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**Ngā kura a Hineteiwaiwa:  
The Embodiment of Mana Wahine in Māori Fibre Arts**

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the Degree

of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

at

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by

**Donna Campbell**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

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# Abstract

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Imagine you are on a continuum of past present and future, in the present while connected to the past and creating for the future. Kairaranga<sup>1</sup> are constantly in this experience through engaging with the materiality of the practices of raranga and raranga whatu.<sup>2</sup>

The key focus of this thesis is to provide theoretical discussion of the raranga and whatu practices that are the creative component of this doctoral research. The theories that inform the analysis are Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine both of which, like raranga, are organic to this place, Aotearoa<sup>3</sup>, and have grown as descendants of Papatūānuku<sup>4</sup> and Ranginui<sup>5</sup>. The connection between these theories and the creative practices of raranga and whatu form a cultural praxis through which I argue enables the transformative power of raranga and whatu practices. This too is the essence of Te Whare Pora, a weaving house that embraces kairaranga both conceptually and materially and which provides the approach to the project. Te Whare Pora is a place of knowledge and a place of practice. Like Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theories it is a cultural form and expression of praxis. As kairaranga we create taonga<sup>6</sup> informed by the creative genius of our tūpuna<sup>7</sup> from the native plants of the land. These ageless practices and the taonga we create are permeated with our own present realities. The taonga then carry this tūpuna knowledge into the future in multiple forms. To highlight this, I explore a range of practices that exemplify raranga and raranga whatu as cultural embodiment. This is articulated through notions of raranga as an expression of cultural bodies of knowledge, creative practice and regenerative

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<sup>1</sup> *Kairaranga is the term used to describe weavers of native fibres. In particular the weaving of basketry leaf textile.*

<sup>2</sup> *Raranga is the weaving of leave material, and whatu is the process the off-loom process of twining muka the internal fibre of the harakeke leaves.*

<sup>3</sup> *Aoteaora is commonly known as New Zealand*

<sup>4</sup> *Papatūānuku is our Earth parent*

<sup>5</sup> *Ranginui is our Sky parent*

<sup>6</sup> *Taonga are tangible, intangible and culturally significant. Encompassing language, tikanga knowledge and practices.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ancestors.*

praxis that span the past, present and future. As such, this thesis is an expression of the creative journey of theory and practice inspired by tūpuna knowledge in the art forms of raranga and raranga whatu. The practices of raranga and raranga whatu not only transform the materials the kairaranga is using, but also the kairaranga themselves. These practices become self-affirming, culturally affirming and ultimately decolonizing.

# Acknowledgements

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**1.**

***Woven Worlds: An Introduction***



Ko Te Kai o Te Whetu rāua kō Taranaki ōku maunga

Ko Waimamaku rāua kō Tangahoe ōku awa

Ko Ngātokimatawhauroa rāua kō Aotea ōku waka

Ko Whakamaumahara rāua kō Taeporohenui ōku marae

Ko Ngāpuhi rāua kō Ngāti Ruanui ōku iwi

Ko Ngāti Pākau rāua kō Ngāti Hāmua ōku hapū

Ko Mahareta rāua kō Te Ika ōku mātua

Ko Donna Campbell tōku ingoa

This pepeha or formal introduction in the Māori<sup>8</sup> language refers to landmarks associated with the Iwi<sup>9</sup> to which I belong. It is a way to recognize the woven history that makes me who I am. I am of the Iwi of Ngāpuhi, the Hokianga district (Figure 1) in far Northland of Aotearoa<sup>10</sup> on my Mother's side. I have strong links with Ngāti Ruanui of Taranaki (Figure 2) on my Father's side. I belong to these whenua,<sup>11</sup> these affiliations with the whenua locate my Māori ancestry and provide me with a place to speak from.

This introductory chapter outlines the creative research project of Ngā kura a Hine-te-iwaiwa. Within this project I explore the practices of raranga and raranga whatu as a means to cultural affirmation and resistance. The native plant harakeke (*Phormium tenax*) is the most abundant and available weaving material used by kairaranga today. The art forms of raranga and raranga whatu that utilise our native plants are Māori cultural practices that inform cultural identity. Embodied within these practices is Māori knowing accessed through creating taonga

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<sup>8</sup> *Indigenous people of Aotearoa.*

<sup>9</sup> *Refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory.*

<sup>10</sup> *New Zealand*

<sup>11</sup> *Land, territory.*

informed by tūpuna ancestral knowledge. Creating taonga from our native plants can powerfully reconnect us to the whenua in an affirmation of culture.



*Figure 1.* Campbell, D. (2011). The Hokianga Harbour.



*Figure 2.* Untitled Figure of Taranaki Maunga (n.d). Retrieved from [www.Wordpress.com](http://www.Wordpress.com) Used with permission.

Firstly, we are re-connecting with the whenua by nurturing and conserving the plants. Then secondly, we are learning about ourselves and our tūpuna through practicing the tikanga<sup>12</sup> associated with the art forms. Learning to raranga harakeke has transformed my life in the most positive ways possible. The practice has given me a deeper awareness of mana wahine,<sup>13</sup> and a consciousness of the wonders of the Māori world. This experience has occurred for many people that I have worked with over the years in sharing the tikanga of raranga and whatu.

Te Pā Harakeke<sup>14</sup> provides the means by which all kairaranga create taonga. The plants also provide many medicinal properties to Māori healers today. Te pā harakeke in addition to the physical attributes for raranga and rongoā<sup>15</sup> provides to this day guidance that is reflected in the many whakatauākī pertaining to relationships with world around us from a Māori world view. (Pihama, Lee, Te Nana, Campbell, Greensill, & Tauroa, 2015; Metge, 1995; Hetet, 2002, Elder, 2012). Consequently, in an artistic engagement with Te Pā Harakeke physical, spiritual, and cultural layers of meaning come together in a synergy of theory and practice that encapsulates Māori creative practice. This synergy is a weaving of meanings that underpin the theoretical approaches of this thesis, informing the development of a kaupapa Māori methodology implemented in this research.

Theory and practice that is woven together in lived experiences, forms the praxis that has characterized my embodied experiences of raranga as cultural regeneration. Consciously reflecting on this praxis enables me to articulate the transformative power of raranga as cultural regeneration that affirms the centrality of the Māori worldview in our practice as kairaranga. Embodied within the practice of raranga and whatu are te reo,<sup>16</sup> and tikanga and Mātauranga Māori<sup>17</sup> that uphold and sustain the Māori world view. Through the senses when

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<sup>12</sup> Māori culturally appropriate protocol and customs.

<sup>13</sup> Mana wahine is discussed in-depth in Chapter 2.

<sup>14</sup> A plantation of harakeke.

<sup>15</sup> Traditional Māori medicines.

<sup>16</sup> Māori language.

<sup>17</sup> Bodies of Māori knowledge.

weaving, through the smell, the feel and the sound of raranga, I have felt a timelessness, a wellness in experiencing embodied Mātauranga Māori. For me, the act of practicing tikanga associated with raranga and whatu enlivens a cultural wellness through enacting both spiritual and cultural self-awareness. The connection with the whenua through harvesting and the preparation of materials, takes me back to the land and the knowledge of sustaining these taonga plants for future generations.



*Figure 3. Campbell, D. (2017) Te Pā Harakeke, Hokianga.*

Since I was a child, I have always made things. I was taught how to sew, to knit, to crochet, keeping the hands busy and productive. I always enjoyed the transformation of thread to textile, and the practice of making of creating was as gratifying then as it is today. My experience was one of creativity and practicality and I am forever grateful to my mother passing on these skills to me as her mother did for her. However, the fact that I was taught these European arts and not our Māori arts indicates to me a wider issue of the marginalization of Māori knowledge. This is a key impetus for this PhD project. For me, the learning of these art forms established the colonial arts/crafts as more accessible, acceptable and preferred to Māori arts, demonstrating disruptions in the passing on of Māori knowledge, language and culture.

The disruptions that underpin the marginalization of Māori knowledge systems are due to colonial control that can negatively impact a cultural sense of self. Systems of European settler colonialism have been delivered through the assimilationist policies of the education system since the 1840's (Simon, 1998). Moana Jackson (2016) describes education as fundamental to the colonizing process. Educating us to believe that our own knowledge systems and cultural understandings were not worthy in order to “dispossess us of our lands, lives and power” (p. 39). These pervasive systems of colonialism have the effect of subverting the autonomy of Māori knowledge structures. The absence of Māori art forms and abundance of the European was an insidious symptom of the colonizing process (Panoho, 1995). As a result, I was growing up in a world that reinforced a disdain for Māori thinking and knowledge, which resulted in denial of cultural identity, and connectedness for me. This sense of loss has only become apparent to me after my years of reclamation of the “being” of being Māori through the arts. The learning and teaching of raranga and whatu has renewed my cultural sense of self, identity, mana wahine. My experience of reclaiming Māori knowledge through creative practice firmly fixes my place as a Māori weaving researcher.

My raranga journey began with making kete.<sup>18</sup> This learning initially took place at art school, then on marae<sup>19</sup> with other kairaranga in wānanga.<sup>20</sup> Some kairaranga were and are fortunate enough to have learnt from their mothers or grandmothers or elders. However, indicative of the colonized context in which I grew up, and symptomatic of our present-day realities, many kairaranga have not had this intergenerational experience. I have always been creative and wanted to follow an artistic path. As mentioned earlier I was initially taught creative practice within the Western art school system, where Māori artforms were not central to learning. Then later I was able to move into a context where I gained a unique

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<sup>18</sup> *Kete are woven baskets, created from native plants, discussed fully in Chapter 3.*

<sup>19</sup> *Marae are culturally communal gathering places.*

<sup>20</sup> *Wānanga are collective learning spaces predicated on Māori pedagogy. Often held in Māori spaces such as Marae in order to facilitate the practice of tikanga appropriate to these cultural spaces. Can be held in other environments appropriate to the collective.*

Māori education in creative practice. In the early 90's I attended one of the few courses on Māori art education, taught by practicing Māori artists through Waiariki Polytechnic in Rotorua. Tutors such as artists and educators Christina Wirihana from Ngāti Pikiao, Ross Hemara from Ngai Tahu and Robert Jahnke of Ngāti Porou descent among others were the pioneers of the course. This course planted the seeds of a lifelong passion for me in Māori art and design as a way of relearning and immersion in the creative potential of mātauranga Māori.

The arts of raranga and raranga whatu are often carried out through wānanga, a collective practice that creates an environment of support, of sharing and learning and a sense of solidarity. Wānanga are cultural learning contexts and very different to other forms of Pākehā<sup>21</sup> sites of learning. Wānanga provide a context that supports a holistic approach to the purpose of gathering together. This can be in a teaching and learning space or dissemination of research, or practitioners coming together. Through the methods of wānanga physical, spiritual and intellectual development can be sustained. Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (2001) of Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāpuhi talks about the term wānanga as referring to methods and processes that bring about the creation of new knowledge. He advocates wānanga as an activity that creates common understanding held within a group of people (p. 43), and as a process as enabling the creative mind or conscious awareness to emerge. The wānanga process enables cultural pedagogy that facilitates the practice of tikanga Māori and is a powerful vehicle to learning and re-learning information.

In a similar way the pedagogy of wānanga engages in what Graham Smith (2012) calls indigenous transforming praxis, bringing together theory, action and reflection emergent as conscious awareness and transformation. In terms of raranga wānanga the passing on of techniques, applications and design theory is part and parcel of working within a collective that acknowledges the whakapapa<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *New Zealander of European origin.*

<sup>22</sup> *Genealogy, lineage.*

of the art forms. These wānanga create the space for critical reflection in the sharing of Māori creative practice grounded in Kaupapa Māori.<sup>23</sup>

The recognition of collectivity in the fibre arts privileges a Māori approach that values the interconnectedness of all things. The acknowledgement of the whakapapa of the art forms ensures valuing the inspiration for contemporary work. Manulani Meyer (2008) writes about conscious subjectivity and that research needs to be bound in meaning and a contribution to others, to the collective. My own creative practice research values existing Māori wisdom in the fibre arts and finds new ways of understanding and applying that accumulated learning. The research is deliberately subjective, inspired by the taonga our tūpuna created before us. Creating taonga from the knowledge that can be discovered in the physical exemplars of raranga and whatu our tūpuna have left for us provides access to mātauranga Māori and to the creative spirit. I have had many teachers and the work I have created is not only mine but also belongs to my tūpuna and those who have contributed to my learning. Being a practitioner of the raranga arts for over 20 years working with our native plants and teaching for much of that time informs my interpretation of the world.

My academic life has grown from my artistic practice and I have been privileged to teach through the practice. Through engaging in a PhD through creative practice I have the opportunity to weave together my artistic and academic careers in a whakairo<sup>24</sup> that reveals the tacit indigenous knowing within raranga and raranga whatu. When I refer to tacit knowledge, I am meaning the intuitive and experiential knowledge that arises within the praxis of raranga and whatu. I claim that by engaging with the tikanga and practices of the raranga and whatu arts the creation of implicit or tacit knowledge – non-verbal, or otherwise unarticulated and intuitive forms of knowledge is experienced.

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<sup>23</sup> *Kaupapa Māori is discussed in Chapter 2 Te Whare Pora Methodology.*

<sup>24</sup> *To ornament with a design, or to carve, or sculpt. In this context I use the term as a pattern or design.*

Through the engagement of all the senses, an internal understanding of self, otherwise unarticulated, can be brought forth. Through the feel, the sound, and the smell of the harakeke with the opportunities and sometimes challenges of creating taonga that your tūpuna has made before you, involved in this expression of being Māori has transformative power. Raranga and whatu are active processes on an essential level. These practices unite mind and body, “embracing the totality of our sensual perception and experience rather than intellectual activity alone” (Schneider and Wright 2006 p. 16). Accordingly, experience can become knowledge, you know because you have been in it. These practices are taonga which is defined by Rose Pere (1994) as “the highly prized practices and beliefs of our forebears, our ancestors” (p. 69). Putting these beliefs into practice is to manifest mātauranga Māori <sup>25</sup>drawing on every experience of life. As the practices of raranga and whatu are passed on to us from our ancestors, they are imbued with mātauranga Māori. As Pere (1994) illustrates the knowledge of ancestors is valued in the present, and through creative practice in the fibre arts we can maintain and pass on these treasures.

A pivotal point of this PhD research engages in what Smith (2003) calls the indigenous project of representing “Indigenous communities have struggled since colonization to be able to exercise what is viewed as a fundamental right, that is to represent ourselves” (p. 150). The representing project is not only about the right to determine ourselves politically, it also supports a form of voice through creative expression. My own creative work and the practices of raranga and raranga whatu are creative expression that draws on the Indigenous spirit, our experiences and world-view. Through indigenous artmakers making indigenous art the works can interrupt dominant stereotypical readings of our culture and beliefs. Smith (2003) notes:

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<sup>25</sup> *Māori knowledge – the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including the Māori world view and perspectives, Māori creativity and cultural practices. Retrieved from:*  
<https://Māoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=matauranga+Māori>

Representations of indigenous peoples by indigenous people is about countering the dominant society's Figure of indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems. It is also about proposing solutions to the real-life dilemmas that indigenous communities confront and trying to capture the complexities of being indigenous (p. 151).

Through challenging false stereotypical representations of ourselves Māori reclaim the right to determine how, where and when we are represented. Creative practice in all its forms is concerned with representation, the understandings mediated by the artworks, the intention of the maker and the perception of the audience. This study positions raranga and whatu practices as representations of Māori women's creativity. In particular these practices make visible creative work as decolonisation, situating these art forms as political praxis. This research project is grounded in creative arts practice as assertion of identity and pathways to decolonization. Accordingly, this study investigates Māori creative practice as transformative on cultural social and political levels as they give voice to express and critique contemporary cultural identity.

Discussing culture and identity, Māori Marsden (2003) writes that Māori culture is Māoritanga, a term affirmed by tangata whenua (Māori) to specify to our unique view of the world. Māori culture he states "...is a complex whole of beliefs/attitudes/values/mores/customs/knowledge acquired..." (p. 34) that is dictated by responses to the environment, evolving and transmitted by the people as guiding principles. The guiding principles Marsden is suggesting here are a corpus of knowledge providing the cultural endurance that weaves together the societal fabric of a culture. He goes on to declare that despite the colonising forces that have disrupted Māori ways of cultural identification, that tangata whenua have never totally surrendered the value systems of our culture. Therefore, cultural identity, according to Marsden, is grounded within the prevailing understanding of a society's basic convictions. However, cultural identity also operates and responds within a dynamic flux of changing environments. Representations of cultural identity underpin Māori creative practice, as

assertions of a distinctive Māori world view. The Māori worldview is elucidated by Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou legal scholar Ani Mikaere (2011) in this way:

The world-view bequeathed to us by our ancestors is at the very heart of what makes us unique. It provides a lens through which we view the world. It determines the way in which we relate to one another and all other facets of creation. It enables us to explain how we came to be here where we are going. It forms the very core of our identity (p. 308).

Mikaere affirms that through a Māori worldview we express our cultural identity as gifted to us through ancestral connections. Accordingly, at the heart of my own creative practice is a Māori worldview that informs my identity and the expression of that identity. Te Arawa and Tūhoe writer, scholar and feminist activist Ngahua Te Awekotuku (1990) writes of the Māori worldview as expressed through taonga tuku iho.<sup>26</sup> According to Te Awekotuku, echoes of taha wairua<sup>27</sup> and taha tinana<sup>28</sup> are embodied in the Māori ancestral arts created from natural resources. She writes:

Taha wairua, the way of the spirit in matters Māori, permeates our world so profoundly that to isolate and analyse it is almost like threatening the very fabric itself. Spirituality and art making have formed an integral part of the Māori worldview from ancient times until the present day (p. 135).

As Te Awekotuku observes, essential to the creation of Māori art is the spirituality, while also acknowledging the intellect, and the body, as ornately embodied within the practice of our art forms. The ancestral arts such as raranga are created from the whenua through designs and forms responding to and inspired by the whenua. Cultural identity is reflected through these designs, forms and materiality as unique to this place, this whenua. Earlier I considered the question of why I was

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<sup>26</sup> *Ancestral arts.*

<sup>27</sup> *The spritual realm.*

<sup>28</sup> *The physical realm.*

taught European creative arts as the norm, rather than Māori creative arts. I posit in this thesis that erosion of cultural connection occurs in subversive ways demonstrated by my early experiences. Through this creative practice research, I suggest that by reclaiming cultural identity through Māori arts practice affirms a Māori worldview giving rise to an awareness of the impact of colonization. Therefore, contemporary creative Māori practice then is the on-going cultural reclamation of cultural identity.

In an analysis of Caribbean cinema and other forms of visual representation, Jamaican-born British cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1990) gives us two views of cultural identity. The first view is a collective one of shared history and ancestry, passing on cultural codes that provide continuous frames of reference and meaning, regardless of the shifting changes of our modern worlds (p. 223). The second view is that as well as the similarities within these frames of reference there are also significant points of difference, these points of difference refer to what we have become in response to the ruptures of cultural connection and identity by colonialism. Hall argues that “cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of “becoming as well as of being” belonging to the future as much as to the past “(p. 225). Hall is highlighting that cultural identities are not fixed; rather, they are continually in a state of transformation. Cultures and societies change overtime (Marsden, 2003) supporting Halls argument that identity is almost always in formation, and that past, present and future inform how identity is formulating. While I agree that as a Māori woman my reality has been shaped by the colonial experience, the anchor of a Māori worldview provides me a value system and framework in which to live in a meaningful present that also contributes to the future of my mokopuna.<sup>29</sup> In the same way that Hall states “becoming as well as being” is necessary in identity formation as Māori we can draw from mātauranga Māori and tikanga, which is already “being.” Through these ancestral knowledge’s we learn how to practice an ancient art form of raranga and raranga whatu that succours our becoming conscious to self-affirmed

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<sup>29</sup> *Grandchildren.*

cultural identity. My research position in this study is that of an insider, inside a community of kairaranga. As such I am responsible for maintaining integrity within this research. Hall (2002) posits the notion of “belongingness” (p. 25) as identification constructed on cultural meaning and in relation to a political system. Māori identify as tangata whenua<sup>30</sup> and as such the politics of self-determination and resistance to colonial domination inform our notions of belongingness. This study speaks from the position of “belongingness” (Hall, 2002) to cultural identity, as the source to making meaning. Creative practice is explored in this study as identity production, grounded in Mātauranga Māori that is transformational, and firmly located within a decolonization framework.

This study comprises of two interrelated components exhibition and thesis – it weaves together the artist as academic and the academic as artist, creating a pattern that gives form to thinking through creative practice. The creative works produced in this PhD study are an extension of previous creative projects and my MFA study.

My Masters project *Weaving the Skin* (Campbell, 2005) explored ideas of the Indigenous body through woven and digital articulations. The representation project of this PhD builds on the *Weaving the Skin* creative projects, to investigate the embodied nature of raranga and raranga whatu through a Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theoretical lens. It positions the fibre arts of raranga and raranga whatu as acts of resistance to an increasingly marginalized reality for many Māori. As a contemporary practitioner my studio work also includes digital media, which for me is a new form of fibre to be woven and layered to express relationships and conversations past, present and future. It is a practice that has evolved out of customary practice and is now centred on the body and cloak as vessel and body as land.

Within the practices of raranga and raranga whatu our tūpuna are always

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<sup>30</sup> *The original inhabitants of a place.*

acknowledged as those who have passed this gift on to us. As kairaranga we are constantly revisiting examples of taonga tuku iho, to inform and inspire new directions in the practice. Taonga tuku iho is defined by Māori Marsden (2003) as treasures bequeathed by our ancestors. These taonga are intangible - the spiritual, and tangible - the material. Marsden goes further "...taonga refer to the cultural tradition, lore, history: corpus of knowledge...with which the descendants can identify and which provide them with their identity, self-esteem and dignity "(p. 38).

In this study taonga tuku iho inform the practices of raranga and raranga whatu, including the tikanga that guide the practice. Through their practice, kairaranga enact taonga tuku iho; through the practice we experience dignity and self-esteem asserting our identity. In considering the implication of indigenous peoples in a colonized world Marsden explains that through the process of assimilation and cultural genocide tangata whenua have suffered the loss of dignity, self-esteem and identity, resulting in spiritual and psychological insecurities (p. 39). Kaupapa Māori theoretical approaches in creative research address cultural erosion and assimilationist policies by validating Māori knowledge's while at the same time acknowledging and encompassing the "... succeeding generations that add their quota of knowledge and fresh discoveries to the corpus of their [our] cultural heritage." (Marsden, 2003, p. 39). Raranga and whatu are our cultural heritage practices articulated through textiles that are functional artistic expressions representing narratives pertaining to the Māori worldview. Our visual arts, raranga and whatu in the context of this study, provide a lens, a portal, an access point to the unique expression of our Māori world.

The practice of making engages all the senses, working with our native plants I engage, not just the physical senses, but the spiritual senses as well. The expression of raranga and whatu originates from te ao Māori our unique worldview. Through working with native materials, the consciousness of the Māori world as embodied in the art form arises. Thai textile designer and educator Nithikul Nimkulrat (2010) writes on the relationship between physical material

and artistic expression within craft production, the idea of making for her is a way of thinking through the hands manipulating the material. The kairaranga knows that the practices of raranga and whatu “are understood not only as way of making things by hand, but also as a way of thinking through the hands” (p. 64) that is to say all the senses are ignited through the hands. Thinking through the hands therefore is a means for thinking through the senses. The senses are activated through experiencing the material we are enacting our value systems, exploring our intellectual worlds, and engaging in mātauranga Māori. Māori scholar Charles Royal explains:

Mātauranga Māori is a modern term for a body of knowledge that was brought to these islands by Polynesian ancestors of present-day Māori. Here this body of knowledge grew according to life in Aotearoa and Te Wai Pounamu. (p. 20)

These bodies of knowledge were impacted in many and significant ways by the arrival of European settlers endangering the veracity of Māori knowledge systems. “Important fragments and portions – notably the Māori language – remain today” (Royal, 2009, p. 31). I would add to Royals discussion that the visual arts of raranga, raranga whatu and whakairo rākau are also important “fragments and portions” that remain to inform and inspire us today. Through the following chapters this study explains the understanding of Indigenous knowledge through Māori creative practice drawn from Mātauranga Māori.

## Statement of Research

Ngā kura a Hineteiwaiwa the title of this study, translates as the treasures of Hine-te-iwaiwa. Hine-te-iwaiwa is the name of one of the principal atua wāhine or female deities in the creation narratives of the Māori world. She presides over all womanly facets, including the arts of Te Whare Pora<sup>31</sup> the celebration of te whare tangata<sup>32</sup> and women as guardians of knowledge for future generations. These are the kura or treasures that originate from her divine being. The arts of raranga and whatu are created within her realm and as such this study is a reflection of the importance of our atua wāhine in the present day. The thesis title follows on from an exhibition of the same name<sup>33</sup>, which brought together a group of kairaranga creating work in response to the kaupapa of traditional Māori approaches to raising children. The Tiakina Te Pā Harakeke<sup>34</sup> project drew on traditional indigenous knowledge approaches to childrearing which the metaphor of te pā harakeke reflects. The exhibition was the creative expression as research from the kairaranga who participated in the project. Hineteiwaiwa is the guardian of all aspects of the feminine, significantly te whare tangata,<sup>35</sup> the birth rites and tikanga pertaining to childbirth in the Māori world. She also presides over all aspects of the fibre arts. As such she was the guardian of the exhibition and acknowledged in the title of this study. This study weaves together narratives of Hineteiwaiwa through a mana wahine theoretical framework exploring the notion that raranga and whatu are a means to cultural regeneration and sustainability.

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<sup>31</sup> *Te Whare Pora is associated with the weaving arts as a physical space to come together and weave in addition to spaces of reflection, thinking and ideas.*

<sup>32</sup> *Refers to the womb.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ngā kura a Hine-te-iwaiwa*

<https://www.waikato.ac.nz/rangahau/research/completed-projects/tiakina-te-pa-harakeke/events/ng-kura-a-hine-te-iwaiwa-exhibition>

<sup>34</sup> *Tiakina Te Pā Harakeke: Traditional Māori Approaches to Child Rearing*

<http://www.maramatanga.ac.nz/project/tiakina-te-p-harakeke-raising-treasured-child>

<sup>35</sup> *Women are the house of humanity of the Māori world – and they are venerated for creating life.*

Ngā kura a Hineteiwaiwa PhD project comprises of two interrelated components or creative outputs. The text of the thesis reveals to the reader the theoretical and practical knowing embodied within the creative processes. While the thesis communicates through written text this study also presents creative praxis in the form of woven textile and sculptural works as knowledge production from Māori thinking and creativity. The arts-based research is expressed through textile-based works in raranga and raranga whatu. The study explores the relationship between the physical native plant material of the harakeke and Māori cultural regeneration, affirmation and resistance that is tightly woven in the knowledge practices of raranga.

The central question of this thesis is:

*What is the role of artistic relationships with Te Pā Harakeke in relation to cultural regeneration, affirmation and resistance?*

The research is informed by Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theories and tikanga pertaining to raranga and whatu.<sup>36</sup>

## *Thesis Chapter Overview*

The introduction chapter has established the motivation for this study, by explaining the intent of creative practice as a vehicle to affirm cultural identity. The Māori world view, as critical to this research was introduced as underpinning the creative work and written research.

The theoretical positioning that drives the creative work and written thesis is described in *Te Whare Pora* Chapter 2. The development of my research methodology and the intent of Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theories are discussed. Kaupapa Māori theory is introduced as form and thinking that underpins this study. Kaupapa Māori conveys Māori understandings of the world,

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<sup>36</sup> Fully explained in the *Te Whare Pora* Chapter 2.

and how our values and beliefs are predicated on these understandings (Pihama, 2001). Māori knowledge and knowing is central to this study and as such a Kaupapa Māori approach is essential in order to validate “...our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce” (Smith, L.T., 1999, p. 1). Kaupapa Māori theory positions this study with clarity so there is no guise of neutrality of assumed objectivity (Smith, L.T., 1999). By utilizing Kaupapa Māori theoretical frameworks this study identifies first and foremost as an affirmation and assertion of our cultural worldviews. Because Māori weaving praxis is Māori creativity embodied through and of the native materials of this place, practiced with associated Māori cultural protocols it is logical Kaupapa Māori approaches would apply. This study is engaged in from Māori women’s perspectives, relating through creative practice, Māori women’s realities, and therefore a Mana wahine theoretical approach has been employed. Mana wahine theory as a branch of Kaupapa Māori theory underpins this study concentrating on the many aspects of the expression of the feminine. The Te Atī Awa and Waikato scholar and activist Leonie Pihama states “Mana Wahine theory is a theoretical framework that provides for a Kaupapa Māori analysis that focuses on issues that directly impact on Māori women. Women as repositories of knowledge (Mikaere, 1995) in traditional and contemporary Māori society are inspirational to, and inform the nature of, the creative work.

*Weaving the Contemporary* enables me in chapter 3 to introduce the arts of weaving from a contemporary perspective. *Weaving the Contemporary* contextualizes my creative practice providing the theoretical underpinnings that drive the creative work. Critical to the practices of raranga and whatu are our taonga plants. These taonga plants and their properties are discussed from physical and spiritual perspectives. In addition, the philosophies of Te Pā Harakeke are discussed revealing how these ancient philosophies are realized in contemporary practice. Integral to the world of kairaranga are our native plants and how we nurture them for future generations. The connection of the kairaranga with the whenua is explained through the relationship of maker and taonga plants.

*Weaving the Cultural Body* investigates the body inscribed as a site of resistance. The notion of the cultural body is explained in Chapter 4 to reveal the nature of thinking through the articulated woven body. The woven articulation of the body and the space that surrounds the body are contextualized as developmental to my creative practice. The creative outputs for this study are interpreted through the cultural body lens, and the making processes are theorised. The body discourse builds on this thinking and is explored as sculptural manifestations created through raranga and whatu.

*Te Ra: Navigating Memories* tells the story of Te Rā the only Māori waka<sup>37</sup> existence, housed in the British Museum, London. Chapter 5 focuses on the fascinating raranga methods employed in the creation of this unique taonga. Te Rā represents for me as a kairaranga a body of knowledge that we can become reconnected with. In particular the woven hiki<sup>38</sup> technique, which is rarely seen today in contemporary raranga. The discussion is on knowledge recovery and how researching this taonga provides new spaces for cultural rejuvenation. For myself, and many other contemporary kairaranga Te Rā embodies the collective nature of the fibre arts providing inspiration for visual thinking. This taonga inspires us to imagine our tūpuna navigating Te Moana nui a Kiwa<sup>39</sup> and the adventures bold vision they had for themselves and their mokopuna...us. A visit to the British Museum to analyse the weaving techniques in Te Rā is discussed as well as the cultural spiritual aspects of dealing with taonga in overseas collections. After more than 200 years in storage at the British Museum the construction and materials of Te Rā have never been identified, documented nor made publicly available. Te Rā holds many secrets from the perspectives of kairaranga and sailors, and continuing research on this fascinating taonga will unlock those secrets.

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<sup>37</sup> *Traditional Māori sailing vessels.*

<sup>38</sup> *Literally means to carry, in the context of raranga whāriki it means the joining technique used.*

<sup>39</sup> *The Pacific Ocean also known as the Great Ocean of Kiwa.*

*Whatukura ki Oraurangi: Woven Memories* provides an overview of kākahu Māori<sup>40</sup> acknowledging their inspiration in contemporary expression in Chapter 6. The title *Woven Memory* refers to the liminal spaces kairaranga and kaiwhatu<sup>41</sup> can experience of connecting back to the tūpuna through an age-old practice of working through hands, mind and body. This chapter focuses on the experience of thinking through the hands to encourage body knowledge to arise through the hands as they create, as they make. This way of thinking through raranga and whatu is an intellectual process, a process Gray and Burnett (2009, p. 51) refer to as “a dynamic process of learning and understanding through material experience”. This chapter also makes clear the collective nature of raranga and whatu acknowledging the contribution of individual kairaranga to the creation of *Whatukura ki Oraurangi*, the korowai created through this study.

*Kura: Embodied Mana Wahine* in chapter 7 details the creative spaces of the creative components of this study. The creative works for this PhD study exemplify a dialogue with practice, the non-verbal exchange between the artist and material. It talks about the reciprocal relationship of kairaranga and the material, how artistic expression and cultural significance are balanced aesthetically. The creation of *Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi* is discussed as well as a kete muka created from the remnants of the korowai, as individual and collective creative practice. Then the creation of the sculptural woven garments that also ensued in response to the research of this study are reflected on. The underpinning narratives that inform the representation of these works is discussed in relation to the theoretical drives of the creative works. In this chapter the strands of the thesis are brought together to complete this research kete.

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<sup>40</sup> *Kākahu* is the generic term for all types of Māori clothing. In this instance it refers to traditional handmade clothing.

<sup>41</sup> A term describing a practitioner of the whatu technique to distinguish between the processes employed by the practitioner

## *On Reading this Thesis.*

This thesis is written in English with Māori terms and words woven throughout the text. There are inherent difficulties in attempting to describe Māori concepts and values using the terms of another culture. Because Māori and English cultures have evolved from very different worldviews and value systems the English language does not necessarily translate the deeper meanings of the Māori language. For example, in literature pertaining to weaving arts the term raranga is usually defined as plaiting. Plaiting refers to “the interlacing of strands” (Merriam-Webster's dictionary, 1999). The term raranga used to describe the practices of Māori weaving is explained from a Māori world view as thus: The term raranga means to bring or weave together. In the context of the fibre arts raranga interweaves thoughts ideas and materials, as well as bringing together the person and the material. It is ultimately transformational, the transformation of plant to textile, the transformation of the kairaranga in a relationship with the materials and praxis, and transformation for people learning and teaching the practice. Therefore, the English definition of plaiting does not fully encompass the depth of meaning. Accordingly, the term raranga is defined in this thesis as “weaving kete textile.”

