

## CHAPTER X

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### DO INDIGENOUS METAPHORS HAVE UNIVERSAL APPLICABILITY? LEARNINGS FROM MĀORI IN NEW ZEALAND

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#### INTRODUCTION

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Certainly, there is a groundswell of support for becoming better stewards of the planet. Some view Indigenous wisdom as an essential contributor to this mission (Marsden 2003; Cajete 2016; Rout and Reid 2020; Spiller 2021a) which can help to solve some of the world's most pressing issues such as climate change and environmental degradation. Indigenous knowledge and conceptions of the social world are often recognized as being synchronistic with land, cosmos and natural relationships (Cajete 2016). Because of these synergies, Indigenous embedded images of the world, and their role in ordering social life could be an important avenue for contributing to the world's sustainability. If we take these assertions to be true, then questions that follow include: How universally applicable are Indigenous metaphors? To what degree are they generalizable to other contexts? If they are lifted and transferred to different parts of the world, would they still hold the same meaning? Or do they have to be translated – or even replaced by “local” metaphors to make sense in new contexts?

Metaphors play a pivotal role in how organizations are shaped, and are critical to the way people “engage, organize and understand their world” (Morgan 1986: 601). Taking a holistic view, Van Engen (2008: 39) notes the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions that metaphors can evoke, thus enriching and complementing organizational culture such as language, story, memory, history, values and relationships. Consequently, metaphors are considered significant building-blocks in organizational theory (Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan 2007). Morgan's (1986) landmark text *Images of Organization* showed how metaphors represent different views of realities. Over time, metaphorical images embed institutionally through the establishment of policies and procedures that further influence organizational practices. People's behaviour then conforms to the dominant metaphors in their cognitive schema, until they become a naturalised and taken-for-granted way of seeing the world and doing things (Morgan 1986). Morgan identified eight dominant metaphors of the organization: machine, organism, brain, culture, political system, psychic prison, instruments of domination, flux and transformation. The machine metaphor, for example, has given rise to seeing division of labour, a mechanistic worldview, where organizational life is akin to a factory (Morgan 1986). The metaphor of the brain privileges rationalism and logic, and decisions based on numbers and calculations, proposing that humans are akin to computers, objectifying the human condition (Morgan 1986).

In this chapter, we draw on our experience in Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa is the Indigenous name for New Zealand) to question the “travelability” of Indigenous metaphors to understand how the benefits of Indigenous metaphors might be used in alternative contexts. We begin this chapter defining Indigenous People’s, with a brief introduction to the Māori cultural landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand. This leads to a discussion of Māori knowledge, metaphors and the philosophical themes that underpin. We draw on four Māori metaphors: *Te Whare Tapa Wha* (a house with four walls), *whanau* (kinship networks), *Maui* (personifying innovation), and *rāranga* (life as interwoven). We utilize three existing frameworks, Hall’s (1976) framing of low and high context, Cornelissen’s (2004) typology of metaphors, and Case et al.’s (2017) work to elucidate transference issues of metaphors between cultures and formulate potential explanations regarding the degree to which metaphor may transcend their native contexts. We finalize our chapter by providing some guidance for other nations when considering the metaphorical incorporation of Indigenous imagery into their organizational landscapes.

## DEFINING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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There is increasing recognition globally regarding diversity issues that include gender inequality, racial discrimination, and the marginalization and silencing of minority groups. Decolonizing, post-colonial and indigenizing discourses and research interrogating these topics are becoming vogue in response to a world that has overtly privileged a Eurocentric patriarchy. While it is easy to lump these “Othered” groups into one category, each requires its own focused attention, rules of engagement and policy considerations. Indigenous Peoples represent a unique and distinctive global community, made up of diverse groups. Their histories are characterized by displacement and attempts at systematic eradication. Dispersed over 90 countries, estimated population figures of Indigenous Peoples worldwide are believed to be between 370 and 500 million. Making up just 5% of the global population, they account for about 15% of the extreme poor and have life expectancies up to 20 years lower than non-indigenous people worldwide (*Vereinte Nationen, Hochkommissariat für Menschenrechte, and United Nations* 2013).

