrinsic sense of energy:

*The nearest word I would get would be energy, that there are energies that exist. In English, that's how I would see it. And I think when we talk mauri, when we talk ihi, wehi there's so many words within which the notion of energies and the transmission of the present and a moving dynamic nature of those energies exist. And they are kind of so vast that they kind of wear out I guess - merge with much bigger Beings and with other Beings and other energies.*

The state of Being that the participant associated with the term energy was also related to other living Beings including plant life. The participant described how a Māori worldview would include understanding that all Beings can communicate and share knowledge:

*I do **believe** that energies, plants, have their own knowledges and when we interact with those plants, if we're lucky we can share in that **knowledge**, they can reveal knowledge to us, we can ask knowledge of them, they can share that back with us and so forth.*

**Believe:** The term believe can be contrasted with 'to know' and raises interesting possibilities about Māori and indigenous understandings of Being. To 'know' something suggests that there is certain knowledge of a thing that in this thesis has been directly linked to having knowledge of a thing's essential qualities (that can be determined through types of measurement). In contrast 'believe' suggests a type of faith that something exists even though there may be no way of measuring the thing. This is important when considering how Māori and indigenous metaphysics raises the possibilities of things that we cannot see or the 'unseen'. There appears to be a type of faith at play (rather than knowledge), when things (such as 'energy'), are discussed. In terms of mental health, I wonder how these two

seemingly dissonant views impact on a person who describes their experience in the language of ‘belief’ rather than the language of medical conceptualisation?

**Knowledge:** I interpret the description of plants having knowledge as something that disrupts the idea that knowledge is human centred rather than supporting the concept of knowledge as the cataloguing of essential qualities.

The participant spoke about the outcome of the long running legal battle undertaken by Whanganui iwi that resulted in a decision to grant the Whanganui river legal rights or rights of personhood. In talking about the personhood of the river, the participant described how communicating with the river (and other living Beings), forms part of being present in the world. The participant related this view of being present to being grounded in our bodies in contrast to dominant Western perspectives that she viewed as dissociative and that encourage disconnection:

*we've got that example in Whanganui where the river's been recognised now as a tūpuna, as a **living ancestor**. But that's always been the way. As you walk past the river you talk to the river, you mihi to the river. It's the norm for us, really... I know looking at the way my grandmother operated, she was always very present. Very present in her body, very **grounded** in her body. The state of Being in the West is very much about, I think, disassociating ourselves from our bodies... Which is constantly pulling at us to, I think, disassociate. And so again it comes to my mind a decolonising process to remain in our bodies, to remain connected to all of the energies that are around us, to remain connected to our understandings of the livingness.*

**Living ancestor:** The term ‘living ancestor’ (while used here in a positive sense to acknowledge the river as an ancestor), pushes me to think of how there is a tendency within dominant Western metaphysics to draw a hard line between ‘living’ and ‘dead’. I interpret this as a rigid separation between what is here or present (living) and what is not here or is absent (dead). This would appear to have implications for tāngata whaiora who describe experiences of having contact with people who have passed away or with things that are perceived as being absent (again – the unseen). It does not seem possible, within a framework that relies on the presence of things, for these experiences to be ‘real’.

**Grounded:** The term grounded pushes me to think about how metaphysics constructs the self as either a Being that is immersed within the world or an individual who is separated from the world, taking on a detached stance as an observer. These different metaphysical orientations have implications for Māori and indigenous researchers who are often, I believe, forced to detach from things in the world in order to follow the rules of academic research. The holistic nature of Being in which all things in the world are connected would, of course, prevent any real spiritual detachment from taking place, but the treatment of things as objects that stand apart from the self is, nevertheless, harmful (Justice, 2016). Viewing the self as a connected Being and representing things speculatively as holistic and therefore not fully knowable things, is the experience of Being within the research.

Another participant linked Māori understandings of Being to the idea of ethics and ensuring that the integrity of tikanga Māori is upheld. Maintaining integrity was discussed in the context of relational Being and connections with the wider environment and how understanding connectedness ensured the protection of each Being. This included understanding mauri, wairua and the role of karakia in maintaining connections between things in the world:

*For me I think about ethics a lot...This is my kind of thinking and kōrero around why we need to have a real*

*wānanga about ethics. Because all the things that we do and all the things that we kind of take for granted about tikanga Māori is about us maintaining the integrity of our being human in this environment. Karakia is one of the ways that links us all up together, but then because of our understanding of mauri and then our understanding of wairua, we put in place a lot of things that are actually about protecting the Being.*

***We put in place a lot of things that are actually about protecting the Being:***

The term ‘we’, used here to refer to those that put in place things that will protect the Being can be understood as people who engage in things, creating something that protects that Being. In a worlded, holistic sense of Being, however, the term ‘we’ would refer to all things engaging at once to create what is referred to here as protection or what could also be referred to as energy (see following quote below).

One of the participants talked about their connection to ngahere and how this connection related to their well-being. The participant has created a ngahere as part of her home which she experiences as being more than a ‘garden’ in a backyard and that provides energy and a lived experience of knowledge that she described as being located in the world as opposed to being located in the mind (or head):

*Sometimes when I’m really down in every way, I go there and hold my tree, my kauri. It’s right underneath by my studio and I can sit there, stand there and hold and just get the **energy** back. Those sorts of things, it’s about a lived experience of living with it because knowledge in your head is dead. It’s dead to the world, it’s only in your head, unless you apply it in your **lived experience** then it’s about doing that for me.*

**Energy:** Referring to energy in this way appears to offer an understanding of relationship which contrasts with the idea of knowledge. When the participant talks about getting their energy back, there is no intention to analyse the environment in order to gain knowledge of it as a way of experiencing or extracting something from the environment, and in this case - well-being. How might a more transactional relationship, based on extracting knowledge from the environment, impact on the type of well-being that is experienced? Knowledge, within a dominant metaphysics, requires that we stand apart from things in order for them to be 'known', demanding that a type of separation occurs. In the context of Māori and indigenous views on 'attunement' (see chapter four), what are the implications of an essential separation of self and world? In a mental health setting, I imagine that there are types of transactional relationships that occur, particularly between a professional who must extract information from a person in order for a person's 'dis-order' to be known (based on the qualities of dis-order that are available to be assigned to the person in the form of pre-determined behavioural traits). The person labelled as experiencing mental illness may also be expected to identify their experience in ways that fit with the language of pre-determined and well-defined behavioural traits, thereby separating themselves from the experience in order to place the experience into a certain clinical framework.

**Lived experience:** The idea of lived experience is important in Māori and indigenous metaphysics and I have written about this (for example) in chapter four when describing the idea of orientation or the experience of Being as our (embodied) interpretations of experience, sensations, and the networks we are immersed in as part of a process of becoming. However, a strict reliance on the experience of things in order for things to be 'real' things is a reliance on the absolute presence of things which is not a prerequisite of 'real Being' within Māori and indigenous metaphysics. Deloria (2001) also talks about experiential existence explaining that our experience of the world and our sensory engagement is the ground from which our reflection and understanding of relational Being emerges.

Experiential existence allows for the movement of existence rather than the static representation of existence through grasping or conceptualising. The phenomenon of experience mentioned by the participant captures my regard within the entirety of the participants' revelations about whakapapa. Whakapapa as experiential existence extends the meaning of connection beyond human genealogy to include a complete holistic connection to the world as entity or whanaunga (see chapter four). This is contrasted with the Platonic view that marginalises the sensory, lived experience and indeed the (false) physical world itself. Through Platonic philosophy, the corporeal world has become a corrupt, lesser, solely material phenomenon to hold at a distance (e.g., Arola, 2007). This links to the separation that participants discuss and to the idea of the concept of mind (also connected to Cartesian philosophy) as a marker of that separation through the cognitive uptake of the world. The cognitive uptake of the world may also be connected to the marginalisation of the sensory, casting the body as a corrupt tool. This view of the body as lesser 'tool' sits in contrast to a Māori and indigenous view of the body as a part of a wider organism, as being attuned to a wider organism (or out of tune e.g., Vanessa de Oliveira, 2018).

### ***Knowledge of the other world***

One of the participants discussed the concept of connection and the spiritual ties that continue to connect people, not only in the living world but also once people have passed away. In recounting a conversation that they had with their son, the participant talked about their desire to teach their son about "*knowledge of the other world*" or a Māori worldview about the continuation of relationships after death. The participant spoke about being able to soothe her son's anxieties about death and dying and referred to Māori traditions, such as pūrākau, that can be used as tools for teaching loved ones about Māori views of death and relationship:

*you know kids when they're at that developmental age  
and you don't want their parents to die... that's when  
they kind of fixate and get anxious about it and lose*

*sleep over it and start dreaming about it. One of the things I used to talk to him about was... myths, **our old traditions**, our pūrākau because I wanted him to grow up with this knowledge of the other world, a Māori world view is not like one god. Because that's so destructive. The space Hine-nui-te-po has created... I wanted him to know that when we die, it's just as heaven, **the heaven equivalent**, that there's a space on the other side and we'll be there. I don't know, he might have been about three or four, and he said when you die and then when I die, how will I know where to find you. And I said I'll build a house right next to the door, so when you come through, I'll be right there...I said when you come, you just got to call out and I'll know it's you. That's a Māori world view for me that he can take and know, and it's going to mediate his fears and his worries. **One of life's biggest kind of fears is death, and loss and losing your loved one.** I want him to live knowing that it's going to happen but when it does there's actually a space and a place for us.*

**Our old traditions:** Rather than this being a reference to something past that is being revisited in teachings, I interpret the participant's response as a type of re-turn to things that are always with us like voices that are always guiding us through the world. Within a dominant Western metaphysics, the things that the participant is teaching her son may be seen as 'old' in a negative sense (things that are in the distant past), but from within a Māori and indigenous metaphysics they are 'here now'. There is a sense of times collapse in this view of traditions that are never distant and that endure in the sense of never being absent. In fact, a mother that is teaching her son about these 'traditions' is, I think, a demonstration that these things are always here, manifesting in a mother's words to her son.

***The heaven equivalent:*** The idea of ‘the heaven equivalent’ potentially raises issues about the separation of different spaces (i.e., the world is separate from heaven) within Christian thought. For example, Arola (2007) explains how Christianity’s idea of heaven is associated with Plato’s theory of Forms in which the real world (or real objects), resides in another space, away from the physical world that we inhabit. The idea of separation seems to echo across the different aspects of dominant Western metaphysics and seems at odds with Māori and indigenous holism in which all things are here in a kind of collapsed space or what was referred to in chapter four as the ‘cosmoscape’ (Roberts, 2013).

***One of life’s biggest kind of fears is death, and loss and losing your loved one:*** I would agree, but there may be a different kind of fear set up by dominant Western metaphysics that is fundamentally about escaping the clutches of time. This fear of something bigger than the self is perhaps reflected in the metaphysics of presence and particularly where it has been described as the quest to resist the flux of temporal change (Garrison, 1999). Death’s relationship with temporal change would seem to automatically repel those who live in a world that is invested (by way of a certain metaphysical inheritance), in keeping things intact – the soothing solidity of the perpetual thing (or essential thing) that does not fade away or threaten us with a nature that is not fully knowable.

Another participant addressed the sense of anxiety that the participant above has associated with views of death by describing how Māori views of death, dying and transition contrast with a fearful view of death that they felt stemmed from the West’s fear of the unknown:

***The West tends to fear pain, the unknown, the darkness etc and tries to seek youth and longevity. The birthing and the dying is hidden away and medicalised. When it is in the home, which is what I remember as a child, you learn about the process of***

*birthing and dying as natural life transitions. Death and birth are realities that change your experience and perception of the world.*

*The obsession with “I” is enhanced through the removal of life transitions, because when we acknowledge transitions, we have to reflect on the ways that we are part of a collective moving through life and towards death. Those transitions include rites of passage from one phase of life to another which indigenous peoples have rituals for, to honour and acknowledge the spirit of change, shedding a skin. Externalising our movement towards death means that the spirit of death is not an enemy.*

***The West tends to fear pain, the unknown, the darkness etc and tries to seek youth and longevity. The birthing and the dying is hidden away and medicalised:*** The medicalisation of mental illness (or clinical classification), would seem like a kind of death – a death of movement, of complexity, of faith (when faith is interpreted as a belief in things that remain unseen or cannot be measured/proven). Paradoxically the participant is pointing to a type of ‘flight’ from death and transition that would mirror the desire to depart from the apparent influence of temporality and change reflected in the metaphysics of presence (e.g., see Söderbäck, 2013, and classical ontology’s task of making things immune to time).

Another participant discussed the misinterpretation of Māori entities (or deities) that, through misinterpretation (or reinterpretation), have come to be associated with non-Māori views of death:

*There are the well-known historical barriers where they’ve created their interpretations of our histories*

*and our literature and have come out with spurious interpretations of things. My favourite one is the misinterpretation or the misalignment of Hine-nui-te-pō as some kind of grim reaper. You see that occasionally in various interpretations and sadly some Māori have taken that on as well, that **Hine-nui-te-pō could almost be some grim character.***

***Hine-nui-te-pō could almost be some grim character:*** The characterisation of Hine-nui-te-pō as a type of ‘grim reaper’ appears to mirror a Western interpretation of death as a negative finality. This association re-shapes not only our thinking about Hine-nui-te-pō but also suppresses the excessive and profound in order to bring Hine-nui-te-pō into line with the notion of death. The notion of limited meaning reflected through a certain view of death is symbolic of a metaphysics that seeks to escape (the temporal movement of) change and uncertainty. I speculate that this may have repercussions within a mental health context when we think of how experience is limited by clinical concepts. These concepts represent a particular manifestation of the finality that dominant Western metaphysics has preferred since the time of Plato and Aristotle – the same finality that renders Hine-nui-te-pō as a limited entity and a representative of death. In contrast, from a Māori perspective, Hine-nui-te-pō has been described as a protector, nurturer (e.g., T. Smith, 2015) and a guardian that embraces the spirit moving towards its “next spiritual quest” (Nikora, Te Awekotuku and Tamanui, 2015, p. 230). I would suggest that we are often rendered in line with the same limited framework of Being that mirrors a dominant Western preference for limitation (fitting things into limited categories of Being), but that within mental health, this rendering is a strict suppression of excess and of the possibilities of engaging in a creative response to one’s (holistic) circumstance. In a Foucauldian sense, death and ‘madness’ have a special relationship, embedded in the Renaissance period, and the fear of death that manifests in the imaginary of “death of the mind” (Barchilon, 1998, p.vi). Madness, as the free flow of

things and the abyss of the unintelligible, must be contained, which is, I suggest, still reflected in the concept of clinical diagnosis that we see as a predominant feature of mental health treatment today.

### ***Reconnecting and healing***

One of the participants talked about individualism as an unhealthy perspective on a state of Being. They described how relationships between people create Being, calling each other into existence. The act of calling others into Being was related to wider Māori understandings of the process of creation that the participant said gives meaning to her lived experience, describing how “*it textures my daily life and engagement with people around me*”

*I cannot be without other people. **Other people** make my Being and they call me into existence. So, to try and **understand** me as an individual not only ignores but it actually invalidates my existence, and my being in relationship, and being called into relationship and therefore into an existence. So, you get the whole thing from Te Kore, Te Pō all the way through to Te Ao-mārama, which really is a process of being **called into existence**, and into the world of be-ing. So, again, it comes back to the whole process of let's chop it up to better understand it, and I found that to be quite a fruitless exercise. It's easier to actually try and understand and give meaning to people, and their Being by understanding their life world.*

**Other people:** I like the appeal to interconnection that is reflected in the participant's words, that “*other people make my Being and call me into existence*”. The extension of this thinking would implicate the ‘more than human’ calling that makes our Being through a more thorough holism,

disrupting the idea of human centred Being. McIntosh (2012) describes the disruption of human centred Being by also using the idea of ‘calling’, referring to “a radical re-grounding of humanity (that) must therefore call back Being, the soul, if it is to find harmony with ecology in its full cosmic depth – with the rta”(Sanskrit word for cosmic order, p. 61).

In a mental health context, this more thorough holism raises questions about what is impacting on the person, or what is ‘calling’ to the person. This view of a holistic (and intangible) impact on the person, by things that call for attention has, for example, been raised as a possibility by Harris et al. (2017) who describe the call as ‘echoes’ (p.9).

***Understand***: the term understand would appear to signal that something is beneath or is positioned under a thing (perhaps an epistemic ground of understanding, for example); however, the etymology of the term understand shows that its original meaning is ‘between’ or ‘among’ - literally, to ‘stand among things’. When we say that we understand something (when this is seen from the perspective of the term’s traditional meaning), we would traditionally be signalling that we are ‘within’ the phenomenon rather than standing apart from it in order to observe, measure and know it. The isolated subject, in the context of the rational thinking self, is one that stands away from an object to determine its essential structure and therefore produce knowledge of the object. This more traditional translation repositions the (indigenous) self (and all things), from a Being who is positioned as an isolated subject to one who is immersed.

***Called into existence***: if time is collapsed, then it could be useful to think of the possibility that nothing is called into existence but always-already is. I like the way that the participant describes the experience of being called into existence, but I conceptualise the experience as (perhaps) being called to ‘see’ or called to re-turn in certain directions, orientating ourselves to things that are already before and around us.

### ***Individualism and interrelationship***

Individualism was described as a type of cultural suppression that one participant discussed (in relation to Māori and others who find meaning in relational Being), as a philosophy that tends to, “*diminish the nature of their Being*”. In the context of the notion of mental illness, and particularly when considering approaches used to support those labelled as experiencing mental illness, the participant stated that a central concern would be to determine how views on Being shape support systems:

*what would be an appropriate system of support and care into a space that conceives of the world in a particular way? I think it's about coming to better understand people, and ways of engagement with things that are strange, odd, unusual.*

In terms of healing approaches and pathways to well-being, one participant talked about the idea of interrelationship and the lived experience of a holistic relational approach to Being or “*interacting*” as a pathway to well-being and an expression of wairua as embedded in our ways of living in the world:

*Mental health is about unravelling - unravelling what we're told and just choosing to live another life. **I don't like to talk about wairua separately because to my mind it's interlinked into everything.** Everything is living, everything is interacting, but I think a **positive relationship** with the way we operate with the other Beings, it's setting down what that is for us and what that process looks like.*

*grounding myself...and allowing yourself to receive the wisdom that comes from these other places...what our tūpuna instructions were but findings ways to do that in*

*energy ways and to ground ourselves and be able to help others with that.*

***I don't like to talk about wairua separately because to my mind it's interlinked into everything:*** What are the consequences of separating wairua and treating wairua like it is a separate element of Being? For example, Māori and indigenous peoples are often engaged in rituals (such as pōhiri), that lay ground for our 'gathering together' as indigenous peoples. However, are those rituals seen as the expression of wairua more so than other mundane activities that we are engaged in throughout our everyday lives? If so, what does that say about how wairua is positioned? How would wairua be viewed if it was conceived of as being thoroughly caught up in everything that we do?

***Positive relationship:*** I view the participant's use of the term positive as meaning 'good'; however, the term does make me think of the idea of the negative from a Māori worldview that can relate to Te Kore and potentiality. I have earlier pointed to the idea of the negative being a powerful energetic space for creativity, particularly as this is applied to Nepia's (2012) description of absence, void, nothingness, loss and annihilation, as a pathway to enhancing creativity through uncertainty. What are the implications of this view for mental health? Is there potential for healing (as a type of creativity – the creation of healing strategies) in the negative, the uncertain, the void? Rather than seeing this type negativity as 'bad', can it be seen as an opportunity for discovery of the self?

In discussing non-indigenous peoples' detachment in the context of colonisation and living in indigenous lands, the participant spoke about connecting with whakapapa, which for some non-indigenous people was mediated by engaging either emotional or intellectual connections to histories and origins. Emotional connections were related to Ngaro (also see the conversation area, Hinenagaro, in chapter eight for one participant's explanation of Hinenagaro in a cosmological

context), and the participant described how connecting with whakapapa through Ngaro or emotions provided a type of knowing that could foster reconnection:

*I find that some of them, especially very politicised women, weep with it. They weep with knowing what they've missed because of that whole process for them, **being raised on whenua that's not theirs and never really having a huge relationship with it in their histories.** Or when you ask them about their whakapapa, they can't even go back. They don't want to go back there... But there are those that just get it, because they allow their feel to feel it, not their head to know it or not their intellect because there's the two out of the twins. Hine is the intellect, ngaro is the emotions. So, depending which way they come from, the head knowledge, the intellect... but those that come from their feel know it. They can transpose it and explain they're feeling, what they're feeling, so when they come from that feeling space, they get it.*

***Being raised on whenua that's not theirs and never really having a huge relationship with it in their histories:*** This description of non-indigenous peoples' dislocation (from their own indigenous lands) makes me think of a description of medieval society given by Barfield (1965). Barfield describes the turn in history in which the self was re-presented as being separate from the world:

This was not the background picture before the scientific revolution. The background picture then was of man as a microcosm within the macrocosm. It is clear that he did not feel himself isolated by his skin from the world outside to quite the same extent that we do. He was integrated or

mortised into it, each different part of him being united to a different part of it by some invisible thread (p. 78).

While I understand that the participant here is talking about the disconnect felt by non-indigenous peoples as a result of being in another physical place (a land different from their indigenous home), bearing in mind Barfield's description, I think the disconnect is far more fundamental. I imagine that non-indigenous people can never be fully separated from their histories or lands (in a spiritual sense) but have perhaps constructed cognitive barriers to being cognisant of those connections which has then impacted on the spiritual experience of connection.

### ***Whakapapa and identity***

One of the participants talked about Māori identity in the context of constructed identities and identity concepts, such as the concept of ethnicity that the participant felt was a product of binaries such as Māori/non-Māori. The participant challenged what they saw as a tendency towards positivism in articulating Māori identities where visible markers of Māori identity are presented. In contrast, they saw whakapapa as an expression of identity that did not rely on positive identity markers contained in labels. For the participant, whakapapa as identity is expressed from a place that is independent from the identity marker 'Māori':

*It's this kind of positivism that's crept into a lot of this identity politics now where people want to say, **I'm Māori because** (XYZ)... and of course, you can't do that. If you want to use a positive identity, then you do have to **derive back to your tūpuna** in my case, this is where I come from... a specificity that's not contained within the kupu 'Māori'. Māori, as an identity, as an ethnicity label, has in some way to be united by the confrontation of the other, which is the European.*

***I'm Māori because:*** King, Hodgetts, Rua and Morgan (2017) point out that there is a complexity of Being that makes the singular identifier 'Māori' problematic and that there are multiple identities that are carried that include, for example, tribal and national identities that shift as contexts, locations and situations change, sometimes on a daily basis. However, if each of the identities within the complexity of Being is expected to be represented by a set of essential markers that define what each of the multiple identities are, then even the complex and multiple are subject to the same structural representation. This representation is what has been discussed as 'the whatness' (Silverman, 2009) of each feature of identity that is reflected in the overarching category of Māori.

***Derive back to your tūpuna:*** The idea that we derive back to tūpuna implies a type of distance between the 'here and now' and the things that are perceived to be in the past – things that we might reach back to. Within the indigenous view of time as a collapsed 'cosmo-scape' (Roberts, 2013), this temporally constructed distance does not exist. Our tūpuna are, within this view of collapsed time, immediately present even if we cannot perceive this presence in a physical sense. Different temporal perspectives may have implications for how the indigenous self perceives the self's connection to things in the world (including tūpuna). The perception of a distanced connection to something that can support well-being (or a distanced potential), may have a different impact than the perception of being always immediately 'with' things.

Another participant referred to the European gaze as the origin of the concept of identity as Māori (in a pan tribal unified sense), and as the ongoing monitor of Māori identity. However, the participant saw the potential to disrupt created or constructed identities through denying and claiming other identities outside of those that are prescribed:

*The European gaze...has not only been creating that idea of Māori identity but also assessing when and to*

*what extent it was... they were making their **judgements about whether or not we still existed, and still are**. That is what the Don Brash, Elizabeth Rata kōrero is all about because to the extent that Māori claim to be other, we disrupt the knowledge, the episteme.*

**Judgements about whether or not we still existed, and still are:** This point was raised in chapter five concerning how the need to find the essential nature of things imposes the expectation that Māori and indigenous peoples will ‘present’ with certain ‘normal’ traits. We might also conform to this expectation through our own representations of Māori and indigenous identity or Māori and indigenous knowledge. Within mental health, the push for cultural competency has led to the development of cultural frameworks that are often informed by well defined, fixed, and essentialised conceptualisations of culture (Carey, 2015). In line with this, I wonder how the expectation that Māori and indigenous Being will be expressed in certain fixed ways would impact on those seeking support that is conceptualised (within a service provision framework) as Kaupapa Māori or indigenous. Would the models of care that are developed to define what counts as Māori or indigenous allow for expressions that do not obviously fit the cultural framework created to define what counts as a cultural expression? The idea of the highly personal expression of holistic Being is discussed at length later in chapter nine; however, what I am raising here is the possibility that any expressions that fall outside of a defined cultural structure (or cultural traits) ,may not be recognised as a cultural response. I think this has implications for the Māori and indigenous self and the idea of ‘abnormality’. While the notion of mental illness and associated diagnoses have the potential to render people as ‘abnormal’, I suggest the rigid conceptualisation of cultural traits may also lead to abnormalizing the Māori and indigenous self.

The participant also discussed how Māori identity has been conceptualised to fit various non-Māori theoretical frameworks including biological genetic frameworks that frame identity in terms of “*mixed blood*”:

*My mother, as I said, had a Māori ancestress but the knowledge of that was suppressed. When her mother was being courted by a Pākehā man and when they had to ask the father for their hand in marriage, and the reply was **there’s mental illness in the women of the family caused by the mixed blood.** That was a very interesting, racist, patriarchal science myth, because of the mixed blood, the idea that somehow there was this essence of Māoriness that was transmitted through the blood so it’s a protogenetic mythology.*

The participant reflected on the distinction between a Māori worldview constructed in response to Pākehā and a Māori worldview that stems from the ground of thought that is associated with relational Being. Using the term ‘tangata whenua worldview’, the participant explained that, rather than carrying what he described as an illusory constructed perception of the world, ‘tangata whenuatanga’ is the lived experience of connecting (and re-connecting) to sites of significance (whenua) that are linked to whakapapa and experiencing emotional and spiritual connections to sites of significance. The participant also stated that Māori are reconnecting with tangatawhenuatanga to move beyond constructing identities in the context of treaty settlements and other actions of response:

*The place where I think the **tangata whenuatanga**...comes forth in my life is when I do return to the places where my loved ones are buried and my tūpuna are buried, and where my family still does own some land and where I do actively connect, not just intellectually but spiritually and emotionally and physically connect with places that are expressed or touched upon in my whakapapa.*

*we are in a state of reconstruction about what tangata whenuatanga actually is... so much of our actions today and our thinking and psychology is just about grappling with the government and trying to settle claims, just about survival really. All of the inspirations that arise from our tangata whenua past are being applied in a sense of being able to secure our treaty rights or something like that but we're really struggling for these ideas to be central to our life ways.*

**Tangata whenuatanga:** While the participant is talking more directly about a focus on reaction and dissent as a barrier to reconnecting with a tangata whenua identity, another idea that emerges from this discussion is the relationship between dissent, binaries and the nature or structure of 'concept' as a tool in reacting to an external pressure. This is the idea that we are, through our reactionary stances, using 'concepts' because they are a part of the language of the structure. We can be recognised and stand in an identity that is set apart through articulating something other than what has been imposed. If, however, we utilise the same onto-epistemic structure that is the basis of objective language then these alternate articulations of identity are simply different impositions that lock identities into rigid representations, creating equally rigid expectations of what we must be in order to gain inclusion and membership. The rigidity of objective, categorical identity, in which what counts as Māori becomes a demand for convergence, is not one that stems naturally from a Māori metaphysics that is at home with complexity and the colourful haziness of the world that defies full representation. Objective rigidity is the inheritance of the very structure that provokes the reconceptualization of Māori identities that are aiming to resist imposed labels.