The use of te reo Māori is essential to this study as expression and voice of the Māori world. In order to acknowledge the importance of te reo Māori I have used the following approaches to explain Māori words and terms. Māori words are not italicized as is often seen in academic writing in order to allow the language to flow. Māori terms and words are explained as translations in footnotes. This thesis is a text-based experience of the tactile nature of raranga and whatu. I relate to the thesis as a kete, a basket created from text and textile articulating the cultural recovery I have experienced in an artistic relationship with the native materials of this place Aotearoa. The chapters are whenu<sup>42</sup> that form the whakairo of a kete and are structured as supporting each other to create the whole. The whenu or

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<sup>42</sup> *Weaving strands or lengths.*

chapters are laid out in a linear fashion consecutively, but also circular in nature, as one would raranga a kete. The creative works produced throughout this study are the whenu that support the whakairo of the chapters. Then lastly you the reader add to the completeness of this kete as the handles that carry this kete forward.

A close-up photograph of green leaves, likely from a plant like a cornflower or similar, showing signs of damage. The leaves are vibrant green but covered in numerous small, dark brown spots, which are characteristic of a fungal or insect infestation. The background is a soft-focus blue sky.

2.

***Te Whare Pora Methodology***

The process of coming to a research methodology has been one of unpacking mātauranga Māori often taken for granted by me as a kairaranga. The place of knowing that is embodied within weaving arts praxis is often tacit, that is to say it is intuitive and often unspoken. The approach of this research is grounded in Mana Wahine theory as a form of kaupapa Māori theory. Kaupapa Māori theory is implemented to ensure that Māori knowledge is privileged in this project (Smith, 1999), positioning mātauranga Māori as central to the thinking and application around Māori creative practice (Nopera, 2018; Wilkinson, 2014). Kaupapa Māori research legitimizes the unique Māori worldview validating mātauranga Māori. (Bishop, 1994; Irwin, 1994; Smith, 1999). Kaupapa Māori termed as the “discourse of proactive theory and practice” (Bishop, O’Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010, p. 13) supports the intent of this research as Māori cultural affirmation and resistance through the weaving arts. As a wahine Māori (Māori woman) creating taonga within the field of raranga and raranga whatu I have experienced a way to assert mana wahine<sup>43</sup>, the regeneration of my culture and affirmation of Māori ways of knowing and being. The grounding in Kaupapa Māori praxis is essential to the understanding and framing of this study. This research project seeks to privilege the voice of Māori women and their creative work.

This chapter is a discussion of theory and methodology utilized in this research. It is an investigation of mātauranga Māori in the weaving arts applied to contemporary practice. The corpus of knowledge that constitutes mātauranga Māori (see Marsden 2003; Royal 2012) practiced within te ao mahitōi<sup>44</sup> encompasses tikanga, and praxis. These understandings are passed on from kairaranga to kairaranga they are taonga tuku iho our cultural heritage.

This study considers knowledge as a process of inquiry, itself creative, not a fixed idea or set of facts, and through creative art works as knowledge production. It employs Māori creative practice as a mode of research. Through creative practice

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<sup>43</sup> *Mana wahine can be expressed as status accrued through one’s talents, human rights and leadership.*

<sup>44</sup> *The world Māori Art.*

Mātauranga Māori is reflected and drawn upon in a transformative relationship, one that transforms the experience of the maker as much as the maker transforms the materials. Creative practice in raranga and whatu draw on taonga tuku iho that embody Mātauranga Māori. Te Awekotuku (1990) eloquently describes the relationship of taonga tuku iho for herself, and Māori people, acknowledging that these taonga have many meanings:

The taonga inspire and confront; they relax and soothe; they provoke and energize; they empower and sustain. They convey memories from the past and make promises for the future, and they show us where we are going to. They represent hope, fortitude and resilience: the survival of the spirit (p. 139).

Te Awekotuku is highlighting the nature of taonga tuku iho as the embodiment of Māori cultural representations of knowledge. The artistry and skill in the creation of the ancestral arts she is referring to – taonga tuku iho - are taonga created in fibre, stone, bone and wood. As an Indigenous artist and creative I draw on embodied tūpuna knowledge of the past, such as that of Erenora Puketapu-Hetet in order to create artistic cultural representations in the present day. Taonga tuku iho as embodiment of Māori knowledge inspire my own creative practice, in some works to retain past memories, and in others to innovate. Johnson (2011) argues for embodied knowing through art, through a critique of Western interpretations of art as knowledge. Johnson posits that the nature of art as knowledge is rarely thought about, and when it is, it is usually associated with the “the progressive accumulation of scientific knowledge” (p. 142). In comparison, the arts are associated with “imaginative works that communicate emotions” (p. 142) and as such are not considered as sources of knowledge. Johnson’s observation on Western knowledge systems are in direct contrast with the Māori world view that Te Awekotuku posits highlighting the appreciation of the ancestral arts as knowledge, as Mātauranga Māori. Architect and scholar Deirdre Brown (of Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Kahu (2012) writing on cultural knowledge suggests that “the majority of the world’s knowledge could be claimed to be indigenous” (p.7) and

that cultural knowledge is debated as “better conceptualized as different “worlds” of knowledge, rather than “worldviews.” (p. 7). Brown identifies that Indigenous researchers seek to protect and promote indigenous knowledge’s that have been disrupted by colonization, imperialism and globalization (2012). This study then speaks directly to these disruptions through an academic process of Māori creative arts research.

## *Kaupapa Māori*

Kaupapa Māori theory is an indigenous political initiative that helps to frame ideas and practices that constitute Māori thinking and knowledge’s within education. Kaupapa Māori theory has been developed from Kaupapa Māori knowledge that validates a Māori world view, taking for granted the centrality of Māori thinking. The Ngāti Porou educator Tuakana Nepe (1991, p. 15) states that Kaupapa Māori is “the conceptualization of Māori knowledge” this knowledge accumulated by the experiences and history of the Māori people. Kaupapa Māori principles and theories were developed within Māori educational discourse throughout the 90’s (see Irwin, 1992; Johnston & Pihama. 1995; Smith, 1999, 2005; Smith, 1997). Graham Hingangaroa Smith of Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Apa, and Ngāti Kahungunu and Linda Tuhiwai Smith of Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Awa descent advanced Kaupapa Māori from their earlier work in the late 1980’s which then constructed the basis for Kaupapa Māori theory methodology and decolonizing methodologies.

In this study raranga and whatu are understood through the philosophies of Kaupapa Māori and realized as lived experience, applied as culturally informed praxis. Therefore, underpinning the methodology of this study is a Kaupapa Māori theoretical stance that lives through the transformative cultural praxis of raranga and whatu. As Graham Smith (1997) contends, praxis is theory and practice in “dialectical relation to each other” (p. 453), the relationships of the philosophies embedded within the fibre arts and the manifestation of these tikanga

philosophies in the taonga created express praxis. Theory as Māori knowledge, philosophy, tikanga does not exist without the theory being expressed of and through the materials such as our native plants.

Kaupapa Māori theoretical praxis is developed from within Māori communities to reclaim self-determination or tino rangatiratanga (Smith, 1997). Leonie Pihama explains Kaupapa Māori as “conceptually based within Māori cultural and philosophical traditions” (p. 94), and as such these theories are naturally privileged in this study. Graham Smith (1997) further argues “the deliberate co-option of the term ‘theory’ has been an attempt to challenge dominant Pākehā notions of theory and provide “counter-hegemonic practice and understandings” in terms of how theory is constructed, defined, selected, interpreted and applied” (p. 455). One of the key qualities of a Kaupapa Māori approach to this study is an organic, cyclical research process that is fluid and cumulative. Graham Smith (1997) positions Kaupapa Māori praxis as “a viable, organic ‘theory’ of transformation of Māori educational and cultural crises” (p. 450) reminding us of the need to develop our own theory(ies) in order to talk back to dominant hegemony. Cyclical refers to the nature of becoming, the research is always in a state of becoming, and at times it is also in a state of unknowing, these stages are a dynamic cyclical flux the centre of which is where the magic of creative research happens. The cyclical in te ao Māori <sup>45</sup> is illustrated by the kaupapa set down by our ancestors (Panoho, 1996) a view of the natural environment. The harakeke responds to the seasons spring, winter, summer, autumn, day and night, dormancy and flowering. The life of the plant flows vigorously from the roots, through the leaves, through the flowering korari. The plant is dormant in the winter, until the spring where the putiputi flower to attract the Tui, then the renewal cycle begins. Kaupapa Māori theories and methodologies make provision for a non-linear approach, such as the life cycle of the harakeke plant, to the research. Where I begin with the material, with an open mind, then through the doing, ideas arise, responding to the environment, an organic process of creation.

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<sup>45</sup> *The Māori world.*

The adoption of Kaupapa Māori theory in Māori research affirms our cultural ways of knowing upholding our belief systems and practices. I experience Kaupapa Māori praxis daily in my creative work and lived reality, as I believe many Māori do. However, the extension of every day practices of Kaupapa Māori applied to theoretical approaches are designed to challenge “Pākehā dominant interests’ [through] a cycle of conscientisation, resistance and transformative action” (Smith, 1997). The key issues are:

- I. That there is ‘conscientisation, resistance, transformative action’ response to structural impediments.
- II. That ‘conscientisation, resistance, transformative action’ is flexible enough to accommodate the ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ of struggle; in that some gains are made, and some are lost, but these wins and losses have to have been absorbed without disturbing the overall emancipatory vision.
- III. That the ‘local issue’ transformative impetus in the cycle of ‘conscientisation, resistance and transformative action’ is held together by a larger emancipatory project or ‘utopian vision’ (Smith, 1997, p. 38).

As such there can be no transformation without awareness of current existence. This study contributes to creating an awareness of Māori creative practice as emancipatory projects. I suggest that through the practices of raranga and whatu we can become aware of our present state of being. Awareness and sometimes more importantly unawareness of self becomes apparent through engagement with the cultural knowledge and tikanga of the weaving arts. As Smith (1997) states we cannot become conscientised if we are not aware. Therefore, the weaving arts to are a catalyst to a critical cultural awareness. Through the practice we learn about ourselves, how we function as individuals, how we contribute to a collective and how the collective contributes to us. Becoming conscious can set the conditions for a critical resistance to existing realities that are not supportive of Indigenous self-determination. In terms of resistance and resurgence Métis elder Maria Campbell is quoted by Simpson (2011) thus:

She told me that acts of resistance are like throwing a stone in the water. The stone makes its initial impact with the water, displacing it and eventually sinking to the bottom. There is the original splash the act of resistance makes, and the stone (or the act) sinks to the bottom, resting in place and time. But there are also more subtle waves of disruption that echo out from where the stone impacted the water. These concentric circles are more nuanced than the initial splash, but they remain in the water long after the initial splash is gone. Their path of influence covers a much larger area than the initial splash radiating outward for a much longer period of time” (p. 145).

Raranga and whatu to me are acts of resistance, spaces of conscientisation that impact not only the kairaranga, but our whānau and wider communities. As lived experiences raranga and whatu are practiced from the principles of tikanga which inform the principles of kaupapa Māori theory. Kaupapa Māori theoretical approaches implemented in this study frame creative processes that can contribute to transformation of people affected by the corrosion of Indigenous knowledge’s through colonization. Linda Smith (1999) suggests that colonialism and imperialism are interconnected, colonialism being one of the expressions of imperialism (p. 21). Both these forms of power suppress indigenous peoples politically and economically, resulting in a loss of faith in indigenous knowledge by indigenous people. Kaupapa Māori methodologies centralize Māori knowledge in challenging the privileging of Western knowledge within academic institutions.

To maintain integrity within analysis of these art forms as evocation of tacit knowing it is essential to centre the research from a uniquely Māori foundation. Essentialism is a perspective pertinent to the discussion of the methodology and creative practice of this project. Robert Jahnke (2001) Ngai Taharora, Te Whānau a Iritekura, Te Whānau a Rakairo o Ngāti Porou scholar and artist asks the question - Māori art education: hybrid or essentialist praxis? In doing so he discusses an essentialist position in his own creative practice as well as Māori art education. He

offers up the models of Toioho ki Apiti at Massey University in Palmerston North and Toihoukura in Gisborne as ways forward in arts education from a Māori worldview. He speculates that European critiques of essentialism invisibilise colonial histories and serve to support the dominant Eurocentric discourse “preserving intellectual distance and intellectual superiority” (Jahnke, 2001, unpaginated). He goes on to say, “In hegemony, Pākehā academics merely perpetuate the essential white doctrine as the sole criteria for cultural enlightenment” (Jahnke, 2001, para 3). Centering Kaupapa Māori research is a claiming of space within the academy that decenters the euro-centric doctrine. As African American scholar and activist bell hooks argues, what is not debated in the critique of essentialism “is the way that essentialism informs representations of whiteness. It is always the non-white, or in some cases the non-heterosexual Other, who is guilty of essentialism”. (hooks, 1992, p. 30). Kaupapa Māori theory destabilizes these perpetuations of essential white doctrine (Jahnke, 2001, hooks, 1992) as a transformative praxis that is critical and emancipatory. “Kaupapa Māori thus challenges, questions, and critiques Pākehā hegemony. It does not reject or exclude Pākehā culture”. (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002, p. 33). Kaupapa Māori is “not a one-or-the-other choice” (p. 33) therefore it is not essentialist, but it is essential to this study.

While contemporary taonga created in the fibre arts draw on collective memories they can also address dominant artistic boundaries of Māori art through the weaving arts. Like other Māori artists contemporary kairaranga are not always content to replicate the taonga examples left for us, but to push the artistic limits to create works that engage and challenge. We can engage in what bell hooks calls cultural legacies (1995, p. 162), for me the cultural legacy is raranga and whatu and the legacy of innovation our tūpuna have left us. bell hooks reminds us that “cultural legacies can sustain us, protect us against the cultural genocide that is daily destroying our past” (1995, p. 162). Through working with Māori arts practice, creating taonga makes us aware of we keep our traditions past and present alive (Pendergrast, 1984; Buck, 1950; Tamarapa, 2011; Evans & Ngarimu, 2005; Maihi & Lander, 2005) through tapping into this knowing, we are potentially

empowered to heal and transform our lives. American feminist activist Margaret Randall states that “authentic power comes from a fully developed sense of self, possible only when both individual and collective memory is retrieved” (1992, p. 171). I agree with Randall that understanding how one is located within the collective, past and present is key knowing the self. A potential catalyst to the realization of belonging to something larger than oneself is the experience of the women’s collective of raranga. Essential to the experience of the weaving arts, is the collective expressed as whanaungatanga (kinship rights and obligations), connectedness and development of reciprocal relationships. I suggest that practicing the cultural legacies embodied through the weaving arts we are reminded of collective memory embedded in our bodies, minds and spirits. These are tūpuna memories, treasures and ceremony that affirm Māori knowledge as vital and valid in the modern world.

Retrieving collective memory potentially begins with individual transformation, the conscientisation that Smith writes about. The conditions for transformation need to be created, spaces such as weaving wānanga where the space is Māori centred and co-created with those involved. In these transformative spaces, each individual experiences the expression of individual and collective truth and beauty through working with Kaupapa Māori principles. Creating transformative spaces for me is engaging in the practice. The very act of using our native plants, continuing and perpetuating our tūpuna gifts, creating new innovative taonga, from taonga tuku iho is the practice. This is how I claim being an authentic, empowered Māori indigenous being; whole and complete. For me, as a wahine Māori, authenticity and empowerment is expressed in how we practice our art forms, representing from a Māori voice, through the taonga we create. Transformative action then is engaging in this deeply Māori art form creating representations that speak to the contemporary Māori feminine. Passing on and maintaining the practice is conscientizing resistance and transformation that contributes to the emancipatory project of valid Māori knowledge and practices (Smith, 1997; Smith, 1999; Pihama, 2001).

Kaupapa Māori principles in creative practice informed the creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi, the creation belonging to the collective knowledge of many weavers' hands and minds. As the harakeke plant is transformed into a textile so Kaupapa Māori is a transformative theory that is enacted through Māori creative practice. Graham Smith presents these principals as crucial 'change factors' in Kaupapa Māori praxis. In the creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi and the following creative works produced for this study aspects of these principles are illustrated.

Aspects of Tino Rangatiratanga the principle of "self-determination and relative autonomy", (Smith, 2003, p. 8) are carried out within Māori creative practice research via the researcher developing ideas with communities to benefit said communities. Cultural identity affirmation through re-connecting to whenua through the fibre arts provides aspects of control in life, which are often missing in a marginalized, disenfranchised society. The principle Taonga Tuku Iho - the "validation and legitimation of cultural aspirations and identity" (Smith, 2003, p. 9) are inherent within the creation of taonga from the whenu, and from and through our taonga plants. The reality of creating something from one's own cultural identity that belongs to one's own culture; from the land that one belongs to creates an awareness of disrupted identity. Focused healing and awareness can then occur through artistic praxis. Ako Māori the "incorporation of culturally preferred pedagogy" (Smith, 2003, p. 9) underpins the sharing of raranga and raranga whatu, learning in collective environments instils a belonging to something bigger than ourselves, as creating an awareness of whakapapa, of the art form and ultimately of the self. Whanaungatanga arises through the praxis of raranga and whatu that "incorporate structures which emphasize the 'collective' rather than the individual (Smith, 2003, p. 9). Creating functional as well as culturally embodied taonga, can contribute on many levels to the Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga principle of "mediation of socio-economic difficulties" through commercial and culturally appropriate decision maker, by the weaver. The collective nature of the practice brings weavers together through shared and collective vision/philosophy. This collective vision and philosophy includes

involvement of collaborators, a collective investment that provides agency for all involved through the art form. Each individual person involved in the collective, experience their own development through their own praxis all the while contributing to the whole.

The raranga and raranga whatu art forms engender an inherited responsibility to practice the tikanga inherent within the art form. Relational accountability (Wilson, 2008) was evident as weavers who gave freely of their knowledge, their aroha and their materials, in order to have contributed to the collective. Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is an embodiment of collective praxis that acknowledges the whakapapa of the art form.

Kaupapa Māori is one of two theories I am drawing on to weave my own conceptual model of Te Whare Pora. But before explaining this model and how it framed the study, I want to first explain the next theory that informs Te Whare Pora that of Mana Wahine.

## *Mana Wahine*

Mana wahine as a principle of Kaupapa Māori is integral to this study in a number of ways. Mana Wahine principles are concepts and theories relating to Māori women. Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere is a tohunga and elder of Tūhoe and Ngāti Kahungunu descent describes the concept of mana as “beyond translation from the Māori language” (1994, p. 36) Its meanings are multi-faceted including psychic influences, authority prestige that is acquired through acts or vested from others, “that quality of a person that others know he or she has” (p. 36). Similarly, Ngāpuhi tohunga Māori Marsden<sup>46</sup> (2003) refers to mana as an “extraordinary power, essence, or presence” as forces that relate to people and to the natural world. By this statement Māori is asserting that mana is integral to all parts of Māori society. Mana therefore is connected to notions, of status, and power that is earned and

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<sup>46</sup> Retrieved from <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-ao-marama-the-natural-world/print>

is recognized by the collective. The concept mana used with the term wahine honours and uplifts the roles of women in the Māori world. The direct translation of wahine is 'woman' however although correct this translation does not encompass the many phases and spaces Māori women move through (Pihama, 2001). The word wahine can be considered in two parts, Wa meaning time and space and Hine meaning the female essence. Leonie Pihama has written extensively on Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theories, on representation of Māori in film and education for and by Māori (1994, 2001). Pihama (2001) maps out the historical development of Kaupapa Māori research and Mana Wahine theory. Leonie Pihama explains the term wahine in this way:

The term wahine designates a certain time and space for Māori women but is by no means a universal term like the term woman in English. There are many times and spaces that Māori women move through in our lives, wahine is one of those. There are others. There are varying terms that relate to times in our lives and relationships. From birth we begin a journey through those many spaces. As such the term wahine should not be seen as a dualism with the term tāne, as we see in the constructed binaries of female and male that exist in the West and which are defined in biological terms (2001. p. 263).

Mana wahine therefore encompasses not only the many and complex roles that make up Māori women's realities. I agree with Pihama that the term wahine not be seen in opposition to the term tāne, in that we all possess aspects of the feminine and the masculine. Aspects of these traits can be drawn on depending on circumstance and relationships.

Mana Wahine theory and discourse is often understood as to be a type of Māori feminism, fundamentally Mana Wahine theory is about raising consciousness of the diverse expressions of wahine Māori (Smith, 1999; Te Awekotuku, 1991; Pihama, 2001; Simmons, 2011). Mana Wahine theory is a Kaupapa Māori theoretical framework based in mātauranga Māori that challenges colonial

patriarchal structures by providing a platform with which to critique said structures. Mana Wahine theories take into account multiple issues faced by wahine Māori, issues of patriarchy, colonisation, language and culture loss, marginalization. Naomi Simmonds writes on Mana Wahine “as an extension of Kaupapa Māori, is located in the wider indigenous struggle that has emerged because ‘we’ were unwilling to continue to try and ‘find’ ourselves in the world, text and Figures of others” (2012 p. 13). Mana Wahine is of this place Aotearoa developed from the Māori experience. As Māori we can draw on feminist perspectives, however Mana Wahine is drawn from Māori understandings. Wahine Māori have the right to express and define us through our own experiences of the world, to state our own positions in our own world. Mana Wahine theories embrace the diversity of wahine Māori worlds. In saying this though it can never be assumed that all Māori wahine have similar understandings (Pihama, 2001). On the diversity of wahine Māori realities Kathie Irwin (1992) writes:

In our work with Māori women we need to recognize that they, like any other community of women, are not a homogenous group. A number of other factors influence Māori women’s development: tribal affiliation, social class, sexual preference, knowledge of traditional Māori tikanga, knowledge of the Māori language, rural or urban location, identification on the political spectrum from radical to traditional, place in the family, the level of formal schooling and educational attainments to name but a few (p. 2).

Our experiences of the world and how we see it are diverse and unique to each one of us. In order to reclaim our voices, the development of Mana Wahine theories by Māori women for whānau, hapū and iwi is critical (Smith, 1999; Pihama, 2001).

As the intent in this study is to privilege Māori ways of knowing through an analysis of the arts of raranga and whatu, sourcing the feminine in Māori art is articulated through a mana wahine framework that honours the female principle as integral to leadership through the arts. Leonie Pihama states that there is a 'need for Māori

women to speak to and for ourselves' (2001, p. 25). Māori women's artistic expressions are manifestos for challenging discourses of patriarchal and colonial dominance by reclaiming our voices and speaking back. On Māori women's creativity Ngāti Porou scholar Kathy Irwin (1995) reminds us "creativity is a highly discursive process, that is it doesn't happen at set times like at nine o'clock on a Monday morning" (p. 11). I can relate to this as my creative practice involves working around everything else that is happening in life. Creativity cannot be turned on and off subsequently much of my design work formulates when I am doing other things, driving, housework, through dreams and meditation. When I am able to find space to manifest my design thinking and create, I have a settled sense of well-being. Irwin goes on to say:

Writing, painting, singing, [weaving] our worlds is a critical part Māori women's survival kit! Telling about what life is like for us, in our diversity, makes our stories visible. It allows us to 'stand in sunshine' in our own right, not in the shadows of others nor as reflections of anyone else's Figure. It allows us to be whole, real and visible, as ourselves. (1995, p. 12)

The creative works for this study are underpinned by Mana Wahine theories; the works are woven sculptural body adornments that represent aspects of particular Atua wāhine, while also reflecting aspects of human traits. These creative works embody mana wāhine, mana tāne and mana tangata and are referred to as female. The creative work in this study are taonga, they are drawn from whakapapa Māori, made from the whakapapa of raranga and whatu, and from our native plants. They are each named as they were created. Māori taonga are named as a cultural practice, we name taonga to acknowledge the mauri<sup>47</sup> inherent within and they are always referred to in the personal pronoun (Te Awēkotuku, 1991). I

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<sup>47</sup> *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. Also used for a physical object, individual, ecosystem or social group in which this essence is located. Retrieved from: <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=mauri>*

also use the female pronoun to talk about the creative works in this study including the korowai Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi as the embodiment of Mana Wahine and representative of Hineteiwaiwa. The female reference being acknowledgment of the feminine principal of Hineteiwaiwa the spiritual ancestress of childbirth and weaving. Transformation is at the heart of this study focusing upon the transformation of harakeke to vessel, muka to korowai but also transformation of Māori cultural affirmation in colonized spaces. Pertaining to this study, Mana Wahine is the aho of interweaving together the whenu Kaupapa Māori theory.

The art forms of raranga and whatu endure despite being relegated through a colonial patriarchal lens to craft and women's work therefore lesser. Reflecting on the hierarchy of art and craft, British, Hungarian art historian and feminist Roszika Parker (1984) concludes that "art made with thread and art made with paint are intrinsically unequal: that the former is less significant" (p. 5). Parker is alluding to the values placed on textile arts, who predominantly works in textile arts and where, probably on the kitchen table or home studio, and who is acknowledged in the visual arts where the works are made for galleries and museums. The only difference in these art forms is who makes them and where they are made. According to British designer, scholar and feminist Cheryl Buckley (1986) "women designers, weavers and textile artists transform nature into culture through the design process, patriarchal ideology defines their design skills as a product of their sex – as natural or innate, instinctive and emotional" (p. 5). Buckley goes on to state "The practice of defining women's design skills in terms of their biology is reinforced by socially constructed notions of masculine and feminine, which assign different characteristics to male and female" (p. 5). The effect of colonial patriarchy ascribes stereotypical male and female roles to the Māori arts by positioning males as the only practitioners of tā moko<sup>48</sup> and whakairo<sup>49</sup> carving with weaving being done traditionally only by women<sup>50</sup>. Contemporary artists are

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<sup>48</sup> *The art of traditional tattooing.*

<sup>49</sup> *Earlier I referred to the term whakairo as patterin or design. In this context whakairo relates to the carving of wood, bone or stone.*

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.newzealand.com/int/feature/Māori-arts/>

challenging these stereotypes. Artists such as Ngai te Rangi, Ngā Tūwhiwhia tā moko practitioner and multi - media artist Julie Paama Pengelly (Smith, 2007) as well as Moriori, Ngāti Mutunga tā moko artist Christine Harvey, along with Henriata Nicholas of Te Arawa, painter and graphic designer and tā moko artist are the pioneers of reclaiming the right of females to practice tā moko. Harvey states when she first started out in her practice that “one major challenge was definitely not being taken seriously by the men and being left out or ignored”. (Te Awēkotuku, Nikora, Rua & Karapu, 2007, p. 110). All of these women have been practicing for 20 years and have established practices. In terms of raranga and whatu the noted male weaver Karl Rangikawhiti Leonard, of Ngāti Rangiwewehi and Ngāti Ngārarānui produces exquisite Māori fibre works in tukutuku, piupiu,<sup>51</sup> poi tāniko,<sup>52</sup> and kākahu<sup>53</sup>. Karl Leonard is considered a tohunga<sup>54</sup> weaver, and his work and status challenges gender stereotypes (2015, wakahuiatvnz). Considering the concepts and practices of raranga is Tāwhanga Nopera of Ngāti Whakaue who is a Māori performance artist and scholar who utilizes raranga methodologies as a form of research. He re-weaves patterns of theory and practice in research to find ways to transform from traumatic experiences, “in particular theorising Māori social practices, transgender identities, sexuality, and ways that raranga can shift negative perceptions of these” (Auckland Museum, n.d., para 4) Nopera (2018) states of his artistic and scholarly work that “Raranga as a form of research helps to blend and contour; it is a means to reinterpret, reconceptualise and reorganise bound territories.” Nopera positions raranga as Indigenous methodology through “digital imagery, digital video, writing and performance to help balance the destructive impacts of colonization upon sexual expression and binarized notions of gender” (2017, p. 15). His work transcends preconceived notions of what raranga is and what it can be, while acknowledging the inherent tacit knowledge embodied within te pā harakeke and raranga praxis. The role of Nopera in the representation of creative work for this study is discussed in Chapter 7. These

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<sup>51</sup> *Customary, traditional waist garment.*

<sup>52</sup> *Intricately woven taaniko balls for performance.*

<sup>53</sup> *The generic term for all types of customary Māori clothing.*

<sup>54</sup> *Expert.*

contemporary Māori artists are a few of many who do not conform to stereotypical roles constructed from within patriarchy.

The common thread experienced by many is the marginalization of the feminine, within the Māori and the Pākehā worlds. Western constructs of gender are surpassed by the interpretation of Mana Wahine as the embodiment of all the facets of the feminine essence, as well as the masculine essence. Mana Wahine theories contribute to the deconstruction of gender constructions by acknowledging fluid expressions of identity and the many facets that make up a person. Expression of key elements of the self are constricted by binary gender roles where one is expected to act, to dress, to take on roles dictated by Western constructions of gender.

The processes of assimilation and colonial patriarchal ideology do not acknowledge inherent indigenous Māori knowledge's, specifically knowledges within the feminine spheres. Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou educator and academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1992) points out that Māori women have been effectively written out of history through written accounts of ethnocentric researchers (p.170). "Māori women belong to the group of women in the world who have been historically constructed as 'Other' by white patriarchies and white feminists" (Smith, 1992, p .33). This has resulted in a double devaluation of the embodied wisdom in contemporary understandings of the weaving arts – non-male and non-white. It is also evident that women writers were absent from the early literature on the Māori fibre arts. Importantly the first book written from a female perspective on raranga was written in 1989 entitled *Māori Weaving* by Erenora Puketapu Hetet. Prior to this publication male ethnographers were the only visible authors on Māori material culture, which effectively silenced the female creative experience of these art forms. Developing a Mana wahine theory in this study enables the critique of the invisibility of Māori women's creativity, and the learned stereotypical gender roles we are subjected to. The notion of transforming nature into culture is inherent within the practices of raranga and whatu, however these art forms embody instinct and emotion as well as logic and intellect. The social

constructs of intuitiveness, sensitivity and emotionality belonging to the feminine stereotype and logic and rationality belonging to the masculine stereotype is challenged in this study through a mana wahine lens. Such a lens firmly locates this study from a Māori woman's perspective, my own, and one that acknowledges other Māori women's articulations of mana wahine. Mana wahine theory in the arts ascribes to the Māori worldview that creative work is highly respected and protected whether made by females or males. According to traditional belief the arts stem from shared belief systems and values or tikanga Māori, with the source of the arts being traced back to the gods (Mead, 2003).

Creative practice for me as a Māori woman is ceremony. When I am creating, I open myself to connect with the tūpuna through thought, and memory. I invoke the tūpuna through visualisation, in particular Hineteiwaiwa the guardian of childbirth and weaving, and my kuia Puti. I immerse my thoughts and making within their beings through the practice. Creativity opens up space and time, a connection to my tūpuna and to myself. The ceremony of creative practice is intensely healing and as Irwin observes that "Māori women's creativity has not always been valued or recognized as it should have been" (1995, p. 12) this observation is still valid today. The devaluing of Māori women's creativity diminishes the cultural power of reclamation, of autonomy and ultimately the deep cultural healing embodied within the practices of raranga and whatu. This thesis and creative work serve to rectify these perspectives. This study adds to a growing number of Māori women's' voices contributing to the ways Māori research is carried out. The issues explored in this study are centred on wahine Māori colonized realities and how the creative practices of raranga and whatu can disrupt these spaces.

The development of a Te Whare Pora research methodology encompasses the various methods used to enact a Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theory of praxis.

## *Te Whare Pora*

The methodology for this study is developed from the knowledge and practices of Te Whare Pora. Nepe (1991) explains whare pora as “a distinctive educational institution” (p.18) transmitting knowledge and culture from a distinctly Māori worldview. As well as being a physical space where historically kairaranga were taught specific forms of knowledge pertaining to raranga and whatu, Te Whare Pora is also considered a state of mind. Te Āti awa weaver Erenora Puketapu-Hetet (1999) refers to te whare pora as more than a house of weaving, or a weaving school. Te Whare Pora can be a state of mind where experienced kairaranga often subconsciously exist in this creative state. This state she goes to say does not require verbalizing or writing about “it has simply been a way of living” (Puketapu-Hetet, 1999, p. 24). The tikanga of Te Whare Pora is attained and maintained through kairaranga continuing to create and innovate within their creative practice. Te Whare Pora then is a conceptual as well as physical space of creativity and connection interweaving mātauranga Māori and art praxis within a Māori women’s framework that is informed by Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine. Accordingly, Te Whare Pora methodology brings together Mana Wahine theory with Kaupapa Māori theory. Mana Wahine theory is reflected in the aho<sup>55</sup> that weave together the whenu<sup>56</sup> representing the principles of Kaupapa Māori theory. Woven together using whatu and raranga as the metaphor these theories create the kākahu of Te Whare Pora methodology.

A Te Whare Pora methodology employs Mana Wahine theory with which to explore an arts-based practice through research, informed by history and tradition. Te Whare Pora is a conceptual model for the various methods used in the study. It is based on the idea of interweaving, much as the rau of the harakeke plant are interlocked within each other (Figure 3 & 35). The interlocking natures of the form of the plant are related to as the concept of whiri or braid. The

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<sup>55</sup> *Horizontal threads used in the whatu weaving process.*

<sup>56</sup> *Verticle threads used in the whatu weaving process.*

research concepts making up this whiri are entwined around, on top and underneath each other; these research strands can be transposed and approached from numerous stages of the research. Whiri are prominent in raranga and are also used frequently in the whatu process therefore the notion of intertwining, layering and overlapping is pertinent to the heart of this project, the research of the weaving arts raranga and whatu. Many strands can make up a whiri, each strand containing tikanga, mātauranga, ideas, designs, and insights, indigenous knowing as a mosaic of thinking. This mosaic reflects seemingly random unrelated or interrelated phases and spaces that come together through the performance of the research concepts.

Te Whare Pora methodology provides conceptual whenu or spaces where information gathered may be implemented or not and can be replaced if or when new information arises from inquiry. This whakairo of thinking is predicated on Kaupapa Māori praxis and is critical to a Māori creative practice model where the research is explorative and new ideas inspire multiple directions. Ultimately this model will provide for a range of design concepts to be brought together to create a cohesive whole such as the whiri.

This project also encompasses a Māori creative practice-led research platform as inquiry through my own creative practice “Research through one’s own creative practice, or practice-led research, suggest an approach where the practitioner take the position of the researcher using his/her own professional practice as a means of inquiry (Rust et al, as cited in Nimkulrat, 2007, p. 66). The notion of the practice leading the investigation is an important underlying feature of Te Whare Pora methodology. Theory and practice are always entwined in the creative process; theoretical approaches to raranga and whatu are embodied within the practice, the conceptual issues are often personal and unspoken. This research uncovers the implicit nature of the weaving arts and engages with the transformational nature of working with our native materials. Te Whare Pora is a methodology that locates Māori understanding at the centre of the research process and analysis.

