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Te ahi tawhito, te ahi tipua, te ahi nā Mahuika:

Re-igniting Native women's ceremony

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

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by

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This photograph was taken during a ceremony in Waikaremoana in 2015 by Pehiaweri matakite, Shellie Hanley. The photograph captures Mahuika, the atua of fire. I title this work in her honor because fire represents Māori continuity, endurance and the vibrancy of our self-regenerating spiritualities with which this research is concerned. She represents the mana of ancestral altars that continue to fortify and convey our incantations to traditional deities. She also represents the procreative fire of the womb within the earth and within women that renews life. I place this work upon her altar to foster her flame as it is re-activated within the multiple sacred works of others who seek the divine feminine.

Through the smoke of the flame that rises I also raise prayers of gratitude to the timeless atua, Spiderwoman, who rules the domain of women's ritual mysteries and Hinateiwaiwā, who has guided this work from the beginning:

*E Hina
Ngaro ki te aakauroa o te roto ana
Te kohu rere Hina
Ki Panekire
Hina-te-ao-whetū
Pounamu o Haumapuhia
Te Huarahi Hiriwā
Tatau ngākau ka tuwhera manu parirau kura
Ka rere ka rere ka rere!*

To mum, a courageous poet who seeks beauty and justice, and dad, a tenacious and committed tino rangatiratanga freedom fighter. I dedicate this study to you in honor of your life-long decolonisation work through Te Pūmao.

ABSTRACT

This research examines the multiple ways in which Māori, and Hawai’ian and Native American women, are re-activating feminine ceremonial forms and recovering sacred relationships with customary feminine deities. Attention is focused on the creation of personal ritual practices that respond to contemporary decolonising and ecological contexts.

A mana wahine theoretical and methodological framework motivated by emancipatory agendas that seek to facilitate transformation is used. Key to mana wahine projects is the creation of space for Native women to define themselves and their own stories and knowledges. This is important because Native women’s voices, knowledge and ritual histories continue to be marginalised. Furthermore, debased colonial renditions of femininity, which have been reproduced, perpetuate patriarchal and colonial politics that engender discord in Native communities today.

The study used a suite of complimentary methods to engage 45 Native women and men. Interviews and kōrero (discussion), ceremony, mana wahine wānanga (women’s sacred learning space), Native sacred site visits, solicited journals, collaboration in ritual theatre productions, and analysis of mana wahine artworks as discursive texts were employed to gather stories of spiritual continuation that are unique and largely uncharted in academia.

The empirical material is organised around four themes in four different chapters. The first of these empirical chapters re-interprets colonial ethnographic material alongside karakia (incantations), mōteatea (songs), cosmological and tribal stories, to reveal bold examples of Māori female ritual leadership. The second empirical chapter comprises an analysis of key colonial processes that have attempted to erase Native women’s ritual ontologies and the strident expressions of Native women’s resistance to colonial imperatives. The third empirical chapter investigates the multiple channels through which Native women are restoring their ceremonial lives. The fourth chapter investigates rerenga atua (menstruation) rituals that celebrate the Native feminine body as a cosmological site of communion with feminine deities.

The rich weave of Native women's stories of ceremony, old and new, threads into decolonising Indigenous scholarship around the world that also seeks to recover the sacred feminine as a key site of Native sovereignty. These discussions reveal a self-renewing Native belief system based on vibrant and evolving rituals that respond directly to current socio-political, spiritual and ecological realities.

MIHI

I raise prayers of gratitude to the atua, kaitiaki, and tīpuna that have guided this work. To those of you who moved through my dreams and escorted me through ritual protocols that shaped and guided my journey over the last four years, ka rere ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou.

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I lay down prayers of reverence to the sacred places that I have been in this research, to the kaitiaki and mana whenua of these places, and to those who escorted me: Pua and Kalani who took Piri and I to the summit of Mauna Kea and into the realm of Wākea and Poliahu; Hāwane who took me to Pu’u o Kohe and Pu’u o Koholā; Kealoha who escorted me to the mouth of the womb in the underworld cavern of Kapo and to Ka’u; Kanani and Roxanne who guided Piri and I to Kapu Wāhine to meet ‘the Sacred Woman of the Pit’ - beloved tutu Pele, and to the Makua whānau and Mahealani, Keone and Kawika who took Piri and I to the birthing temple - Kūkaniloko.

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Whilst our ritual observations to mark Piri’s ikura began with Jim and Roxanne, eight months later they were completed in our own tribal lands in Te Urewera, with the added blessing of the Mauna Kea whānau, Pua and Hāwane. Pua, everywhere you walk we see the grace of Mauna Kea, and the relationships to the spirit world whose love you honor as sacred commitments. Hāwane, you are a beloved sister

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To all the women and men who have shared stories, knowledge, and tribal and whānau histories in this study, thank you for your generosity and kindness. Thank you for trusting me. I honor the stories and wisdom you have shared with me, and the ceremonies, wānanga, kōrero and experiences we have shared together. May these stories be witnessed by the tīpuna and those to come as a mark of love for them and life itself. May they activate healing, transformation and liberation within our communities. May they re-activate memories that stir and embolden our resistance, activism and dreaming as we enter a new time-cycle on the planet. I could not have done this work without your support and guidance.

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CHAPTER 1

Opening the way

*How does a community heal itself from the ravages of the past?
Through recovering that which is sacred (La Duke, 2005, p. 11).*

For most Native women, spirituality is the heart of survival, resistance and renewal. The practice of Native spiritual traditions is, in and of itself, an act of resistance to all the conditioning that Native ways are 'evil, 'pagan', and 'witchcraft' (Anderson, 2000, p. 133).

This research aims to investigate the ceremonial and spiritual worlds of Māori¹ and other Native² women. More specifically it aims to answer the following questions:

1. Did Māori women fulfill ritual and ceremonial leadership roles for the hapū³ in customary Māori society and, if so, what did these roles entail?
2. What were some of the colonial processes that impacted on Māori women's ritual ontologies and what are the consequences of these impacts today?
3. Are Māori and other Native women recovering and evolving ceremony and, if so, in what social, spatial, cultural, political, spiritual and ecological contexts?
4. What does the re-activation of Native women's ceremonial lives represent and what emancipatory potential do these knowledges hold for whānau,⁴ hapū and iwi?⁵

¹ Like Te Kawehau Hoskins (2001), Leonie Pihama (2001) and Naomi Simmonds (2009), I use the term Māori "as a political concept that identifies collectively the Indigenous Peoples of this land" (Pihama 2001, p. 1). I acknowledge, however, that 'Māori' as a people are made up of distinct and culturally autonomous tribal nations that have diverse histories and genealogies.

² I use a capital n for Native and a capital i for Indigenous in this research as a symbol of solidarity with Indigenous self-determination movements.

³ Hapū are a social kinship entity that consists of a collection of whānau who are all related through a common ancestor. The term is also used to denote conception and pregnancy. I discuss the significance of this in Chapter 5.

⁴ Whānau is an extended family kinship unit. It also means to birth. I discuss the significance of this in Chapter 5.

⁵ Iwi are a socio-political and economic unit that comprise of a number of hapū that are related through a common ancestor. The term also means 'bones'.

In this research I use the term mana wahine⁶ ritual ontologies to convey Māori women's sacred ways of being, knowing and orienting in the world that are steeped in cosmological and whakapapa⁷- based relationships that pre - date colonisation. I speak to a knowing and being that emerges from subjective experiences couched in community and collective identity. I speak to a way of knowing and being that is spirit driven (Meyer, 2008) and that recognises the womb as a center direction (Gonzales, 2012), and axis point that binds the earth, sky, star and spirit worlds across the time space continuum in accordance with Native cosmologies (Gould & Rock, 2016; Jensen & Jensen, 2005). Mana wahine ritual ontologies are lived, embodied and intimately shaped by ancestral knowledges, patterns, memories, resonances and ceremonies that reverberate through our⁸ actions, thoughts and relationships with tribal territories (Evans, 1994a; Simmonds, 2014). I use the term to convey a dynamic, continuous living system of knowledge based on principles of regeneration and renewal that are encoded in whakapapa, menstrual blood, ovaries, semen, bone, flesh, dream, memory, story and ceremony (Gonzales, 2012; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008; St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). These ontologies are healing traditions that emancipate and reweave the web of relationships that colonisation attempted to sever (Murphy, 2012; Pihama & Cameron, 2012; Smith, L. T., 1999).

The questions posed in this research are located within colonial histories and, more specifically, within histories of colonisation as a patriarchal process that stripped

⁶ Mana wahine refers to the authority, prestige and sacredness of Māori women that is inherited from pre-colonial female and male deities. Whilst I have heard the argument that mana wahine is a recent theoretical development that was not discussed by our ancestors, I maintain that it may not have been necessary to articulate mana wahine in former times as it was lived. The patriarchal nature of colonisation has eroded these practices, however, which has meant that Māori women now have to define mana wahine as part of an anti-colonial political project (Murphy, 2013; Simmonds, 2014).

⁷ Whakapapa has several meanings. For the purposes of this research I refer to whakapapa as a relational way of being, an ontological system of thought that interconnects all things across creation, time and space through cosmogony (Pere, 1982; Pihama, 2001; Royal, 2003).

⁸ Similar to Leonie Pihama (2001), Te Kawehau Hoskins (2001), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1992), Naomi Simmonds (2009) and others, I use personal pronouns us, our, and we throughout this study. In doing so I position myself explicitly in the work as Tangata Whenua (Indigenous to Aotearoa), rejecting notions of objective and neutral research (Murphy, 2013).

Māori and other Native women of their voices, stories, knowledges and ceremonies (Gunn-Allen, 1992; Irwin, 1991; Pihama & Johnston, 1994). I use the term colonial patriarchy to refer to this process and the way it has re-defined Māori and other Native women as defiled, subordinate, inferior and threatening to the sacred, due to our bleeding, lactating and birthing bodies (Simmonds, 2014; Mikaere, 2017a). Histories and knowledge that suggest otherwise have been largely omitted from the historic record (Murphy, 2013; Yates-Smith, 1998). The erasure of Māori and Native ritual histories that venerate Native women's reproductive bodies as a symbol of the regeneration of tribal societies, and their replacement with sweeping statements of a debased womanhood, have been internalised by many Native girls and women today (Anderson, 2000; Kent & Besley, 1990; Smith, 2012). The consequences are political, multiple, complex and far-reaching.

Over the nine years in which I have facilitated pre-colonial menstruation teachings in Māori and other Native communities I have witnessed what some of these consequences look like. They manifest in sweeping silences,⁹ feelings of shame, and a lack of knowledge about mana wahine ritual histories that venerate the feminine (Simmonds, 2014; Smith, 1992). They manifest in the heaving sobs of mothers who recognise that the opportunity to celebrate the ceremony of their own daughters menarche, as our tīpuna once did, have passed them by and in the shaky voices of women who speak out, often for the first time, about feelings of disgust toward their own menstrual blood (Anderson, 2000; Murphy, 2013, 2014; Smith, 2012). Beyond the workshops I witness the consequences in the silencing of Māori women's voices and in the way Māori men are groomed to monopolise ritual leadership to which the female counterpoint is thoroughly denied (Evans, 1994a,

⁹ I discuss this in detail in Chapters 2 and 5. Whilst silences are common on the workshops I facilitate I also witness the enthusiasm and hunger of Māori women to share their personal stories of menstruation, both positive and negative, in the workshop space. I have also witnessed the support of Māori men to affirm these stories and ritual traditions. These stories, which have often never been voiced aloud, are a critical component of our healing journey as Indigenous Peoples.

1994b; Messiter, 2010).¹⁰ I see it inscribed on the bodies of some Māori youth, whose shuffling feet and downcast eyes is a response, not only to hostile white hegemonic spaces, but to the intergenerational narratives of ‘filth’ and ‘inferiority’ scripted upon the Native womb, and by extension, all those who are issued forth from it (Anderson, 2007; Smith, A., 2005). And I see it more overtly in domestic violence toward the bodies of Māori women, bodies socially, culturally and politically constructed by colonial narratives to accept violence and subjection (Lievore, 2007; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pitman, 1996).¹¹

This research is motivated by mana wahine decolonising imperatives that seek to resurface marginalised feminine ritual ontologies to facilitate healing and transformation (Pihama, 2001; Smith, L. T., 1999). Key to the project of facilitating transformation is the creation of space for Native women to assert the authority and agency to define ourselves and our stories, knowledges and spiritualities in ways that empower ourselves and our whānau (Brown, 1994; Irwin, 1991; Jahnke, 1997b; Pihama 1994). Ngāti Raukawa mana wahine scholar, Ani Mikaere (2017b, p. 37) maintains:

The power of definition is one of the most important weapons in the colonisers’ arsenal ... Being defined by the coloniser involves the assertion of colonial domination; it is an inherently violent process. The power of definition has enabled them to account for us, to contain us, to know us. It is scarcely surprising that, as a result of having been violated in this way, many of us now struggle to know ourselves.

This research creates a platform for Māori, Hawai’ian and Native American/First Nation¹² women to define and tell their own stories. My own personal stories and

¹⁰ Rarely are Māori women seen leading incantations in public spaces and at Māori functions in Aotearoa today, despite a rich history of Māori female ceremonial and spiritual leadership, which I examine closely in Chapter 4 (Mikaere, 2017a, 2017b; Murphy, 2012, 2013; Ngata, 2014).

¹¹ New Zealand has the highest reported rate of intimate partner violence in the developed world (Tait, 2015). Despite this, there are no official family violence statistics collected on a regular basis in New Zealand (New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House, 2018). Māori women are twice as likely as other women to experience domestic violence (Leask, 2017; Te Puni Kokiri, 2017).

¹² First Nations is a pronoun used by Indigenous peoples of Canada.

experiences constitute the ‘us’ and ‘we’ and join the weave of voices that seek to recover sacred and ancestral relationships that comprise Native spiritualities (Gonzales, 2012; Simmonds, 2014). These stories represent a transitional moment in history in which many Native women struggle to know and find ourselves and recover our own voices and spiritual ways. They are deeply rooted in decolonisation and the painful processes of shedding derogatory colonial re-definitions of Indigeneity, and reclaiming and recreating ourselves and our own cultural practices. As such, these stories, like all stories, are not stable but transitional and fluid, capturing a sense of recovery and metamorphosis. They are stories of resistance, hope, and reconnection to pre-colonial feminine deities that provide a way out of colonialism (Gonzales, 2012; Smith, L. T., 2012). They point to a path of emancipation based on ancient relationships and philosophies that are the foundations of Native world-views.

This research grafts into decolonising Indigenous scholarship around the world that seeks to recover the sacred feminine as a key site of Native sovereignty in order to restore balance¹³ in our tribal nations (Gould & Rock, 2016; Meyer as cited in Lin, 2008; Mikaere, 2017a; Pere, 1994; Smith, L. T., 2012; Yates-Smith, 1998). Whilst there have been important contributions to this end, the reclamation and evolution of Native women’s personal ritual forms remain largely unexplored in academia. I focus on intimate, fluid and unique ceremonial expressions and the multiple ways Native women are crafting their own spiritual practices of communion with the divine feminine. The different channels in which Native women are re-igniting a living spirituality represents a self-renewing Native belief system based on vibrant and evolving ceremonies that respond directly to current socio-political, spiritual and ecological realities which I examine in this thesis (Gonzales, 2012; St Pierre &

¹³ Balance is a central and re-occurring motif in Native writings (Cajete, 2000; Kimmerer, 2013; Mikaere, 2017a; Nelson, 2008; Pihama, 2012). It is informed by a constellation of ideas that cluster around the belief of the inter-relatedness of all things in creation (Gonzales, 2012; Selby, Moore & Mulholland, 2010). The negotiation, preservation and maintenance of relationships (through cultural practices and protocols based on respect and reciprocity), particularly between human and non-human entities in creation, is identified by Native writers as key to notions of balance (Kimmerer, 2013; Trudell, 2008). These relationships are often maintained through rituals and ceremonies that promote unity, wellbeing, and renewal of the bounty of nature (Deloria, 1999; Mataamua & Temara, 2010; Royal, 2003).

Long Soldier, 1995). Broader still, the recovery of Native women's ceremony grafts into an international shift to recover the divine feminine in a time of massive social, spiritual and ecological crisis (Ardinger, 1995; Barrett, 2007; Budapest, 1980; Van der Meer, 2015).

What I present in this thesis is not a definitive, exclusive or authoritative version of feminine ritual ontologies, which consist of a vast "living body of knowledge open to multiple interpretations" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 145). Rather, it is an introductory examination of some of the ways in which some Native women are recovering ancient ancestral relationships with pre-colonial Native feminine deities and *te ao wairua*¹⁴ to bring deeper meaning and connection in their lives.

Like Cree, Métis scholar, Kim Anderson (2000), I move my discussion between the present and past by drawing on both research participant's stories and archival, historic secondary data. I do this to highlight cultural continuity and to counter typical ideas about Native people being "all dead, [and] merely artefacts to be examined for the illumination of others" (Anderson, 2000, p. 59). In focusing on the Native feminine ritual practices that exalt the feminine body as a ceremonial site I do not seek to essentialise Native constructs of femininity based on biology, nor do I aim to romanticise Native women's relationship with the *atua wāhine*. I also acknowledge that not all Native women see themselves in such terms. Rather, like other *mana wahine* decolonising scholars, I aim to re-center the divine feminine to restore balance as a central decolonising tenet (Mikaere, 1994; Pihama, 2001; Simmonds, 2014; Yates-Smith, 1998). In writing of Indigenous women from Aotearoa, Hawai'i and Great Turtle Island (Denver, Minnesota, Toronto),¹⁵ I also do not mean to generalise or homogenise our experiences and knowledges. Like Kickapoo, Comanche, Macehual scholar, Patrisia Gonzales, I celebrate the

¹⁴ The spirit world.

¹⁵ Great Turtle Island is the Indigenous name for the northern continent of America that also extends into Canada. It is a name that originates in tribal cosmological stories. I use this name in my research in solidarity with the sovereignty struggles of Native American and First Nation peoples.

diversity amongst us yet also “seek to show how we share certain values that reflect various interconnected relationships” (Gonzales, 2012, p. 3).

Whakapapa is key in my research and has multiple applications. I trace the whakapapa of Māori women’s eclectic ritual practices today across history and into cosmological stories, once again to establish the idea of the vitality of Native women’s spiritualities as a living, self-regenerating constellation of knowledge (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). As Hinataiwaiwā¹⁶ is one of the main deities perched upon the altar of my work, I also found it necessary to trace her stories back to the ‘āina¹⁷ of Hawai’i and to the struggles, ceremonies and sacred activism of our Kanaka Māoli¹⁸ relations, whose stories ground this research in Polynesian philosophies and decolonising politics. The research also led to Turtle Island, which provided a broader international context to understand the sweeping Indigenous movement to recover feminine spiritualities (Anderson, 2000; Gonzales, 2012; Gunn Allen, 1991; Yates-Smith, 1998).

This study also traces the whakapapa of colonial narratives of female spiritual pollution that stain notions of Māori womanhood today. This leads, not to Māori philosophies, but to the witch hunts of Britain and Europe. The vilification of the female body as an emblem of political, moral and social rebellion during the witch hunts cemented the embryonic colonial capitalist order as a patriarchal process (Federici, 2014). Finally, I trace the contemporary imbalance between Māori women and men today to the corruption of the cosmological story cycle by many of the colonial ethnographers, who instituted notions of a gendered hierarchy to fortify a colonial imperative (Mikaere, 2017a, 2017b; Pihama, 2012; Smith, L. T., 2005).

Whilst in beginning this research my aim was to examine the qualities of Hinataiwaiwā and her ritual traditions as the atua who rules over Polynesian

¹⁶ I use Hinataiwaiwā and Hineteiwaiwā interchangeably in this thesis for the same deity.

¹⁷ ‘Āina is a Native Hawai’ian term for land.

¹⁸ Kanaka Māoli is a traditional term for Native Hawai’ians.

women's ceremonial houses, I found that a constellation of atua wāhine were also moving and claiming space in the work. Papatūānuku, Hineahuone, Hinefītama, Hinenuitepō, and Mahuika all present themselves, revealing their own intersecting mana wahine ritual lineages. Visiting tribal landscapes in Hawai'i and Turtle Island also invoked the deities Pele, Poliahu, Kapo'ulakina'u, and Spider Woman - all powerful and timeless entities and sacred relations who inspire and guide the work. The decision to place Mahuika in the title of this study emphasises ancient Māori and Polynesian understandings of mana¹⁹ as a sacred and supernatural ritual fire whose power, like women's ritual mysteries, cannot be extinguished (Robinson, 2005; Tikao cited in Beattie, 1990). The power of fire, which activates the womb and the creative, regenerative earth, rests with women in Polynesian thought (Kame'eleihiwa, 1999; Te Rangikāheke cited in Thornton, 1992). In pre-colonial Māori society Mahuika was summoned in a large variety of fire rituals (Best, 1972; Buck, 1950). We were and are a fire people,²⁰ who walked on fire, leapt through the fire and read fire, smoke and ashes in divination rites, yet Mahuika and her fire ceremonies today have become obscure. I summon her to the fore in this work to reclaim and re-ignite the traditions of fire as women's healing ritual arts (Jensen & Jensen, 2005).

I will often refer to authors and people within this thesis by their first name to counter objective and disembodied ways of producing knowledge (Longhurst, 1997; Simmonds, 2009). I introduce each research participant using their full name and the iwi/tribal nation and people to whom they belong, in accordance with tikanga Māori. I also describe them in the way that they define themselves to honour their voices. From time to time I also draw on other peoples' descriptions of them. For example, I describe one participant as a women's ceremonial leader. She has not described herself in this way, rather others have.

¹⁹ Mana has multiple meanings that include authority, prestige and power that is grounded in collective and communal identity and connection to the divine.

²⁰ We are also a people of the earth, a people of the sea and water and a people of the winds. Each realm, a respective deity, maintain their own ritual qualities, karakia, story cycles and traditions.

The rich weave of Native women's stories of ceremony, old and new, brings fresh, rare, submerged and subordinated knowledges to Kaupapa Māori,²¹ mana wahine and Native feminist geographic literatures. These knowledges also contribute to international Indigenous literatures that focus on the emancipatory politics of decolonisation that seek to re-activate spiritual foundations (Anderson, 2011; Nelson, 2008; Simpson, 2000; Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012). I ground my analysis squarely in my own experiences and evolving understandings as a Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Ruapani ki Waikaremoana, Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Rangitahi woman, understandings which will, no doubt, change with time (Tangaro, 2007).

Chapter outline

In this opening chapter I have outlined the aims of this research, which is to investigate the ceremonial and spiritual worlds of Māori and other Native women and provide a platform for Native women to define our spiritualities, stories and struggles, in our own voices. The significance of this is to push back against colonial histories that have relegated our voices to the margins and denied our ritual arts (Mikaere, 2017a; Simmonds, 2014; Yates-Smith, 1998). The consequences are political and continue to produce oppressive outcomes that impact on the entire whānau, hapū and iwi (Pihama, 2001). I argue that Indigenous struggles for autonomy will remain fruitless until we restore mana wahine (Irwin, 1991; Mead, 1994; Ramsden, 1994).

In Chapter 2 I review mana wahine and other decolonising and anti-colonial literatures that contextualise the significance of Native women recovering their spiritual and ceremonial lives today as a political project of Native emancipation. I open with a photographic artwork and invocatory poem that reflects the major theme of the chapter, and thesis, which is to provide a platform for Native women to tell their own stories. I discuss colonial re-definitions of Māori femininity and the distortion of Māori cosmological stories that underpin mana wahine ritual knowledge. I also discuss what constitutes and underpins ceremony in Native

²¹ Critical Māori decolonising theories.

contexts and why it is a central site of Native sovereignty. The significance of place to ceremony is also examined, which includes an investigation of three different kinds of ceremonial place that directly informs the research: Native sacred sites; cosmological altars in domestic space; and the Native female body.