Putting negative social-wellbeing determinant figures aside, Indigenous Peoples continue to survive and, in a lot of cases, thrive. The Indigenous rights cause has moved the struggle into public attention though formal recognition with international instruments such as the United Nation Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues (*Vereinte Nationen, Hochkommissariat für Menschenrechte, and United Nations* 2013). Indigenous Peoples often rely on their socially constructed world, to find strength, resilience, resistance, and peace residing within their teachings of ancient knowledge passed down to them through many generations. Other non-Indigenous communities also see the benefit of adopting or taking on Indigenous metaphors to counteract environmentally and spiritually disconnected societies. However, although sharing similar histories of colonization and imperialism, Indigenous Peoples are not a homogenous group. They represent around 5000 distinct communities.

## THE MĀORI CONTEXT AND THEIR METAPHORS

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*Māori* is the label given to the Indigenous Peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori were the original inhabitants of New Zealand thought to have settled in Aotearoa around 1200. Through sophisticated navigation techniques, they landed in New Zealand via a multitude of migrations, with cultural origins and knowledge stemming from Pacific roots, such as Tahiti, Cook Islands, Rapanui and Hawaii. Over time, faced with a new and much harsher landscape, both climatically and physically rough terrain, they adapted and produced new bodies of knowledge to suit the new surroundings. Thus, Māori formed their own distinct cultural body of knowledge separate, but still connected to, their original homelands. This body of knowledge is now known as Mātauranga Māori (Henare 2001; Marsden 2003; Hikuroa 2017). Mātauranga Māori arises from the inter-generational experiences of Māori living in the environment of Aotearoa New Zealand. Although it retains scientific knowledge of rivers, plants and astronomy and horticulture, it also holds teachings regarding the socially constructed world of the Māori reflected through their metaphorical imagery of life.

Many racial policies such as, colonization, extermination, amalgamation, assimilation have shaped New Zealand and consequently Māori representation within the nation. This journey to reach racial fairness means Māori society has been flooded with (mostly negative) metaphorical imagery seeking ways to portray them that fit with the nations policy narrative of the time. Most depictions of Māori up until recently, involved representing them as “the noble savage”, barbaric and violent “once were warriors” or “happy go-lucky lads” unable to cope with the demands of capitalism. However, Māori have experienced some gains in recognition within policy. The country has entered a bi-culturalist era, turning to strong advocacy at political levels for Māori to be treated as an equal partner in the governing of New Zealand. These efforts draw heavily on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, a document which formalized the relationship between Māori and the Crown, signed in 1840 by British settlers and approximately 500 Māori chiefs (Orange 2010). Te Tiriti o Waitangi promised governance of New Zealand to the Crown, while retaining Māori sovereignty, the protection of items of value to Māori and equal rights of Māori with British citizens (Orange 2010). Thus, Māori economic life in New Zealand is complex and nuanced. The Māori economy was recently valued at \$62.7 billion dollars (*BERL* 2018). Many cultural practices of Māori still remain intact. In organizational contexts, for example, we see the integration of traditional welcoming ceremonies and time allowances for traditional bereavement processes. However, due to mass urbanization of Māori from the 1930s to the 1980s, many Māori reside now outside of their tribal areas and cultural spaces and have adjusted to New Zealand’s dominant organizing style. In this complex context, there exists hybridized spaces that give rise to new metaphors and conceptualize new realities and phenomena taking place. We now discuss four metaphors in use with New Zealand’s organizational landscape.