The terms practice-led and practice-based research are also fundamental frameworks to this study. American scholar Patricia Leavy (2009) writes about artistic domains such as social research and creative arts, narrative inquiry, poetry and qualitative research, performance studies and the visual arts. Arts based practices can provide alternative readings or framing of artistic work. The visual arts can be used to respect diverse identity issues, including cultural, representational, economic and political dimensions of identity. Creative practice research strands are interwoven into the kete and korowai of this study, included within the principles of Kaupapa Māori as an approach to creating the methodology of this project and of special interest how the work created can be evaluated.

Visual art, which includes woven sculptural forms of this study, can be used to respect diverse identity issues, including cultural, representational, economic and political dimensions of identity. bell hooks (1995, p. 163) establishes aesthetic interventions of visual art as a method analysis the work of Emma Amos. Of Amos's photographic work bell hooks writes:

Amos disrupts the essentialist assumption that a pure imagination shapes artistic work. Showing us that all art is situated in history, that the individual choice of subject matter reflects situatedness, in her new work Amos articulates a vision of universality that coexists in a dialectical relationship to the particular (1995, p. 163).

Mana wahine theories inform the dialectical relationships in my creative practice. It is in the dialectical relationship to the particular where my creative practice resides. It does not come from pure imagination alone. It is informed and situated in an ancient present. For bell hooks (1995) visual art carries a transformative power that can resist and dislodge stereotypical ways of thinking. On visual politics bell hooks reminds us that art is a conceptualized medium for expressing political ideas, cultural beliefs, including dominant views of race, class and gender. bell

hooks (1995) asserts that "race, class and gender shapes who makes art, who sells it, what is sold, who values it, how it is valued, who writes about it, and how it is written about". (p. XII). From this perspective art can function as a site of exclusion by devaluing wahine arts such as raranga and whatu. Therefore, visual art operates as a medium where struggles of representation occur. Applying bell hooks questions to Māori visual arts acting as sites of contested representations, I ask who makes Māori art? who is Māori art being made for? how is Māori art inclusive? and who writes about Māori art, and how do they write about it? These are positions from which to critique Māori fibre arts role in the visual arts arena. Raranga and whatu are Māori visual arts that are inclusive. The weaving fraternity often share and collaborate on projects. The practice can also be solitary. However, the opportunity to work with others is always open. I believe that Māori fibre arts shift dominant views, by re-presenting the customary art form of raranga in unexpected ways, the aesthetic intervention that bell hooks (1995, p. 163) talks about reminds the viewers these practices are dynamic and relevant today. As makers while maintaining and sustaining the customary tikanga and practice, through our contemporary work we can defy the normative paradigm of how the weaving arts are usually perceived. Whether in a Western art gallery or on the marae as tuku tuku panels for example, the viewer is exposed to new thinking through practice. As a kairaranga I consider it is enacting the practice that shifts and moves thinking; in the making, thinking occurs, always responding to materials, thinking arises through the making.

Duxbury & Grierson (2008) note that artists, researchers, writers are responding to:

...processes of making art, questioning art, scrutinizing the conditions of art in the academy, and undertaking research degrees in art; then allowing the knowledge that flows from art to be discursively engaged in contemporary cultural conditions and practices" (Duxbury & Grierson, 2008, p. 13).

Thinking through practice is elemental to the processes of raranga and raranga whatu. Although at times there can be chaos in the thinking, the practice that

includes the doing leads to clarity. This will be explored further in relation to the creation of Whatukura ki Oraurangi.<sup>57</sup>

Te Whare Pora methodology provides space for the interrogation of my own practice within a cultural framework. As such Te Whare Pora enables the questioning of the work, which is on-going within the practice, to be articulated inside this study. Enquiring into whakapapa as the embodiment within the weave, and how whakapapa comes to life within the practices of raranga and raranga whatu is an essential point of this investigation. Mana wahine theories are encompassed and extended within kaupapa Māori and are strategic to this in the thesis and creative outputs. These new creative works represent the interrelationship between writing, thinking and raranga and whatu. As Nimkulrat (2013) reminds us:

Creative practice in a research context can generate new knowledge, which is embedded in the practice and embodied in and by the practitioner. This knowledge can be found not only in the practitioner making the artefact, but also in the artefact created, the process used to make it, and the culture in which it is made and viewed or used, all taking place at different stages of a research process (p. 14).

Nimkulrat's words are significant to this project in that she articulates the creative practice as the production of new realizations and understandings. These revelations reside in the taonga that are created from the artists viewpoint, the processes of making and the how the maker or practitioner is transformed through the practice. Equally important to the making processes in raranga and whatu are the tikanga that guide and inform the kairaranga. These rituals of practice ground the maker and support the creative spirit. Te Whare Pora methodology supports a tikanga active process in the physical and thinking spaces I weave in. Whether on the kitchen table or my studio Te Whare Pora is created

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<sup>57</sup> Chapter 6.

through the rituals of practice as observed and applied. Accordingly, my position in this study is one of re-engaging in the customary practice of raranga and whatu while attending to the tikanga associated with the fibre arts, in turn the practice becomes an anticolonial act of resistance that affirms cultural integrity, identity and knowledge.

A close-up photograph of a dark purple woven basket. The basket is made of a complex, tight weave of fibers, creating a textured, grid-like pattern. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the intricate details of the weave and casting a sharp, dark shadow of the basket's shape onto the background. The background is a deep, dark brown or black, which makes the purple of the basket stand out. The overall mood is artistic and focused on the craft of weaving.

3.

*Weaving the Contemporary*

## *Taonga Tuku Iho*

Our native weaving plants are taonga tuku iho.<sup>58</sup> Relating to our plants as taonga<sup>59</sup> acknowledges the cultural, spiritual, historical and traditional associations of these plants and the natural world. Taonga are not only physical treasures, they are also intangible, such as traditional waiata,<sup>60</sup> karakia,<sup>61</sup> and whakataukī,<sup>62</sup> and stories that are passed down from our ancestors. Creative practice in raranga and whatu draw on taonga tuku iho that embody Mātauranga Māori. Te Awekotuku (1990) eloquently describes the relationship of taonga tuku iho for herself, and Māori people, acknowledging that these taonga have many meanings:

The taonga inspire and confront; they relax and soothe; they provoke and energize; they empower and sustain. They convey memories from the past and make promises for the future, and they show us where we are going to. They represent hope, fortitude and resilience: the survival of the spirit (p. 139).

Te Awekotuku is highlighting the nature of taonga tuku iho as the embodiment of Māori cultural representations of knowledge. The artistry and skill in the creation of the ancestral arts she is referring to – taonga tuku iho - are taonga created in fibre, stone, bone and wood. Conal McCarthy a Pākehā academic understands taonga as “locaters of time and space that are part of the genealogical matrix of whakapapa” (2016, p. 136). In accordance with Te Awekotuku he relates to taonga tuku iho as representations of cultural connections and identity. Erenora Puketapu Hetet is of Te Ātiawa, also describes the practices of raranga and whatu as taonga

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<sup>58</sup> *Cherished treasures handed down from our ancestors. These can tangible and intangible, inclusive of language and tikanga.*

<sup>59</sup> *Taonga - referring to that which is cherished is the term also used the articles that kairaranga create.*

<sup>60</sup> *Song, invocation through music.*

<sup>61</sup> *Incantation chants ancient and contemporary.*

<sup>62</sup> *Proverbial sayings from the Māori world, used today to guide and inform behaviours.*

(1989) in her book *Māori Weaving*. This book is the first that provides insights into raranga and whatu from the perspective of a female kairaranga. Puketapu Hetet gives voice to the many women who engage with this taonga art form.

The weaving has its own life course, sometimes accompanying its kaitiaki<sup>63</sup> back to papatuanuku<sup>64</sup> [sic]. At other times it is held in this world as a living taonga, passed from generation to generation in the same way as an heirloom. It is used until it can no longer serve the purpose for which it was created. It is then deemed to have died a natural death and is allowed to go back to where it first began – back to papatuanuku to begin a new life cycle (p. 2).

According to Puketapu-Hetet, the life cycle continues on in the native plants we harvest. The cycle is eternal. The woven taonga and the plants are one and the same. Our weaving plants are also considered as taonga, physical treasures that embody the intangible treasures of ancestral stories, philosophies and usage that is passed down. They represent a unique interconnectedness of the natural world that kairaranga are fortunate enough to experience.

The connection many Māori have with the natural world manifests through a whakapapa relationship. Whakapapa is the relationship whereby all things trace their origins through Māori cosmogony. Māori cosmogony begins in Te Kore translating as the nothingness, or void and space of all potentiality. Ngāpuhi tohunga Māori Marsden (1992) describes “Te Kore kore as the realm between non-being and being: that is, the realm of potential being” (p. 20). Grace and Kahukiwa (1984) define Te Kore the void in this way:

From Te Kore came the many nights of Te Po.

*“It was out of this nothingness that Increase and Consciousness,*

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<sup>63</sup> *Guardian*.

<sup>64</sup> *Earth parent*

*and I, Te Po, were born.  
I am aged in aeons, and I am Night of many nights,  
Night of many darkness's –  
Night of great darkness,  
long darkness,  
utter darkness,  
birth and death darkness:  
of darkness unseen,  
darkness touchable and untouchable,  
and of every kind of darkness that can be.  
In my womb lay Papatuanuku who was conceived in Darkness, born into Darkness  
– and who matured in Darkness, and in Darkness became mated with the Sky.  
Then Papatuanuku too conceived and bore many children among the many long  
ages of Te Po.”*

(Grace & Kahukiwa, 1984, p. 16).

Papatūānuku and Ranginui are the primal parents whose many children continued through the eons to dwell in darkness clasped between their parents (Mikaere, 2003, p. 15). Papatūānuku and Ranginui were locked in an eternal embrace. Their children were nurtured within their interlocked bodies, in warmth and darkness. The children could hear sounds and noises from beyond the darkness and desired to investigate. They wanted to leave their world and see what was outside of their knowing. Although Tūmatauenga suggested the only way out would be to kill their parents, there was no agreement to such a violent act from the other progeny. Amid much disagreement and dispute the separation of their parents by Tane was accepted by majority. “.....this was also the beginning of discourse, debate and independent thought”. Pou Temara (1978, p. 2) Therefore after much debate the children decided to force their parents apart so they could dwell in Te Ao Marama the world of light. They all agreed except for Tāwhirimātea of the winds and storms who was angry at the thought of separating their parents. According to

some versions Rongomātāne, the atua <sup>65</sup> of cultivated food stood up to tear them apart, he struggled, but he could not part them. Then Tangaroa, the atua of fish and reptiles, stood up to try his strength; he also struggled; but he could not part them. Haumiatiketike the atua of the fern root, stood up and struggled; but he also failed. Next, Tumatauenga, the atua of wars, slowly stood up, and struggled but he also failed; Then Tane the atua of the forests and everything that lives there slowly stood up and he struggled with his parents, but he could not part them with his hands. So, for a moment he stopped, and he placed his head on his parent the earth and rested his feet against his sky parent. He strained his back in a mighty effort, and he tore apart his parents (Waititi, 1963). The grief of their parents at being separated was extreme with hail and snow pouring from Ranginui with the tears of Papatūānuku rising in constant mist. The children decided to turn Papatūānuku facedown so they could not look on each other's pain (Mikaere, 2003).

From my perspective as a kairaranga taonga created from the native plants birthed by Papatūānuku and Ranginui manifest a reconnection of them to each other, an acknowledgement of their yearning for each other. The taonga created represent a cyclic framework of the creation of the world. The Māori world view that is predicated on continuous creation explained by Marsden (1992) "as employed in two allegorical images: that of plant growth and that of gestation in the womb" (p. 134). Mikaere goes on to explain, "The progression from Te Kore through Te Pō and on to Te Ao Mārama is an ongoing cycle of conception, development within the womb and birth." (p. 16). As Marsden (1992) states:

Te Kore kore is the realm of potential being, Te Pō is the realm of becoming and Te Ao Mārama is the realm of being. It is a process of continuous creation and renewal" (p. 135).

The phases of development Te Kore, Te Pō and ultimately Te Ao Mārama are

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<sup>65</sup> *Atua are divine beings, spiritual entities, godlike entities.*

applied to my own creative practice. As a kairaranga I move through these phases of Te Pō Te Ao Mārama and Te Kore, at times in no particular order, moving through the phases as the work becomes and at times un-becomes Te Kore.

To practice raranga or whatu is to listen intently to the material for ways forward, sometimes highlighted by not knowing what there is to do next, which I relate to as the state of Te Pō. This state can involve a resting and thinking space, or sometimes continually practicing raranga without knowing the outcome. This state also relies on the trusting in Te Ao Mārama that the work will be resolved. There is no set order to these phases, as each phase is part of cycle of the creation process, except that before any creative work can begin the harvesting and preparation processes must be carried out. When creating prescribed forms, such as kete, the process is linear. However, investigating new whakairo and forms in kete, challenges arise that invoke a more variable approach.

Through the creative practice of raranga and whatu kairaranga work in the natural world in a continual practice of interconnectedness between human and plant. Māori cosmogony explains the relationship between the environment and people, and that Māori have a reciprocal bond to the female and male elements that make up our world. We are born from the atua that generated the natural world we live in; therefore, we humans are an integral part of the natural world. The maintenance of a holistic balance between environment and people is fundamental; kairaranga having a direct association with their taonga plants have an obligation to maintain this relationship. This holistic relationship is termed kaitiakitanga as Ngāti Whātua scholar Merata Kawharu (2000) writes:

The interconnectedness of all things means that the welfare of any part of the environment will directly impact on the welfare of people. The health and wellbeing of natural resources will impact on the health and wellbeing of Māori depending on these resources (as cited in McCallum & Carr, 2012, p. 186).

Living in urban environments has meant that in many instances we have “grown away from nature and understanding its deeper meaning” (Puketapu-Hetet, 1999, p.3). The deeper meaning Puketapu-Hetet is alluding to is the kaitiakitanga that Kawharu is describing. Kaitiakitanga is an essential philosophy of the Māori world that informs practice relating to the natural world. Todd Taiepa of Ngāti Rangitāne explains:

Kaitiakitanga is the intergenerational responsibility that Māori have to ensure that the mauri or life force is sustained. This involves a recognition and respect for the both the seen and unseen forces that act to either enhance or degrade the environment (p. 94).

My belief is that as people we are responsible for our natural environments and obligated to those relationships. Kairaranga in particular can be considered kaitiaki of native weaving materials and those environments, kaitiakitanga including safeguarding tikanga associated with the plants and the art forms. The ongoing colonisation of our indigenous knowledge and knowing is perpetuated when we are divorced from the land. Tikanga related to Te Pā Harakeke is predicated on our relationship with the land as Indigenous Peoples. In the Māori world the whakapapa of the weaving arts gives us a way to re-connect to the philosophies of our tūpuna. In order to maintain and sustain our cultural identities through the practice it is my view that the teaching and learning of Māori fibre arts must include the teaching of Māori knowledge’s embedded and intrinsic within the practices. The key learning in the weaving arts is not creating woven taonga but learning about kaitiakitanga, being with and on the whenua cleaning and harvesting our taonga plants, taking care of the plants, and learning the tikanga associated with sustaining the plants. As Ngāpuhi academic and elder Hone Sadler (2010) reiterates, the Māori relationship with the whenua as integral to our identity. For kairaranga this relationship is fundamental to understanding the taonga of plants, and the taonga of raranga and whatu.

Ngāpuhi comes from Ranginui and Papatūānuku. We are more than

just the indigenous peoples of this land. We were born of the land. Our mana (authority) comes from the land. We come from the land (p. 27).

Sadler (2010) is talking here from a Ngāpuhi context, my tribal origins. Inclusive in this statement are Māori, the indigenous people of this place. Connecting and re-connecting ourselves to the whenua through the creative and sustainable processes are decolonizing acts of resistance and affirmation.

## *Weaving the whenua*

Māori knowing depends on maintaining our bodily connections to the whenua, to our natural environments that prompt and make manifest our embodied knowing. The taonga arts remain engagements of the body with the whenua, the learning and teaching from the land being intrinsic to the practice. Current Western models of teaching these taonga arts, such as that of my first encounter with raranga that I described in Chapter 2, distance the learner from the experience of being on the whenua. In mainstream education the use of classrooms rather than being outside, and the teacher as the source of all knowledge dominates the pedagogy (Lee, 2005; Pihama, Lee, Smith, Taki, 2004). The classroom and the teacher become the source of all knowledge. Mātauranga Māori and the knowledge within the materials and the whenua are disregarded in favour of mainstream pedagogy. When we learn to raranga and whatu we learn about the knowing that is embodied in the whenua. As the Turtle Mountain Chippewa scholar Melissa K. Nelson (2008) reminds us “the real intelligence dwells throughout the natural world and in the vast mystery of the universe that’s beyond our human comprehension” (p. xxii). By being responsible to our taonga plants, taking care of them, harvesting from the ngahere<sup>66</sup> and practicing the tikanga associated with these practices we experience deeper realities about ourselves and our whenua. We learn to be humble and appreciate the wealth embodied within our natural environments. Indigenous knowledge is inherently tied to land, not to land in

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<sup>66</sup> *Bush or forest.*

general but to particular landscapes, and landforms, where ceremonies are held, stories told, rongoā<sup>67</sup> gathered, and transfers of knowledge properly authenticated (see Morphy, 1995; Basso, 1996). By enacting cultural practices in sustainability through harvesting and nurturing our plants, we inevitably engage the whakapapa or histories of the whenua.

The knowledge systems embedded in the principles of kaitiakitanga<sup>68</sup> are informed by Māori knowledge systems and by practicing them we learn how to sustain our cultural selves and our whenua. Kaitiakitanga utilizes the materials of the whenua in a sustainable way, by practicing tikanga Māori. Kairaranga practitioners have opportunities to engage with the land in ways, even though many of us live in urban environments. Through engagement with the whenua we access learning through our tinana,<sup>69</sup> hinengaro,<sup>70</sup> and wairua.<sup>71</sup> We experience ourselves and our relationships and responsibilities with each other and to the whenua. As Hawaiian scholar and educator Manulani Aluli-Meyer (2006) reminds us “Other ways of knowing something must be introduced if we are to evolve into a more enlightened society. It will not occur with scientific or objective knowledge only” (2006, p. 265). The experiences we encounter on the whenua whether harvesting our materials, or in a weaving circle on the whenua are highly subjective nevertheless the knowing Aluli-Meyer is referring to is no less real because of that. Māori creative practices are not only vehicles to express identity but offer us avenues to challenge hegemonic systems in order to affirm Māori cultural values and wellness. Recovering Māori knowing of self that arises in the experience of the doing and being on the whenua challenges the dominant hegemony of the Western classroom. Māori epistemologies are founded on the way we view the world, from our creation pūrākau, tikanga practices, and Mātauranga Māori, informing the relationship Māori have with the environment (Marsden 1988; Henare 2001). By acknowledging the Māori world- view of the

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<sup>67</sup> *Traditional medicines.*

<sup>68</sup> *Guardianship of the natural environment.*

<sup>69</sup> *The body.*

<sup>70</sup> *The mind, intellect.*

<sup>71</sup> *The spiritual.*

interconnectedness of all things, the relationship we have with the whenua becomes more meaningful and related. Raranga is one of the Māori sources of knowledge embodied in the whenua. Re-connecting our cultural bodies with the whenua through learning through the land, “a deep identity that is not easily translatable into frameworks the Western teachers and curriculum developers take for granted” (Schwab & Fogarty, 2015, p. 14). Schwab and Fogarty affirm that learning “on country” in the Australian Indigenous context re-establishes indigenous ways of knowledge, stating that:

In many ways Learning on Country recreates elements of the original Indigenous classroom, where young people spend time on traditional lands, in the company of Indigenous adults with responsibility for those lands, learning about culture and country, the relationships of various groups to country and one another and the roles and responsibilities in relation to that country they will one day be expected to assume (2015, p. 3).

The whenua is a Māori classroom, where we can learn about who we are. As raranga materials are harvested from the land, kairaranga need to understand those materials and how to take care of them. Knowledge of the environment and the materials we/they source sustainably is vital to continuing knowledge as kaitiakitanga.

Through my practice as a kairaranga enacting our tikanga pertaining to the arts, is a haptic experience where we connect through all the senses to that cultural imprint otherwise articulated as whakapapa. Tikanga is intrinsic to the experience of the weaving arts, without the knowing embodied in tikanga the practice becomes mechanical, detached from whakapapa. Hirini Moko Mead (2012) writes of tikanga as traditional bodies of knowledge pertaining to ‘being’ Māori. Tikanga provides a framework of practices and values that inform relationships with the land and each other, which is central to my practice. The connection to land as body is central to the discussion of tikanga in art making practice. Ngāti Kahu, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kauwhata and Ngāti Rangi artist and academic Kura Te Waru Rewiri

is quoted in Highfield (1999) as reminding us that “Māori exist upon the land in the time they are here. The land owns you rather than you own it” (p. 13). Te Waru Rewiri’s interpretation of the ownership of land reflects the observances inherent for Māori around land. According to tikanga we are obligated to care for and sustain our whenua as well as our connections to whenua. Mead (2012) goes on to explain that tikanga is a normative system and was an essential part of customary or traditional Māori society. These customary practices are Māori philosophy and knowledge and are essential to and of mātauranga Māori, they inform the practices of raranga and raranga whatu. Mātauranga Māori is the embodiment of generations of Māori knowledge and constitutes the intellectual property of Māori “While mātauranga Māori might be carried in the minds, tikanga Māori puts that knowledge into practice and adds the aspects of correctness and ritual support” (Mead, 2003, p. 7). Kairaranga identifying as Māori must ensure through the making of their artworks appropriate Māori knowledge and philosophies are practiced and that these are implicit in their works. As a kairaranga it is my understanding that empowerment comes from ensuring certain tikanga are in place; these tikanga are tacit, time honoured, and experiential, a dialogue with art and practice.

Engaging the senses of the body with the tactile nature of raranga and whatu stimulates a rhythm of thinking where the praxis of body-mind is captured in the act of making. Memories embedded in the body arise as a gathering of thought into present day experience of art making and knowledge formulation. Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa (2009) affirms that all artists look to the essence of things. That all arts arise from a common soil, “they are all expressions of the human existential condition” (p. 22). Existential in this context refers to the artists embodied mode of being and experiencing the world they encounter. My experience in the act of raranga is the becoming of being the true essence of a practice that engages all the senses. The thinking hand (Pallasmaa, 2009) is a metaphor for how all of our senses perceive and scan the physical world. Pallasmaa’s investigation of existential and embodied wisdom aligns with how I experience the tacit knowledge and understanding embodied in the praxis of

raranga. These tacit knowledges are embodied within the practices of raranga and whatu and our cultural ways of being and experiencing the world.

Western philosophy positions the body as distinct from the mind (Pallasmaa, 2009). Predominant educational pedagogies separate logic and emotion from the senses of human embodiment (Pallasmaa, 2009). Consequently, educational practices may focus on physical training for the body or intellectual thought processes while disregarding the embodied and holistic nature of the human experience. Pallasmaa writes that:

We are connected with the world through our senses. The senses are not merely passive receptors of stimuli and the body is not only a point of viewing the world from a central perspective. Neither is the head the sole locus of cognitive thinking, as our senses and entire bodily being directly structure, produce and store silent existential knowledge. The body is a knowing entity. Our being in the world is a sensuous and embodied mode of being, and this very sense of being is the ground of existential knowledge (p. 13).

Pallasmaa is reminding us here that there are ways of knowing, through the experience of asserting our own existence. Through my teaching practice I often ask taura<sup>72</sup> to, let go of thought, to try and to allow the mind and body to come together and experience the act of raranga to awaken mind-body memories of the action. The idea of 'not thinking', although perhaps less familiar to taura in academia who have been heavily socialized to use rational thought, encourages a state of focus on the task of raranga, and frees them from over analysing. Through my experience, I suggest that decolonization occurs in the mind-body through the practice of allowing the material, allowing the creative process to move through the hands, through the body, through the mind. The haptic nature of the practice takes over; the senses become filled with the smell the feel of the harakeke and

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<sup>72</sup> *Students.*

the senses takes over, allowing our cultural selves to arise. The body-mind-spirit is able to re-connect through the making in 'letting go'. The act of raranga becomes our own self-expression and that of our tūpuna and ultimately in time what we are yet to discover about ourselves.

The exploration of self through the practice of raranga is encouraged in the raranga papers I teach. This becomes evident from taura, as they often express a feeling of connection to something other than themselves, identified as a connection to their tūpuna. Taura have expressed that through the practice memories arise that were elusive until working with the harakeke. Sometimes a memory of Nan or a whānau member creating with raranga when they were small would arise. Memories of going harvesting with Nan or searching for mud dye in the river when they were small. Or having the experience of being amazed at their fingers remembering how to do raranga when they thought they had forgotten. The students are asked to create a learning journal as part of their creative production; these are some of their comments on their raranga practice.<sup>73</sup>

*"... It was fascinating to see my hands remember movements that my mind couldn't"*

*"...the harakeke truly spoke to me; my hands and the harakeke were like two best mates having the most intricate catch up possible..."*

*" I did our karakia and I gave immense thanks to Tane for allowing my peers and Kaiako to harvest his mokopuna and tamariki again to reform them into new and beautiful shapes that will be appreciated for some time to come "*

*" I realized that weaving is not just a reforming and reshaping of the harakeke but it is a reshaping and reforming of a person themselves, reintroduction for some*

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<sup>73</sup> These comments come from students who identify as Māori and are first year learners in the raranga programme and are reproduced with permission.

*into their taha Māori. So today I came away learning many new things, relevant to the University criteria of this paper but also life lessons to be cherished for many years to come”*

*“Satisfaction came from trimming and glorifying my kete, but achievement came from showing my mum what I had completed in class no A or A+ will ever amount to the warmth of mum’s smile”*

The comments of these tauira exemplify the holistic nature of the practice of raranga, the connection of body and mind and the reawakening of Indigenous embodied knowledge through their experience. Their insightful observations arise through the reflexive nature of the practice that embraces tikanga Māori as living practices passed onto us from our tūpuna. In turn we accept and apply these taonga tuku iho as learning’s that we in turn will pass on. Even more powerfully the experience and application of these tikanga within the Western institution of the University challenges the notions that Western forms of knowledge are the only forms of knowledge production.

## *Taonga plants*

### *Te Pā Harakeke*

It is without question that the harakeke plant was vital to the survival of the early Māori who discovered Aotearoa, evidenced by the metaphor and importance our tūpuna have placed on this plant. McCallum & Carr (2012) state that “traditional Māori were both hunter gatherers and agriculturalists” and that “their environmental knowledge and conservation ethic was transplanted into the New Zealand landscape from Polynesia” (p. 187). It is clear in the literature that on settlement, tūpuna Māori needed to adapt to the cooler climate of Aotearoa. The kumara they brought with them was extensively farmed in the warmer climates of the North (McCallum & Carr, 2012, p. 187). Paper mulberry, the material used for clothing in Eastern Polynesia, did not flourish in the cool climate “no coconut,

banana, breadfruit, or pandanus used for weaving survived” (Anderson, 2002, p. 26). In their wisdom and new environment our tūpuna discovered the properties of harakeke, the leaves perfect for basketry, matting and net making, then the lustrous internal fibres especially suitable for weaving into soft wearable textiles (Buck, 1949,). The preparation of materials and their application has not changed much since then (Buck, 1949; Mead, 1969). Clothing perhaps more than any other product of technology reflects the prevalent ideas and values held by the people of that time (Mead, 1969). The innovation we see in the customary clothing of our tūpuna spurs myself and other contemporary kairaranga on to recreate and revolutionize inspired by our ancestor’s expertise in design and function.

The philosophies and imagery of Te Pā Harakeke have also been adopted to claim being ‘New Zealand’. For example, it has been used to illustrate the properties of the harakeke in modern skin treatments. Modern technology now extracts the oil from the seeds of the harakeke flowers. These oils are promoted to have restorative powers that complement the skins natural healing processes. The harakeke plant is still today providing these healing properties that were discovered by our tūpuna, the first Māori settlers. According to Mead (1952) writing for Te Ao Hou magazine “historically Māori used parts of the plant as rongoā (natural remedies), the gel found at the butts of the leaves have antimicrobial properties and was used as cure for minor cuts and scratches” (p. 41). In addition to the gel tubers of the plant were boiled and the liquid taken as a laxative (Mead. 1952). Today kairaranga will use the gel at the base of leaves for scratches or cuts that accidentally occur while working with the plants. In my experience the gel immediately stops any bleeding, while acting as an antiseptic. The wound heals quickly leaving no scar.

Central to the disciplines of raranga and whatu is the materials and the concepts of Te Pā Harakeke. Harakeke is the most prolific of our weaving plants and as such is the most utilized plant by contemporary kairaranga. It is likened to the whānau

where the rito<sup>74</sup> are embraced by awhi rito or ngā mātua (Figure 35). These three leaves in the centre of the harakeke should not be cut, as this would jeopardize the wellbeing of the plant. The whānau<sup>75</sup> analogy of embracing and protection of the plant is synonymous with the protection of whānau and Māori values as articulated through tikanga. (Pihama, Lee, Te Nana, Campbell, Greensill, & Tauroa, 2015). One expression of whānau is in the well-known whakatauākī<sup>76</sup> from Te Rarawa “Hutia Te Rito”.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Hutia te rito o te harakeke         | If you pluck the heart-seed of the flax bush |
| Kei hea te kōmako e kō              | Where will the bellbird sing?                |
| Kī mai ki ahau                      | I ask myself                                 |
| He aha te mea nui o te ao<br>world? | What is the greatest thing in the world?     |
| Māku e kī atu                       | My answer is                                 |
| He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata  | It is People, it is people, it is people!    |

Metge & Jones (1995) describe this whakatauākī of Northern origin where kaumātua attributed this proverb to a Rangatira<sup>77</sup> whose relatives sought to forge a relationship that would enable a peace pact through whakapapa. The whakatauākī is part lament and part cautionary tale. The harakeke bush, prolific along roadsides, in parks and most probably recognizable by most New Zealanders, is referred in the first instance.

Each flax bush consists of many sword-like blades growing in fans. New shoots (rito) emerge between the two centre blades in each fan. Māori identify each shoot as the tamaiti (a child) and the two blades between which it grows as ngā mātua (the parents). The flax bush is a favourite

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<sup>74</sup> Young shoot of the plant, in the centre of the leaves.

<sup>75</sup> Family, included extended family.

<sup>76</sup> Whatauaki are proverbial sayings that are passed down through the generations.

<sup>77</sup> Chiefly person, female or male.

Māori metaphor not just for the parent-child family but also for the larger family group, the whānau (p. 3).

Harakeke fans grow together in a clump, the roots of each fan are so intertwined that they stand or fall together. The rito is not only the growing point of the fan but of the whole bush. When harvesting, kairaranga are taught to leave the three centre leaves and only take the outer leaves. To remove the rito or leave it unprotected by taking its two outer leaves will destroy the plant. The whakatauākī proposes that if the bush dies so too do the flower stalks that attract the bellbird to the nectar. It will be lost searching between land and sea for a place to nest and feed. "If the whānau ceases to produce and nurture children, it too will die" (Metge & Jones, 1995, p. 4). The whakatauākī concludes with the question "what is the most important thing in the world?" He tangata! He tangata! He tangata! It is people! It is people! It is people! The response is an affirmation of the significance of people and of the whānau that produce and nurture them. This maxim relates to the conservation of the plant and bird life and references the protection of people while providing an insight into the profound relationship Māori have with the land.

## *Kiekie*

Kairaranga also have the privilege of working with other native weaving materials. The taonga plants used today also include kiekie.<sup>78</sup> It is often referred to by kairaranga as our taonga plant. Te Arawa weaver Edna Pahewa (2009) in her introduction to the book *He Rito, He Ranga – Kiekie: Our Taonga Plant* argues for the need to protect this taonga plant.

Kiekie is found in lowland forest and is increasingly scarce as land is cleared for development projects; in some areas the quality of the resource does not meet standards required by experienced kairaranga

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<sup>78</sup> *Freycinetia banksii*.

and therefore is not easily acquired or readily used by many kairaranga (p. 3).

He Rito, He Ranga (Wallace, Evans & Ngarimu, 2009) drew on conversations with kaumātua<sup>79</sup> and kairaranga about their knowledge of traditions, practices, uses and stories relating to kiekie. These interviews were focused on the tikanga surrounding the kiekie, rather than processes of weaving. In addition to the interviews a research team of ethno botanists from Manaaki Whenua<sup>80</sup> conducted studies on the biology, ecology and growth and harvesting of kiekie. Kiekie grows wild in ngahere usually climbing high to meet the sun, but always under the forest canopy. The usual method of harvesting kiekie that I have been taught and continue to use today is the traditional hand wrenching of the centre of the plant. In my experience the plant gives up what it wants to give up with this method. Wallace, Evans and Ngarimu (2009) support this point as they describe how the kiekie is harvested:

The vine is held firmly towards the head with both hands a short distance apart (about the length of a forearm) and at arm's length away from one's body. The hand toward the head of the vine is moved towards one's body in a twisting motion as if to bring the hands together. The plant will generally give a certain amount of leafy material with a snap of the vine. This is seen as a tried and proven technique, which encourages regrowth. Harvesters are taught that using this traditional method, the vine will give as much as it wants and that, in some cases, the vine may not yield any material at all (Wallace, Evans & Ngarimu, 2009, p. 45).

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<sup>79</sup> *Elders.*

<sup>80</sup> Manaaki Whenua or Landcare Research is a Crown research institute (CRI), one of seven in New Zealand. CRIs were formed in 1992 as independent companies that are owned by, and accountable to, the New Zealand Government. Our shareholders are the Minister of Finance and Minister of Science and Innovation.

He Rito, He Ranga, confirmed that the traditional methods of harvesting encourage regrowth of the plant. These types of research projects encourage kairaranga to keep practicing according to tikanga, to the time-honoured processes. The voices of the elders included in this research were significant in passing on the knowledge and tikanga. Their voices reiterated the importance of maintaining the tikanga associated lest these knowledges be lost.