Chapter 3 opens with a photographic image of a burning smudge stick whose smoke, heat and fire communicates both Native continuity and the way the methodological approach taken was fundamentally shaped by my own spiritual life and tribal identity (Debassige, 2010; Struthers, 2001). This embodied positioning led to the development of a mana wahine ritual methodology that was grounded in my own subjectivities and was highly responsive, providing unconventional entry points into the research for the diverse participants that spanned four very different geographical locations. I discuss the challenges in undertaking study of Native women's ceremonies in the context of academia (Simpson, 2000). This discussion is applicable to many Indigenous scholars who are writing spiritualities into the academic realm as a critical component in producing collaborative and emancipatory scholarship in Native communities (Dillard, 2008; Gonzales, 2012).

Chapter 4, the first of my empirical chapters, works almost exclusively with secondary data to excavate censored, understudied, and largely unknown Māori histories of female spiritual and ceremonial leadership that defy colonial depictions of both Māori femininities and masculinities. These stories are presented to challenge the assertion that Māori women do not have our own ritual histories and knowledge. They are also presented to facilitate decolonisation and inspire Māori women today to question the boundaries of what we have been taught to believe about ourselves (Irwin, 1991; Smith, L. T., 2012). I begin in the cosmological story cycle with the atua Hinateiwaiwā. Described as the 'role model of Māori womanhood' (see Anderson, 1928; Grey, 1956; Orbell, 1995) a close inspection of Hinateiwaiwā reveals an incendiary figure who transcends colonial constructs of Māori womanhood and opens up histories of female ritual and military leadership. These qualities are traced across iwi military histories that exalt the feminine body as a ceremonial site of birth, death and renewal. This discussion circles back to cosmological stories of the atua Hinetītama and her transformation into Hinenuitepō and the ways in which the qualities of the atua wāhine are ritualised

on the battlefield through the corporeal bodies of Māori women. The histories outlined in this chapter, sourced from Māori oral literatures and re-interpreted ethnographic material, provide the whakapapa foundations of this thesis. Māori women's diverse ceremonial expressions today, which I examine in the proceeding chapters, graft into a vibrant ritual continuum that extends through history and into the Māori cosmological story cycle.

Whilst Māori women have powerful ritual histories, little of this is known today (Evans, 1994b; Irwin, 1991, 1995; Yates-Smith, 1998). Moreover these histories have been replaced by colonial representations of a spiritually defiling femininity (Goldie, 1904; Shortland, 1882; Smith, 1974). Chapter 5 examines how the internalisation of colonial re-definitions of Native womanhood has directly impacted the way that many Māori and other Native women see themselves. The point of this chapter is to interrogate colonial processes that shape the disorientation many Native women experience today as we move to restore our personal spiritual and ceremonial practices. Specific colonial processes that produce fear and uncertainty toward te ao wairua are examined, including Christianity, key legislations, the plundering of feminine cosmological sacred sites, raupatu,²² and sexual violence (Gould & Rock, 2016; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Smith, A., 2005). I also explore the different ways that Māori and other Native women are resisting colonial re-definitions and re-igniting feminine ritual knowledge through artistic mediums.

Chapter 6 opens with a contemporary karakia²³ composition from my own spiritual practice and a personal journal entry. This is used to highlight my subject positioning in the research and to demonstrate a major research theme, that it is important not only to reclaim traditional ceremonies, but also evolve new emancipatory and decolonial ritual practices. The major themes that arise across

²² Confiscation of tribal lands.

²³ Chant, incantation.

participant kōrero²⁴ about recovering the sacred are discussed, including the right to connect directly to deities without a mediator, looking within for the atua and revelation, and re-learning to trust and move beyond the fear that colonial processes implanted to keep Native peoples from owning and asserting mana motuhake.²⁵ These discussions reveal living spiritualities that re-invigorate Native resistance and activism and symbolise a growing confidence amongst Indigenous peoples to both reclaim and recreate emancipatory tikanga practices as responsible ancestors for future generations.

In Chapter 7 I examine the specific site of menstruation ceremonies that represent Indigenous rites of regeneration and renewal. The vilification of menstrual blood as a symbol of women's ritual power is discussed within a wider interrogation of the contestations of power over women's reproductive bodies. Following participant kōrero I examine four specific ritual observations taking place: menarche rites; rituals of rest and retreat; rituals of returning menstrual blood to Papatūānuku; and rituals that conceptualise the blood as a powerful agent of purification that carries the capacity to clear 'obstacles' at different spatial scales. The last example opens up a constellation of ancient ritual constructs related to the whare tangata,²⁶ deepening readings of the cosmological stories and histories that I examine in Chapter 4. Understandings of these ritual philosophies have been fragmented through colonial processes. My intention is to reweave the web of understanding, connecting these inter-related ritual systems of knowledge into a coherent framework to empower whānau today.

In Chapter 8 I revisit the aims of this thesis and offer a summary of the main findings and research conclusions. Included in the findings is the rediscovery of profound ritual histories of Māori feminine leadership that are uncovered through examining historic material through a mana wahine lens. These histories reveal an

²⁴ This term can be translated as narrative and discussion.

²⁵ This term can be translated as our own unique authority as Indigenous nations, an authority that stems from our direct relationship to atua (deities) female and male.

²⁶ Translates as 'the house of humanity' – the womb.

entire cultural orientation that venerates the womb and women as a primary seat of mana and tapu.²⁷ The re-igniting of Native women's personal ceremonial practices to recover relationships with Native feminine deities is another finding. These ceremonies comprise the foundations of Native activism in defense of sacred places and also involve world renewal rites in a time of ecological uncertainty.

I conclude by identifying key sites that require further analysis. These include a deeper investigation into Mahuika and traditional Māori and Polynesian fire ceremonies, and the extensive and understudied area of menopause rites in traditional Māori society. Iwi-led biographies of Māori women who were ritual, military and prophetic leaders is another area of transformative research that would extend this work and provide important educational material to facilitate healthier gender relations in Māori communities based on the authority of historic cultural traditions. Related to this is an examination of mana tamariki²⁸ and the roles of Māori children in the 19th century sovereignty wars in Aotearoa between Tangata whenua and the New Zealand settler government. Whilst critical work regarding traditional Māori parenting and mana tamariki has been undertaken to counter violence toward children in Māori communities, a study of histories that reveal their active involvement in defending tribal lands and tino rangatiratanga is yet to be undertaken (Pihama, 2013; Simon & Smith, 2001; Taonui, 2010).

Finally, further research on the intersections between ceremony and Native activism, historically, and in contemporary times, is a rich and inspiring area of study. In the context of looming ecological uncertainty many scholars have identified that in order to facilitate meaningful transformation, humanity must change the way they regard the earth (Hartmann, 2004; Jensen, 2006; Kimmerer, 2013; Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012; Wildcat, 2009). Voices from the frontline of Native activist movements to defend the sacred demonstrate a relationality that is pivotal to creating change.

²⁷ Tapu carries multiple meanings and is intrinsically related to mana. In this context I use it to refer to that which is intensely sacred.

²⁸ I use this term to refer to the authority and sacredness of children.

The stories presented in this research represent Native ceremonies and spiritualities as bastions of resistance to colonial capitalist regimes that push the world toward ecological collapse (Hartmann, 2004; Waziyatawin, 2012). They are expressions of love that seek to re-ignite sacred relationships with our relations, the *atua*, who consist of the living natural world, in a transition time in which human survival on this planet remains deeply uncertain (Jensen, 2006; Wildcat, 2009). The stories speak to faith in our own living systems of knowledge as Indigenous peoples and confidence in our abilities to evolve ritual traditions motivated by the restoration of balance.

CHAPTER 2

Navel stories of continuity: Indigenous women's decolonising literatures



Figure 2.1: Fighting Terrorism since 1860, N. Hohaia. Reprinted with permission.

*Puhi wahine, puhi wahine
E pao ki runga i tō kuru pounamu
Arā ki te horo ahau, ko au tonu
Te mekameka ka noho ki runga i ngā take
O ia Puhi Maunga puha i te korero
Ko au tonu te uha o tōku mana
Ko au tonu.*

*Noble woman, noble goddess
Chant upon your greenstone rock
And shatter as you may the crystal of your soul
Thread what remains into a necklace of activation
And honor and celebrate the domain that you hold
Over the foundations of your sacred mountain
You are the source of your own power
(R. Black with translation in Pardington, 2016, p. 142).*

Staring defiantly down at the photographic lens, her kauwae moko,²⁹ thick Polynesian hair, bare shoulders and patu³⁰ clasped at her breast accentuated by the black and white frame, Ngāti Moeahu, Ngāti Haupoto artist, Ngahina Hohaia's 'Fighting Terrorism since 1860' (in Figure 2.1) is a striking re-inscription of Māori femininities located within whakapapa histories of anti-colonialism, resistance and bold female military and prophetic ceremonial leadership.³¹ Paired with Tuhoe composer, Rangitunoa Black's invocation, 'Puhi Wahine', it represents a re-assertion of the autonomy of Māori women to define for ourselves who we were, who we are today, and who we will become as descendants of the atua wāhine (Hutchings, 2002; Tamaira, 2010).

In this chapter I locate my research within a number of intersecting bodies of literature. These include mana wahine theories, Native feminist, decolonising and anti-colonial literatures and feminist geographers' writings on the body and home places as discursive and culturally constructed sites. I begin with a brief outline of mana wahine theories that interrogates colonisation as a patriarchal process. I discuss dualistic colonial ideologies and the way they have distorted Māori cosmological stories that underpin mana wahine ritual knowledge. I also discuss the censorship of mana wahine ritual knowledge and the reproduction of colonial representations over the last century. These representations erase mana wahine

²⁹ Kauwae moko is a skin carving that adorns the chins of Māori women. It was traditionally received during puberty and was a part of menarche ceremonies that celebrated menstruation (Murphy, 2013, 2014). The kauwae moko is an important ceremony that is being reclaimed by Māori women as a bastion of identity and mana motuhake and as a healing intervention (N. Hohaia, personal communication, May 20, 2018; Penchira, 2011). It embodies and symbolises mana wahine ritual histories, ontologies and cosmologies and signifies the direct connection of Māori women to the atua wāhine through whakapapa.

³⁰ Patu is a short-handled club, as seen in the image, made from stone, wood or bone.

³¹ The title of the work, 'Fighting Terrorism since 1860' is a play on the language used by the United States of America Homeland Security Department, established in 2002, to counter 'terrorist attacks' on American soil. In Aotearoa, the United States of America's frenzied declarations of a 'war on terror' fueled the New Zealand settler government's 2007 'Urewera terror raids' in which social and environmental justice activists and Māori communities within Te Urewera were targeted and invaded by armed forces (Lines-MacKenzie, 2017). The artwork, 'Fighting Terrorism since 1860', responded to these raids, subverting the coloniser's language to accentuate continued histories of Native resistance to unjust colonial rule since the 1860 sovereignty wars in Aotearoa New Zealand.

ritual ontologies and provide a clear context for the significance of Native women's ritual renewal today. I then draw on Indigenous women's decolonising literatures, focusing specifically on the significance of *navel stories* – stories that represent continuity and convey ritual constellations of knowledge. I discuss this term more fully, and an associated term – *navel geographies* – in this chapter. This literature extends into discussions on what constitutes and underpins ceremony in Native contexts. Finally, drawing on feminist geographic literatures, I examine the importance of place to both ceremony and Native resistance. I examine three different kinds of ceremonial place: Native sacred sites; cosmological altars in domestic space; and the female body as a ceremonial site.

Mana wahine

This research contributes to work being done by mana wahine scholars seeking to reclaim, reconstruct and re-activate knowledges pertinent to Māori women (Hutchings, 2004; Irwin, 1992; Pihama, 2001; Simpson, 2006). Whilst Mana wahine is a relatively recent development within Kaupapa Māori scholarship, its origins are located in ritual incantations that describe the evolution of creation through the allegory of the womb (Jensen & Jensen, 2005; Mikaere, 2017a; Robinson, 2005). It resides in whakapapa to the atua wāhine³² who stride the land and sky-scape, fecund in their own mana and tapu (Kahukiwa and Grace, 1984; Kame'eiehiwa, 1999; Tamaira, 2010). It is reflected in the strong hips and open vulvas of ancestral carvings and in the sexually ribald ngeri,³³ waiata³⁴ and

³² Atua wāhine can be translated as feminine deities.

³³ Ngeri is a type of short impromptu haka.

³⁴ Waiata are rich and complex oral compositions – songs that convey histories, genealogical information, relationships, stories, ritual instructions and other systems of knowledge. The primary composers of waiata in traditional Māori society were women, which Ngāti Raukawa scholar Ani Mikaere (2017a) points out correlates to their role as knowledge keepers and guardians of the wellbeing of the hapū and iwi.

whakataukī³⁵ of old. It is encoded in te reo Māori³⁶ and enshrined in place names that sweep the length and breadth of the land (Simmonds, 2014; Sykes, 1994). It is in the tatau pounamu³⁷ arrangements that sealed intergenerational peace pacts between warring iwi, and the historic accounts of kuia³⁸ who raised up and led ancient armies (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016). It is in tikanga³⁹ practices, such as the karanga⁴⁰ and moko kauwae, that ritualise the vulva as the gate between worlds (Mikaere, 2017a; Murphy, 2016; Simmonds, 2014). It exudes itself through example after example of bold female leadership that spans our entire pre-colonial and colonial history up into present times (Jahnke, 2000; Mita, 1994; Pihama, 2001).⁴¹

These ritual histories have been largely obscured from written records and replaced with narratives of female domesticity and insignificance (Evans, 1994a; Pihama & Johnston, 1994). Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Awa decolonisation intellectual, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1992, p. 48) observes that the entire colonial project, as a patriarchal process, has denied the status and significance of Māori women and served to:

legitimate the power of Māori men. The first colonisers were men. They dealt with men and observed and studied men. The roles played by

³⁵ Whakataukī are tribal aphorisms and proverbs that convey Tangata Whenua philosophies, values and customary practices.

³⁶ Te reo Māori can be translated as the Māori language.

³⁷ Tatau pounamu carries different meanings. I refer to it here as the customary institution of arranged marriages between different hapū and iwi to restore lasting peace in times of conflict.

³⁸ Kuia can be translated as elder female.

³⁹ Tikanga can be translated as cultural practices and protocols.

⁴⁰ Karanga is a woman's ritual call that serves multiple functions. It is a ritual art that embodies and activates the mana wahine ritual ontologies outlined in this study. I discuss karanga in Chapter 7.

⁴¹ This leadership has been systematically marginalised by crown policies and actions which led to the filing of the Mana Wahine Claim to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1993. WAI 381 the Mana Wahine Inquiry alleges that the crown has failed to protect the rangatiratanga of wāhine and has, in fact, actively diminished and obstructed it. The Waitangi Tribunal began its hearings of WAI 381 in 2018.

Māori women were marginalised because of the ethnocentric and phallogocentric views of these early colonisers.

Mana wahine Te Ātiawa scholar, Leonie Pihama (1994, p. 39) extends the argument stating:

Colonisation has had a major impact on the position of Māori women. Colonial ideologies have constructed particular discourses related to Māori women which have contributed significantly to the denial of rangatira status. Ideologies of gender and race have interacted in complex ways to corrupt many of the stories, values, beliefs and practices that are linked to Māori women. Māori women's knowledge has been made secondary to Māori men's knowledge and Māori women's roles redefined in line with colonial notions of gender relations. Information related to Māori women has been ignored or re-written to become more conducive to colonial belief systems.

Ngāti Kahungunu author, Kathie Irwin (1991, p. 1) points out that the consequences mean:

our women, and their stories, have been buried deeper and deeper in the annals of time by the processes of oppression that seek to render us invisible and keep us out of the records.

Kathie Irwin's (1991, 1992) call for Māori women to reclaim space to articulate our own realities, tell our own stories and define ourselves for ourselves in ways that mobilise tino rangatiratanga⁴² has been taken up by mana wahine scholars, artists, activists and educators (Irwin, Ramsden & Kahukiwa, 1995). Mana wahine theories inform the recovery of customary knowledge and critical analysis to on-going colonial hegemony (Jenkins, 1992; Smith, L. T., 1992; Te Awekotuku, 1992). Mana wahine scholars also examine the different ways that Māori women's knowledge, status, stories and ceremonies have been denied, corrupted and re-defined through the misogynist lens of many of the colonial ethnographers (Simmonds, 2011; Yates-Smith, 1998). These representations, often steeped in oppressive ideologies of female shame and inferiority, have been reproduced for almost two centuries and are drawn upon by some Māori in the quest for cultural reclamation (Mikaere, 2003;

⁴² Tino rangatiratanga can be translated as sovereignty and total authority.

Murphy, 2011). In my research I am concerned with how Māori women have inherited a textual history of derogatory narratives supplanting customary stories that link us to cosmologies that celebrate the *whare tangata* (Mikaere, 2017a; Norman, 1992). The consequences erase *mana wahine* ritual ontologies and produce political outcomes that impact on the lives of Māori women and their *whānau* in a multiplicity of complex and negative ways; from the insidious marginalisation of our knowledges, roles and voice, in both Māori and Pākehā⁴³ spaces, to the more overt expressions of domestic violence and female subjugation (Messiter, 2010; Pitman, 2012).

Dualities and the distortion of cosmology

In order to understand what it means for Māori and other Native women to recreate ceremony in their lives it is necessary to understand the ways in which we have been led to believe that the sacred and ceremony is not our role or domain. Māori women's roles, status and ritual power emanate from the cosmological story cycle. In order to advance the colonial project these stories, as sacred scripts underpinning the ordering of Māori society, needed to be re-defined in a way that legitimised a gendered hierarchy (Mikaere, 2017b). The introduction of Cartesian dualisms fulfilled this purpose (Pihama, 2001; Simmonds, 2009, 2014).

The re-ordering of Māori cosmologies and the socio-ritual codes of *tapu* and *noa*,⁴⁴ through the imposition of Eurocentric, Cartesian gendered dualities have been critiqued by a number of *mana wahine* scholars (Mikaere, 2017a; Murphy, 2013, Pihama, 2001; Simmonds, 2009). These dualities establish a hierarchy of opposites in which Native peoples, women, children, non-human relations and the earth are re-cast as inferior to (white) men, justifying their subordination as a 'natural moral order' (Johnston, 1998). As I point out in earlier work (Murphy, 2013, p. 30), these dualisms are reinforced by Christian doctrine:

⁴³ Pākehā is a term used to describe non-Māori people of British and European origin.

⁴⁴ Noa can be translated as 'free from restrictions or prohibitions imposed by *tapu* sacred states'.

aligning men with morality, immortality, and spiritual transcendence, and women with flesh, decay, mortality, the earth, and sin. Women's reproductive sexual bodies in particular have been imaged as evil, threatening mortal corruptibility to the disembodied and transcendent male spirit (Blackford, 1999; Grosz, 1994; Ruether, 1996).

Prolific colonial ethnographer Elsdon Best provides examples of this re-ordering of Māori cosmology that not only subordinated the status of atua wāhine but demonised them as the source of misfortune in the world. He writes that Māori men are associated with Ranginui,⁴⁵ the 'heavens', life, light and positivity. Women are associated with the earth, misfortune and death:

The inferiority of the female sex is emphasized, even as Hine-ahu-one was inferior to Tane (Best, 1924, p. 120).

This 'house' of misfortune, of ominous inferiority, is represented by this world, by the earth, by the female sex, and by the female organ of generation which holds dread powers of destruction and pollution (Best, 1924, p. 121).

The first quote is a Victorian reading of the origin story of the first woman, Hineahuone, who some versions state was sculpted from the menstrual river of power of her mother, Papatūānuku, at Kurawaka,⁴⁶ said to be the vulva of the earth (Murphy, 2013, 2014). Oral narratives recount that Tānemahuta, one of the sons of Papatūānuku, upon entering Hineahuone's vulva, experienced a powerful force that overcame him - the regenerative female element that birthed the world into being (Pere, 1982; Mikaere, 2003; Yates-Smith, 1998). Yet all of this is lost in Best's account, which is clouded by gendered dualisms that anoint men as lofty 'sons of the heavens' and, thus, heirs of ceremonial and socio-political rule. Women become his secondary subject, the Biblical Eve associated with misfortune, sin, and the fleshy corporeality of the denigrated earth (Murphy, 2013; Sjoog & Mor, 1991). Like Eve, Hineahuone, in this version, is cut from the cloth of the male, denying women's autonomy. She becomes his subordinate counterpart, cementing notions

⁴⁵ Ranginui is a male deity that is referred to as 'sky father'.

⁴⁶ I discuss this further in Chapter 7.

of female inferiority in the Māori world that linger despite vigorous challenge (Evans, 1994a; Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama & Johnston, 1994).

Best's second quote refers to the story of Maui⁴⁷ in his pursuit of immortality who transgresses sacred laws by entering Hinenuitepō's⁴⁸ tara,⁴⁹ unannounced and uninvited. As he journeys back to the womb that conceived him, with a plan to reverse birth and re-emerge from her mouth, he is caught out and crushed by the 'tara with teeth'.⁵⁰ Whilst Ngā Potiki, Ngā Uri a Maui versions narrate that Maui's body became the first menstruation to enter the world,⁵¹ assuring 'immortality' through the continuation of whakapapa the menstrual blood conveys, colonial versions such as Best's recode this story as emblematic of Māori female spiritual malignance. Like the obscure Hebrew character, Lilith, who refused to lie beneath a man and accept subservience, Hinenuitepō is recast as the font of 'calamity' and a lurking threat who stalks the lives of men, ever ready to snare and 'drag them into the underworld' (Best, 1972; Walker, 1996). Unable to deny her supremacy the colonial ethnographers could only demonise her (Mikaere, 2017a). In both of these representations of Māori sacred story cycles, female genitalia becomes the font of spiritual defilement, contradicting oral histories that venerate the tara as a sacred gate between worlds as I discuss in Chapter 4.

An important element within mana wahine theories is tracing whakapapa in order to seek understanding and facilitate transformation (Irwin, 1991; Mikaere, 2017b; Pihama, 2001). Elsdon Best and other colonial ethnographic writing on Māori women reveal much more about the consciousness, politics, histories, hysterias and

⁴⁷ Maui is a trickster demi-god born of women's womb-blood in Māori cosmological stories. He is celebrated throughout Polynesia (Murphy, 2013; Robertson, 2008).

⁴⁸ Hinenuitepō is the atua of death, transformation, healing and revelation. I discuss elements of her qualities in detail in Chapter 4.

⁴⁹ Tara is a customary Māori term for the vulva.

⁵⁰ I examine 'the tara with teeth' – the vagina 'with bite' in detail in Chapter 4.

⁵¹ This story is relayed in full by Dr Rangimarie Pere, in Murphy, 2013, p. 60. I also discuss it in Chapter 7.

peculiarities of European culture rather than Māori epistemologies regarding women (Rountree, 1998). Best's language, in particular, can be traced directly to the infamous torture manual, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (Kramer & Sprenger, 1971) - "the official hand-book of the witch hunters" which, for almost four hundred years,⁵² gave guidance and justification to the town fathers on how to identify, torture and publicly execute 'witches' (Sjoo & Mor, 1991, p. 300; Starhawk, 1979). Inspired by The Old Testament and its proclamation 'none shall suffer a witch to live' (Exod., 22:18) *The Malleus Maleficarum* articulates the primary nature of woman thus:

What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an unescapable [sic] punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colours! (Kramer & Sprenger, 1971, p. 43).