### **Health and wellbeing: Te Whare Tapa Whā**

*Te Whare Tapa Whā*, translates literally to mean a house with four walls. Introduced by Sir Professor Mason Durie during an era where holistic health was still considered scientifically unsubstantiated and novel, this metaphor for health and wellbeing has seen widespread usage and uptake in mainstream New Zealand policy and practice. The house depicts the importance of balancing the four walls to maintain overall wellbeing: Taha Tinana (Physical wellbeing), Taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing) Taha whānau (family wellbeing) and Taha hinengaro (mental wellbeing) (Durie 1994). *Te Whare Tapa Whā* was ground-breaking, creating a transformational impact in many sectors of New Zealand

organizational life, especially, health, education, public service, and business. The new conceptualization acknowledges humans as more than a mechanical piece at work. It allowed areas of employment to consider more multi-faceted dimensions of human well-being, previously not thought to be the domain of employers. For example, this manager working for a major government Ministry spoke to the influence of *Te Whare Tapa Whā* on employee well-being:

We created a pou ārahi position if you're just not in the right frame of mind ...we brought into the team someone that can just be ... that wise old fella that can take you into a room, have a bit of a karakia [prayer] with you. If you're emotionally and spiritually not feeling right, you can have some time out. (Spiller et al. 2017: 11)

Formerly, the well-being of employees was strictly siloed to the domain of doctors and psychologists and segregated from a person's place of employment.

### **Familial relationships: Whānau**

Another well-travelled metaphor into New Zealand organizations is *whānau*. Considered a basic building block, *whānau* was the main working unit of traditional Māori society. Within this structure food was grown, hunted, caught, and distributed. It was the pivotal social unit necessary for survival in the harsh environment of early New Zealand settlement. Hence, much emphasis went towards maintaining the integrity and unification of the unit. *Whānau* also crossed generational boundaries to include ancestors passed and those yet to be born. Overtime, with the influence of colonization, contemporary understandings of *whānau* have morphed and broadened. Today, the *whānau* concept within many New Zealand organizations includes collectives of people who share common values and goals. Modern conceptions of *whānau* emerge through mutual objectives, rather than relying on kinship ties (Cunningham et al. 2005). The adoption of *whānau* into New Zealand's organizational life allowed for broader sets of work relationship to be considered. For example, elders are now employed by mainstream institutions, valued for their wisdom and ability to connect to spiritual dimension of life. Similarly, supportive older/younger sibling-like relationships are encouraged for framing mentoring roles. The *whānau* metaphor points to creating family-oriented environments in organizations that encourage people to stay connected and committed to the workplace and recognize that humans are connected to communities and ecologies.

Family (in the Western sense) is already a commonly used metaphor for organizations. Family are networks of people, with levels of hierarchy and power, who must interact and resolve and balance tensions to achieve objectives. Scholars have demonstrated how conceptualizing the organization as a family can evoke caring organizational personas that invite employees to "join the family" to achieve a sense of belonging (Casey 1999; Brotheridge and Lee 2006).

### **Entrepreneurial roots: Maui**

*Maui* is a recently emerging metaphor representing Māori entrepreneurial vigor. Springing to global fame in Disney's "Moana", *Maui* refers to a mythological hero whose legends are deeply embedded in ancient Polynesian culture. For Māori, his cunning, trickery,

and disruptive thinking led to mythical accomplishments such as fishing up the North Island of New Zealand, slowing down the sun to enjoy longer days, and presenting humanity with fire. This particular metaphor has been used to exemplify innovative and entrepreneurial behaviors amongst Māori (Tapsell and Woods 2008; Dell and Houkamau 2016). In this context, *Maui* made his first scholarly appearance through the concept “Mauipreneur” (Keelan and Woods 2006). The metaphor aptly resounded with Māori and picked up in usage among several Māori economic development institutions. The metaphor was used to name a purpose-built Māori innovation hub Te Whare a Maui (The house of Maui) (*Callaghan Innovation* 2015), and well-known Māori entrepreneurs started to draw from the metaphor:

I definitely see myself as a Maui-preneur. Maui went out and challenged the status quo. For a lot of my upbringing my entrepreneurial skills weren't recognized by any system, and I was a square peg in a round hole, so it's great to have these skills recognized, alongside other incredible Māori business leaders. (*Chapman Tripp* 2017)

### **A woven life: Rāranga**

*Rāranga* or weaving as a traditional practice provided clothing and daily items necessary for capturing food. Knowledge of *rāranga* practices and customs meant the difference between being fed and warm as opposed to being cold and hungry. *Rāranga* involves rituals and ceremonies, gathering and returning processes, identifying exceptional resources and materials, developing discipline, exactness, and expert ways to work. As a metaphor for organization, *rāranga* depicts organizational complexity, encompassing many strands which come together, layered upon each other to form an organization (Spiller 2021b). At the center of workplace life, a sense of belonging is fostered by the Māori web of metaphorical imagery that fosters mutual responsibility to other people. As Royal (2011: 7) described:

We dwell within “the woven universe”, within the web of existence and no part of the whole is comprehensively autonomous. The purpose of life is to live within this intricate web of relationships and to become a conduit for the energies of life, to enable these energies to rise and fall within us.

The notion of weaving complexity together is an important feature of Māori life. The past is woven into the present and into the future. Relationships between the physical and the spiritual, between people and environment are also seen to make up the woven universe.

### **Philosophy underpinning Māori metaphors**

Four common themes cut across Māori metaphors of the social world representing their philosophical values and ideologies: stewardship, reverence, shapeshifting and temporality (Rout and Reid 2020). Stewardship emphasizes communal welfare over self-interest and highlights the responsibility of decision makers to ensure positive impacts for future generations. To be a steward from a Māori perspective means avoiding a “domination” approach where humans unceasingly interfere with the Earth life systems. A steward approach is one that honors equality with all aspects of creation, to ensure the wellbeing of

all with respect and reciprocity. The steward role is to move gently and respectfully to ensure that which already exists can thrive according to its own life force. Organizations, as constellations of human endeavor, are part of the quest to ensure Earth's systems are life-sustaining.

Reverence, closely connects to stewardship, encouraging the spiritual connection between people and place and the linking of the material and spiritual worlds. Reverent metaphors acknowledge the sacredness that exists in all life, and points to a deep belief in an interconnected world where humans are not separate to the Earth but are in kinship with all of creation (Spiller 2021a). Māori hold a belief in the spiritual dimensions of life where everything is imbued with a life force that requires a deep respect. Māori have a highly sophisticated ordering system which endows all aspects of creation with a genealogy (e.g. rocks, insects, birds, humans) that takes us all back to a single, shared point of connection (Rito 2007; Roberts 2013).

The ability to adapt and be dynamic is represented through the theme of shapeshifting. The ability to shapeshift reflects the significance for people, communities, and organizations to embrace the unknown, go on journeys of discovery, challenge the status quo and adapt to meet a changing world. Shapeshifting metaphors have helped guide Māori towards new futures and adapt to fluctuating circumstances.

Lastly, Māori metaphorical imagery reflects Indigenous perceptions of temporality. The Western notion of time is linear; time flows as a straight line. On a continuum, the past is to the left, and the future is to the right. Events are chronologically recorded, where one follows the other. Once an event has occurred, a Western perspective may discredit the ability of the past to influence the present. The past is relegated to the past. In traditional Māori culture, time is circular. The present time can only be understood in its relationship to the past (Lo and Houkamau 2012). The past, the present and the future are linked. The past is given much stronger time orientations, past and future generations – all interwoven into a perpetual present. Tightly allied is an intergenerational outlook whereby the legacies of tupuna (ancestors), and the needs of future generations are taken into consideration for present-day managing, organizing and decision-making.