Tikanga surrounding the harvesting of kiekie is affirmed by karanga<sup>81</sup> and karakia<sup>82</sup> being performed before entering the ngahere. The harvesting of kiekie is a collective process. The plants are often bountiful in isolated ngahere therefore it's important for safety to harvest as a group, as well as for collecting large quantities of weaving material. It is exhilarating harvesting kiekie, all one can hear in the ngahere is the snap; snap of bunches coming away and the delight of the kairaranga harvesting. The preparation is also done as a collective with kairaranga sharing out the prepared material fairly between themselves. In my practice I love to work with kiekie for its firmness and ease of raranga. The beauty of kiekie is the much sought-after brilliant white in contrast to the creamy yellows of harakeke.

## *Pingao*

Kairaranga, myself included, also prize the colours of golden orange of the pīngao.<sup>83</sup> Again, similar to kiekie it does not slip once placed in a weave. Minimal preparation is necessary, but the weaver must be wary of the spikey edges if handled the wrong way. Pīngao is a rare and coveted material for the contemporary weaver because of its various shades of gold, and its scarcity.

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<sup>81</sup> *The karanga is a ritual call. Skilled kaikaranga are able to use eloquent language and metaphor and to encapsulate important information about the group and the purpose of the visit. Retrieved from <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWord=&keywords=karanga>*

<sup>82</sup> *Ritual chants*

<sup>83</sup> *Finicia or golden sand sedge grass.*

Mainly woven on tukutuku turapa<sup>84</sup> intricately laced with kiekie, pīngao is also woven in finely plaited kete, whāriki<sup>85</sup>, pōtae<sup>86</sup> and rāpaki or raincoats.

Environmentally, pīngao is an important sand binder for stabilising coastal sand dunes along with spinifex. In my own Iwi area, the Hokianga Harbour, tribal wānanga are held regularly to replant pīngao on the sand dunes shoring up the dunes. Once common on sand dunes throughout Aotearoa, it is in decline from trampling by humans, domestic stock, and wild animals such as goats, possums and rabbits. Scheele & Sweetapple (Landcare Research, 2012) warn that “today coastal development, sand mining, damage from motor vehicles, and overharvesting for weaving continue to exacerbate pīngao’s plight” (unpaginated). Herbert & Oliphant (1991) advocate growing pīngao in household gardens and provide instructions on how to propagate pīngao from seed, and plant as seedlings. Sustainable harvesting practice is also emphasized, the cutting of single leaves from the vine being recommended. I have been taught to harvest this way; it is a mindful process that constantly reminds one of the precious nature of this material.

Harakeke, kiekie and pīngao form the basis of my current weaving practice. Our other native weaving plants such as Houhere,<sup>87</sup> Kuta a tall grass from Northland that grows in fresh water, Tī Kōuka<sup>88</sup> or cabbage tree, Neinei<sup>89</sup> a mountain tree similar to Tī Kōuka, and Kāretu<sup>90</sup> a long grass with scented leaves provide a wealth of textures, colours and strengths for the kairaranga in Aotearoa.

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<sup>84</sup> *Intricately laced panels made from Toi toi, kiekie and pingao situated usually between the ancestors depicted in the carvings in a whareniui or traditional meeting house. These panels symbolically deepen the conversation between the carved ancestors.*

<sup>85</sup> *Large finely woven mats.*

<sup>86</sup> *Hats.*

<sup>87</sup> *Lacebark.*

<sup>88</sup> *Codyline indivisia.*

<sup>89</sup> *Dracophyllum.*

<sup>90</sup> *Hierochloa redolens.*

## *Raranga and Material Culture*

Two of the most prolific writers on material culture are Te Rangihiroa (1923; 1924; 1925; 1926) and Hirini Moko Mead (1997; 1999). Te Rangihiroa is an authority on indigenous art and material culture of Aotearoa and the Pacific. His anthropological work focused on recording the 'material culture' of Māori and Polynesia. S. M. Meads (1926) *The Evolution of Māori Clothing* contains a close study of the wide array of Māori garments ranging from maro,<sup>91</sup> to korowai<sup>92</sup>, with careful examination of techniques, application and materials. It is a fascinating and intricate recording of the construction of garments and remains a necessary resource for kairaranga today.

Notable is Hirini Moko Mead's contribution to academic literature on Māori textiles. His essays in *Māori Art on the World Scene* are a collection of his writings published between 1968 and 1996 and offer insights into Māori values and philosophies of the arts. They include the arts as identity, the development of the arts, concepts and models for museums displaying our arts, and the cultural significance of the arts. The essays on kākahu<sup>93</sup> illustrate his classification of styles, and the evolving techniques of whatu and tāniko<sup>94</sup> from pre-contact through to contact with Europeans. His erudite analysis of developing construction techniques and responses of kairaranga to their environment has provided insights that inform contemporary practice today, including my own. Garments created today using raranga and whatu draw on customary techniques in construction and design. We, as kairaranga, continue and nurture the art form through customary preparation and construction informed by the sartorial garments of old.

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<sup>91</sup> *Woven waist garment.*

<sup>92</sup> *Korowai, are a prestige class of cloak, among the many styles of Māori cloaks.*

<sup>93</sup> *The generic term for Māori clothing, usually created from natural materials.*

<sup>94</sup> *"Tāniko refers to the patterns as well as the technique. Tāniko is a traditional weaving technique used to decorate borders of garments" Puketapu-Hetet, 1999, p.26).*

On techniques related to raranga and whatu Mick Pendergrast (1984; 1986; 1987; 2003; 2005) also provides invaluable reference material for any weaver and researcher. Kākahu are catalogued by type, name of weaver if known, measurement, materials used and other general information with clear images. These recordings have always served as an inspiration to creating new work within my own creative practice.

Connections of people and woven taonga kete are evident in *He Kete He Kōrero Every Kete Has A Story* (Maihi & Lander, 2005). Each contributor relates their story of connection to a kete significant to them. The stories are the memories embodied in the kete told by the people who have enjoyed them. The relationships come to life in the woven materials of harakeke, kiekie, houheria, pīngao and kuta.<sup>95</sup> One of the interviewees, Butt expressed the relationship in this way “It (the kete) has given me an opportunity to discover my tūpuna and understand that I’m part Māori, and that being part Māori ties me in with people and places and events that I had never necessarily thought about before” (Butt as cited in Maihi & Lander, 2005, p. 80).

Raranga and whatu are identity work. The stories we tell through our connection with the materials of weaving, the language of weaving as intrinsic to the relationships we have with our tupuna, our world and our bodies affirm cultural identity. Weaving, as artistic excellence (Te Kanawa, 1992; Blackman, 1998; Harwood, 2011; Tamarapa, 2011), as analyses of production (Wirihana, 2010; Manakura, 2006; Henare, 2005), and as a means of measuring wellness (Diamond, 2003; Wallace, 2006) are all texts that pertain to contemporary weaving today.

My creative practice is centred on the use of native weaving materials of this land Aotearoa from which I belong and connect to. Native materials such as harakeke provide cultural grounding for me as a wahine Māori artist. These materials attest to the connection I have as an indigenous person to this place; and proffer a

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<sup>95</sup> *A sedge plant with hollow stems, usually used to delicate articles of raranga.*

wealth of textures, colours, and forms discussed in the section above. They also contain memory, memories of the environment they are harvested from and memory in a sculptural sense.

Contemporary Māori fibre art is dynamic and vibrant with many practitioners creating stunning modern works all informed by the gifts our tūpuna have left for us. Our fashion conscious tūpuna (Te Awekotuku, 1991) were making textiles that were innovative, elegant and sartorial, with carefully considered design and application. Following in the footsteps of such innovative tradition inspires freedom to create new and inventive works. Contemporary weaving practice in Aotearoa draws on urban conversations of fashion, art and design and cultural discourse of place. The re-presentation of customary indigenous weaving practices reflects these influences. Contemporary practice re-imagines and re-interprets Māori customary woven textile. Often these re-imagined fibre works cross over into costume and performance and are represented in non-traditional contexts, such as the fashion catwalk and gallery spaces, as well as expected areas of kapa haka.<sup>96</sup> A significant collection of customary wearable works was re-presented in the exhibition *The Call of Taranaki* in 2013.<sup>97</sup> The exhibition featured 25 Māori artists all of whom whakapapa back to iwi in the region of Taranaki, working in various media. The woven kākahu featured in the exhibition and catwalk show present a range of customary techniques and materials in a dazzling array of contemporary re-imagining of customary kākahu<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> *Cultural performance.*

<sup>97</sup> <http://pukeariki.com/Exhibitions/Call-Of-Taranaki-Reo-Karanga-O-Taranaki>

<sup>98</sup> <https://youtu.be/AKPCWsF65jA>

As evidenced by the *Call of Taranaki* show contemporary kairaranga are drawing an array of materials to re-interpret customary textiles. The creative work I contributed to the show are examples of the use of basketry textiles to produce sculptural garments attesting to the versatility of raranga textile. The Little Black Dress (Figure 5) and Kurungaituku (Figure 4). These works investigate the tension between the past and present hierarchy of materials practice. Raranga techniques in the fibre arts historically are considered only for basketry therefore creating kākahu from this type of textile extends the relationship of materials and their known purpose. The piece Kurungaituku is a play on the conventional wearing of feathers in the Māori world. The corset is basketry textile, with the leggings layered in feathers as customary korowai are.



Figure 4. Campbell, D. (2008). *Kurungaituku*. In *Call of Taranaki Exhibition 2013*. [Harakeke, commercial dyes, commercial feathers]. Collection Te Puke Ariki Museum.

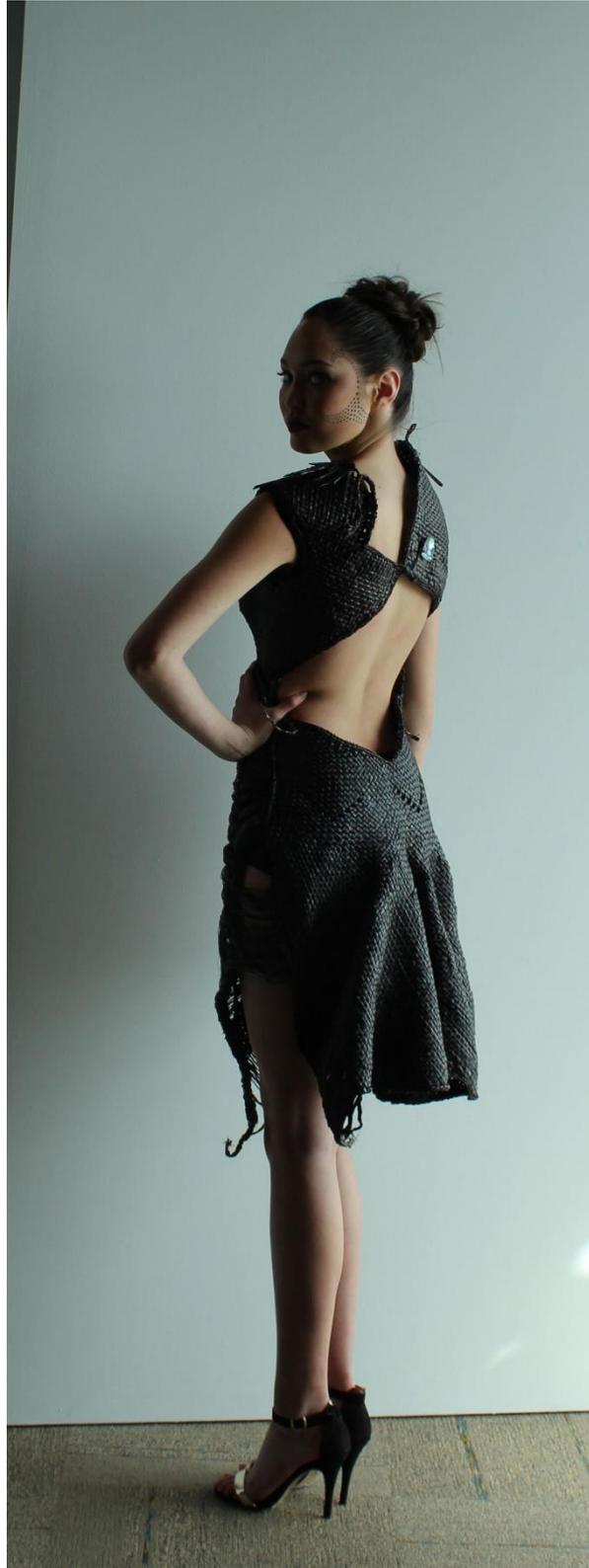


Figure 5. Campbell, D. (2008). *Little Black Dress*. In *Call of Taranaki Exhibition 2013*. [Harakeke, commercial dyes,]. Artists Collection.

## *Kete as Knowledge Vessel*

Raranga is the process of weaving that forms the foundation of my creative practice. Kete are created from the raranga process and hold a distinctive place within pūrākau. The following pūrākau tells us how knowledge came to humankind. This version of the narrative is attributed to *The Knowledge Basket – Te kete o te wānanga*.

*When Tāne decided to climb up to the heavens to seek the baskets of knowledge for mankind, his brother Whiro was angry. Whiro thought he had more right to the baskets than Tāne, because he was the elder brother.*

*The two brothers struggled for power, but it was Tāne who was favoured by Io, the supreme power, so Tāne was allowed to ascend the twelve heavens.*

*His task was made more difficult by Whiro who sent plagues of insects, reptiles and carrion-eating birds to attack Tāne.*

*But Tāne, with the aid of the winds, was able to proceed until he reached the summit of all the heavens.*

*Here, at Toi-ō-ngā-rangi, he was welcomed by Io and received the three baskets of knowledge and the two sacred stones.*

*The baskets, or kete were –*

*The kete-aronui which held all the knowledge that could help mankind*

*The kete-tuauri which held the knowledge of ritual, memory and prayer*

*and the kete-tuatea which contained knowledge of evil or makutu, which was harmful to mankind.*

*The stones, or whatukura held the power of knowledge and added mana to the teaching of knowledge.*

*On his return journey, Tāne was again attacked by Whiro and his allies, the birds and insects. Tāne would have been defeated if the winds had not once more, come to his rescue. The winds blew the birds and insects back down to earth where they remain today.*

*When Tāne finally reached earth again he placed the baskets and stones in a special house of knowledge – whare kura, which he had built before his journey to the heavens.*

*Whiro was back on earth too, and he demanded that he should be the one to take care of the treasures.*

*But Tāne and his supporters refused Whiro's demands and Whiro was eventually banished to the underworld where he still lives, and continually tries to cause trouble for gods and mankind.*

*Tane-te-wānanga-ā-rangi (Tāne, bringer of knowledge from the sky) was left to maintain order on earth.*

This pūrākau<sup>99</sup> tells us that the search and pursuit of knowledge can be arduous, but we must persevere. Most important to this theme is the significance of kete. These kete held knowledge tangible and intangible, in themselves they were/are knowledge. They are a symbolic representation of the connection between the physical and spiritual realms, between consciousness, experience and reality.

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<sup>99</sup> *History, creation narratives as well as contemporary narratives.*

Kairaranga play an intrinsic role in making manifest these connections through the creation of kete, and the continuation of the praxis of raranga and whatu.

The forms of kete vary according to the intended function. In contemporary weaving the wealth and artistic depth displayed in kete whakairo<sup>100</sup> is astounding. In the construction of a kete, narratives of place are interwoven as a series of symbols such as Papakirango and Karu hāpuku (Figures 10 & 11) among others. These patterns or whakairo on kete have significance that relates to the land from which these taonga originate (Pendergrast, 1984; 2003).

The creation of a kete whakairo begins with laying out the whakapapa whakairo<sup>101</sup> for the kete (Figure 7). The layout defines the pattern of the kete, then also regulates the raranga that follows. The use of the term whakapapa in kete construction represents the very beginning of constructing the kete. Kete are a mainstay of my practice. In the raranga of kete a world of numerous patterns and forms is available, that can challenge, inspire, test, and enhance the skills of the kairaranga. For instance, the intricacy of Karu Hapuku pattern (Figure 10) is far more challenging than taki rua (Figure 6), a common pattern introduced to beginners. Kete can be put together at the beginning with a whiri, where the ends of the whenu are stripped to expose the muka.<sup>102</sup> These muka ends are tightly plaited together to form the basis of the kete, then the whenu are woven up, to form the kete. Or the kete can be laid out as in (Figure 7), with the whakapapa of the pattern worked out accordingly. The body of the kete is then woven in a circular form then closed off at the bottom as the kete is finished. The laying out of the whakapapa is critical to the whakairo and must be accurate for the design to be executed correctly. It is obvious to an experienced kairaranga if a whenu is misplaced in the layout, as each row builds on the whakairo, if the whakairo is interrupted with a wrong weave, the raranga must be taken undone and redone.

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<sup>100</sup> *Whakairo used in this context relate to the patterns and designs woven into kete.*

<sup>101</sup> *The sequence of laying out the design to be woven into the kete.*

<sup>102</sup> *Muka is the internal fibre of the harakeke leaves. The extraction process and use is described in Chapter 6.*

Undoing raranga to correct a whakairo embeds good habits in creative practice, acknowledging the fundamentals and practicing and re-practicing teaches us how raranga operates, it's very construction. Understanding the fundamentals fosters innovation that has integrity.



Figure 6. Mitchell, A. (2016). *Kete Whakairo*. Taki rua pattern on top and bottom of kete.



Figure 7. Campbell, D. (2018) Laying out the whakapapa on kete whakairo. Note the blocks of colour and placement in the construction of Papakirango pattern. [Kiekie, synthetic dyes].

In the making of a kete or kākahu for a particular person I think about the best whakairo or design that would represent them. For someone I hold in high esteem I would weave a whakairo that I would find challenging and difficult but ultimately rewarding. Pouhine (Figure 8) and Poutama (Figure 9) are two such whakairo; they are both meaningful and visually arresting, being instantly recognizable to many Māori eyes. Pendergrast (2003) states “The poutama (pattern 28) is often said to show the progress of a young man in his struggle to make his way in life” (unpaginated). I would add to this that whakairo pouhine shows the progress of a young woman in the same struggle. The analysis of patterns that Pendergrast (1984) collected, were shared to him by many female kairaranga. Pattern 156 Poutama<sup>103</sup> has an extensive explanation of the pattern as belonging to the male gender, while Pattern 159 Pouhine barely rates a mention. Both of these patterns can apply to male and female. Pendergrast goes on to state:

Each step represents a new attainment as he [she] continues upwards in his [her] search for knowledge and understanding. Also, the pattern is seen to represent welcome, with a vertical suggesting a human body and the next angle above, (consisting of a horizontal and a vertical line) representing an arm raised in pōwhiri or welcoming gesture [*Italics are mine*] (p. 159).

Another interpretation on the pattern from Moorfield’s (2011) *Te Aka Dictionary* explains Poutama as a pattern used in turapa tukutuku and whāriki. The definition continues “symbolizing genealogies and also the various level of learning and intellectual achievement. Some say they represent the steps which Tāne-o-te-wānanga ascended to the topmost realm in his quest for superior knowledge and religion” (p. 156). The ascension of Tāne to the spiritual realms is a well-known reading for the whakairo Poutama. However, the whakairo Pouhine has also been left to us by our tūpuna, giving it equal status. Many times, my preference will be

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<sup>103</sup> *Pou relates to a post, upright support or pillar. Tama means male, Hine means female.*

to use Pouhine as this whakairo to me reflects balance, acknowledging the female and male aspects within our visual language of raranga. Both of these whakairo technically have a staggered ara tika<sup>104</sup> except when they are laid out at the beginning whakapapa, which makes them intellectually as well as experientially challenging. The majority of raranga whakairo have a straight ara tika that kairaranga follow in order to maintain an even edge. The kairaranga weaves around the kete on the ara tika, in a circular three-dimensional way, each sinistral<sup>105</sup> whenu and dextral<sup>106</sup> whenu interwoven in even tension.



Figure 8. Campbell, D. (2016) *Pouhine sampler*. [Harakeke, synthetic dyes.]



Figure 9. Herewini, P. (n.d.). Poutama. Kieke. In Pendergrast, M. (1984). *Feathers & Fibre: A survey of traditional and contemporary Māori craft*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books Ltd.

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<sup>104</sup> An ara tika is the guideline a kairaranga follows in creating the body of the raranga. If this is does not meet, it means that the initial layout was probably wrong, necessitating redoing the raranga from the beginning.

<sup>105</sup> Left facing from the kairaranga view - direction of whenu.

<sup>106</sup> Right facing from the kairaranga view - direction of whenu.



Figure 10. Campbell, D. (2003). *Karu hāpuku. Kete whakairo*. [Harakeke]. London, England: Collection Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.



Figure 11. Campbell, D. (2003). *Papakirango. Kete whakairo*. [Harakeke]. London, England: Collection Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Karu hāpuku (Figure 10 & 14) is another whakairo that does not technically have a straight ara tika. The kairaranga working with this whakairo needs to stay mindful in the raranga process so as not to miss the change of overlay. Karu hāpuku has an irregular ara tika that changes every 12 whenu, the whakapapa sets the whakairo for the on-going raranga. Whakairo karu hāpuku is not generally

used, as the difficulty level is very high. Karu hāpuku is referred to as the eyes of the hāpuku a grouper or large fish of the ocean; the whakairo karu hāpuku then may represent a coastal tribal area. Raranga today is privileged by the knowledge gifted from kairaranga of the past, it is important today for kairaranga to seek out elders who may have the knowledge of these whakairo, in order to pursue their own tribal knowledge.

Kete are also made from kiekie or pingao, as introduced earlier, depending on availability. The inside of a kete for a kairaranga is just as important as the outside. I do not often put lining inside a kete, as the mark of the maker is evident on the inside by the way the kete is joined and how the handles are attached. These are hallmarks of the maker. It is gratifying to see kete being used by their owners, although they are considered taonga they are also functional, as well as being a symbol of the Māori world. Kete are created from native materials from the native environment, and as such may not last forever, they need to be taken care of. Oftentimes I am asked to mend the worn-out body of a kete, my advice is always to retire the one that is worn by returning them to Papatūānuku the whenua. Or hang them on the wall so they can still be enjoyed and make a new one. Or I will offer to make a new one for them. By creating a new kete, the art form continues to flourish, and the owner can still appreciate the beauty of the first kete.

Given that currently the whakapapa of many whakairo we embellish our kete with are unknown, many kairaranga weaving today are engaged in maintaining and re-remembering this visual language. A kete is more than a basket, it contains even when empty, the symbolic representations of the brilliance of our tupuna thus a vessel that contains much more than the eye can see. The kete as body is an extension of the kete as vessel, and a natural progression in my creative practice.

### *From basket to body*

The kete as vessel, as body forms the basis of a series of work that underpins much of my creative practice. The reclaimed kete series 2006 – 2009 included in

exhibitions such as the vitrine at Waikato Museum 2009,<sup>107</sup> and Pasifika Styles 2006, Māori and Pacific Art and Culture in the 21st Century at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in the UK.<sup>108</sup> These creative research works represented body forms as three-dimensional (3D) woven relief together with suspended woven 3D forms. Reworking used and cast off kete to recreate discernible body forms is a core thread of the work that I produce today. These forms are modified to invoke the body as container reflecting the kete as vessel, and the body as vessel. Underpinning these works were the ideas of reclamation and salvage. The reclaiming of indigenous voice, indigenous female space is woven into these conceptual forms. Using discarded and redundant kete I remove them and transformed them into bespoke works, referencing how they began their lives initially by keeping some of the kete elements intact.



Figure 12. Campbell, D. (2007). *Reclaimed kete series*. [Harakeke]. Private Collection.

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<sup>107</sup> <http://waikatomuseum.co.nz/exhibitions-and-events/view/2145845869>

<sup>108</sup> <http://maa.cam.ac.uk/pasifika-styles/>

I did this, for instance, by maintaining the initial whiri join of the kete in the body form and leaving the handles on the body forms. (Figure 12).

Integral to the creation of the body form is the kete being used as the base. The kete form is important as the beginning of the body forms as they embody knowledge and whakapapa., To create the body shapes the kete are cut open, moulded, trimmed and added to, the weave is at its weakest at this point revealing its vulnerability. Once the weave is split in this way the woven fabric has no support and un-weaves itself, I relate to this phase to the colonized state of mind, where the unmaking of Māori thinking has occurred.



Figure 13. Campbell, D. (2007). *Reclaimed kete series*. [Harakeke, commercial dyes]. Private Collection.

The weave becomes to me much like a skin, an unwoven and broken skin that reflects the state of the cultural body as it navigates marginal spaces, trying to resist the coming undone of itself. The inside and outside of the body then becomes manifest in its new re-weaving and reclamation of the kete - it becomes another body a decolonized body. The body of woven articulation, that is an articulation of intangible and tangible knowledge, in a form that is visibly relatable to what I call a manifested cultural body. The cultural body theory will be discussed fully in Chapter 4. The use of the body as the tool of articulation informed the creation of body forms. The progression from creating kete as vessel (Figures 12, 13, 14, 16) to manifesting the body as vessel from discarded kete was a logical development in my studio practice.

Underpinning my current work is that the body and the harakeke are vessels of knowledge. In fashioning sculptural body forms from the woven textile of harakeke I discovered the 'memory' within the material. The realization of the plant having memory opened up a wealth of sculptural qualities, which I discuss in depth in Chapter 4.



Figure 14. Campbell, D. (2006). *Reclaimed kete series. Karu hapuku*. [Harakeke and commercial dyes]. Private collection.

## *Dialogue with Practice*

My creative practice is an established one. I have been weaving and creating sculptures for the last two and a half decades. My artistic work has been supported by a teaching career that also spans two decades. Many people are interested in learning these art forms, this is evident in the delivery of raranga courses offered in tertiary institutions across Aotearoa and the memberships of raranga organizations such as Te Roopu Raranga Whatu o Aotearoa. This national body hosts a bi-annual hui<sup>109</sup> throughout Aotearoa that is always well attended from 150 attendees to 300 per hui. The art of weaving is highly valued by kairaranga and collectors although many people are unaware of the intricacies and cultural significance of customary and contemporary garments. Like many artists my teaching career has allowed me freedom from the necessity of selling my creative work. This in turn has allowed me freedom in pushing the boundaries of how weaving is re-presented today. These sculptural works are created from traditional weaving techniques, processes underpinned by tikanga Māori. The weaving is contemporary in that it is re-presenting the role of raranga textile, underpinned by cultural and mana wahine priorities of creativity that challenge the status quo. In order to create new forms in raranga it is necessary to learn the fundamental processes and techniques first. I believe my Māoriness is expressed through the materials and cultural practices I employ, the expression of which is teased out and articulated in chapter 3.

As mentioned earlier my first contact with harakeke in the 90's was as a medium to create art, that is to say we were not taught the whakapapa of Te Pā Harakeke, or any of the tikanga associated with the art form. I was enrolled in a Craft Design Course in Auckland where we were introduced to a wealth of disciplines, from clay, to textile printing, and jewellery making. Raranga or flax weaving class it was called, was a short block course of a week or so in the full programme of the course. In this initial engagement we were not taught that harakeke, and raranga

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<sup>109</sup> *Hui is the Māori word for gathering together.*

practice was revered in the Māori world. Nor were we made aware that this art form was often relegated to the past by white settler colonization as of lesser value. With the cultural values of the art form being absent a subversive disruption of tikanga Māori and the marginalisation of Māori knowledge was established. The erasure of tikanga from an inherently Māori form of expression perpetuates the notion that the art form is an individual achievement rather than being embedded within a wider world, the Māori world. Even though I was unaware of the cultural significance of raranga, I fell in love with harakeke and raranga in that first engagement. The first taonga I learnt to make were waikawa<sup>110</sup> I loved to create these big baskets and consequently all of my friends received waikawa from me for months after. Through this Introduction to 'flax weaving class' I learnt that I loved the feel of harakeke, the smell, the juices, the presence of the plant. Even though I was not taught tikanga, there was something about the material and the practice that I felt was a part of me. Consequently, my life took a new trajectory. On completion of the Certificate in Craft Design in Auckland I transferred to Waiariki Polytechnic to continue on with the Diploma where the teaching was founded on Māori art forms and accordingly being taught by Māori practicing artists opened my eyes to a new world. Raranga was an integral discipline within the programme structure and we were encouraged to underpin our creative works with design theory.

As I progressed, as a kairaranga the learning I most enjoyed was being part of weaving wānanga on marae, where kairaranga of all skill level gathered. These wānanga are inclusive spaces for all level of learners and teachers. The opportunity to engage with master kairaranga was such a privilege, the elders and established kairaranga being more than happy to pass on the knowledge and the tikanga around their practices. The learning one can gain in wānanga with other kairaranga, many of them being experts, is humbling. Being made aware of the scope of the weaving arts and skills of the practitioners, I have experienced mana

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<sup>110</sup> *Large basket made from undressed harakeke.*

wahine in practice. Sharing this collective practice in the company of wahine<sup>111</sup> Māori sharing our experiences, laughing and crying together, affirms for me the strength in the collective through the mana of women. These wānanga continue today because of the energy and commitment of kairaranga who value the collective energy of being together in creative indigenous spaces. The strength, resilience and tenacity arising through the collective of weaving together is visceral and feminine. I still attend and contribute at these wānanga today, which re-affirms and continues the practice of mana wahine in such spaces.

The relationship of the kairaranga and plant is a direct one. In my practice I acknowledge the agency of the plant. As I raranga I am aware through experience of how supple the whenu can be and how far I can push this suppleness before the whenu is stressed. This awareness is also necessary in the preparation process. If one is not listening or aware of the weight, dryness, moisture content, of the whenu, over processing will occur. The kairaranga may over scrape the whenu resulting in breaking the surface negatively affecting the overall look. Or the opposite may be the case where by not applying enough pressure can result in the whenu curling as it dries creating an uneven tension in the finished taonga. It takes time for a kairaranga to develop what I call a listening for the material and only comes with the repetitive practice of preparing and practice raranga. In the making process, a dialogue surfaces between the kairaranga (myself) and the material of articulation, in this case the native plant. I feel intimately connected with our taonga plants through my tūpuna when I engage with these knowing plants. A relationship to the past, present and future arises through the senses. This dialogue is in the body and the mind with the plant through listening in and acknowledging what the material can tell us. The harakeke in the harvesting process has the memory of being in the whenua, buoyed by the wind, soaking up sunshine and rain. Relishing the environment. The plant has a memory, remembered within the rau of the harakeke Papatūānuku and Ranginui, from the land and the sky.

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<sup>111</sup> *Female.*

I relate to this the first memory of the harakeke; once the kairaranga starts to process the rau this first memory becomes apparent. In the preparation processes we need to listen, to feel the material, to respect a relationship is occurring. To reshape the 'first memory' embedded in the leaves the kairaranga firmly softens the leaves by processes termed "hāpine, piahū, haro, or haku ... depending on where the weaver is from" (Puketapu-Hetet, 1999, p. 21). Here, the kairaranga feels for the thickness of the rau, and the weight of the rau, to gauge the pressure of the hāpine process. At the same time listening to the tool as it scrapes the surface of the whenu, and asking is it too scratchy? ... do I need to reduce pressure, ...? Or to add pressure? The hāpine or mirimiri<sup>112</sup> should be smooth in sound and feel. This process softens the leaves and removes as much moisture as possible, done with a pounamu<sup>113</sup> tool or more often than not an old kitchen knife reserved for just this purpose. The mirimiri alters the memory cells of the whenu making them supple and pliable. The rau<sup>114</sup> are bladed, hāpine applied, then boiled and bundled and left to dry out. The whenu can then be stored in this form for a number of years in the right environment. When the kairaranga is ready to raranga, the bundles can be softened or reconstituted by soaking briefly in hot water. The whenu are then pliable again ready to raranga.

Once the whenu dry after being woven they hold the form of whatever they are woven into. This holding of form is what I suggest is the 'next memory' of the harakeke, the memory of the finished form. The environment is embedded within the cells of the leaves, their first memory, becomes joined with the next memory of form. The hands and body of the kairaranga and the palimpsest altered but still ultimately itself, have shaped the leaves in new forms that express the knowledge of the harakeke plant. The transformation of harakeke and kairaranga emanates through a reciprocal relationship. Like its amazing capacity to take colour but also vary in hue and saturation, whenu can also be stripped to expose the muka fibre embedded within and softened and rolled to create threads, which I explain

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<sup>112</sup> Firm massage.

<sup>113</sup> The Māori name for greenstone, different types of hard, durable, prized nephrite jade.

<sup>114</sup> Leaves.

further in the chapter on the creating the korowai Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi.<sup>115</sup>

In introducing the underpinnings and development of my creative practice, in this chapter I have detailed the basis for this study. The creative works presented here example the ways in which I have explored thinking through making (Pallasmaa, 2009; Nimkulrat, 2013) which has been instrumental in the development of the methodology Te Whare Pora.<sup>116</sup> Fundamental to creating new forms in raranga the kairaranga needs to understand the expansiveness and the limitations of the practice. This takes dedication and practice, the development of raranga skills can only happen through making, by perfecting preparation processes, by learning to raranga with freshly harvested harakeke. Understanding the 3-dimensional nature of raranga, gives a kairaranga insights into the structure of the weave therefore allowing for extensions in manipulation. My practice is built on extending the forms of raranga in the creative process, which can only come from practice. The contemporary practices of raranga and whatu are collective practices encompassing kaupapa Māori, time honoured techniques, and tikanga that sustain and maintain the practice.

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<sup>115</sup> Chapter 6.

<sup>116</sup> Discussed in Chapter 2.

*Weaving the cultural body*



Colonisation has designated the indigenous cultural body as inferior, a site of colonisation constructed by physical and spiritual violence (Pihama, 2001; Simmonds, 2011; Smith, 1992). I draw on the notion of the cultural body in order to frame the discussion of the creative outputs of the PhD project. The cultural body is the Māori body and its construction through a Māori world view. I use the cultural body notion as a theoretical space in which the creative works are realized, sourced deeply from this place, this land, informed by Māori ontology.