*All of the inspirations that arise from our tangata whenua past are being applied in a sense of being able to secure our treaty rights or something like that but we're really struggling for these ideas to be central to our life ways:* The metaphysics of presence is explicit in the objective construction of Māori identity as a set of traits and behaviours that can be fully articulated and it is the expectation of full articulation that has been critiqued within health settings (including mental health) that search for clear explanations of cultural appropriateness and relevancy. As Mika (2017a) points out, the harm that is done to Māori and indigenous expressions cannot be undone by appealing to the same tools and structure that have inflicted the harm in the first place. It is a curious paradox that Māori are forced to utilise an onto-epistemic structure, of objective representation, to give voice to things that have been made silent by objectivity's insistence on finding essential, universal identities. In doing so, the hard parameters of objective language and definition make other silences from things that do not fit within these constructed frames – the things that are excluded. Hokowhitu (2016) explains these silences in terms of the marginalisation of subjugated groups within Māori and indigenous populations who do not readily fit the assigned markers of identity that are selected, asking “who is authorised to speak” (p.84) to construct ideas of authenticity. However, these silences can also be applied to the imposition of objective language and labels that speak on behalf of the more-than-human who traditionally would have been afforded agency through less insistent expressions that allowed for an explanatory contingency reflected in Māori metaphysics and the idea of mystery (e.g., Mika, 2016).

The world that is at play behind the structure of essential identity hints at an aspect of ‘tangatawhenuatanga’ that was discussed by the participant, highlighting a response to binary and imposed identities based on reconnection rather than dissent as resistance. I understand this description of a ‘tangatawhenuatanga’ response as a different way of resisting imposition but one that re-turns our attention to those things that within a Māori metaphysics are intimately connected to our sense of Being.

While recognising the impact of external influences and the pressures that lead to constructed identities, abstract representations of the world, and conceptual apprehension of Māori knowledges, the participant believed that the greatest barriers to reconnecting with tangatawhenuatanga or a tangata whenua identity comes from within te ao Māori and the adherence to binary identities:

*we Māori ourselves today have constructed interpretations ourselves about our own culture in the face of pressures from the outside world, the difficulties in the outside world and...my number one view regarding advancing the tangata whenua world view and the development of Māori people is I believe that the great barriers are actually in us now, not in external things. Yes, there are things out in the world that conspire against us, there's poverty and all of those realities... I feel that the real issues facing us today are actually our own internal demons and barriers. I'm not enamoured anymore of heroic stories of how great Māori are and how bad Pākehā are...but I think the major barriers to our own emancipation...**We've papered over the cracks... We've got to have a more kind of honest appraisal of ourselves.***

***We've papered over the cracks... We've got to have a more kind of honest appraisal of ourselves:*** Within the context of Western mental health, how might we consider the issue of having an honest appraisal of the self? The participant's reference to there being a need for honest appraisal raises questions about how honesty is encouraged in a system that has led to, for example, people constructing their identities as clinical concepts (e.g. see Sadler, 2004). The concepts, taken up as real identities, are what, I argue, obscure the more complex view of the self: concepts that have "*papered over the cracks*".

When talking about ideas related to identifying and describing the characteristics of a Māori world view, one participant used the term ‘inscribe’ in reference to others imposing a Māori world view onto her. The participant described her experience as a type of paradox where having a Māori identity or worldview was both discouraged and inescapable in the context of Māori identity being defined for her:

*You weren't allowed to be (Māori), you had to be Pākehā, but to have a worldview of others – from others – forced onto me in a sense...so while I wasn't allowed to be Māori others thought of me as Māori. They would sort of **inscribe a Māori worldview** onto me that I wasn't allowed to have.*

**Inscribe a Māori worldview:** The idea of ‘inscribing’ is interesting; like an etching in the skin raising the imagery of moko. But this inscription is of Māori identity, not carved by the participant or those connected to them but placed – etched and inscribed by others. There is a paradox at play here too – the idea that it was not okay to have a Māori worldview or identity, but it was also a projected expectation placed by others, enforced by others onto the participant. She could not be anything else, but it was also the only acceptable identity (made acceptable through the inscribed meaning of what it is to be Māori). What are the implications of ‘inscribed’ identities within a mental health context? Are the diagnostic categories that capture people’s experiences like (imposed) superficial etchings on the surface of a much deeper experience?

### ***Whakapapa and holistic influence***

One participant described the concept of human nature from a Māori worldview as one that would be more aligned to the term Being which, “*takes that dichotomy of human and nature out of the question*”:

*nature in that sense is often seen as the uncontrollable parts of human-ness. You know, human nature is the innate things that are almost by definition wild. And uneducable. They're the things that you have to tame. That notion of **human nature**, I don't think we Māori had that view of human-ness.*

**Human nature:** The participant's description highlights the implications of the idea of human nature as both an imaginary that has been associated with uncontrollable or wild aspects of Being and as a concept that would not have been a part of traditional Māori world views. The term human-nature and its construction of the idea of the 'wild' excesses of humanity (that must be controlled) mirrors the critique of the notion of 'madness' that was presented by Foucault (1965) and the subsequent (more fundamental) critique of logocentrism put forward by Derrida (1978).

One participant used the term "*weave of life*" to describe a view of Being that differs from what he described as a more common modern view of Being in the world. The participant saw the potential for people who had experienced disruptions in their connections with whānau to benefit from developing an understanding of the interconnected nature of their Being or their relational Being:

*nonetheless, connecting with one's heritage, and of course in the Māori world tangata whenua world view, connecting with one's immediate forebears, ultimately means connecting with the natural world...the lesson there is for those whose immediate experience of their own family background is difficult is somehow to get over that and show that **in fact they're part of a much greater weave of life and interconnections of life.***

***In fact they're part of a much greater weave of life and interconnections***

*of life:* What is being described here invites the imagery of a fractal (see chapter four) and the idea that, given that all parts of the whole are connected, any movement in one part will affect and create movement in another. This is also helpful in explaining an idea that came through during the development of this thesis in response to a question about how Māori knowledge can be conceptualised if dominant Western concepts are not adequate to support a presentation of Māori understandings of Being. Using the example of a fractal, I explained that my view of re-presenting Māori understandings of Being is that Māori knowledges present a fundamental shift (when viewed from a metaphysical foundational level) that, once taken seriously, potentially shifts the onto-epistemic ground in which we talk about the world. Within this view, fitting with dominant conceptualisations is no longer a strict criterion and neither is reaching points of certainty in order to orientate ourselves to things in the world. Our experience of the world becomes something different all together: we are orientated within the world rather than by our objective descriptions of things (e.g., Rifkin's, 2017, indigenous temporal sovereignty as orientation: see chapter four).

One of the participants talked about colonisation as an entity, both in the sense of a legal entity and an energetic entity that has impacted on the awareness that Māori have of wairua and connected Being. The participant described the relationship between colonisation and Being as a creative experience where focussing on colonisation perpetuates and re-creates the experience of colonisation:

*There are two things that's running here. A government is an entity, right? Which means that colonisation has become one, and that's only because everyone's brought into it. So, where we disconnect ourselves from that energetically is where we can destroy and uncreate all the connections ...that we had to those particular entities so that we no longer have that control. It's not up to us how that actually shows up, but each and every*

*person has their own perspective on that... Like for me, I do my best to scoot across the ngaru or across the waves of it rather than be at the effect of it. You know, that sort of stuff. And out-create it. Because it's almost like the more we buy into the story, the more it perpetuates and the more it's created... so the more we give it energy, the more it creates that, so I actually prefer to do something else.*

***I do my best to scoot across the ngaru or across the waves of it rather than be at the effect of it:*** The idea of moving “*across the ngaru*” makes me think of the difference between speculating on something (or finding an approximate meaning for something), and trying to fully conceptualise a thing. Like the view of ‘ground’ as a non-foundational entity within Māori and indigenous metaphysics (Mika, 2016), the ngaru re-presents an understanding of the partial knowledge that emerges from the disruption of (a preference for) certainty. Instead it raises the possibility that things cannot be fully apprehended.

In terms of a relationship with the natural world (and all things within the world, including people), the participant described what they viewed as a suppression of awareness that prevents people from connecting with other realities including, for example, the human cost of producing goods. The participant used the term “*amnesia*” to describe this suppression of awareness, speculating that it is an enabling factor in continuing to live each day without a focus on global realities:

*We suppress what we actually know to do with the quality. Sure, I've got a mobile phone and yet I've seen the pictures of children going down holes in the ground to get the rare earth metals. The majority of the human population survive... on a bowl of rice a day, if they're*

*lucky. All of those things. The only way we can live the way we do in the West is through **amnesia**. It must be.*

**Amnesia:** The participant's use of the term amnesia raises the issue of being disconnected and of being driven by 'presentism', defined as an ontological doctrine that posits that only things that are present, in the present, truly exist (e.g., see Ingram and Tallant, 2018). Amnesia, in the participant's response, represents a deeper form of presentism – a complete (and I imagine spiritual) disconnection with past and future conceptualised as absent things. Other people are also cast as absent things because we cannot see or feel how our lived experience is connected to their reality.

In line with earlier discussions about tangatawhenuatanga and holistic relational Being, the participant described the impact of external societal realities on internal states of Being. The participant also connected this sense of Being with modern realities that include living largely within built environments and predominantly within the interior of built structures:

*It seems to me that you've got the whole lesson of indigeneity is the way in which the external natural world is symbolic of your internal realities. We all feel this. We all feel this kind of sense that we go into the world and we see the dis-equilibrium in the world of the dis-equilibrium we find inside ourselves... Being indigenous is not just about connection to the natural world but it's the degrees to which we allow the natural world to be teachers of our own internal realities ultimately to come to the truth of ourselves. Each day is an **interior** day...I live...in this interior, inside built environments. So that constructs inside of me a certain kind of consciousness and a way of being-in-the-world.*

In discussing other theorists who had influenced their thinking, another participant referred to the analysis of metaphysical relationships to the conception of self and the understanding of the self's relationship to the external world. The participant described work that had been done by Christopher Lasch and Sigmund Freud that focussed on traits such as narcissism and ideas about individuality:

*the shifts from the modern liberal individual, I'm saying well **here's a construction of mental illness.** Because it's not about societies or cultures or groups or subjectivities in plural. It's about individuals, and much of that is kind of like tied up with kind of legal apparatus that grants the individual rights and takes away rights and incarcerates them and controls them in various ways...Freud very early contemplates the possibility of the sickness of a society or a culture as a first question.*

***A construction of mental illness:*** The way that the participant talks about mental illness as a construct is interesting because it raises the possibility of thinking of illness as a worlded phenomenon. This makes me think of the fractals that were discussed in chapter four that offer a mathematical demonstration of Māori imagery where the world is represented as a fully interconnected phenomenon. The notion of mental illness as an individual affliction is turned on its head when illness is considered as a societal influence. It also gives the idea of a constructed illness and new meaning that extends beyond the view of discursive construction (for example), to implicate a type of holistic construction. Within this view, if there is illness, it is in society as a whole but it influences the individual who expresses the illness within their own personal experience.

One of the participants described extreme individuality (such as that linked to narcissism) as a “*form of psychosis*”, driven by a metaphysics of separation that manifests in abject materialism and non-relational being:

*my observation is that when you drive around California for instance and you see five or six cars in the driveway, and you go into a house and everybody's got their own TV, the possibility of **actually sharing stuff has diminished**, and they view their own programmes, they live their own lives.*

**Actually sharing stuff has diminished:** This may be seen as a type of social constructionism, but what is coming through in my thinking relates to the idea of a social psychosis discussed by Jack Forbes (1979) as the Wetiko disease which he describes as a psychosis of greed, taking, and apprehension forming the metaphysics that gave birth to colonisation (see chapter nine for a full explanation of how this may impact on lived realities).

The physical **interior:** Living in a constructed environment through the construction of buildings (and lifestyles lived within these constructed interiors), connects to and presents a metaphor for the interior construction that occurs through rational thinking as a representation and relationship within and with the world. This construction of self and world connects to the psychosis that is illustrated by Jack Forbes' (1979) description of capitalism and cannibalism, contrasting indigenous histories of cannibalism that held great ritualistic significance against capitalism's consumption of people for no significant (or positive) spiritual purpose. If material excess and ways of living marked by separation (as in the participant's description of living described in the quote above), signifies the expression of a certain metaphysics embedded in our self-expressions, then our contrasting expressions (verbal, written, or actions that we take), about connected living may follow the same pattern that Gordon (2008) describes as mere cognitive

familiarities (that do not translate to actions or fully adopting a different way of Being. In this sense, though we might talk about connected relational Being as a philosophy, we may also live a disconnected material life. In line with the participant's comment about individualist material excess being a form of psychosis, there is an appeal to the idea that mental illness is part of the whole rather than an individual experience only (connect to the concept of worldedness, Mika, 2017).

## **Wairua**

### *Voices and visits*

One of the participants spoke about people's experiences of being 'visited' and how these can manifest as hearing or seeing the presence of an entity or entities. She explained that while some people are very comfortable with these experiences, others can be terrified. The participant felt that Māori conceptualisations of the experience of hearing or seeing entities contribute to people feeling comfortable in these situations but that other conceptualisations have constructed negative views and prevent people from engaging with Māori understandings which can lead to unwellness:

*We have these people around us, not everybody, and some people are terrified by these events. Stuff moves in the house, wasn't there yesterday or the night before and it's moving, doors shut, people could hear footsteps across the path, or see faces, and that can be terrifying for them; it can be terrifying for me too.*

*But others are very comfortable in that space, very comfortable with being visited... so Māori conceptualisations of these phenomenon are comfortable conceptualisations for those who do. But,*

*if we've been given this narrative that well that stuff is just crazy, and you are crazy and that could never possibly happen, then we can react to those things and become unwell, **shut them down and then kind of break away from our understandings of that.***

***Shut them down and then kind of break away from our understandings of that:*** The dominant Western metaphysics and the narrative that this creates could represent a pathway to unwellness. I suggest that it sets up a metaphysical dilemma that is internalised (i.e., self-construction as disconnected, self-construction as unwell if having what are seen as strange experiences). The participant has used the term “*comfortable*” to describe those who conceptualise these experiences in a certain way – as normal experiences that are accepted rather than conceptualised as irrational or part of disorder. Can the reverse be true? Can certain conceptualisations bring discomfort that comes through an experience of the world as separated phenomenon?

### ***Receiving and sharing messages – normalising experiences***

One participant talked about the experiences that one of her friends has had, describing them as a way of receiving and sharing information in the form of messages or stories. These messages or stories were given to her friend from an external source that she described as “*floating around in the ether*”, rather than being from a visible physical source. Her friend felt that she was being guided to share the story or message with a person or people that the information was intended for. The participant explained that as part of these experiences, her friend was linked with the intended recipients of the messages in ways that are not fully explainable but that involved communication between wairua. While the details of receiving and sharing the stories are important, the participant’s focus in sharing

this account was to discuss the legitimacy of this experience as a potential subject of academic writing to highlight the normalcy and regularity of these experiences:

*She just knew some story had been floating around in the ether, until she met this person and then she knew exactly where that story was coming from. She was able to recall that story or parts of that story...what we've figured out is that what happens is she will get her own messages, and she will literally be given a story that she has to tell somebody else, whether I'm there or not. But when we're in quite a big space with a whole lot of people, this is when it normally happens...**it's kind of like their wairua and her wairua are kind of like trying to get their stories to hook up.** They don't know each other, but there's a central link, and so their wairua says to this wairua no, go and you two meet or you two meet. It has actually happened often enough that we have decided we're going to write about it, we need to do that. We've got a couple of friends who are the conduits, the landing posts.*

***It's kind of like their wairua and her wairua are kind of like trying to get their stories to hook up:*** This view of connection raises the possibility of exploring the idea of narratives that are entitized presentations and that other stories sit behind the stories that we tell. This view of stories as entitized presentations reflects the symbolic and metaphorical nature of indigenous storytelling as opposed to providing static representations and completed truth narratives. The explanation of the story and message sharing experience that the participant recounted, and its inclusion of the linking or meeting of wairua, also connects to the idea of whakaaro as a relational experience.

Extending her thinking about normalising experiences, such as those described in relation to receiving messages to share with others (wairua to wairua), the participant reflected on some of the barriers that might be faced in bringing these experiences into an academic setting through, for example, developing writing and other information. The participant talked about the need to meet expectations in terms of the content of writing, including needing to quantify experiences in order to validate the subject. However, the participant was optimistic that there is a shift occurring within different disciplines that had traditionally conceptualised these experiences as ‘madness’:

*the structure gets debated, and I think that's about kind of like quantifying your experiences or trying to or having to validate the actual experience. As opposed to "the" experience, as opposed to the phenomenon itself. I think that just in terms of wairua, because that's a harder one...how can it be so shut down as a legitimate area of study when so many people talk about it. I think psychology and psychiatry has done a really good job of shutting it down and making it about madness. But that's shifting, it's shifting a lot.*

The participant discussed the importance of understanding the notion of tohu or signs as an example of communicating with the world and as a part of recognising the agency of other entities that hold knowledge as opposed to humans holding ultimate knowledge about entities or phenomena:

*We can interact and help, and that's why **tohu** is such an important thing as well. Being able to read the signs, because we know those kinds of Beings have knowledge, and we have this humility to be able to say alright, you're telling us this, we'll try to read things better. That's our dedication to you, our honouring of you is we will try to read what you are saying better. And we will thank you for what you do for us. Gratitude*

*is so much in our way of operating. I think that's one thing I'd love to see us do more of, which is to bring back in more of that as a daily practice. That's what karakia were actually all about in the past, I think. It doesn't have to be flash, but I'm just thinking that way of connecting to other Beings in a more real way of getting the truth, that interaction.*

**Tohu:** Tohu seems like such a normal phenomenon to me. I take for granted that we are presented with information in a 'spiritual' sense and that we receive types of communication in this way. It is a common saying among people I know to refer to tohu – to say 'he tohu tera' in response to something that has happened in a person's life or something that someone has noticed during a personal experience. I think about how this contrasts with the Western conceptualisation of what Derrida (1982) calls signification: the use of words to signify what something 'is'. Signification is a 'sign' of a different (metaphysical) kind.

Extending the idea of the personality or nature of Being associated with the notion of existence as thinking and mental functioning or the brain, another participant discussed the Western world in the context of science and discovery. The gathering or collecting of things in the world was discussed in relation to acts of analysis and appropriation (as a product of how knowledge is conceptualised) and a "selfish" aspect of personality that is unaware of its impact on others:

*I actually think because they're unable to see their own selfishness... in my view, what's happened is the Western world has constructed a whole way of Being which is about greed, it's underpinned by scientific theory, ways that science operates, Western science operates in ways that knowledge is seen, **that it's very much about gathering – gathering of other peoples I***

would say most of the people who engage in it are completely oblivious that they're constantly gathering others; other things,... and they're also analysing and appropriating, so I guess their notion, the way they see a self and an individual is also tied up with that... when that sort of gathering, collecting type mentality is there it's focused on what it's gathering, it's not focused on what it's doing to others

***That it's very much about gathering – gathering of other peoples:*** In terms of mental health, this act of gathering described by the participant could be related to acts of discovery that apprehend people, manifesting in the application of diagnosis that contains the experience. The person's experience cannot easily escape this conceptual containment and anything intangible (for example), is rendered absent or is noted as another sign that the person is unwell (i.e., not thinking rationally). This has significant implications when raising the question of whether Māori and indigenous ontologies are being taken seriously within different knowledge institutions (such as mental health).

Another participant spoke about the “unseen” as something that is both invisible and highly significant in all things, stating that “*Everything is unseen and everything is intangible when you're talking about things beyond the human body*”. The unseen was described as something that is energetically connected to things in the world but not in any way that could be easily explained or fully conceptualised. The participant explained this in the context of research and the interview process where much of what is happening in the exchange is unseen and therefore not entirely explainable or able to be conceptually presented. The participant also explained that attempts to describe and identify what has been conceptualised as spirituality will lead to a reductionist explanation and that the very nature of what they called the unseen means that arriving at a complete explanation is not possible.

Instead, the participant described a holistic approach to understanding things in the world that focuses on things that exist in between the things we are able to observe:

*once you start to chop it up it disappears...So, if you chop it up it'll disappear. What's the other approach? Well, you take a more expansive approach to understanding the world. Systems like this are based on reductionism, right? You reduce everything to its parts and therefore you'll be able to deal with it in a much more sort of effective way. But we also know that the similar parts don't necessarily equal the whole. What does that mean? Do you carry on looking at the parts in order to understand the whole? No, what it means is that you start to actually try to understand the whole in order to better understand the parts, and the bits in between. Because the bits in between are the things that disappear very quickly, and that's what we actually need to apprehend and to better understand.*

***Once you start to chop it up it disappears...So, if you chop it up it'll disappear:*** The participant's discussion of the unseen mirrors a description that is offered by Mika (2017b) when talking about how things in the world show themselves within the context of mystery. As Mika explains, once we appear to have landed on a solid ground of thought, it would seem to disappear, only to be replaced by another idea. Both descriptions highlight the idea of the intangible and of things that cannot be fully known despite how we might attempt to represent things through our use of language and concepts. There is something more at play that can be acknowledged through the Māori and indigenous metaphysical premise of mystery.

The participant addressed the issue of conceptualising spirituality and a Māori world view within the context of the unseen. From the participant's perspective, there is a tendency to equate Māori world views with a simplistic and stereotypical

notion of spirituality that is linked to an expectation of the spiritual manifesting in spectres such as seeing spirits. In contrast, the participant pointed to a wider understanding of spirituality in connection with the unseen that includes a multitude of experiences:

*Now, I could've gone down the line of saying oh yes, there's a whole spiritual world that we kind of like understand and I sort of get feelings about...I wake up in the middle of the night and seeing someone at the end of the bed blah blah blah. I could've gone down that pathway in terms of explaining the unseen...**But I think that that is too simplistic, stereotypical, and ignores all the other unseen things that occur in our life.***

***But I think that that is too simplistic, stereotypical, and ignores all the other unseen things that occur in our life:*** This suggests an expanded view of absent and unseen things that is inclusive of the entirety of experience rather than the idea of a separated 'spirituality' or a stereotypical view of spirituality that is perhaps reflected in a New age type of uptake. This view of the unseen brings forward the idea of the trace or 'play' that Derrida (1978,1998) discusses. Also implicated are the haunting sociological presences that Gordon (2008) describes as the sites of meaning: the seething presences that, through a new consciousness of complexity, create new spaces of understanding.

In discussing wairua, one participant described a spirituality that is embedded in all things in the world. The participant also explained that the world is an entitized realm and that entities, rather than being limited to popular notions that include 'spirits' or 'ghosts', includes all things, such as people and all other non-human phenomena including, for example, songs and books:

*We talk about wairua but it's actually the width and breadth and depth of the entire entity's spiritual world. An entity is defined as everything actually. A book, song, you and I, those that have passed on, our so-called missing legends – they're not, they're like pono, truth. Different reality, different dimensions but totally there.*

The participant views the world as a realm that is made up of different dimensions, including dimensions that cannot be seen. They discussed the ability (and inability), to connect with a sense of these different dimensions as another impact that colonisation has had on Māori as worldviews have changed and suppressed the experience of connection. However, the participant believes that connecting with other dimensions and accessing the world as a spiritual entity (and communication between the human and non-human world), is possible through re-learning traditional Māori knowledges:

*Different dimension totally...Still there. Just that we haven't activated that space anymore, or again, to be able to actually have them as a contribution in our lives. They're totally still there. And the work that is being done around the colonised viewpoint of what we've bought into has actually squashed all of that and called it a fairy tale, a myth or a legend, and they aren't; they are totally still there. The Chinese talk about the awakening of the dragons. They have dragons, we have Taniwha. Same thing but it's a consciousness awakening. Which means that as an entity, we're able to access, go to and acknowledge all time, space and reality and dimensions at any given time that we want to. If we're taught the tools. And the tools are really simple.*

***We haven't activated that space anymore, or again, to be able to actually have them as a contribution in our lives:*** There is a tension between the idea of the holistic world (all things as entities), impacting on our lives through our conscious awareness of those things and the understanding that we are influenced by things in the world regardless of whether we consciously attend to those things or not. I think there is a pathway to well-being, but this pathway is always there regardless of our attention to it.

The participant described experiences that she has had that are related to physical sensations and that indicate the presence of entities. These sensations have shown up as both physical ailments and as emotions:

*some of my background is that my body indicates to me when wairua entities or spirits are around, and that would show up as when they're around eczema, allergies, headaches, heaviness across the shoulders, **puku** aches, through to depression, anxiety, paranoia, stuff like that, when all it was... I had a potent awareness that entities were around me. The entities themselves, or the wairua, had no idea how they were showing up to me.*

***Puku:*** The reference to puku as a site of sensation reminds me of conversations that I have had with people where they have remarked that they have been guided by their 'puku'. It is also something that I have heard people remark on as a way of giving a type of guidance such as making a decision based on what you can 'feel in your puku'. Interestingly, references to puku as a site of knowledge or guidance align with L. Smith's (1999) description of thinking residing in the gut which has also been discussed by Mika (2016) when describing the convergence of feeling and thought within Māori metaphysics.

Another participant addressed both the conceptualisation and translation of the term wairua as spirituality. The term spirituality from the participant's perspective denotes a separation and distinction - of something that is experienced as separate from the person while wairua is an embedded state of Being. The participant spoke about the need to decolonise te reo Māori and connected the colonisation of Māori language, particularly in relation to the translation of wairua as spirituality, to the Christian faith and the church. The participant also referred to the “*ahuatanga of the words*” that te reo Māori are translated into. The participant believes that we need to be aware of the power of words as something that can be internalised or something that we “*take on*” as opposed to simply being terms that are spoken or written with no subsequent implications:

*For me, wairua isn't spirituality. There's no such word as spirituality in Māori thinking. It is actually embedded in everything, it's embedded, and it's not talked of, it just is. It's not talked of; you don't talk of that. In fact, wairua, twin rivers, twin waters, duality, the dual nature of atua me tangata, the dual nature of the wāhine me tāne. It's the church people, and in fact it's Bishop Panapa, who in research that took the fem out of tangata and they think it's just the male because of patriarchy, because of their church...If we decolonise the language then we wouldn't speak of wairua as spiritual, but some will do that because that's how they believe it to be. For me, is a duality. It's the closest thing to atuātanga, me tangatatanga between humankind and the atua.*

***For me, wairua isn't spirituality. There's no such word as spirituality in Māori thinking:*** The term spiritual carries with it the sense of a separate 'thing', something that exists apart from the physical. From within a Māori and indigenous metaphysics, however, spirituality cannot be separated from

the physical. It is part of holistic Being or is simply the experience of being-in-the-world.

## **Conclusion**

Participants' responses illustrate a metaphysics of holism that disrupts the principles of separation, explaining how this principle has impacted on how people and things in the world are conceptualised. Rather than conform to the idea of the essential separation of things in the world, participants highlighted how, from within Māori and indigenous metaphysics, things can be experienced as whole (rather than parts of the whole). The implications that this view of holism has for people who are labelled as experiencing mental illness were reflected on in terms of how people can understand what has influence (on for example behaviour and emotions). For example, one participant's reference to being "*called into existence*" by others presents possibilities that break down the limited conceptualisation of people's experiences as an individual reaction to things. Instead, when considering the metaphysical premise of holism, it is possible to imagine people's experiences as a thoroughly complex holistic reaction – a re-orientation that sets up (k)new possibilities in imagining strategies of support.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING AND THE MORE THAN HUMAN WORLD**

Chapter eight concerns the idea of the world is an entitised reality, acknowledging that Being is not restricted to or ultimately governed by a human-centred existence. Other things in the world are acknowledged as having agency. Through this, the idea of human centred knowledge and the ability to fix the world (and its meaning) into self-originating concepts is challenged. What might be seen, for example, as a cognitive event in terms of thought or the ‘mind’, can be extended within Māori cosmology to implicate the more-than-human world that influences what we experience as ‘thinking’ and ‘sensing’. There is, in this chapter, an appeal to the more profound and mysterious understandings of Being as they manifest and, therefore, of people’s experiences, including the experience of what is commonly labelled mental illness.