## **THEORIZING THE UNIVERSAL APPLICABILITY OF INDIGENOUS METAPHORS**

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We now turn to answering our driving question, what is the extent to which Indigenous metaphors can be adopted, incorporated, and utilized outside of their originating contexts? To do so, we leverage three important scholarly contributions to our understandings of metaphors. Firstly, Hall's (1976) depiction of high and low context cultures helps to illustrate if metaphors can travel through and across varied cultural contexts. Secondly, Cornelissen's (2004) typology of metaphors enables us to assess which metaphors take in alternative contexts, and thirdly, Case et al.'s (2017) work describes what metaphor transference issues might occur between cultures.

Hall's (1976) conceptualization of high and low context cultures offers a communication-oriented perspective on culture that emphasizes the interdependence and inseparability of both culture and communication (Kittler et al. 2011). Typically assessing national cultures, Hall (1976) identified different cultures to be sitting along a continuum from high to low context. These contexts differentially assign meaning to communication. High context cultures, such as Japan and China, are primarily collectively orientated and individuals may be taught to prioritize entire groups in their decision making (Hofstede

2001). High context cultures tend to rely heavily on pre-existing, pre-programmed understandings in the communicator and the receiver to transmit meaning. Intentions and meaning may be communicated beyond vocabulary, through body language or tone. Due to their close connections to each other and contextual familiarity created over long periods of time, communication does not entirely need to rely on words to convey meaning (Kittler et al. 2011). Māori culture, like many Indigenous cultures, aligns with what Hall (1976) describes as a high context culture. These cultures place high value on symbolism, metaphor and storytelling. Indigenous communication can be laden with meaning requiring reading between the lines and poetic nuance. Oral transmission is valued, and knowledge tends to be carried internally, is highly contextual, situational and relational. In high context cultures relationships tend to be long-term, and centre around belonging. Face-to-face connection is cherished, and relationships are prioritized above tasks. Yunkaporta (2019) further highlights, from an Aboriginal Australian standpoint, that Indigenous cultures are oriented towards patterns, holism, relationality, and are field-dependent. Decision making favors group consensus, dialogue abounds with non-verbal communication.

Low context cultures, such as the UK, US, Germany and the Netherlands tend towards individualistic cultures (Hofstede 2001), because they rely on clear-cut messaging, which favors written communication to convey ideas (Hall 1976). Low context tends to have explicit communication without nuance or ambiguity and little inference. In a low context approach, relationships are characterized as short term and compartmentalized. As a settler-colonial society, Aotearoa New Zealand, has strong Western orientations, and would thus be considered a low context culture in Hall's (1976) framework. Although criticized for its over-simplification (Kittler et al. 2011), Hall's (1976) framework provides a useful representation for our purpose of trying to consider how metaphors might travel through and across varied cultural contexts.

With regards to the value of metaphors and their uptake, Oswick et al. (2002: 295) have previously argued that the focus on similarity merely makes "the familiar more familiar" where dissimilarities and tensions tend to get overlooked and the interactive meaning-making process represents a lost opportunity (Oswick et al. 2002; Cornelissen 2004). Metaphors create novel insights by transferring conceptual elements from the source domain to reconfigure new understandings of an existing area referred to as the target domain (Lakoff and Johnson 2008). Cornelissen's (2004) typology of metaphors provides a suite of four frames assessing the usefulness according to the similarity and distance between domains. Type 1 metaphors have similarity but to the point of being banal. The exact correspondence between the concepts and low distance between the domains renders the metaphor low in heuristic value. The metaphor "fails to shock us into conceiving of a subject in a completely new way" (Cornelissen 2004: 718-19). This simple comparison tends to create an isomorphic similarity yielding lack-lustre creative insights (Oswick et al. 2002; Cornelissen 2004). Type 2 metaphors are similarly weak due to the conjoining of domains that are close with the confounding addition of inexact, non-sensical imagery. Type 4 metaphors, whilst having potential heuristic value are separated by too much distance to be relatable and conjoined in an interactive, meaningful way. The metaphorical holy grail is the Type 3 metaphor according to Cornelissen's (2004) schema. These metaphors combine both aptness with heuristic value because of the right blend between domain distance and similarity between the concepts. Type 3 metaphors are the most powerful type from the vantage point of organizational theorizing as they provide conceptual advances and clarifications and startling new insights that were inconceivable before.