And all this is indicated in the etymology of the word; for Femina comes from Fe and Minus, since she is ever weaker to hold and preserve the faith (1971, Kramer & Sprenger, p. 44).

In her extraordinary work *The Caliban and the Witch* Italian activist, Silvia Federici argues that degraded stereotypes of women constructed by the demonologists of the witch hunt era canonized definitions of women as biologically, weak, immoral and prone to evil, which justified the rising patriarchal order and its unprecedented assault on women. Federici continues that the fathers of modern rationalism - intellectuals, philosophers and scientists - endorsed the violent persecutions as a means of social control. Despite the magnitude of the witch hunt era and its central significance in providing the scaffolding of the new capitalist order, Federici points out that it continues to be one of the most understudied phenomena in European and world history. She argues that the witch hunts must be continually reinvestigated "if we are to understand the misogyny that still characterises institutional practice and male-female relations" (Federici, 2014, p. 164).

⁵² The witch hunts occurred throughout the 15th-18th century across Europe and the British Isles. The numbers of estimated victims vary between 1-9 million of which 80 percent were said to be women (Sjoo & Mor, 1991).

The motif of the witch in the western imagination - wild, uncontrollable, autonomous, rebellious, close to the earth, and female - are immanent within Elsdon Best's and other colonial descriptions of Māori women. Pākehā scholar, Kathryn Rountree (1998, p. 42), notes that Māori women in colonial literatures are:

portrayed as ugly, dirty, smelly and greedy... [and] are described as being smeared with red earth and animal fat ... decorated with bird's feathers, bones and beaks, and bundles of human teeth. This image conjures up a version of homo sylvaticus, the 'wild man' (or here more correctly 'wild woman') of European imagination, closer to the earth and to animals, occupying a liminal space between the beasts and 'man'.

Whilst the witch is cast as wild and dirty, carrying connotations of contamination and threat (Sibley, 1995) it is her untamed sexuality that is identified as the source of her malevolence in witch hunt doctrine (Kramer & Sprenger, 1971). Similarly visceral descriptions of Māori women in the 19th century locate her as sexually immoral and promiscuous. Leonie Pihama & Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Pikiao scholar, Patricia Johnston (1994), highlight depictions of Māori women as sexual objects, lustful, open and available to titillate the colonial male gaze. Her body becomes an extension of Native lands that are 'open' for colonial conquest (Smith, A., 2005; Tamaira, 2010). Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tuhoe artist, Sarah Hudson (2010) drawing on the work of Sutton Beets (1997), determines a variety of political imperatives underpinning different representations of Māori women in colonial postcards that include:

- depictions of sexualised young Māori girls used to “represent vulnerability, innocence, virginity and the idea of assimilation and intermarriage” (p. 5);
- images of Māori women as sexually immoral and promiscuous, inviting 'colonial conquest';
- depictions of Māori women as sexually available yet also 'intrinsically dangerous'. Like the wild Native landscape that needs to be 'tamed' and 'broken in', Māori women in these representations require force in order to subdue them;
- depictions of kuia with backgrounds characterising poverty conveying the supremacy of the emergent prosperous settler state (whose wealth stems

from confiscated Māori lands) and the ‘naturalness’ of colonial conquest on a people already inclining toward extinction.

Tūwharetoa writer, Marata Tamaira observes another angle in romanticised depictions of Māori and Polynesian women. She argues that they are a form of ‘colonial spin-doctoring’ that ‘aestheticise the violence of colonisation’, acting as a ‘smoke screen’ to conceal the brutish, hard realities. ‘We cannot depend on our eyes’ Tamaira warns, in examining the colonial photographic and artistic representations of Māori and Polynesian women, which she argues “constitute visual strands in a western narrative that tells of colonial desire and subjugation in Polynesia” (Tamaira, 2010, p. 14).

Whilst the political imperatives underpinning these representations convey complexity, the undertones are consistently sexual, depicting a long history of the targeting of the Native female reproductive body as a central site of colonisation (Hudson, 2010; O’Brien, 2006; Waldroup, 2004). Immorality, promiscuity, malignance, misfortune, danger, inferiority and symbolic pollution comprise the hegemonic discourses that have been constructed regarding Māori women’s reproductive bodies, which extinguish the potentialities of mana wahine ritual ontologies.

Censorship and reproduction

Te Arawa scholar and composer, Aroha Yates-Smith’s seminal work, *Hine! E Hine! Recovering the Feminine in Māori Spirituality* (1998) links the marginalisation of Māori women to the marginalisation of the atua wāhine across early colonial ethnographic accounts. She charts the impacts of Christianity on Māori cosmologies and the ways in which stories related to Māori women that were considered too graphic or extraordinary, or accounts that challenged the cultural ideologies of the coloniser were simply omitted from the history books.

A powerful example of censorship is recorded in the South Island newspaper, *The Grey River Argus*, which in August 1887 published an article entitled ‘A Disgusting History’. The article conveys the political and ideological stoush behind the publication of colonial historian, John White’s ‘*Ancient History of the Maori*’ *Volume 1* (1887) by the Government printing office:

The presence of what polite society calls broad language may to some extent be excusable in such a history in order to convey to the reader the ideas of the people treated of; but the presence of whole pages containing indecent allusions is assuredly without excuse, and certainly renders the volume before us unsuitable for general perusal. When we read the legend of the creation of woman in language which is positively disgusting we shudder when we reflect that the author, who makes the ‘New Zealander speak for himself’ has promised that the Maori shall give us the meaning of the ‘mountains, rivers and headlands’. The Government on learning the objectionable character of the letter press, has already suppressed the publication, at any rate till it shall have been expurgated (para 1).

What could the Government printing office of the day have found so repellent to colonial sensibilities that could warrant a recall of the publication? And more specifically, what relations of power were so fundamentally threatened to justify such an extreme response? (Federici, 2014). It seems likely that it was the supremacy of female sexuality encoded repeatedly in sacred cosmological stories (and ritualised in whakapapa histories which I investigate in Chapter 4).

Ani Mikaere’s timeless work, *The Balance Destroyed* (2017a, p. 71) examines this line of thinking carefully, recounting cosmological stories of the atua wāhine that exalt the feminine reproductive body as a ceremonial landscape. Her ultimate analysis is that:

Female strength formed part of the core of Māori existence, and was sourced in the power of female sexual and reproductive functions. This emerged clearly in the cosmogonic accounts, the potency of female sexuality being implicit in the womb symbolism of Te Kore, and Te Pō and becoming explicit with the sexual union of Tane and Hineahuone, as well as in the story of Maui’s death ... While both men and women were recognised as possessing inherent tapu, the role of women as whare tangata made them particularly so, for they were vital to the survival of the whānau, hapū and iwi. Women were also, by virtue of their sexuality, regarded as possessing special powers in mediating the boundaries of tapu and noa. The recognised centrality of female sexuality to survival meant that women celebrated their femaleness with confidence, both expecting and exercising sexual autonomy.

Yet it was not only codes of mana wahine emanating from Native readings of the Hineahuone story that threatened patriarchal ordering. Ancient chants that recount

the origins of the first human reflect a deep love between Tāne and Hineahuone (Smith, P., 1913). This bond between the genders is also immanent in the sacred story cycles of the primordial parents Ranginui and Papatūānuku who clung to one another as ‘one deity’, reinforcing notions of gender balance (Pere, 1982, p. 8). It is further demonstrated in historic accounts recorded by Ani Mikaere (2017a), in the recollections of Waikaremoana elder and tohuna tipua, Rangimarie Pere (1982), and in ritual histories surrounding the ceremonies of the whare tangata that I examine in earlier work (Murphy, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016). Dominance and subordination do not feature in traditional chants (Murphy, 2013; Pere, 1982). Breaking the bond between tāne⁵³ and wāhine as tribal sisters and brothers who took up arms and fought side by side in the sovereignty wars, was paramount in ensuring the success of the new colonial regime. The process of fracturing the delicate balance between tāne and wāhine began with the corruption of the sacred story cycle, which provided the template of social relations (Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001; Yates-Smith, 1998).

What the colonial ethnographers wrote has been continuously reproduced for well over a century, cementing narratives that promote imbalance and discord in Māori social and spiritual relationships (Pihama, 2001; Yates-Smith, 1998). Tracing the reproduction of colonial representations of Māori femininity into current scholarship is important. It explains the context of the struggle, shame, fear, doubt and lack of knowledge that many Māori and, indeed, other Native women express in this research in reconstructing their ceremonial lives.⁵⁴ It also contextualises the significance of Native women returning to ceremony as a political project that is central to Native sovereignty movements, in light of a history of censorship, denial and dehumanisation (Smith, L. T., 1992; Waziyatawin, 2012).

⁵³ Tāne, most simply, is a term for Māori men, which derives from the atua of the forest – Tānemahuta.

⁵⁴ I discuss this in Chapter 5.

Eldson Best distorted impressions of Māori women have been faithfully reproduced for well over a century. Pākehā writer, Berys Heuer,⁵⁵ drew heavily from Best's work in her publication *Māori Women* (1972). She proclaims that the 'destructive' nature of female genitalia toward the sacred meant that there were no female priests, a point thoroughly challenged by Aroha Yates-Smith (1998), Ani Mikaere (2017a, 2017b), Ron Ngata (2014), and myself in the following chapters. Heuer continues that the defiling nature of female genitalia (and menstrual blood) meant that Māori women were actively excluded from esoteric knowledge "to avoid contaminating the *karakia* and ceremonial rituals", a point I continue to vehemently dispute based on historic oral sources. High-ranking women were the exception, she declares, being fortunate to attend some sacred learning spaces where "lesser kinds of knowledge" were instructed (Heuer, 1972, p. 44, *Italics in original*).

Noted Pākehā historian, Ann Salmond in her prominent work *Hui: A study of Māori ceremonial gatherings* (2004, p. 42) perpetuates the same dualistic and gendered narrative declaring:

Let it be stated from the beginning that males, high descent, the dead, the elderly, and the history of the tribe all possess strong tapu qualities, as indeed does anything that enjoys great mana ... On the other hand, women, the low-born, cooked food, water and the young all have noa (common) qualities. Thus women, the lowborn and the young will be prohibited from carrying out sacred rituals.

Pākehā author, Margaret Orbell (1995, p. 187), falls into the same dualistic 'trap of opposites' (Royal, 1996) in her statements:

Intrinsically and in general, men were tapu and women were noa ... just as men belonged with the sky and women with the earth, so men in themselves were essentially tapu and women noa.

There are a number of Māori scholars that have challenged the narrow, gendered reconstructions of tapu and noa that can be traced back to the early works of some of the colonial ethnographers (Henare, 1988; Mikaere, 1994, 2017a; Murphy, 2013; Pere, 1982; Pihama, 2001; Royal, 1996). Ngāti Hauā, Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa

⁵⁵ See Leonie Pihama (2001) who usefully deconstructs Berys Heuer's work.

scholar, Manuka Henare (1988, p. 20) points out that everyone has intrinsic tapu, through whakapapa to the atua and as members of whānau, hapū and iwi. He also maintains that women are tapu because of their ability to whakanoa – to liberate people and place from restriction.⁵⁶ Ani Mikaere (2017a) goes further, demonstrating through historic examples that Māori women mediated the fluid boundary between tapu and noa and fulfilled ritual functions of both whakatapu⁵⁷ and whakanoa. She argues that women were able to fulfill these ritual functions because of constructions of the female sexual body as a path in and out of the world. She overturns arguments of tapu and noa as hierarchical and mutually exclusive by pointing out that central to the wellbeing of tribal community is balance, between men and women, adults and children, humans and the environment, and the physical and spiritual realms.

It is deeply concerning that contemporary high-profile Pākehā scholars, who have worked extensively in Māori communities, find it acceptable to reproduce a concept of Māori gender-relations steeped in the politics of domination and subordination, without pausing to consider the impacts of this. It is especially unethical and irresponsible, I would argue, to continue to unproblematically re-affirm notions of female inferiority and male supremacy given the epidemic⁵⁸ of domestic violence in Māori communities (Lievore, 2007; Pihama & Cameron, 2012; Pitman, 2012).

Pākehā authors Kent & Besley's (1990, p. 4-5) alarming publication, *He Whakamarama: A Bicultural Resource*, intended for schools and community groups recycles colonial representations, drawing heavily on the work of Berys Heuer, following Elsdon Best. The authors proclaim:

⁵⁶ Whakanoa is a ritual process often associated with Māori women that involves lifting tapu prohibitions, limitations and restrictions. I discuss this in Chapter 7.

⁵⁷ Whakatapu is a ritual process that deems something, some place, or someone, under prohibition or restriction for a period of time.

⁵⁸ This is a term used by The Second Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence who employ it to convey the magnitude of domestic violence in Māori communities and the way it is collectively spread and maintained (Kruger et al., 2004).

Māori women and girls feel a shame toward their bodies (unlike the men) and are seen as a destructive force of low status and little power within Māori society.

Ironically the authors comment that in former times Māori women and girls spoke openly about their bodies, and menstruation in particular,⁵⁹ however, this had changed to a hushed silence. Not once do they stop to ask themselves where this shame has emanated from. Nor do they question how presenting Māori women as ‘powerless’ and ‘destructive’ may contribute and reconsolidate notions of ‘shame’.

Heavily quoting Kent & Besley, and conveying these oppressive discourses across the threshold into the 21st century, University of Pennsylvania Pākehā professor, Dale Titus (2001, p. 14) declared at an International conference on education in Las Vegas in 2001:

In traditional Māori society the male is of higher status, powerful, positive and embodying life. The male principle which comes from the heavens and embodies sun and the color white, is sacred. In contrast the female is of low status, of little power and seen in a negative light. The female principle is common and embodies the earth and the color black ... This view is the contributing factor to low educational levels for Maori women and girls ... It is also important to recognize that some Maori females who hold to traditional Maori values may restrict their activities during menstruation. Maori students may be very embarrassed to talk about or view pictures of female genitalia, and educators must treat this with great sensitivity.

Is it any wonder that some Māori women feel shame towards their bodies when we have inherited a legacy of derogatory narratives?⁶⁰ Is it any wonder that Māori women occupy some of the worst sexual and domestic violence statistics when we have been consistently portrayed as ‘worthless’, ‘destructive’ and ‘inferior’? How do Māori and other Native women re-activate spiritual relationships when the vulva and menstrual blood has been constructed as ‘destructive’ to the sacred? My

⁵⁹ The open attitude of Māori women, girls and whānau toward menstruation and sexuality was one of my major findings in earlier research (Murphy, 2012, 2013).

⁶⁰ I discuss shame and the theft of language that venerates the feminine reproductive body through colonial processes in Chapter 5.

participants in Chapters 6 and 7 speak to the necessity of decolonising the narratives surrounding Native femininity and recovering kōrero that reframes the tara and menstrual blood as sites of ceremony and communion with the sacred.

Indigenous women's literature

It is important to point out Māori are not the only peoples confronted with such challenges (Mead, 1994). International Indigenous literatures reveal that the re-ordering of Native gender relations is widespread, demonstrating that it is intrinsic to the colonial project (Anderson, 2000; Maracle, 2012). In this research I draw on the decolonising critiques of Native women to extend my own analysis. The late Laguna Pueblo author, Paula Gunn Allen argues “the genocide practiced against the tribes is aimed systematically at the dissolution of ritual tradition” (1992, p. 259) of which women are central. For this reason, she observes, Native women, particularly medicine women, healers, seers and women of power, have been actively targeted, maligned and suppressed. Christian doctrine and ethnographic statements of female inferiority and spiritual defilement have worked to erase the ritual and spiritual power and influence of Native women in Native societies (Awatere, 1995). Gunn Allen concludes that an essential component of “Indian resistance to cultural and spiritual genocide” (1992, p. 259) is the contemporary critical writings of Native women, a comment also made by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and Laguna Pueblo writer, Leslie Marmon-Silko (1996).

Pākehā author Mark St Pierre and Lakota artist Tilda Long Soldier (1995) point out that in Lakota contexts:

In most nineteenth-century writing, Indian women come out looking like prostitutes, packhorses, wrinkled hags, or slaves. In twentieth century writing they are all but invisible, and this has only recently begun to change (p. 206).

They further comment:

We believe that the Judeo-Christian patriarchal bias in most ‘Native American literature’ has, over time, actually served to reduce the spiritual role and social status of Indian women at a most crucial level. For some tribal members, both male and female, ideas about the proper ‘place’ and abilities of Native women have changed, limiting their potential for contributing in this sacred way to their own people. Worse

yet, these changes have seriously distorted the actual relationships between men and women in Indian life (p. 202).

The impacts of patriarchy on the relationships between men and women as tribal sisters and brothers and the ways in which colonial society co-opted Māori men has been closely examined by mana wahine scholars and is a critical area of scholarship (Evans, 1994b; Irwin, 1991; Mead, 1994; Smith, L. T., 1992). Cree, Métis author, Kim Anderson (2000) highlights this area as well, writing of the impacts of colonial patriarchy on male and female tribal relations and the ways in which Native women's ceremonial status has been rendered obsolete. She records the attempt to annihilate the sacred ceremony of Native women's blood mysteries in historic accounts of Canadian boarding schools that instituted shame and 'self-hatred' in girls toward their own menstrual blood through acts of public violence and humiliation. Like the works of the formidable Hawai'ian quartet - Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahale (2011), Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa (1999), Haunani Kay Trask (1999), and Kalei Nu'uhiwa (2012), Kim Anderson focuses on resurfacing Native women's ritual histories and leadership to stimulate healing, decolonisation, resistance and cultural resurgence.

I have consistently returned to the analysis and writings of Patrisia Gonzales (2012) in this research. Patrisia locates the reclamation of Native women's womb knowledge as a fundamental site of Indigenous sovereignty movements. She describes these knowledges as healing and curing traditions and medicinal practices that address the violations of on-going colonial processes. She further comments that the restoration of these teachings foster the regeneration of Native worlds because the womb represents the life-force of Indigenous communities. Patrisia (2012, p. 11) focuses her scholarship on continuation and resistance maintaining:

I write through and from 'still'. That which is 'still' manifesting may persist, interrupt, disrupt, intervene, recede, and return as people activate their knowledge and relationships. To assert 'still' is to assert a living knowledge. The 'still' that I refer to contains survival. It is dynamic in the ability to continue and to challenge colonization.

Like Patrisia I place the stories of Native women's ceremonies today within a whakapapa continuum of ritual knowledge that is lived, embodied, unbroken and un-extinguished. Despite corruption, censorship and denial, the ritual traditions of

Native women continue, ebbing and flowing like an undercurrent beneath the surface of memory. Through the alchemy of stories, they wake. Stories are the vehicle with which Native women's ritual histories can be shared to facilitate healing. Through stories, Native women's ritual ontologies can be re-activated. I now turn to discuss the significance of story in Indigenous women's literatures and how these inform my work.

Navel stories

Stories constitute curing traditions that convey teachings to elevate, transform, connect and sustain the generations across time and space (Gonzales, 2012). The following quote, taken from an oracle based on the characteristics of the animal, reptile, and insect world (Andrews, 1999) comments:

‘I would ask you to remember only this one thing’, said Badger. ‘The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other’s memory’ (pp. 246-7).

Stories, as a source of sustenance, can be a form of ceremony, reweaving relationships across the whakapapa continuum. Leslie Marmon-Silko (1996, p. 152) maintains:

The old folks used to tell us to listen and to remember the stories that tell us who we are as a people. The old folks said the stories themselves had the power to protect us and even to heal us because the stories are alive; the stories are our ancestors. In the very telling of the stories, the spirits of our beloved ancestors and family become present with us.

The orator of stories, Sto:lo author, Jo-Ann Archibald explains, comes from a “place of prayer” (2008, p. 26). Perhaps this is because stories are “the umbilical cords to our past, to the shared collective memory and to the sacred knowing that feed a deeply experienced relationship with life” (Anaya & Lomeli, 1989, p. 239). Perhaps it is because stories, as Pākehā writer Clarissa Pinkola Estes explains, are a healing art that “set the inner life in motion”, providing “the directions for spiritual raptures” (1992, p.16 & 20). Perhaps too, it is as Marmon-Silko suggests, stories are prayers, ceremonies, because they summon our ancestors to be with us. What all these different readings have in common is the idea that stories connect the

generations and locate Indigenous peoples powerfully within intimate ancestral landscapes that cradle identity and belonging. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 146) maintains:

Each individual story is powerful. But the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place ... The story and the storyteller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story.

Kaupapa Māori Ngāti Mahuta researcher, Jenny Bol Jun Lee (2005) investigates pūrākau as a research approach. Whilst pūrākau have often been described as traditional Māori stories, Lee points out that pūrākau can encompass both ancient stories that recount cosmogonic origins, whakapapa and tribal histories and philosophies, as well as contemporary stories (p. 43, p. 121). I support Lee's assertion that new understandings can be gained from ancient stories and believe this takes on special significance in the context of my work recovering Māori and other Native women's ritual knowledges that are embedded in cosmological and historic narratives (Lee, 2005, p. 31; Mikaere, 2003; Murphy, 2013; Yates-Smith, 1998).

In this thesis I focus on the recovery of ancient mana wahine stories that I re-read as ritual maps that offer instructions toward inner-transformation and healing. Like mana wahine scholar, Naomi Simmonds (2014), who respectfully weaves her own stories as a Ngāti Raukawa wahine through her collection of participant pūrākau, my own stories join the Native women's voices present in these pages to record the resurgence of mana wahine spiritualities within wider activist, mana motuhake movements. As I point out in the previous chapter, these stories do not reflect definitive and/or exclusive mana wahine ritual knowledge traditions. Rather they are personal and intimate representations of the very different ways in which Native women are crafting their own ceremonial and spiritual practices shaped by experiences, relationships, dreaming, memory, childhood, and whānau, hapū and iwi landscapes that are unique to each of them. Mana wahine ritual ontologies are as diverse, complex, and infinite as the night sky. There is no one authoritative tradition.

One of the criticisms directed at the focus on personal stories in academia is that it promotes ‘navel gazing’. This term is aptly subverted by Indigenous women who use pūrākau as socio-cultural, spiritual and political expressions of resistance and continuation (Archibald, 2008; Mucina, 2011). The power to tell and define our own stories for ourselves is a key feature in Native decolonising literatures (Irwin, 1992, Jenkins, 1992; Pihama & Johnston, 1994; Simmonds, 2014; Te Awekotuku, 1992). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1992), and the Crow wise-woman Pretty Shield both point out that the power to control stories about ourselves is the power to control our own lives: “The one who tells the stories rules the world” (Shield as cited in Gunn Allen, 1992, p. 27). Given that our sacred stories and ritual knowledges as Native women continue to be marginalised and debased through recycled colonial renditions, ‘navel gazing’ takes on a political imperative. Our ‘*navel stories*’ are part of a bigger picture. The way we encounter, navigate and negotiate the contradictions and complexities of our colonised realities; the way we continue to bear the brunt of the ‘anger, addictions and violence’ that are the direct outcome of the theft of tribal lands and relentless suppression of te reo and tikanga (Pihama, 2001); and the way some of us are barely surviving in the cracks of a society that was never intended to advance our own aspirations, all indicate the continuation of a war, which is often subtle but never the less very real for many of our whānau (Smith, L. T., 2012). As Māori women, our ‘*navel stories*’ are stories written from the inside of stories. They are inherently revolutionary in that they are told on the outskirts of a century whose beginning was marked by monuments erected by the New Zealand settler government to symbolise our inevitable extinction (Pool, 1991).