Conversation areas:

### ***Mātauranga***

Mātauranga concerns the different ways that participants discussed Māori and indigenous onto-epistemes. Participants talked about the experience of ‘knowing’ but not in a way that referenced knowledge as a result of rational deliberation. Instead, knowing was talked about as a type of intuitive presence.

### ***Hinengaro***

The participants’ responses culminate in the articulation of Hinengaro. Hinengaro is initially represented directly through one participant’s description of Hinengaro within a Māori cosmological frame. Hinengaro is also represented indirectly where participants talk about the aspects of Being that are particularly relevant to the notion of mental illness or, more expansively, to mental health and well-being.

The description of Hinengaro within a Māori cosmological frame sets the scene for understanding a more profound relationship with Hinengaro than what is allowed for in mental health policy where Hinengaro is often used as a term that signifies

the separated aspect of mental Being (e.g., Ministry of Health, 2017). In this sense, Hinengaro resists the limited frame assigned through common translations within mental health to re-present a more expansive cosmological meaning and identity.

## **Mātauranga**

### *Science, philosophy and duality*

One participant discussed what they called the fact-value dichotomy. The participant related the fact-value dichotomy to scientific knowledge that the participant viewed as a flawed epistemic approach (i.e., a mythical rather than factual set of truths). The participant talked about their experience of studying science as part of their tertiary education and developing a realisation that science is based on a (cultural) philosophy rather than being based purely on fact calculation. The philosophy of knowledge that the participant began to consider as part of her studies related to a fact-value dichotomy that they saw as the “*Achilles heel*” or “*weakness at the heart of the scientific enterprise*”. They also described the philosophy of scientific knowledge as an embedded philosophy that is invisible when considering questions of how knowledge is produced:

*I did a master's in science and it was when I was working at the medical school some years later that someone first mentioned the phrase philosophy of science in conversation with me. I remember being blown away by that because I'd never had any idea that science had a philosophy. You go to university and learn science, or I suppose it starts at secondary school, and scientists do not ever give any thought to the philosophy of the knowledge that they are working with because **it's under your feet**. It's embedded, it's the ground that you walk on. That makes the world of science completely blind to the weakness at the heart of scientific enterprise.*

*It's under your feet:* I reflect on this as a question of the self's orientation to things in the world. It is the difference between the perspective of being within the ground as opposed to seeing the self as standing on the ground. I interpret this as either a Māori and indigenous worldview (Being within the ground or Being within the world) or a dominant Western view (standing 'on top of' or standing apart from things). To me this is an important metaphysical consideration that impacts on how people and the world are positioned that has implications for the lived experience of holism and being immersed within the world or rationalism and standing apart from the world to observe (and control) it.

### *The misfit - framing Māori knowledge*

One participant talked about the practice of fitting Māori knowledge into foreign frameworks and theories that reflect cultural beliefs about how the world works. In order to fit Māori knowledge into these theoretical frameworks, the participant described how Māori knowledges need to be removed from the original cosmogenic narratives that Māori understandings of the world are based in:

*Western science has a framework of basic theories about how the world works and that Western scientific edifice has looked at Māori knowledge, but **they have cut Māori observational knowledge of the natural world away from its theoretical framework which were those cosmogenic narratives.** Like we were saying before, growing up, here's the Māori version of the book, *Rangi and Papa*, whatever, whatever, and here's my real-world Māori. We have to go back in time to where those stories are the philosophical framework within which Māori knowledge exists.*

***They have cut Māori observational knowledge of the natural world away from its theoretical framework which were those cosmogenic narratives:*** In many ways this is the point that this thesis seeks to highlight before the notion of mental illness is addressed. Mental illness is just one area of concern that can be deconstructed to expose the non-indigenous premises that lie beneath what are often conceptualised as scientific truths (or generalisable explanations) of behaviour.

As an example of how Māori knowledges are removed from cosmogenic narratives, the participant referred to the labelling of Māori narratives as myths and legends,

*If you read any kind of Elsdon Best or any of those Western anthropological accounts of Māori knowledge, by cutting out those narratives and referring to them as fireside tales, which is what they write, or they're always called myths and legends. I will not use that term and I correct my Pākehā colleagues. I refer to them as nature narratives because I think it's a much more kind of neutral, respectful... We're not calling them theories but **they're narratives that provide a philosophical framework for understanding the natural and human world.***

***They're narratives that provide a philosophical framework for understanding the natural and human world:*** The possibilities that are arising from viewing Māori 'cosmogenic narratives' as pathways to healing are demonstrated in the use of Māori creation narratives in mental health. Mahi a Atua is a form of narrative therapy that utilises Māori cosmology to engage with whānau and tāngata whaiora. The major focus is on recovery from trauma and colonisation (Rangihuna, Kopua, Tipene-Leach, 2018), which links to other projects that include a focus on Māori and indigenous

models of trauma (and the development of Māori and indigenous trauma informed care).

One of the participants felt that the dominant structure of knowledge was upheld by other structures that perpetuate particular worldviews including worldviews based on science and medicine. These structures include research funding criteria, criteria for having publications accepted, and being able to codify work in ways that contributes to databases that support university rankings:

*It's not like **you have to hide** some of the practice that you do because it's going to be seen as not operating from that scientist practitioner world view. See, there's that word – world view, scientist practitioner world view which underpins a lot of psychology and psychiatry in medicine. I think it's about a level playing field and a lot of what we are taught is so heavily constructed and bound with somebody getting research funding, somebody getting a publication or a publishing house getting the money for publications, and university getting good rankings because they've got the publications, and actually they don't really work for us.*

**You have to hide:** The idea of having to hide a Māori practice because it is not seen as operating from a scientific worldview implies that there is a form of automatic concealment that is always already in place. These epistemic structures are ones that demand conformity, re-shaping Māori language and worldviews to fit the expected representation of things that includes presenting Māori ideas about the world in positive language rather than the less tangible presentations that are offered through metaphor (for example), which merely seeks to approximate a things character (rather than fully define it). The act of approximation (rather than definition or objective,

positive representation), may be linked to a Māori metaphysics that views the world as an entitized phenomenon, demonstrating a type of active engagement (described by participants in this research as, for example, energetic communication), that we might imagine as a type of agency in which an entity can resist any notion that it can be fully known with certainty. The entitized world, and Māori metaphysics as a whole, while including an understanding of concealment, is subject to a different type of concealment when Māori knowledge is pulled into non-Māori academic and ultimately, metaphysical, frameworks. Rather than speaking to a metaphysical concealment that provides some clues about the sense of mystery that pervades Māori worldviews, epistemic concealment is a thorough blanketing of the mystery that characterises a Māori metaphysics. The language that must be used to demonstrate what will be identified in research, and the metaphysical intent that is built into research methods of discovery and positive description, discipline Māori worldviews. These worldviews, while sometimes represented in the translation of Māori terms into non-Māori concepts, have an excess of meaning that is cropped to fit the dominant Western frame. The excesses are those things that are subject to the automatic epistemic concealment that the participant describes.

### *Alternative logic*

One participant discussed the idea that there could be different cultural versions of concepts. Using the example of logic, the participant stated that logic has one form and could not be transformed into an ‘alternative’ cultural model of logic. The participant located the basis of logic in the premises that are set up on which to base decisions and behaviour. They also stated that understanding the premises that underpin decisions and behaviour would provide an understanding of why things were done even if from a different worldview. The participant stated that within this context certain practices appeared to be illogical:

*If there's one thing I'm sure of, it's that logic is logic. I don't subscribe to the idea that there's other forms of logic. I looked into this quite carefully during my doctoral work. I had Pākehā supervisors and I think they were quite keen to see me come up with this idea of an alternative logic but let's not get this confused. **Logic is logic, and Māori are just as logical.** Logic is a human thing, it's not a cultural thing. It's about the premises on which we base logic. Logic is fine in the strict sense but when we say this isn't logical, it's because we don't understand the premises that are behind it.*

***Logic is logic, and Māori are just as logical:*** Initially, the idea of logic being applied to Māori worldviews felt at odds with the discussion of Māori metaphysics as something that resists rigid epistemic structure. The term logic and its association with validity, observable phenomena, and universal conclusions (of what can, rationally, be accepted as true) would seem to present the same restrictive risks to Māori worldviews that has been described by other participants in this thesis. However, it is interesting that the participant has referenced the Māori ritual or practice of biting the latrine beam (see quote below). Mention of this ritual leads directly to an article by

Anne Salmond (1978) who writes about the ritual, explaining its logic in the context of Māori cosmology. The ritual of biting the latrine beam is of interest because, as Salmond explains, the seemingly bizarre practice exposes how cosmological premises can be linked to the logic that forms the practices and principles that support the ritual. But it is Salmond's description of cosmological orientation that is most helpful (in this thesis) to understanding how logic can be connected to phenomena that have no objective or physical grounding.

The participant gave an example, describing a Māori ritual of biting a latrine beam or stick to ward off danger before going on a journey. While the ritual might appear to be illogical, those that understood the premises that this ritual was based on would understand that the beam symbolised balance, ensuring both cosmic and psychological protection:

*There was this pre-European Māori ritual or practice of biting the latrine beam, which is basically a stick of wood and you sat on it and shat over the cliff kind of thing. If you were going into a journey or a place of danger, one of the ways to ward off potential danger involved this ritual of biting the latrine beam, which of course seems totally illogical, but if you understand that that pae tūtae was acting as a symbol of the cosmic poles. Because the Māori cosmos is made up of these polarities, tapu, noa, ora, mate, opo, and they're not only cosmic but they're also psychological. So, there is a logic in that, although it appears on the surface to be pretty weird.*

***Pre-European Māori ritual or practice of biting the latrine beam:*** In Salmond's (1978) description of cosmological orientation, the points on a compass that are usually associated with directions of travel or physical locations are referred to as Māori spatial mappings associated with physical and spiritual elements within a complex system of meaning. Within this cosmological map, for example, north (runga), is associated with Ranginui (sky father), te ao mārama (world of life/light), and ora (life, health). South (raro) is associated with Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), mate (death), and pō/reinga (underworld). Runga and raro are also directly connected to each other along with other points in the spatial web. While providing a full description of Salmond's Māori cosmological spatial mappings is outside the scope of my reflections on Māori logic and its premises, what I take from Salmond's analysis is the idea that the premises on which Māori logic are constructed are not dependent on the verification of facts as part of a rational process of deliberation. Logic, in Salmond's example, can be supported by the intangible. In this case the premises that a ritual is based on produce logical actions (and in this case biting a beam of wood that is used in a whareiti), but ones that are connected to a holistic and not fully knowable cosmological orientation. From my perspective, the premises of logic in this context are considered more for how they explain how things fit into an overall cosmological whole, rather than explaining how observed parts of an experience or phenomenon lead to a logical (universal) conclusion.

***Because the Māori cosmos is made up of these polarities, tapu, noa, ora, mate, opo, and they're not only cosmic but they're also psychological. So, there is a logic in that, although it appears on the surface to be pretty weird:*** What are the possibilities presented by understanding people's experiences based on the premises of Māori cosmology? Again, this comes back to the idea of how we are orientated within the world and how all things create 'place' and personality (Deloria, 2001).

In line with the previous participant's discussion of Māori logic and the premises that underlie Māori logic, another participant talked about knowing as something

more than a rational process of thinking, deliberation and conclusion. The participant instead described knowledge as a state of Being. The participant felt that Māori had traditionally understood knowledge and knowing as a holistic process but ideas about knowledge being associated with functions of the mind or brain have changed perspectives on knowledge. The participant associated what they called ‘knowing’ with parts of the body (including the heart and ‘puku’ or stomach), and related knowing to a type of energetic exchange or communication with ‘all things’:

*We’ve kind of forgotten how to activate and acknowledge **our knowing**. The more practice we have at it, the better we are in terms of catching those knowings and working with the energy of it rather than we might receive a message in the knowing and then our head gets in the way and starts analysing it about what it is, and we’ve actually forgotten what the instant thing was and it’s now changed about four different times and then you’re in doubt about what it is, when you actually had it... There’s no thoughts or emotions in that, there’s nothing. It’s all about your connection and communion with all things. Everything.*

**Our knowing:** In reflecting on the participant’s description of knowledge as an energetic exchange with all things, I am tempted to summarise the point made by the participant as knowledge that comes from communication with things external to the person. However, as discussed in chapter four, this view may be informed by a tendency within dominant Western metaphysics to conceptualise things as individual phenomena that are connected to other individual phenomena. In considering the participant’s response from within a Māori and indigenous perspective, however, communication (and knowing) would be the internal and external ‘at once’ - each a continuous part of the other.

One of the participants reflected on their own questions about knowledge and where knowledge originates from, which led them to consider what their mother had taught them about knowledge from a Māori perspective:

*I wonder....it stimulated me to think about my mother and how she was never ever going to answer, ever. She still was of the, oh, really? I've been thinking about that too. She talked in riddles and that. Then, if we complicated things, she would say to us, you know what? Whakaaro Māori, it actually makes it easier, and we go, so what's the hell's that? Immediately she says that – and I'm talking about me and my sisters and cousins who have all these wonderful wānanga in our lives – and immediately she said, what are you talking about? Aren't we whakaaro Māori because we're Māori? She said, your guys' trouble is you know too much.*

In line with the participant's comment about complicating knowledge, another participant described how definitions of te ao Māori can complicate discussions about Māori world views and lead to overly prescribed representations:

*Someone who has got a sophisticated understanding of the Māori world will actually complicate the response or complicate the assertion in terms of "this is the Māori way"*

The participant also spoke about the relationship between the origins of knowledge or how knowledge is conceptualised and approaches to supporting people who are experiencing states of dis-ease. One of the approaches she described involved drawing pictures and creating narratives as opposed to talking directly about symptoms or other aspects of behaviour that could be related to (for example), different types of diagnosis. The example provided of creating narratives involved both the individual and their whānau who all participated in recounting experiences

which in turn would lead to the changing of a narrative. Rather than seeing this approach as an activity that involved the whānau that are physically present only, the participant believes that, *it's very much about atua*” who are also contributing to the narrative:

*two of her team are artists so then when somebody comes in to talk about what's going on for them, they're drawing pictures. And then the person who's needing to be supported and all their whānau to be able to understand what's going on, they all see it being drawn and they go, bro, nah, nah, that's not where the... and **they participate in the narrative**. And then that's their job, changing the narrative, coming to terms with it, expanding on it. It's not about, oh well that's actually distorted thinking; that's your narrative, so where are we going to go with this type of thing.*

***They participate in the narrative***: similar to the reflection on narrative included earlier in this chapter (i.e., Mahi a Atua), the participant's description of narratives as a way of including people raises the idea of the self as a Being that is in relationship with things in a wider context. This wider context expands beyond what is reflected in clinical diagnoses that conceptualise a person's experience as being located within the individual. Instead, the narrative is a reflection of a complex holistic connection and it brings the person and whānau back to reside 'within' things rather than seeing the person as being connected to other individual things (e.g. Mika, 2016). Through narrative, all that are a part of the story diverge and connect with the person, the whānau and atua showing up in the significance of the story that is told.

The participant discussed her aspirations for engaging in research that explores the nature of 'knowing' from a Māori perspective which related to her life experiences

- the things that she had wondered about and the way that her mother spoke about whakaaro Māori. In considering what knowing is from a Māori perspective, the participant has reflected on certain experiences, including physical sensations which appear to act as signals that something is about to happen and that put the person in a state of readiness. The participant described how these physical signals and sensations are linked to an interconnected state of Being and that they are more a type of primordial rather than cognitive process. These physical sensations can be experienced in the puku and the ngākau (for example), and provide a type of certainty that is different from how certainty might be conceptualised in a rational or definitional sense:

*I want to research our knowing. Here – a lot of us know the Māori stuff around here, about all that kind of kōrero, but actually I said, I want you to think about the knowing. Is it whakaaro? Is it whatever? So, what's the knowing? Where does that come from? Because when things are not right – I don't know if you've experienced this, when things are not right and you have the – all those things that are associated – your physical symptoms of dread which includes the fear flight thing...but I'm talking about the thing that goes – it seems like all your blood leaves you and you're that cold, sweaty... and you don't know why but your knowing knows why and that's about preparing you. So, you get into the state, not of readiness, but of super observance. That's the other thing that when we're talking about how do we know about our Being, we come from a culture that's absolutely extremely observant of our natural phenomenon, of our natural environment, because we come from a culture that knows we're not alone in the universe. When you talk about the knowing thing, you know when you've rocked it, man, you know because your puku tells you, your body tells you and then somewhere along the line your*

*ngākau tells you and then your head catches up afterwards with oh, that was pretty cool.*

***I want to research our knowing. Here – a lot of us know the Māori stuff around here, about all that kind of kōrero, but actually I said, I want you to think about the knowing. Is it whakaaro? Is it whatever? So, what’s the knowing? Where does that come from?*** The participant’s desire to explore ‘knowing’ from within a Māori worldview is informed by their intimate experience of embodied knowledge that has come through their attention to what their body tells them. It is not a question of ‘how do we know with certainty’ but rather, I interpret their question as one that asks, ‘how do we get guided to move in different directions’? I recall from this the description of orientation that was discussed in chapter four in relation to Rifkin’s model of indigenous temporal sovereignty. Through movements over time, our bodies acquire the very shape of the different directions that we move in. I interpret this movement, in relation to the participant’s description of embodied knowledge, as the shifting of the self in relationship with others or what Marsden (2003) calls wisdom. I wonder how mental health ‘treatment’ might be re-orientated to reflect this relational understanding of knowledge. Perhaps one of the possibilities lies in Māori and indigenous narrative therapy.

The participant also described the experience of sensing and feeling a connection to others and knowing that they will, through that connection, be affecting the other person in some way.

### ***Mātauranga Māori in Mental Health***

One of the participants stated that there is a tendency to equate Māori knowledges with terms that apply to clinical practice or non-Māori, non-indigenous therapeutic frameworks. The participant described how translating Māori knowledges as components or forms of a non-Māori clinical practice or framework effectively changed the nature of Māori terms and knowledges that are related to “*standing in*

*the presence of atua*”’. As an example of how translating Māori knowledge into non-Māori, non-indigenous frameworks impacts on lived experiences, the participant described the contrast between standing in the presence of beauty and power within the ngahere as opposed to modern practices that lead to visiting ngahere to extract and utilise the healing properties of plants:

*they try and give a name to it, well hello, we already have it, but they just ignore that. That’s the same thing around mental health and all of the way we work with tāngata whaiora. It’s not about taking it down like that; it’s standing in the presence of atua...When you go out and stand in that forest out there...you’ll know. You just feel the beauty. It is just so powerful. The healing... you don’t have to pick their leaves and wreck it and drink it and whatever, infuse it...and put it as ointment; just stand in there and feel the grace of the atua. It’s beautiful.*

***They try and give a name to it, well hello, we already have it, but they just ignore that:*** Two are things at play here: firstly, there are translations that take Māori terms and re-structure them, ensuring that they equate to a pre-determined concept. Secondly, there is the idea of re-structuring ngahere, changing and limiting its nature from a place where we would experience “*standing in the presence of atua*”, to a place where we can access a natural resource as a commodity which is a material consequence of its conceptual restructuring.

The participant also gave examples of how she believed the premise of separation has impacted on how people have engaged with Māori knowledges, describing the separation of Māori knowledges into parts. The participant imagined what it would be like for people to engage holistically with traditional Māori knowledges (the

lived experience), through describing direct communication with the world as an entity:

*While we've got Kohanga reo trying to give back the reo, Puna reo, all of those... while we've got all of those trying to desperately happen, we still need those that will walk not just in the reo but in the tikanga and the kawa and the pūrākau and the instilling of whakapapa, those things, back into the whole thing. Still again we've just taken te reo separate from the pūrākau, separate from the tikanga kawa, separate from the roles on marae, separate from the wāhinetanga, separate from the whare tangata ...wouldn't it be lovely if we all went around talking and not use this Pākehā reo and said "tena koe taku whare tangata" to what we think is mother. Acknowledging the sacredness of the most ancient of all sites. Wouldn't it be beautiful if we talked to what we call father...It would change this whole world...you carry the sacred seed and to start thinking about that sacredness.*

Another participant discussed the psychological impacts of Māori experiences of non-Māori knowledge structures that were used as mechanisms for re-shaping Māori language and culture:

*you saw that kind of control that was being exerted on Māori in schools where they weren't allowed to speak their own language and they were punished if they did. When I was doing some research in the Tai Tokerau, I would see generations of Māori kids who are fluent in te reo who were forced to sit a written exam for an oral language where they failed. So, although they were living on marae and speaking fluent te reo Māori, they*

*failed at their own culture. That led to some pretty disastrous psychological consequences.*

Despite recognising the effect of translation on lived experiences, the participant provided a view on translation (including conceptual translation), to support an understanding of what might sit behind the motivation to equate Māori terms with non-Māori worldviews, terms, concepts and frameworks. The participant related the drive to reach understanding through translation to a wider sense of detachment and loss that non-indigenous people feel, contrasting this sense of detachment with Māori attachment to whenua Papatūānuku:

*They have a different reo, they have a different language, so they try to put it in a language for them. I can work with that, when they're trying to understand it from their perspective. It's hard to understand something that's not part of their lived experience from a child. They've never grown up – I mean, they're colonisers so they're all far away from where their whenua is. They've never been attached to a whenua like we are. We have a relationship with this whenua, Papatūānuku, so that's where it starts from.*

### ***Feeling and narrative***

One of the participants discussed how worldviews are formed and talked in a contemplative rather than definitive way about the forming of narratives from things that people feel. The repetition of experience was also offered as a potential pathway to forming worldviews along with the explanations that are used to describe experiences:

*you kind of feel those things and then you start talking about it, and then that becomes our narrative. Or is it that that's the way that we explain something, and it just becomes our **narrative**... I think that we have those*

*experiences often enough that we don't forget them, and we can keep talking about them.*

**Narrative:** Narratives are not necessarily definitions of experiences or phenomena in the world but are described as sense-making mechanisms that some view as cognitive maps and others view (for example), as structural features of a story or analytic approach (Richardson, 2000). The etymology of the term narrative, in the context of the participant's contemplation of worldviews and the wider focus of this thesis, is associated with the word 'gnārus'. Gnārus is translated as 'knowing' and more broadly with the concept 'to make acquaintance with'. The idea of making acquaintance with something brings to mind the translation of whaka aro offered by T. Smith (2000) as 'to cast attention to' that differs from the common modern translation of 'to think'. The terms attention and acquaintance appear to signal a more relational understanding of the concept of worldview than the term knowing allows for, particularly where knowing is taken to mean a type of certainty that, in turn, is associated with conceptual understanding or to bring things under concepts (Etymology Online Dictionary). The participant's reference to feelings being a precursor to forming a worldview also motivates a reflection on the idea of embodiment as a type of holistic thinking rather than a purely cognitive exercise.

Another participant spoke about their ideas for bringing people together to discuss ethics and to imagine pathways back to living in line with tikanga Māori. While discussing her ideas, she made a comment about being focussed on a timeframe of nine days or a nine-day wananga:

*I've actually already said to people we need a **nine-day wananga**. I don't know why that number; I just thought, oh it sounds nice on my tongue or something, but it came from somewhere.*

*Nine-day wananga*: The participant's focus on the timeframe of nine days is interesting not because of the length of time that she mentions but for the way in which she understands her reason (or unreason), of choosing the timeframe. She can give no clear rationale for why the wananga she is imagining would be planned for nine days but she has a sense of conviction that this is the right length of time for these discussions. In considering this, the participant suggests that the length of time, as an idea, has arrived, stating, "*it came from somewhere*", which links to Royal's (2017) discussion of Māori Marsden's experience of "new knowledge arriving" from an external source. I think it is significant that the participant travelled with Māori Marsden in earlier years as part of her work in wairua healing as this marks a connection between the participant, what they have discussed and how Marsden's experiences of wananga form part of my reflections on the participant's responses. The participant's mention of the timeframe of nine days sounding "*nice on my tongue*" also would appear to connect to the reverberation of words and language that was discussed in chapter four.

## **Hinengaro**

### *Atua Hinengaro*

Extending the description of knowledge that expands beyond intellectual conceptualisations of what may reside in the mind or head, the participant who discussed Hinengaro talked about the connection between embodied knowledge and the atua Hinengaro. Atua Hinengaro, described from a traditional Māori perspective, also raised issues related to gendered representations of Being. As discussed in chapter six, the description of Hinengaro from within Māori cosmology disrupts the simple translation of Hinengaro as, for example, mental health.

*you can know from all over your body, really...but it's  
still the **Hinengaro** because hinekorikoriko is the atua*

*wāhine then she partners with tama i ngaro. They have twins. The girl twin is Hine, the boy twin is named Ngaro after his father. So, when you look at the intellect and the emotions that come out of the Hinengaro it's Ngaro. That is the emotional. In fact, our men are the emotional. They harbour their emotions for a long time, and it bursts out of them in a different way. Wāhine will scream and rant and rave straight away. They don't f\*\*king care, they just tell you.*

*but the amazing thing is – I'm not talking about the male and female, the male's over there and I'm over here – I'm talking about the male/female kei roto i a koe. In our reo we have ia. We don't have him/her. So, what it's addressing is the male/female inside of me. So, when you look at it, we look at the taha mauī the left brain is wāhine, the taha matau the right brain is male. I go out to the prison every day. I don't live in my feminine. I work in my male. When I'm working with wāhine, I'm working in my feminine. When I'm working with my children, kei roto in the middle is the is the child.*

**Hinengaro:** The translation of Hinengaro in mental health policy is a significant example of how Māori terms can be co-opted to support the dominant Western onto-epistemic framework. The idea of atua Hinengaro being given conceptual boundaries is particularly problematic when considering the description of Hinengaro that is offered by the participant. How do we effectively reduce the excessively profound and spiritual cosmology that is reflected in the participants narrative to equate to the concept of mental health? We do it by putting Hinengaro into a pre-determined framework, ignoring what cannot fit into the frame or what was

discussed earlier in terms of Heidegger's (1971) cautioning passing over complex meaning.

The participant also discussed the term ngaro:

*Speaking of ngaro: You have a look at it, it is two things, nga – and that's the plural of oro. That's way back in the oro in the cosmogenic series when Papa was being pulled out of the water sighing - all a part of that language, the knowing...the feeling, this new space, the new place. She's been pulled out of moana to open her waters so that her father can look upon Papatūānuku because he needed to have children, a male, and then that's when the world was... all of that – oro te whiu- and its full.*

**Ngaro:** Ngaro, rather than being characterised by an emptiness that may be implied by the translation of ngaro as to be hidden, out of sight, covered, disappeared, absent, is characterised by a fullness that the participant explained as being a part of the creation process and the “*cosmogenic series*” that is encapsulated in the term oro.

The contrast between the participant's explanation of terms such as Hinengaro and Ngaro and the common translations that are associated with these terms today were provided as examples of the types of knowledge that can be accessed through a different study or perspective of Māori language. As the participant states, “*We get to understand the secrets lay within the reo*”.

In line with the participant's focus on meaning within te reo Māori, the participant spoke about the term ‘aroha’ which is commonly translated as meaning ‘love’. The

participant described the term aroha by breaking the term down to ‘Aro’ and ‘Ha’ that the participant translated as meaning ‘sacred breath’ or ‘the sacred thought’:

*Aroha... Aro – the thought, the sacred thought. Ha – the sacred breath. So, where did everything else come out of that? Let’s have a look. It’s right there in front of us, our tūpuna put it there.*

**Aroha:** Cleve Barlow (1991) describes Aroha as the sacred creative power that emanates from the Gods as one of the three essential elements of all things, the other two elements being the pu (the positive force) and the ke (the negative force). Barlow states that, according to elders,

*love is not skin deep like the tattooed face of a chieftain but swells up continually from the depths of one’s heart.*

The whakatauki that Barlow presents, referring to ta moko as skin deep, is also interesting in that it connects to a comment made earlier by another participant referring to things that are inscribed onto Māori (the inscription of identity), signalling that there are other things that sit beneath the obvious or the things that are etched on the surface.