However, transference to other cultural contexts may surface issues. As experienced by Case et al. (2017) when metaphors are adopted outside of their original context, they are interpreted through the lens of the receiving culture, which can dilute or distort the original meaning. According to Case et al. (2017: 232) the danger is that unchecked and misappropriated metaphors have “the capacity to colonize subjectivities and shape organizational acts”. Cultural context is vital when interpreting how a metaphor is understood and used *in situ* – bringing a sociological consideration alongside cognitive understanding (Cornelissen et al. 2008). Case et al. (2017) have highlighted the pitfalls of ethnocentrism, homogenization, separation from context, reification, and colonization notable in early metaphor literature. Bringing an explicit reflexive position to work on metaphors is essential to ensure ethnocentric filters are acknowledged and ideally, mitigated through greater cultural sensitivity, appreciation of context and inquiry into the deeper layers of metaphor. We doubt that anything using the mechanism of language can be wholly adopted within another culture with its essence completely intact. Different mental images and experiences color the receiver’s interpretation.

## DISCUSSION

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Western metaphor and imagery have often been disseminated globally laden with assumptions of universality and superiority. In settler-colonial contexts, this is an element of ongoing colonization on spaces once governed by Indigenous Peoples (Pihema et al. 2002). We caution that the uptake of Indigenous metaphors by non-Indigenous people comes with sensitivities, and that such metaphors cannot be extracted from their political reality. Therefore, before we address whether Indigenous metaphors *can* and – if so – *how* they travel, we first address the issue of whether they *should* travel. Historically (and in some contemporary circumstances), Indigenous Peoples were punished and faced extreme abuse in order to rid them of their cultural and spiritual practices. In some cases, to outwardly express your indigeneity could mean death. In the attempt to restore injustices by encouraging the use of Indigenous language, symbolism, and other renaissance practices, well intentioned (and the not so well-intentioned) non-Indigenous supporters risk becoming cultural appropriators.

Cultural appropriation refers to the exploitation of elements of another’s culture or identity by members who are not from or part of that culture such as their religion, traditions, dance, fashion, symbols, language, and music (Young and Brunk 2012). The controversy stems from when dominant colonizing cultures cherry pick and copy fashionable elements from usually a minority culture to represent them outside of the original culture’s context. Furthermore, often Indigenous Peoples have been denigrated for the same expressions of culture. We do not advocate the lifting of Indigenous metaphors, unless Indigenous Peoples are assisting with and condone their integration. Only then *should* Indigenous metaphors be adopted outside of their context of origin. For example, partnering with Indigenous People, organizations or communities, and/or the creation of Indigenous-specific positions to support employee spirituality or to oversee the use of Indigenous knowledge in organizations are good foundational steps to enable the uptake of Indigenous organizational imagery. Indigenous metaphors need to be culturally, spiritually, environmentally grounded within the socially constructed worldview they come from. Again, that requires two sides of a relationship, where a willful and intentional giver (the Indigenous Peoples) offers teaching to an authentic receiver, the learner.