This chapter introduces the woven articulation of the body and the space that surrounds the body within the creative practice of this study. The notion of the cultural body is explained to reveal the nature of thinking through the articulated woven body. The creative outputs for this study are interpreted through this cultural body lens, and the making processes are theorized. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, my creative practice explores the body as concept, as vessel, as container and ultimately as discursive text. In the early stages of my practice I learnt to make kete whakairo (Figures 10 & 11) I then went on to investigate sculptural forms informed by raranga kete techniques and processes. These are processes involving tikanga and cultural knowledges that revitalize, nurture culture and disrupt colonizing effects. At this stage the woven articulation of body forms arose as a natural progression through a need to push the boundaries of my known creative practice. The evolution of the body forms stemmed from the notion of kete manifesting as the body as container, as in the “reclaimed kete series” then subsequently kākahu such as the LBD and Kurungaituku, constructed from raranga techniques were developed as containers for the body.



Figure 15. Mitchell, A. (2017). *Kete Whakairo*. [Harakeke and commercial dyes]. Hamilton, New Zealand.



Figure 16. Campbell, D. 2006-2009. *Reclaimed kete Series*. [Harakeke and commercial dyes]. Collection Hamilton Museum.



Figure 17. Campbell, D. 2005-2009. *Body formation*. [Pingao]. Private Collection.

Previous creative research re-presented body forms as 3D woven relief together with suspended woven 3D forms. Reworking used and cast off kete to recreate discernible body forms created a core thread of the work produced at this time. Underpinning these works were the ideas of reclamation and salvage, reclamation of indigenous voice, of indigenous spaces, of female spaces. These discarded kete vessels were transformed into bespoke works, referencing how they began their lives initially. Amongst the series of works produced at this time were digital installations of the body as land, the female body as land and sites of violence (Figure 18). The use of a digital format extended my practice articulating multi-layered visual conversation on regimes of discourse and power.

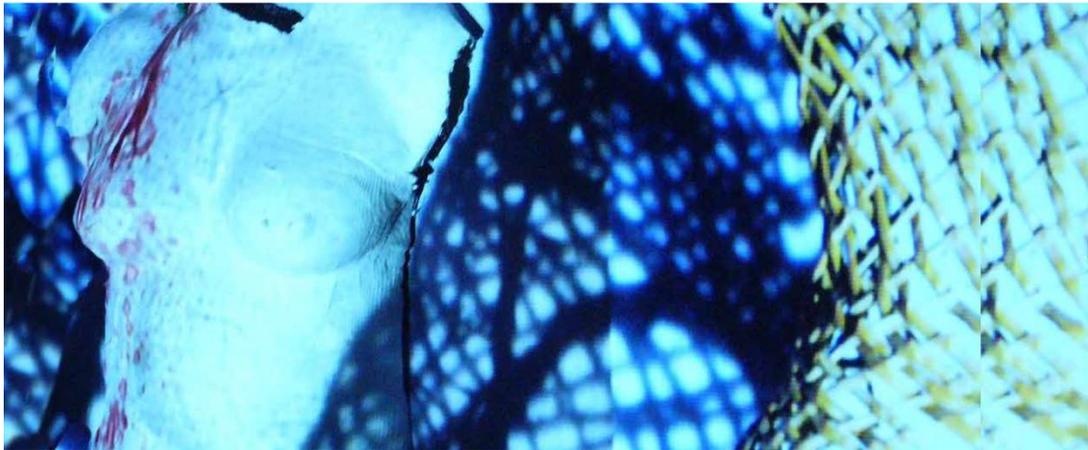


Figure 18. Campbell, D. (2005). *Aho o te Whenua*. [Digital Still]. Artist collection.

The theory of the cultural body has developed through my studio praxis, informed by kaupapa Māori theories and methodologies outlined in chapter 2. The cultural body in my creative practice is a political stance critiquing the colonial project that erased, marginalized and suppressed Te ao Māori. As such, I claim my creative body of work, like my physical body, is a body of resistance to colonization.

Indigenous Māori knowledge is deeply rooted through many generations in the land. The cultural body notion developed from my own belief systems and ontology is a decolonized site. The theory of the cultural body encompasses the mind, body and spiritual connections. An idea of a body that knows its indigenous self, that draws strength from the earth where all knowledge resides. Through this notion Papatūānuku and Ranginui are the cultural bodies that are the source of life. Wiremu Pākehā (Temara, 1978) describes Papatūānuku and Ranginui in this way:

If there is no Papatūānuku, Ranginui cannot be, if there is no Ranginui, Papatūānuku cannot be. If you mention Ranginui, you are conscious of Papatūānuku and the same applies to Papatūānuku. That is why they are one. Everything between them is one, they all come from them; the stars, the sun, the moon, the clouds, the rain, the snow, the wind, everything that we see and feel. Even to the things of the world, everything, the birds, the

animals, the insects, the trees, the sea, the land, the rivers, everything all from Ranginui and Papatūānuku (p. 1).

Papatūānuku and Ranginui are the cultural bodies that envelop us still, Ranginui the sky parent and Papatūānuku the earth parent, and as such I am aware of their relationship from a kairaranga perspective. The artworks that are created through and of weaving imbued with Te Ao Māori are a manifestation of the relationship between these two cultural bodies; a kairaranga is the conduit through which these two bodies come into connection with each other. The mist that rises from Papatūānuku and the rain that descends from Ranginui are physical manifestations of the longing these two atua have for each other. Consequently, the creation of a work of art from te pā harakeke, a manifestation of mist and rain, Papatūānuku and Ranginui, is also a physical manifestation of their relationship and would not be possible without their nurturing of the worlds we dwell in and on. Therefore, weaving spaces can be ritualized spaces that validate Māori centred cultural practices, which guide the mahi<sup>117</sup> being created. The connection of Te Pā Harakeke and kairaranga has been explained in Chapter 3 and the body of knowledge embodied in Te Pā Harakeke also manifests in the creation of artwork from these materials. Whatever form they take, these woven works are considered as cultural bodies of knowledge being vessels, that embody tikanga and whakapapa. Be it kete, kākahu or sculptural works they are sources of knowledge when read from a knowledgeable cultural base or Māori worldview. By creating a taonga that manifests from these cultural bodies, an affirmation of the cultural Māori body becomes available.

Becoming and identity are intertwined when we can access our cultural bodies of knowing; we can also acknowledge our own bodies as cultural bodies. Through raising consciousness, or conscientisation the cultural body we inhabit becomes known as aware indigenous bodies, thinking, feeling, doing, and being through the process. The Indigenous body as a colonized vessel has no control but to be

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<sup>117</sup> *Work.*

subsumed by the systems of power. The notion of the cultural body as kaupapa<sup>118</sup> encompasses the hinengaro<sup>119</sup> and wairua<sup>120</sup> of a person as inseparable in the expression of being. Through the practice the cultural body of the kairaranga thinks through the practices of raranga and whatu becoming aware of the treasures our tūpuna have left us that can heal and restore us.

Papatūānuku and Ranginui are connected creating a whole existing in a holistic relationship, so too can we mindfully experience our cultural body and cultural thinking as one in a holistic manner. Therefore, our Mātauranga encompassing mind-body-spirit connections, links us intrinsically with the Māori world. I suggest that weaving is a portal to access our Mātauranga that affirms and celebrates us holistically. To consider Papatūānuku and Ranginui as cultural bodies is then to reflect on our own bodies as created of /and from Papatūānuku and Ranginui. The practices of tikanga around and for the body, the mind and the spirit are performed as integral to our indigenous worlds. Through the practice of raranga and whatu we can free our minds to allow the gifts of our tūpuna to flow through us. When the conditions are beneficial, we can re-remember our original instructions inscribed on and through our bodies.

### *The Body Inscribed*

Thinking through Kaupapa Māori theory in my practice, the inscribed body is a body written with cultural memories, with trauma, embodied with sites of erasure and bondage. At the same time the Māori body is imprinted with the gifts of our tūpuna. Inscribed with Māori whakapapa the body can be stabilized through whakapapa, as it becomes re-inscribed by colonial power structures. Whakapapa is the Māori concept of interconnectedness to all things human and non-human in the environment. Pihama asserts that, “Whakapapa is regarded as an analytic tool that has been employed by our people as a means to understand our world

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<sup>118</sup> *Philosophy, background or subject of process.*

<sup>119</sup> *The mind, the intellect.*

<sup>120</sup> *The spiritual side of a person.*

and relationships” (2010, p. 5). The knowledge of whakapapa as interior territory of the body affirms the cultural body as a body pre-inscribed with knowing. Australian feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz (1987) argues that: “The female (or male) body can no longer be regarded as a fixed, concrete substance, a pre-cultural given, it has a determinate form only by being socially inscribed” (p. 2). Without relating to the inherited body as whole and complete, Grosz believes that it becomes a site that is transient and vulnerable to the social and cultural ideology of the day. The body is open to re-inscription of its surface; in such a way that a new text can become the constitution or reading of the body as in the colonized cultural body. Feminist scholar Pippa Brush asserts, “the body is rendered plastic inscribed with gender and cultural standards” (1998, p. 22). The body as a malleable plastic vessel can then become a reclaimed cultural body aware of a colonized condition and re-inscribed and re-remembered through tūpuna knowledge. Learning and practicing raranga and whatu I was made aware of my empowered cultural body, so deeply embedded in my identity, the pre-inscription of whakapapa as fundamental. Through the processes of learning te reo me ona tikanga<sup>121</sup> relating to the art forms of weaving I had the experience of realizing what was missing in my lived body. I knew my whakapapa, but I had grown up in the city of Auckland in the 60’s that continually marginalized Māori girls and boys as being culturally inferior (Pihama, 1993; Simon, 1990; Simon, 1998). The onslaught of a racist curriculum in New Zealand education provided me with a distorted view of my Māori whakapapa and myself.

I knew deep inside my body/self that there was something missing; a link to an affirmed and celebrated culture that I could become whole and complete within. My young body was a malleable body, open like a wound to the “colonial gaze” (hooks, 1996; Trinh, 1991; Hunt & Lessard, 2002) and affected by social conditioning. I became a disempowered site travelling around the world looking for connection, only to realize that I needed to be home in Aotearoa nurtured by the cultural bodies of Papatūānuku and Ranginui, and those living and past bodies

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<sup>121</sup> *Māori language and customary practices.*

that embody te ao Māori. Engaging with our native plants and learning about my own cultural body mind and spirit through weaving practice affirmed cultural wellness. Cultural wellness that helped to heal the wounds of the colonial gaze wounds now strengthened with scar tissue inscribed on my body. These marks, scars of empowerment have come about through Indigenous Māori knowledge systems, affirmed, accepted and practiced through my tūpuna art forms.



*Figure 19.* Campbell, D. (2010). *Tinana – body* [Harakeke].

My creative practice bodywork in contrast to the reading of a disempowered body literally manifests the inscribed body as a site of power and resistance. This is inscribed by the woven textile, informed by embodied histories inherent within the whakapapa of pre-inscription. French philosopher Michel Foucault (1977)

articulates the pre-inscribed body in this way:

The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a disassociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. (p. 148).

The body therefore is in constant conflict of past experiences, present desires, of failure and breakdown. Within such an analysis the body is in perpetual disintegration signified by the processes of ageing, a constantly changing body (Campbell, 2005). The human is conceived, and then born, then goes through on-going series of events that inscribe the body. The female body in particular endures a non-stop series of events on the body, the menstruating body, the maternal body, the menopausal body, as well as societies pressures to conform to an ideology of beauty. These inscriptions socialize a body to normative power systems or as American gender theorist Judith Butler (1989) points out regimes of discourse and power. Butler (1989) investigates the paradox of bodily inscriptions whereby the constructed body becomes the site of its own construction asserting that the body would not be constructed without being the occasion, the site or the condition of a process of construction. Thus, a paradox is teased out further as Butler goes on to say that perhaps a reading in a self-referential way, the body is indefinite and is of necessity a construction that is open to a genealogical critique (1989). The genealogically grounding whakapapa of the body is the site of becoming the cultural body, the cultural bodies that surround us as well as the bodies in which we dwell. Tawhanga Nōpera, Māori scholar and artist, describes whakapapa in this way:

Whakapapa inspires life; it allows Māori people to keep memories alive, to reorder them and test out their relevance over eons through restorying histories; through whakapapa, we are able to link and connect to things that seem distant and abstract, as well as those that seem close and more real.

Through the theory of whakapapa, people are always able to locate themselves at the core of their accumulated experiences; thus, whakapapa resists marginalization by centring identity. (T.Nōpera, personal communication, November 10, 2016)

The bodies and forms of the body created within my creative practice centre identity being predicated on the cultural meanings that constitute the corporeal body. The weave is the materiality of a body constructed from the cultural inscriptions that are its construction. The practice of raranga and whatu are intersections of the interior and exterior connecting the interior body and exterior skin, and through knowledge and relationships also to other bodies and the cultural body.

French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze and French psychoanalyst and political activist Felix Guattari (1987) conceive the body as something that is in constant flux a body in the constant process of “becoming” in which systems come together to form a nascent system or assemblage (Holland, 2013). Along with Jacques Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari insisted that difference and becoming should have priority of identity and being (Holland, 2013). The idea of becoming or constantly in a state of becoming is integral to my art making praxis, systems of, or processes of, creation are enacted from sites of knowing already existing within the cultural body. Stuart Hall on cultural identity and diaspora writes that cultural identities have been “reconstructed within the dominant regimes of cinematic and visual representation of the West” (1990, p. 225). In terms of Māori identity constructs this view also applies. My own experience has been one of disruption of identity, my Māori identity referred to by Hall as the “broken rubric of our past” (p. 225). The broken past takes focused healing and awareness, which can be accessed through our arts and how they are practiced. Hall (1990) goes on to say that:

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything, which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the

continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. (p. 225)

Tikanga informs us of a history of behaviour that enacts a cultural body 'being' in the world affirming a Māori identity. Constantly becoming is a response to the ruptures of cultural practices and the reclamation of cultural ways of being, a re-finding of the self within our own interpretation of the world. The cultural body as an identifier is a positioning of ourselves within our own pūrākau and taking on the learning those pūrākau have for us.

Far from being eternally grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall, 1990, p. 225)

The cultural body encompasses historic pūrākau as well as current realities, Hall's assertion of identity being more than connections to a romanticized past that defines us. It is an identity that is fluid in the states 'becoming' and 'being' that are influenced by ruptures and loss (Hall, 1990). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) posit the state of 'becoming' as 'assemblage' signifying multiple ways of 'becoming.' influenced by factors of past, present and future experiences that the body endures. Assemblage as a theory of multiple lines of flight, or multiple connections on many levels, is reflected in the cultural body as in constantly becoming. These lines of flight refer to the multiple interpretations of a body becoming, of a body extending past binary thinking that limits expression. The cultural body is at once, itself and not, is at once identity and fixed and fluid, in a constant state of making and unmaking. My creative practice research explores the notions of the known and unknown in the making, thus identity known, and unknown is constantly in its construction.

Also, a point of theoretical departure is the notion of assemblage as a state of being, a state of creation that only manifest or become when the assemblage being created becomes the whole but is still open to re-articulation. Holland

considers Deleuze and Guattari's theory of assemblage as re-articulation in constant process saying that:

The double-becoming of wasp and orchid is in some respects far more striking: they don't share genetic material, but each has nonetheless become the subject of a becoming-the-other by capturing an element of its behavioural or morphological repertoire, each serving as medium for the other's becoming" (Holland, 2013. p. 74)

The relationship of kairaranga and material is a process of becoming-the-other, and-the-other-becoming, without the taonga plant and its inherent cultural imperatives, the kairaranga cannot become a kairaranga, without the kairaranga the taonga plant does not manifest other articulations and become something other than itself. Thus, a double becoming is manifested in a reciprocal relationship of kairaranga and taonga plant. One cannot become without the other.

I relate to the pre-inscribed or cultural body as a body articulated through whakapapa, acknowledging not only continuity of being but also a beginning of being. Whakapapa is closely linked to the metaphor of the pre-inscribed body, the metaphor of the body as a container of history, container of the present and the future. Foucault describes 'pre-inscription' as "a body that is culturally imprinted prior to any social or environmental conditioning" (as cited in Rabinow, 1984, p. 77). Whakapapa is thus a cultural imprint; nonetheless the body is still subject to sites and conditions of control. The cultural imprint of whakapapa is the connection to ancestry that remains in the present day as a focus of 'becoming' - a connection that I felt as something missing in my early years but reclaimed through tikanga and wānanga practices and spaces.

The theorized body is also exemplified in the contemporary wharenuī<sup>122</sup>, the large

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<sup>122</sup> *Ancestral house.*

meeting houses, on the cultural institutions of the marae. In addition to places of communal gatherings these houses contain a symbolic narrative of whakapapa. The wharenuī are often named after a significant ancestor of the tribe and as such are greeted by name and addressed as a living person (Walker, 1992). The body is represented in the architectural structure of the building:

The maihi (barge boards) represent the outstretched arms of the ancestor extending a welcome to guests. The tāhuhu<sup>123</sup> is the backbone and the heke<sup>124</sup> the ribs. Thus, an assembly of the tribe in the house is said to be meeting within the bosom of the ancestor. The porch is referred to as the roro<sup>125</sup> of the ancestor. The kuwaha<sup>126</sup> is the doorway. It symbolizes the transition from the outer world of light in the courtyard to the inner world of the spiritual realm inside the house (Walker, 1992, p. 21).

Looking beyond the fabric of the architecture of the building is to interpret the narratives of whakapapa represented inside. The pou are carved representations of tūpuna, conveying whakapapa connections to the eponymous tūpuna the house is named after. The tukutuku<sup>127</sup> and kōwhaiwhai<sup>128</sup> connote the history of the local iwi. The whāriki<sup>129</sup> are inlaid with geometric patterns that represent stories of the past, and in some wharenuī figurative painting is used to express cosmological notions. These narratives of inscription are connections to the past as well as access to genealogical and tribal knowledge. The metaphorical body of the wharenuī encapsulates the physical Māori art forms of whakairo rākau,<sup>130</sup> turapa tukutuku, kōwhaiwhai, and whāriki. The wharenuī is a transitional space where time and space collide through the body of the whare experienced through

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<sup>123</sup> *Overhead ridgepole.*

<sup>124</sup> *Overhead rafters.*

<sup>125</sup> *The brain.*

<sup>126</sup> *The mouth.*

<sup>127</sup> *Fine lattice panels woven with whakairo that enhance the connection between the carved pou on either side of the panels.*

<sup>128</sup> *Curvilinear painted rafters that denote genealogical connections of the eponymous ancestor and the pou represented in the carved forms.*

<sup>129</sup> *Large fine woven mats.*

<sup>130</sup> *Wood carving.*

our cultural bodies as embodied experience. (Campbell, 2005)

## *Key influences*

Inspiration in my work comes from many directions, film, fashion, architecture, textile art, and sculptors and weavers; multiple disciplines are influences to my work. I think my work interweaves culture, art and fashion. A key person in the development of how I relate to raranga is the Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāi Tūhoe artist and designer Vicki Hipora Stark<sup>131</sup>. I first met Vicki around 2002; I had graduated from Waiariki Institute of Technology with Diploma of Craft Design specialising in raranga and was beginning to create sculptural forms, tall baskets that extended into preliminary body forms. Vicki was working in film and television on design and construction skills in costuming and meeting her and her work really fired up my creative energies. I wanted to push and challenge the raranga techniques I had and as a result of working with Vicki I was able to develop my raranga skills, building on the important fundamentals of the practice.

My tutor at Waiariki, Christina Wirihana, instilled these important fundamentals in me.<sup>132</sup> In her classes Christina passed on the deep respect she has for our taonga plants and the unlimited potential of what we could create with our materials. From her teachings I learnt to read raranga, to unpack and deconstruct by looking closely at woven taonga, and reweaving what I could decipher. I will be forever grateful for the skills Christina has passed on to me.

At this time, I also discovered the work of the late Polish sculptor and fibre artist Magdalena Abakanowicz and her evocative textile sculptures of the human Figure. Her powerful *Abakans* (Figure 20) series created in her early career are incredibly moving and greatly influenced the way I thought about textile. At this time, I was working with sculpting harakeke paper bodies with life size moulds of friends and

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<sup>131</sup> [http://tamawahine.iwarp.com/vicki/sculp\\_bf.htm#NgaWahine](http://tamawahine.iwarp.com/vicki/sculp_bf.htm#NgaWahine)

<sup>132</sup> [http://www.spiritwrestler.com/catalog/index.php?artists\\_id=4](http://www.spiritwrestler.com/catalog/index.php?artists_id=4)

whānau. I could relate to quiet power and mystery of the *Abakans* forms and they became a key reference point to the work I made then and still make today.



Figure 20. Abakanowicz, M. (1967-80). *Plecy / Backs* Retrieved from: Retrieved from: <http://culture.pl/en/artist/magdalena-abakanowicz#second-menu-0> Used with permission.

Of her process Abakanowicz says:

After many years soft things of complicated tissue have become my material. I feel a kinship with the world which I do not want to know but through touching, feeling and relating to the part of myself which I carry deep inside me. (...) There is no tool between me and the material I use. I choose it with my hands. I shape it with my hands. My hands transmit my energy to it. By translating an idea into a shape, they will always pass on something escaping conceptualisation. They will reveal the unconscious (1970, para 3).

The way Abakanowicz articulates knowing the world through touch exemplifies the relationship I have with my materials. Like Abakanowicz no tools interrupt my experience of the plant materials I raranga. There is transference in this

relationship, a physical one of DNA, and a spiritual awakening of energy passed between the material and myself. The revealing of the unconscious as Abakanowicz describes of her work aligns with my experience of the acts of raranga and whatu. The revelation manifests in the intimate direct relationship of weaver/maker through the hands, through the bodily experience.

Another key international influence in my creative work is the Japanese fashion designer Issey Miyake. He is a pioneer in clothing design using technology to create new fabrics from recycled materials. He was born in Hiroshima Prefecture in 1938. He established the Miyake Design Studio in 1970 and has been continually creating unique clothing for over 45 years. In particular his *Bodyworks series* (Figure 21) have been highly influential in the creation of my 'cultural body series.'

From 1980 to 1985, Miyake created Body Series, a collection of sculptural clothing that covers the torso and is made of hard materials that had never been used for clothing before like fibre-reinforced plastic, synthetic resins, rattan, and wire. "These sculptural clothes—clothing for militant women, we might say—were created out of both Miyake's unrestrained and ever-searching mind as well as his efforts in support of new technologies and traditional skills," writes Yayoi Motohashi, curator of *Miyake Issey Exhibition: The Work of Issey Miyake* at the National Art Centre Tokyo. — P.M. Retrieved from: <https://www.metropolismag.com/design/the-a-to-z-of-issey-miyake/>



*Figure 21.* Miyake, I. (1980). *Plastic Body*. Courtesy Tony Taniuch/Metropolis Magazine. Retrieved from: <https://www.metropolismag.com/design/the-a-to-z-of-issey-miyake/>

Issey Miyake's iconic moulded plastic bustier is an exemplar of his experimentation with inflexible materials exploring the relationship of the body's form and the garment. Heisenger and Fischer describe the piece as:

Moulded on a human form, the bustier was made in collaboration with Nanasai, a mannequin manufacturer. Reversing the idea that clothing clads or conceals the body, the bustier replicates the body--or at least part of one--and then exposes it in a second, plastic skin.

In my practice the process of moulding the woven textile from created body castes and mannequins was inspired by Abakanowicz and Miyake. The notion of replicating the body, in a way replacing the body with a second skin generates thinking around the plasticity of the body. Miyake's bustier is published by itself, as sculpture as are the body works, I have been creating.

The way painters look at weaving are also influential on my thinking around my creative practice. Among her wide range of symbolism drawn from customary Māori art forms of carving and weaving, the weaving imagery that Kura Te Waru Rewiri<sup>133</sup> utilises within her paintings, encourages new engagements for me with the surfaces of the raranga and whatu works I create. (Figure 22). Te Waru Rewiri is one of Aotearoa's most celebrated women artists; she has an established career as an educator as well as an artist. Her visual engagement with the fibres of whatu is predicated on her deep understandings of the interwoven relationships of tinana, wairua, and hinengaro.



Figure 22. Te Waru Rewiri, K. (1998). *Ko te ha o te muka (The breath of the fibre)* [Acrylic on canvas]. Private Collection Auckland. In Borell, N. (Ed.). (2011). *Kura: Story of a Māori woman artist*. Auckland, N.Z.: Mangere Arts Centre.

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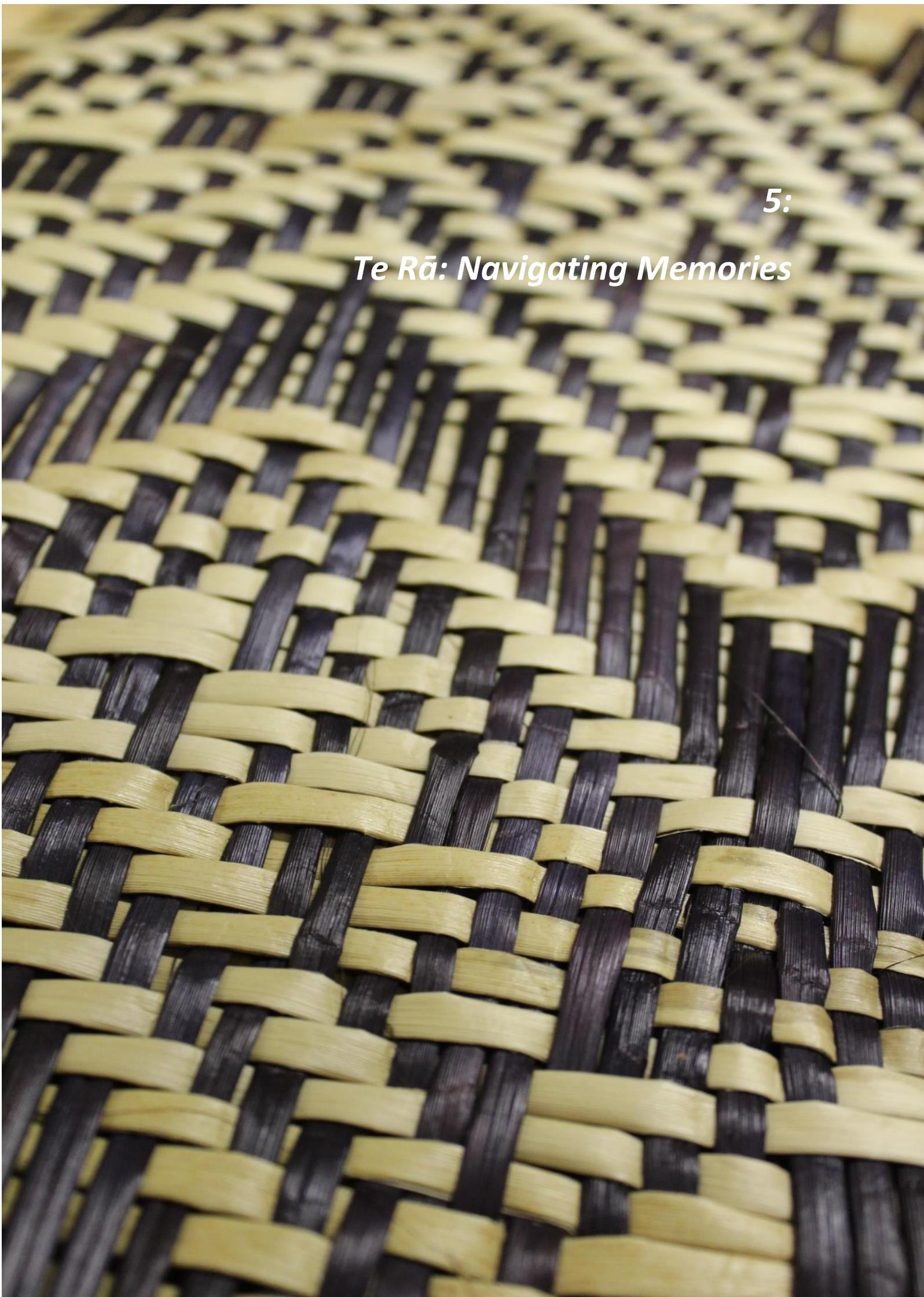
<sup>133</sup> <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/page/five-Māori-painters-kura-te-waru-rewiri>

John Bevan Ford<sup>134</sup> is another of Aotearoa's best-known Māori artist who draws on the customary arts of raranga, taaniko, and whakairo are also inspirational to my work. (Figure 33) I am inspired by his visual articulation of the whatu technique. His images re-present back to me the processes of whatu and tāniko, while clearly drawing on whakairo rākau as design inspiration. Also, an educator and artist Bevan Fords korowai works in inks and liquid acrylics are a testimony to the beauty inherent within the creation of kākahu Māori. He re-presents the surfaces and creation of kākahu back to the viewer as landforms, making explicit the connections between the woven fabric and the interwoven connections of Māori and our relationships with land and whakapapa.

Māori forms of knowledge are evident in the production of kākahu Māori. These garments are handmade from native materials and as such related to as prestigious garments. They represent embodied collective knowing that is reflected in the creation and wearing of a kākahu. Embodied within the textile, the materials, design and form are the connections of people to land through the art form.

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<sup>134</sup> <http://www.creativegiants.co.nz/view/artist-index/b/john-bevan-ford.php>

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a woven basket. The basket is made of two types of material: a dark, almost black, fibrous material and a light yellow, flat, woven material. The weaving pattern is a complex, repeating geometric design that creates a sense of depth and texture. The lighting is soft, highlighting the individual strands and the way they interlock. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the intricate details of the weave.

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*Te Rā: Navigating Memories*

*“The ocean is not merely our omnipresent, empirical reality; equally important, it is our most wonderful metaphor for just about anything we can think of. Contemplation of its vastness and majesty, its allurements and fickleness, its regularities and unpredictability, its shoals and depths, its isolating and linking roles in our histories - all this excites the imagination and kindles a sense of wonder, curiosity and hope....”*

Epeli Hau’ofa

The opening quote from Epeli Hau’ofa the Tongan and Fijian scholar, artist and anthropologist in addition to the title of this chapter invokes the aptitude and expertise of Pacific sailors and navigators. It brings to mind the limitless vision of our ancestors as they traversed Oceania eventually settling in Aotearoa. Connecting the sky and ocean, sails provided the means by which these ancestors of Māori explored and traversed Te Moana Nui a Kiwa.<sup>135</sup>

This chapter considers the cultural understandings and learning’s embodied in this particular sail - Te Rā, that is often referred to as the British Museum Sail. Throughout this chapter I privilege the term Te Rā to describe this woven taonga, and its whakapapa. This cultural capital is embedded within the raranga and materials of the Te Rā. A visit to the British Museum (Figure 24) to visually analyse Te Rā is also discussed. Comparisons will be made with construction methods of Pacific sails and their functions. The discussion in this chapter focuses on the fascinating aspects of Te Rā from a practitioner’s point of view. It discusses the woven techniques employed in its construction, how feathers, adornments and binding were used and the nautical expertise inherent in its design. Held in the British Museum collection, Te Rā a traditionally woven Māori sail is the only known sail of its kind in existence today. Made of harakeke and woven in 13 panels Te Rā is an intriguing piece of Māori technology. Although Te Rā was closely studied by early anthropologists and ethnographers such as Te Rangi Hīroa (1949) Elsdon Best (1925) the aesthetic beauty and expertise of the woven techniques employed has been largely overlooked by mainstream academics.

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<sup>135</sup> Refers to ‘The Great Sea of Kiwa’ the Pacific Ocean.



*Figure 23.* Campbell, D. & Mitchell, A. (2014). Te Rā. British Museum, London. UK.

Māori tūpuna travelled extensively throughout the Pacific on ocean going waka. Sails such as Te Rā are of great importance in our seafaring cultures. There is an intimate connection of weaving and sailing manifested in the Te Rā. Kydselka and Bunton (1969) highlight that contrary to some literature in the Western canon on Pacific sailing, “there is convincing evidence that considerable traffic between island groups existed long before the Europeans arrived in the Pacific” (p. 10). Māori navigated by the stars and the ocean mapping their way through the Pacific. Nevertheless, embedded within the colonized psyche of New Zealand is the powerful Figure by Charles Goldie and Louise Steele 1898 entitled ‘The arrival of the Māori’s in New Zealand’ which depicts Māori sailors as starving gaunt Figures rather than navigators on deliberate voyages of exploration, as they are depicted in Māori tradition. “The crew are shown as Polynesians with no tattoo, wearing tapa cloth, but they are sailing in a mixed-up double Māori canoe of the eighteenth

century using a sail form which probably never existed.” (Simmonds as cited in Clarke, 1998). The sail is illustrated as a three-layer concertina style mat, roughly woven, ripped on the edges and collapsing into the sea. The absence of women aboard also demonstrates the inauthenticity of the painting. The image was derived from Theodore Gericault’s *Raft of Medusa* a famous work depicting a shipwreck, which attests to the fact there was no accuracy in the rendering of traditional navigation by Māori to the shore of Aotearoa. Nevertheless, it is a powerful image that has become one of New Zealand’s best-known historical paintings. The image does not portray the Polynesian navigational and maritime skills of our ancestral sailors and undermines the ‘prophetic and spiritual nature of the pilgrimage’ to Aotearoa (Clarke, 1998).

In the Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Society Te Rangi Hiroa (1924) discusses the British Museum Sail as part of a study on Māori weaving and basketry techniques, he describes the sail from a photograph and notes wistfully that there is no old-time sail in New Zealand that could be studied.

The one vestige of information concerning anything approaching the old-time sail that I could obtain was an incident narrated to me by Paratene Ngata, of Waiapu. During the Hauhau war on the east coast in 1865 the friendly Māori captured seven canoes at Tokomaru. Using ordinary rectangular floor-mats of the porera class, they rigged them up like main-sails, but with a Māori diagonal sprit, or titoko, instead of the pākehā lower boom. A rope was tied to the lower posterior corner. With mats hoisted, this curious fleet successfully sailed to Tuparoa. (pg. 361)

He refers to Firth’s study of the sail, noting ‘his good line drawings’ and detailed description of the sail, as well as acknowledging Best’s contributions on the sail. According to Elsdon Best (1925) Māori names for sails are *ra*, *komaru*, *namaru*<sup>136</sup>,

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<sup>136</sup> *The author could not find a reference for this word*

*whakawhiti*, and *whara*, or *ra whara* the first is more generally used. Interestingly the first three reference the sun.