The participant’s description of Aroha as ‘the sacred thought’ is significant to this thesis as it relates to the possibilities of expanding an understanding of thought to include things that are outside the boundaries of cognitive thinking. With this more expansive understanding of Hinengaro and aroha (as sacred thought) set as a guide for re-turning to the term from a Māori metaphysics, we can depart from the translation of Hinengaro as ‘mind’ or as a blanket term that can be used to support a Māori view of mental health.

### ***Metaphysics and essentialism***

Participants expressed concerns about the idea of essentialism and how essentialist philosophy has led to rigid conceptualisations of individuals and groups including in terms of identities and how experiences (behavioural and cultural), have been conceptualised. Essentialism was discussed as a problematic and damaging approach to conceptualising human nature and one that has directly impacted on (and shaped) how the notions of mental illness and mental health are understood, including the separation of mind and body:

*if you hold some essentialist view of human nature, then that's the basis on which you can base some kind of morality. But I don't hold that there is. There are plenty of theories in **Western philosophy about human nature that are essentialist**, and one of the main ones is the Cartesian world view, which is mind body. Which I think has done a lot of damage to Western philosophy historically but also to conception of the mental health.*

***Western philosophy about human nature that are essentialist:*** These hardened layers of essentialism described by the participant are problematic in many ways. The essentialist and “*universalist claims*” that are described here as being more human than scientific (more created than universally true), stem from a metaphysical ground that is hard to disrupt. The essentialist project and its metaphysical foundation represent a monolithic structure of re-presentation, but it is a structure that has allowed Māori and indigenous expressions about Being some entry. Gaining entry into this structure may seem on the surface to present positive opportunities that might be thought of as shared epistemic space; however, if essentialism is the foundation – the structure – then those things that enter essentialism’s domain must surely follow the structure.

One participant discussed the movement towards reductionist conceptualisations within mental health that, in searching for things within the body that may be contributing to a person's experience, had created a focus on the brain as the physical source of a person's behaviour, including behaviours that were considered to be dysfunctional. The reductionist approach to explaining what is labelled mental illness was described within the context of cultural and historical constructionism and ongoing debates about 'human nature', and metaphysics,

*so even now after years of development of psychiatry in the West they're still disputing the very basic terminology about the DSM-5 revised. What is a disorder? A mental disorder. And they're still questioning the basic metaphysics of a philosophical system that led to that kind of **radical separation**...I...avoid actually embracing some kind of essentialist doctrine about what it is to be a human being...I kind of have a problem with productionist views. Especially those that have accepted the move to the body(and) still want to boil it down to something that occurs in what we call the brain. As a brain dysfunction, another word which is probably quite difficult.*

*There are masses of philosophical problems in there that we are nowhere near solving. Everything is contestable – the terms, the history, **the concept of human nature that's at stake**...what those conceptions are, and what falls out of that, which is really a series of inordinate claims about human beings. Universalist claims...more about human being rather than scientific ones.*

***The concept of human nature that's at stake:*** The philosophies that contributed to the construction of the mind-body separation that the participant described as a “***radical separation***” can be linked to essentialist discourses. These essentialist philosophical systems drive what the participant felt had severed the self from the world, encouraging a separation of things – to recount Heidegger (1953), the “splitting asunder” (p. 170), of things from the whole. Things, now taken up as separate components, can be examined within the framework of fixed traits and human nature. However, as the participant explained, any attempts to fix traits or apply essentialist discourses leads to an impossible explanatory task that is reflected in a lack of consensus within mental health professions. In terms of Māori and indigenous contributions to mental health ‘knowledge’, what ‘fixed traits’ must we be wary of constructing? How do we avoid the ‘fixing’ of Māori identities within a framework that is steeped in the expectation of pre-determination?

In line with the points made about philosophy and essentialism, one participant talked about how essentialist metaphysics has contributed to essentialist views of groups within society. In the participant’s view, the essentialist metaphysics that underlies descriptions of groups and populations remains intact and has not been adequately deconstructed or, “*revisited*”. Taking a social constructionist viewpoint, the participant pointed to the Edward Said’s (1978) *Orientalism* as a frame for understanding Māori mental health (and illness) as a product of identity construction:

*I think the relationship between criminality and being mentally unwell so to speak, those distinctions all go back to some kind of underlying essentialist metaphysics that we haven't really revisited. It's quite a big problem...after reading Edward Said's Orientalism you can see the way in which Western psychiatry constructed Māori mental health in various periods through history...which was more about*

*control than reform...if you accept Edward Said's Orientalism when it comes to questions about mental health (the) popular descriptions of craziness and madness and so on, then I think you're buying into an argument that says each age kind of constructs a conception of mental health or various different groups.*

**Control:** The idea of Māori and indigenous identities as constructions of essentialism helps to extend a consideration of Māori and indigenous entry into shared epistemic spaces. The expressions (the terms, philosophies, narratives and metaphors) of Māori and indigenous peoples when considered within the context of construction, are not left to be as they may be intended by those that offer gifts of indigenous wisdom. Or, in seeking to gain entry and to be heard within an epistemic system, a type of re-construction may already occur that ensures that Māori and indigenous expressions are recognised by the structure and that the expressions meet the expectation of structure and essentialist presentation as “this or that”.

Māori and indigenous identities are also subject to the expectation that we will be “this or that”, and the essentialising gaze is ever watchful (Mika and Stewart, 2016), determined to keep us in step. Essentialism's catalogues (including the DSM), place and re-place Māori and indigenous identities and insert indigenous ontologies into lists that can ‘tick-box’ troublesome identities (constructed through history and re-emerging in ever changing iterations). However, in a spiritual sense, Māori and indigenous Being (and indeed all Being), spills out of essentialist representation despite being subject to conceptual containment and the essentialist limiting of spiritual excess.

Continuing the discussion of the construction of identities of mental illness or madness that are applied to groups and that have been applied to Māori and indigenous peoples, the participant explained that Michel Foucault's analysis of the

construction of (the notion of) madness can be linked to the West's history of favouring reason over (apparent) unreason:

*In Hegel, you can just read it...his philosophy of history where he sees the West as the pinnacle of development, and all others as kind of let's say subservient intellectually. Not only subservient but questioning their capacity to even be able to think properly. Which is why Foucault is so important when he talks about reason and unreason, where the realm of unreason is that kind of madness and craziness.*

As the participant explains, unreason was linked to madness, but also to 'other' populations that were seen as inferior based on frameworks of intellectualism.

### ***Containing human experience***

One of the consequences of essentialism that was discussed by participants was the tendency to reduce complexity in understanding human experience (and therefore the complexity of understanding Being). One participant talked about how essentialism and reductionism set up the conditions for containment (both physical and conceptual) that, while helpful in situations where containment is protective, is applied in ways that negatively impact, including in cases of incarceration and institutionalisation:

*What Western thinking does is to get a bit freaked out about difference. And a person who's really really anxious has to be kind of contained. Somebody's mad, they have to be **contained**. And sometimes people do need to be contained for their sake and for somebody else's. But we contain them in such a way that we potentially destroy them. Criminals we destroy; unruly kids we destroy; boys who just are boys and think with their mouths and explore with their tongues and their*

*hands get crushed into boxes. Then of course what happens to girls and the way they are structured, are socialised to be an ideal. I reckon a lot of it is about construction; our constructions of an ideal is what limits our potential to be.*

**Contained:** The relationship between the act of conceptualisation and the act of apprehension is particularly poignant when thinking of containment as it relates to the history of containment that is associated with mental illness. Historical forms of containment have been replaced by policies of deinstitutionalisation (e.g., Granerud, and Severinsson, 2006). The idea of containing people physically is largely unacceptable and is no longer part of a preferred approach to working with people labelled as having mental illness (Brunton, 2011). However, conceptual containment can continue to apprehend the person to construct them (and their experiences). The participant's description of conceptualisation and diagnosis forms a link between the idea of containment and the trajectory that may follow, setting up a certain pathway of treatment (and diagnostic labelling), that then reinforces the containment.

The excesses of meaning that are missed through the construction of clinical concepts (or containers), can include wider social experiences (e.g., sexual abuse), but they may also include unsayable influences that are at play that are part of a person's (spiritual) whakapapa. The term 'at play' is important here for two reasons: firstly, the term play has been discussed in this thesis in relation to Derrida's (1978/1998) insistence that the world is at play behind the concepts that are put in place as markers of transcendental truths. This sense of play resonates with Gordon's (2008) concept of sociological haunting, mentioned earlier in the thesis, that makes 'real fictions' out of conceptual containers that claim to alight on the central or true meaning of an object or experience. Secondly, the world at play also highlights that, within a Māori and indigenous metaphysics, an excess of meaning that

cannot be contained with concepts is an entitized excess – the spirit at play that animates the world. There is, therefore, a discursive construction that occurs and constrains the person in a container of conceptual meaning but at a deeper level, there is a metaphysical construction that contains and constrains all things.

The idea of construction and conceptual containment (such as when people are contained within an ideal that structures identity), appeared to be related to both the limiting of Being as well as the limiting of potential:

*those ways of conceptualising what might be going on for somebody are really dated. Those are the world views, like **somebody might actually look like they've got bipolar disorder and psychosis if they've had sexual abuse all their lives and have been abandoned and haven't been able to form good attachments.** But if they are painted up as it's a **biological problem**, then the treatment is different, the way people view them is different and the diagnosis is more likely to stick. And that then tracks onto a pathway on how we treat people, and how they are treated.*

***Somebody might actually look like they've got bipolar disorder and psychosis if they've had sexual abuse all their lives and have been abandoned and haven't been able to form good attachments:** The contexts of trauma that impact on people who are labelled as having mental illness have become an important consideration as models of care expand to account for trauma histories. The tendency for 'symptoms' of trauma to be interpreted as a **biological problem** or to be interpreted as clinical diagnosis has been widely critiqued (e.g. see Falloot and Harris, 2001a, 2001b, 2002). However, it is the apprehension of complex experiences through framing experience *as* concepts that I find more insidious. The conceptual uptake of*

things must deny and discard things that cannot be fully explained by the terms that we have at hand to describe things. This is particularly concerning for Māori and indigenous expressions, given the metaphysical premises of mystery (e.g., see Mika, 2017), or excessive meaning. Through an adherence to the idea of conceptual framing, we are forced to discard what cannot be grasped by the concept.

### *Quantifying human nature*

When asked about the notion of mental illness and the implications that this notion has for how Being or human nature is understood, one participant pointed to the concept of quantification. They felt that the notion of mental illness reduced the complexity of experience in order to fit into norms that include personality types, and, in the context of the clinical term, ‘presentation’, would reduce personality to a set of observable characteristics and behaviours:

*I think it implies that human nature is **quantifiable**. That it's controllable and that it has to fit into a norm. I think that it doesn't allow for the breadth of experiences that people can have. It doesn't sanction the breadth of experiences people can have. And I think that we really only have a small range really of presentation. I've thought about this before, in which we're not really evolving a great deal in terms of our types of personalities...our personalities are changing but we're still pretty limited in how much we can be...We're kind of forced into these spaces, and I think we evolve but we just aren't as capable of Being as we could be.*

**Quantifiable:** The participant's experiences of working in treatment settings that classify and quantify behaviour and personality can be thought of as a

type of suppression. The participant's concern with approaches that do not allow for the breadth of experiences that people may have is directly tied to a scientific view of human nature that the participant describes as spaces that people are forced into. These spaces, while conceptual (i.e., conceptualising normative standards of behaviour), are discussed as having real impacts on the person, suppressing and restricting growth and Being.

I think about the different ways that suppression and restriction can be imposed, and the pathway set by clinical diagnosis and quantification of behaviour. It reminds me of a story I encountered years before that was told by Robert Whittaker (2010), a medical writer who is focussed on determining why rates of mental illness are increasing in America. Whittaker tells a story of two children whose development takes two very different paths: one child forced into clinical spaces and medicated for behaviour deemed to be dysfunctional, and one who, in accordance with the parents' decision, is not medicated. These two paths had vastly different results: one child who sat quietly, subdued by medication that was doing the job intended; and the other, who has a different experience, permitted to be spirited and loud and eventually developing past the 'behavioural issues' they were said to exhibit at the age of four. What struck me in these stories is that both children were described by psychiatrists as having a 'chemical imbalance'. Their troubling behaviour was reduced to a physical, quantifiable, disorder classification.

One participant discussed the concept of Māori mental health and mental health in general. The premises that the concept of mental health (and mental illness), are based on were described as aspects of a system that separates people into (measurable) parts that are broken (e.g., broken heart, broken spirit), as opposed to being based on the premise of holism:

*That's where I'm at. In terms of Māori mental health,  
there was never such a thing, eh? It was all part of life.  
But, you know, what Pākehā do, which bothers me a lot  
because **we're dragged into that system of everything***

*is separated. You've got a broken heart, you've got a broken spirit, you've got a broken whatever... you're chucked over here, you're chucked over here for that part, this part over here, you're chucked over here, yet we were all kept in one place to deal with the whole thing. I just hate that we buy into such systems of separation, because we shouldn't be separated.*

***We're dragged into that system of everything is separated. You've got a broken heart; you've got a broken spirit:*** I interpret the participant's description of the onto-epistemic bases of the dominant Western health system as a critique of separation but also as a warning about onto-epistemic expectation. Māori and indigenous terms, when “*dragged into*” the dominant system, must conform to a style of representation that demands clarity and the presence of meaning. This is problematic when things within a Māori and indigenous metaphysics, while “charged with meaning” (Kereopa, cited in McNeill, 2005, p. 142), are unsayable. Through acts of epistemic integration, however, these unsayable things are subject to framing, rendering what spills out of the frame silent and absent.

Another participant described how dominant Western notions of Being, which focus on the brain as the centre of Being, have directly impacted on lived experiences resulting in artificial notions of separation:

*I think again that notion of my body that's completely artificial, a way from which those artificial separations and labelling have caused us to reconfigure life and our actions within life... the West goes okay, **this is your mind, this is your brain, everything exists in your brain**, that's the controller of everything and the controller of your Being. We know that that's not true*

*because your body gets sick and all sorts of things  
happen with regards to your body.*

***This is your mind, this is your brain, everything exists in your brain:*** As discussed in chapter five, the metaphysics of presence is, I think, solidifying within mental health and moving towards ever more visible representations of human nature. The onto-epistemic tendency and preference for knowable, measurable, essential qualities appears to be manifesting in mental health in the growing reliance on and investment in physicalist explanations of behaviour (and therefore Being). For Māori and indigenous peoples, this move towards more solid (physical) explanations is problematic when terms such as ‘mind’ or ‘mental’ are considered from within Māori and indigenous metaphysics. There can be no assumptions that Māori and indigenous meaning will find common onto-epistemic ground on which to share perspectives of Being or (more pointedly in terms of physicalist notions of mental illness) what is meant by the term ‘mind’. The dominant conceptualisation of ‘mind’ within mental health as a physical substance (i.e., see Graham, 2010) leaves little room for metaphysical movement. From my perspective, this means that when Hinengaro is translated as mental health, there is potential for the profound cosmological meaning associated with Hinengaro to be aligned with the dominant conceptualisation of the term ‘mental’ that is upheld within the mental health system.

The participant also described the personality or nature of Being associated with the notion of Being as thinking and mental functioning or the brain. Mind-centred notions of Being were associated with the need to have certainty about things in the world, which in turn was linked to a history of collecting and labelling things (i.e., imperialism, colonisation),

*we are quite happy to live with uncertainty... the West  
tries to capture certainty all the time, which is why  
they're rabid collectors – you know, they'll collect*

*things and they'll label and try and nail down certainty. Whereas, I think our understanding of the world is definitely around there are always going to be uncertainties because we're not the king of the planet... it has its way of Being and it will give us signs around particular things.*

In contrast, another participant talked about the Māori term ngākau as a source of emotional knowledge. While ngākau is commonly translated as heart, it was described here as Māori understandings of emotional knowledge that are grounded in or present in the body:

*thinking about **ngākau** and why do we put so much emphasis on ngākau? Well ... it was really about being, I think, more grounded and more present in our bodies than we are now... the more we talk about it the more we tend to be centred in that and so where emotions come from in the body is different. You know, the emotion of the heart, like a lot of stuff in the West is all about the heart. Yet, there are completely different ideas, I think, around how the body develops and therefore how you interact with the world. So, I think all of that needs sorting as well.*

**Ngākau:** Māori views of Being that contrast with perspectives of Being as 'quantifiable parts' - such as the brain or even ngākau - foreground the notion of embodied Being. Within this thesis, ngākau has been discussed as a place from which thinking can emerge but not in the sense of strict cognitive 'thought'. As discussed in the method chapter, 'te whakaaro o te ngākau' relates to a holistic process of embodied thinking. This understanding of ngākau can be discussed in contrast with what is closest to a Māori understanding of the brain or 'roro' that, while also engaging in a type of

thought process, was understood as holding knowledge that is ‘fleeting’. The divide between the metaphysics that separates mind and body and a Māori metaphysics of holistic embodiment brings the concepts and subsequent treatment approaches that are practiced within the mental health system into sharp focus.

### *Fixed meaning – fixed responses*

One participant shared a memory that provided an understanding of how Māori worldviews provide different perspectives of behaviour. The example the participant gave related to what, in a clinical and dominant societal view, is conceptualised as suicide. Rather than speak about common conceptualisations of suicide, the participant talked instead about her own experience as an adolescent of wanting to “*cross the awa*” and leave her body:

*We know we’ve got to go; we’ve got to go cross that awa and then we can travel into that other space, except I had to learn to leave where my body was. So, **crossing the river was not about suicide**; it was about going to my nan, but she wouldn’t let me come.*

***Crossing the river was not about suicide***: Again, Māori expressions appear to be at the mercy of a pre-determined concept that is enforced from an external worldview. The participant understands her experience in a different way which has implications in terms of how onto-epistemic space is created within mental health - allowing for positively divergent explanations of experience.

The participant also talked about approaches to healing, expressing discontent about pharmaceutical approaches and the impact that these approaches have on the person. The pharmaceutical approach was discussed within the wider context of

dominant Western approaches to treatment and what the participant believes are barriers to a person's development and growth. The inability to utilise traditional healing processes was also discussed and the participant described the difference between those who position themselves as healers and those who position themselves as facilitators of healing,

*they drug them out of Being. They walk around like zombies. They want to use approaches that just doesn't have that person grow...But in saying that too, we have our own people who don't know how to utilise the traditions of ours and the healing processes. They're busy walking around labelling themselves as healers. I'm not a healer and never will be, never have been. I heal me. **My job is to open a door and find the healer within that person** and say, you know the best about you, let's examine what you think you are. Mine is to lay the tools of being able to examine what that might look like.*

**My job is to open a door and find the healer within that person:** The idea of treatment as healing and as the role of facilitator or an act of facilitation appears to be different from conceptualising approaches to healing as being located in a professional's knowledge through diagnosis and the management of symptoms. I speculate that this means the healing (in whatever form or process), comes from a source different from professional knowledge that is conceptualised as 'expert' knowledge. I think there is a conceptual difference between the terms *treatment* and *facilitation* and that this manifests in a metaphysical difference between the idea of individuals treating other individuals (human centred knowledge and human centred recovery from 'mental illness') and the person seeing themselves, and someone they are working with, as part of a holistic (facilitated) process.

One participant discussed how limited conceptualisations of Being and ideas about sets of behaviours play out in clinical practice and treatment settings or in working with people who are experiencing emotions related to trauma and grief. Rather than supporting people to process emotions as natural responses to traumatic experiences, the participant believed that experiencing grief and trauma is limited by expectations that include the length of time that a person experiences an emotional response, the severity of the response and the type of behaviour that is exhibited:

*the attending clinician has it fixed in his or her mind that the client is suffering from bipolar disorder, or psychosis, or something. But someone else might say actually no, maybe it's PTSD; this person has had a lot of trauma. And my biggest concern is that our **natural response to trauma and grief and pain** and hurt is controlled for us. We're allowed to grieve but come on, wrap it up. For god's sake don't go crazy about it, and don't go on hard drugs and get into unsafe sexual relationships because it's filling a gap or quitting your job and running off and doing something really crazy.*

**Natural response to trauma and grief and pain:** The participant's reference to "natural response to trauma and grief and pain" raises questions about what natural responses might be. Our natural responses are hidden beneath objective medical and scientific language that suppresses other possibilities of how we might think of our experiences. I have also heard mental health consumer advocates and others who critically analyse mental health discourse argue that what is labelled mental illness is in fact a natural and normal psychological response to trauma.

These alternate views have the potential to challenge diagnostic categories to expand views about what different behaviours mean. However, it also

illustrates how hard it is to shift pre-determined frames of thinking about behaviour, including shifting from the conceptualisation of behaviour as an individual's observable behaviour to the individual being part of the whole. From within a Māori and indigenous metaphysics, I would argue that the individual's place within the whole is important to the discussion of how we think of natural responses (and in this case, a natural response to trauma). For example, I attended a presentation in 2018 that was given by Professor Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti. In this presentation Professor Andreotti described what she calls modern colonial habits of Being that are characterised by capitalist materialist desires and rationalist ontologies that reduce Being to 'knowing'.

The model presented by Professor Andreotti ties our Being to modernity's love for conquest and progress that is conceptualised as scientific and technological expansion, discovery, extraction and ownership. There are, however, hidden costs that sit beneath narratives of progress. The exploitation of people and of the planet, the false promise of universal security, and the anxiety that is created by the expectation of individual progress, are all things that trap the human life-force. Through this analysis of the ontology of modernity, Professor Andreotti has begun to look at the issue of addiction through the lens of entanglement, theorising that addiction (drug and alcohol) may be more like an experience of attunement to what she calls 'colonial addictions' or addiction to modernity. This view of addiction could be likened to the term worldedness that has been discussed in this thesis as the mysterious collapse of the world in any one thing or the understanding that "all things actively construct and comprise" any one thing in the world (Mika, 2017, p.3). In this sense, natural reactions that are currently conceptualised as mental illness could be understood not as an individual natural reaction, but as part of a (un) natural entanglement. This does not necessarily mean that things in the world, including people, will automatically become unwell as a result of living and Being in the world. Rather, this thinking pushes our attention in a certain direction opening up conceptual possibilities for understanding 'natural reactions' as something

that occurs within the ‘whole’ as opposed to occurring within part of the whole (or the individual).

The participant also discussed the role of clinicians in the context of ethics associated with identifying the cause of mental illness or what may be conceptualised as problematic behaviours or emotional states:

*I think we have a curiosity and I think a lot of clinicians have a curiosity, but they also have the training that to know is to be able to help. If we go with just the ethics, and a responsible practitioner would want to know to be able to help, but if you get caught up in it to the extent that you think there’s something there and you absolutely have to know, you could go down the wrong path and that’s where I think don’t we just love a mystery.*

**Mystery:** The idea of ethics as an obligation to ensure that a clinician is able to help a person and the pursuit of knowledge about why a person is having a particular experience is discussed here as a complicated process of balancing knowledge (as certainty), and the potential for reaching inaccurate conclusions. The question, I suggest, is whether healing is dependent on accuracy and certainty or if there are other pathways (based on divergent metaphysical premises), that can be used to engage with a person’s experience. The idea of mystery as a metaphysical premise brings up possibilities that sit counter to finding the centre of meaning. The possibility of navigating a person through an experience by using a type of relational orientation was raised in chapter six when discussing psychotherapy that focuses on things that ‘haunt’: these are the histories and stories affecting the person that cannot be brought fully to light (Harris, Kalb and Klebanoff (2017). The person’s connections to others and the complex weave of stories

that make up a person's realities show up and take effect regardless of whether they can be explained or not. Through invoking different strategies to access those complex effects and experiences, a whole realm of possibilities may be open to the person and to those that are attempting to facilitate healing. I liken this to the process of creative expression described by Nepia (2012) who explains how uncertainty can be a positive feature that enhances "the potential for discovery" (p.28).

In line with the idea of worldedness, one participant spoke about the difference between the concept of relationship that she described as being "in sync" with the environment (both physical and non-physical), and the idea of experiencing mental illness:

*One of the really, really important things – and this is about karakia, that he talked about, about that karakia transmits our understanding, our Māori understanding, of our state of Being, and it helps with our relationships with the cosmos, with our environment and with each other. So, our Being, our Māori Being is actually about being in tune or being cognisant or being in place, at peace, in the state of normal with our environment which includes our cosmos. When we're not in line with that, we're not in mental illness, we're actually **out of sync** with our Being in this environment.*

**Out of sync:** Rather than understanding certain behaviours or states of Being as an illness, the participant understands these behaviours as being in a state that is "out of sync" with the wider environment. The pathway back to being 'in sync', including using karakia, might be seen as a transmission of understanding through karakia - an understanding of the cosmological,

environmental and interpersonal relationships that are a part of the ‘normal’ state of Being.

### ***Imbalance***

Another participant talked about the idea of imbalance as being in an emotional state “*all of the time*” and also as the impact of living in a “*Pākehā world*” that is difficult to escape and imposes restrictions on traditional Māori ways of Being. The participant stated that in working with people who are seeking healing, she sees her role as supporting the person to experience balance. The experience of balance that was discussed here also connects to this participant’s previous description of Hine and Ngaro through their reference to “*the seer that sees beyond the seeing and the hearer that hears beyond the hearing*”:

*When we’re working with those that spend their time in their emotions and all of the time in their emotions, for me my work is to bring balance. We’re so unbalanced, in everything. I say walk into the Pākehā world with your hand totally in a Māori world all of the time, that you know exactly – as much as you know in te ao Māori, be living in it, working in it, knowing it, fully experiencing the beauty of the legacy our tūpuna left us, and when we can conquer that, we can walk in the Pākehā world too because that’s where we’re at. That’s where it is. We can’t say to these Pākehā, go home and leave our awa alone. It’s already too late. We have instilled so much. While I can say we can walk in that world, now we’re working even in a more technical world which is so totally different, another invasion of our ability to use the seer that sees beyond the seeing, the hearer that hears beyond the hearing.*

The participant also provided a view on other clinical labels framing behaviour, offering an alternative perspective on schizophrenia which, from a Māori perspective, normalises the idea that each person expresses multiple selves that they conceptualised as different states. The participant described the impact of conceptualising and framing behaviour and how the idea of exploring behaviour as different states of Being can be suppressed through equating this idea with a dominant clinical concept:

***we are schizophrenic** ...I've been teaching that. I said "we learn through our atua – all the different states like tānenuiarangi, tānewhakapiripiri, tāne matua, tāne te wananga, tāne te atamai. I'm the mother and the daughter, I'm the auntie, I'm the grandma, I'm the great-grandma, I'm the artist, I'm the carver, I'm the poet, I'm the storyteller, I'm the teacher, I'm the student... and each one of those characters has a different behaviour. I'm the lover. I would never use that lover's behaviour with my children. I believe that that's where the roles get crossed, because we haven't learned about the behaviours of each one of that because to tell us we're all these characters is to tell us we're schizophrenic.*

**We are schizophrenic:** The understanding of balance and imbalance that is connected to the experience of being in the emotional body, that can be conceptualised as Ngaro (the emotional tāne/male aspect within a person), and the re-framing of schizophrenia as the multiplicity of Being, shifts the metaphysical construction of the indigenous self (and other selves). Within a dominant Western metaphysics, the idea of imbalance has been discussed in this thesis as a dysfunctional internal conflict (tied to the idea of proper moral functioning), that continues to influence the way that behaviour is framed today (Seeskin, 2008). Within this metaphysics, the rational self (that

is connected to the image of ‘mind’), governs other inferior aspects of interior Being ensuring that balance is achieved. The implications that this view of the person has had for how the self is constructed has also been connected to the separation of mind and body – the mind occupying a superior position over the lesser corporal physical aspect of Being. The implications that this metaphysical view of the person has for the construction of the self, and particularly the indigenous self, include the construction of self as a largely self-contained rational Being and one whose experience of ‘imbalance’ is centred on an internal chaos and ‘dis-order’ that prevents (individual) moral functioning. Re-framing the idea of imbalance to one that implicates spiritual cosmogenic elements that raise the possibility of external influences but ones that are at once intimately connected to the Being of a person (and all people), shifts the focus away from internal dysfunction to bring in an understanding of balance as relationship. While I am not aiming to provide a tidy explanation of how this shift in understanding would be applied within a therapeutic setting, the narrative that is offered through an understanding of cosmogenic Being may offer different possibilities of understanding an experience. These understandings may not result in the assigning of labels and exact descriptions of experiences but rather in seeing the self as something other than a dysfunction. These narratives also challenge the ideas of restricting excess (as discussed in Aristotle’s metaphysics), that suppress Māori and indigenous expressions that are seen as being inconsistent with the ordering of the positive and objective language of scientific clinical discourse.