The second question pertains to, *can* Indigenous metaphors travel? Metaphors of *whānau* and *Te Whare Tapa Wha* have been captured into New Zealand's mainstream usage, demonstrating that Indigenous metaphors *can* move from high to low cultural contexts, despite Māori and the majority of New Zealand (non-Māori) cultures having quite antithetical value systems (collectivist and individualistic, respectively) (Hofstede 2001). *Whānau* and *Te Whare Tapa Wha* according to Cornelissen's (2004) framework are classed as the high utility type 3 metaphor, that are both apt, and fit meaningfully because sufficient similarity and distance exists between the target and source domains. The heuristic value is compromised when not enough difference exists to provide new conceptual leaps and "therefore fails to shock us into conceiving of a subject in a completely new way" (Cornelissen 2004: 719) or too much distance occurs and the connective elements are too weak. However, *whānau* has relatable concepts to notions of Western families and *Te Whare Tapa Wha* similarly provides easily accessible conceptual elements relatable to well-being. Therefore, enough distance and similarity between the two exists to provide heuristic value that creates a new lens to view organizations and enable new conceptual insights and advances.

However, new metaphors that emerge in Māori communities often fail to transport into New Zealand society. *Rāranga* and *Maui* have both aptness and heuristic value in a Māori context, again representing the high functioning type 3 metaphor. However, when crossed into mainstream New Zealand, the metaphors cease to be as meaningful, diverging to a type 4 metaphor classification when applied outside of the originating context. *Maui* as a representation of entrepreneurial traits or *rāranga* as an expression of organizational complexity suit the Indigenous context from which they arise. *Maui* has deep contextual roots and requires access to cultural interpretations to appreciate the meaning he brings to the innovation and entrepreneurial spaces. Mainstream New Zealand does not have the same kinship affinity for the character. Similarly, the weaving metaphor, when considered as a type 4 metaphor, tends to hold aptness for Māori but fails to generate much heuristic value or theoretical advances outside of that contextual setting. The metaphors are too remote for conceptual connection preventing any meaningful interaction for New Zealanders and consequently beyond creating relatable imagery.

Lastly, we answer *how* do Indigenous metaphors travel. Due to the bicultural agenda in Aotearoa New Zealand, the uptake of Māori metaphors in mainstream organizations are both deductively "imposed" or "projected" onto an organizational reality (Cornelissen et al. 2008) and inductively, naturally "surface" from within the organization through discursive sensemaking. National policies advocate for the inclusion of Māori epistemologies throughout the country. Based on our experience as bicultural citizens, we want to point out a couple of practices that help to honor the essence of a metaphor in the transference process. The transference process should maintain as much as possible the original language and associated context of the concept. For example, *Te Whare Tapa Wha* does not get translated as the "house of four walls" when used, the Indigenous terminology remains, and this pattern occurs with other metaphorical images adopted by New Zealanders. *Whare*, although translated as a house, has significantly different cultural connotations different from its English translation. Only through intimate experiences of traditional houses of Māori can these nuances be felt.

Importantly, Case et al. (2017) impress the need for communities themselves to be involved in the construction and use of metaphors, bringing their cultural reflexive selves and myriad interpretations. Understanding a cultural context from an embodied perspective requires effort, often an investment of personal resources and energy by the receiving culture to understand, learn, and absorb the native context from where metaphor exists. The integration and uptake of Māori imagery and metaphorical use into mainstream New

Zealand has mostly been achieved through consulting, critiquing, challenging and working alongside of the Indigenous population. Passing useful imagery over into mainstream acceptance and integration occurs when multiple giving and receiving interactions occur to resolve differing perspectives of each other. For example, the term *whānau* has broader and more permeable boundaries than English notions of the nuclear family. However, non-Māori New Zealanders may unconsciously resort back to these more tightly bound images in their interpretation of *whānau*.

## CONCLUSION

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Māori metaphors contain valuable knowledge for relating to people, the world and organizations. Their underpinning values; shapeshifting, reverence, stewardship, temporality – can provide use for inspiring better living and organizing. We do believe in the utility of transferring Indigenous metaphors; however, this cannot be separated from creating intimate, and authentically based relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous metaphors are not a “free for all” to take and utilize. Although they bring beautiful new interpretations to the world, they are tied to wider political struggles that come with commitments and obligations to those who want to partner with Indigenous communities to benefit from them. Are Indigenous metaphors universally applicable? We believe so, but conditions apply.

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