The stories I share in this research I locate ‘*at the navel*’; the place that connects us to the cyclicity of time; the place that orients us between earth and sky (Gonzales, 2012); the place where matrilineal knowledges are intergenerationally passed on (Jensen & Jensen, 2005; Kanahale, 2011); the place that symbolises our connection to the atua wāhine, particularly Hinateiwaiwā, whose cycles govern the reproductive tides of Māori women’s bodies; and the place that has become a site

of resistance through the renewal of rites that return the whenua,⁶¹ pito,⁶² birth and menstrual bloods back to the whenua⁶³ to re-affirm ahi kā⁶⁴ and connection to Papatūānuku.⁶⁵

Sacred stories, mythic stories, creation stories, healing stories, stories of loss, hope, re-connection, rebirth, gratitude and reverence underpin and shape ceremony. I turn now to examine more closely why the restoration of ceremony and the sacred is so central to Native peoples' self determination movements.

Ceremony

This research seeks to create space to witness, document and share stories about the multiple ways in which Māori and other Native women are recovering sacred relationships. The significance of this is located in colonial histories of physical, spiritual, intellectual and cultural annihilation that have ridiculed and outlawed the spiritual systems that comprise the very foundations of Native societies (LaDuke, 2005; Ngata, 2014; St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). Ngāti Kahungunu Indigenous rights lawyer and activist Moana Jackson describes the attack on Māori spiritual belief systems as an “attack on the indigenous soul” (cited in Mikaere, 2003 p. 68), striking at the foundations of identity and instilling fear and doubt toward the spiritualities and deities that have sustained our communities for centuries. This attack was launched in a multitude of ways, including the intrusions of patriarchal Christian doctrine, confiscation of tribal lands steeped in ritual topographies, the relentless assault on te reo and tikanga, and the rolling out of assimilationist

⁶¹ Whenua means both placenta and land symbolising the intimate connection between Māori women's reproductive body and the land as the primary source of sustenance for humanity in Māori thought. I discuss this in detail in Chapter 5. In this particular sentence, I refer to the placenta.

⁶² Pito is the umbilical cord.

⁶³ Here I refer to whenua as the land.

⁶⁴ Ahi kā can be translated as ‘the burning fires of occupation’, which denotes continued occupation and customary user rights over specific tribal lands.

⁶⁵ Papatūānuku is the Māori name for the earth mother.

educational policies and legislations that drove Native spiritual practitioners “deep into the woods” (LaDuke, 2005, p. 12).⁶⁶ Lakota/Dakota activist and historian, the late Vine Deloria (1999, (p. 247) highlights the gravity of the impact on Native spiritual practices in his comments that “although the loss of land must be seen as a political and economic disaster of the first magnitude, the real exile of the tribes occurred with the destruction of ceremonial life (associated with the loss of land)”.

But what is ceremony and ritual and what does it mean for Native peoples? Why is it so significant? What is at stake in its decline, continuation and renewal? Etymologically, the term ‘ritual’ (like ceremony) carries French and Latin origins that denote habitual action in the performance of sacred rites (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2019). Yet Pākehā author, Judy Grahn (1993) maintains that the term ritual derives from the Sanskrit *r’tu*, which means both any act of magic toward a purpose and ‘menstrual’. Grahn (1993) argues that this correlation suggests that the art of ritual originates in sacred acts that observed the flow of blood, seen as the ‘primary life force’ (p.6). I explore the significance of this idea in more depth in Chapter 7.

Like Patrisia Gonzales (2012) I note that my own elders, research participants and Native decolonising literatures often (but not always) tend toward the term ceremony. Patrisia writes:

Native peoples tend to speak not of rituals but of ceremonies. They speak of making offerings or offering prayers ... these ceremonies, like rituals, can be private, informal prayers or an elaborate matrix of reverential acts or ‘liturgies’ (p. 44).

Patrisia’s point that ceremonies can be formal and/or informal, public and/or private is important because of the way in which Cartesian dualities have represented ceremony and the sacred exclusively with (disembodied) maleness, formality, and public spaces as I mention earlier (Blackford, 1999; Ruether, 1996). This has led to scholarship across the disciplines that focuses on physical religious monuments

⁶⁶ Growing up my whānau referred to *tohunga* as ‘color doctors’ and continued to consult them despite them being outlawed through the *Tohunga Suppression Act 1907*.

and formal, masculinist descriptions of public ceremony rather than on more secret, personal and intimate feminine ceremonial space, including the space of the body (Spicer & Hamilton, 2005). This research does not canvas formal Native women's traditional ritual arts, rather it focuses on personal, intimate and fluid ceremonies and sacred spaces. These are often constructed within domestic realms, blurring the boundary between the secular and sacred (Nuechterlein, 2005; Spicer & Hamilton, 2005). I return to explore the significance of place in more detail shortly.

Native notions of what constitutes ceremony and ritual are as diverse as their purposes and as Indigenous Peoples themselves, yet there are themes that re-appear consistently across international Indigenous literatures. Opaskwayak Cree author Shawn Wilson (2008, p. 11) writes that "The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves". Potawatomi botanist, Robin Kimmerer (2013, p. 5) comments "Our elders say that ceremonies are the way we 'remember to remember'" the deep web of relationships that comprise Native realities. Tewa scholar, Gregory Cajete (2000, p. 70) maintains ceremony is:

a way to remember the responsibility we have to our relationships with life. Native ceremony is associated with maintaining and restoring balance, renewal, cultivating relationship, and creative participation with nature.

The late Ngāti Whātua theologian Māori Marsden (in Royal, 2003, p. 48) uses the term *kawa* to denote ritual processes aimed at maintaining harmony and 'right relationship'⁶⁷ with our relations across the natural world. He asserts:

Behind the institution of *kawa* and its use lay a host of attitudes, ideas, and cultural perspectives. A sense of reverence for life, of the fitting and proper way of treating things, an awareness of the spiritual essence,

⁶⁷ Whilst 'right relationship' is perhaps grammatically incomplete or incorrect I use it anyway because it is a term often used in some Native communities. Like the Native American term 'coming in a good way', 'right relationship' is an active term that denotes a lived spirituality that honors the interrelatedness of all life forms. This understanding shapes ones personal behavior and actions in the world.

of the wana (aura of splendour, the glory) that radiates from all animate life and a sense of their numinal qualities.

Marsden (2005) continues that Māori reality is composed of three interlocking worlds. These are the world of symbols, the world of senses and the world of spirit, all of which shape and bring meaning to ceremony.

Some of my favorite descriptions of ceremony come from Patrisia Gonzales (2012) in *Red Medicine: Traditional Indigenous Rites of Birthing and Healing*. Patrisia questions her elder about why birth is a ceremony, to which her elder responds “because it brings the family together” (Dona Filo cited in Gonzales, p. 44). This comment conveys in simple and striking language the significance of ceremony in which “our responsibilities with our human and non-human relations ... children and future generations and to the natural world are celebrated as unified commitments” (p. xxiii). These relationships are implicit in the Māori term whānau. Often used to denote ‘extended family’, my kuia, Waikaremoana tohuna tipua Rangimarie Pere, explains that the term whānau, when broken down to its sacred vowels and associated teachings, can be read as whā - nā - ū - all creatures across the four directions of the planet that seek sustenance from the breast of the mother, Papatūānuku, constitute family (R. Pere, personal communication, June 16, 2017). Within Māori cosmology every element of creation is inter-related through whakapapa. Humans are teina - the youngest in creation and have a responsibility and obligation to care for their elders. These include the land, oceans, rivers, forests, animal, insect and birdlife, whose mauri⁶⁸ is tended through karakia whakaoho⁶⁹ to ensure their vitality (Mead, 1984). In Māori contexts, ceremonies are never isolated acts. Rather, they are witnessed intimately and received by our whānau who comprise creation, rippling out across the cosmos to influence and affect the whole (Robinson, 2005).

⁶⁸ Mauri can be translated as life-force. This is extinguished upon death in Māori philosophical thought.

⁶⁹ This term can be translated as rituals of renewal that vivify the mauri – life-force.

Patrisia points out that this relational way of orienting in the world underpins sacred laws that shape ritual protocol. In ceremony, Patrisia explains, a ‘sacred interval’ is created in which actions and symbols “pregnant with meaning, intent, prayers, and energies” (Gonzales, 2012, p. 80) are performed that allow mediation with other inter-related life-forms. She maintains that communication becomes a possibility because of Native sacred story-cycles that assume a common origin of life (Gonzales, 2012, p. 80). Paula Gunn Allen (1992, p. 62-63) similarly explains that “songs, prayers, dances, drums, ritual movements, and dramatic address are compositional elements of a ceremony” each a specific ‘form of address’ to the spirit worlds. She continues:

The purpose of a ceremony is to integrate [and restore] conscious harmony with the universe. In addition to this general purpose, each ceremony has its own specific purpose ... But all ceremonies, whether for war or healing, create and support the sense of community that is the bedrock of tribal life.

Paula’s last point is critical because it identifies the role of ceremony in fostering community cohesion. St Pierre and Long Soldier (1995, p. 9) explain that, due to missionary influence that recoded Native ceremony as devil worship, whole families ceased attending and observing the community ceremony cycle, with consequences that impacted the collective. The careful cultivation of relationships and balance implemented through ceremony began to unravel with the aggressive onslaught of missionary teachings that promoted hierarchy between men and women, children and elders, humans and the rest of creation. This discord, an *iro*⁷⁰ planted in the relationships that comprise Native identities, continues to foster a state of imbalance that destabilises Native communities and maintains colonial political imperatives.

The sacred laws of inter-relatedness that weave through these descriptions of ceremony are laws that Native peoples will put their own lives on the line to defend, as Anishinaabeg author, Winona LaDuke (2005) demonstrates in *Recovering the sacred: The power of naming and claiming*. These laws are often situated and

⁷⁰ Iro can be translated as maggot.

represented *in a place* (Walters, Beltran, Huh & Evans-Campbell, 2011). These places represent cosmological landscapes that cradle the life-force and birthing sites of tribal nations. They are matrilineal places of power that continue to be targeted, desecrated and annihilated by settler societies whose notions of a male god ‘up in the sky’ justify the plundering of the earth (LaDuke, 2005; Maracle, 2012; Murphy, 2011; Ruether, 1996).

Patrisia Gonzales (2012, p. 215) and St Pierre and Long Soldier (1995) maintain that many ceremonies today respond directly to the impact of on-going colonial ‘injury’ and violence and are often rites of regeneration and healing “that address soul loss, land loss, and cultural fragmentation”. Patrisia adds that the environment must be restored as part of our healing “to treat the *susto* within the land” (p. 215). She describes *susto* as the fleeing of the spirit through the impacts of trauma and violation. Māori Marsden (in Royal 2003, p. 49) writes similarly of the use of *karakia* to mitigate the impacts of environmental destruction and to facilitate the regeneration of *mauri* – the life-force immanent in all things “which impels the cosmic process onward towards fulfillment”. He explains that the processes inherent within the cosmos are:

pro-life and that the law of self regeneration latent within creation will, if not interfered with, tend towards healing and harmonising eco systems and biological functions within Mother Earth.

This understanding underpins the many forms of world renewal ceremonies that are performed in Aotearoa, Hawai’i and Great Turtle Island. Vine Deloria Junior (2003, p. 280) writes of the planetary significance of such ceremonies in a time of environmental upheaval pointing out:

traditional people have been forced to hold these ceremonies under various forms of subterfuge and have been abused and imprisoned for doing them. Yet the ceremonies have very little to do with individual or tribal prosperity. Their underlying theme is one of gratitude expressed by human beings on behalf of all forms of life ... one might describe ceremonials [sic] as the cosmos becoming thankfully aware of itself.

The rebuilding of Native women’s ritual lives grafts into wider movements of, not only decolonisation and Native cultural resurgence, but also the movement to remember sacred laws that orient us relationally at a time marked by spiritual and

social disconnection. As Denzin, Lincoln & Smith (2008, p. 13), drawing on Quechua author, Sandy Grande (2000, p. 354) comment:

The central crisis, as defined by Native Canadian, Hawaiian, Māori, and American Indian pedagogy, is spiritual, ‘rooted in the increasingly virulent relationship between human beings and the rest of nature’.

Dakota activist and writer, Waziyatawin (2012, p. 14-15), calls Indigenous Peoples to reclaim spiritual foundations as a first step in the pursuit of decolonisation and asks:

Do we still cherish the land as our mother, or do we see her today as a resource to be exploited for economic development? Do we still believe in the value of our traditional ways of existing, or have we succumbed to the belief that those ways are inferior to those of colonising society?

Resistance, decolonisation and the resurgence of Native spiritual and ceremonial life-ways are steeped in place (Smith, L. T., 2005; Waziyatawin, 2012). They are all mutually constituted. Ceremony re-affirms sacred relationships to place as a first ancestor (Kahukiwa & Grace, 1984; Walters, Beltran, Huh & Evans-Campbell, 2011).

Place: The mother of ceremony

Place is central to ceremony, and in some Native ontologies, is ceremony itself (Cajete, 2000; Kahukiwa & Pōtiki, 1999). I am interested in how sacred places are constructed, defined, evoked, perceived, contested, and defended in a variety of contexts. I am also interested in what ways these readings potentially challenge constructs of the sacred that reinforce colonial patriarchal hegemony.

In my research I focus on three different kinds of ceremonial places. The first is what I call ‘*navel geographies*’. Like the ‘*navel stories*’ that I write of earlier in this chapter, ‘*navel geographies*’ are matrilineal and feminine cosmological sites that cradle Native identity, spirituality and wellbeing (Gould & Rock, 2016). They are center points that connect Native peoples to creation as well as the ancestors and descendants across the time space continuum. The second ceremonial place I examine is secular and domestic environments where boundaries between the sacred and the mundane are porous. Lastly I examine the discursive Native female

reproductive body that is culturally constructed as a temple of communion with female deities.

Native sacred sites

Place constitutes whānau (Kahukiwa & Pōtiki, 1999; Kame'eleihiwa, 1999; Suchet-Pearson, Wright, Lloyd, Burarrwanga & Hodge, 2013), ancestral memory (Somerville, 2013), immanent divinity (Kahukiwa & Grace, 1984), primary identity (Walters, Beltran, Huh & Evans-Campbell, 2011), points of communion with the spirit worlds (Gonzales, 2012), and sites where knowledge “comes in and through” (Johnson & Larson, 2013, p. 10). Vine Deloria (2003, p. 285) writes that sacred places, particularly, “are the foundation of all other beliefs and practices because they represent the presence of the sacred in our lives”. Whilst observing the “immense particularity in the sacred” (p. 277) Deloria identifies different kinds of sacred places that I draw on in my research. The first is places of cultural and historical significance where events transpired that evoke a sense of reverence. Rituals of remembrance are observed in these places linking communities to “the passage of generations that have brought them to the present” (p. 276). Deloria (2003) writes that these places are made sacred by human activities. They are places that accumulate “the spiritual potency of past prayers” (Webb, 2005, p. 31-32).

Bdote in Minnesota, North America, is perhaps an example. As a site where hundreds of Hunkpapa and Dakota women and children were held in concentration camps and murdered by United States colonial military forces between 1862-1863, it is a sacred place where the ancestors are honored and remembered. Rituals here carry codes of on-going resistance to physical, spiritual and cultural annihilation and represent the survival and continuation of the people. Yet Bdote is also sacred because it is cosmologically constructed as the ‘*cekpa* navel center of the earth’. Here at the navel of Maka Ina - mother earth – the Dakota Nation emerged into the world. Dakota scholar, Waziyatawin, points out Bdote is both a site of Dakota “genesis and genocide” (Waziyatawin, 2008, p. 103).

Like many Native sacred sites, Bdote is a place of multiple contestatory discourses embedded in power relations of colonial conquest and Native continuation. Whilst it is a ‘*navel geography*’ and birthing site of Dakota it is also sacred to some Minnesota settlers as “an outpost of American imperialism” (Waziyatawin, 2008,

p. 100) from which the war to subjugate and eradicate the Dakota and Hunkpapa nations was waged. Fort Snelling, regarded as a citadel of civilisation in the ‘savage wilderness’ of Dakota territory, continues to release a canon every day to mark settler sovereignty over Native lands (Jones, 2001). It is a formidable presence that looms over the origin landscape of the Dakota Nation, signifying the colonial project of ethnic cleansing and extermination (Waziyatawin, 2008). The prayers, chants, incantations and songs of Native people that constitute the ceremonial landscape at Bdote compete with the explosion of the daily canon, rumbling trucks, thundering aeroplanes and the loud expressions of gaping tourists.

Pākehā writers, Spicer & Hamilton (2005, p. 4) contend that the same landscape can mean different things to different people. Deloria (2003, p. 277) adds that some sites are sacred to some peoples yet secular to others. An example is Mauna Kea on Hawai’i Island. Whilst Native Hawai’ian cosmologies construct the mountain as a ‘*navel geography*’ - the ‘*piko*⁷¹ of the world’ – a sacred site that unites the land and sky worlds and Hawai’ian People with their atua, tīpuna⁷² and uri,⁷³ the United States military views the mountain in purely secular terms. The military, therefore, finds no consequence in using this ritual landscape as a live-fire training ground.

Makua Valley in Oahu, where the first human emerged in Hawai’ian cosmology and where the ancestors depart this world, and the hills in Waianae where Hina⁷⁴ raised her son Maui, and where he ‘snared the sun’ in Polynesian whakapapa histories, provide more examples. These places are simultaneously multiple and layered (Richmond, 2013). They are sacred cosmological sites that are also outposts of colonial-settler occupation and the violence this implies for Native Peoples. These sacred sites are also physically unsafe and are inaccessible to non-military personal due to the concealment of undetonated grenades. This prevents Native

⁷¹ Piko is Hawai’ian for the navel. In Māori the word is pito.

⁷² Tīpuna is plural for ancestors.

⁷³ Uri can be translated as descendants.

⁷⁴ There are a myriad of different Hine and Hina across the Pacific, each with their own set of personalities and characteristics that are conveyed through the entirety of their names. Hina the mother of Maui in this whakapapa account is Hinaakeahi – Hina of the fire.

Peoples from fulfilling their ceremonial duties in these places. Rather than a harmless coincidence, the supplanting of Native cosmological birthing sites that symbolise continuation with imperial, military outposts that represent settler dominance is the point.

In my research I locate the violation of '*navel geographies*' as part of the colonial effort to eradicate the divine feminine that represents Native continuity. Yet, as Deloria (2003, p. 278) maintains, even where ceremonial and sacred sites have been physically annihilated, such as the historic landing sites of Mataatua waka⁷⁵ in my local community, they live on in the people's memories and come alive, not through occupancy, but through stories. Re-telling the stories that are embedded in the land, Pākehā authors, Johnson & Larson (2013, p. 10) maintain, re-creates "the ontological and epistemological foundations of the community". Despite the impacts of Christianity on Native spiritualities they continue in multiple forms as I discuss in the following chapters.

Deloria's final category comprises new sacred sites that are always emerging in response to new revelations. He writes: "if this possibility did not exist, all deities and spirits would be dead ... we always look forward to the revelation of new sacred places and ceremonies" (2003, p. 281). His comments highlight the nature of Native spiritualities and ceremonial forms as fluid, lived, embodied, and evolving as mutually constituted socio-spiritual, cultural and political expressions. This challenges notions of Native spiritualities and ceremonies as stagnant artefacts, stranded by rigid notions of authenticity and threatened by impending extinction due to irrelevance in contemporary life (Anderson, 2000; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 142). St Pierre and Long Soldier (1995) maintain that Native ceremonies continue to be vital, evolving in accordance with the times, the context, the needs of the people, and the space. What remains constant, however, are the values that underpin the ceremonies and, specifically, humanity's place within the whānau of creation (Gunn Allen, 1992; Trask, 1999).

⁷⁵ Mataatua waka was one of the great voyaging vessels that sailed to Aotearoa from Hawaiiki.

The ceremonial mediums of communion recorded in this thesis are eclectic and evolving. Some represent the continuation of old forms applied in both traditional and new ways. Others represent new expressions entirely. Whilst I support initiatives of spiritual and cultural reclamation that are widely regarded by decolonising scholars as critical components of tino rangatiratanga, it is also important to value the evolution of new forms that respond to the socio-political, environmental and spiritual times we are in. These forms are shaped by the politics of decolonisation, resistance and the re-activation of mana wahine as part of wider Native sovereignty movements. Broader still, as I point out earlier, these forms, which focus on healing and world renewal, respond to the collapse of eco-systems and long standing Native prophecies that declare we are entering a new time cycle on the planet (Deloria, 2003; Mitchell, 2018).

Cosmological altars in domestic space

There are many sites through which we encounter the divine. In my work I am interested in contemporary domestic spaces and homes that become places of spiritual revelation. Patrisia Gonzales (2012, p. 216) maintains in Mesoamerican contexts that the home has always been a space “to worship and direct cosmological meaning”. She points out “The home - a bedroom, a kitchen niche, a corner niche, a patio, or a special prayer room ... are among the various altars that help to renew our worlds”. Pākehā writer, Nuechterlein (2005, p. 50) agrees, arguing that in many cultures fixed sacred spaces, such as churches and temples, do not maintain a monopoly on experiences with the ‘transcendent other’, rather, the sacred can enter and be experienced from within the “secular domestic world”. Nuechterlein (2005) queries what constitutes sacred space and how experiencing the sacred in domestic realms can impact on understandings of it.

These points become significant in light of Cartesian dualities that align the sacred exclusively with masculinity, formality and the public sphere and position women within the private, domestic realm that is constructed as banal and secondary (Brickell, 2010). Such constructions shape the politics of knowledge production that legitimise masculinist ceremonial spaces yet deny the female ritual counterpart (Longhurst, 1997; Rose, 1993; Valentine, 2001).

Pākehā writer, Harriet Gray (2016) comments that the home place, regarded as inert, neutral, homogenous and apolitical is, in fact, shaped by socially constructed gender relations and processes of power motivated by patriarchal political imperatives. She argues that the boundary between the social spheres of public and private are always dynamic, fluid, mutually constitutive, and politically formulated. Pākehā feminist geographer, Gill Valentine (2001, p. 64) similarly suggests that homes are not “neutral containers for our social relationships”, rather they contain a “matrix of social relations” and can be read as “maps inscribed with social values and political relations” (p. 65). Valentine suggests that home, as a product of industrial capitalist society, perpetuates patriarchal values and social orderings in the exaltation of the heteronormative nuclear family unit, although this is a site open to struggle and contestation.

African American feminist theorist bell hooks (1991, p. 42) offers another reading on constructions of the home place arguing that it is, for many black people, a site of subversion, sanctuary, and resistance to white hegemony. She writes that home place, ruled by black mothers, offers a retreat from the violence and racism of white society and without these spaces, black people could not build a “meaningful community of resistance” (p. 47). For hooks the home is a foundational site of revolution and political liberation. African American feminist theorist Patricia Hill-Collins (1990) agrees, writing that the public and private divide have different readings for African American women than for White American women. She argues that private domestic homes constitute spaces that are beyond the reach of white rule and are nourished by black familial connections that increase the resources of mothers and the collective, such as through shared parenting.

Home places for Native people are also political sites of sanctuary, subversion, and resistance to the hegemony of white settler society.⁷⁶ They can be bastions of cultural continuation. Patrisia Gonzales (2012, p. 70) drawing on Burkhart (1997, p. 52) writes:

⁷⁶ Yet, Native home places can also be places shaped by the intergenerational traumas of colonising socio-political realities that manifest through domestic violence and other forms of lateral violence.

Prior to the European invasion, Mexica/Aztec women's homes were their sites of power, 'a potential locus of subversion and resistance', where they guarded rites and birthed their babies. Even after the conquest, the home - as the domain of female control - was a private space for women to worship and direct cosmological meaning.