### ***Liberating Māori worldviews***

When asked about their understanding of what constitutes a Māori worldview, one participant spoke about narratives that are different from what they called a Eurocentric view of relationships between the human and natural world along with views about relationships between people. For the participant, Māori worldviews provide a pathway for escaping dominant views, described as a “*mental escape*

*hatch*” that, while not allowing for a complete escape from modern ways of living, enabled a different way of thinking about the world:

*To me, a Māori world view is a way of understanding, particularly the human world but also to some extent the natural world, that derives from a heritage of different narrative, stories and events from those of the mainstream. My own little way of thinking about it for me is being Māori I think of it a bit like an escape hatch because everything about this world is so dominated by that euro-centric way of understanding the human being and the relationship with nature and with other human beings. An escape hatch in the sense that it's like that's not really me. I'm actually over here. It's not really something that I can – I can't go and live over there but mentally, it's like **a mental escape hatch**.*

***Mental escape hatch:*** A mental escape hatch could be conceptualised as an activity centred in thinking differently about the world in the literal sense of intellectual responses and processes. It could also be conceptualised, in a wider sense, as a way of Being in the world and the ability to transition the self from a non-relational Being to a relational Being escaping the limitations of having a primarily rational relationship with things in the world.

### ***Normalising Māori pathways to healing***

One participant spoke about the normalisation of a Māori worldview, noting some behaviours and thoughts that may provide pathways to healing despite these behaviours being seen as strange or potentially conceptualised as dysfunctional. The participant referred to the experience of a young woman who had sought a pathway to healing through sleeping on her grandmother's grave at night and how, in a wider sense, Māori may know that visiting a grave to be with loved ones that

have passed on has the potential to heal. Within the context of wondering how Māori may know that certain behaviours are pathways to healing, the participant considered the potential for this knowledge to be embodied or for it to be a result of socialisation (i.e., an innate understanding that guides responses to trauma or something we learn):

*If you don't have those things, but you are open, or maybe you even do have those things and then a Māori might come on and go no that's actually been a wider experience, so she's been sleeping on her grandmother's grave, every time she gets distressed we know she's going to end up on her grandmother's grave. And she might have had an experience where...she was that distressed over a period of time that she ended up sleeping on her grandmother's grave in the middle of the night, and it was pouring down with rain.*

***Why do we know that going back to the grave is going to heal us?*** *Our connection back to this Māori-ness, this Māori world view includes going back to a grave and trying to be with the only tangible object of our grandmother or grandfather, grandson anything. That's normal for us, not the best to be doing it in the dark when it's raining, you want to kind of mediate that, but that self-help, that Māori world view of how do I heal myself because maybe I'm not getting help anywhere else, or maybe that's actually where I want to be, that's a normal Māori worldview response. Whether we're socialised into it or whether we feel it innately or whether it's just that kind of like pain that is in our bodies, in our DNA, in our grief, that's where we go. That's a Māori world view there, and I think Western science psychology is shifting on that.*

*Why do we know that going back to the grave is going to heal us?* The question, “Why do we know that going back to the grave is going to heal us?” and the participant’s mention of having a tangible connection to loved ones as a way of coping with distress, raises interesting questions about the tangible and intangible in the context of help-seeking and treatment systems, including in the case of self or whānau help-seeking behaviour. In the example given by the participant, the person is seeking a tangible site of healing (the grave of a loved one), but what is implicit in this behaviour is also the connection to those who are not physically present (intangible connections). We might also speculate that this same intangible connection to a loved one who is not physically present is also tangible in the sense that the person is connected through DNA but that there are, in turn, intangible aspects to this that are reflected in the term whakapapa that expands the idea of blood connection to go beyond biological genealogy to include the spiritual connection between all things.

Another participant also spoke about the type of experiences that may fall outside of dominant expectations of normality when viewed from within a dominant Western frame of reference. These experiences include hearing or seeing phenomenon that are not otherwise visible or audible (i.e., explained as visual or auditory hallucinations in clinical terms). The participant explained that when these experiences are viewed from a different worldview, however, an alternative ground of understanding is presented that may provide opportunities for exploring (rather than suppressing) the experience:

*I think for what constitutes mental illness, I think if our people start seeing someone, if they start seeing people coming around them we’ll take it seriously. Our first line is probably to say, I know my family is saying well who was it? Did they want something? And they’ll take it seriously. Whereas we know the methods of practitioners ... they’ll classify that a particular way. I think the realms between the living and those who have*

*passed on, or even other entities, for us is more dynamic and accessible by a lot of people. I think we come from that basis. A lot of our people, the mental health system is actually making them worse because they're unable to work through things. We have a high tolerance of letting people work through what they need to work through. Whereas if you medicate it... you don't necessarily understand what's happening there.*

One participant related the experience of what is labelled mental illness (and in this example depression), with popular views on “*light and dark*”. The participant explained that, in popular culture, dark is usually associated with negative states and is dramatized in ways that equate dark with fear and dangerous situations. In contrast, the participant explained that, from a Māori perspective, the experience of darkness and the idea of being in the dark can be associated with healing and, in particular, healing from deep sadness. The participant described the different spaces within the wharenuī and how these correspond with realms of light and dark in the world or Te Pō and Te Ao Mārama. Te Pō was described as a realm of healing:

*we talked about depression around that our understanding of light and dark. And I think this is really important...The West are being like the dark and anything dark is like bad news. We've raised my moko to be actually really comfortable in the dark. I used to take them for walks at night and we'd look at the moon, we look at the stars and we'd tell her to feel what the eels are like in the dark. Because I didn't want them to be afraid of that. You know, you see it in songs all the dark, the dark is a place to be afraid of.*

*spaces of darkness could be nurturing places and healing spaces... You have at the front Te Ao Mārama and you have at the back Te Pō. And people who were*

*in say states of depression or needing healing could go to Te Pō to stay in that place for as long as they wanted to go, to be there. Now, if they were there for too long people would observe them and if they were there for too long, they would start to be enticed out. There's comfort and healing in those spaces but not too long ... and then they would start to sing to them, they would start to do things to entice them out to Te Ao Mārama. Things like that where the West has also cut us off from our nurturing places, from our healing spaces. To me, the dark the moon and the stars, I just think there's so much healing that comes from them, as much as the sea, all of these different things but it's whether or not our kids can be connected to those things.*

***Spaces of darkness could be nurturing places and healing spaces... You have at the front Te Ao Mārama and you have at the back Te Pō:*** When thinking about the ways that the participant describes states of Being and how these are connected to physical and non-physical spaces (such as the wharenuī and the more than physical space of 'Te Pō'), I am struck by the contrast between what the participant identifies as Western views on darkness (that are often associated with negative spaces), and Māori views on darkness (Te Pō), as a source of healing. The view of Te Pō as the physical space of healing and the ability to sit in that space and be nurtured seems to contrast with what was described by another participant in an earlier comment about how Western clinical approaches tend to encourage people to hastily discard heavy emotions in favour of re-turning to a functional state. Within that previous comment the participant expressed concern that "*our natural response to trauma and grief and pain is controlled for us*". I reflect on that sense of control in the context of a healing process in which darkness is a source of healing and the healing is a process of sitting and Being. This view of healing, within a clinical setting and more widely from within a

cultural world view that equates darkness with negativity, appears to represent a dual suppression of Māori spiritual responses. Both the idea of darkness and the idea of taking time to experience distress (or remain in an emotional state), appear to be viewed through a negative lens.

The participant also spoke about the variations in darkness that exist and the beauty that is associated with the various shades and hues. However, while the participant used terms such as “*velvety blue*” as an example of variance that would indicate differences in shades of colour, they referred to this difference as “*all sorts of states*” as opposed to referring to ‘all sorts of colours.

Another participant expressed discontent about the tendency to equate what is real with what can be seen or what is visible and how these tendencies impact on the way that emotions and behaviour are interpreted:

*when are we going to wake up and realise that there's a whole other world apart from what they can actually see...the way they interpret emotion sometimes, that's fraught, the way they interpret behaviour is fraught, so I think that a lot of ways that stuff happens in the system that is not great.*

In speaking about experiences that have been termed Extra Ordinary Experiences (See Taitimu, 2007), including for example seeing someone who has passed away, another participant reflected on the question of how the person who has had the experience would interpret the experience and framed this as a central issue in determining a response to the experience. The participant stated that external interpretations (both clinical and indigenous), tend to suppress the complexity and variance that exists in people’s experience of phenomena:

*If we're defining the Māori way as exploration of soul wounds, intergenerational trauma, all those sorts of things then we're just saying one way, and that's the*

*problem I have, it's not complex, it's not complicated enough. **It doesn't account for the variance that is in there.***

***It doesn't account for the variance that is in there:*** What I find interesting in reflecting on the two responses shown here is that there is a sense of the need to account for things that are both visible and invisible (presence and absence). However, there is a sense that, in developing Māori approaches to healing, the complexities tied to the invisible and the unsayable, unintelligible aspect of Being can be lost in the *defining* of an experience. Defining trauma from an indigenous perspective may not capture the variance that is at play in the experience (and the person) and may be as rigid as non-indigenous conceptualisations. The idea of there being an expectation of how something will be re-presented as 'this' or 'that' and the language that is at hand to produce and share indigenous models of mental health are significant in the context of engaging the "whole person".

When talking about the notion of mental illness, one participant related the notion of mental illness to having a strong awareness or experience of wairua. The participant believed that wairua, and connecting with wairua or entities, are fundamental aspects of what is commonly conceptualised as mental illness:

*I have a very strong point of view that I don't mind sharing, **that mental illness is a strongness with wairua.** People are very potently aware, and they don't have the tools of how to handle it on a daily basis, and we've been brought into the spooky and drama and trauma of what it is for other people, what the movies say. When you get rid of all that stuff, the actual reality is it's just you and I having a conversation, and it's just me and the wairua having a conversation.*

***That mental illness is a strongness with wairua:*** There is a connection between conceptualising mental illness as a wairua experience that has come to be associated with ideas projected from ‘scary movies’ and other narratives, and previous comments made about how darkness has come to be associated with fear and negativity. The experience of wairua as an energy has been discussed earlier in this thesis in relation to Valentine’s (2009) description of wairua as a fundamental attribute that enables Māori to engage with our reality through a type of intuitive consciousness. Later in this section, another participant will refer to wairua when discussing healing through engaging in karakia to address what is “*impacting on wairua*”. This has an interesting alignment with what the participant is describing in the comments above when they describe wairua as an entity (or entities) that we may be “*having a conversation with*” but that this might manifest as behaviour that causes concern (e.g., behaviour that is labelled schizophrenic). There is a sense of mystery and the unknowable that is connected to the spiritual nature of both wairua and darkness or Te Pō. Neither is fully discernible and the mystery that is part of these entities was described in chapter four as “a limit on what we know about an object, related to its ability to withhold part of itself from our view” (Mika, 2017, p.5), or things that call for our attention, presenting themselves to be regarded while at the same time withholding the fullness of their spectre.

The ability for wairua to call for our attention and the impact that this has on wairua (as a shared element of being between the internal and external world), along with the nature of mystery that denies a full apprehension of the experience, may sit comfortably within a Māori metaphysics. However, this same metaphysics is challenging to a dominant Western orientation relying on discernible present objects that provide some certainty. It is the clash of these two metaphysics that I suspect gives rise to a negative framing of spiritual experiences (that can then be catalogued and made present and measurable as, for example, schizophrenia), and also suppresses spirituality,

preventing learning about the types of wairua communication that the participant is describing.

In terms of conceptualising the connection between colonisation and Being as a creative experience, one participant discussed the use of terms as things that create dis-ease or well-being. This participant believed that many of the terms used in health (including public health that is usually associated with the prevention of disease), reflect states of illness and that using language that focuses on illness has a material impact that creates and re-creates disease:

*Speaking from a public health perspective with all those rules and stuff, it's still very heavy. As an example, in the public health space it's all disease state, a spectre. So, what happens is that if they're always promoting about a disease you will perpetuate that for all eternity. If you sort of flip that and talk about ease within your family – ease, health, wealth, feeling great – it's a whole different energy, and there's nothing medical about it.*

This view was also expressed by another participant who was concerned with the way in which words (as part of the understanding of interconnection and impacts on wairua), impact on well-being. When talking about her own experiences of dealing with what mainstream medicine describes as a chronic health problem, the participant recounted the experience of being advised by a medical professional to, “*stop talking about being chronic*”; this medical professional instead encouraged her to focus on her state of wellness, given that she was already engaging in treatment and was experiencing good medical outcomes. The participant spoke about the power of the words that we use and their “*reverberation*”.

In another example, the participant recalled providing similar advice to a Māori organisation who had, in searching for a name for their group, settled on a term that held specific implications for them in terms of their behaviour. The name the group settled on loosely translates to ‘calling wellness’ which, as the participant

explained, creates certain responsibilities related to the reverberations of words that make up the name provided. The name the group had selected would have implications that would be set in motion by using the particular words, which in the early stages of developing the organisation were ‘karanga’ (to call) and ‘ora’ (wellness).

*because that's just the name they've put up, I said you're calling wellness. So, if you're calling wellness, that entity to enter into your life, you've got to prepare to be accepting of it if oranga comes... you call ora in and how prepared are you to accept it? Because it is an entity. I also know that we will and can call in kino as well, and some of the times we don't recognise when Mauriora is coming in the door or te ao kino is coming in the door, because we're so f\*\*ked up in our heads around our colonised way of thinking.*

*I was talking to them about ora being a real thing, so to get ora to happen you need to prepare the place where ora is going to land. That's from your ngākau that's from your wairua, all of that sort of thing so that when ora comes and you do the pōhiri, you're doing the Karanga Ora, when ora comes then you're actually prepared*

***Because that's just the name they've put up, I said you're calling wellness. So, if you're calling wellness, that entity to enter into your life, you've got to prepare to be accepting of it if oranga comes:*** An entitized description of language, and the sometimes inadvertent act of calling in entities through the words that are used, is reflected in how language is described from outside of an ‘objective language’ framework. This view of language presents it as something more than descriptive words that grasp and represent an object.

We see clues about how the participants describe the living nature of language in some of the descriptions of language that were presented in chapter four. Language as a living entity is described as a “sacred expression of breath (that) incorporates this orientation in all its foundations.” (Cajete, 2005, p. 70). Words and phrases are described as “vitalistic (and) expressive of life forces, (of) metaphysics, and cosmic energy”.(Manuka, 2001, p.199), and language is also described as a non-linguistic energy or ‘ecology’ that resists any strict rules of the structure that is expected through verbal and written language. It is in this sense that the impact of language on states of Being may be understood, particularly when considering how a label (such as chronic illness), is applied to a person’s experience. As Mika (2005) explains, language has a spiritual movement implicating those things that exist behind the terms that are used - things that are then ushered in by language. Within this context, what are the implications of employing the terms that are used in mental health to describe the notion of mental illness - including the term mental illness itself - in relation to the construction of the self? Considering the participant’s description of language as a living entity, I speculate that the clinical terms used in the mental health setting (that find their way into popular conceptualisations of mental illness), are both spiritually and materially constructive. This construction includes but also goes beyond the discursive and social construction concerns that are often voiced about labelling to impact on the spiritual self as a relation to other things in the world. This is particularly significant when the self is reconstructed to deny the existence of relationships with external entities - a refusal which is arguably built into the structure and meaning of the language that is dominant in mental health treatment settings and in the community.

The participant described ‘kupu’ as entities that can be called in and that there is a need to prepare for the entity’s arrival. Distinguishing between entities that are in line with mauriora (associated with a sense and state of wellness) and kino (evil or bad) was also important and the participant related the ability (or inability) to make this distinction to a colonised way of thinking.

In terms of returning to a Māori way of thinking and Being that would support the ability to engage in the calling of entities that align with wellness - and, more broadly, ways of living that call wellness - the participant spoke about being able to receive a type of guidance through different ways of thinking and engaging that she characterised as dreaming and imagination:

*We need to start dreaming, imagining, whatever you like to call it, the world that we want it to be and then we do this big kind of – miss out this bit and go back to that bit to say, okay you people, there were some things that you actually laid down for us – we can't find them, you're going to have to give us a clue and be absolutely okay about the wairua giving us some clues about what we need to be thinking about.*

Another example of the reverberation of words and a sense of a living entitized language was reflected in one participant's recounting of a memory from childhood. The participant described her sibling as an amazing singer who had been chosen for classical training. At this point, another sister of the participant, who was present in the house during the interview, joined the conversation, confirming and adding details to the story. The following is a full account of the story as it unfolded in conversation. It is included here in this way to allow for a discussion of how the story pushes thinking about the impact of applying structure and rigidity to things that would be, in a more natural state - melodious (in the context of song and singing/waiata and tune/rangi):

*Interviewee: But our sister was taught classically by Beatrice Webster, and thereafter right up until she died, whenever she wrote a waiata it was something that had that trained connotation. It missed something after that...that sadness in it.*

*Interviewee 2: Soprano and to me it was like...*

*Interviewer: Like it had to follow some rules.*

*Interviewee: It did, it did, and Pākehā rules.*

*Interviewee 2: It doesn't belong. It doesn't belong.*

*Interviewee: It wasn't that natural melody, that melodious Māori ability*

***Like it had to follow some rules:*** This reference to rules pushes my thinking towards considering the rules that are apparent in clinical systems and clinical language. The simple representation that is reflected in clinical language and diagnostic categories is, through provisions in health policy, at times complemented by additional contextual information that include cultural beliefs. However, holism or holistic health, from within a Māori metaphysics, is more than the visible social connections that a person experiences including, for example, connections to physical landscapes. Holism as a metaphysical experience is an understanding of the complex nature of Being that resists the idea of conceptual, definitive explanation, and the view that something (including behaviour), can be grasped in such a way that it is fully presentable. The multiple connections with both seen and unseen entities (whanaunga) make objective, positive descriptions of human experience highly problematic within this metaphysical context and serves to silence those less discernible, and less visible connections, muting the melodious fullness of Being that is at play.

Within this example, there is a sense of containment that comes through in how the 'rules' of singing and 'melody' are described. This appears to mirror the idea of containment that has been discussed so far in this thesis in relation to human

emotion and behaviour and (in a wider context) the world as a whole that must be ‘disciplined’.

### ***Māori metaphysics in health***

In talking about the role of Māori in mental health systems of treatment, one participant recognised the contribution of all Māori who work to contribute to developing Māori approaches within mental health while also recognising the systemic restrictions that frame much of the work that Māori are attempting to undertake. The participant stated, “*they’re doing the best that they can within their own intellectual environment*”. However, when reflecting on the focus of this thesis and PhD research question, the participant was mindful of how focussing on what is not working can detract and distract from creating pathways back to relational Being through a focus on Te Ao Māori and interconnectedness that supports a process of, “*re-centring ourselves back into our universe*”:

*we’re so busy doing things against what’s not working  
.... I don’t think this deconstructs mental illness, but  
what it does do it actually requires the construction or  
the reconstruction of Te Ao Māori and our relationships  
with our universe and with each other.*

Another participant commented on the provision of Māori health services that they felt were often based on the same models of care as non-Māori, non-indigenous services:

*there’s lots of Māori health providers but they’re just  
providing the same health, they’re just brown faces,  
aren’t they? Brown faces for the same health provision  
with the same medical models.*

One participant also cautioned that the application of Māori values and concepts within the context of mental health would need to account for and retain the

premises on which Māori values and concepts are based rather than attempting to fit Māori values and concepts into non-Māori models:

*Fundamentally. Well, I think what we're good at doing is making it seem commensurable. Like, we can take that model and do a Māori version of it and make it seem like it fits. But what informs the Māori view is often completely different, is premised on a completely different notion of being a person, being human, Being.*

In reflecting on Māori mental health approaches, one participant described how Māori have knowledge of behaviour that may appear to be similar to psychological theories (such as the superego), but that Māori have a different metaphysical basis that extends beyond the individual. In comparing and relating the concepts of te hihiri that the participant related to the psychological concept of the superego, the participant explained that the Māori term te hihiri, when understood in the context of a person or personality, can be likened to a taniwha; an entity that can bring balance within a person and the place that is the “*seat of immense power*”:

*When you go into te hihiri...the super ego space, which is where memory and taniwha actually co-exist and violence. It's the seat of immense power and knowledge, but it's also where the taniwha are actually created for specific reasons– they've got their own roles as well. If you didn't use the taniwha, we would be extremely violent people because there's no balance– so you create the taniwha and the taniwha is te whakatūpato and you don't want to awaken the taniwha because then you lose the control of hihiri where greatness is but also where destruction and violence lies, talking about our Hinengaro and our wairua and our mauri actually keeps that in control.*

***You don't want to awaken the taniwha because then you lose the control of hihiri where greatness is but also where destruction and violence lies, and how our lives, talking about our Hinengaro and our wairua and our mauri actually keeps that in control:*** I imagine the possibilities of this narrative being used within mental health to guide people through an experience or to orientate people to their experience. Like the narrative therapy, 'Mahi a atua' (see earlier reflection), the participant positions the person within a wider cosmological narrative.

The participant described their experiences of teaching others to engage in assessments when working with people who were experiencing what might be, in a clinical context, conceptualised as psychosis. In recounting these experiences, the participant explained that some people she has worked with were seeing entities and hearing voices. In teaching others to complete assessments with those who were having these experiences, the participant encouraged staff to directly address what people were hearing and seeing and, further, to engage in conversations that encouraged people to actively think about and contemplate what they were seeing or what they were hearing:

*I have done some independent research around this. When I taught people how to do assessments, I actually told them to have the conversation about who visits who when they see people and all this, because a lot of people who have either drug and alcohol addictions or some who are traumatised, they're actually traumatised by the people that they're seeing or hear. So, I encourage people when they're doing the assessments to talk about who it is that they see or hear, what do they look like; actually, really talk about it as if you're talking about all these other symptoms and then somewhere along the line go so, do you reckon your grandmother will come and beat you up? Do you reckon your grandmother wants to hurt you? Do you reckon*

*your tūpuna, who spends a lot of time setting things up,  
what do you reckon they would be doing?*

***I encourage people when they're doing the assessments to talk about who it is that they see or hear, what do they look like; actually, really talk about it as if you're talking about all these other symptoms:*** While there is evidence that clinical assessments will involve some discussions about what a patient is experiencing in the context of seeing or hearing phenomena that are visible and audible only to the patient, these experiences are usually associated with clinical diagnostic categories that include visual and auditory hallucinations. Taking these experiences seriously and encouraging patients to contemplate their meaning in the way that is described here requires a reconceptualization of the value of these experiences as material for discussing thought processes. From a Māori perspective, however, and particularly in relation to the participant's view of real entities, it also requires a metaphysical leap. I suggest it would require that professionals who are completing assessments do not conclude, despite exploring a person's perception of spiritual, non-visible entities, that the person is, nonetheless, still experiencing hallucinations of things that are not real. The potential impacts of concluding that spiritual experiences simply reflect clinical interpretations of an experience again goes back to the idea of taking indigenous ontologies seriously and to the ways in which clinical categories and language construct the self.

One of the participants described some of the work that she is involved in that relates to teaching others how to deal with wairua. This work involves teaching rangatahi Māori and whānau about how wairua might manifest in experiences that are often conceptualised as symptoms associated with mental illness including depression and anxiety. The participant saw this teaching and learning experience as an alternative to the pharmaceutical approach to treating depression and anxiety:

*we teach them a whole bunch of simple tools for first of all the whānau, because sometimes the kids aren't ready to receive until they see that their whānau have some of the skills to receive it. And these kids are ones that knowingly come through, who are classified by the doctor as depressed, have anxiety, all of that stuff that the mental health system wants to medicate.*

*When it's medicated that brings on a whole other raft of impacts to the person in that any time drugs and alcohol were used – and prescription, I'll put in that – what that means is that the infinite Being or the Being is no longer in control of their body, it is now controlled through the drug or the alcohol, which then opens them up to the lower harmonic entities to enter their space and use the body.*

When discussing wairua healing, another participant spoke about what she thought was impacting on wairua and the potential reasons for the states of unwellness that people experienced. Trauma was pointed to as having an impact on people and in particular past trauma that the participant related to both a person's own experiences and to whakapapa in the context of intergenerational trauma. Rather than pointing to impacts that could be conceptualised as visible signs of trauma, the participant described trauma that rests within whakapapa and the soul (as non-visible sites of trauma). The wairua healing process would include addressing the accumulation of trauma in this context which would lead to those facilitating the healing searching for the points within whakapapa where trauma had occurred:

*Past trauma. Most of it is past trauma. You can tell the people when they've got – they don't have oranga Hinengaro. **You feel them, you feel them in a different way.** When you've worked in mental health and all that sort of thing and you know we're not actually even in their domain. That's because their soul at this point on*

*their whakapapa can't cope anymore with the traumas of previous whakapapa. Now, this person before you might have been sexually abused, this person before you might have had violence against them; all the sorts of things that we attribute mental illness to. But if you do wairua healing, you look at this person and you don't say, so why are you reacting to the abuse? The wairua healers go, at what point in your whakapapa did the first hara happen? And they go there, and they clean that up, and they go there and clean that up. They do it five or six generations sometimes and clean the whakapapa.*

***You feel them, you feel them in a different way:*** The participant described part of the process of searching for points of trauma as getting a feeling for the person, which indicates an embodied, intuitive approach to identifying what is impacting on a person. This sits in direct contrast with clinical approaches that are largely based on rational, scientific knowledge matching a person's experience with pre-existing categories and checklists of symptoms and associated diagnoses. Intuition has been discussed in chapters two and three as a more than cognitive exercise that is connected to the idea of the world as an integrated organism. Ott's (2017) description of thinking as a type of embodied cognition was used to describe an experience of Being in which all things in our environment (including people) becomes an extension of the self.

While Ott uses examples of physical objects to demonstrate how this extension occurs (i.e., a blind man who uses a cane that can be thought of as an extension of the blind man's body), I expanded this view of the extension of the self to include things that are non-spatial, non-physical and non-psychological in the sense that we need not be aware of them. Within this context, the participant's experience of 'feeling' in order to identify what is

impacting on the person implies that there is a type of non-physical continuum between the participant and the person seeking healing. Within a Māori metaphysics, this continuum may be explained by an understanding of holism (see again the term worldedness), but importantly it also highlights the nature of Being as more than Cartesian subjectivity or ‘Being as thinking’ (Ahenakew, et al. 2014).

Conceptualising a person’s experience as one that is controlled largely by rational processes sets up the conditions for a rational response where understanding a person’s experience is informed by what can be thought. Māori and indigenous metaphysics would not restrict the conceptualisation of Being as thinking, thereby allowing the self to feel and intuit a person (rather than simply having a rational understanding of a person).

The participant also discussed the possibilities presented by taking different approaches to working with people who are labelled as having mental illness and are treated within clinical settings. In general, the type of approach that the participant described involved undoing thoughts about mental illness and the process of stripping away layers of understanding about unwellness that had been given to the person. The participant used the term ‘re-birth’ in describing the impact that undoing types of thinking might have and the ability to bring the person to their “*own original thought*” about their experience:

*I really wanted to be one of the people who could take people back through all their levels of knowing because by the time they come in and they’re mad and out of control or whatever because somebody else said they’re not functioning. But by the time you kind of take them back to all their levels through to their own original thought, which actually might manifest itself in the person going back to their own foetal place, then your job is to kind of rebirth them again... because I think half the thing about our people who go into institutions*

*or get institutionalised in their thinking, is because **their power to reorganise their thoughts have been taken away**. I always knew that when we were medicating people, some people want to be medicated so they can live their lives in the way that they want, and you can't take that away; but when we're medicating people we were stopping their process.*

***Their power to reorganise their thoughts have been taken away:*** I interpret the reference to reorganising thoughts as a more than cognitive exercise that implicates other things in the world that show themselves in order to be regarded. This view of an entitled influence on a person's 'thoughts' therefore re-contextualises the idea of 'reorganisation' as a 're-connection' to things in the world.