“*Ra whara* seems to mean "mat sail," *whara*, *wharariki*, and *tuwhara* all being applied to mats. Evidently this name originated in the name of the *Pandanus* (*whara*, *fala*, *fara*, *ara*, *hara*, and *hala*, in various dialects of Polynesia), from the leaves of which mats and mat sails were made”. (Best, 1925, p. 252)

Rā whara according to the Williams Dictionary is Sail for a canoe – “In the East Cape district the word is used only of a sail of fine dressed flax ornamented with *puhi kererū* and *anga pipi*, reserved for the use of a chief, and used by him as a pillow when on shore”. (Williams pg. 333). The names Best refers to are also indicative of the environment, *ra* being sun as well as day, *kōmaru* also defined as sun, and a description of a cloudy sky. He also uses the term *tuwahara* applying to mats. *Tuwhara* is a term used by *kairaranga* today describing a roughly woven mat.

The *wharariki* is a type of *harakeke* known to contemporary *kairaranga*, Williams describes *whara* as a plant, a floor mat, a mat of *raupo* leaves lashed over the caulking of a *waka*, and most importantly as a sail – “a sail made in a special way for a war canoe. *Mo te waka taua anake te ra whata; I mangunguitia*”. (Williams, pg. 488)<sup>137</sup> For the sails to be named in such a way indicates that *rā* were numerous and used widely in Māori navigation. From the accounts of Cook’s first voyage in 1769 by Becket the description of a ‘carved and decorated canoe’ indicates a *waka taua* in full sail.

In the evening a double canoe, built after the model of those at Otahitee, but carved and decorated according to their own peculiar manner, followed us a long time, the Indians appearing in good humour, and frequently dancing and singing.... The next morning the same canoe pursued and

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<sup>137</sup> *Seventh edition 1971, first edition 1844.*

overtook us about nine o'clock; she carried a sail of an old construction, which was made from a kind of matting, and of a triangular Figure, the hypotenuse, or broadest part, being placed at the top of the mast, and ending in a point at the bottom. One of its angles was marled to the mast, and another to a spar with which they altered its position according to the direction of the wind, by changing it from side to side."

In exploring the literature from historic accounts of Cook's Voyages on the sighting of sails gathered Best (1925) highlights the fascinating accounts from Colenso as follows:

Tuta Nihoniho informs us that amongst the Ngāti-Porou Tribe canoe-sails were made of *harakeke*, *kieke*, and *raupo*—that is, of leaves of *Phormium*, of *Freycinetia Banksii* (a climbing-plant), and of bulrush. The *Phormium* leaves were woven or plaited as a floor-mat is made, but were split before being so used. The leaves of *raupo* (*Typha angustifolia*) were used whole, and, not possessing any fibres, were not split or plaited, but laced together (*he mea nati*) by ties at intervals, two strings being used for this purpose, and each leaf having the two passed round it separately in order to secure it—a process not unlike that by means of which the *harapaki* decorative designs are formed. The *raupo* sails possessed the advantage of being much lighter than others. Tuta remarked that he had seen these sails in his youth. Portions of the edges were sometimes ornamented with feathers (Best 1925, p. 253).

Considerable conjecture was made on exactly the material the sails were constructed from by the colonialists. Described by Colenso as 'bulrush –leaves laid flat edge to edge and laced across with flax', Wakefield posits fine grass, also aute of paper-like fabric or tapa. Tuta Nihoniho's account seems accurate as the leaves of the *harakeke*; *kieke* and *raupo* can be sourced to be of some length. Even with the use of *hiki* to join panels to extend the sail textile, *kairaranga* would still have been looking for the longest leaves possible. Potential weak spots could occur in

the joining of the panels together, thus the hiki on Te Rā is a triple join shown in (Figure x). The tripling over of the weave would have made a very strong seam to hold the textile together.

In *Bulletin No. 2* of this series is an illustration of a Māori canoe sail in the British Museum, where it has lain for many years. It is probably the only one in existence and must have been obtained by one of the early voyagers in these seas. It is woven of fine strips of either *Phormium* or *Cordyline* leaves. On both sides there appears to be some form of selvedge or strengthening of the material, though no bolt-rope is discernible, and to these margins are attached a number of loops whereby it was connected with mast and sprit. No intermediate poles were used, as appear in Goldie's picture. The ridge down the middle of the sail has been caused by folding during many years. A certain amount of ornamentation appears in the zigzag pattern worked in the fabric, in the streamer or pennant, and in the feather borders. The horizontal bands seen are probably joining's of the various pieces of mat-like fabric of which the sail is composed. This is a very excellent illustration, for in it we observe a true old-time Māori sail, which is more satisfactory than any information obtainable from the present-day Māori. (Best, 1925. p. 263).

A visit to the British Museum by myself and Aroha Mitchell both weaving artists, accompanied by Haki Tuaupiki a sailor and navigator of traditional waka and Rangi Matamua a scholar of Māori astronomy allowed us to be up close and personal with Te Rā. Our purpose was to re-search, re-remember and reflect on a reweaving of Te Rā. This research visit was a unique and ultimately moving experience that brought us together through a common goal of attempting to unlock some of the secrets of Te Rā. Underpinning the research was the possibility or recreating te Rā to recover knowledge of raranga techniques as well as traditional sailing knowledge that Te Rā holds. The collaboration of kairaranga and sailors was essential in bringing a multi-dimensional approach to the visit with each of us bringing their distinct perspectives to the discussion. The key feature of

this time with Te Rā was the cross-disciplinary collaboration; with the knowledge of traditional sailing and navigation pertaining to Te Rā enriching the weaving knowledge we applied to the visual analysis of this taonga. Research on Te Rā requires a whānau or collective approach, an approach that was inclusive of the disciplines associated, in fully realising the potential of reweaving of Te Rā project. We were also committed to sharing our findings with the curators from the British Museum. A sharing of knowledge between the museum curators and ourselves added to the rich observations we had made on Te Rā. Our process was visual analysis of the taonga in order speculate on its functions by examining the woven technique's used to create it. The examination entailed a process of conceptually un-weaving what was in front of us. Then, by looking closely, and drawing on prior knowledge the process move to drawing and photographing areas of interest, with the intention of weaving samples to recreate the weaves within Te Rā. The following reflections are from a research diary related to our visit with Te Rā.

By engaging directly with Te Rā it became clear to me clear how intricately woven the sail is. The raranga is incredibly skilful and hints at lots of fascinating secrets from a weaver's perspective. It was with positive glee that Aroha and I closely examined this amazing textile, excited by at last being able to touch, to inspect and appreciate this beautiful taonga.



*Figure 24.* Campbell, D. (2014) the underside showing the hiki between the papa.



Figure 25. Campbell, D. (2014) the underside of Te Rā showing the puareare pattern uninterrupted by the join construction.

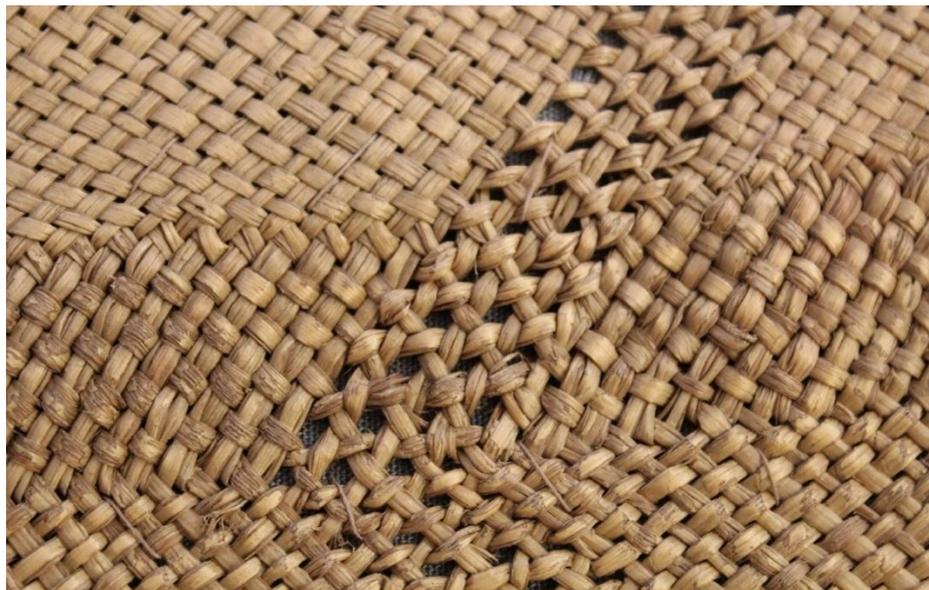


Figure 26. Campbell, D. (2014) The topside of Te Rā showing the uninterrupted pattern of pūareare.

Te Rā is constructed of 13 panels, joined with a traditional Māori plaiting technique called hiki or hono, similar to those used on whāriki.<sup>138</sup> Best states that “The whole sail was not made in one piece, but in several widths, called papa,

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<sup>138</sup> *Woven floor mats*

which were afterwards joined together, just as seen in larger native-made floor-mats” (pp. 264). Close inspection of te Rā indicates this technique was not used however a particular woven joining method called hono or hiki was used to create the 13 panels. Whāriki or floor mats are made by replacing each whenu (weaving strand) when the length runs out to create the next papa or panel. This method of joining is practiced widely in raranga today. As seen in (Figure 25) the whenu have been folded down with new strands woven into place. It appears that the hiki used on Te Rā is a triple construction forming a very strong connection of the panels, which would be necessary for sailing conditions.

In Samoa the sails were plaited in separate sections which were afterwards overlapped at their edges and sewn together with a separate cord, but this technique does not apply to the British Museum sail....it may be said that Māori sails were made in one piece whereas sails made in Samoa and other islands were made of separate sections with were sewn together. (Hiroa, 1923, p. 205).

The surface is woven in a taki tahi pattern<sup>139</sup> from fine whenu 3 millimetres wide, with zigzag bands of three-directional open plaiting, according to Pendergrast a technique unusual in New Zealand (1996, p. 123), which gives us food for thought, as to the provenance of the sail. The museum has no information of the provenance, other than to say it was probably picked up on Cook’s voyages to the Pacific and Aotearoa in the 1700’s.

Along the length of the rā is a series of openings, referred to by kairaranga as pūareare; these are placed in a zigzag pattern, perhaps to allow the wind to pass through the textile of the sail (Figure 26). This pattern is used extensively in contemporary basketry weaving today however most intriguing from a weaver’s point of view is how the puareare pattern of zigzag spaces is continued through the hiki or the joining of the papa. Although the hiki interrupts the surface pattern

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<sup>139</sup> *over one under one*

of the sail the pattern of pūareare is not affected by the change of plaiting. This is no mean feat and shows the skill and dexterity of the maker.

### *The Loops:*

To the edges of the sail are fastened twenty-four loops twelve on each side for connecting to the mast. These are multiple-strand harakeke cord. Each loop is approximately 4 and half inches long and thick. In many of the loops a little tuft of kaka feather – red from the underwing – is fixed and held by the wound cord (Figure 28). The loops are also well placed at the juncture of the panels join. This would be strongest part of the sail and would be able to take the strain of the wind on the sail.



Figure 27. Campbell, D. (2014). The loops are made from muka, the fibre extracted from the leaf of the *Phormium Tenax* or Harakeke.

Mr. W. H. Skinner, who examined the sail in 1908, has obliged us with the following extract from his diary;

British Museum, May 12, 1908. As requested by Mr. Hamilton, I made inquiries *re* the canoe-sail. After a lot of hunting round it was found. The sail, contrary to expectations, was not of *raupo*, but of undressed flax (*Phormium*) or *ti* (*Cordyline*) leaves, in very narrow strips, not too closely woven, but sufficiently open—or, rather, close—to catch the air and yet not

too close to make a heavy thing for mast of canoe and canoe itself to carry. They had succeeded in making a very strong and yet very light triangular sail admirably adapted for its purpose. The plaiting had an ornamental pattern, or, rather, scroll, running over it—nothing elaborate but sufficient to relieve the monotony of the fair expanse of plat; and one part of it was heavily fringed with feathers of the wood-pigeon, and also, I think, of the hawk. Along the side were inserted strong loops, finely worked, of the usual dressed flax, *muka*, for tying to the boom or light attached spar, for purpose of spreading and keeping the sail in position. It is, as far as I know, a unique specimen of the old native sail, and agrees in shape, &c, with the specimen shown in Angas's well-known plate of the large canoe sailing along off Cape Egmont. (Skinner cited in Best, 1925, p. 264)

### *The Edge:*

Again, most interesting to the weaver is that the edges of Te Rā are not finished with a woven lock off edge such as we would use today. I surmise that the border of Te Rā has a raw edge where the weaving has been trimmed to facilitate the shape of the sail. A double fold is made and stitched down the two rows of a tacking stitch. Te Rangi Hiroa notes that this is practically the same technique as used in Samoan sails. The only difference is that the second row of stitching which fixes the turned-in edge of the plaiting or weaving is a simple tacking stitch while the spaced overhand knots with a continuous cord is used in the Māori sail, he also indicated that the Māori stitching was a better technique. The method of including a cord in the doubled-over edge was probably a widespread Polynesian technique in full-sized sails. (1949, p. 206). It strengthens the sail-edge and prevents the loops, which fasten the sail to the mast and sprits from tearing through the plaited materials when strain is put on the sail.

## *The Feathers:*

The method of attaching the feathers in tufts by overhand knots on a running cord finds some similarity in the Samoan method of attaching red feathers to the lower border of fine mats. In the Samoan method, the feathers are knotted on a single cord and this cord is stitched to the matting edge with a separate cord.



*Figure 28.* Campbell, D. (2014). Feather attachments on the matairangi of Te Rā.

Along the top edge and the ‘tail’ attachment are fringes of dark feathers. (Figure 29). The quill of each has been carefully cut transversely and alternate sections separated on each side. These break the rigidity of the feather and allow it to move freely in the wind. (Pendergrast, p. 125)

The flag or pennant on the side has woven edges unlike the body of Te Rā. Skinner notes in regard to the pennant:

The pennant was an old Māori usage, and such an appendage seems to have been known as a *matairangi*. In Marsden's account of his first visit to New Zealand he speaks of seeing ten canoes advancing in a regular line with

colours flying. Presumably these colours were such appendages as are seen on the old sail (cited in Best, 1925, p. 265).

We spent two days with Te Rā photographing talking laughing and 'being' with our taonga, our tupuna. Afterwards I presented to the other curators at the store on our insights and assumptions from our perspectives. We had agreed as a team Te Rā was a coastal sail and would not have been used on the open ocean due to its size. It would more than likely have been a river sail traversing the inland waterways of Aotearoa. The weaving contained in the sail is and always will be intriguing and we are looking forward to sharing our findings with other kairaranga. The importance of knowledge recovery is forefront of the research at this point. Recognition of indigenous knowledge systems sustains cultural ways of being, which in turn nurture and affirm communities. By regaining the knowledge in Te Rā we unlock ways of working, of creating, of understanding our tupuna thus understanding who we are in the world today. Te Rā has provided a platform for collaboration and the opportunity to bring people together to rediscover and recreate a similar taonga. A project such as reweaving Te Rā would involve kairaranga, sailors and waka builders, but what an amazing project that would be! As my friend Hoturoa reminds me, "you need to come out on the waka and see how a sail works" before you begin to weave a new one.

While Te Rā was unpacked it was an opportune time to share with the other curators our insights and speculations while they offered us theirs. Sharing our cultural connection to this taonga and how significant she is to us, was a clarification for them of how we as Māori researchers related to our taonga. The sharing of knowledge from differing perspectives was very fruitful and inspiring. I was made aware of the care and passion these caretakers have for our very precious taonga and I do believe that Te Rā remains in good hands for future generations to ponder over. In 2007 and 2008, the British Museum's Tahitian sail was assessed, conserved and documented in detail. The collaboration between curators and conservators at the British Museum and a Tahitian curator was an important part of the conservation project and resulted in the creation of a large

amount of information about this sail. I believe that a similar in-depth project could be conducted on Te Rā in the future. There are many areas of research to be done on Te Rā for that reason ongoing research is vital to unlock the secrets Te Rā holds.

## *Reflections:*

*We arrived at the British Museum stores in London on a hot sunny day full of enthusiasm for the task ahead. This trip had been planned over the course of a few years. It began with emails flying back and forth to arrange a time to be with this taonga, we envisioned at least two or three days to spend with Te Rā in order to closely analyse its construction. We were lucky that the sail was in storage and not on display, so we were allowed full access. Other kairaranga had visited Te Rā previously therefore the museum staff were very aware of the keen interest of many in Aotearoa, consequently they were considerate of the significance of this fascinating taonga to us.*

*Dr. Maureen Lander had sent me detailed photographs of her visit to Te Rā some years earlier, with various measurements and notes with a view to me researching the weaving techniques used. Time constraints on the day she visited meant that the notes were sketchy and there was no time to draw construction details. From these photographs I had attempted to weave some of the techniques however I needed to visit the sail to do some close analysis. This trip was something I had been looking forward to for some time; consequently, I was very excited to at last 'be' with Te Rā. Below is a timeline of known associations with Te Rā*  
*Te Rā - a unique example of an early Māori textile constructed for a specific purpose. The only 18<sup>th</sup> (or early 19<sup>th</sup>) Century Māori spritsail still in existence*

*2005: Dr. Maureen Lander in collaboration with Prof. Geoff Irwin to recreate a sail based on the British Museum Sail.*

*Lander visits British Museum and records what she can although there was lack of staff, and time and space to spread sail out.*

*Asks if Donna Campbell would be interested in working on making a replica, and sends visual documentation of Te Rā.*

*2010: Ruth Port visits the sail for research purposes with a view to recreating the sail*

*2014: Team from Waikato University visits Te Rā with a view to research the construction and use of Te Rā.*

*As kairaranga Aroha and I were concentrating on the construction and functional aspects of the weaving, in terms of discovering and recreating the techniques used in the production of this textile. It was important to the project that the expertise of sailors and navigators was included in our visit accordingly our team being complemented by Haki and Rangi enhanced our research.*

*As we entered the space of the museum store, I felt heaviness, and sadness besides the thrill of at last seeing Te Rā. I sensed the taonga stored in these rooms and their mauri (life force energy) and thought of how lonely Te Rā and the many other treasures stored here must be, to be so far away from home. It was wonderful to be visiting our taonga our tupuna (ancestor). I felt quite awed to be there, and we were all humbled by the energy of our taonga. Te Rā was rolled up awaiting us. As we carefully unrolled Te Rā the reciting of karakia (incantation) by Rangi and Haki began. Their voices and words reverberated around the storeroom, wrapping Te Rā in a cloak of aroha (love) and mana (respect) as she was awakened to the world again. This taonga before us embodied the ancestors, those who made her, those who had sailed with her, and all those who have had contact with her, all of the tupuna who have gone before us. The depth of knowledge of ancient karakia Rangi and Haki recited brought waves of emotion on all of us. These karakia related to Te Rā as an ancestor a taonga with mauri (life force) and mana (prestige). Karakia opened up the space for us to be able to engage with Te Rā and to acknowledge and re realize its significance. The embodiment of the ancestors was brought forth through the process of karakia, and within those walls of the Museum store all the taonga from many other places was acknowledged.*

This chapter positions Te Rā as the transmitter of “original instructions” pertaining to raranga and to sailing. As Melissa K. Nelson (2008) observes Original Instructions are the real intelligence where there is no separation between the technical and the spiritual. She goes on to say “The Original Instructions celebrate our interdependence and interconnection with the diversity of life and one other. They help us to remember who we are, that we were all Indigenous to a place not many generations ago” (p. xxii). Te Rā embodies the interconnectedness that Nelson (2008) is writing about that is the relationships and understandings of our tūpuna from their natural world. Te Rā is an exemplar of some of our earliest traditional ecological knowledge. It provides us with a view into both the power of raranga and skill of the kairaranga, to create such a taonga and also the depth of our ancestral knowledge of marine ecology. This knowledge is here to be

investigated by both current and future generations. The fascinating raranga techniques used in the creation of Te Rā inspire and excite new works for kairaranga and kaiwhatu alike. The raranga technologies developed by our tūpuna in their time through the deep learning's of our environment is also evident in the creation of kākahu. Te Rā exemplifies embodied knowledge inherent within our taonga, epitomising woven memories. This embodied knowledge is what many kairaranga are working to ensure remains available to our tamariki<sup>140</sup> and mokopuna.<sup>141</sup> It is also what informs my desire to create the works for this project that will be presented in the next chapters.

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<sup>140</sup> *Children.*

<sup>141</sup> *Grandchildren.*

A close-up photograph of a traditional Māori korowai. The garment is intricately woven from light-colored natural fibers, featuring a series of horizontal bands. Several large, dark brown feathers are attached to the fabric, and several thick, black braided cords are woven through the structure. The bottom edge of the garment is finished with a decorative border of colorful beads in shades of blue, orange, and red, and a fringe of raw, light-colored fibers.

6:

*Te Whatukura Ki Oraurangi:  
Woven memories*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Whakawai wai ai<br>Te tū rā Taranaki<br>Ō kahu hukarere<br>I hua tau ai koe rā<br>Huhia iho koe              | Enchanting to the eye<br>Art thou, o Taranaki<br>Clothed in the snowy garment<br>O mountain glorious arrayed<br>In spotless cloak of glistening white  |
| Ki tō parawai mā<br>Tō kahu taaniko<br>I tino pai ai koe rā  | With fringe-patterned border<br>A robe of radiant beauty<br>Yon cloud that wreathes thy lofty<br>brow  |
| Me tīpare koe<br>Ki te rau kawakawa<br>He tohu arohanui  | Is a mourning chaplet<br>Soft band of kawakawa leaves<br>Emblem of sorrow for the dead   |
| Ki ngā iwi e ngaro nei<br>Waiho rā e Rangī<br>Kia tāria ake<br>Kia tae mai he karere<br>E kore rā e hoki mai | Love circlet for the vanished ones<br>For ever lost to us<br>Remain thou there o peak of Rangī<br>Steadfastly keep thy silent watch<br>For ocean-borne grief messenger<br>From those who will come no more |

In this chant of praise by Mere Kapa Ngāmai I of Te Ātiawa for her sacred ancestral mountain Taranaki, the splendour of the chiefly peak is described by its array of prestigious cloaks. The circlet of kawakawa leaves is a symbol of mourning, a reference to loved ones who have passed on to ancestral connections. (Tamarapa, 2011, p. 10)

The words and Figures that open this chapter express the intrinsic nature of kākahu Māori of and from the landscape as woven patterns of te ao Māori. *Woven Memories* opening chant by Mere Kapa Ngāmai I of Te Ātiawa illustrates the visual language of our tūpuna and how the language of weaving is deeply embedded in the Māori consciousness. The language of weaving is used here metaphorically to reflect our connections to land and to people. The reference to kākahu, the kahu hukarere is used to symbolize the chiefly peak of Taranaki maunga<sup>142</sup>, alluding to the nature of these prestigious garments as treasured as the sacred mountain.

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<sup>142</sup> *ancestral mountain*

Ngāmai is acknowledging the resolute stature of the maunga, its stability and cultural symbolism comparable for me to the knowledge's embodied within the art forms of raranga and whatu.

Another example of artists drawing on these representations in its many forms is the art and words of John Bevan Ford.<sup>143</sup> Similarly providing an exemplar of weaving language and metaphor reflecting the embodied nature of a kākahu.

Take the single line, such as the aho tapu of the weaver, the genealogical line. Follow it to its logical conclusion. It doubles, triples, quadruples. Eventually there is a mosaic of interwoven lines, a fabric of history, an infinite number of references surface. That single line reflects the mana of the people and a history that can go beyond the present to another time long, long ago (Ford, 2004, p. 12).

Ford is referring here to the historic connections of people that are reflected in the whatu weave of a kākahu. Ford follows the threads of whatu as they reveal, through their myriad connections, embodied Māori history and collective knowing in the present. (Figure 29) shows the graphic style of Fords work reflecting the reverence he held for whatu. This Figure shows the tāniko on the bottom and edges as vibrant colourful framing to the body of the korowai.

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<sup>143</sup> <http://www.creativegiants.co.nz/view/artist-index/b/john-bevan-ford.php>



Figure 29. Bevan Ford, J. (n.d). *Taranaki and the Three Kings from Te Hono Ki Zealandia Nova Series* [pigmented ink on watercolour paper]. Retrieved from: <http://www.artnet.com/artists/john-bevan-ford/taranaki-and-the-three-kings-from-te-hono-ki-8WpR8C-GEv8zY4LPtqMyzQ2>

This chapter explores the creation of a korowai, the name of which is Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. It examines the embodied collective knowing that is reflected in the taonga of a kākahu, illustrating the embodied connection of people, land and the art form. Drawing on my kairaranga perspective this chapter will bring together the threads of cultural memory, materiality and praxis.

The creation of the korowai Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is a significant component of the creative outputs for this study, as an example of history and collective knowing in the present day. The korowai was made for the University of Waikato intended for the kaumātua (cultural elder) to wear on important occasions. A garment such as this project a stately symbol of the Māori world and as such it was important that this taonga be named in accordance with tikanga Māori. The

personal naming of such a taonga acknowledges the mauri<sup>144</sup> inherent within the garment as Ngahua Te Awekotuku explains “Māori taonga are living entities, best addressed as ‘her’ or ‘him’ or ideally by a personal name” (Te Awekotuku, 1991, p. 138). Te Awekotuku warns against using the impersonal pronoun – it - when talking about taonga suggesting that to do so “neutralizes an artefact, not only demeaning the power within, but distancing the treasure from the beholder, the toucher, the caregiver” (1991, p. 138). The naming of this korowai personified the vision of the making, and how the korowai would be used. The naming process was a discussion between me and Professor Pou Temara an expert in Māori language and tikanga. We talked at length about my experiences of creating the korowai the vision behind the design and the love I have of the practice. After much discussion the name Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi was decided upon. As explained by Temara (personal communication, January 10, 2014) Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi refers to the woven treasures of the past, for me being created in the present, for the future. The name Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi embodies the gifts of the ancestors, acknowledges the life of this korowai and recognizes my experiences of creating this taonga, which are explained further in this chapter. The importance of naming taonga gives them mana, they become heirlooms and the name reflects their whakapapa, and so it was important and tika<sup>145</sup> that this korowai be named thus. As an embodiment of mana wahine Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is referred to by name and the female pronoun throughout the exegesis.

### *Kākahu: Cultural Garments*

Kākahu is the term used to describe Māori korowai, usually worn over the shoulders and wrapped around the wearer’s body (Tamarapa, 2011) korowai are a class or style of kākahu. Although there is a dazzling array of styles, a limited

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<sup>144</sup> *Life force, the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity. Also used for a physical object, individual, ecosystem or social group in which this essence is located.*

*Retrieved from:*

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=mauri>

<sup>145</sup> *Right or correct.*

range of korowai are described in this chapter as inspirational to the design and creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. Korowai are handmade from techniques developed from generations of accumulated knowledge. Subsequently there are many inspirational styles mainly using native materials that are still employed today. The style of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is of the korowai style, adorned with a kiwi feather collar, tufts of kiwi feathers and pheasant feathers with hukahuka<sup>146</sup> attached to the kaupapa<sup>147</sup> of the korowai. According to Kahutoi. Te Kanawa a korowai is defined by the addition of hukahuka (personal communication, November 5, 2018). The addition of these decorative tags add movement and motion to the body of the garment. The preparation and whatu techniques have been handed down through generations. Accordingly, as taonga these cloaks have ancestral connections that embody knowledge, history and connections of people and places. Admiring the beauty of customary cloaks Te Awekotuku (1993) points out a significant principal that they held mana and personal names, and one, Karamaene, was exchanged for the great-carved war canoe Te Toki a Tapiri [in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century] now housed at the Auckland Museum. “That a taonga... like this majestic canoe was traded for a rare and truly regal garment reveals much about the comparable value of men’s art work and women’s art in the ancient Māori world...” (Te Awekotuku, 1993, p. 279). Kākahu and korowai were created and treasured by our tūpuna consequently they hold deep significance for Māori as connections to our tūpuna.

Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is in a class of kākahu predominantly created from muka, the fibre of the harakeke plant. An array of kākahu korowai styles include:

- the kahu kurī (dog-skin cloak)
- the kaitaka, a cloak with silk-like texture and a border of tāniko
- the korowai hukahuka, a cloak adorned only with hukahuka (tassels or fringing)
- the korowai kārure, a cloak adorned with a three-ply tag known as kārure

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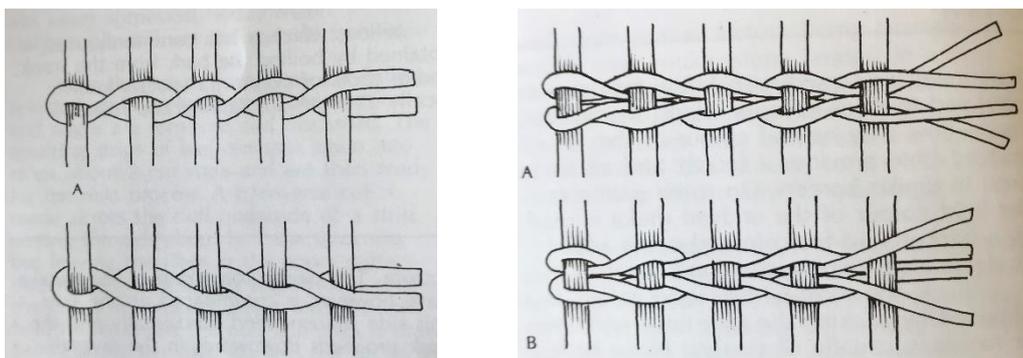
<sup>146</sup> *Rolled (miro) 2 ply cords, often dyed in natural mud dyes. Woven onto the body of a kākahu as decorative tags.*

<sup>147</sup> *Kaupapa in this context refers to the body of a cloak.*

- the kahu huruhuru/kura, a cloak with bird feathers added, again often arranged by colour to form striking patterns
- the kaitaka huaki, a fine woven cloak with double tāniko bands.

All classes and styles stated above are created from the same technique of whatu. Our tūpuna conceived the whatu weaving technique with the discovery of the lustrous creamy muka internal to the leaf of the harakeke. Muka varies with different types of harakeke so particular fibres were and are used for different purpose. Muka can be thick, sometimes fine and creamy, sometime coarse and stringy, so specific uses were applied. In order to extract the fibre without damage new technologies were developed. The fibres were then processed as explained later in this chapter. The harvesting and preparation processes as well as the whatu process that our tūpuna devised are still applied today.

The Māori form of textile creation is from the technique whatu, which is a finger aho (weft) twining process using muka, carried out without a loom. Whatu aho pātahi (single) and whatu aho rua (double) pair twining are the whatu structures used in kākahu Māori and applied on Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi, as shown below:



*Figure 30.* On the left: Whatu aho pātahi (single pair twining) A. Normal twist B. Reverse twist. On the right: Whatu aho rua (double-pair twining) A. Usual method for cloak-making, B. Alternative method used for tāniko. In Pendergrast, M. (1987). *Te Aho Tapu: The Sacred Thread*. Auckland, New Zealand: Reed.

Pendergrast (1996) describes whatu aho pātahi as a technique that is or has been used in the world. These methods connect us to our ancestors as well as our Pacific

origins in particular the basket-weaving techniques of raranga. As a kairaranga it is affirming to know that indigenous epistemological connections are made through our raranga and whatu processes. Pendergrast (1996) explains whatu aho pātahi as “Each weft consists of two (a single pair) of threads (Figure 31). One of these passes behind each warp and the other in front of it, before they are twisted together, firmly enclosing the warp between them” (p. 125). As there is no loom involved in the whatu technique the tension for the weave is all in the hands body and mind of the kairaranga or kaiwahtu<sup>148</sup>. Pendergrast also describes whatu aho rua as in (Figure 30) as the technique most used for cloak making:

Again, the weaving begins at the left-hand side, but in this case four threads (a double pair) are carried for each weft, two passing behind and two in front of each warp. Between each weft there is a space ranging from 5mm on the finest cloaks to 20mm or more in more open weaving (1996, p. 125).

Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is woven from muka with whatu aho rua so as to better secure feathers and hukahuka. Whatu aho rua being the preferred weave on all decorated cloaks for this reason.

Even though Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi would be classed technically as a korowai hukahuka she was greatly influenced by the customary styles of korowai as exemplars. For example, the kahu huruhuru,<sup>149</sup> adorned completely with feathers are referenced in the design and application of kiwi and pheasant feathers on Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. (Figures 40 & 41). Maniapoto weaver and scholar Kahutoi Te Kanawa and Ngāti Kahungunu scholar John Turi write on the significance feathers woven into cloaks noting “birds are the children of Tāne and their connection to atua, as well as their ability to change form and their accompanying mythological stories, are all qualities that are valued within Māori tradition” (pg. 26). Thus, the qualities of the birds are embodied in the garments adding to their

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<sup>148</sup> *Kaiwhatu is the term usually used for a cloak weaver. Sometimes also referred to as a kairaranga whatu. The term is used interchangeably throughout this study.*

<sup>149</sup> *Kahu huruhuru, also known as Kahu Kura denote feathered cloaks. Feathers such as kiwi, weka, pigeon, traditionally adorn these cloaks. In contemporary whatu, pheasant pukeko and duck feathers are often used in addition to native bird feathers.*

elite status. As an illustration the kahu kiwi<sup>150</sup> has a mysterious and otherworldly quality, as the kiwi is a nocturnal bird rarely seen. Kiwis are protected birds in Aotearoa, which makes a contemporary korowai with these feathers even more valued. Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi has a full kiwi feather collar and tufts of kiwi feathers on the body, used to reflect an exclusive status, of garment and wearer. Next the kahu kuri embellished with dog skin and fur (Tamarapa, 2011, p. 97) and the kaitaka paepaeroa<sup>151</sup> (Figure 32) in addition to the korowai class adorned with rolled cords such as Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi, are only a few of the magnificent array of these sartorial garments. Te Awekotuku (1993) describes old-time Māori as fashion conscious and that kākahu and korowai can attest to that observation. She states:

Yet the kaitaka paepaeroa were probably the supreme expression of sartorial elegance – silky fibre processed to a creamy white sheen, gored and shaped to fit and flatter the various body, hemmed in deep polychrome tāniko these garments were draped, toga like, to display the chief's mana for maximum impact (p. 5).