Related readings are encapsulated in Māori home place terms such as *kāinga*, *hau kāinga* and *wā kāinga*. All of these terms are grounded in collective tribal identities and *whakapapa* networks that collapse notions of home place as nuclear heteronormative and patriarchal enclaves of capitalist society. In *kāinga*, *hau kāinga*, and *wā kāinga* home extends beyond the singular to become community and an extension of *marae*.⁷⁷ Here home is constructed within cosmological, ancestral, social, spiritual, physical, political and gift-economy landscapes founded on relationships, identity and belonging rather than the politics of capitalist economy. *Kāinga* includes identity markers such as tribal mountains, rivers, streams and sacred places - ritual geographies - that bind people to place through Native spiritualities. The burial and placement sites of *whenua*, *iho*,⁷⁸ hair, nails, bodies and birthing blood comprise the landscapes of the *kāinga* that collapse hierarchical divisions between the public and private, sacred⁷⁹ and secular, forwarding, rather, a fluid continuum of being and a spirituality that is deeply embedded and entangled in daily geographies. Mānuka Henare (1988, p. 15 - 6) explains:

Before the coming of the Pākehā and Christianity, Māori religion both dominated and was a reflection of the Māori way of life. It emanated from the every day existence of Māori ... Western concepts which

⁷⁷ The *marae* (*marae ātea*) is the open courtyard in front of the *whare tipuna*- ancestral meeting house, yet today it is often used to refer to the entire complex of buildings and space that surround the *whare tipuna*. *Marae* continue to be the focal point in Māori communities.

⁷⁸ Umbilical cord.

⁷⁹ Interdisciplinary scholars argue that the sacred and profane frequently overlap and are fluid categories that are mutually constituted (Bossuyt, 2005; Pestell, 2005). Spicer & Hamilton (1995, p. 3) maintain that sacred and profane are originally Latin spatial terms – *sacer* and *profanes*. *Sacer*, they point out, is defined as places and objects that are sacred, and *profanes* is defined as an area that lies outside of the space marked *sacer*. Profane, however, has been redefined within Cartesian dualities as the opposite of sacred and inferior to it.

distinguish between the sacred and the world of the profane and talk of dichotomies between human and natural do not fit easily into the Māori world view.

St Pierre and Long Soldier's (1995, p. 59) descriptions from a Lakota context, are not dissimilar from many Māori lived realities:

Plains Indian life is not neatly segmented, as some anthropologists like to think, into the sacred and the profane. Indian people do not have one way of perceiving the sacred that they use at home and a different one in church, requiring two sets of behavioural codes. Certainly in public ritual there are more formal behaviour, but day to day life is very much involved in the sacred mystery.

Home in Māori contexts, then, comprise spiritual, conceptual and emotional spaces as much as physical spaces, a notion that is reflected in whakataukī, which convey proverbs and customary teachings. The following are two examples:

'Hokia ki ngā maunga kia purea koe e ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea'

'Hokia ki tō ūkaipō'

(in Riley, 2013, p. 293).

Both proverbs communicate tribal homelands as places of healing, purification and renewal for tribal peoples. Yet, these homelands are also deeply embedded in the psyche of Māori and other Native Peoples who carry their sacred mountains, rivers and ancestral houses within their compartment everywhere they go.

The sacred is often written in literature as separate from ordinary lives (Eliade, 1961). Space is 'set apart' for the entry of the sacred. Whilst this can be the case in Native contexts, where places, objects and/or people are 'set aside' as tapu and thus placed under specific restriction, spirituality and the sacred can also weave in, out and through daily mundane realities. One of the striking features of my research is that in many of the contemporary Māori and Native homes that I entered, *tūāhu*⁸⁰ were established in living areas (and sometimes more than one *tūāhu*). In traditional times they often occupied places away from sleeping and eating quarters. The

⁸⁰ Altar.

presence of *tūāhu* in Māori living areas can reflect both the evolution of *tikanga* to suit modern homes and contemporary contexts and the ways in which spirituality is lived in ordinary spaces and in daily lives.

In Native homes sacred spaces are cosmological sites that reflect Native continuation. The domesticity of space can be shaped and transformed through the introduction of specific elements, such as altars that are either temporarily created, or fixed in a corner ‘set apart’ from the secular. ‘Set apart’ from the domestic milieu, altars can represent a liminal mutable zone appropriate for rituals (Banner, 2005; Mecham, 2005, p. 160). Conversely, altars can also be placed in a central spot in the home, blending into the domestic environment and reflecting the weave of spirituality through ordinary everyday life (Gonzales, 2012; Nuechterlein, 2005). Symbolic objects such as heirlooms, photos and ritual instruments that represent specific spiritual relationships are placed upon the altar to evoke the sacred (St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995; Williams, 2005). These objects delineate spatial boundaries and manipulate space to meet spiritual needs (Mecham, 2005, p 141). The scent and smoke (which represents a visual prayer) of sacred plants burning, water and earth from tribal sites of power, and fire comprise elemental energies that consecrate the altar and mark it as a sacred place that is qualitatively different from the surrounding environment (Eliade, 1961). These elements are often placed at coordinate points and used to convey whole constellations of ritual philosophy. For example *hika* can be translated as fire, *karakia*, copulation, and female genitalia (Williams, 1991). *Mahuika*, who represents the element of fire, is the regenerative fire that activates the womb. Like ancient menstrual blood rites, fire is used to ‘fertilise’, increase, intensify and fortify ritual workings (Buck, 1949; Murphy, 2013; Robinson, 2005; Thornton, 1992).

Objects and elements of power visually and sensorially delineate sacred space, yet it is the intention, will, belief, behavior, rites and ritual that shape sacred space and bring meaning to the materiality of ceremony (Bossuyt, 2005; Nuechterlein, 2005; Spicer & Hamilton, 2005). In Native ceremony incantation, song, chant, prayer, acknowledgements and even silence, shaped by intention, become the principal vehicles in the demarcation of sacred space. These can be called upon to create sacred space in secular, domestic, mundane and/or even hostile, forbidden,

dangerous, and squalid geographies. Pākeha writer Richard Williams (2005) writes of prison spaces that are transformed into sacred spaces through rites. Yet his argument is limited by his claim that consecrated objects are necessary to facilitate the transformation of space into a site of the sacred. In the context of my research space is made sacred at bare minimum through mind, voice, body, chant, behavior, intention and will. People can create sacredness for themselves inside of spaces that are hostile and oppressive such as prisons. Whether it is a prison cell or a desecrated, military-settler occupied Native sacred site, the sacred can be invoked and evoked to (momentarily) transform geographies.

An example in my research is the hospital. Hospitals can be deeply political, medicalised and hostile spaces inscribed with western values of white patriarchal supremacy. Yet they can be momentarily transformed into Native cosmological and sacred sites through the chants, songs, mihi,⁸¹ and moveable altars of homebirth midwives and whānau that greet the ancestor coming through the birth canal, as well as the birth process itself (Cook, 2008; Gonzales, 2012). These spaces become contested sites of struggle that are temporarily reconstituted as sacred spaces, collapsing rigid binaries that banish Native spiritualities to the margins of ‘wild geographies’ in remote Native territories. If Native spiritualities are lived then communion with the divine can happen anywhere and at anytime, and it does.

The Native female body as ceremonial site

Sacred sites operate at different geographical scales. The final site I focus on in this research is the material and discursive Native female body. Patrisia Gonzales (2012, p. 47) writes that “Place can refer to a home, the body, the womb or a series of relationships that create a landscape of meaning and experience”. She maintains that the Native body and womb comprise a ritual and sacred landscape that are a critical site of subversion and Native self-determination. These comments are highly relevant in my own work, which examines the Native reproductive body as a ceremonial site of communion and embodiment of the atua wāhine.

⁸¹ Acknowledgement.

The body, like place, is not an apolitical and neutral container (Grosz, 1994; Valentine, 2001). Rather it is socially, spiritually, politically, economically and culturally inscribed (Longhurst, 2001, 2005; Simmonds, 2009, 2014). The Native female body is a discursive site of multiple readings and contestations of power. Colonial re-definitions of the Native feminine body operate within Victorian, Christian and patriarchal paradigms that locate it as a site of spiritual defilement, misfortune, inferiority, danger, sexual deviance and immorality as I discussed earlier (Pihama & Johnston, 1994, 1995). These readings are used to justify and reinforce patriarchal political imperatives of domination and exclusion that underpin social relations today (Mikaere, 2017a; Murphy, 2013). Whilst Māori and Native men's and boy's bodies are also recast as 'dangerous' and 'threatening' to white rule and political and moral order, Native women's bodies carry further readings that emanate from their reproductive body. For example, as 'birthers of a counter-colonial order', Native women's bodies become associated with subversion and defiance (Smith, A., 2005; Sibley, 1995). Also, as feminist geographers argue, women's bleeding, birthing, lactating bodies have long been associated with emotional instability, irrationality and uncontrollability, in opposition to men whose bodies are located as self-contained, and thus 'rational' and reasoned (Grosz, 1994; Johnston, 2005; Longhurst, 1997). Such narratives are used to justify notions of a 'natural inequality' between the sexes that translates into social, political and economic inequalities (Johnston, 2005; Rose, 1993; Valentine, 2001).

Dualistic arguments that presume a 'natural' difference between men and women, and white, Native, and colored bodies based on biology are essentialist. They have been used to impose an oppressive political order over entire populations as a 'natural' consequence of a moral hierarchy (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008; Valentine, 2001). Social constructionists have challenged essentialist discourse arguing that the body is not natural, pure, neutral or un-coded, rather it is culturally mapped and infused with social, political and economic exigencies of power (Fuss, 1989). They argue that what are perceived as natural 'essences' emanating from certain bodies, are, rather, socially and culturally constructed difference produced through discourses and social practice (Longhurst, 2005; Valentine, 2001).

Native scholarship that seeks to retrieve spiritual and cultural philosophies, values and ‘essences’ are critical components of self-determination and interventionist healing strategies that are positioned quite differently to essentialisms put forward in pursuit of colonial politics. The cultural characteristics Indigenous peoples articulate to counter white hegemony do not stem from racist and sexist binaries but from Indigenous spiritual ontologies that are motivated by activist agendas of resistance, self determination and emancipation. This represents a crucial difference.

Leonie Pihama and Patricia Johnston (1995, p. 84-85) point out that reclaiming narratives that speak to cultural essences does not automatically equate with essentialism, but rather to cultural constructions of identity. They argue:

[a]s Māori women we have a relationship to the land, we are each connected to Mana Whenua. As Māori women we have a relationship to spirituality, Mana Wairua. As Māori women we are located in complex relationships within whakapapa, Mana Tangata. Each of these aspects of tikanga Māori are part of who we are as Māori women, whether or not we experience them in our day to day realities, as they originate from historical and cultural sources that both precede and succeed us. The complexities of such relationships extend into whānau, hapū and iwi, so no single expression is one, but that each may and do find a range of expressions. Hence, what may be viewed as an essence in cultural terms does not, in our terms, equate to essentialism, rather it expresses the historical and social construction of cultural relationships.

Pākehā scholars, Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg (2008) contend all identities are fluid, historically constructed and are mutually constituted by the intersectionality of religion, ethnicity, class and gender. They point out that disempowered and disenfranchised Indigenous communities often employ essentialisms that claim cultural characteristics shaped by spiritualities as a matter of survival within continuing colonial histories of cultural obliteration. The authors note how Indigenous identity is often located within spiritualities that venerate a cosmological and genealogical connection to the earth. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 78) similarly maintains:

The essence of a person has a genealogy which could be traced back to an earth parent ... A human person does not stand alone, but shares with other animate ... beings relationships based on a shared ‘essence’ of

life ...[including] the significance of place, of land, of landscape, of other things in the universe ... Concepts of spirituality which Christianity attempted to destroy, and then to appropriate, and then to claim, are critical sites of resistance for indigenous peoples. The values, attitudes, concepts, and language embedded in beliefs about spirituality represent ... the clearest contrast and mark of difference between indigenous peoples and the West. It is one of the very few parts of ourselves which the West cannot decipher, cannot understand and cannot control ... yet.

Pākehā scholar Diana Fuss (1989) refers to the work of Indian literary theorist Gayatri Spivak (1999) who coined the term ‘strategic essentialism’. According to Spivak the employment of strategic essentialisms by the dispossessed can act as a political focal point and a place to re-group temporarily for political purposes (cited in Fuss, 1989, p. 32). Fuss argues that the permissibility of essentialisms is determined by the “subject-position from which one speaks” (1989, p. 32) and the motivation behind employment. In this context, strategic essentialisms becomes dangerous for Indigenous people only when we fail to acknowledge and provide space for diversity and variety, which has always been a feature within our communities (Simmonds, 2009; Smith, L. T., 2012)

Mana wahine theorists have repeatedly stressed the significance of formulating theories that speak to the diversity of Māori women’s lived realities (Hutchings, 2002; Pihama, 2001; Simmonds, 2014; Smith, L. T., 1992). Ani Mikaere (2003, 141-142) argues:

It is also absolutely vital that the full range of Māori women’s experiences be validated. Colonisation has impacted on individual women in so many ways. The life experiences of a woman who has grown up away from the marae, with neither language nor strong whānau connections are just as much a part of what it now means to be Māori as those of the woman who has grown up in a rural, marae-centred Māori community, is fluent in the language and secure in her iwi identity. All Māori women are involved in the struggle, some consciously, others without even realising it; whether rural or urban, whether fluent or not, whether they choose to bear children or not, whether lesbian or heterosexual, whether proud or ashamed of being Māori. Ultimately, we are all connected by whakapapa, to one another and to our Māoriness. To question the authenticity of one another’s Māori womenness, as though there is a standard definition to which all

‘real Māori women’ must conform, is to deny the complexities of colonisation. It is also highly destructive, introducing divisiveness which Māori women can ill afford.

In focusing on the Native feminine reproductive body as a cosmological and ceremonial sacred site I do not seek to essentialise Native constructs of femininity based on biology or assert rigid notions of what constitutes ‘authentic’ mana wahine ritual knowledge. Rather, like Aroha Yates-Smith, Ani Mikaere, Leonie Pihama, Patricia Johnson, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and other mana wahine decolonising scholars, I seek to re-center mana wahine ritual ontologies for the political purposes of resurfacing the divine feminine to restore balance as a central decolonising tenet. As I have already stated, the knowledges, positionings and representations put forward in this thesis are not closed systems or definitive accounts. They represent distinctive strands in the complex, multiple and heterogeneous weave that comprises Native women’s ceremonial lives and knowledge.

In focusing on the body as a ceremonial and cosmological site constructed through whakapapa narratives back to atua wāhine such as Hineahuone, Papatūānuku, Hinateiwaiwā, Hinētītama, Hinenuitepō, and Mahuika I also acknowledge that not all Māori (and other Native women) see themselves as such. I also acknowledge that not all women desire to be mothers, or to birth, or to be identified with their reproductive bodies. Nor do I posit that women who have not birthed cannot experience mothering and/or be mothers. I also do not intend to exclude takatāpui,⁸² two-spirit,⁸³ māhu⁸⁴ and gender fluid and diverse identities (Kerekere, 2015). This

⁸² Takatāpui is a term that is used to describe Māori who identify with diverse genders and sexualities (Kerekere, 2015).

⁸³ Two-spirit is a cultural term used by some Native American, First Nation and other Native Peoples to describe Indigenous people who occupy a fluid continuum of gender, sensual and sexual identities. Significantly, it is a term that encompasses sacred, ritual and ceremonial qualities and is grounded in Native communities, world views, histories, two-spirit cultural traditions, as well as legacies of colonial invasion and annihilation (Enos, 2017).

⁸⁴ Māhu represents a third gender in Hawai’ian culture, encompassing both male and female qualities. Māhu were held in high regard and were often spiritual leaders in traditional Hawai’ian society (Borofsky, 2012).

is a critical and dynamic area of scholarship that will provide rich complexities to understandings of Native spiritualities.

Whilst I recognise the vast and very different constellations of mana wahine knowledge, I maintain that the cycle of the whare tangata, marked by the blood mysteries of menarche, conception, pregnancy, birth and menopause, remain central to mana wahine ritual ontologies.

Conclusion

To conclude, I have located my research within a number of intersecting literatures that include mana wahine, Native feminist, decolonising and anti-colonial theories and feminist geographical theories. I began with an outline of mana wahine theories and discussed how Māori cosmological stories were distorted through colonial dualistic interpretations. I also discussed the censorship of mana wahine ritual knowledge and the reproduction of colonial representations over the last century. I then drew on Indigenous women's anti-colonial literatures to examine the power of stories in decolonising scholarship. Following this I examined international Indigenous literatures on the philosophies underpinning Native ceremony as a medium of spiritual and community cohesion. Informed by feminist geographical literatures I then discussed the significance of place to ceremony, focusing on Native sacred sites, domestic home places, and the Native feminine body. In the next chapter I focus on how I implemented these theories in my research through a mana wahine ritual methodology.

CHAPTER 3

‘Rolling with the wairua’: A mana wahine ritual methodology



Figure 3.1: P. Case, Mauna Kea, Hawai'i, June 16, 2016. Photographed by N. Murphy.

Ritual provides access to the otherworld. It is the songs, sacred objects, order, and detail of the holy woman's rituals of communication that are at the basis of her manifestation of power. Through these acts the spirits can understand and respond to human concerns (St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, p. 106).

Subjectivity is your starting point to reality (Leroy Little Bear in Peat, 1996, p. 228).

Our Methodology is our Spirituality (Gustavo Gutierrez as cited in Dillard, 2008, p. 286).

A profound experience during my doctoral research was witnessing a scene in Kaha:wi Dance Theatres' 2018 production 'Blood-Tides', a work dedicated to re-activating Native women's menstruation ceremonies. It was a solo dance by the director, Kahnyen'kehàka (Mohawk) choreographer and research participant, Santee Smith, who used shuddering, quivering and clockwise circular motions to create the affect of a gravitational force field in which she, as the archetypal 'Clay/Pottery woman - First woman', called back to herself her broken shards, all those pieces smashed apart through the brutality of colonisation. With the pieces she re-sculpted her female body back into a state of wholeness. Her dance was a healing ritual of 'calling back the spirit' when it flees the body through the impact

of trauma that imprints and reverberates across the generations (Duran, Duran, Brave Heart & Yellow Horse, 1998; Gonzales, 2012; Walters, Beltran, Huh & Evans-Campbell, 2011).

In a similar fashion this research documents the multiple ways in which Native women are gathering and calling the shards of ourselves back home to ourselves in order to return to wholeness. My methodology and methods in collecting these stories have been steeped in a mix of implicit and explicit embodied ritual acts underpinned by mana wahine and Kaupapa Māori philosophical tenets (Pihama, 2001; Smith, G. H., 2003; Smith, L. T., 2005). These tenets include the principles of wairuatanga,⁸⁵ whanaungatanga,⁸⁶ whakapapa, mana motuhake, utu,⁸⁷ aroha,⁸⁸ diversity and decolonisation, which I have applied in a variety of ways that I discuss throughout this chapter (Bishop, 2008; Mikaere, 2017b; Smith & Reid, 2000).

In beginning this chapter I situate myself in accordance with traditional Native ways and discuss how I approached this research as a personal and embodied expression of my own spirituality (Debassige, 2010; Struthers, 2001). This led to the development of a mana wahine ritual methodological approach that was grounded in my own subjectivities, specifically my whakapapa strands, the political and spiritual ways in which I was raised, and the life experiences that shape me.

My mana wahine ritual methodology was highly responsive, providing unique and unconventional entry points into the research for my diverse participants. Whilst this approach gained rich material it also posed challenges. I will speak to some of the internal struggles that I wrestled with in undertaking study of Native women's ceremonies in the context of academia, including the complexities around deciding what knowledge to reveal and what to conceal (Simpson, 2000). This discussion is

⁸⁵ This term can be simplistically translated as spirituality.

⁸⁶ This term refers to the inter-relatedness of all things across creation in Māori thought. It is a process, a way of being and relating that I discuss in further detail in this chapter.

⁸⁷ This term can be translated as reciprocity.

⁸⁸ Aroha can be translated as love.

applicable to many Indigenous scholars who are writing spiritualities into the academic realm as a critical component in producing collaborative and emancipatory scholarship in Native communities (Dillard, 2008; Gonzales, 2012).

The multiple ways in which Kaupapa Māori and mana wahine philosophical tenets are applied in this study is discussed, including vignettes that highlight my approach. This discussion includes tracing the whakapapa of Māori women's contemporary rituals across history and cosmology by examining archival sources, and tracing the whakapapa of Hina and Native women's ritual power to feminine cosmological sacred sites. It also led me to explore the creation of different kinds of mana wahine sacred space in the production of knowledge. I conclude by detailing the ways in which I analysed my findings.

Setting out on a sacred journey

Gregory Cajete (2000, p. 45, 70) writes that ceremonies evolved to transfer and ask for specific kinds of knowledge from the spirit world. Anishinaabe author, Leanne Simpson (2000, para. 5) adds that knowledge, from an Anishinaabe perspective, "originates in the spiritual realm" and that traditional methods for teaching and transmitting knowledge include direct experience, dreaming, ceremony, dance, prayer, observation, experimentation, reflection and song. Like many Indigenous scholars, my research began in ceremony acknowledging the journey of the pursuit of knowledge and 'coming to know' as a sacred process and one taken in collaboration with te ao wairua (Buck, 1949; Mead, 2003; Wilson, 2008). In Native contexts knowledge that facilitates healing and transformation can be seen as the flowering of a union with the divine. The pursuit of knowledge then, for many Native people, is spiritual as much as it is intellectual and political (Dillard, 2008). It involves preparations and the taking of a journey, a metaphor for internal transformation (Cajete, 2000; Meyer, 2008). It involves negotiation, and sometimes the seeking of permission, not only from hapū and iwi, but from one's tīpuna and the atua who reside over those particular realms of knowledge (Struthers, 2001; Smith, L. T., 2012). Rather than western research models that value notions of so-called 'neutrality', objectivity, abstraction and disembodiment, the pursuit of knowledge and understanding in Native paradigms is personal, subjective and

grounded relationally in whakapapa and first-hand experience (Bishop, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Meyer, 2004, 2008; Simpson, 2000).

More than anything else, my doctoral journey was motivated by the desire to forge a much deeper living relationship with Hinateiwaiwā and a cluster of atua wāhine. I approached Hina in ceremony as a descendent, calling for permission and direction in entering her domain of ritual knowledge (Kame'elehiwi, 1999; Tangaro, 2007). I summoned her directly, petitioning her to use me as an instrument to return to the world sacred knowledges that might facilitate healing, emancipation and the restoration of balance. I called to the knowledges as well, acknowledging them as cyclic, alive and inter-dimensional, and invited them to find through me a portal of re-entry into Te Ao Marama (Cajete, 2000; Murphy, 2011; Peat, 1996). I asked for doorways to open and for people that could assist to be brought forward to me. I asked for any barriers to be removed. I also called to the tīpuna kuia,⁸⁹ themselves, those stranded in the margins of history by colonial ethnographic distortions and trapped in the desecrated sacred sites that I visited, to find channels of release through the various rituals that have shaped the methodology of this thesis.

My research, then, has been an intimate and embodied expression of my own spirituality and way of life and a process of ceremony (Dillard, 2008; Gonzales, 2012; Massaro & Cuomo, 2017; Murphy, 2013). I have entered feminine cosmological sacred sites that represent the zenith, nadir, womb and navel of Native peoples' ritual landscapes and have participated in a number of diverse ceremonies. I have smudged, leapt the fire, entered underground/underworld caverns, immersed myself in fresh and salt water and climbed to the summit of the highest mountain in the world.⁹⁰ As Leanne Simpson (2000) points out, "if researchers don't 'do' they cannot learn from the people" (para. 9). Rather than an academic exercise to produce a tidy package of 'rational' knowledge my research was an intuitive

⁸⁹ Tīpuna kuia is a plural term for female ancestors.