Another participant addressed the use of the term mental illness and its connection to the view that there is something beyond a physical state of Being. The participant also indirectly challenged the notion that an illness is something linked to the internal workings of an individual and that external factors may be at play in the person's experience of illness:

*I'm not even sure if Māori would use the word mental anyway, but as something that's beyond the physical. There's no clear obvious physical cause for someone's behaviours to change, so therefore the cause is something else. And I think in our traditional world view, also the cause could be external to the person – it could be over there, it could be those people's fault or it could be that person, it could be a mākutu, it could be some breach of tapu. Also, it would have been seen as one of the reasons why someone is unwell.*

*I'm not even sure if Māori would use the word mental anyway:* However, there is evidence that suggests that Māori do use the term mental as a translation for Hinengaro which equates to a type of reductionism, limiting the profound cosmological character of Hinengaro in order to provide a Māori term that can be used within mental health (see chapter six for discussion of Hinengaro and the term mental health).

### *The external world in Māori mental health*

One participant emphasised that relational Being, manifesting in experiences such as *tohu* or signs and holistic Māori worldviews, remain as part of the lived experience for *whānau*. However, in the context of the notion of mental illness, the participant stated that the benefits of (for example), believing *tohu* to be real are outweighed by the attributions that are made about these experiences within clinical settings. The participant stated that these attributions limit a Māori worldview that, in contrast, presents a range of possibilities of what may be contributing to a state of imbalance or illness:

*Well, so far, it's not a benefit. It's not even accepted. In fact, for some people it would make them look even crazier than what they're suffering. So, I think the system as it is, because it doesn't accept the range of possibilities that we think are available, as I say, as a diagnosis, then by not accepting it they're doing us harm.*

The participant discussed the importance of understanding the notion of *tohu* as an example of communicating with the world and as a part of recognising the agency of other entities that hold knowledge as opposed to humans holding ultimate knowledge about entities or phenomena:

*We can interact and help, and that's why **tohu** is such an important thing as well. Being able to read the*

*signs, because we know those kinds of Beings have knowledge, and we have **this humility to be able to say alright, you're telling us this, we'll try to read things better.** That's our dedication to you, our honouring of you is we will try to read what you are saying better. And we will thank you for what you do for us. Gratitude is so much in our way of operating. I think that's one thing I'd love to see us do more of, which is to bring back in more of that as a daily practice. That's what karakia were actually all about in the past, I think. It doesn't have to be flash, but I'm just thinking that way of connecting to other Beings in a more real way of getting the truth, that interaction.*

***Tohu...this humility to be able to say alright, you're telling us this, we'll try to read things better:*** In my experience, tohu and the belief that we are given signs that guide us, is accepted as a normal part of life. I've never thought of this experience as one that requires a certain level of humility. However, if tohu are understood as the showing of knowledge from other Beings, rather than the development of self-originating knowledge (reliant on the internal rational processing of information), then it would seem that a certain type of humility and gratitude would form part of the experience.

While the participant emphasised a relational holistic understanding of imbalance in contrast to the notion of mental illness, she also cautioned against the development and use of Māori models of healing and support that are based on romanticised notions of Māori principles of Being. The participant talked about the need to ensure that any application of Māori values and concepts in the context of mental health would need to be grounded in socio-cultural realities:

*It's complicated. I don't think we can make pure romantic models saying this is all about whānau,*

*because whānau are complex organisms as well and not all whānau are romantic multi-generational extensions these days. For some whānau functions, if you drove up and parked in the carpark, you would lock your car. If I put it as simply as that – you would lock your car... you can't take for granted trust. A lot of abuse happens in wider whānau context, so the nature of whānau changed as well as the nature of what happens for individual experiences. But if we go back to say the Māori models, Māori values and concepts that can be used in mental health, then yeah, they're there but they have to be applied to real context, real life context.*

One of the participants described a changing landscape of meaning and conceptualisations of the experience of imbalance, indicating that worldviews contrasting with the principles that guide Māori understandings of Being have influenced perspectives. However, the participant also stated that Māori views on external contributors to states of imbalance remain part of a lived experience for her and her whānau and that relational experiences such as receiving signs or tohu are considered to be an ongoing part of the relational experience of Being that influences how the experience of imbalance or illness is understood:

*And at the same time, we're trying to relate to that in a sort of Māori way even though it's changed – the landscape's changed, the relationships have changed, the rules, the order of life has changed.*

*I think that's often the first order of diagnosis, that it's external to us. And I think what we accept is that it can be deliberately caused by another person wishing us harm, or that we have breached something, even unintentionally. I think for those, well, for my family, those are real, those options are on the table all the time. And that also we've often been sent signs that*

*something might happen or is going to happen. It could be birds, a bird appearing, something unusual happening, and it's a tohu.*

One participant also talked about the locus of unwellness, not as an individual's experience of unwellness, but as a societal issue. The markers of an unhealthy society that the participant pointed to that impact on the health of whānau included economic disparities, health disparities and social injustice. The participant expanded the view of the notion of mental health being linked to personal or individual states of Being to highlight the existence of ill health as a systemic state of Being:

*You know, we live in an unhealthy society and always we're wanting whānau to be more and more resilient. Well, it can't be resilient if there's no employment, our general health status is not good, our access to things is not good. So, mental health is part of this bigger system of social injustice, and an unjust society is an unwell society. If I put it like that, those are the fundamentals. So, with the mental health system, well we need a big mental health system. In the same way they think of a prison system, we actually need a much bigger mental health system, because we live in a society that creates, produces mental health problems. So, I guess the thing is yeah, there's all the care stuff but how do you create a society that doesn't produce as much mental ill-health, because that's the systemic change that needs to happen. And it's not just a single thing – it's our economy, our cultural values, our day to day realities, schools.*

*We live in an unhealthy society and always we're wanting whānau to be more and more resilient:* I discuss the idea of health being a societal rather than individual issue at length in the next chapter, however, I think it is important to acknowledge how this participant's response (and similar responses from other participant's), has shaped this thinking. The idea of an unhealthy society highlights how our complete interconnection with things in the world makes the idea of an individual illness a problematic proposal. I imagine that there is a metaphysical basis to the tendency to focus on changing people as opposed to changing an unhealthy society. Does dominant Western metaphysics have such a strong grasp on our conceptualisation of health that it pulls us back into the frame of 'fixing the individual' despite our knowledge of (the concept of) unhealthy societies and environments?

## **Conclusion**

The participants' responses create an opening of things, presenting possibilities for how mātauranga and Hinengaro are taken up as something 'more than': extending beyond the concepts and common translations applied to each term from within a dominant Western framework. Participants' description of 'knowing' from within Māori and indigenous metaphysics re-presents mātauranga in ways that disrupt any simple and limited understanding of mātauranga as being synonymous with dominant Western conceptualisations of (rationally derived) knowledge. Similarly, Hinengaro as atua is more than the concept of mind or mental (discussed earlier as common translations that reduce the meaning of Hinengaro), encompassing a profound and complex identity that cannot be captured within limited conceptualisations. Each of these terms, and their expanded meaning, has potential implications for how the notion of mental illness is understood and for how people who are seeking support within the mental health system encounter treatment. Rather than limiting the self's expression through the conceptualisation of a person's experience as an individual's illness (with increasing focus on biological Being), there is an opportunity to engage in an opening of meaning – an expansive view of the person and world. Through this, there is potential for a creative self to

emerge away from limited clinical concepts and individually focussed worldviews. The creative reflective self is therefore re-positioned to reside within the world as part of the whole, imagining (k)new narratives and potentialities.

## **CHAPTER NINE: SPECULATIVE POTENTIAL AND A NON-FOUNDATIONAL CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I gesture to the potential apparent in Māori and indigenous understandings of Being through suggesting how the ideas that have come through in this thesis might manifest as (k)new possibilities in mental health. While there is an element of summarising the main points that have emerged throughout the thesis, I aim to go further in my thinking by imagining how these emergent points and ideas can influence creative speculation. Within this chapter, I speculate about the potential to re-imagine mental health, presenting what can be considered as an expansion of thought - an ongoing process of reaction and reflection. This process is demonstrated in the articulation of 'what might be' if we shift our view of self and world to account for a thorough holism.

This chapter replaces a conventional discussion section in which themes or data are analysed and explored. Again, although there is an element of summarising the main points of the thesis, the central focus is on speculating about the potential for Māori and indigenous understandings of Being to influence a shift in how mental health and the notion of mental illness are perceived. In many ways, this chapter is a continuation of the (non) method of whaiwhakaaro. Like the free-flowing reflection that guided my responses to the participant interviews, the creative speculation in this chapter adds another dimension of worlded reflection.

While the ideas that emerged through the participant interviews form part of what influences my thinking in this speculative chapter, there is no attempt to order my thinking as a direct commentary of the conversation areas described in chapters seven and eight. Further, rather than using the interview responses (and other material that has been employed in this research) to construct an exact framework that describes how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being can shift a view on mental illness, I aim to re-imagine.

It is intended that a speculative approach will further disrupt the view that research must identify the essential qualities of a thing or present the essential variables that

make up a phenomenon. Rather than treat participant interviews (or any other part of the thesis) as data that provides certainty about a particular topic, I aim to engage in a creative exercise, exploring potential ways forward. I hope to shift the ground of thought that the notion of mental illness emerges from, dislodging the notion from its solid orientation, including its allegiance to the language of conceptual representation and the essentialist framing of people's experience.

I end this chapter with a non-foundational conclusion that re-visits the metaphysical premises of open expression. Within this conclusion, Māori and indigenous understandings of Being provide ground for further reflection on the potential future directions that may be taken in re-shaping approaches to providing support to those who are labelled as experiencing mental illness. I also present some final thoughts on the research process that I have engaged in, reflecting on the experience of holistic research and whaiwhakaaro. The limitations of an academic research process are highlighted here along with an exploration of the researcher's journey as it relates to the ability of the indigenous self to express a more (spiritually) complex research experience.

### **Revisiting interview responses**

In chapters seven and eight, four conversations areas were presented, providing a view of Being based on metaphysical premises that highlight the idea of connections that push our thinking of holism beyond a view of being linked to things only insofar as they are visible, physical, and thinkable phenomena. Whakapapa and wairua were presented as a view on the indivisible nature of Being that is permeated by an ever-present (absent) influence reflected in participants' descriptions of spiritual experiences and subjectivities. Wairua, discussed by some participants as a connection to the unseen, raises the idea of being connected to intangible presence. This intangible presence (that is cast as an absent non-presence within a dominant Western metaphysics), represents what has been described as an embodiment of life (Moewaka Barnes, et al., 2017), that has also been linked to intuition (Valentine, 2009).

Mātauranga and Hinengaro presented a view on the more-than-human world. Mātauranga was described by one of the participants in this research as a holistic experience, surpassing the concept of rational, cognitively derived self-originating knowledge and connected to, “*standing in the presence of atua*”. The presence of atua was given an approximate description as an indefinable and powerful feeling of what one participant called “*grace*” that is experienced by the person, not as intellectual insight, but as a thorough connection to (and experience of) an intangible (yet present) entity. Mātauranga was also presented in terms of the participants’ re-presentation of knowledge as a more than cognitive process, implicating not only the self as a fully integrated (mind, body and soul) organism, but the world as a co-constructor of complex spiritual knowledge or what one participant referred to as our “*knowing*”. Finally, Hinengaro, as atua, was re-presented through both a direct description of Hinengaro as cosmological Being and through an exploration of participants’ views of the potential of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being in mental health. Together, these conversation areas, the participants’ experiences, and the participants’ vision for change have influenced the development of this chapter and my overall aim of imagining the potential of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being in re-considering the notion of mental illness.

The reader will note that the terms and sentences that were highlighted in chapters seven and eight to present whaiwhakaaro (or my reflections on participant responses), are repeated in this chapter. These highlighted terms and sentences are included as footnotes to show how my thinking as creative speculation has been pushed further by the reflections that came through in my reaction to what the participants said. Each of the points of reflection presented in chapters seven and eight will be linked to relevant aspects of the creative speculation that forms the basis of this chapter. Doing this will support the reader in making connections between whaiwhakaaro and what has emerged in the current chapter as a form of creative utterance.

## **Speculation on the bases of metaphysical premises**

The excessive meaning reflected in Māori and indigenous metaphysics finds expression in this chapter through an exploration of the potential for re-framing the notion of mental illness and seeing experience through a holistic lens. There are two main premises that underpin this exploration of potential. Firstly, there is the premise of thorough interconnection that enmeshes all things in the world (reflected in chapter seven through the conversation areas whakapapa and wairua). This premise is explored through a consideration of worlded Being in an attempt to depart from the notion of mental illness as a condition of disorder that rests within the separated individual. Secondly, there is the premise of excessive meaning that cannot be contained within objective representation (reflected in chapter eight through the conversation areas mātauranga and Hinengaro). This premise is explored through a consideration of how complete interconnection might show up in a (k)new understanding of the indigenous self as a relational Being whose expressions are the creative manifestation of indivisibility. Using these premises as a starting point, I will explore how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being can be re-presented to disrupt conventional conceptualisations of mental health and the notion of mental illness.

### ***Resisting frameworks***

What does it mean to account for an excess of meaning that denies full representation and resists being fixed within the definitional frames that capture (and explain) behaviour and experience? Derrida's (1978) warnings about a metaphysical inheritance that is hidden beneath divergent articulations illustrates the challenge of attempting to account for things in the world that, in his words, are always 'at play', resisting any notion of fixed meaning. For Derrida, once we assume that we have found the essential meaning of any one thing in the world (that we might represent in solid conceptual forms), we are immediately at the mercy of other things (Mika, 2017) that, while escaping our conceptual attention, always form traces of greater meaning.

Gordon (2008) raises the possibility of the traces of meaning formed with each story that is told as if it were a story of a 'true' reality - the idea of landing on the essential

features of social and cultural lived experiences. These stories, dressed up as ‘real’ representations, are fictions, characterised as such by things that haunt our writing and assertions - disrupting our ability to define a thing with certainty. Within this context, the framework of factuality struggles with excessive meaning – the complex encroaching other that threatens the certainty entrenched in the metaphysics of presence since the time of Plato and Aristotle. And yet, despite the haunting threat of something that is more than what can be contained in limited and partial explanations, the expectation of positive and present representation has become a pervasive influence on Māori and indigenous expressions.

As I have already discussed in previous chapters, it has been noted that, within institutions (including mental health), Māori and indigenous understandings of Being are often translated in accordance with a prior (and superior) definition or are expected to be presented in conceptual frames that ensure meaning is fully ‘present’ and available (i.e., the language of absolute conception). Māori and indigenous expressions are re-shaped to ensure a type of easy comprehensibility is achieved (e.g., Randal, Geekie, Lambrecht, and Taitimu, 2008), or to suit the political palette of the system (Waitoki, 2018). Māori and indigenous metaphysics in the context of constraining excess (of meaning and Being) resists the expectation of absolute and ordered conception. Despite this, the ways in which Māori and indigenous understandings of Being are translated and taken up within institutions, and in this case mental health, have continued to follow a reductive approach that, for example, reduces Māori terms, rendering them as simple and direct translations of clinical concepts. The inclusion and translation of Māori terms within Aotearoa/New Zealand based mental health literature suggests that there is a tendency to equate Māori understandings of holistic Being with dominant Western concepts that constrain the excessive meaning reflected in Māori worldviews. Responses from participants in this thesis, however, demonstrate that there is no simple way of directly translating Māori terms into Western conceptual frameworks. My own reflections (whaiwhakaaro) also show how I have been called to re-turn to Māori and indigenous worldviews on different and more complex terms.

## **Worlded Being: Departing from the notion of mental illness**

The idea of ‘worldedness’ has been discussed as a thoroughly indivisible state of Being in which the world and self are wholly and inseparably involved in a dynamic process of co-creation of lived experience. The co-constitution of the self with and by all other things in the world brings forward (but necessarily expands) a consideration of what has been called (from a more conventional metaphysics), a holistic view of well-being. The notion of mental illness within a worlded context raises the possibility of taking seriously an expanded idea of holism. This more expansive view would go beyond the consideration of holism as quantifiable variables such as those listed within a determinants of health framework (i.e., social, cultural and economic indices, Ministry of Health, 2002), that were discussed in the introduction of this thesis.<sup>19</sup>

Expanding the idea of holism to engage with holistic Being in its excessive, unconstrained meaning allows for an alternative view of what is labelled mental illness. This is particularly relevant where mental illness denotes a type of disorder that is located within the individual. In reflecting on the response of one of the participants in this research, I speculate that there is much more at play in people's experience of ‘mental illness’ than what is reflected in clinical explanations of disorder. The participant in question described the influence of societal structures and how these shape behaviours, particularly focussing on materialism and how this is reflected in a societal shift to accumulating (personal material) goods. As the participant stated, “*the possibility of actually sharing stuff has diminished*” within a world where personal, individual Being is constructed by a culture of materialism and self-indulgence. While this example is one that provides a visible and observable representation of society's influence on the individual, I speculate that it could, when considered within the context of ‘worlded Being’, implicate a deeper understanding that could be understood as a spiritual and metaphysical construction of the self.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Quantifying your experiences*: The idea of quantifying lived realities.

<sup>20</sup> The physical *interior*: The construction of the world mirror the construction of self.

In line with Māori and indigenous views on relational Being, a deeper spiritual, metaphysical construction of the self, who is indivisibly connected with all things in the world, disrupts the idea that our experiences are predominantly mediated through our internal (and largely cognitive) faculties.<sup>21</sup> Despite the growing entrenchment of physicalist brain-based explanations of behaviour, ideas of indivisibility, and how this influences and shapes our lived realities, offer a different insight into how and why we may be affected in ways that are commonly (and reductively) described as experiencing mental illness.

I speculate that worlded Being is reflected in the manifestation of what is labelled as mental illness but that it is, from within a Māori and indigenous metaphysics, what can be described as a type of holistic distress. I suggest that dominant Western metaphysics plays a significant role in the setting up of the conditions of holistic distress by positing a view of the world that has become a structural influence in our lived realities. This structural influence is one that forces the indigenous self (and all selves), to discount the sense of play in the world and the understanding that our perceptions are a pathway to relationship rather than objective knowledge of things. As Mika (2015c) states, the world affects the Māori perceiver. Merely contemplating a thing has an effect on the self – a simultaneously spiritual and material shaping that is part of the indivisible relationship that the self has with all things in the world. Further, this type of spiritual and material indivisibility has the potential to impact on our well-being, mirroring our relational orientation to the world. As Mika explains,

If one is permitted to acknowledge the ground of perception - and hence the object - as both ultimately beyond one's cognitive capacity and as a living entity that contains to it thoroughly unknowable and imperceptible characteristics, then one may retain wellness. If, on the other hand, the indigenous self is forced to view the object as merely a product of something originating from the self, and hence an object

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<sup>21</sup> *In fact they're part of a much greater weave of life and interconnections of life*: Being orientation *within* the world.

of thought, then a kind of violence is done as a whole  
(p. 1138).

The violence that Mika points to is, as the quote above suggests, a type of severing of the self from the world.<sup>22</sup> But it is also the setting up of conditions for a type of separated society that manifests not only in how our perceptions of things are conceptualised - and how we subsequently experience reality - but in how our concept of responsibility to each other and other things in the world is shaped.<sup>23 24</sup> If we take seriously the view of the world as a thoroughly connected, co-constructive experience, then how does a world that is constructed based on the values and ideals of a dominant metaphysics engage us and our experience of co-construction? How, in other words, does metaphysics manifest in the world and self in ways that are both seen and unseen?

Holistic distress, as a manifestation of a metaphysical construction of the self, cannot be easily separated from the idea of a metaphysical construction of society - an idea reflected in the thoughts shared by the participant who pointed to the construction of the separated self through a society that is focussed on materialism. The complete interconnection between all things reflected in Māori and indigenous worldviews indicates that the “violence that is done as a **whole**” (Mika, 2015, p. 1138), (through the metaphysical and conceptual separation of the self from the world), can be taken literally as a forced distancing that affects and constructs the entire world in which we live.<sup>25</sup>

Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti (2018) describes this forced distancing as ‘the house that modernity built’ in which a dominant Western metaphysics is represented through ideas of separation (relational disconnection of people from each other and

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<sup>22</sup> *They have cut Maori observational knowledge of the natural world away from its theoretical framework and cosmogenic narratives*: manifesting in the notion of generalisable, internal explanations of behaviour.

<sup>23</sup> *Amnesia*: Other people are also cast as absent things through the construction of a separated society.

<sup>24</sup> *Actually sharing stuff has diminished*: Psychosis of greed.

<sup>25</sup> *The heaven equivalent*: An example of how distance is constructed in thoughts about a distant heaven.

from ‘other-than-human’ entities including the natural environment),<sup>26</sup> universal reasoning (certainty of universal concepts that reduce complexity and allow for control of things in the world), and exploitation of people and the planet (the quest for progress through consumption of resources including human resources).

As de Oliveira Andreotti (2018) explains, modernity’s structure of separation and consumption is constructing a lived reality of social, economic, political and ecological crises through exceeding the limits of what people and planet are able to sustain as resources for ‘progress’.<sup>27</sup> As part of these concerns about modernity’s restructuring of self, Andreotti raises the issue of mental health crises (in a global sense), mirroring the concerns raised within Aotearoa/New Zealand that have led to a review of Mental Health and Addiction Services (see Government Inquiry into Mental Health Addiction - Oranga Tāngata, Oranga Whānau). According to de Oliveira Andreotti, the crisis reflected in rates of mental illness, rather than being understood as an individual affliction, is firmly rooted *in* the world.<sup>28 29</sup> As the world of modernity increases its momentum of progress, utilising natural and human resources as impersonal (disconnected) commodities, altering and dislodging people and place, the essential and relational construction of our well-being shifts (literally and spiritually) from beneath our feet.<sup>30</sup>

This shifting of relational construction is mirrored in what one participant described (when talking about those labelled as experiencing mental illness) as philosophies that “*diminish the nature of their being*”, hiding and suppressing the holistic self

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<sup>26</sup> **Knowledge:** One participant’s description of the natural environment holding (non-intellectual) knowledge.

<sup>27</sup> It strikes me that the excessive consumption described within de Oliveira Andreotti’s (2018) model of modernity demonstrates that excess is a fundamental aspect of the metaphysics of presence but that this excess is created by the same reductionist reasoning that suppresses the excesses of Maori and indigenous metaphysics. Through the reasoning of separation (that is integral to a metaphysics that must stand apart from the world in order to capture the essential and present qualities of a thing), people and planet are cast as resources for progress and are therefore reduced to being a type of commodity rather than the more expansive view of all things as, for example, whanaunga. Paradoxically, it is this reductionism that turns people and planet into usable commodities (within modernity’s quest for progress), that leads to excessive behaviour – the behaviour of excessive consumption.

<sup>28</sup> **A construction of mental illness:** If there is illness, it is in society as a whole -it influences the individual manifesting in personal experience.

<sup>29</sup> **Natural response to trauma and grief and pain:** The individual’s place in the whole and how this influences and co-constructs ‘natural’ responses.

<sup>30</sup> **It’s under your feet:** Grounded completely within the world such that it moves our Being as it shifts.

within limited frames of Being that split the person from the world - re-constructing the self in a context of individualism. However, I posit that, rather than creating a truly autonomous state of Being, the constructed context of individualism demonstrates how the world (as a whole) is implicated in people's experiences of distress. In this sense, the indivisible nature of the world is reflected in the making of the self as a Being who is forced to live in a type of spiritual alienation.<sup>31</sup> We are, in other words, still co-constructed by a worlded reality but it is one that co-constructs our Being based on the values of modernity.

Forbes (1979) illustrates the idea of a worlded illness in his observation that cannibalism (rather than being conceptualised in negative terms as a primitive and savage indigenous practice), is a type of societal psychosis that is captured in the Cree term 'Wetiko'. According to Forbes, the Wetiko disease is characterised by the 'mental illness' (being stuck in a rational existence marked by separation and rigid boundaries between the internal and external world), of excessive greed and the symbolic and literal, "consuming of another's life for one's own private purpose or profit" (p.24). While Forbes provides examples of this practice in the form of historical treatment of populations (including oppression through slavery), in a similar way to de Oliveira Andreotti (2018), Forbes points out that the desire for progress and advancement is one that has persisted through to modern times, characterised by continued economic material and therefore spiritual exploitation.<sup>32</sup>

Forbes' (1979) description of Wetiko disease and de Oliveira Andreotti's (2018) explanation of modernity's impact demonstrate the form of holistic distress that I speculate is manifesting in what is labelled as a mental health crisis (globally and locally). Taking account of a worlded understanding of Being in which all things are collapsed together in an indivisible co-construction, I suggest that if there is a type of 'illness' then it is *in the world* - a world that constructs what we (choose to) see at an individual level or as "personal conduct" (Szasz, 1961, p.2). Interpreting the impacts of a structural, systemic (and in the context of Māori and indigenous metaphysics, spiritual) construction of the self as an individual illness aligns with a

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<sup>31</sup> *Out of sync*: Being in a state that is 'out of sync' with the wider environment.

<sup>32</sup> *That it's very much about gathering – gathering of other peoples*: Also applies to the conceptual containment of people in mental health (i.e. labelling and mental illness).

dominant and conventional worldview that rejects more complex views of holism. Worlded Being is instead an interpretation of not only self-assembly but of the world's simultaneous assembly as a complex organism in which the idea of orientation is not dependent on solid concepts but on embodied interpretations of experience.<sup>33</sup> As one participant in this research commented, “*Other people make my Being and they call me into existence*” which, when extended to include all things in the world, is a view of relational Being that describes our movement with others - including the more-than-human (Rifkin, 2017). These movements account for our experiences in what was discussed in chapter four as “rhythms—patterns of consistency and transformation that emerge immanently out of the multifaceted and shifting sets of relationships that constitute formations and out of the interactions among those formations” (Rifkin, 2017, p.33). These embodied experiences shift and change, denying the rational impulse for universal explanation. They also expand the frame of Being and experience beyond ideas of internal experience.<sup>34</sup>

Forbes (1979) stresses that the relatedness of all forms of existence means that what is done in (and to) the world ripples out in all directions. But it is also this relatedness (demonstrated in indigenous reverence for and belief in holistic life and Being), that provides a pathway back – a re-turn to connection and shared responsibility.<sup>35</sup> Within this research, this view of holism and re-turn was reflected in one participant's description of indigenous people who are seeking a pathway back to whenua and whakapapa. As the participant stated, the journey of re-turn is supported by people understanding that “*in fact they're part of a much greater weave of life and interconnections of life*”. When a view of interconnection is taken as a sense of shared responsibility (as it is in Forbes' philosophy), the possibility exists to not only resist excessive greed but to re-construct our relationship with the world as a whole. Whakapapa, reflected in a lived and embodied understanding of interconnection and the orientation of self and world as simultaneous relational

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<sup>33</sup> ***They participate in the narrative/They're narratives that provide a philosophical framework for understanding the natural and human world:*** Considering holism as a type of worlded participation - life as a complex narrative.

<sup>34</sup> ***Lived experience:*** Whakapapa as experiential existence extends the meaning of connection beyond human genealogy to include a complete holistic connection to the world as entity or whanaunga.