The korowai class of kaitaka paepaeroa Te Awekotuku is describing (Figure 31) exemplifies the skill of the kaiwhatu in design and application. The kaitaka paepaeroa is noted for its unique construction in that the aho rows are vertical whereas all other korowai are woven with horizontal aho. These types of korowai exude elegance and beauty while at the same time being functional for warmth. They are in a class of their own including the kaitaka huaki which usually have double deep lower tāniko borders (Tamarapa, 2011) effectively giving the appearance to two cloaks, one atop the other. Also, the kaitaka aronui/pātea is of interest as an exceptional example of a “crossover of styles” (Tamarapa, 2011, p.99). “it is a classic kaitaka aronui/pātea with narrow tāniko<sup>152</sup> borders and a deep lower border but diverges from the form with an additional trim of flowing dog

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<sup>150</sup> *A cloak fully adorned with kiwi feathers.*

<sup>151</sup> *Fine muka cloak with vertical aho rows and tāniko borders*

<sup>152</sup> *Patterned border on cloaks made by whatu method.*

hair, reminiscent of the decoration on kahu kuri” (Tamarapa, 2011, p. 99). This kaitaka is an exemplar of the innovation of our tūpuna kaiwhatu, the various styles coming together in a play of texture, with a fine kaupapa of muka, framed by tāniko then finished with the deep lower border of intricate tāniko, embraced by a fringe of dog hair. These classes of kākahu greatly influenced the way I envisioned Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi for their prestige nature, and also the artistry and design skills. Because the role this garment would play I wanted to exemplify the mana and prestige of these past taonga, accordingly inspiration came from the past. Tamarapa and Wallace (2013) see (Figure 31 & 32) explain a particular kaitaka paepaeroa and its origins in this way:

This magnificent kaitaka paepaeroa (fine flax cloak with vertical weft rows and tāniko borders) has a unique history. It belonged to a woman of high status who had considerable mana (Ruhia Pūrutu). In traditional society, the mana of such people permeated their belongings. In 1840 it this cloak saved the life of a young European immigrant (Thomas Mckenzie) who had inadvertently breached the laws of tapu. Its owner threw her cloak over the boy, placing him under her personal protection (unpaginated).

By this symbolic act of protection Ruhia Pōrutu saved the young Thomas Mckenzie’s life, he remained a friend of Ruhia and her family. (Figure 32) illustrates the owner Ruhia Pōrutu who was the daughter-in-law of Te Rīrā Pōrutu, paramount chief of Te Āti Awa, wearing her kaitaka. The photographer has placed it upside down to display the elaborate tāniko border. The story of Ruhia and her korowai illustrate the symbiotic relationship of wearer/owner and a prestigious garment such as the a kaitaka paepaeroa. The status of the owner enhances the status of the garment and vice versa. Within these layers of meaning the prestige of the garment reflects the skill of the kaiwhatu in design and application. Unfortunately, the kaiwhatu of this kaitaka is unknown, but their expertise and brilliance lives on in the fabric.



*Figure 31.* Kaitaka paepaeroa belonging to Ruhia Pōrutu. (n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/object/40980/ruhia-porutus-kaitaka-paepaeroa> (accessed 23 January 2018)



*Figure 32.* Ruhia Pōrutu wearing her kaitaka. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/photograph/40981/ruhia-porutu-wearingher-kaitaka> (accessed 23 January 2018)

Kākahu are cultural garments that symbolize Māori belief systems connecting the physical and spiritual worlds. The intangible spiritual dimension that for many Māori is pervasive is often perceived as embodied within a korowai. Toi Te Rito Maihi (2011) describes muka, the principle material used in making korowai and kākahu as not only a concrete way to represent wairua, but also powerfully symbolic of the unseen. Te Kanawa and Turi (2011) likewise discuss the significance of kākahu Māori.

Along with the respect generated by the technical virtuosity of the weaving, these garments are imbued with the mana of both maker and the wearer, and often that of the whānau hapū, or iwi. The belief that these prestigious garments convey power and authority has been retained up to the present time and is evident at both Māori and non-Māori functions (p. 20).

These garments are not only functional they signify tribal pride and status. Kākahu are worn today at important events, it is especially heartening to see kākahu worn

by taurira at graduation ceremonies. Through the creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi the realms of wairua and mana the connections to the past are manifested as a maker. As a wearer these embodied dimensions are also experienced.

### *Embodied knowing through making.*

The interaction between the kairaranga whatu and natural materials is a cultural journey that leads us to a dialogue with the past. In my experience I believe the liminal spaces experienced throughout the raranga and raranga whatu processes are embodied knowing that arises through engaging in the practice. We are using the very techniques and materials that our tūpuna used and I am often led to contemplating on the aspirations our tūpuna had for us. Dreams have been woven into the kākahu of old as they are now, worn frequently and passed on reflecting the mana and prestige of makers and wearers. In my practice the past arises in the very nature of creating these taonga; the tikanga and techniques of our tūpuna are at the forefront in the creation of these textiles. The relationship between the a kairaranga and their materials is explained by Erenora Puketapu-Hetet (1989) in that she sees herself and other kairaranga as repositories, linking the knowledge of the past with that of the future:

We have a phrase – I ngā rā o mua – which refers to the past. But the word “mua” also means “in front of you”. In our concept of time we cannot separate ourselves from our ancestors or the generation in front of us. Our past is our future, and also our present, like the eternal circle (p. 5).

The eternal circle Puketapu-Hetet is referring to has been made manifest to me through the weaving of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. In the making of this korowai I have experienced the concept of time becoming fluid, connections arising with those who have gone before us, surfacing within the fingers, the mind and senses. These connections are awareness of my whakapapa and of my Māori

knowingness. My experience is of a liminal space, at the boundaries the edges of the physical and the spiritual, happening as a result of linking past and future through creating this textile.

As a kairaranga my practice embraces connection with indigenous Māori knowing that encompasses body mind and spirit. In the act of weaving we develop our thinking and consciousness. Within this consciousness we are also required to innovate and extend that which our tūpuna have left us, without compromising on integrity of tikanga and quality of the taonga. Manulani Aluli-Meyers (2008) reminds us that:

Using body, mind and spirit as a template in which to organize meaningful research asks us to extend through our objective/empirical knowing (body) into wider spaces of reflection offered through conscious subjectivity (mind) and finally, through recognition and engagement with deeper realities (spirit) (p.224).

Through the bodily experience of raranga the articulation of knowledge and the creative process is a coming together of body, mind and spirit. The artwork becomes the expression of a mindful union, “a physical embodiment of its maker’s expressive-artist thought” (Nimkulrat, 2009. p. 105). The transformation of plant to textile embeds Māori knowing and meaning and the created textile then embodies and conveys meaning through its materialness. Therefore, as a kairaranga, there is real joy in remembering and practicing Māori ways of knowing through creative processes. The creative process for me creates temporal experiences where the thinking, making, and tūpuna connections are made conscious. The acts of raranga and whatu are catalyst and synthesis bringing thinking, making, tupuna together – a synthesis of body, mind and spirit. I propose that by engaging with materials of raranga and whatu we as kairaranga extend through our objective/empirical knowing bodies to access our deeper indigenous realities. This is meaningful knowing from indigenous coherence and

understanding. I feel honoured to have this unique indigenous cultural connection through our weaving materials and practices.

Kākahu Māori embody meaning gathered from the past present and future. Kākahu have symbolic whakairo as coded text. The journey of the kairaranga and their materials is part of this story and text. The storied quality of these taonga begins with karakia<sup>153</sup> and tikanga as the embodiment of ancestral ways of being, followed by the material and the maker then the wearer. The very fibres of the kākahu embody whakapapa through the techniques and processes we still use, and through the makers, the wearers the owners of these kākahu. Thus, the woven kākahu becomes an embodied textile, as Mātauranga Māori is embedded within the fibres. Malcom-Buchanan et al (2012) identify that “korowai embody, as well as compel, both spatial and temporal connectivity, revealing aspects on liminality which engage the past within the present” (p. 55). The embodiment Buchanan is referring to can also be the experience of the kairaranga whatu.

In contemporary practice as culturally mindful kairaranga we are entrusted with the responsibility of passing on these skills and ways of knowing. In the making the korowai Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi adds to its stories by going through many phases. She has travelled with me to various hui<sup>154</sup> and worked on in a collective setting, other times to be worked on in a solitary way, although I never really felt alone in the process. She has been unpicked, rewoven, scanned, reworked, relocated, and most of all handled physically and emotionally. These energies become part of the story and the text. When the korowai was completed, I shared my stories of the garment with the receiver and these stories live on through the textile. Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi collects the experiences of everyone she will come in contact with and will always have stories to tell. I am referring to Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi as a living entity, as Māori taonga such as kākahu are considered to be. As Te Awekotuku (1991) distinguishes, taonga are alive they

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<sup>153</sup> *Incantation or ritual chant.*

<sup>154</sup> *Gatherings or meetings.*

have identities and names and we must use them. Even while I was creating Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi I felt that this taonga was a living entity, a beautiful gift from my tūpuna that I was reawakening and in turn was reawakening me, through cultural connectedness with the praxis.

In creating Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi I followed customary prescribed forms of preparation and of materials. Despite following custom however, there was also much room to explore and add individual touches to this collective work that spanned generations in the making. The form of the korowai became the structure within which to apply tikanga, to create a textile that is informed by our tūpuna and which is relevant and dynamic today. The affirmation for me while making this taonga was that the process spanned generations. The knowledge embedded within the textile was became known to me through the process of creating this korowai. While weaving throughout the whatu process I was being made aware of the innovative creative intelligence of my tūpuna and was committed to creating a korowai worthy of this history. Regeneration was occurring in my thinking hands, heart and mind as I whatu. With every twist of the aho, with every stroke of the whenu, awareness arises. Through the smell, feel, touch of the materials haptic perception arises as recovery, restoration and connection to my tūpuna. Creating a korowai much as my tūpuna would have done was an emotional experience. The processes of weaving, preparation and the materials are the same. So much as my tūpuna would have done, I sat in front of the textile and practiced whatu, an additive process that builds with every twist of the muka. With every addition of aho, the textile became more substantial, every aho becoming a stronger link with my tūpuna.

As a kairaranga I understand aho and whenu within a tikanga framework. Whilst the aho are the physical horizontal threads, they are also more subtly the horizon line moving across the vision of the kairaranga, evocative of the continuum of time. I see myself as connection of the past present and future through this interpretation when practicing whatu processes. The word aho is evocative of the aho tupuna the ancestral threads that bind and connect us, and are considered a

genealogical line (Ford, 2004). Te aho tapu refers to the weft or line that establishes the various forms, elaborations and borders on korowai. In addition, it determines the descending line and weaving pattern. The aho threads also represent the connections we have to the whenua. In the Māori language word for placenta is the same as the word for land – whenua. The connection with the whenua articulates the ritual burial of the whenua within the whenua<sup>155</sup>. It is a customary Māori practice to bury our baby's whenua in the whenua to which we geographically belong. This could be tribal land or land that has been passed down through the generations. The burial of the whenua within the land forever connects the next generation to place just as whatu and raranga tikanga links generations.

Also, with various levels of meaning, the whenu threads are the physical vertical threads that are symbolically connecting Ranginui and Papatūānuku with the kairaranga whatu and the taonga being created in the centre of that connection. Thus, the whatu or the bringing together of the whenu with aho speaks volumes about the interweaving of past, present and future.

Made visible to me through working with our taonga plants (such as muka) is the transcendence of time. Using the ways of my tūpuna with these ancestral materials at times feels like I am in a time machine. I am at once present, situated in the past, and creating for the future, a liminal space of connectivity. The experience of being in liminal space is reoccurring in my creative practice; it is at once in-between, before and after, a transient state arising through the making. As referred to earlier in this chapter these liminal spaces are where awareness occurs, an awareness of Māori knowing.

The construction, the artistry and flair of customary kākahu of which korowai are a style informed the making of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi and continue into the

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<sup>155</sup> *Whenua refers to both afterbirth and land. This saying refers to the return of afterbirth to the land after birth.*

present day in its final form. Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi will be used often not just packed away into a museum case but will be enjoyed by the wearer, the viewers, and the kairaranga. I have witnessed the University kaumātua wearing Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi with pride at University graduations, and I am always reminded of the first time I placed the korowai on his shoulders. He was humbled and honoured that the korowai was for him to wear in his role as University kaumātua. Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is a testament to the beauty inherent within such a customary/contemporary garment. She announces to the world by being worn ceremonially that “here I am an important purveyor of Māori artistic integrity”. Reminding us that the fibre arts are as vibrant and relevant today as ever.

### *Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi*

Collective practice is at the heart of the creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. Collective knowing in creative practice informed the creation of this korowai, the creation belonging to the collective knowledge of many kairaranga hands and minds. The art forms of raranga and whatu engender an inherited responsibility to practice the tikanga inherent within the art form. Relational accountability (Wilson, 2008) was evident as weavers who gave freely of their knowledge, their aroha and their materials, in order to have contributed to the collective. Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is an embodiment of collective praxis that acknowledges the whakapapa of the art form.

As an example of collaboration, collective praxis, it is important to acknowledge the role of my partner Aroha Mitchell as a key collaborator in my creative practice. Aroha Mitchell is a multi-media artist who works in paint, wood and fibre a well-established artist in her own right. Affiliated to Te Arawa and Ngāti Porou, her artwork is often inspired by the environs of her hometown Rotorua. On Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi, her skills as a kairaranga and designer were integral to the finished korowai project. At the start of the project, we undertook visual

research of customary garments and techniques that contextualized the shape and design of the korowai. Then a range of tests was carried out in order to harvest and prepare the necessary materials. However, before any harvesting could happen the political process of negotiating access to the appropriate harakeke was essential. In this process Aroha Mitchell embodied whanaungatanga and aided negotiating the needed access.

Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi exemplified Kaupapa Māori through whanaungatanga. Whanaungatanga can be described as participating in meaningful relationships, of working together in a sense of belonging. Without practicing whanaungatanga we would not have had material to weave with. To source the prime kōhunga muka we needed for the project we needed to obtain permission. It would have been possible for us to access this harakeke without permission and no one would have been the wiser. However, it would be inappropriate for Aroha and me as kairaranga to operate in such a fashion. According to tikanga Māori we are responsible for behaving in a correct and authentic way. Through a relationship Aroha had with the niece of the kōroua who owned the pā harakeke a hui was arranged. We made sure to take home baking as a koha in respect for the kōroua giving us time for a hui. Our tribal connections were essential to be clarified so that he could be reassured we had good intentions. As well the intended role for the korowai, and that it would stay in Waikato and be used by the kaumātua at the University.

The harakeke was in Waikato, so it was satisfactory that we were using the harakeke muka for a korowai that would stay in Waikato. For us it was important to assure him that we intended to clean the Pā Harakeke as we harvested the material we needed, nurturing the plants in appreciation of the taonga we were about to create. This was about generating a relationship of trust between him and us, a relationship of reciprocity where he was as much a part of the creation of the korowai as we were, the enactment of whanaungatanga. He was very open

and generous to us as he gave his consent for us to use the Pā harakeke. The creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is revealed in depth in Woven Memories.<sup>156</sup>

The time and commitment spent on a korowai is in itself a cultural affirmation. While weaving Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi I was teaching full-time which slowed progress somewhat therefore the korowai was created over a three-year period. The collection and preparation of materials took the best part of year to complete. Then the whatu process was another two years in creation. A beautiful aspect of working on a korowai is that the work can be left for periods of time. Unlike raranga where the kairaranga needs to complete the work relatively quickly as the prepared whenu, need to be dampened over and over again which can weaken the outer leaf of the whenu. However, a korowai is draped on a frame, with no need to be folded and put away every day. This allows for a luxury of sitting for short or long periods of time without any pressure that the materials might be stressed.



*Figure 33. (2014). Rotorua Wānanga. Donna in the foreground Working on the korowai frame with Christina Wirihana and her Mum Matekino Lawless in the background.*

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<sup>156</sup> Chapter 6.

The harvesting and processing of the materials to create such a garment is lengthy, time consuming. The harvesting process (Figure 34) is most gratifying in my practice because of the many levels of engagement. According to tikanga, karakia is performed, before removing anything from the pā harakeke. The space of karakia clears the mind and the physical space surrounding the body to be clear and focused on the processes to follow. Performing ritual incantation provides space to be grateful for the taonga plant, to thank the whenua, and acknowledge Hineteiwaiwa<sup>157</sup> as the guardian of raranga and whatu. I love the physicality involved in harvesting, the bending the stretching and the squatting needed in order to trim the rau for processing. The dead or dried leaves are also cut away at this time, so as to give the plant room to breathe, allowing all the nutrients in the earth to go to the young shoots. Then the bundling and carrying the treasure of harvested rau to transport back to the studio is yet another strenuous bodily experience, especially if the bundles are heavy. It is gratifying to care for our taonga plants in this way, especially when one can look at the pā harakeke and see the plants cleaned and healthy for the next round of harvesting. The harvesting is the same whether gathering materials for raranga or whatu. The connection with the whenua at this stage is corporeal as well as spiritual.



*Figure 34* Harvesting Harakeke. Note the three leaves in the centre are te rito, embraced by awahi rito, or sometimes referred to as ngā mātua.

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<sup>157</sup> *The atua or deity who is the guardian of all womanly things, including child birth and the weaving arts.*

The preparation of these rau to create the aho and whenu for a korowai is best done in bursts of time as the number needed is in the hundreds. For Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi I used kōhunga<sup>158</sup> for the whenu, and taiore<sup>159</sup> for the aho because of their different properties, as told to me by Diggeress Te Kanawa many years ago. Then reinforced by Kahutoi Te Kanawa (personal communication, November 2013) when we were discussing the creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi.

In the repetitive nature of the task's attention is renewed. The miraculous appeal of the muka releasing from its encasement within the rau, from its skin, is at once astounding and affirming. Astounding to reveal the secret lustrous fibre intact within the leaf and affirming to succeed at releasing the fibre in one long even length. Sound, touch, smell, all the senses are activated while handling the materials. To release the muka from the skin of the rau the kuku (mussel) shell is firmly rubbed along the leaf making a scratchy sound. The sound of the muka when pulled away from its encasement is a barely audible shredding sound. As much as a vibration in the body as a sound to the ears. On separation of the muka from the outer skin, an earthy perfume is released, what I call a fresh green smell that is intoxicating. In this process, light oils are released from the rau; they are then absorbed by the skin of the kaiwhatu in a symbiotic relationship of kaiwhatu and plant. The muka is encased in a second layer that we call para this second skin is scraped off firmly to clean the muka, but gently enough so not to break the fibres. Sometimes with this method the body becomes sprinkled with para, that needs to be brushed off before walking anywhere, or else the para is trailed all around the studio. The only tools used are kuku or mussel shell and the skilful hands of the kairaranga (Figure 35 & 36). The action is repeated many many times, the more it is repeated, the more dexterous the kairaranga becomes at releasing the muka firstly, then rolling the muka to make even threads in readiness for the whatu process. The whenu or aho are then coiled together in bundles of even numbers, so as to know at a glance how many have been prepared (Figure 38).

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<sup>158</sup> Recommended best harakeke fibre for long silky muka, by Diggeress Te Kanawa

<sup>159</sup> Recommended best harakeke fibre for aho, the para comes away cleanly and the strands separate easily.



*Figure 35.* Kuku (mussel) shell used to extract muka



*Figure 36.* Mitchell, A. (2016). Muka separating from the outer leaf.

Once all the necessary aho and whenu are prepared the whenu are then put through the patu process. The process of patu (Figure 37) is the beating of the soaked bundles of muka, to remove the moisture. This process involves dropping a kōhatu (stone) shaped for this purpose on each bundle over and over again to soften the fibres and remove any extraneous leaf material. This might require more than a hundred drops, each drop about the length of a heartbeat. For me the rhythm and action is meditative and hypnotic, the mind shifting temporally as the body continues in automatic but intentional action. As part of the patu

process, the bundled whenu are rubbed together or kōhumuhumu to help remove any extra superfluous material, and then the soaking and patu process begins again. By feeling the softness of whenu the kaiwhatu intuitively knows when to stop the practice. Many of the processes of raranga and whatu are spaces where the mind can be present in the moment accepting an unconscious emotional connection to the materials. Through the senses of smell and touch, which can potentially trigger embodied knowing that dwells in muscle memory. I am suggesting here that tūpuna memories are embodied within the muscles of our bodies, and that engaging in these practices this knowing can be accepted. The patu process involving water, fibre and stone is multisensory and all encompassing.



*Figure 37.* Mitchell, A. (2014) The patu process.

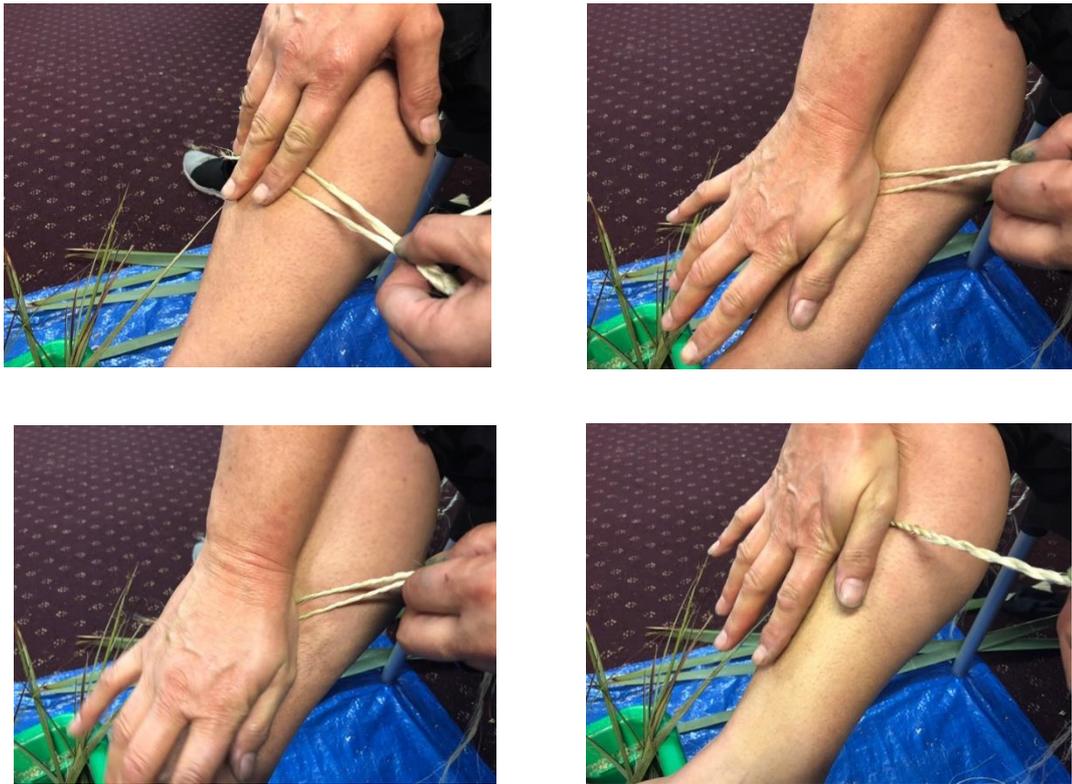


Figure 38. Campbell, D. (2017). Miro process, rolling muka on the leg to create a 2-ply twined thread.

The physicality of muka preparation processes leave traces of the maker entwined in the fibres as the muka threads are rolled across the body after being extracted. The extracted muka is split and top and tailed then the miro process (rolling of the fibres to create weavable lengths) is done on the legs of the kairaranga. (Figure 38). The fibres are then rolled together with dexterity and practice to achieve uniform tension creating an entwined thread. This process is also done with the aho. Consequently, in this method the rolled muka captures miniscule remnants of skin and hair of the kaiwhatu. Thus, the whenu and aho literally contain the body of the kaiwhatu. Then in the creation of the kākahu textile the whatu process of twining the aho and whenu adds another layer of the bodily contact with the muka. (Figure 39). The preceding methods are tikanga o ngā mahi whatu<sup>160</sup> taonga tuku iho methods that have been handed down from generation to generation of

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<sup>160</sup> *The correct way to prepare muka for the whatu processes.*

kairaranga and kaiwhatu. By practicing these methods, we retain tūpuna knowledge that can ensure wairua, tinana, and hinengaro are in balance in wellness.



*Figure 39.* Campbell, D. (2014). Working the whatu process in the creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi.



*Figure 40.* Campbell, D. (2014). Detail of haka haka cords and tufts of Kiwi feather elements on the kaupapa of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi.



*Figure 41.* Campbell, D. (2014). Detail of korowai border mawhitiwhiti whatu, and Kiwi and Pheasant feathers.

Working in this slow art is ceremony allowing the space of thinking of being one with the materials in mindfulness. Working across the width of the textile can take up to three hours a time, with many additions to the aho threads to increase their length. Therefore, three or four rows can be worked at once all at different stages across the kaupapa. This technique is up to the kaiwhatu and what works well for them. This technique I found helpful in maintaining rhythm rather than stopping regularly to add in new aho, as well as focusing attention to the tension of the overall textile. Care has to be taken to maintain the whatu pattern by being aware at all times of the overall placement of feathers, tags and whatu design elements. Counting the whenu between the placement points and placing knots or coloured pieces of wool at intervals to indicate placement points does this. The addition of feathers and tags when working multiple rows can create spaces within the weave that affect the overall tension, but more care is necessary than if you were whatu one row at a time.

Patience of mind body and spirit is required all along the way, weaving the seemingly endless aho and whenu into the fabric of the korowai. The body can be held in one posture for lengths of time as the whatu process takes over, sometimes being “in” the process it’s easy to forget to stretch and move the body

to release any built-up muscle tension. The act of whatu is very satisfying and affirming process for me reminding me that my tūpuna are still teaching me through this taonga about my Māoritanga.<sup>161</sup> I feel privileged to be able to experience my cultural strength through this gentle art form.

Weaving acknowledges Māori ways of knowing, through the practice of tikanga associated with the art form. When we harvest prepare and weave our materials, we engage in tikanga that has been handed down from our tūpuna through karakia, tikanga and practice of time-honoured techniques. The daily performance of these cultural imperatives assists and remind us that knowing our culture, our indigeneity, is central to our wellbeing. Furthermore, these performances provide a source of awareness of, and resistance to, our colonized realities where weaving was presented as a technical activity and harakeke simply as a medium of artistry. Connecting with a collective practice similarly provides an antidote to the individualism of the modern Western world we live in.

The korowai has travelled in its making. It has had many hands caress and contribute to its creation. It has affirmed for me as a kairaranga and as a wahine Māori, my own cultural connections. It has also made me more aware of the collective nature of working with our Māori fibres and tikanga. Through the understanding of the commitment involved of creating a korowai, other kairaranga offered muka to help me complete Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. It was humbling and overwhelming to receive generous gifts of aho to add to the hundreds I needed. Making aho is a skilful process; these rolled threads are mere millimetres thick, therefore to be handed a boxful with no expectation of return exemplified the collectivity of kairaranga. This is only one of the many gifts given to Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. My weaving friends also dyed the hukahuka fibres in traditional mud dyes and contributed bark dyed aho for the border of the korowai. The relationships with other kairaranga whatu were manifested through the creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. At one point halfway through the

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<sup>161</sup> *Māori ways of being.*

kaupapa I realized I needed to take more care as my tension was off. By laying the kaupapa on a bed (which I did at regular intervals) I could see that the right side was moving slightly outwards, rather than maintaining the rectangle. I immediately rang Kahutoi who is a friend, mentor and fellow kairaranga and explained what was happening with my tension. I have to admit I was a bit panicked thinking of the days of work I might have to undo. Kahutoi was very calm being a very experienced kaiwhatu, and suggested I double up on some whenu over a series of aho to bring the side into line. I followed her advice of trusting that my body would know which whenu to double up on and to do this gradually, so as not to make the adjustment visible. Kahutoi saved me a lot of stress that day, she is a master kairaranga and understood what I was going through and willing to help.

Also, the gifting of materials such as aho from Christina, Mate and Liz were gratefully accepted. The competition with my friend Ngarimu on who can roll the tightest huka huka was an amusing challenge that spurred us both on. Although he has never come in contact with Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi we both worked on the tags while Christina dyed them with traditional mud dye paru ready for attachment. My contemporaries were continually asking how the korowai was going. All of them supportive, knowing the creation of this korowai was a collective endeavour, of our tūpuna, of ourselves, and future weaving artists that may reference it. Their vested interest in supporting the creation of this korowai speaks to the collective embodied knowing that manifested through the making of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. The contributions from Aroha Mitchell, Christina Wirihihana, Matekino Lawless, Kahutoi Te Kanawa, Edna Pahewa, Te Ao Marama Ngarimu are all woven into the fabric of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi and as such they all a special part of whakapapa of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. Whenever I took the korowai to wānanga the collective thinking and scholarship of the art form came alive. The scholarship of design advice, practical advice on whatu techniques, on whakapapa and properties of plants was shared. As well, stories and experiences of other kairaranga were shared in the supportive Māori spaces of wānanga. As a kairaranga whatu, I experience wānanga as thinking spaces, to think, on your own, or to think with others, to discuss, to create, to 'be' in Māori

‘being’ where te ao Māori practices are enabled and embodied. These instances of working collectively of being together on common ground with a shared sense of indigeneity are unique in that the colonized spaces we all inhabit are challenged. Through a wānanga experience we can assert our Māori worldview on our own terms and in our own spaces. The tikanga of the fibre arts, embodied in Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi, reinforces te ao Māori in an artistry of design as a catalyst for the creation of these spaces.



*Figure 42.* (2013). Tūnaki border in progress. Tūnaki aho dyed with traditional methods.

The artistic nature of creating a korowai involves the design of the garment. Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi was made to a prescribed form of textile fabricated from the whatu technique from prepared muka fibres. Design of the ornamentation was conservative in nature due to the ceremonial roles this garment would be used for in the future. In terms of design kiwi feathers were chosen as appropriate for the status of the korowai and the intended wearer. Pheasant feathers were selected as visual counterpoints of form and colour to be attached as borders for the rows of kiwi feathers. Design elements also included hukahuka (Figure 40), attached in a way that allows them to sway when the korowai is worn, adding a layered visual interest.

The tāniko border (Figure 42) on the bottom of the korowai is woven in the University colours of yellow, black and red. It is woven in the Patikitiki pattern named for the dominant motif of the single diamond. Patikitiki represents abundance and is used on this korowai to signify the abundance of teaching and learning in the University.

### *Kete Muka*

The creation of a kete muka from the left over whenu and feathers of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi completed the making journey of this korowai. This kete muka (Figure 43 & 44) has been handled by students as a working drawing, or work in progress as I have used it in classes for students to learn whatu technique. Most of the time they would do a row or two, then I would undo the row and redo it if the tension was not even. It has been a wonderful learning kete that has inspired taura to make their own. This kete reflects the embodied knowledge inherent within the making, teaching techniques used in a korowai. The kete also utilised the extra whenu and feathers from the creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. This kete was completed in order to donate to the St Faiths Church at Ohinemutu in Rotorua where we live. The church committee were raising funds for repairs on the building, and invited artists and makers to contribute art works. It was a privilege to pass this kete on to such a good cause, knowing many hands were in the making.



*Figure 43.* Campbell, D. (2016). Whatu kete muka (adding feathers). Kete muka, with pheasant and kiwi feather detail and finishing top edge with whiri.



*Figure 44 .* Campbell, D. (2016). Kete Muka.

Through weaving kairaranga can experience the connection to our past, of ourselves and of our tūpuna in the processes of material preparation and the manifestation of the taonga we are creating. We also feel these connections intangible though they may be, they are no less real. To attain dexterity the

kairaranga whatu practices these skills again and again. The experience of working with muka is one of discovery and revelation, the wonder when the leaf shell gives up the inner fibres of muka can be quite exhilarating not the least dampened by the fact that it may have taken attempts before being successful. The development of these skills is demanding and challenging in ways that cultivate our sense of ourselves, experiencing at one tenacity, dexterity, success, disappointment and achievement – all in one swift attempt at extracting muka with ease from its protective shell. Not in the least is the understanding of influences of the tangible garment that connects a series of intangible relationships.

As Mere Kapa Ngāmai praised her ancestral mountain Taranaki by using the metaphor of ‘prestigious cloaks’ accordingly this chapter acknowledged our tūpuna knowing embodied within these garments. The ceremony of creating the prestigious cloak Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi was explained from my own perspective as a kaiwhatu. This chapter wove together the collective embodied knowing of cultural memory, the material practice from conception to creation of Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi. Korowai and other taonga created from harakeke embody the philosophies of te pā harakeke. These philosophies symbolize bringing people together, exchanging knowing and knowledge, and affirming our cultural heritage, healing and sourcing mana wahine .

The body is central in the making of kākahu; these garments are made through the body of the body and for the body. Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi is made manifest from corporeality and liminality. These thinking spaces, and physical processes inform the creation of new work for this PhD project.

A close-up photograph of a woman's shoulder and arm. She has a large, intricate black tattoo on her right shoulder. She is wearing a traditional woven garment, possibly a kura, with long, light-colored fringes hanging down. The background is dark and out of focus.

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*Kura : Embodied Mana Wahine*

The creative works for this PhD study exemplify a dialogue with practice, the non-verbal exchange between the artist and their material. These works are 'kura' defined by Rangimarie Rose Pere (1991) in this way "Kura can mean precious treasures that include valuable information and knowledge" (p. 20), and as such they embody the learning's, concepts and ideas that arisen from this project. The body adornments including Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi represent the narratives of atua wāhine placing them central to Māori narratives, each will be explained in sequence. The works created within this study are of the whenua. The works will have their experience; they will be owned, worn, and shown off; they will wear, they will age, and eventually be returned back to the whenua, as is tikanga, for all woven taonga. The creative work developed through this project have been woven from harakeke, kiekie, pīngao and muka. While they encompass both processes of raranga and whatu, they are underpinned by the body theories<sup>162</sup>, investigating new forms and application of sculptural elements.