⁹⁰ This was Mauna Kea on the Big Island in Hawaii. Mauna Kea is the tallest mountain in the world measuring from sea floor. I discuss Mauna Kea in Chapter 6.

process and “study from within” (Struthers, 2001, p. 132). It spilled out into the domesticity of my home and whānau’s lives, particularly my daughter who accompanied me on haerenga⁹¹ around the country and overseas. It also spilled out and across multiple mediums that include wānanga,⁹² hui,⁹³ an art exhibition, and two full theatre productions in Aotearoa and Canada.

In undertaking this research I employed a mana wahine ritual methodology shaped by my whakapapa, the way I was raised, and the experiences and memories that define me. I am from Waikaremoana, the purple inland sea nestled in the wild and isolated mountainous forests of Te Urewera.⁹⁴ For centuries Waikaremoana has been a deeply contested borderland territory that overlaps Ngāti Ruapani, Ngāi Tahu and Ngāti Kahungunu. To be from Waikaremoana is to inherit all three whakapapa strands. I inherit these strands through my grandmother, Kuiwai Martha Tahu, daughter of Te Hau and Poi from Pāmaru. Kuiwai married Te Marunui, grandson of the Ngāti Manawa matriarch, Kiekie, from the western edge of the Te Urewera mountains. This union produced my father, Takawai, the eldest son of six children. My whare tipuna,⁹⁵ Te Poho o Hinekura, at Te Kuha Tarewa Pā in Waikaremoana, is named after Hinekura, a descendent of Hoturoa, the kaihautū⁹⁶ of the Tainui waka, and Ruawharo, the tohunga⁹⁷ of the Takitimu waka. However, to this day overlapping contested claims identify her as a Tuhoë tipuna,⁹⁸ an

⁹¹ Haerenga can be translated as a journey.

⁹² Wānanga can be translated as both formal and informal learning spaces. Wānanga has multiple forms.

⁹³ Hui are gatherings of people.

⁹⁴ Te Urewera is situated in the central-east North Island - Te Ika a Maui.

⁹⁵ A whare tipuna is an ancestral house that is a living structure that represents the ancestor (male or female) of a people. It continues to be the hub and main gathering place of hapū.

⁹⁶ Leader.

⁹⁷ Specialist in a certain area.

⁹⁸ Ancestor (singular).

assertion that erupts into hostilities and conflicting observations of tikanga on the marae ātea.

Waikaremoana, and Te Urewera more generally, have always been shrouded in mystique. The remote forests, steep mountains and mist are well-known as a cradle of both ritual and esoteric arts and resistance to the impositions of colonial rule (Best, 1972; Binney, 2010b). The late Pākehā historian Judith Binney (2010b) describes Te Urewera as a wild and threatening sanctuary of hostile rebels in the European colonial mind, even before it harbored the military leader and prophet, Te Kooti, and his followers - escaped prisoners from Wharekauri,⁹⁹ amongst them my own koroua,¹⁰⁰ Peita Kotuku. Seen as a foothold of rebellion against colonial rule, the settler government declared war on Te Urewera from 1866 through to 1872. Crippling confiscations; the murder and execution of unarmed and fleeing women, children and men; the exile of women into neighboring tribal lands; and the implementation of scorched earth policies that destroyed settlements, crops, stock and food sources are some of the details of the colonial invasions of my ancestral lands (Binney, 2010b; Waitangi Tribunal, 2017). The objective of the repeated colonial military invasions was extermination of the Te Urewera ‘savage’ (Binney, 2010b). The bones of my tīpuna who were subject to massive land theft and starvation continued to be unearthed well into the 1980s on the large sheep stations just east of our old kāinga.

The journey home over gravel roads that wind high into the mountains was one we rarely took when I was a child. Taranaki, where I was raised, was a long way from the mists of home. At twenty years old, I stood like a stranger at the gate of my ancestral house, Hinekura, feeling like a tourist. Nestled behind her on a small hill was a house and sitting on the steps was a kuia. I walked toward her and she rose to greet me. As I approached she reached out her hands and started to cry. *‘I remember you’* she said. *‘This is your home’*. *‘Everything that I have is yours’*. I

⁹⁹ Also known as Chatham Islands and/or Rekohu, which is situated in the Pacific Ocean 800 kilometers east of Te Wai Pounamu – the South Island in Aotearoa New Zealand.

¹⁰⁰ Elder. I use it in this context to refer to one of my grand-fathers.

initially thought that she had mistaken me for someone else, someone close to her, because of the way she cried. I knew I had never met her before. But she recognised the tīpuna in my face. Returning a year later to visit the kuia I found that she had passed away. Her name was Mauniko and she was the kaikaranga¹⁰¹ at Hinekura. Hers was the first voice that welcomed me home on my own marae.

The experience with Mauniko was pivotal in teaching me that whether we are aware of it or not, te ao wairua interacts, intercepts and shapes our realities. This idea has been fundamental in my mana wahine ritual methodology and it is an insight that has been nurtured through participating in the ceremonial cycle that my kuia, tohuna tipua Dr Rangimarie Pere, hosts on Waikaremoana marae every year. Many of these ceremonies align with Native prophecies around the world that state that we are entering a new time-cycle on the planet in which old knowledges, thought ‘lost’ to the world, are returning along with the divine feminine in her multiple guises to restore harmony and balance (Gonzales, 2012; Marmon-Silko, 1996).

Prominent Te Arawa scholar, Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) maintains there is a worldwide re-affirmation of the divine feminine taking place, which can be observed through a prolific output of literature and art.¹⁰² This thesis contributes to this global movement and extends the ceremonies at home that seek to facilitate transformation, renewal, and the restoration of balance. It bears witness to the multiple ways in which Native women are fostering the resurgence of the divine feminine, retrieving ‘what we once were and remaking ourselves’ anew in a time of massive ecological, social, spiritual and political crisis/transformation/world renewal (Mander, 1992; Smith, L. T., 2012, p. 4; Wildcat, 2009).

A sense of the divine feminine has been with me all of my life. My earliest memory is as a toddler being pushed in a pram along Ngāti Manawa road to visit my nannies, women who loved me so much that, to this day, when I see an old push-up pram I

¹⁰¹ Kaikaranga are women who perform the ritual function of karanga - a women’s call that welcomes the living, summons the dead, greets the land, mountains, sacred waterways and places, uniting these things together. The kaikaranga is usually the first voice heard on the marae in the fomal ritual encounter of the pōwhiri ceremony.

¹⁰² I discuss examples in Chapter 6.

feel a strong surge of unconditional and maternal love. The memory and strong emotion it evoked became a pivotal moment that shaped my experience of the divine as feminine from a very early age. This view was nurtured by my Irish/Spanish descendant mother, whose little odes to the earth celebrating the land, water, wind, clouds, and rain fostered a deep state of reverence in me that continues today. From my mother I inherit tangled histories of wiccan ritual tradition that exalts the divine feminine, and the violent suppression of these traditions through the witch hunts that targeted women's bodies as a symbol of 'original sin' (Federici, 2014). I also inherit stories of colonial invasion through a 'settler lens' (Robertson, personal communication, June 18, 2018), including those of Pākehā who politically align with the Maōri communities in which they live and change because of it (Barnes, 2013). Through research I create a space for my different whakapapa strands to reconcile the contradictions, coming into balance in a place of power that is women's ritual knowledge. This is one of many reasons why, for me, research is ceremony. It is a place to facilitate transformation, not only for ourselves, and future generations, but across and through the whakapapa continuum (Cajete, 2000; Wilson, 2008).

If my mother raised me with a sense of the divinity of the intimate natural world, my Ngāti Manawa, Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Ruapani, Ngāti Kahungunu father taught respect in the observation of tikanga that assured its integrity. Inspired by the ferocious activism of the Taranaki hau kāinga¹⁰³ where we lived, and the teachings of the liberatory prophets, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kaakahi, my father also brought decolonisation and the intergenerational struggle for tino rangatiratanga into our household. These teachings inspired the Te Pūmaoao decolonisation wananga that he and my mother facilitate across the country, which informs the political imperatives that underpin this thesis. Being swept up in the momentum of resistance that swirled Taranaki mountain is a part of an old story for my whānau, however. Our relationship with Taranaki began with our koroua, Peita Kotuku, whose first fighting expedition with his Ngāti Maniapoto kin led him to support

¹⁰³ This term refers to Taranaki hapū – the Indigenous peoples of Taranaki on the west coast of the North Island-Te Ika a Maui.

Wīremu Kingi Te Rangitāke at Waitara in the attack by British troops which opened the 1860's sovereignty wars.

Taranaki were fierce in their reclamation of te reo and tikanga when I was growing up and this included a call to reject Christianity and re-activate Māori spiritualities and ritual. This was a stance I agreed with. My father was curious and supportive when, as a teenager, I began to intuitively formulate my own ceremonies to celebrate the different seasons of Papatūānuku and the cyclic wax and wane of Hinataiwaiwā. He assisted me through crafting karanga and preparing and lighting the ritual fires before the arrival of manuhiri.¹⁰⁴ His support in this way demonstrated to me ancient tenets of the bond between mana tane¹⁰⁵ and mana wahine (Murphy, 2013, 2014). This sense deepened through my relationship with my brother, a man who midwived all five of his children into the world, consecrating himself in the wash of afterbirth blood - blood some other Māori men, through the infiltration of Christian teachings, have come to see as 'spiritually polluting'.¹⁰⁶

Every year, on 6th February my brother and I would make our pilgrimage to Waitangi¹⁰⁷ on behalf of our whānau, to join the throngs of people who gathered to call for justice and recognition of the right of Tangata Whenua to autonomy in our

¹⁰⁴ This is a term used for visitors.

¹⁰⁵ I use this term to denote Māori men and the autonomous authority that they possess *in relationship* to mana wahine. I use the terms mana tane and mana wahine to emphasise the balance between and across the different genders that our tīpuna strived to maintain.

¹⁰⁶ I discuss this further in Chapter 7.

¹⁰⁷ Waitangi is a place in the north of Te Ika a Maui (the North Island) where Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed in 1840 between different iwi (some did not sign including my own iwi, Ngāi Tuhoe and Ngāti Manawa) and representatives of the Queen of England. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a binding covenant, under international law, that afforded limited rights to Pākehā (kawanatanga is the term used, opposed to tino rangatiratanga or mana motuhake that imply supreme authority, independence, and sovereignty) to settle in Aotearoa and establish a government to govern their own people. Article Four of Te Tiriti o Waitangi was an oral article (not in the English version) which assured Tangata Whenua the right to practice and pursue their own spiritualities. Article Four, as with all the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, were swiftly trampled on by successive settler governments through legislations geared toward land confiscation and subjugation of Māori (Murphy, 2010; Scott, 1975).

own lands as enshrined in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It was not only my political analysis that was cultivated at Waitangi. On each hīkoi¹⁰⁸ I would feel the swell of ancestors amongst us. The rumbling movements of te ao wairua never appeared closer to me than on the frontline of political protest where our voices wove into an intergenerational story of resistance to unjust colonial rule. Here on the frontline remembering never seemed so lucid – remembering the tīpuna that fought and died that we might live; remembering sacred relationships and pacts between human and non-human entities, adults and children, men and women, spanning the generations to a time when we set sail across the Pacific, confident in our own expertise and technologies. Remembering, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 147) declares, is a site of resistance when “the obliteration of memory was a deliberate strategy of oppression”.

At Waitangi it was easy to recognise mana wāhine in the bold female leadership within the activist ranks of the whānau, hapū and iwi gathered. More often than not they led the hīkoi to the treaty grounds. Their leadership, tino rangatiratanga educators Hilda Hawkyard-Harawira and Mereana Pitman maintain, is a continuation of tribal histories where rangatira wahine¹⁰⁹ signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and fought to retain tribal lands against sweeping confiscation (Sherman, 2016). They are also a continuation of the qualities of the atua wāhine, Hinataiwaiwā and Hinenuitepō, whose stories reflect the role of women to pursue justice in times of transgression (Kame’eleihiwi, 1999; Mikaere, 2017a, 2017b; Murphy, 2013). Whilst the mana of Māori women continues to be denied by ongoing colonial processes and some of our own people, it has not halted its continuation (Johnston & Pihama, 1994, 1995; Messiter, 2010; Sykes, 1994). This is a major theme that weaves throughout my research.

These are some of the main strands that comprise my mana wahine ritual methodology. It allowed me to situate myself spiritually, politically, culturally and communally in the research and undertake the journey in a way that was appropriate

¹⁰⁸ Political march.

¹⁰⁹ Female chiefs.

for me. The experiences I have detailed underpinned each unique engagement with participants, guided each ceremony, and dictated the political imperatives that compelled the work. They also informed a unique way of learning and knowing that is located at the intersections between feminine divinities, Indigenous ceremony, te ao wairua, whakapapa, tino rangatiratanga, resistance and activism (Bishop, 1999; Debassige, 2010; Smith, L. T., 2012).

Treading multiple pathways in ‘coming to know’

Patrisia Gonzales (Contreras in Gonzales, 2012, p. 36) quotes a research participant who comments on the ceremony of birthing, stating “The spirit comes through and starts telling you what to do”. This description fits a phrase I often hear in Waikaremoana - ‘*Rolling with the wairua*’. This statement reflects a different kind of orientation in the world – one that trusts te ao wairua implicitly, surrendering control and going with the flow of synchronicities and events. Yet ‘*rolling with the wairua*’ does not denote passivity, rather the nature of the relationship is highly collaborative and reflective of ancient Polynesian world-views. ‘*Maui did not fish the North Island out of the sea*’, Ngāti Porou photographer Natalie Robertson points out, ‘*rather he set his co-ordinates through reading the environment around him and let the land come to him*’ (personal communication, August 12, 2018). Similarly a traditional Hawai’ian navigator once told me ‘*We don’t go out into the ocean to ‘catch’ fish, we set the co-ordinates and move out into the fishing grounds and let the abundance of the sea come to us*’.

In a similar way, I set my ‘co-ordinates’ through ceremony, orienting myself in the kaupapa and making clear my general direction in the research. I then ‘set sail’ on the journey, contacting people to ‘interview’. Just as significantly, I employed a highly responsive, fluid and collaborative methodological approach that provided unique entry points for the different people who ‘came to me’. For example during the course of this research I was contacted by individual artists and a mana wahine artist collective and three theatre directors creating mana wahine ritual theatre works, wanting to collaborate and share their work. My role was to meet with participants on their own terms and create diverse ways to engage that honored their mana motuhake and the specificities of the relationship, space and context (Bishop, 2005; Smith, G. H., 2003).

Many mana wahine scholars have commented on the diversity and multiplicity of Māori women's experiences and the need to account and provide for this diversity (Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001; Simmonds, 2014). This was particularly significant in my research as my participants comprised diverse tribal and ethnic backgrounds, geographies, cultural, socio-political and economic realities, gender variance, sexual orientations and views as activists, artists, healers, matakite¹¹⁰ and cultural practitioners.

My research methods included ceremony, in-depth semi-structured and unstructured interviews and kōrero, wānanga, sacred site visits, solicited sacred mana wahine journals, collaborating as an advisor and vocalist in three mana wahine ritual theatre productions (two of which premiered during the study), the gathering of mana wahine artworks as discursive texts, the analysis of oral histories recorded in karakia and mōteatea and the re-interpretation of colonial ethnographic material through a mana wahine lens. In this research, kōrero and interactions with participants are marked as 'personal communication' yet it is important to point out that this term is used to denote a wide range of interactions with people, from brief kōrero in person, over the telephone, email and social media, to lengthy exchanges over days in wānanga environments that extend well beyond regular interview methods.

With ethical approval from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1) I engaged with thirty-eight Māori and Native women, and six Native men who escorted me to sacred sites overseas. I also engaged with one Tauīwi, a homebirth midwife in Ngaruawahia and South Auckland, whose clientele were almost exclusively Māori women. I wanted to find out from this participant what her experiences were as a midwife for Māori women, particularly in terms of issues of colonialism, racism and control over Māori birthing bodies in white, hegemonic spaces such as hospitals.

The people approached included Native artists, ritualists, healers, matakite, sacred activists (those who actively defend and protect Native cosmological/sacred sites

¹¹⁰ A matakite is someone who is clairvoyant and/or clairaudient.

and relationships) and midwives/birth-workers from Aotearoa, Hawai'i and Great Turtle Island. I prepared information sheets, consent forms and questions schedules that were crafted for each of the different groups of people that I engaged in this research. For example, an information sheet, consent form and question schedule was prepared for artists, ritualists, healers, matakite and activists (see Appendix 2). Another information sheet and consent form was prepared for a Mana wāhine art collective in Gisborne who engaged in the research through journals and ceremony (see Appendix 3). It was necessary to amend the information sheet, consent form and question schedule for midwives and birthworkers in a way that emphasised confidentiality, anonymity and the protection of third parties who may or may not have given their consent to engage in this research (see Appendix 4). Finally, a fourth information sheet and consent form for international participants was prepared (see Appendix 5). I did not compose a question schedule for international participants as it did not seem culturally appropriate to arrive with pre-designed questions, having not met some of them before. Rather, my main objective in kōrero with them was whanaungatanga and sharing stories as I discuss in more detail shortly.

I identified people that I thought might have interesting stories to tell in relation to my research area and people who I observed living and recovering a personal ritual way. The gathering of personal stories that convey differing worldviews and approaches to ceremony, rather than the production of 'objective' research, and meta-narratives motivated the work. Like Kim Anderson (2011, p. 18) I have not sought to establish universal truths, but rather explore the myriad truths of who we once were, who we are today, and who we hope to become as Native peoples.

The following sets out my participants in this study and the suite of methods used to gather pūrākau and kōrero (see Appendix 6 for a table of research methods and participants). All of my participants choose to use their real names in this research, owning their own kōrero publicly as a political statement. One participant chose to use a pseudonym, however when contacted a year later to confirm her decision, she had changed her mind and insisted on using her real name.

Aotearoa participants

- Amiria (Tainui, Ngati Te Ata), kōrero, summer solstice ceremony;

- Cathy (Kai Tahu, Waitaha), kōrero;
- Joanne (Ngati Apakura), kōrero;
- Heather (Taranaki, Tangahoe, Ngāti Tupaia, Ngāti Tanewai), kōrero;
- Claire (Tauīwi), kōrero, social media;
- Rangitunoa (Ngāi Tuhoe, Te Whanau a Apanui, Ngāti Tuwharetoa), kōrero;
- Hinewirangi (Tauranga Moana, Ngāti Kahungunu, Rongomaiwahine), kōrero;
- Whetu (Ngā Puhī, Ngati Pakahi), summer solstice ceremony, kōrero over skype;
- Komako (Ngā Puhī), summer solstice ceremony, kōrero over skype;
- Shellie (Ngā Puhī, Pehiaweri), ceremony, kōrero;
- Tema (Ngā Puhī, Pehiawēri), ceremony, kōrero;
- Jo (Taranaki, Te Arawa- Tuhourangi, Ngāti wahiao, Ngāti Pikiāo), ceremony, wānanga, mana wahine journals, sacred site visit;
- Sarah (Bicol/ Ilocano / Pasig Filipino), ceremony, wānanga, mana wahine journals, sacred site visit;
- Charlotte (Rongomaiwahine Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Nga Puhī), ceremony, wānanga, mana wahine journals;
- Te Rangiroimata (Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngāti Konohi), ceremony, wānanga, mana wahine journals, sacred site visit;
- Huhana (Rongomaiwahine Ngā Puhī, Ngāti Kahungunu), ceremony, wānanga;
- Elizabeth (Ngāti Oneone, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Whānau a Kai, Rongowhakaata Ngai Tāmanuhiri), ceremony, wānanga, sacred site visit;
- Chanz (Te Arawa), art, kōrero;
- Cholena (Ngāti Kahungunu, Kai Tahu), art; social media;
- Rosanna (Samoan), art, kōrero;
- Ngahina (Ngāti Moeahu, Ngāti Haupoto), art;
- Pirimaia (Ngati Manawa, Ngati Ruapani, Tuhoe, Ngati Kahungunu), ceremony, sacred site visits;
- Hayley (Ngāi Tuhoe), social media;
- Natalie (Ngāti Porou), kōrero;
- Ninakaye (Ngāti Maniapoto), kōrero; sacred site visits;
- Terri (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu), mana wahine theatre script, wānanga, social media;
- Hemi (Ngāti Ruapani, Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Awa), ceremony, kōrero;
- Rhonda (Ngāti Porou), kōrero;
- Rāwiri (Taranaki), kōrero.
- Michelle (Ngāti Waewae), kōrero.

Hawai'i participants

- Pua, sacred site visits, kōrero, ceremony;

- Hāwane, sacred site visits, kōrero, ceremony, mana wahine wānanga;
- Kealoha, sacred site visits, kōrero, ceremony;
- Sunnie, sacred site visits, kōrero, ceremony, mana wahine wānanga;
- Puni, sacred site visits, kōrero;
- Keone, sacred site visits, kōrero;
- Keli'i, sacred site visits, kōrero;
- Kanani, sacred site visits, kōrero, mana wahine wānanga;
- Mahealani, sacred site visits, kōrero.

Turtle Island participants

- Jim (Dakota), sacred site visits, sweatlodge ceremony, kōrero;
- Roxanne (Ojibwe), sweatlodge ceremony, sacred site visits, kōrero;
- Waziyatawin (Dakota), kōrero;
- Alicia (Aztec, Mayan, Chicana, Taos Pueblo), kōrero;
- Ramona (Xicana, Mexica-Yaqui descent), kōrero;
- Santee (Kahnynen'kehāka), developing ritual theatre script and methodology, kōrero.

I recruited my participants through whanaungatanga, drawing on my own national and international networks in a process similar to snowballing (Bryman, 2004). I also drew on the networks of close friends, particularly in making connections in Native communities overseas. This meant that the nature of engagement with people I had not yet met was already grounded in established relationships of trust.

Whilst there were similarities across the experiences and understandings of my participants, there were also striking differences shaped by the differing global localities, histories, politics, sexualities, age, ethnic, tribal, and cultural perspectives and positionings within whānau, hapū and tribal nations. Fluency in te reo Māori and Native languages and ceremonial customs and the differing political, material and internal impacts of colonisation also shaped the diversity of participants voices in nuanced and important ways. For example, some of the women felt the acute pain of having colonial processes strip away their Native language, ritual traditions and relationships with their tribal lands and people and were actively engaged in processes of decolonisation and spiritual/emotional/sexual and psychological recovery. Yet others, similarly raised, expressed feelings of freedom from 'cultural restraint' and tikanga corrupted by patriarchy and colonisation as they explored and

developed their ritual lives fostering trust in a direct connection to the atua and the spirit world.

The various modalities of participants as artists, healers, cultural practitioners, birth attendants, activists and educators also shaped a diverse range of experience. Some of my participants located the re-activation of Native women's ritual knowledge within Indigenous political imperatives of self-determination. Others positioned ceremony as totally separate from political realities. Some believed that in approaching ceremony one needed to know exactly what they were doing, how they were opening, closing and performing ritual, otherwise there was an element of danger. Yet others approached ceremony and te ao wairua in total trust and with no 'plan', 'listening' and following the directions they perceived as coming directly from their 'tipuna', 'kaitiaki',¹¹¹ 'atua' and the spirit world. Some of my participants continued ritual formula handed down to them from their elders and others were creating their own rituals having had no instruction from elders. Most sensed the significance of evolving ceremonial forms in the context of climate crisis and ecological transformation. Christian and homophobic views amongst some elders and fear towards reclaiming sacred cultural forms that may not have been practiced in generations was also a reality for some participants. Some spoke of the crushing oppression against women within their tribal nations and the consequences of whānau, hapū and iwi internalising homophobic and patriarchal colonial ideologies which had distorted women's ritual roles and systems of knowledge.