<sup>35</sup> ***Aroha:*** Sacred creative power.

movement and change, shifts the focus of ‘dis-order’ from the individual to the collective.<sup>36 37</sup>

It is important to note that there are many social constructionist discourses that already call for an increased focus on collective or societal contributors to people's experience of mental illness. However, what I am suggesting, in relation to the notion of holistic distress, is that this is a spiritual experience that is manifesting as a material condition (when perceived through an observation of people's material conditions and lived reality). This understanding of holistic distress would therefore require a deeper metaphysical response and one that resists the rational impulse of addressing only what can be measured.<sup>38</sup>

Highlighting the spiritual here is more than just a cultural preference. Forbes' (1979) focus on the pathway back from excessive greed is one that implicates the need for another type of excess – a spiritual excess - that pushes outside of the limits of conceptual, universal, rational representation. Paradoxically, the excess that I am referring to is one that, I argue, would achieve a balancing of life through highlighting the relational responsibility that emerges from taking a deeper, spiritual holism seriously. Through this, I suggest that we might disrupt the view of Being as that which is ordered by human centred intellectualism<sup>39</sup> in which the world (and other people) become divisible (commodities) within the human domain.<sup>40 41</sup>

Spiritual holism disrupts certain metaphysical standpoints, and particularly those that have grown from a quest for universal, essential meaning. These standpoints

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<sup>36</sup> *We put in place a lot of things that are actually about protecting the being*: All things engaging at once to create a form of protection.

<sup>37</sup> *Logic is logic, and Maori are just as logical/Pre-European Maori ritual or practice of biting the latrine beam*: The logic apparent in Maori cosmological orientation still resists the dominant logical order.

<sup>38</sup> *Quantifiable*: Approaches that do not allow for the breadth of experiences that people may have is directly tied to a scientific view of ‘human nature’ suppressing and restricting growth and Being.

<sup>39</sup> *Control*: Essentialisms cataloging of people and the world.

<sup>40</sup> *For me, wairua isn't spirituality. There's no such word as spirituality in Maori thinking*: Spirituality cannot be separated from the physical. It is part of holistic Being or is simply the experience of Being-in-the-world.

<sup>41</sup> *We're dragged into that system of everything is separated. You've got a broken heart, you've got a broken spirit*: Through acts of epistemic integration, unsayable things are subject to framing, rendering what spills out of the frame silent and absent.

firmly position the self in a rational existence predicated on a (ancient philosophical) construction of relationship where the world stands apart from the self in order to be studied. Within this philosophical construction, spiritualism itself appears to be split from whole, becoming a separate aspect of life that can be easily recognised in ritual but is not necessarily lived as an indivisible experience.<sup>42</sup> However, as one participant commented when talking about the difference between the concept of spirituality and Māori understandings of wairua, “*It is actually embedded in everything, it’s embedded and it’s not talked of, it just is*”. The ‘coming-together’ of self and world (the recognition of an embedded, indivisible spirituality), relies on the re-presentation of a holistic standpoint that effects not only our treatment of the world (as more than a resource for progress), but also changes our view of how balance is achieved. It would, I suggest, call for approaches to conceptualising and providing support that reach both the individual and world in a conscious awareness that the determinants of health are, rather than being external influences that impact on the person, at once the world and person in synchronistic construction. Simply fixing the person while tweaking social conditions, I argue, will not result in wellness as the wider context – the site of disease - is left unchanged.<sup>43</sup>

At one level, a re-view of mental illness as holistic distress requires that our rationally mediated, disconnected relationship with the world is altered to bring the world back into focus as whanaunga. At another level, and particularly when considering how tāngata whaiora experience mental health services, taking holistic distress seriously means allowing for an understanding of experience that exceeds the conceptual boundaries afforded by mental health concepts and clinical (medical) discourse.<sup>44</sup> The excessive meaning of tāngata whaiora lived experiences (and the inability for these experiences to be contained within clinical concepts) will be discussed in the following section; however, here I wish to highlight how

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<sup>42</sup> *I don’t like to talk about wairua separately because to my mind it’s interlinked into everything:* Wairua as an indivisible, lived experience including in what we might consider the mundane.

<sup>43</sup> *We live in an unhealthy society and always we’re wanting whānau to be more and more resilient:* Dominant Western metaphysics and the conceptualisation of health that it pulls us back into the frame of ‘fixing the individual’ despite our knowledge of (the concept of) unhealthy societies and environments?

<sup>44</sup> *Western philosophy about human nature that are essentialist:* A monolithic structure of representation that often captures Maori terms within mental health.

holistic distress may be utilised to guide a mental health response. The way in which holistic notions of health are currently conceptualised may be impacted on by taking whakapapa seriously as a spiritual and material reality in which certain metaphysical constructions of the world are manifesting as, for example, negative health statistics.

Waitoki (2018), in responding to the latest iteration of Government mental health frameworks in Aotearoa (He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction, 2018), states that holistic perspectives on mental illness continue to be largely ignored. This is, according to Waitoki, particularly pronounced at the structural level where racism and other constructors of difference and disparity are created and perpetuated. Waitoki notes that, while there is some focus on enhancing and modifying systems that impact on individuals and communities (e.g., addressing WINZ sanctions that penalise single mothers that do not name the father of their children), and on increasing investment in kaupapa Māori services, there is also significant focus being put on enhancing the ability for the individual to practice self-contained strategies for well-being (i.e., mindfulness and resilience).<sup>45</sup> In response to this, Waitoki appeals for an increased focus on systemic injustice, including a focus on how systems contribute to and in some ways exacerbate the experience of (for example), trauma, which in many cases is observed as (individual) criminal behaviour or mental illness. Waitoki's analysis of the direction that Government are advocating as part of proposed mental health reforms highlights what appears to be a significant philosophical (and subsequently political), difference in how mental health is conceptualised.

The limited attention paid to the systemic construction of people's experiences is, I would argue, a reflection of the heavy influence of an individualistic metaphysics that is centred on the rational.<sup>46</sup> This construction of self can be historically linked to philosophies that regard the individual's well-being as something that ultimately

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<sup>45</sup> *I'm not even sure if Maori would use the word mental anyway:* The use of the term mental in Maori mental health.

<sup>46</sup> *Mental escape hatch:* A paradoxical expression about resisting rationality.

stems from rational balance and clarity (perhaps reflected in the premises of mindfulness).<sup>47 48 49 50</sup>

A focus on systemic influences (as advocated by Waitoki, 2018), opens up possibilities for understanding an individual's experience of what is labelled mental illness as a more complex phenomenon. Within this context and considering what de Oliveira Andreotti (2018) and Forbes (1979) have described about holistic systemic impacts, I suggest that systemic influences are important to consider because they signal the individual's embodiment of systems. As one participant in this research stated,

*we're dragged into that system of everything is separated. You've got a broken heart, you've got a broken spirit, you've got a broken whatever... you're chucked over here, you're chucked over here for that part, this part over here, you're chucked over here, yet we [Māori] were [traditionally] all kept in one place to deal with the whole thing.*

When taking indigenous metaphysics seriously, the embodiment of systems (or worldedness) changes the premises on which we form our understanding of what is happening to the person or community described by Moewaka Barnes et al. (2017) as a process of changing our understanding of 'affect'. In a similar vein, we might understand the idea of affect in Ferreira da Silva's (2013) appeal to a sense of collective movement that counters the preference for knowing as rigid acts that return us to certain predetermined points. Instead Ferreira da Silva opens the space necessary for understanding the limitless meaning provided through our (ever-moving) encounters that re-turn us to the idea of knowing as something residing in

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<sup>47</sup> **Understand:** the positioning of things and people based on a view of the rational self that stands on a ground of thought as opposed to standing among things.

<sup>48</sup> **This is your mind, this is your brain, everything exists in your brain:** Equating Being with the (physical) brain and its (cognitive and neurological) processes.

<sup>49</sup> **Hinengaro:** More profound meaning of Hinengaro cannot be reduced to the term mind.

<sup>50</sup> **Talking about our Hinengaro and our wairua and our mauri actually keeps that in control:** Balance of emotions through Maori understandings of (spiritual) Being.

the experience of relationality.<sup>51 52</sup> Without this change of (metaphysical) premise, I argue that our interventions will always gravitate more towards fixing the person rather than focussing on the relational and constructive environment that the individual resides within. This is not to say that the individual is completely dissolved within a worlded view, but that the principle of individualisation is sacrificed in favour of a deeper holism and that individuals are supported to engage in interventions that account for dis-ease as a holistic affliction.

## Whakapapa and the relational individual

While individualism might be conceptually disrupted by a positive spiritual excess of meaning reflected in a deeper sense of holism, the individual experiencing holism, rather than dissolving in a sea of overpowering collective identity is, I would argue, paradoxically given more space for expression.<sup>53</sup> Within this view of the holistic individual, the self's interconnection and relationship with the world foregrounds what is described by Glazebrook (2012) as what is unique in each thing rather than what is *common* across all things.<sup>54</sup> An understanding of the individual experience as unique, and (at the same time) holistically connected, disrupts the idea of the self-contained individual but it also disrupts notions of the collective as, for example, the existence of collective universal traits. This is important in the context of Māori and indigenous responses to imposed Eurocentric ideas of universal indigenous identities because it resists framing alternative expressions of identity (as a form of resistance), by using the same structure of universalism.<sup>55 56</sup> As Hunt (2014) states, “The heterogeneity of Indigenous voices and worldviews can easily become lost in efforts to understand Indigeneity in ways that fix Indigenous knowledge, suppressing its dynamic nature.” (Hunt, 2014, p. 29).

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<sup>51</sup> **Positive relationship:** The paradoxical power of the negative (i.e. the void or *te kore* in Maori cosmology), as an opening of space for creativity.

<sup>52</sup> **Ngaro:** A fullness that is part of the creation process and the “... cosmogenic series...” that is encapsulated in the term *oro*.

<sup>53</sup> **I'm Maori because:** disrupting the overarching *category* of Maori.

<sup>54</sup> **The concept of human nature that's at stake:** The impossible explanatory task of defining human nature.

<sup>55</sup> **Inscribe a Maori worldview:** The implications of ‘inscribed’ identities within a mental health context and the (imposed) superficial etchings on the surface of a much deeper experience.

<sup>56</sup> **Judgements about whether or not we still existed, and still are:** The expectation that Maori and Indigenous peoples will ‘present’ with certain ‘normal’ traits.

Instead, the individual, as a holistic Being who moves with all things in the world, can share their experience of holism as a unique expression of worlded Being.

Some participants in this research described how the dominant Western preference for describing things in terms of common traits has impacted on how Māori and indigenous worldviews are represented. These impacts have included the quantification of Being<sup>57</sup> demonstrated in the framing of people's experiences as behavioural categories that one participant felt restricted our ability to express ourselves. As they stated, *I think that it doesn't allow for the breadth of experiences that people can have... And I think that we really only have a small range... of presentation... we're still pretty limited in how much we can be*".

Limited and normalised representation was also discussed in terms of its impact on how Māori and indigenous worldviews about death and illness, time and place, and the profound cosmological beginnings of life were presented when interned by the dominant Western worldview.<sup>58 59 60 61</sup> Within this space of internment (of interpreting things through a dominant Western lens), all things are caught up in limitation<sup>62</sup>, including the individual indigenous self who must resist the impulse of creativity, relying instead on a conformity that aids others in their quest to understand, fix in place and (over) determine. The re-turn to the individual as creative expression was reflected in participants' discussion of embodiment and of making space for people to reclaim "*their power to reorganise their thoughts*".<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> **Quantifiable:** A scientific view of 'human nature' that suppresses and restricts growth and Being.

<sup>58</sup> **Hine-nui-te-pō could almost be some grim character:** Western interpretation of death as a negative finality that re-presents Hine-nui-te-pō in the image of the West's fearful imaginary.

<sup>59</sup> **The West tends to fear pain, the unknown, the darkness etc and tries to seek youth and longevity. The birthing and the dying is hidden away and medicalised:** Containing experience in order to control the fearful imaginary which includes medicalising mental illness.

<sup>60</sup> **One of life's biggest kinds of fears is death, and loss and losing your loved one:** How we are impacted by a Western view of death and its symbols (e.g., the passing of time, being vulnerable in a world of uncertainty).

<sup>61</sup> **Called Into existence:** Collapsed time and the possibility that nothing is called into existence but always-already is.

<sup>62</sup> **They try and give a name to it, well hello, we already have it:** Maori worldviews on Maori terms without the limits of dominant re-conceptualisation.

<sup>63</sup> As I discuss in chapter eight, when reflecting in this participants words, I understand the "power to reorganise their thoughts" as meaning more than a reorganisation of rational thinking. Rather, using Maori and Indigenous metaphysics as a basis for understanding a person's ability to re-organise thoughts, I believe that other things in the world are implicated, showing themselves in order to be regarded - an entitled influence that re-contextualises the idea of 'reorganisation' as a re-connection to things in the world.

Mika (2017c) discusses the individual as a worlded Being when describing how the self engages with and responds to language. As the individual encounters a term, reaction and response signal that there is an effect taking place that is deeper than what might be considered from the perspective of a rational encounter.<sup>64 65</sup> Mika refers to this as the term's "irruption" (p. 1): the influence of language that is "at once" (p. 2), what we say about the world but is also the world itself.<sup>66</sup> The world is, in a holistic sense, signalling the impossibility of using language to transcend the more complex fabric that is life's mystery. Words are therefore real things rather than being mere tools of human expression. Their irruption (as an influence on the self), is a holistic relationship that manifests as an opening of what might in dominant Western convention be seen as linguistic containment.<sup>67 68 69</sup>

So far in this thesis (and particularly when considering what has been discussed in chapter three), this relational view of language as *things* that emerge at will has been linked to the researcher being called to attention by things in the world that encourage a type of (embodied) thinking or 'whaiwhakaaro' (to follow the thought). But the relational self and the calling of the self by things in the world need not be restricted to language's influence. Relational Being in a worlded sense implicates all things as it highlights our metaphysical location of full immersion within (as opposed to being a separate part of), the whole.<sup>70 71</sup>

The expression of experience that the self offers within this more holistic context is therefore an articulation of the connected individual who is able to voice the 'unique' as opposed to following expectations of 'common' expression.<sup>72</sup> Rather than being restricted by the dominant frameworks that govern meaning of

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<sup>64</sup> *What's the knowing? Where does that come from?* A relational understanding of knowledge.

<sup>65</sup> *Ngākau*: 'te whakaaro o te ngākau'.

<sup>66</sup> *The name they've put up, I said you're calling wellness*: An entitised description of language.

<sup>67</sup> *Nine-day wananga*: One participant's reflection on why a nine-day wananga sounded "nice on my tongue".

<sup>68</sup> *Our knowing*: Communication is internal and external 'at once' each is a continuous part of the other.

<sup>69</sup> *Contained*: Containing the person through language - people live their diagnostic labels.

<sup>70</sup> *Energy*: Relational attunement between self and world.

<sup>71</sup> *It's kind of like their wairua and her wairua are kind of like trying to get their stories to hook up*: Entitised and interconnected communication.

<sup>72</sup> *Like it had to follow some rules*: The limitation of expression reflected in the parameters of clinical frameworks.

experience within mental health (e.g., Randal, Geekie, Lambrecht, and Taitimu, 2008), the individual is able to engage in a personal yet creative response to the holistic influence that characterises being-in-the-world. When considering personal creative response within a mental health context, Taitimu (2007) explains that “A major boundary between Pākehā illness and Māori cultural experience (negative and/or positive), may lie within the experiencer (in terms of their personal understanding), rather than the experience itself” and that “This is also influenced by the constructions shared by those around them (whānau, friends, helping professions)” (p.255). I interpret Taitimu’s reference to the ‘experience itself’ as a statement about static representations that attempt to concretise individual experiences, simplifying the complex and creative into ready-made categories.<sup>73 74</sup> The ‘experiencer’ on the other hand would seem to represent a liberated manifestation of whakapapa as connection that in Taitimu’s observation includes whānau, friends and helping professions but could be extended to include the entire dynamic world in which the individual is immersed.<sup>75</sup>

This view of Being and meaning echoes the idea of experiencing an orientation to the world: an experience that provides meaning but does not rely on meaning as certainty or pinpointing an exactness of what things are.<sup>76 77 78</sup> Instead, orientation is a type of experiential fluidity earlier discussed as “bodies [that] acquire the very shape of such [experiential] direction” (Ahmed, 2006, p. xxvii).<sup>79</sup> In this way, orientation can be understood as another way of describing holistic interconnection

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<sup>73</sup> ***But I think that that is too simplistic, stereotypical, and ignores all the other unseen things that occur in our life:*** Complexity that creates new spaces of understanding.

<sup>74</sup> ***Shut them down and then kind of break away from our understandings of that:*** The dominant Western metaphysics and the narrative that this creates could represent a pathway to unwellness.

<sup>75</sup> ***Because the Maori cosmos is made up of these polarities, tapu, noa, ora, mate, opo, and they’re not only cosmic but they’re also psychological. So, there is a logic in that, although it appears on the surface to be pretty weird:*** How we are orientated within the world and how all things create ‘place’ and personality (Deloria, 2001).

<sup>76</sup> ***Mystery:*** The idea of mystery as a metaphysical premise brings up possibilities that sit counter to finding the centre of meaning.

<sup>77</sup> ***You have to hide:*** Epistemic concealment as a thorough blanketing of the mystery.

<sup>78</sup> ***Western science operates in ways that knowledge is seen, that it’s very much about gathering – gathering of other peoples:*** People being gathered into categories: their experience reduced to a pre-determined meaning.

<sup>79</sup> ***All of the inspirations that arise from our tangata whenua past:*** Tangatawhenua response returning our attention to an intimate, connected state of Being.

but one that resists static descriptions as variables that can be measured (i.e. determinants of health) to show how well or unwell a person is.<sup>80</sup>

Drawing again on Rifkin's (2017) discussion of being-in-the-world (discussed as an indigenous temporal framework), our experiences are seen as complex rhythms that shift with other things (relations)<sup>81</sup> in a circular (rather than linear) pattern of self formation.<sup>82 83</sup> This formation of the self, however, need not be seen as individualistic. It may instead be seen as the individual's expression of the experience of dynamic holism (or what Taitimu, 2007, describes in the quote above as personal understanding).

One example of how this view of personal understanding can be understood in a mental health context relates to the earlier discussion of Papatūānuku (see chapter four). Mika (2016) remarks that Papatūānuku is often (through conventional translation), equated with the term 'land', denoting a solid (physical) definition and character that is out of step with Māori descriptions. Māori understandings of Papatūānuku reflect a deeper more expansive view that speaks to the idea of being fully immersed *within* Papatūānuku or what Marsden (2003) refers to as "the womb of the primeval mother" (p.45).<sup>84</sup> This understanding of Papatūānuku is also reflected in one participant's description of *Ranginui and Papatūānuku* [as] *real Beings*" explaining that "*we're descended from those Beings, that there is really no separation for us....Whakapapa is experiential in this sense but also, it's central to our understanding of how the world exists.*"<sup>85</sup> I speculate that this view of relational connection to Papatūānuku has much to offer in shaping how we

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<sup>80</sup> **Believe:** A type of faith that something exists even though there may be no way of measuring the thing. There appears to be a type of faith at play (rather than knowledge) when things (such as 'energy') are discussed.

<sup>81</sup> **Once you start to chop it up it disappears...So, if you chop it up it'll disappear:** Non-foundational shifting ground of Being and thought.

<sup>82</sup> **Derive back to your tūpuna:** Relations that are 'here and now' rather than being made absent by the concept of things in the past. The ability to continuously re-turn to relations.

<sup>83</sup> **Our old traditions:** Suggesting a sense of temporal distance that does not exist in Maori and Indigenous metaphysics.

<sup>84</sup> See chapter four for the full discussion of Papatūānuku and relationship including the idea of attunement that explains the notion of immersion within Papatūānuku.

<sup>85</sup> **Being raised on whenua that's not theirs and never really having a huge relationship with it in their histories:** Imagining the potential of non-Indigenous re-turn to (spiritual) whakapapa.

understand the types of support that are provided to those that are presenting with what are commonly conceptualised as symptoms of dis-order.<sup>86 87</sup>

In the early stages of imagining this research, I encountered an example of what I would call the possibilities that a relational view of Papatūānuku (and more widely of holistic immersion in the world), provides when attempting to re-present Māori and indigenous understandings of Being in ways that disrupt conventional views of mental illness. The example draws on the work of Heid Erdrich (2012) (a native American scholar and Poet), with a particular focus on the poem *Craving First Month*, which I interpret as a story about both the human womb and the ‘womb of the primeval mother’ or Papatūānuku.

I first encountered the poem at the 2014 Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference after hearing Ryan Rhadigan (University of California), present his research on science and indigenous ontologies in Erdrich’s poetry. The poem describes the cravings of a woman in her first trimester of pregnancy but in a style that is different from the usual descriptions of cravings for food that equates to a type of biological nutrition. Erdrich (2012) instead describes the land as the women’s nourishment: the women hungry for home - feasting with her eyes and tasting the colours of the prairie,

My belly rejected everything but a certain sky, the one  
that rocks the high north plains of home. Nothing but  
color and light for my mouth, streaks of cirrus like pale  
lettuce— tear a leaf and taste that clear covering of  
clouds! I craved the prairie (p.144).

Rhadigan (2013) describes Erdrich’s poetic representation of (home) land as a poignant inversion of the idea of nourishment as food that rearranges (and I would argue re-presents), connections between “land and place *as* bodily nourishment” (p.

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<sup>86</sup> *Living ancestor*: Deferring from the tendency within dominant Western metaphysics to draw a hard line between ‘living’ and ‘dead’. Re-contextualising tāngata whaiora experiences of having contact with those who have passed on (the unseen).

<sup>87</sup> *Who it is that they see or hear*: Exploring a person’s perception of non-visible entities.

93).<sup>88</sup> Through this encounter with home, the child is also nourished in the womb<sup>89</sup> which is reflected in Erdrich's description of the women's internal dialogue to her unborn son,

Here it is, I said into wind up the bald hill. Here it is, I  
said to the question mark of child. Here's the land we  
are born from. Here's what made us. Here's the world  
that fed us. Here now, you eat too (p. 144).

When I first presented my own interpretation of Erdrich's poem at a local conference in 2017, Dr Naomi Simmonds, a Māori researcher from the University of Waikato, gave me some direction on how to link the idea of land (or whenua) as nourishment to Māori understandings of Being. Following my presentation, Dr Simmonds leaned over to me and said, "look at ukaipo". In line with what has been described by participants in this research as the world communicating with us through *tohu* or 'signs', I took for granted (in a positive sense), that Dr Simmonds' remark was a significant marker in terms of what I was meant to explore to bring Erdrich's poetry into relationship with Māori worldviews.<sup>90</sup>

Simmonds' own PhD (2014) turned out to be a rich source of information. Simmonds presents a discussion of 'Te Ūkaipō' explaining that it is a concept that ties together maternal bodies, whenua and Papatūānuku. As Simmonds explains (referencing Murphy, 2011), *ūkaipō* (commonly used to refer to the spiritual and physical nourishment provided through 'breastfeeding'), is a name given to Papatūānuku in recognition of her spiritual and physical nourishment of humanity. Further, Simmonds relates this understanding of *ūkaipō* to her research participant's responses, particularly where participants conveyed a sense of being nourished by

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<sup>88</sup> *You feel them, you feel them in a different way*: The power of intuition and embodied knowledge.

<sup>89</sup> *Puku*: A site of knowledge - the convergence of feeling and thought within Maori metaphysics.

<sup>90</sup> *Tohu*: It is a common experience - to say 'he *tohu* tera' in response to something that has happened.

the experience of being outside in nature during pregnancy that Simmonds interpreted as a type of ‘grounding’.<sup>91</sup>

Taking Simmonds’ (2014) discussion of ūkaipō into account in the reading of Erdrich’s poetry, I imagine the implications of seeing the land (in an expanded sense), as Papatūānuku when considering the experience that is presented in Erdrich’s work in the context of mental health. The woman in Erdrich’s poem, while expressing her love for (home) land and the nourishment that her journey home provides, also expresses what might, within a mental health context, be considered part of dis-ordered behaviour.<sup>92</sup>

References to hunger and the belly’s rejection of food as nourishment might at one level raise concerns over maternal nutrition in a physiological sense, but the craving for land as nourishment (as an overriding desire that surpasses the desire for food), when expressed within a clinical environment could, I speculate, raise a different type of concern. I am not advocating that a lack of desire for food in pregnancy be completely ignored; however, I wonder how a (for example, perinatal maternal) mental health service would respond to a woman’s desire to re-turn to land and home as a way of satisfying strong cravings for spiritual nourishment and in Erdrich’s example, cravings that appear to eclipse the desire for food.<sup>93</sup> While I don’t claim to have any definitive answers to offer in considering how this situation could be interpreted to ensure the best possible outcome for woman and child, I do think that the pathway to providing effective cultural support in this context is heavily reliant on the act of interpretation. As one participant in this research stated, how we interpret worldviews has implications for the type of support that is offered within mental health - particularly when those worldviews appear to represent what has been labelled as bizarre behaviour or beliefs (i.e., see introduction for a description of the bizarreness included in the DSM). As the participant stated, we need to consider,

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<sup>91</sup> See introduction chapter for a discussion of grounding as an explanation of research and being immersed within the things that are being explored.

<sup>92</sup> *That mental illness is a strongness with wairua*: The possibility of understanding behaviour in a different context.

<sup>93</sup> *Spaces of darkness could be nurturing places and healing spaces*: A (k)new perception of things commonly perceived as being negative.

*what would be an appropriate system of support and care in a space that conceives of the world in a particular way?” I think it’s about coming to better understand people, and ways of engagement with things that are strange, odd, unusual.*

Food as a source of nutrition can be interpreted scientifically through the physiological measurement of nutrients in a way that spiritual nutrition cannot. A reliance on things that can be interpreted as solid phenomena and the move in mental health towards ever more solid representations of Being as for example, the brain, suggest that the premises that support interpretation limit the possibilities of providing culturally (and metaphysically) appropriate systems of support. It also limits the possibility of the deeply personal expression of relationship that the individual has with the world that manifests in the body’s knowing of where and how well-being can be found.<sup>94 95</sup>

In the case of Erdrich’s poetry and of Simmonds’ discussion of spiritual nourishment or ūkaipō, the question of, “*what would be an appropriate system of support and care in a space that conceives of the world in a particular way?*” is raised and forces a consideration of alternative metaphysical premises. A woman and child’s nourishment, through both tangible and intangible connection, expands what is possible to articulate (Ahenakew et al., 2014), as well as what we can imagine are the metaphysical premises of well-being.<sup>96</sup>

Imagining the possibilities presented by taking indigenous ontologies seriously means not only ‘thinking’ differently about the metaphysical premises of well-being but imagining ways that alternative metaphysical premises can be taken up within institutions such as mental health. Taitimu (2007) calls these premises

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<sup>94</sup> *We haven’t activated that space anymore, or yet again, to be able to actually have them as a contribution in our lives:* We are influenced by things in the world regardless of whether we consciously attend to those things or not - a pathway to well-being, but this pathway is always there regardless of our attention to it.

<sup>95</sup> *Why do we know that going back to the grave is going to heal us?* The bringing together of tangible and intangible sites of healing.

<sup>96</sup> *We’ve papered over the cracks... We’ve got to have a more kind of honest appraisal of ourselves:* resisting concepts that have papered over the cracks - obscuring more complex premises of Being.

“wider dimensions that are essential to Māori wellness” (p.280),<sup>97</sup> identified in Taitimu’s research as including whakapapa and whenua and pointing to aspects of whakapapa and whenua-based well-being that open up our interpretations. These expanded interpretations go beyond simplistic translations of whakapapa and whenua (based on the premises of solidity) that (for example), see whakapapa translated as genealogy and whenua translated as land. But they also make room for whakapapa, whenua, and all things in the world to be interpreted as embodied experiences or the individual’s deeply personal creative expression of relationship - one that is pregnant with the potential of moving us towards our understanding of what makes us well.<sup>98 99</sup>

## **Thesis conclusion**

In this final section, I aim to offer reflections related to the possibilities that may stem from Māori and indigenous understandings of Being in relation to mental health. Utilising the main ideas discussed in this thesis, I will summarise points related to the potential for Māori and indigenous metaphysics to influence future directions in mental health.