### *He Atua, He Wahine*

The creative works in this PhD study are reflections of the goddess within us: they are with us wherever we are, we can commune with them drawing strength and mana wahine guidance. This chapter represents the embodiment of all of the elements of this thesis. The processes of the sculptural work I create is discussed as the making of the body adornments progress. The praxis of creative practice encompasses making and thinking, responding to, and resolving design issues all the while keeping in mind the original vision. I like to make work that challenges me in technique, form and design. The process is very much a dialogue between the material, Te Ao Māori and me. It is a reciprocal relationship where the material responds, and the maker responds, at times vice versa, but always in an interchange. An example of the materials responding is when I am having difficulty with a whakairo that I am familiar with but just cannot get right. In these moments I need to slow down, listen and reflect on the state of mind I am in as to why there

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<sup>162</sup> Discussed in Chapter 4.

is struggle. I need to listen to the material as it is demanding more attention. Most often than not I realize that I need to be more mindful, to honour the challenge inherent within the material and the whakairo and bring humility to the process. These moments are in-between knowing and not knowing. Spaces of unknowing are often experienced in my practice where this dialogue arises and I am guided by what the material is willing to do with my manipulation. Vietnamese filmmaker and academic Trinh T. Minh-Ha talks about the “manifestation of the infinity, of letting things come to oneself in all liveliness, maintaining infinity listening to the intervals manifesting the in between” (2016, unpaginated). Her words accurately describe the state of unknowing, of the in-between space of allowing the material to speak while at the same time thinking through the body that is making. Minh-ha calls these moments out in or inside out moments, which I interpret as a fluid state of moving between the material and oneself then back again. I call it listening to the material, allowing the material to stay true to itself, while at the same time manipulating the material to my vision. A kind of dance, that is for me the magic of the creative process. These out in and inside out moments are woven together through the creative process and never ending. To borrow the words of Kiyomo Iwata Japanese artist in fiber “evolution is so much a part of life. That’s what the creative process is about. There is never an ending.” Even when the work is created there is reflection, observation and critique brought to the work, in order to develop and build on what has gone before.

The idea of creating collars and wraps as body adornment that represent chosen atua wāhine was twofold. Firstly, working with a textile area that had the limitation of form was a way of fully exploring the possibilities of taki tahi and whiri. Taki tahi is an over one under one weave that I utilize a lot to create a tight weave that can be formed and manipulated during and after completion. Whiri is basically a 3 strand braid but can be made of any number of whenu. Whiri are used in multiple ways to finish kete, korowai and all manner of woven taonga. Utilizing this practice of what I call limited experimentation can hone design possibilities. Therefore, collars and wraps were initially a way of perceiving a type of garment that can work off the body. While the corset works encase the body much like

bondage and control (Figure 46), collars can move out from the body becoming a platform for more sculptural forms, which can be worn in different ways.

These pieces are named for aspects of atua wāhine and are designed to represent their Mana Wahine. The materials and form denoting their status within pūrākau, acknowledging key roles they play. Te Arawa, Ngāti Porou scholar Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) writes that “atua wāhine held powerful positions in Māori cosmology, their roles complementing those of their well-known male counterparts and providing a balance within the pantheon” (p. 1). This body of works centralises the role of atua wāhine in the Maui narratives. In the most popularized pūrākau of the creation of the Māori world the demi god Maui is the protagonist. Maui is a cultural hero throughout Polynesia (Yates, 1998) he is the central focus for the narrative, while the atua wāhine are peripheral to the main story. Nevertheless it is clear that Maui would not have succeeded in his endeavours if were not aided by his kuia.<sup>163</sup> These creative works situate atua wāhine, kuia in the Maui narratives as the catalytic forces, vital to success of Maui’s achievements.

This series of works are an extension of each other, informing the other and depending on each other expressing whakapapa and whanaungatanga. The kiekie collar Murirangawhenua (Figures 48 & 49) was the template for the conical textile stole Hinenuitepō II (Figure 53). The conical textile stole, or wrap was developed from the conical textile wrap Hinenuitepō I (Figure 50 & 51). Inherent within my creative practice is whanaungatanga; embedded within the weave is the relationship of each whenu with the other. One whenu cannot exist without the other, critical to the structure of the fabric of the woven textile. Whanaungatanga is an important aspect of how the works in this study relate to each other.

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<sup>163</sup> *Female elders.*

## *Hinetitama*

The next series of works reflect the transformation of Hinetitama of the Dawn to the deity Hinenuitepō of the Night are shown in Figures 45, 46, 50 & 51. These pieces represent the phases of transformation she went through to finally express her own mana wahine. Hinetitama is known as the mother of humankind, the first true human “being a fusion of the godly and earthly elements and born of woman” (Grace, 1984, pg. 70). She was the daughter of the deity Tāne Mahuta and Hineahuone who bound earthly night to earthly day. After discovering that Tane Mahuta was not only her husband, but also her father she discarded the form of Hinetitama to then become Hinenuitepō the protector of souls. This corset piece (Figures 45 & 46) represents the liminal space where Hinetitama chooses to transform into the state of Hinenuitepō.

The piece Hinetitama, is framed by a dark weave within the weave are ridges and whiri, these indicate the confusion she faced when discovering her father and husband were the same man. The piece reflects a fragmentation of self, a breaking apart and coming back together at the same time, in the form of the whakairo karu hāpuku. The piece represents her self-reflection and her ultimate decision to become Hinenuitepō. As she decides to alter her state, she informs her partner pragmatically, “you will take care of our living mortal children and I will care for them when they die and move to next plane of existence”. Hinetitama ultimately decides her own fate, embracing her strength and self-determination.



Figure 45. Campbell, D. (2016). *Hinetitama*. [Harakeke, synthetic dyes]. In *Patterns of Endurance*. Davis, CA, USA: C.N. Gorman Museum at UC Davis, 27 Sep – 3 Dec 2016.



*Figure 46.* Campbell, D. (2018). *Hinetitama*. [Harakeke, muka, synthetic dyes]. In *Kura: Embodied Mana Wahine*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Ramp Gallery, 14 Feb – 1 Mar 2019.

## *Murirangawhenua*

The collar is named after the atua wāhine Murirangawhenua. She was one of Maui's grandmothers, and gifted him her jawbone. The gifting of her body to her mokopuna Maui, her sacrifice of communication through words, speaks to the great love and trust she had for the future of the world. Knowing that this would mean her death did not deter her, as she knew she needed to do this for the future of humankind.

This work was initially inspired by the material - kiekie, the creamy white and the feel of kiekie whenu, felt like fragile bones to me, and spoke to me of Murirangawhenua.

We, my sister and I and some weaving friends harvested the kiekie from Taranaki where our Dad comes from. My sister was new to kiekie the harvesting and preparation so she was really excited to harvest. Sometimes kiekie grows on steep ridges and this harvest was no exception. After our initial karakia, clearing the space, putting us in the right frame of mind for our safety, the adventure of climbing and scrambling through the bush to harvest our taonga began. We drove home with a van full of our taonga plant all of us excited to get to weave it.

We spent two days preparing everything we had harvested, laughing, telling stories generally getting on with the job together. The preparation of kiekie is time consuming, involving splitting down each leaf to fine 3ml whenu widths. Sizing into lengths, then bundling into lots of 50 whenu. Then the bundles are boiled. Each of us switching round each task when we had had enough. It made the jobs much easier working collectively dreaming of the taonga we would make individually. Kiekie prepared in this way can be stored indefinitely, in a cool airy place, out of full sunshine.

Kiekie is a wonderful cream colour and will always lighten as time goes on. The raranga process requires keeping the raranga materials damp by lightly spraying with water or wrapping in damp towels. Kiekie whenu are strong and resistant to staining when soaked with water, in contrast to harakeke, that stains easily. As a result, working with kiekie allows a lot more freedom working sculpturally than harakeke. The freedom comes from the kiekie, it can be woven not completed, left to dry out and then dampened again and again to continue the raranga. I can get distance from the piece in these spaces, distance allows for reflection and critique of the piece while I am creating them

This particular collar form, Murirangawhenua, began life as a kete, but halfway through it became the basis of the collar piece. I had made drawings of the collar, and once my hands were weaving the kiekie Murirangawhenua and her pūrākau kept surfacing in my mind and pulling my hands and fingers to create a piece for her.

Murirangawhenua passed on her knowledge through her jawbone. Patricia Grace (1984) writes:

Muriranga-whenua would not bestow her jawbone of enchantment and knowledge on her grandson Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga, until he had used trickery upon her. Once he had established kinship to her, Muriranga-whenua realized that this Maui had the necessary attributes to receive such a wonderful gift and gave him her jawbone, thus symbolizing the gift of knowledge from an elder to a worthy person of the younger generation (p. 77).

As this collar was created from the kete I was making and woven in a circle I needed to undo the raranga in order to open the circle to create a wrap. In this form the work could be created on a mannequin. Kiekie is very strong once woven it becomes very stiff, so it must be moulded and woven before as it dries to the form. I relate to this as the 'memory' of the material. As before I have mentioned

the 'memory' of harakeke and the reasons for hāpine or mirimiri of the leaves, kiekie only needs to be dampened to weave it. Thus, the memory of it is not interrupted by hāpine; accordingly, it dries as a firmer textile than harakeke. I love the sculptural possibilities of all of taonga plants and especially kiekie. As the kiekie I used was stripped finely due to its natural form therefore weaving was slowed down somewhat.



*Figure 47.* Campbell, D. (2015). Murirangawhenua. Work in progress.

(Figure 48 left) illustrates the messiness in the sculptural raranga process, the messiness and ordered chaos is where the creative magic happens. The Figures show the kete form opened up and wrapped on the shoulders of the mannequin. Working in 3 dimensions helps to give form to the piece. I usually work directly with a mannequin for this reason. (Figure 48 right) shows the top back locked off by a kete finish weave and the beginning of locking off of the bottom edge. There are too many whenu at this stage of the process to keep control off, the use of pegs is necessary to keep everything together. At this stage of the work key decisions are made. Whether to add on more whenu, to create a more shape and body within in the piece, or to refine the form. Which is what I chose to do. Nothing is cut until I am confident, I don't need the length of the whenu. Once whenu are cut they cannot they cannot be added back.

In the raranga process I made the decision to focus on a pure form of shoulder adornment. This decision was partly informed by the many unwoven whenu that I had no real idea about how to raranga them into the form in my mind. By focusing on a relatively flat 3-dimensional form I could bring some control to the piece while working on the surface layer through the weave. I then decided to create texture and movement within the weave with projecting borders on the neck and shoulder edges. This decision was taken with no clear idea how to go about it. I let my hands raranga bringing together all of my previous raranga knowledge, feeling the whenu come together, the ridges being created beneath my fingers, the weave materializing from seemingly disorganized whenu. The textural patterns of ridges and whiri denote the ripping of the jaw bone from her body.

In this piece (as in all of my works) as the weave reveals itself, new ideas spring from the moment, where to go to next, how to weave the next whenu into the next whenu, whether to stop here or keep going. I am in constant decision-making mode and trusting the decisions in the moment. If I go too far, I could lose the truthfulness of material, if I push too far, I might as well be weaving plastic or string. If I don't go far enough, I am not honouring the veracity of the kiekie, its unique qualities and letting it live.

The collar bears the scars and witness to the sacrifice she made for her mokopuna Maui. After being gifted her jawbone he proceeded to fashion a patu with which he slowed down the sun, to make the nights shorter and the days longer. Also from her jawbone he fashioned a fish hook with which he caught Te Ika a Maui, the North Island of Aotearoa. Without the aid of his kuia<sup>164</sup> Maui could not have achieved his many quests.



*Figure 48.* Campbell, D. (2016). *Murirangawhenua*. [Kieve, silk]. In *Patterns of Endurance*. Davis, CA, USA: C.N. Gorman Museum at UC Davis.



Figure 49. Campbell, D. (2018). *Murirangawhenua* [Kiekie, silk]. In *Kura: Embodied Mana Wahine*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Ramp Gallery, 14 Feb – 1 Mar 2019.

I work in an organic fashion, relating to the material, and being open to whatever comes from the mind-body-spirit space I am working in, from the piece I am working on. I listen to the material and allow my hands to make the choices of the weave and the shape. Mindfulness and presence are the experiences of working this way. Often I need to undo something, if it is not 'working' however these spaces of undoing, allow thinking to arise of a new or different direction.

Issey Miyake states that:

Sometimes it goes well, sometimes it doesn't, and in that you have to tear everything down and begin again. But in any case we have to carry on moving forward, continuing doing our research, doing new experiments.

Tearing everything down is an integral part of my creative process, undoing weaving, reweaving, adding, subtracting are all integrated into the raranga, and the whatu processes. At times undoing - because a mistake in the pattern needs to be put right, at other times, undoing - because the shape is not quite right. Or undoing - just because it needs to be undone. At times the finished work is not how I envisioned it...or does not have the qualities I was working towards. Sometimes works just don't turn out. Even though they would not be exhibition worthy these pieces are still important in the development of ideas and techniques. At times even though I might feel the work is not "working" I will persevere to move further into the technique I am practicing, oftentimes the work can be resolved focusing in this way. Even if the work is not resolved in this process there is always learning in the making. There can be spaces of pure frustration when a work is not seemingly turning out the way I envisaged it. A kind of beautiful unease permeates these times, where opening up to the power of our atua wāhine is dynamic. These spaces are where the learning of self, the understanding of self-arises. These are often the ceremonial spaces where karakia and humbleness come to the fore.

## *Hinenuitepō*

Hinenuitepō translates as the Great Lady of the Night. These two garments the pake (Figure 50 & 51) and the collar wrap (Figure 53) are exploratory conical raranga textiles created to reflect the mana of this atua wāhine. In the pūrākau of Hinenuitepō and Maui, he attempts to make men immortal by entering her body, by way of her vagina to eat her heart and emerge from her mouth. She is wakened by her attempt and crushes him between her legs. An excerpt from Grace & Kahukiwa (1984) is as follows:

*... When I have defeated Maui, I will thereafter welcome my descendants in death. I do not cause death and do not ordain it. Human death was ordained when human life was ordained....*

*... Now he stands at the edge of light, exuberant, changing from one disguise to another while the little birds watch, excited and trembling. My vagina, where he must enter, is set with teeth of obsidian, and is a gateway through which only those who have already achieved death may freely pass.*

*He will attempt to enter in life, hoping that I am asleep, but he will be cut in two, meeting his death. Only then can he be made welcome.....*

*... Come survivor of seas, lengthener of day, obtainer of fire, fisher of land, keeper of the magical jawbone of Muriranga-whenua.....*

*... I will wait at this side of death for those who follow, because I am the mother who welcomes and cares for those children whose earthly life has ended.*

Many of the pūrākau of Maui and Hinenuitepō portray Hinenuitepō as the cause of death because she dispatches Maui, on the hand it is Maui who initially sets out to overcome Hinenuitepō (Yates, 1998).

The garment Hinenuitepō as with all of my work is a dialogue with process, creating the cone shapes was a true challenge, and then working them into a textile added another perplexing task. The textile is created by making a series of

cone shapes, then interweaving the pieces to connect into a length of textile. The lengths are then joined together within the weave to



Figure 50. Campbell, D. (2016). *Hinenuitepō I*. [Harakeke, synthetic dyes]. In *Patterns of Endurance*. Davis, CA, USA: C.N. Gorman Museum at UC Davis, 27 Sep – 3 Dec 2016.



Figure 51. Campbell, D. (2018). *Hinenuitepō I*. [Harakeke, synthetic dyes]. In *Kura: Mana Wahine Embodied*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Ramp Gallery, 14 Feb – 1 Mar 2019.

create a seamless textile. At certain juncture points the weave to connect the pieces textile is an adapted whiri technique I have devised from raranga kete.

The conical textile is very difficult to create. There is absolutely no ara tika, so no guiding line, it is challenging to connect the cones in a seamless way. The challenge is what motivates me to create, to somehow master the techniques and control the materials. The cone shapes allude to the obsidian teeth of Hinenuitepō I created the cones in order for the materials to seem more assertive to the viewer and to myself as the maker. In much of my work I am concerned with the beauty of the materials, and the whakairo that enhance the weave. Sometimes I think that if the pieces are too beautiful the message behind them can be lost. When working in a customary textile such as raranga, there is already meaning, deep cultural meaning, as this study attests to. In order to interweave powerful messages into the works I manipulate the form of the raranga textile. Sometimes beautiful, textural, sculptural depending on the kaupapa or message within the work. My own expression as an artist is balanced with respect to the whakapapa of the practice and of the taonga plants.



*Figure 52.* Campbell, D. (2014) Work in progress on the conical textile of Hinenuitepō II (back view).

*Hinenuitepō II* (Figure 53) is the next development working with the conical textile. This piece is lined with fur, a more overt reference to the vagina of Hinenuitepō and in acknowledgment of the potency of the female sexual organs. Mikaere (2003) tells us in reference to Hinenuitepō:

The passage through which each of us pass to enter Te Ao Marama is the same passage through which each of us must pass on our inevitable journey back to Te Pō. The process which brings each of us into being brought into the world into being. Our very existence is centred around the sexual power of woman.

In the case of the *Hinenuitepō* works, the conical textile is intended to exude beauty, danger and power. They encapsulate female sexual power, while protecting the wearer. The pieces may not be as wearable as a korowai, nevertheless I am interested in designing and creating sculptural garments that become animated when worn, and can stand alone as art objects.



Figure 53. Campbell, D. (2018). *Hinenuitepō II*. [Harakeke, synthetic dyes]. In *Kura : Mana Wahine Embodied*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Ramp Gallery, 14 Feb – 1 Mar 2019.

## *Mahuika*

In the Māori world Mahuika is the atua wāhine who possess fire in the Māori world. Trinh T (1982) writes in her film scripts of Reassemblage of the woman who possesses fire in this way:

In numerous tales

Woman is depicted as the one who possessed the fire

Only she knew how to make fire

She kept it in diverse places

At the end of the stick she used to dig the ground with, for example

In her nail or in her fingers

(p. 96 )Film scripts Reassemblage.

The muka used to create *Mahuika* has been extracted from harakeke rau that have light discolorations or flecks on the rau see (Figure 54 & 55). These flecks are made by fungal infections that make pinkish red patches through the rau and the muka. This muka was used intentionally in the creation of *Mahuika* as the whenu are tinged with red pinkish patches. These tinges of colour denote not only the fire children *Mahuika* contained in her fingernails and toenails. They also allude to the singed wings of the hawk that Maui transformed into trying to escape the flames of Mahuika's fire.

The piece Mahuika is a deconstructed kākahu, using traditional methods of miro to spin the whenu, and whatu to weave the whenu together. I love to work with muka, through creating Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi my experience was one of containing, controlling and restraining the fibres, with this work I felt a liberation of the materials, as well as myself. The freedom of fire, the power of Mahuika this piece celebrates these qualities expressed through mana wahine.



Figure 54. Campbell, D. (2016). *Mahuika* [Muka]. In *Patterns of Endurance*. Davis, CA, USA: C.N. Gorman Museum at UC Davis, 27 Sep – 3 Dec 2016.



Figure 55. Campbell, D. (2018). *Mahuika*. [Pīngao, muka]. In *Kura: Embodied Mana Wahine*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Ramp Gallery, 14 Feb – 1 Mar 2019.

## *Hineteiwaiwa*

Hineteiwaiwa is the spiritual guardian of childbirth, weaving and the cycles of the moon. Hineteiwaiwa guides me in my creative work, throughout the processes of weaving. The korowai Whatukura ki Oraurangi represents many phases of Hineteiwaiwa. Yates-Smith (1998) describes the traits of Hineteiwaiwa as strong, determined and resourceful, among others. These traits are exemplified in the tenacity needed to complete a korowai and as such the korowai Whatukura ki Oraurangi is dedicated to Hineteiwaiwa.

## *Kura: Embodied Mana Wāhine*

The exhibition Kura : Embodied Mana Wahine brings all of the thinking and making of the thesis together. Kura refers to the treasures of Mātauranga Māori, and as such Mana wāhine is the kura of this thesis, expressed in text and creative works. The exhibition conveys the relationship of raranga with the body in a display that allows an audience to closely examine the woven works. Mannequins are used to display each piece, so the viewer may engage in a three dimensional way.

The mannequins displaying the garments are positioned in such a way, that they are in relationship with a life size photograph of the same garment being worn. The viewers may weave their way through the mannequins, making connections with the garments as static sculptural works, and as wearable works as represented in the photographs.

The exhibition reflects a gender fluidity in the selection of models for the works. In my work Mana Wahine encompasses female and male aspects of ourselves.. Joanne Barker of the Delaware Tribe on Indigenous sexuality and gender states that Indigenous representations “are enacted through racialized, gendered, and sexualized images of Indigenous women/femininity and men/masculinity – presumably all heterosexual and of a generic tribe..(p.3). The selection of models

directly challenges the notions of heteronormative archetypes by positioning atua as non-gendered. Māori atua have been personified in contemporary narratives which has led to the exclusion and marginalisation of atua wāhine (Yates-Smith, 1998). I have also personified them in order to redress an imbalance that I see in the re-telling of our pūrākau.



Figure 56. Campbell, D. (2018). *Te Whatukura ki Oraurangi - Hineteiwaiwa* [Muka, kiwi and pheasant feathers, bark dyes]. In *Kura : Embodied Mana Wahine*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Ramp Gallery, 14 Feb – 1 Mar 2019.

## *Whiria te whiri*

### *Braiding the strands together*

Within this Creative practice research I have argued that the artistic relationship with Te Pā Harakeke is a means to cultural regeneration, affirmation and resistance. The art forms of raranga and whatu are grounded within a Māori world view. They are predicated on tūpuna knowledge which can be accessed through whakapapa. This includes both the whakapapa of the kairaranga and the whakapapa embodied in our taonga plants as native materials of this whenua. Engaging in these art forms is a melding of theory and practice that often is not articulated. This melding comes through the tacit nature of the praxis of making. In opening this work with my pepeha I bring to the fore my whakapapa connections that have always informed my work. This is essential, as it as kairaranga I draw deeply on ancestral knowledge both that from my own whakapapa connections and that which is generated through the mahi raranga itself.

As a kairaranga knowledge is embedded within the practice of caring for, nurturing, clearing, feeling, smelling, creating with the plants themselves. Just as we are children of Papatūānuku, so to are our native plants children of this whenua. These connections are critical in Te Ao Māori as I argued in the introduction that sustaining cultural identity is a key aspiration for Māori and Indigenous Peoples, that is inclusive of reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori. In this PhD I speak to these aspirations in the form of mahi raranga, as it was through raranga that I came to re-member my own place as a Māori woman and to reclaim the centrality of both mana wahine and mana Māori within my life. This is, I argued, both a process of being and of becoming. Raranga affirms my being Māori, raranga affirms my being wahine, raranga informs the ways through which I am becoming through the ever constant and evolving ways in which who I am as a

wahine Māori kairaranga is both in formation and is grounded simultaneously. When I first commenced this thesis I shared with my supervisor my creative practice “way of being” that is reflected in the idea that as a kairaranga I have both structure and fluidity, and through this practice the work is shaped by the structure and yet has the fluidity to take form in ways that are not expected. That has certainly been the case with this PhD.

At the beginning of this thesis I asked the question:

- What is the role of artistic relationships with Te Pā Harakeke in relation to cultural regeneration, affirmation and resistance?

This question has arisen from my own considerations about the role of raranga in a wider cultural regeneration strategy for Māori and my reflections on the impact of raranga in the grounded and strengthening of my own cultural identity and seeing the impact of this creative practice upon those that I teach.

The research has been grounded in Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theoretical approaches and follows on the work of Leonie Pihama (2001) who has positioned Mana Wahine theory as an articulation of Kaupapa Māori theory. Mana Wahine theory has guided the research while underpinning the creation of new work that situated Atua wahine at the heart of my creative practice. As highlighted the critical elements of both Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theories are realised within this research through both the analysis and the practice components. In my positioning of myself as kairaranga I have been conscious of the need throughout the work to ensure a weaving of the creative practice with the written analysis. At times within my creative practice I have needed to step back in order to document the process in a way that does not assume a ‘knowing’ that I take for granted in my mahi raranga. To be in a space of creative practice in raranga, as noted in this thesis, the work that evolves is not only of a material making processes but is imbued with spiritual and cultural knowings that flow through my hands, from my body to the body of work. This is fundamentally what I mean by the embodied practice that I as kairaranga engage. Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theories both embrace the fundamental concept and practice of taonga tuku iho within

which mahi raranga can be, and is, located. As Chrystos a Menominee writer and two-spirit activist maintains, flesh and blood experiences inform and confirm our collective restorative aspirations, theories are developed from our own lived experiences (in Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2015). As such throughout this Phd project I have worked to ensure that Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine have been spoken of both as philosophies, theories and as lived experience within creative practice, and as applied cultural praxis.

In aligning with Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theories I have engaged the concept and practice of Te Whare Pora as methodology. Te Whare Pora is a means by which to understand conceptual and physical spaces of creative practice. I have applied Te Whare Pora as methodology to explore the conceptual link between the liminal spaces that kairaranga occupy in the practice, and the tangible expression of taonga we create. As Erenora Hetet (1989) reminds us Te Whare Pora is both house of weaving and a conceptual space within which kairaranga weave thought into the physical. Te Whare Pora is for me as kairaranga, as Mana Wahine, a space I move in and out of in the material, physical, sensory, cultural and spiritual aspects of my creative practice. It is a space that embodies my thoughts, that enables me to think through mātauranga and tikanga Māori. Te Whare Pora also provides a house within which Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine live comfortably together to inform my raranga practice. It is an space that affirms and examples the Kaupapa Māori principles that Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1997) refers to as ako<sup>165</sup> and taonga tuku iho.

Taonga tuku iho have their own life force, they convey memories from the past and guide us today. This is a key focus of Chapter 3. Raranga expresses the interconnectedness of the human and nature, we are taught about these connections when we learn to nurture our weaving plants. As kairaranga we have a unique relationship with the atua that have generated the world we live in. We have a responsibility and obligation to these relationships. The key learnings in the

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<sup>165</sup> *Cultural pedagogy.*

weaving arts are not always about creating woven taonga, but learning about kaitiakitanga, our relationship with the whenua. Connecting with Māori knowledge depends on maintaining our bodily connections to the whenua, to our natural environments that prompt and make manifest our embodied knowing.

Through my practice as a kairaranga our tikanga pertaining to the arts, is a haptic experience where I can connect through all the senses to that cultural imprint otherwise articulated as whakapapa. Awareness for me arises through the practice and application of tikanga, by engaging the senses of the body with the tactile nature of raranga and whatu a rhythm of thinking is stimulated where the praxis of body-mind is captured in the art of making. I come to understand my body as a knowing entity, as is the whenua. This deep connection is between the our indigenous bodies and the land is evidenced in the Māori language by the word whenua meaning the land and also meaning the placenta. These two entities are inextricably linked, in language and the manifestation of taonga that kairaranga create.

This work does however also take place in a context of colonisation. It is well documented that colonisation has designated the indigenous cultural body as inferior and for Māori women this has been multiplied through the intersection of colonising practices that are founded upon belief of race, gender and class domination (Smith 1992; Mikaere 2011; Pihama 2001; Murphy, 2013). In order to contest these identifications, I have focused in this chapter on Kaupapa Māori, Mana Wahine conceptual frameworks and Te Whare Pora methodology in order to theorise the ways in which I have created woven garments in the form of korowai and through woven representations of the female form. The works encompass mind, body and spiritual connections, and idea of a body that celebrates its indigenous self, that draws strength from the earth where all knowledge resides. Through this notion Papatūānuku and Ranginui are the cultural bodies that are the source of life. Papatūānuku and Ranginui are the cultural bodies that envelop us still, Ranginui, the sky parent, and Papatūānuku, the earth parent. The artworks that are created through and of raranga imbued with Te Ao

Māori are a manifestation of the relationship between these two cultural bodies, a kairaranga is the conduit through which these two bodies can reconnect with each other, through the taonga that are created. Raranga is a portal to access our Mātauranga that affirms and celebrates us holistically. To consider Papatūānuku and Ranginui as cultural bodies is then to reflect on our own bodies as created of and from Papatūānuku and Ranginui. The remaking of body forms literally manifests the inscribed body as a site of power and resistance. The relationship of kairaranga and material is a process of becoming-the-other, and the-other-becoming, without the taonga plant and their inherent cultural imperatives, the kairaranga cannot become a kairaranga, without the kairaranga the taonga plant cannot manifest other articulations and become something other than itself. Through the creative practice of raranga and whatu we can free our minds to allow the gifts of our tūpuna to flow through us. We can re-remember our tikanga, our original instructions inscribed on and through our bodies.

Chapters 5 and 6 discussed cultural knowledge recovery as Indigenous empowerment. Embodied knowing situated within taonga tuku iho informs us of the genius of our tūpuna in design and innovation. Chapter 5 focused on the project of researching Te Rā the only known waka sail in existence, housed at the British Museum. The need to research further the intricate woven structures and techniques which are rarely seen today, is established in this chapter. The influence of this taonga on my current practice is evident in the joining techniques I am employing in the Hinenuitepō works. Te Rā has informed my creative practice in the present, and in ways that are yet to be expressed. This chapter reminds us of the power of taonga, although they may be far away from us in overseas museums, their mauri exists. Māori have the opportunities through these taonga to appreciate the depth and breadth of knowledge embodied within tūpuna ideas and concepts. When we engage with taonga we effectively squashing the negative messaging from colonising ideologies with which we are exposed to everyday. Chapter 6 focused on the creation of a korowai as a case in point. The techniques of creating a durable and beautiful textile from the internal fibres of harakeke is

at once affirming, and gratifying as a Māori person. The creation of new kākahu in these customary styles, materials and tikanga are knowledge recovery, and innovation at the same time. The innovation of our tūpuna is at the fore of these creative practice processes and constant affirmation of what it is to be Māori.

The new works created through this project are discussed in Chapter 7. They are concentrated on the role of atua wahine in the stores of the Polynesian hero Maui, seeking to recentre the feminine within these narratives. Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) has focused her research on the marginalisation of the Māori feminine in ethnographic writings. These new works re-introduce atua wahine from the perspective of creative practice. In the creative works created for this project I have created a new form of raranga conical textile. There is more work to be done around developing these techniques. The nature of raranga and whatu is a slow art, the preparation of materials and then the creation of taonga are time-consuming and lengthy. I would have liked to extend the creative research into more multi-media works, to explore video works in particular, however due to the nature of a PhD project, my focus was contained.

As a kairaranga artist it was hard for me to contain my creative focus, however the PhD structure called for deep focus where ultimately I produced works that fully reflect the concepts discussed in the thesis. As an academic this can at times be challenging to explain to other academics that are not engaged in this form of 'hands on' practice, as is responding to the view that for academic or scholarly work to be deemed valuable it must be written. Creative practice in a university context seeks to decolonise such thinking and to remind us that our tūpuna have always expressed our knowledge in multiple forms, the written form, is only one vehicle for the sharing of mātauranga Māori and is only one form of literacy.

Chapter 7 focused on the exhibition Kura: Embodied Mana Wahine. This exhibition was the culmination of the praxis of the written and hands on components of this project. It brought together the thinking and making. Key components of the exhibition were near life-size images of the body adornments

being worn. The models were my friends and happy to contribute to the project. This is again a reflection of collectivity from a Māori perspective. It was critical that the exhibition reflect the human element. The works were visually represented in this chapter, next to the image of the work being worn. Although the woven pieces have quiet presence, they come to life when worn. The association of works with the body was critical in the expression of the embodied knowledge I have been talking about in the thesis. It was important for me to have life size photographs of the garments being worn. The human element is critical in the garments coming alive, and I wanted the viewers to relate the garments to the body. The design of the exhibition was planned to evoke involvement from the viewer with the portrayals in the photographs, and to enable close engagement with the three dimensional woven pieces.

As the creative work for this project was informed by my MFA work the next body of work will be Informed by this PHD project. The body of work after the PhD will be development within the conical textile work, coming off the body and into gallery installations. From this project it is clear to me that representations of atua wahine are not constrained to enveloping the body. That they can literally occupy the spaces that surround the body reinforcing the roles of these atua wahine and their presence in us today. The theoretical positioning developed within the Phd project has served to deeply interrogate the creative practice work and will continue to underpin the creation of future works. Through these interrogations and reflections a deeper awareness of the breadth of embodiment held within our raranga and whatu practices has become even more apparent to me. The salient features of the practice and the influence of these practices are undeniably evident.

I have argued that cultural affirmation can be experienced through learning to create our Māori textiles. As kairaranga we can reproduce taonga our tūpuna have left for us and learn about them and ourselves in the process. We can also create our own forms extending on the design innovation embodied in taonga tuku iho. Through these processes we learn about ourselves, our tūpuna and we can add

own creativity to the collective expression of taonga raranga and whatu. Therefore contemporary practice can maintain and sustain the integrity of our taonga tuku iho by acknowledging and instilling tikanga Māori in contemporary practice. When I first began this thesis I discovered the letter from Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa to “Third world Women Writers.” On reading the first few pages I was so confronted by own internalised negative belief systems about myself and writing that I buried the book under the pile of books on my desk, waiting to be read. It is only now that I am coming to the conclusion of this thesis that I can revisit and live her powerful words and bring myself to “wield a pen as a tool, a weapon, a means of survival, a magic wand that will attract power, that will draw self-love into our [my] bodies” (p. 161). I now appreciate that weaving writing into my life can be as powerful and affirming as the creative work I make through raranga and whatu.

I close this thesis with the words of an ancient karakia. Aroha Yates-Smith describes this karakia as heralding the birth of a young daughter of the hapū, of the iwi. This thesis is a kind of re-birth, a different way (for me) of articulating the treasures of raranga and raranga whatu, and as such I send it into the world. Through this karakia we call on our kuia, our atua wahine, to guide us so that we remember their wonderful deeds and honour them for all that they have given us.

Hine! E Hine!

Nau mai, e Hinewairoto!

Whaea, whakaea tō uru tapu

Whakaea, whakaea tō uru tipua

Whakaea, whakaea tō uru waiora ki taiao nei

E tipu, e rea, e Hinekaurangiariki!

Whakamau tai, whakmau ō Rongo

Whakamau taketake toitū ki taiao nei, e Hinearikirangi e!

E tipu, e rea koe he whatu ioio nui, he whatu io matua

He io taketake ki taiao nei

E Hinerauwhārangi e!



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