Despite all of these differences and more, it is fair to say that all of the women and men involved in this study were engaged in re-igniting, recovering and re-creating their spiritual and ceremonial lives through multiple channels. In so doing, they were actively engaged in resisting on-going and derogatory colonial narratives of Native femininities and masculinities that deny mana wahine and the sacred mysteries of female divinity.

As a 'Native relation' I was often welcomed as an 'intimate insider' as I travelled overseas and was brought into family ceremonies and escorted to sacred tribal sites

¹¹¹ Kaitiaki in this context refers to guardians that are non-human.

(Massaro & Cuomo, 2017). Many of these encounters may not have been possible had I have engaged in a more conventional style, allowing the formality of academia to create an “institutional distance” (Lovell, 2007) that re-affirms boundaries steeped in an imbalance of power that many Native communities rightly mistrust (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, L. T., 2012). This is not to say that relations of power that underpin research participant relationships were not at all present, rather, that this was carefully mitigated through prioritising whanaungatanga, collaboration, and reciprocity in which participants maintained control in determining how they engaged in my research and how their kōrero took shape in the general area of my study (Bishop, 2005; Simmonds, 2014; Smith, L. T., 2005).

In Aotearoa 30 people were engaged in this research. Six were through solicited diaries and wānanga that is discussed in detail further on in the chapter, and five were artists who submitted artworks and photographs encoded with powerful mana wahine ritual discourses (who I engaged further in conversation and over email). Six participants engaged exclusively through phone calls and private message. Five participants (some already mentioned) also engaged through participating in a summer solstice ceremony that I hosted at my home. Four of them went on to develop a mana wahine ritual theatre work, *Hine*, which premiered at the Basement theatre in Auckland in June 2016 and again at the Mangere Arts Center in October 2018. I interviewed the two directors over a Skype call following the 2016 premiere. Another participant engaged through social media and wānanga to develop the script she had written for a theatre work, *Ūkaipō*, which recounts, from a mana wahine ritual perspective, the pūrākau of Hinetitamas’ transformation into Hinenuitepō (this work is yet to premiere).

Nine interviews (including the two over Skype call) were conducted in Aotearoa. People were contacted through phone calls, email, private Facebook message and in person, informing them of the research subject and asking if they would participate through sharing kōrero and/or art works. Seven women were met individually at their homes for kōrero that usually went for between 2 – 3 hours. I took an information sheet and question schedule tailored to each person (artist, midwife, healer/matakite/ also cultural practitioners), and a consent form that detailed their rights to confidentiality, and anonymity (which none of them used),

their right to edit, delete, and add to their own transcript kōrero, and their right to withdraw from the research up to one month following our kōrero. The consent form also sought permission to audio-record the kōrero and provided them with an opportunity to indicate if they wanted the transcript returned to them at the conclusion of the study.

These kōrero were in-depth, informal, and both unstructured (without questions) and semi-structured (questions used fluidly as a guide). Whilst sometimes a question schedule was used, often individually composed for each participant to reflect their different subject positionalities as artists, healers, midwives, and cultural practitioners (which encouraged diverse and rich data yet created some difficulty in thematically collating), often the schedule became redundant as women shared stories and knowledge that they wanted to share, independent of the questions asked. Like other Kaupapa Māori scholars I often found that asking direct questions seemed rude, culturally inappropriate and no way to proceed in Māori and other Native contexts, where to learn often means to sit, to feel, to observe, to participate, and to share (Simmonds, 2009, 2014; Smith, L. T., 2011).

My approach then, was often ‘hands off’ and the methods I used were indirect. I would raise an issue, share a story, or drop a keyword to invite kōrero then listen carefully for responses. I asked open-ended questions in response to the stories that participants shared, which often flowed one after the other. Sometimes, where appropriate, I shared my own stories and experiences to honor the whanaungatanga between us and the importance of utu - giving and receiving as a bedrock for producing knowledge (Bishop, 1996, 1999; Simmonds, 2014; Smith, L. T., 2012). And sometimes I was silent for long periods, encouraging the sharing of kōrero with body language that was purposefully relaxed and casual to invite informality and intimate kōrero. I engaged eye contact and sometimes closed my eyes with murmurs of encouragement and prompting, to help propel the kōrero into intimate and sacred domains.

One of the most important elements in my mana wahine ritual methodology was providing a safe and sacred space for wāhine to share their stories and knowledge. Mana wahine as a methodological idea and process speaks to creating sacred time and space for Māori and other Native women to share in a way that upholds their

own unique mana (Simmonds, 2014). This idea had multiple applications in my research. One was through providing space and also *time* for wahine to find their own ‘sweet spot’ in the kōrero, the place in the sharing of their own stories and knowledge that was most meaningful for them. This meant maintaining fluidity and sharing power through allowing women the space to meander in their stories arriving at their places of power and the points that they felt were significant rather than necessarily steering them to what I defined as important (Bishop, 2008; Bryman, 2004).

Whilst the roundabout technique of allowing participants the space to meander through their own experiences of spiritual revelation and relationship was culturally appropriate and worked, in that it elicited a huge amount of rich and relevant ‘data’, transcribing became a huge job, as did collating the kōrero thematically. Most of the transcribing I did myself as swiftly as I could to return to the embodied experience of the kōrero. This was especially important in relation to my international participants where I was completely ‘immersed in the field’ for one month in 2016, 11 days in 2017, and 12 days in 2018. Transcribing helped me to digest the sheer volume and profound ceremonial nature of my experiences. Transcribing is discussed in more detail near the end of this chapter.

Revealing and concealing sacred threads

My immersive approach posed challenges beyond the hours of transcription (Cope, 2002; Csordas, 2007). Living the research often meant total saturation, swimming and often feeling like drowning in experiences, details, and stories, which all informed the work and could have been written about. Selecting which stories and knowledge to represent in the written thesis sometimes seemed impossible when there were few borders between me and my participants, my research and my daily life (Cuomo & Massaro, 2016; McLean & Leibing, 2007). I was also mindful of the politics and relations of power implicit in selecting which stories to share in an academic forum and which to omit. I could not represent them all in the limited space of a thesis. I was acutely aware of how my own subjectivities shaped these decisions and my interpretations and representations of the kōrero that was shared. I struggled to reconcile the power relations implicit in making these decisions, when my methodology had been reciprocal, flexible, responsive, and collaborative. Yet

as Naomi Simmonds (2014, p. 98) points out in her research gathering stories from first-time Māori mothers, inevitably “no matter how iterative this research may claim to be the final telling of the story lies with me”.

As Kaupapa Māori scholars Bishop (1996, 1999), Smith, G. H. (2003), and Smith, L.T. (2005, 2011, 2012) point out, power-sharing processes are critical in engaging Native research participants, as is maintaining reflexivity in the researcher-participant relationship. I negotiated some of the politics of power and accountability implicit in handling and representing people’s stories and experiences through maintaining open channels of engagement with participants throughout the research process. This included ‘post interview’ visits, and returning transcripts to participants to provide an opportunity for them to edit their own kōrero and maintain control over their stories (Smith, L. T., 2005, 2011). When the broad themes began to emerge from the kōrero, a one-page summary was prepared and sent to all of my participants to maintain transparency and open-communication in the way that the research was shaping up (see Appendix 7). Out of 34 research participants that I emailed, 17 responded. Some examples that capture the wairua of responses are included here:

Kia ora hermana! I'm so happy to hear from you! These themes look great and are aligned with our thinking as Indigenous women communities. I look forward to seeing how your work unfolds - and even more excited for how we might one day collaborate!

Aloha e Ngahuia, Thank you for sharing the emergent themes ... how I long for kōrero rich and deep with you and my sweet sisters of Makaha...

Sister, so much has transpired since last we met ... Please know I am deeply grateful for the chance to see the treasures of our indigenous worldview through your research.

A final summary of the thesis chapters was also prepared a year later and emailed to participants with an invitation to request a copy of the thesis upon marked completion (see Appendix 8). Twenty-four responded that they would like to receive a copy.

Whilst every researcher is faced with the dilemmas of representation, power, accountability, and reflexivity, the nature of my research exploring ritual and sacred knowledge made these issues seem even more acute. For example, I struggled to determine what ritual knowledges *should* be shared to challenge the hegemony of what constitutes legitimate forms of knowledge and knowledge production, and what knowledges might not be appropriate for different fora (Gonzales, 2012; Simpson, 2000). I tussled with how certain knowledges could possibly be misused if released to public.

Denzin, Lincoln & Smith (2008, p. 213) write:

We confront a crisis of spirituality, a failure of the sacred. We have neglected the ways in which our methodologies, epistemologies, and pedagogies affect spiritual wellbeing. We have neglected those epistemologies that locate spirituality at the center of thought and discourse.

Yet writing our spiritual lives into our academic work is no simple task, rather, it is fraught. Whilst I suspect Native people have always engaged in ceremonies in pursuing knowledge, and including in academia, we have kept *these* stories, these *inner theories and methodologies* concealed (Debassige, 2010). As Indigenous peoples around the world pursue study in tertiary institutions as a vehicle of resistance, decolonisation and cultural restoration, space has opened up to discuss the deeper traditional ways with which we engage in the pursuit of knowledge (Dillard, 2008; Gonzales, 2012; Meyer, 2004, 2008). This, however, presents challenges. Ceremony in its multiple forms is an exchange with tīpuna, kaitiaki, atua and the spirit worlds (Cajete, 2000; Simpson, 2000). That exchange fundamentally shaped my methodological process, as it does for many Indigenous researchers, yet I struggled to determine if or how to write about these responses in an academic space that marginalises and ridicules the sacred (Chilisia, 2012; Grande, 2008).

In the first year particularly, in which I engaged in multiple ceremonies around permission, I struggled with determining how I could write about some of the intimate encounters I experienced. I struggled with the question of whether I should pursue these knowledges at all in a tertiary institution. Would turning the glare of

the academic spotlight on something as ethereal as ceremony be beneficial? Was it appropriate for doctoral research? Was it even possible? Were there risks to sharing the knowledge in academia to my participants and/or to myself? I questioned what it might mean to bring these knowledges into the academic arena and what might be at stake in doing so, *or not* doing so?

The struggle expressed itself in my dreams. After a particularly profound ritual encounter that fundamentally directed my methodological direction in the first year of my research I dreamed the following dream:

Dream 1. Birthing but nowhere safe

I dreamed I was heavily pregnant and in the beginning processes of labour. In my dream I felt the oxytocin rush through my body and my cervix begin to open wide. Yet I was in a crowd of strangers at an open-air festival. I walked frantically amongst the crush of bodies looking for an open, safe space to give birth as the process was already upon me. There was no open space. I could find nowhere safe to let go.

The dream can be read as reflecting my anxieties of sharing ceremonial experiences and other ways of knowing within the academic realm that, as an institution, maintains the hegemony of white colonial power and privilege. Leanne Simpson (2000, para 21-23) writes:

Some Aboriginal researchers who seek to understand Indigenous knowledge use ceremonies as a source of knowledge [yet] the sacredness of these ceremonies prevents Aboriginal researchers from writing about these experiences in much detail. Academe remains especially suspicious of knowledge gained through dreams and ceremonies. Many researchers simply do not accept the reliability or validity of spiritually-derived knowledge. Even when using community-based or collaborative research paradigms, spiritual knowledge is not often acknowledged and treated as the foundation of Indigenous knowledge ... Those who do accept spiritually - derived knowledge find it difficult to use or include in their studies ... They risk offending and potentially harming their traditional teachers if they have not received permission to include this knowledge, and their academic colleagues often dismiss their work as unreliable.

Like Leanne Simpson, Patrisia Gonzales (2012), chose to omit the inner details of ceremony from her published academic works in order to safeguard the knowledges and the elders who shared them. Patrisia states that many medicine people do not reveal the entire contents of dreams (or ceremonies) lest they lose their power and become ‘common’ knowledge. This factor also influences the concealment of specific sacred knowledge by Māori (in the past and today), which brings nuance to the disappearance of certain ritual forms beyond colonial processes of censorship, denial and subjugation.

I came to the same conclusions as these authors, determining that whilst I would make it explicit that my methodology was couched in a variety of explicit and implicit ceremonial acts, much of the inner details of exchange would remain concealed. The absence is strategic to protect the knowledges, my participants, and myself, and the sacred threads that bind us as Native peoples to the spirit worlds (Debassige, 2010; Gonzales, 2012).

Dreaming

Perhaps one of the most significant tools that helped me to process the diverse bodies of work that I engaged with is the one that is often not written about in research. It is seen as invalid by hegemonic purveyors of western systems of knowledge, as Leanne Simpson (2000) points out. Yet dreaming has always been upheld as a critical source of both knowledge and human processing of it, particularly sacred knowledge, which in Native contexts is seen to come directly from the spirit world (Cajete, 2000; Simpson, 2000; St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995; Struthers, 2001). As I engaged with the subtleties of ceremony in this research, dreaming became a way to process what I was experiencing as Mohawk elder and midwife, Katsi Cook explains (in Gonzales, 2012, p. 185):

The language of the spirit world is very subtle, and has difficulty arriving in concrete, physical manifestation – so one has to pay a lot of attention to it. If you don’t, the old people have instructed us, it dissipates. Then the spiritual language can’t reach you in your living life ... the message of the spirit comes more properly or more normally in images, not words, so that its through images that the spirit can provide the mind these messages ... When you have a real clear dream its because you have a good relationship with your own spirit.

Patrisia Gonzales (2012) writes of the significance of dreaming to Indigenous peoples as an “autonomous space for survival”, as a site of communion with tīpuna, kaitiaki, atua and the spirit world, and as a site for the continuity of knowledge. Largely ignored and ‘footnoted’ in hegemonic western research paradigms, Patrisia points out that for tribal peoples that value dreamers, as Māori do (Pere, 1987), dreaming has always been an important way “to access knowledge or deeper understanding about the narratives, stories, data which they are collecting and interacting with”. She adds that dreaming “should not be viewed as an abnormal approach to understanding data, particularly by researchers who are part of dreaming traditions” (p. 183).

My dreaming shaped my methodological process and assisted me in dealing with ethical dilemmas (Archibald, 2008; Debassige, 2010; Rheault, 1999; Struthers, 2001). Having spent a good deal of the first year of this research in a perpetual state of ambiguity regarding the appropriateness of undertaking research regarding the pursuit of ritual knowledge in a tertiary institution, two dreams, one after the other, propelled me forward:

Dream 1: Finding Taonga¹¹²

I was hunting for something precious that was lost. I looked into the corners of a room and behind furniture. Reaching my hand behind a cabinet I pulled out a beautiful kuru pounamu – greenstone earring. As I reached further I found another. One after another, I pulled out from the obscurity of a hidden, neglected corner, eight sets of greenstone earrings. The more I searched, the more I found.

Dream 2. The Korowai

I entered a cluttered second-hand store filled with old clothes, ornaments and jewellery. On a shelf near the back of the store sat a faded grey blanket tattered and worn. It had been there for many years gathering dust. People had walked past it. No one had seen it. I took it from the shelf and wrapped it around my shoulders. Looking in the mirror I was astonished to see it change and become a cloak of

¹¹² Taonga can be translated as treasure and/or something precious. It can be tangible or intangible.

exquisite beauty, embellished with taniko patterning and turquoise and black feathers that fell elegantly to the floor. It had waited there for many seasons, waiting for the right time, the right person, the right circumstance to reveal its beauty.

Finding the kuru pounamu was a confirmation that I would uncover what I was looking for, something hidden and precious, an adornment and heirloom of wāhine Māori - matrilineal ritual knowledge, concealed by others, and by ourselves, in order to protect them. The korowai dream, for me, also represented a confirmation of the validity of the journey. In earlier research I marveled at the mōteatea¹¹³ that house profound menstrual blood rituals that reflected the mana of wāhine in traditional Māori society. These chants were hidden in plain view in the ethnographic accounts and in the mōteatea and karakia collections.¹¹⁴ Their vibrant power had fallen dormant like the dull grey blanket in my dreams and their beauty had become obscured (Best, 1924; White, 1887). What it took to uncover and activate their beauty was calling them forth through a ceremonial methodology motivated by the transformatory lens of love for the tipuna and Native world-views, and re-contextualising them within mana wahine and mātauranga Māori¹¹⁵ paradigms (Dillard, 2008; Meyer, 2008; Mikaere, 2017b; Tangaro, 2007).

To bring dreams forward and make them visible in our research as Native scholars is to place a stake in the theoretical and methodological terrain and assert the intergrity and validity of our own ways of ‘coming to know’. As Hawai’ian author, Manulani Meyer (2008, p. 230) states:

We are all part of the birthing of a new culture ... we are far from perfect, but we do bring something unique to the table. We bring dreams, food, elders, courage and the clarity of speech and purpose. After all, there is no time to waste.

¹¹³ Mōteatea can be translated as a general term for different kinds of traditional song compositions.

¹¹⁴ Examples can be found in Murphy (2013) pp. 115-136.

¹¹⁵ Mātauranga Māori refers to Māori epistemologies and systems of thought.

Dreaming is a Kaupapa Māori mana wahine methodological tenet that is associated with the strong themes of whanaungatanga and wairuatanga. I turn now to discuss whanaungatanga particularly, in the context of my research.

Whanaungatanga

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005, p. 101) stresses that the bedrock of research ethics for Indigenous peoples and other marginalised communities is:

about establishing, maintaining, and nurturing reciprocal and respectful relationships, not just among people as individuals but also with people as individuals, as collectives, and as members of communities, and with humans who live in and with other entities in the environment.

Kaupapa Māori Ngāti Pūkeko, Tainui scholar, Russell Bishop (1999, p. 130), locates these comments in the Māori principle whanaungatanga, which he describes in research contexts as the establishment and maintenance of relationships in a manner that addresses power and control and the somatic involvement of the researcher in the research process. Whanaungatanga was a central principle in my mana wahine ritual methodology with multiple applications. Sometimes it meant ‘throwing away the watch’ and the question schedule and entering kōrero in collaboration with participants. Sometimes it meant sharing my own personal stories freely where required, honouring the laws of reciprocity inherent in whanaungatanga (Simmonds, 2014). Sometimes it meant ‘staying overnight’ where I was requested and expected to, and also spending multiple days to foster the relationship, returning to visit and share ceremony and space. Although in my initial research proposal I did not intend ‘sleep overs’ or extensive ‘interview’ periods, my methodology of ‘*rolling with the wairua*’ - surrendering to the flow of events - inevitably took me on unexpected journeys that often exceeded my original humble plans.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ This also meant that I was required to re-engage with the Waikato University Ethics Committee to receive approval for my evolving suite of methods which did not pose any issues.

One of my interviews on Great Turtle Island, where my research led me on two separate occasions in 2016 and 2018, provides examples of how whanaungatanga and wairuatanga transcended conventional research methods. I had travelled to the home of Aztec, Mayan, Taos Pueblo, women's ceremonial leader,¹¹⁷ and doula, Alicia Cardenas, whom I had not met before but was urged by a close friend to seek out. I had travelled to Denver, Colorado to meet her on my way to Hawai'i to trace whakapapa kōrero related to Hina.¹¹⁸ I warmed to her immediately, and her home, which was a sacred woman's space, teeming with altars arrayed on cabinetry, paint and artworks in various states of progress, the chaos of domesticity, and a huge incense dish burning raw gums, resins and barks of sacred plants that sent great billowing clouds of heady smoke into the atmosphere. In her garden was a sweatlodge that she retreated to each month with her daughter for ceremony.

Our afternoon together was spent in a process of whakawhanaungatanga - sharing stories and experiences and observing the cultural protocols around the giving of gifts as Native relations. Like for all of my international participants I did not use a question schedule, as I mention earlier, because it seemed deeply inappropriate to do so. Rather, the most important factor was establishing a relationship (Struthers, 2001). At the beginning of kōrero with Alicia and other participants, an information sheet and a consent form was shared, outlining my research area. More important, perhaps, was sharing the personal reasons why I was on the journey. This conversation always began in the ceremonies within my own tribal lands in Waikaremoana and the global re-emergence of the divine feminine (Murphy, 2013; Pere, 1994; Yates-Smith, 1998; Meyer as cited in Lin, 2008).

As we spoke of research, hers and mine, and ceremonial experiences, Alicia dropped sacred plant resins, leaves and bark on hot charcoal discs which sent bursts of scented smoke into the air as a symbolic medium of living prayer. The burning of smudge in the space created a ritual atmosphere, marking the time and space as

¹¹⁷ This description of Alicia does not come from her but from Yaqui, Xicana scholar, Ramona Beltran, who acknowledges Alicia's work and standing in the community.

¹¹⁸ I refer to a constellation of atua wāhine, each with their own qualities and functions, that stem from a core feminine energy defined across Polynesia as Hina.

sacred, intentional and intimate, which, in turn, shaped the tenor of our kōrero. Over our long afternoon together Alicia prepared a medicine bundle, a traditional Native offering given to represent a living relationship not only with me, as the receiver, but my entire tribal nation. I wondered how I would get the bundle, filled with sacred plants, stones and other ritual talismans of power, through New Zealand customs. I gifted her with a crescent-shaped pounamu neckpiece and woven harakeke¹¹⁹ cloak for ceremony.

Gifting koha¹²⁰ was an integral component of my mana wahine ritual methodology, fostering whanaungatanga and acknowledging through exchange, the significance of the sharing of stories. This is of course not unique to me, but is a common practice amongst Kaupapa Māori and other Native researchers (Simmonds, 2014; Smith, L. T., 2005; Yates-Smith, 1998). I commissioned different taonga to be made specifically for each participant or groups of participants. Figure 3. 2 shows a sample of commissioned gifts for research participants that include pounamu and carved mother of pearl jewelry, ceremonial gourds and woven kete. Koha were accompanied with a consent form and information sheet detailing the research and participants rights in the research.

¹¹⁹ Harakeke is Native flax.

¹²⁰ Koha is a gift of reciprocity.



Figure 3.2 Participant taonga. Photographed by N. Murphy.

Another significant factor that shaped my engagement with participants and deepened the whanaungatanga was that I often traveled accompanied by my 13 year-old daughter, Pirimaia. The kōrero below is important because the tenor is couched in the intimacy of whanaungatanga in which Alicia speaks to Piri as a relation and an aunty, despite that they had never met before. The kōrero also demonstrates the significance of reciprocity and sharing genuinely and openly (and intimately even) with participants as a part of whakawhanaungatanga processes. This is very different to conventional ‘interview’ methods, even unstructured interviews that are based heavily on conversation rather than ceremonial or embodied activity:

Alicia: Becoming a mom has been such a medicine ... Having a daughter is really gonna be profound how much information your gonna be getting as she goes into this mother space and starts in with her menstruation. You probably already are?

Ngahuia: Not yet.

Alicia: Oh you gonna do ceremony?

Ngahuia: Of course! Oh we got a series of ceremonies.

Pirimaia: You know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna get a tub of ice cream and watch movies.

Alicia: Is that ceremony enough for you? That's fine, but your Mum's gonna do some other shit.