The metaphysical premises that Māori and indigenous understandings of Being are grounded in provide guidance on the type of potential future directions that are available as a basis for a (k)new approach to understanding and providing support within mental health. The conceptualisation of behaviour and experience as a (largely) self-originating, internal condition negates the possibility of understanding lived experience as a complex interplay of an entitized world. A Māori and indigenous view of the world resists the tidy categories of behaviour that are a central feature of conventional mental health frames. Instead, they offer a pathway back to understanding Māori and indigenous worldviews from within the

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<sup>97</sup> *It doesn’t account for the variance that is in there:* unintelligible aspect of Being can be lost in the *defining* of an experience.

<sup>98</sup> *I do my best to scoot across the ngaru or across the waves of it rather than be at the effect of it:* Non-foundational ground and creativity.

<sup>99</sup> *Tangata whenuatanga:* We can be recognised and stand in an identity that is set apart through articulating something other than what has been imposed.

ground of Māori and indigenous metaphysics as opposed to apprehending these views to fix them in place, forcing them into the frame of order and taxonomy.

The tendency to represent things in the world as objects with clear boundaries of meaning (as separate objects that can be fully determined), has, I suggest, a particular impact in terms of the notion of mental illness and the conceptualisation of treatment. The distant and value free science that underlines dominant approaches to guiding people through distress, and the arbitrary (ever-present) structure that demands uniformity within mental health, re-present things in the world and, as I have argued, intern them, making them conform to a dominant metaphysical structure. The more mysterious, profound and complex understandings of Being are thereby integrated into dominant Western metaphysics. The internment of excessive meaning that is Māori and indigenous metaphysics ensures that the potentiality reflected in spiritually dynamic understandings of Being is suppressed by the weight of the positivist, objective knowledge structure.

In relation to mental health, the internment of Māori and indigenous terms represents more than an epistemic suppression of meaning. It is, I would suggest, the internment of the Māori and indigenous self and with this the internment of all other things in the world. If, through stripping terms of their mystery and of their inherent reference to interconnection, we set up a relationship between self and world that does not permit us to think of world as entity, then we are re-shaped to fit the normal expectation. This expectation, from another's view of normality, creates a barrier to the indigenous holistic identity – a restriction on how the world and self can be perceived – cutting us off from a perception that may bring wellness. It is a restriction that demands we fit our view of self and world with what the dominant West finds conceivable. Profound entities that are intimately connected to the self are rendered as simple objects of thought. The re-presentation of Māori and indigenous understandings of Being is, therefore, an ethical movement – one that recognises the more-than-human while also allowing for the self's re-turn to a perception of holistic connection.

Within this thesis, much has been made of the premises that underlie different metaphysics: the premises on which we base our worldviews. A significant driver

of exploring these premises has been the aim of exposing the predicates of a dominant Western worldview that lie beneath certain concepts. In order to determine whether there is sufficient onto-epistemic space for Māori and indigenous metaphysics, the aim has been to identify whether the ground beneath our own expressions has been shifted and replaced by the metaphysics of the dominant other. While there is evidence to suggest that Māori and indigenous understandings of Being have been subject to an expectation of ordered representation, there is also evidence of a type of liberatory resistance. The ideas that are emerging through research and service provision discussions within Māori and indigenous communities provide examples of work that is seeking to shift the foundations on which the possibilities of healing are based. These include research focussing on understandings of trauma as an intergenerational and holistic (spiritual) experience, and the development of mental health services that are oriented towards wairua healing. What informs these examples, I posit, is a shift towards growing the experience of being immersed in a metaphysical ground: one that opposes dominant Western metaphysics, invoking a different type of knowledge – a holistic knowledge that relies on relational rather than rational orientation.

The sense of holism as worldedness has been discussed as a (k)new orientation. It shifts not only the view of people's experiences (as isolated and individually mediated experiences), but also shifts the very people who are impacted on away from simply being examined through an individualistic lens. A (k)new understanding of the individual also emerges where the expression of the self is not reliant on conformity, making room for the personal expression of relationship with things in the world – for a creativity that has no pre-determined boundaries. People are re-placed into histories, generational legacies, cosmological realities, residing with whanaunga, both human and more-than-human. Rather than relying on the use of clinical mental health concepts as tools to orientate people to their experiences, Māori and indigenous understandings of Being offer a re-turn to the whole. Through this wider consideration of what makes up the person we might also shift our view of dis-ease from individual dysfunctions and deficiencies to address the dis-ease that exists in the entire organism. Healing, rather than

sacrificing the needs of the person experiencing distress, would take on a much more excessive meaning where personal stories can move beyond conceptual limits.

The idea of re-positioning the person and the potential for different stories to be told was reflected in chapters seven and eight where the idea of using narratives to locate people and their whānau was discussed by participants in this research. One of the examples that was included in this discussion was of ‘Mahi a Atua’ (Rangihuna, Kopua, Tipene-Leach, 2018), that uses cosmological narratives to re-locate people, bringing them back into the metaphysical fold and representing them as the mirror image of whanaunga and atua. I am not suggesting that the use of narratives should be seen as a prescriptive, formulated approach to providing culturally effective therapies. Within the context of Māori and indigenous metaphysics, the potential for different approaches to emerge from the idea of narrative is multiple. What I am advocating is that the principle of holism and of interconnection that is evident in the narrative approach be highlighted. The example of using narratives also provides a point of departure from relying on limited and pre-determined clinical labels to give names to experiences (or to identities). The individual is free to express their own experience of holism, to break from (all) conventional and rigid expectations of how their story will be told.

As mentioned earlier, there are no defined strategies presented in this thesis to provide points on which we might land to determine how to develop and implement changes in how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being are used to create healing strategies within mental health. Instead, the research should be seen as something that contributes to an ongoing conversation about the deeper levels of dominance that haunt our work in the form of an entrenched structure of representation. In this sense, the absence of strategies echoes the central message within the thesis which is to disrupt the expectation of definition and the construction of normal, standardised cultural ideas. It is intended that this research will push other work in the direction of disruption rather than lay more ground of definition and structure.

To end my contribution to an ongoing conversation about Māori and indigenous understandings of Being and deconstructing the notion of mental illness, I want to

highlight and reiterate the point that has been made in this thesis about the limits of meaning. In line with Derrida's (1978) critique of dominant Western onto-epistememes and the role they play in suppressing excessive meaning (discarding complex things that do not fit within conceptual frames), I also posit that we must be wary of the invitation to participate in systems that rely on the structure of concept. Māori and indigenous metaphysics re-present a world beyond concept – an excess that cannot be contained by conventional and definitive description. If we are to escape what I suggest is the suppression of excessive meaning or a spiritual restraint that only allows limited room for expressive complexity, then we must address the deeper levels of the dominant onto-epistemic structure. Doing so will push the limits of the expectation that has been enforced upon Māori and indigenous expressions of Being, forcing an opening that exceeds the conceptual frame. This necessary threatening of the rational order goes deeper than considering how Māori and indigenous views can find purchase within the system. It seeks to shake the system, to buckle its foundations of certainty and, through this, engage us in a profound gesture towards those things that reside in the excess and emerge from the void that is full with potential – the relational reality of holism.

***The holistic research approach and its academic limitations: On violence and well-being***

The idea of concluding a thesis (to end a piece of writing and offer final thoughts that tie together and complete a project), sits counter to holistic temporal principles – principles of continuance and cultural perpetuation that exist within Māori and indigenous metaphysics. While I use the term conclusion as a heading for this final section (and throughout this thesis to conclude earlier chapters), there is in fact no end – no conclusive point of arrival that can be constructed to receive a final word on how Māori and indigenous understandings of Being should be re-presented. Any hard and insistent conclusions, offered as definitive strategies developed from what has emerged in this research, would negate the deeper message that I hope to convey.

The idea of conclusion and completion is mirrored in the dominant Western epistemic frameworks that I have worked to disrupt throughout my writing.

However, the fact that I am using the term *conclusion* highlights the very limitations of research that have concerned me throughout this project. While I write of things that have no apparent limits (no clear lines of demarcation that can be drawn around things in the world to separate them and mark them as individual things), I am also forced to use the limited language I have at hand to explore a metaphysics that exists on different *terms*. I have, for example, throughout my writing, utilised the term *concept* to point to Māori and indigenous views (i.e., Māori concept of ‘x’ or ‘y’), while at the same time, critiquing the deeper basis that underlies the term *concept*: a central feature of dominant Western epistememes that apprehend things through the language of conceptual representation.

The limitation of *conclusion* also relates to the research approach that I have used as a way of engaging in holistic research rather than presenting well defined strategies of implementation. The (non) method used in this thesis – *whaiwhakaaro* – is intended as a possible pathway of moving away from the sense of finality that appears to be embedded in a conventional academic research approach. The expectation of delivering a final statement on Māori and indigenous understandings of Being and how these understandings might re-orientate our view of mental illness has been deferred in favour of gesturing towards something. This gesture is made through the work of clearing the metaphysical ground that has become overrun with the dominant tradition of determination and pre-determination – of things that are named by their clear and present qualities. It is a gesture that aims to lift the structure that represses more complex utterances. However, a full escape from convention has proved difficult.

The limitations of working within an academic process, within the context of the aim of engaging in holistic research, raises questions about structure and whether this can be fully disposed of. While I have engaged with the research material in a reflective style that detracts from a more rigid approach of developing themes that represent essential ideas to inform definitive strategies, I have also enclosed the research material in a type of structure. For example, in chapters seven and eight, I claim to group participant responses into conversation areas instead of themes. But the difference between conversation areas and themes may not be as evident as I had hoped. There is, after all, still a sense of order applied to the presentation of

participants' ideas – still a sense of the researchers influence even when referring to the more-than-human that I believe has helped shape this work. I have my own views about what I think has disrupted Māori and indigenous holism and what I see as signposts for a return to spiritual complexity in lived experience. I cannot claim that these views are not constructive - that they have not influenced the presentation of ideas. However, I also cannot discount the play of other influences or make a clear mark that signals where any self-contained thoughts might begin and end within the context of what, in this research, has been referred to as worldedness - that thorough co-constructive collapse of self and world.

While I recognise the challenges that are built into the presentation of academic material and how this presentation conflicts with the desire to engage in whaiwhakaaro as a holistic reflective approach, I have no clear ideas on how I can fully escape this dilemma. The expectation of at least some level of structured presentation is one that I will continue to find hard to escape. What I can say is that I also see no way of escaping holism despite the different representational structures that we might employ.<sup>100</sup> As mentioned in the method chapter of this thesis, I posit that whaiwhakaaro gestures to a subjectivity that re-presents research and the researcher as the influenced subject whose thoughts are etched by and with an active and entitized world at play.

Any utterance is much more than what we may be able to make of it using conventional language or description. This limitation is one that, in my experience, lingers despite our attempts to describe how the experience of research can be understood based on more spiritual premises of Being. Understanding the world's influence on the researcher would necessarily, therefore, bring forward a consideration of the researcher's well-being - the impact of the researcher's ability to express a spiritual perception. The focus of this thesis is not directly centred on the question of method as an aspect of well-being, focussing instead on the notion of mental illness. However, engaging in research that raises the possibility of an entitized world will bring up some significant issues that are relevant to a wider context of well-being, implicating the role of metaphysics in all aspects of life. I

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<sup>100</sup> *Grounded*: Viewing the self as a connected Being and representing things speculatively as holistic and therefore not fully knowable things, is the experience of being within the research.

recognise that I am impacted by the issue of effectively and respectfully communicating thoughts that are formed *with* things in the world. These thoughts are not limited to what can be processed through cognitive awareness: they breach the limits of intelligibility. Yet, I have attempted to write them down and give them form. Each term I use - each description I provide for an experience or phenomena - is still marked by a form of suppression and limit. While I write of the excess of meaning, signalling my awareness of a complexity that exceeds the limits of representation, I am constantly pulled back into the limited expression, knowing that my perception and experience of holism can never fit within the parameters of my written work.

It is in this sense that I am still left wondering how to express a spiritual influence in academic research. Despite this, there are some examples in this research that I think have been helpful in foregrounding the idea of spiritual influence. This has included describing my encounter with Indranil Chakravarty's PhD journey (see chapter four), in which he expresses a sense of wonderment - of wondering what calls people (with no direct connection) to almost simultaneously take up the task of telling the same historical story. This story has long been left hidden beneath the tracks of time, but it has called people across the world to remember - to explore and re-turn to the life of a man that did great and interesting things. I have also attempted to present the experience of spiritual influence through re-calling a comment made to me by Dr Naomi Simmonds who re-turned my focus to Papatūānuku as Te Ūkaipō. This seemingly casual reference made at the end of an academic presentation grew into an imaginary about the individual's place in the world as a unique expression of holistic interconnection. These two examples are meant as a way of reflecting on the experience of research as a type of spiritual collaboration - one that re-presents the researchers work as an expression of the world's affectual resonance.

Within this view, the attributions that we make about where ideas come from shifts to take seriously the influence of the entitized world, potentially making all utterances ideas that flow from relational Being. While we may choose (or follow an expectation of) how to represent these influenced ideas in ways that then reduce their spiritual genesis – calcifying their open meaning – we may still understand

their importance to our potential for re-turn; turning again and again to those things that reach for us – calling us to attention. It has been my intention through a holistic research approach to listen for this call: to rest comfortably within a reflective process that lets go of the notion of certainty and that, through a belief in relational subjectivity, gives way to creativity - to the stories that are pending and always with the potential to emerge.

In an attempt to counter the limitations of my research as I have experienced them, I have engaged in a research approach that takes advantage of limitation, foregrounding the idea of the researchers limits as an individual thinker. What has emerged from this process is a different view of the self: a self that is immersed in the research, thinking with things in the world rather than studying *their* nature. This approach to research mirrors the understanding of the more-than-human influence but it also provides another pathway of re-turning to the act of disrupting conceptual conclusion. My individual research voice offers no definitive conclusion - no final concept. In this context, I view this thesis as a way of participating in an ongoing conversation. As discussed in chapter six, within mental health (as with other institutions), Māori and indigenous concepts are often subject to the dominant Western request of providing cultural ideas in reductive forms. Māori and indigenous expressions may also be re-shaped to ensure a type of easy comprehensibility is achieved or to suit the political palette of the system. Within this context, writing to disrupt a structure that captures Māori and indigenous expressions – that interns those expressions to the rational and logical order – is a task that has no end.

The dominant Western preference for clear and highly evident representation is not something that can be easily disposed of and the logical order would not readily give way. Its insistent expectation that Māori and indigenous understandings of Being will be presented in tidy conceptual packaging – that we will present ourselves and our knowledges in line with the rules of present and evident meaning – will continue to haunt our efforts. The entrenched nature of the dominant Western onto-epistemic attitude that underpins and apprehends, demanding that things are represented in positivistic terms, requires a certain level of vigilance. It also requires that we continually look for ways to re-present Māori and indigenous

understandings of Being in ways that resist predetermination, basing our presentations of the world in a metaphysics that not only allows for, but is itself, a perpetual act of creative freedom.

## Glossary

Ahuatanga	way, aspect, likeness, circumstance, characteristic, property, feature, function, attribute, trait, phenomenon.
Hara	sin, foul, crime, offence, transgression, wrongdoing, gaffe, infringement, fault, problem.
Hinengaro	mind, thought, intellect, consciousness, awareness
Hine-nui-te-pō	Hine-tītama was the eldest daughter of the <i>atua</i> Tāne-nui-a-Rangi and Hine-ahu-one. She had several children to her father, but on learning that her husband was her father she fled to <i>te pō</i> (the underworld) where she receives the souls of the dead and is known as Hine-nui-te-pō.
ia	he, she, him, her.
Ira atua	supernatural life, <i>atua</i> genes.
Ira tangata	human genes, human element, mortals.
Iwi	extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race - often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory.
Karakia	to recite ritual chants, say grace, pray, recite a prayer, chant.
Karanga	formal call, ceremonial call, welcome call.
Kaumātua	Adult, elder, elderly man, elderly woman, old man - a person of status within the <i>whānau</i> .
Kaupapa	Topic, policy, matter for discussion, plan, purpose, scheme, proposal, agenda, subject, programme, theme, issue, initiative.

Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society.
Kawa	Protocol - marae protocol - customs of the marae and <i>wharenuī</i> , particularly those related to formal activities such as <i>pōhiri</i> , speeches and <i>Mihimihi</i> .
Kino	Evil, wickedness, sin, vice, immorality.
Kōrero	To tell, say, speak, read, talk, address.
Kūmara	Sweet potato.
Mākutu	To inflict physical and psychological harm and even death through spiritual powers, bewitch, cast spells.
Mana	Prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma.
Marae	Courtyard - the open area in front of the <i>wharenuī</i> , where formal greetings and discussions take place. Often also used to include the complex of buildings around the <i>marae</i> .
Matakite	Prophecy, prophet, seer, clairvoyant, special intuition.
Mātauranga	Knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill.
Mauri	Life principle, life force, vital essence, special nature, a material symbol of a life principle, source of emotions - the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity.
Mihi	Speech of greeting, acknowledgement, tribute.
Moko	Māori tattooing designs on the face or body done under traditional protocols.
Ngahere	Bush, forest.

Ngākau	Seat of affections, heart, mind, soul.
Oranga	Survivor, food, livelihood, welfare, health, living.
Pākehā	English, foreign, European, exotic - introduced from or originating in a foreign country.
Papatūānuku	Earth, Earth mother and wife of Rangi-nui - all living things originate from them.
Pōhiri	To welcome, invite, beckon, wave.
Poutiriao	Spiritual guardians - mythical male beings, guardians of the Universe appointed by Io-matua, the Supreme Being.
Puku	Swelling, tumour, lump, bubble, stomach, abdomen, centre, belly, tummy.
Pūrākau	Myth, ancient legend, story.
Rangi-nui	Atua of the sky and husband of Papa-tū-ā-nuku, from which union originate all living things.
Reo	Language, dialect, tongue, speech.
Taha matau	On the right hand, right.
Taha mauī	On the left hand, left.
Tāne	Husband, male, man.
Tāngata whaiora	People with experience of mental illness, who are seeking wellness, or recovery of self. Literally translated as people seeking wellness. <a href="https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/glossary/">https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/glossary/</a>
Tangata whenua	Local people, hosts, indigenous people - people born of the whenua, i.e. of the placenta and of the land where the people's ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried.

Taniwha	Water spirit, monster, dangerous water creature, powerful creature, chief, powerful leader, something or someone awesome - <i>taniwha</i> take many forms from logs to reptiles and whales and often live in lakes, rivers or the sea. They are often regarded as guardians by the people who live in their territory but may also have a malign influence on human beings.
Tapu	Be sacred, prohibited, restricted, set apart, forbidden, under <i>atua</i> protection - see definition 4 for further explanations.
Te ao kōhatu	Stone age, ancient world, old world.
Te Ao Mārama	World of life and light, Earth, physical world.
Te Kore	Realm of potential being, The Void.
Te Pō	place of departed spirits, underworld - the abode of the dead/darkness, night.
Tikanga	Correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention, protocol.
Tohu	sign, mark, symbol, emblem, token, qualification, cue, symptom, proof, directions, company, landmark, distinguishing feature, signature.
Tūpuna	Ancestors, grandparents.
Wāhine	Female, women, feminine.
Wairua	Spirit, soul - spirit of a person which exists beyond death. It is the non-physical spirit, distinct from the body and the <i>mauri</i> .
Wānanga	To meet and discuss, deliberate, consider.
Whakapapa	Genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent.
Whakatūpatu	To warn, alert, caution, forewarn, take care.

Whakawhanaungatanga	Process of establishing relationships, relating well to others.
Whānau	Extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people.
Whanaunga	Relative, relation, kin, blood relation.
Whare tangata	House of humanity, womb, uterus.
Whareiti	Toilet, lavatory, convenience, latrine, loo, bog.
Wharenui	Meeting house, large house - main building of a marae where guests are accommodated.
Whenua	Land - often used in the plural.

(for further information see: <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>)



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# APPENDIX 1: ETHICS APPROVAL

## Linguistics Programme

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

Kim Southey  
Carl Mika  
Tracy Howell  
Dan Weijers

PHIL

16 January 2017

Dear Kim,

Re: **FS2016-65 Re-presenting Maori and Indigenous notions of 'being': Challenging notions of mental illness.**

Thank you for submitting an application to the FASS Human Research Ethics Committee. Your amended application has now been received. The Committee is pleased to offer formal approval for your research activities, including the following:

- 10 semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in philosophical reflection on notions of 'being'.

We encourage you to contact the committee should issues arise during your data collection, or should you wish to add further research activities or make changes to your project as it unfolds. We wish you all the best with your research. Thank-you for engaging with the process of Ethical Review.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie Barbour'.

Julie Barbour, Chair  
*Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee.*



## APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



### Participant Information Sheet

**Research title:** Re-presenting Maori and Indigenous notions of 'being': challenging notions of mental illness.

Tena koe,

This research is part of a PhD thesis that I am completing within the Department of Philosophy at the University of Waikato. The research explores Maori and Indigenous understandings of human nature and being. I am interested in exploring ways in which these understandings have been impacted on by dominant Western concepts that have influenced popular ways of thinking about human nature (including behaviour) in the context of mental illness. This includes exploring how some Western views on knowledge have shaped ideas about mental illness such as categorizing behaviours, formulating and applying diagnoses, and relying on observable phenomenon. This research aims to provide an opportunity to discuss these differences and theorize about what these differences might represent that point to something other than mental illness as an explanation of what is happening.

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Waikato. Any questions about ethical conduct may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee; email: [fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz), postal address: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wananga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, 3240.

### What is involved?

#### Interviews

I will engage in up to 10 interviews that are guided by a set of questions that have been developed to stimulate discussions about Maori and Indigenous notions of "being" and how these might differ from dominant Western notions. I anticipate that the nature of our discussions may mean that there are a number of areas that you may want to describe and discuss and in this case the

questions I have will not need to be rigidly followed. I am happy for there to be a free-flowing discussion throughout the interview and will simply ensure that the following areas are included:

- Maori and Indigenous notions of human nature and being,
- Differences between Maori and Indigenous and Western notions,
- The relationship between knowledge and being (what does our view of knowledge or knowing say about how we see the world?),
- Implications that Maori understandings of human nature and being have for Western notions of mental illness.

The interview will take between 1–1.5 hours to complete and we can meet wherever you feel comfortable. I can also provide a location and space for the interview as well.

If you agree to be interviewed, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form on the last page of this document. You will be given a copy of both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep.

Please note that I would like to record the interview. You do not have to agree to the interview being recorded. If you do not want the interview to be recorded, please tick the appropriate box at the end of this form. Please note that if the interview is not recorded then I will record the interview in written notes to the best of my ability, however, this will have an impact on the detail that I will be able to record and that can be included in the research report.

### **What are my rights?**

- You don't have to agree to be interviewed,
- If you do agree to be interviewed, you can decline to answer any questions that I might ask,
- You can decline to have the interview audio-recorded or for the recorder to be turned off at any time,
- You have the right to review your interview transcript and make amendments,
- You can withdraw from the interview process at any time,
- You can withdraw your data up until analysis begins on the transcript. Analysis of the transcript will begin once you have reviewed and returned your interview transcript or one month from providing you with a copy of your transcript (whichever comes first).

If you choose to be named in the research report, you can request a list of quotes that I intend to use in the report and summary paragraphs that explain the context in which the quote will be used. You will have one month from the time of receiving the list of quotes to make amendments.

## **Confidentiality**

You can choose for your name to be used in the research report or you can choose to remain anonymous. If you choose to remain anonymous, I will use an appropriate pseudonym in place of your name, but please be aware that total anonymity cannot be guaranteed. All your personal information and hardcopies of your interview transcripts will be stored in a locked cupboard at the University of Waikato. These documents will be destroyed when the PhD is completed. I will keep electronic copies of your transcripts on my student hard drive and on my personal 'OneDrive' which is a cloud storage facility offered through the Microsoft Corporation. These will also be permanently deleted when the PhD research is completed.

Recordings from interviews will be transcribed by a professional transcriber who will sign a confidentiality agreement.

I intend to present my research at conferences and to publish academic papers. In the case of public presentations and academic papers, no participant names will be used.

## **What are the potential risks?**

It is important that you carefully consider if you would like your name to be used in the final report or if you would like to remain anonymous. It is possible that if you choose to be named that people will read some of your responses and disagree with them. For this reason, it is also important that you take the opportunity to review your transcript and make any changes you feel are necessary. You will have an opportunity to make changes whether you choose to be named or to remain anonymous.

If you choose to be named in the research report, you will have the option of requesting a list of quotes that I intend to use in the report. This list will also include summary paragraphs that explain the context in which the quotes will be used. You will have 1 month from receiving this list to make any amendments.

## **How will my interview responses be used?**

This research does not attempt to define anything in relation to Maori and Indigenous understandings of human nature and being. You will be quoted throughout the thesis and then I will engage with what you have said to delve into the issues I am exploring. This may mean that, alongside referring to what you say, I will respond in a creative way. In this process, I will ensure that I always respect the integrity of the knowledge that sits within your responses to my questions, by summarizing what you say and then responding in ways that always acknowledge the importance of your knowledge.

Please note here that the research will be used for the completion of a PhD thesis, which will be published in hard and electronic copies.

## **What will happen to my interview transcript and audio recording after the research is completed?**

The PhD supervisors will store all data from the research in a secure location at the University of Waikato for a period of 5 years following the completion of the researchers PhD examination. This will allow for research scrutiny (in necessary).

## **WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION OR IF I HAVE CONCERNS?**

If you have any questions, please contact me directly:

Kim Southey, PhD candidate  
**Mobile:** 027 037 6792  
**Email:** [Kimarie781@gmail.com](mailto:Kimarie781@gmail.com)

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research or my conduct you can contact the Department of Philosophy, University of Waikato:

Department of Philosophy, University of Waikato  
**Phone:** 07 838 4030  
**Email:** [phil-fass@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:phil-fass@waikato.ac.nz)

## **Research Supervisors:**

Co-chief supervisors:

Carl Mika, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, The University of Waikato.  
Email: [mika@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:mika@waikato.ac.nz), phone: 07 577 0620 extn. 8752 (Tauranga Campus).

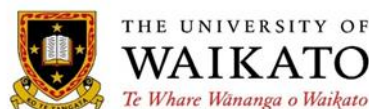
Tracy Bowell, Pro-Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning, The University of Waikato.

Email: [tracy.bowell@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:tracy.bowell@waikato.ac.nz), phone: 07 856-2889 extn. 9351.

Second Supervisor:

Dan Weijers, Lecturer, School of Social Sciences, The University of Waikato.  
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## APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM



### Consent Form

**Please tick to indicate you consent to the following** (*Add or delete as appropriate*)

I have read and I understand the Participant Information Sheet.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given sufficient time to consider whether or not to participate in this research.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the answers I have been given regarding the research and I have a copy of this consent form and information sheet.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that taking part in this research is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If I decide to withdraw from the study within a certain timeframe, I understand that my interview transcript may continue to be used.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I wish to remain anonymous.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I would like my name to be used in the PhD report in relation to my interview responses.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I know who to contact if I have any questions about the study in general.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand my responsibilities as a study participant.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I wish to receive a copy of my interview transcript to review and amend.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>





**Declaration by participant:**

I hereby consent to take part in this study.

Participant's name:

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Signature:

Date:

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**Declaration by researcher:**

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project to the participant and have answered the participant's questions about it.

I believe that the participant understands the research and has given informed consent to participate.

Researcher's name:

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Signature:

Date:

---



## **APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

- What is your understanding of a Maori/indigenous worldview?
- How does this worldview present understandings of the human self/non-human world?
- Within this worldview, what is the relationship of the human self to the non-human world?
- How do you think a dominant Western/non-Maori/non-indigenous worldview differs from this?
- How, if at all, does the orthodox model of mental health/mental illness reflect a dominant Western/non-Maori/indigenous worldview?
- What does the notion of mental illness imply about human nature?
- What are the potential implications of dominant Western worldviews for Maori or Indigenous mental health clients?
- In what ways does a Maori/Indigenous worldview interact with notions of mental illness? i.e. How do you think it aligns with these notions? How do you think it contrasts with or challenges these notions?
- How might Maori and indigenous understandings of the human self and non-human world impact on people who are currently understood to be experiencing mental illness?