*Ngahuia: There's things she has a choice about. She wants a dawn fire ceremony with her aunties. The fire represents the ripening of the *whare tangata* and the flow of the blood of ancestors and descendants. We've designed that together. She's had a lot of say in that but there are other things that have to happen, like that blood needs to be taken to our tribal lands and buried back to mother earth. And then we'll have a *kaitahi*, family feast. But me bringing her on this trip is really the beginning of the ceremonies.*

Alicia: For sure because honestly that prayer started as soon as she was born, that prayer of life, that prayer of womanhood. It's like as soon as that baby comes out then that's the beginning of that journey and then that journey is coming to a new stage and a rebirth is going to happen ... it's really important that you obviously get a say in it but at the same time Mum's gonna make space for you to get the best rebirth possible. That's what she did the first time, that's what she's gonna do the second time. She's gonna hold space and that's really important to let her do that cos she's bringing forth this knowledge of your grandmothers in which you will learn as you become more connected in your womanhood. All of that knowledge, all of that understanding, that they have brought forth for you, you have the ability to tune into it at any moment and use it for your life. Use it to navigate these hard things that are going to come up along the way ... This is about your womanhood and your warrior-hood and the beginning of you coming into your own way. Travelling and seeing the world, hearing other people talk about what your mum talks about all the time but you don't realise that she's not alone in this! (A. Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2016).

Traveling overseas with my daughter created a deeper layer of *whanaungatanga* as we were welcomed as members of *whānau*, transcending the conventional researcher - participant relationship. In discussing the significance of *whanaungatanga*, Ngāti Kahungunu scholar, Fiona Cram (2006, p. 35) points out that “these connections wrap a larger relationship based context around the research moment”. This was especially the case when, three days following the above *kōrero*

with Alicia, Pirimaia's ikura¹²¹ arrived. Our hosts, Jim Rock, a Dakota scientist, and his wife, Ojibwe lecturer, Roxanne Gould, conducted rituals in accordance with their own cultural traditions and provided a space for Pirimaia and I to also conduct our own observations in their home. Perhaps the highlight was being brought into their family sweatlodge in the back garden at dawn. Here Pirimaia was accorded the seat of honor in the west of the lodge. From Great Turtle Island we travelled to Hawai'i and the ceremonies to welcome her ikura continued with whānau there.

Only once did Pirimaia's presence create hesitation regarding the appropriateness of what the participants shared, which was conveyed in a look rather than words. Implicit in the glance was permission to speak frankly. I nodded positively to speak openly. In traditional Māori culture we spoke openly and honestly in front of our tamariki, allowing them to learn through osmosis (Murphy, 2013, 2014; Papakura, 1986). This particular participant took the afternoon to open up, not only because of the presence of my daughter but also because of a general mistrust of researchers, who in the past had misused the kōrero that she had shared. She was the only one who asked me directly at the beginning of our discussions how I would use her kōrero. This was an opportunity to go through the consent and information sheet and explain that the information gathered would be for the doctoral thesis and presentations and publications on the research only and that at the completion of the research her transcript could either be returned to her or destroyed (as was the case with all recorded 'interviews'). The consent form provided her with a space to indicate whether she wanted her transcript returned to her to edit and verify. I offered to send her chapters as I was developing them with her quotes highlighted so she could check how I had contextualised her kōrero. Whilst she was not interested in doing this she did indicate that she would like to receive a copy of the completed thesis. My intention is to return to Hawai'i upon marked completion of this thesis, to gift copies to her, the Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center in Waianae, and five other Hawai'ian participants who have expressed an interest in receiving a copy. This reflects the fact that for many Indigenous researchers,

¹²¹ Ikura is a traditional Māori term for menstruation. I discuss this in Chapter 7.

relationships are the primary factor in research engagements and that commitment to relationships is often a life-long one (Smith, L. T., 2012; Yates-Smith, 1998).

I shift my discussion now to another significant Kaupapa Māori and mana wahine principle that underpinned and shaped my research methodology - whakapapa.

Tracing whakapapa

Recovering our ancestresses voices and stories

In arguing for the significance of Māori women developing emancipatory theoretical tools to reclaim control over our own identities, knowledges, bodies and lives, Mana wahine scholar Kathie Irwin (1991) identifies the stories and histories of our tīpuna kuia as a primary source of data. Kim Anderson (2011, p. 17) also describes the importance of recovering traditional stories and re-interpreting tribal histories to decolonise ourselves today. She writes, in particular, of returning to analyse colonial ethnographic material, which can be sifted through for information regarding women's lives in order to "put the pieces of our culture back together". Whilst cautioning against the white male bias of colonial ethnographic material, Anderson maintains that the stories recorded can be checked with elders and against oral histories conveyed in songs, chants and incantations, which Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) points out, rarely change.

Like Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) who examined archival and ethnographic data and Māori oral literatures¹²² alongside interviews with cultural experts in her recovery of the feminine in Māori spiritualities, I have sifted through the crevices, footnotes and margins of colonial ethnographic material in a hunt for stories of tīpuna kuia as ritual experts. I have re-interpreted this material, as well as some of the cosmological stories regarding the atua wāhine, from a mana wahine perspective guided by Māori oral literatures such as karakia, mōteatea, whakataukī, and pūrākau. In doing so these stories were returned home to their own epistemological cultural origins in order to re-activate their healing qualities as intergenerational mediums that have been 'put to sleep' through colonial re-tellings. The recovery of

¹²² I refer to karakia, mōteatea, oriori, ngēri and other oral forms of knowledge and history.

ancestresses stories and the re-reading of cosmologies as ritual maps that facilitate transformation is a critical component of Indigenous decolonising scholarship and has been undertaken by Indigenous scholars and artists such as Robyn Kahukiwa & Patricia Grace (1984), Aroha Yates-Smith (1998), Ani Mikaere (2017a, 2017b), Kuni Jenkins (1992), Paula Gunn-Allen (1989, 1991), Kim Anderson (2000, 2011) Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa (1999), Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahēle (2011) and others.

In my research the recovery of the voices and stories of tīpuna kuia was paramount. I was interested in connecting contemporary Māori women's ritual practice to historic and cosmological stories in order to establish the idea of a dynamic and self-renewing ritual continuum that connects the present with the past and future (Anderson, 2000; St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). I examined historic sources such as colonial and archival literatures, as well as photographs, art work, karakia, mōteatea, whakataukī and cosmological stories to excavate hidden mana wahine histories and establish the argument that Māori women maintained powerful ritual leadership positions in pre-colonial and colonial contact times (Mikaere, 2017b; Pihama, 2012).

In examining historic sources patriarchal imperatives which obscure mana wahine through vague re-tellings of historic events in which Māori women are often unnamed, were identified (Yates-Smith, 1998). The colonial renditions of Māori femininities that fortify patriarchal imperatives which play out in many Native communities today, is why the re-reading of historic material through a matauranga Māori emancipatory lens is an important project.

I found that applying a mana wahine analysis to colonial ethnographic material and re-reading this material alongside Māori oral literatures transformed the meanings prescribed by some of the colonial ethnographers (Bishop, 1999; Lee, 2005; Smith, G. 2003). Re-reading stories regarding the atua wāhine from a position that celebrates the divine feminine also unlocked deeper themes conveyed in the stories, revealing aspects of the atua wāhine that have been concealed. Revealing these hidden aspects that Māori women can draw on to empower and heal ourselves today affirms that the solutions to many of the challenges we face as Native peoples can be found in our own traditions and sacred story cycles (Cajete, 2000; Irwin, 1991).

Much of the archival and secondary data gathered informs the following chapter, which as the first of the empirical chapters provides a historic and cosmological whakapapa foundation for the research. Yet it also weaves through Chapters' 5 and 7 alongside participant stories to highlight the vitality of Native women's spiritualities as a living body of knowledge (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). Excavating this material about who our ancestors were is important because many Māori and other Native women (and men) do not know as a result of censorship and colonial re-tellings (Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001; Yates-Smith, 1998). Uncovering ancestral stories and knowledge is not about returning to a glorified past. Rather it is about empowering ourselves to know who we are today and who we may become, through understanding who we once were. Pivotal to this is the retrieval of ancestral stories that challenge colonial re-definitions of Māori masculinities and femininities. Ancestral stories become a compass, an orientation and negotiating position in which we are able to call on the power of history and tradition as we strive to liberate ourselves and restore balance. As Robin Kimmerer (2013) points out, balance today, as in earlier times, is no resting place, rather it is a moving, dynamic negotiation of power that is always contested.

Sacred and cosmological sites

Whakapapa as a research tenet also led beyond historic, primary and secondary data to the landscapes of Hawai'i where I traced the stories of Hina, the atua who resides over Polynesian women's ritual arts. Contextualising the renewal of mana wahine ritual knowledge within an Oceanic milieu embedded in whakapapa relationships was also important in order to re-affirm whanaungatanga across Polynesia, locating the reclamation of our knowledges within the wider political context of decolonising the Pacific.

I was taken to a number of cosmological sites in Hawai'i that reflect the close whakapapa connections between Tangata Whenua and Kanaka Māoli. I was taken there as a relation as well as a researcher, with whanaungatanga shaping the experience. Ten Hawai'ian relations escorted my daughter and I on one particular trip. The impressive turnout was a demonstration of the significance of our whakapapa connections as Polynesians and the importance of fostering

whanaungatanga as much as it was about respecting the significance of the sacred site itself and the tapu whakapapa knowledge imprinted on the landscape.

Ceremony was a key component in entering each wāhi tapu,¹²³ which was conducted by my escorts. This included traditional prayer, chant, incantation and song, the preparation of ho’o kupu,¹²⁴ the harvesting of specific native plants for offerings, including tobacco, and the use of salt, which was placed under the tongue for protection. In many of these ritual observations I was expected to participate through the sharing of karakia, waiata, and mihi from Aotearoa, raising my voice to greet tribal lands and the deities that occupied these places. Raising my voice in chant to greet the land, a cube of salt sitting sharply under my tongue, I was never more acutely aware of the fact that my body was both an instrument of research and site of spiritual revelation, collapsing western binaries that disembodied spirituality and knowledge (McGuire, 2003). As Patrisia Gonzales (2012, p. xxiv) writes:

Native knowledge is experienced directly through the body, whether it is in direct relationship to land and place or felt in ritual and ceremony. The body acts, receives and transmits information and experience ... The body is part of sacred geography.

Manulani Meyer (2008, p. 223) agrees pointing out that the “Body is the central space in which knowing is embedded.... *Our mind is our body. Our body is our mind.* And both connect to the spiritual act of knowledge acquisition” (Italics in original). At Kūkaniloko in Oahu, Hawai’i, the ancient birthing temple of ali’i,¹²⁵ my body sunk into timeworn groves in boulders carved out by generations of high-born women whose contracting bodies found strength and support in the stones. Guided by Mahealani, whose family caretake Kūkaniloko, our group was encouraged to position our own bodies amongst the boulders, sinking into the landscape itself, in order to glimpse the ancient petroglyphs carved into the rocks that symbolised navigational directions across the Pacific and our broad whakapapa

¹²³ Wāhi tapu can be translated as sacred sites.

¹²⁴ Ho’o kupu are customary Hawai’ian sacred offerings.

¹²⁵ Ali’i is the Hawai’ian term for a paramount chief/chieftaness. The Māori equivalent is ariki.

networks. The solstices, equinoxes and specific constellations in the sky were also marked on specific rocks, linking the earth and sky in sets of ritual orientations. Implicit in the whole site was the recognition of birthing women as a bridge between worlds and first whare wānanga.¹²⁶ I may not have fully grasped the sophistication of these technologies had I not sunk into the cool groves of ancient stones and followed the sight paths from horizontal angles.

A visit to Koheleleokapō on the Big Island, Hawai'i, the cavernous underground (and underworld) home to the ambiguous shape-shifter female deity Kapo'ulakīna'u also brought an acute awareness of the embodied nature of my research. At the entrance to her cavern, which ran for 12 miles to the sea, and like many female 'womb' geographies also house burial chambers, I felt afraid. Despite feeling this way, my '*rolling with the wairua*' methodological approach had led me there. From the nadir, which was her domain, to the zenith at the summit of the mountain Mauna Kea, the home of her sister Poliahu, I knew I had to experience both to get a fuller sense of the multiple shades of women's ceremonial realms that encompass a spectrum of shadow and light.

At the door of her cavern (named after her detachable and flying vagina), and before descent, Hawai'ian activist and cultural practitioner Kealoha Pisciotta and I called to Kapo'ulakīna'u for permission to enter, offering salt, song, chant and mihi, and making clear our intentions. I felt her presence immediately in the chill of the wind underground, in the intensity of the thick atmosphere – still and dark, and in my shaky breathing, thumping heart and perspiration that trickled down my neck despite the cold.

In the journey underground to meet her I found myself reflecting that I was physically, spiritually, emotionally and psychologically not only entering cosmological sacred sites but also whakapapa kōrero. I was being *storied through* – story as a verb rather than a noun. I was entering the myth and occupying the liminal wā - the sacred Polynesian time/space continuum that collapses the

¹²⁶ Learning house.

cosmological into the embodied present (Kanahele, 2011; Meyer in Tangarō, 2009; R. Raymond, personal communication, August 25, 2015). At the ‘womb of the earth’, in an interior chamber, I momentarily became Hinetītama as she crossed the threshold from Te Ao Mārama¹²⁷ into the Pō, the intense darkness of the spirit worlds and the inner lining of reality, conceptualised as female (Kame’eleihiwa, 1999; Robinson, 2005). I felt her fear of the unknown, entering back through the portal of life. I offered myself up to transformation, as she must have done, in order to meet my own potential. The revelation that we live and continue cosmological stories was raised by some of my participants and it is also mentioned in mana wahine literatures (J. Rock, personal communication, June 7, 2016; Simmonds & Gabel, 2016). On the visit to the shape-shifter atua, Kapo‘ulakīna’u, in her underworld liminal topography, I felt this understanding in my bones. I had taken the journey of ‘coming to know’.

A matter of safety

The intensity of the experience of Koheleleokapō, highlights the cultural importance of ceremony as a critical component of my mana wahine methodology. Here it was a matter of safety. We had come to a tapu place,¹²⁸ a potentially spiritually dangerous place, which required ritual observations and cultural protocols to enter with care and respect. The same was true when my research took me to Great Turtle Island, where I was escorted to feminine cosmological and ceremonial places of power. One of these places was Bdote, the cekpa ‘navel’ of mother earth, whom the Dakota lovingly call Maka Ina. Bdote is a part of the Wakaŋ Tipi/Indian Mounds Park, which is regarded as the womb of the earth and threshold between this world and the Dakota stellar home (Gould & Rock, 2016). Like the sacred site Koheleleokapō, Wakaŋ Tipi is also a burial ground, communicating ancient motifs that link women’s reproductive bodies with the mysteries of the continuous life cycle that spirals through birth, death and renewal (Sjoo & Mor, 1991; Van der Meer, 2012).

¹²⁷ The world of light in which we live as humans.

¹²⁸ I use this term to denote ‘a sacred place’ and a ‘restricted place’.

Bdote is also the place where hundreds of Dakota and Ho-chunk women, children and elders were interred in concentration camps at the height of winter during the 1862-1863 'United States - Dakota' war (Waziyatawin, 2008). The genocide of Ho-chunk and Dakota women, children and elders at the navel center of their world is no coincidence. Rather, like many of the sacred feminine cosmological sites that I visited, they have been deliberately targeted because, like Native women's reproductive bodies, they cradle the mauri – the 'life-force' of Native peoples. They are ritual *womb-scapes* that represent the "center of existence" and axis point of Native relationships that span time, space and worlds (Cavendar-Wilson in Gould & Rock, 2016; Gonzales, 2012, p. 124). These places, therefore, house Native identity, as do Native women's bodies. To target them is to attempt to sever the umbilical cord of a people's source of strength, sustenance, spirituality and survival (Grbich, 2012; Gunn Allen, 1992; Murphy, 2013). To target them is to strike at the center of Native continuation.

Entering Bdote demanded ceremonial observations, which my escort, Dakota scientist Jim Rock, performed. The place, nestled in the trees near a busy highway, seemed to be suspended in time, a liminal zone on the outskirts of western civilisation. Whilst lush, beautiful and green the atmosphere felt eerily still, trapped and foreboding. In a clearing in the trees was a circle of stakes with red strips of cloth tied to them. On each stake a woman's name was recorded, an ancestor who had been murdered at the site by occupying US soldiers. Hanging in the trees all around were little red medicine bundles - offerings of love and remembrance to the ancestors whose lives had come to a brutal end at Bdote.

As we arrived, and with Jim's permission, I pushed record on my dictaphone and let it record the entirety of our visit. It captured all of our ceremonies and the soundscapes of Bdote. Transcribing this material upon my return home was also intense and demanded a ritual process. As I transcribed the material I burned cedar on hot coals, a holy plant of the Dakota, to honor the tipuna who came riding into my home on the sound waves. I acknowledged them with love yet I also opened the door, which lead straight up to Kapū Te Rangi, an ancient Mataatua pā site that is part of one of the spirit highways that the tipuna tread on their journey leaving this world.

Transcribing the Bdote material reflects the significance of closing in ceremony to bring the process full circle. This was particularly important entering and leaving sacred sites. Generally this involved mihi, waiata, the use of water from specific sacred sites (I travelled everywhere with water from a wāhi tapu from my own tribal lands), sometimes debrief, and always, the sharing of food. It was interesting to note that kaitahi¹²⁹ as a way to conclude ceremonial process is widely observed across the Indigenous peoples and communities that I stayed with, despite our vast differences. Indeed food was important in my research for a number of reasons. These include ritual whakanoa processes to lift tapu states and also taking food to participants houses to foster whanaungatanga (Simmonds, 2014). Whilst some kōrero with participants was shared in ceremonial contexts where food may not have been appropriate until the conclusion, in other instances the sharing of food became the focal point in fostering a sense of informality conducive to sharing. For example, my time with Hawai'ian community birth worker Puni Jackson and Hawai'ian community educator Sunnie Makua was spent seated around a table laden with Hawai'ian cultural delicacies, which we sampled intermittently over the course of a long afternoon together talking about the politics of birth, blood, mothering and ritual as Native women.

Mana wahine sacred space

Whilst stories and knowledge are important, equally important is the space in which stories are shared (Holloway, 2003; Simmonds, 2009, 2014). These spaces in my research were often more than intimate and informal, they were sacred spaces shaped by ritual aesthetics that prompted a certain kind of sharing and a certain kind of kōrero. Mana wahine is a broad term that can be applied in different ways. The *wā* in *wā-hine* reflects time and space and its qualities are liminal, ambiguous, fluid and transformative in Polynesian views (Tamaira, 2010; Wendt, 1999). Throughout their lives Polynesian women move through the *wā* simultaneously occupying multiple states of being and in-betweenness that exist in relationship to others (Pihama, 2001). Unlike western concepts of woman as an in-active noun framed in an unequal binary with man, *wā-hine* can be understood as an active and

¹²⁹ Kaitahi denotes the sharing of food.

transformative verb, existing in her own mana as a whakapapa descendent of Hineahuone, the first woman, of which the *hine* in *wa-hine* is derived (Mikaere, 2017a; Yates-Smith, 1998).

My mana wahine ritual methodology involved creating transformative and sacred time and space for women's voices and knowledges to be shared and heard. Throughout the course of my research I discovered that for some Native women these opportunities to come together in a sacred and safe space were rare. This is a direct consequence of the imposition of colonial ideologies and legislations that criminalised and attempted to eradicate mana wahine ritual knowledge and practice.¹³⁰ I learned that these spaces were desperately sought by Native women in order to heal and empower ourselves as we continue to live in the borderlands of colonised realities (Anderson, 2000; Simmonds, 2014; Smith, L. T., 2005). Hawai'ian research participants, Kanani Aton and Sunnie Makua (personal communication, June 13, 2016) speak to the significance of creating mana wahine ritual and sacred spaces stating:

Kanani: This is needed to address intergenerational fatigue, which ultimately, if we are feeling fatigue then Papahānaumoku, mother earth, is showing signs of fatigue.

Sunnie: [It's important] for them [our daughters] to experience having these gatherings. You are going to have your own gatherings because this is how we feed each other and grow.

Kanani: But when they do have their gatherings in their own kitchen they are gonna reach for a higher level. Because we are reaching today. We are reaching but we are showing them. We set the watch back to Hinenuitepō, put it back to Papahānaumoku.¹³¹ This is what we did. Today is big.

I realised that perhaps one of the most powerful aspects of my research was simply to create mana wahine ritual spaces where women could share kōrero and re-ignite sacred living relationships with the atua wāhine. These spaces were incredibly

¹³⁰ I discuss examples in the following chapter.

¹³¹ Papahānaumoku is a Hawai'ian term for mother earth.

diverse (as sacred spaces and mana wahine invariably are) across my engagements with participants, responding, once again, to the participants themselves and the context of engagement (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, L. T., 2005).

The creation of mana wahine ritual spaces as a methodological tenet had multiple applications in my research. One of my research engagements was with an artist collective based in Gisborne comprised of a group of Māori women and one Bicol, Ilocano, Pasig Filipino woman. Early in 2016 members of the group approached me to share my research and facilitate ceremony for them to help bring them together to develop works for a mana wahine art exhibition at the Paul Nache Gallery in Gisborne. After conversations with the organisers, in which I shared with them my current research examining how some artists are using their modalities as mediums of ritual and communion with the atua wāhine, the organisers suggested that I profile the work of members of the collective.

In April 2016 my daughter and I travelled to Mahia Peninsula to the tribal stomping grounds of one of my own iwi of whom I know very little, Rongomaiwahine. I had prepared information sheets, a consent form, and journals for willing participants to chart any ritual or sacred elements that they had incorporated into their processes of creating art works for the exhibition (see Appendices 2 and 3). I had also designed a ritual to facilitate for them as they had requested. All of my careful preparations, however, flew out the window upon arrival. This is a good example of how my *'rolling with the wairua'* approach entailed flexibility and responsiveness to my participants.

There were six wāhine present at the wānanga, which took place at Huhana Mete's home, Waihinahina, which sat up on a hill overlooking the sea. We began with whakawhanaungatanga, which was highly emotional. I often found that women cried in these mana wahine spaces - tears of loss, anger, sadness, love, hope, longing, realisation and revelation. This is something that I was always prepared for. Tears¹³² and the unloading of raw emotions, specifically in the context of

¹³² Tears, crying and wailing play critical functions in Māori society. My observation over the years is that Māori are not embarrassed to publically cry, rather we see crying and the shedding of tears as

renewing matrilineal ritual traditions that have been violently suppressed, are to be expected and are intrinsic to facilitating movement and healing. In all of the diverse mana wahine spaces that I entered, created and participated in during this research in Aotearoa and overseas, I was struck by the intimacy, raw honesty and emotion of these spaces and the similarities of experience regarding both the denial of Native women's ritual lives and the movement to reclaim them. As I mention in the previous chapter, this indicates how, despite variations in Native peoples experiences of colonisation, the marginalisation of the feminine is widespread (Mead, 1994; Smith, L. T., 2012).

During the whakawhanaungatanga round at Waihinahina something happened that forced us to abandon our plans, including the ritual that I had prepared. The whenua and the wāhi tapu of Rongomaiwahine¹³³ seemed to compel us outside to walk upon the land and find our ceremony in direct relation with the environment, its memories and inscribed knowledges (Johnson & Larson, 2013). It took most of the morning with Huhana leading the way. At one site we faced the east, the place of the rising sun and moon that often represents new beginnings and transformation in ritual orientations, and called the winds to purify and rid us of obstacles blocking the path.

Returning to the house we shared kai to lift the tapu of ceremony in accordance with tikanga Māori. My earlier research on traditional Māori awa atua¹³⁴ ceremonies was discussed alongside the current research. Each of the wāhine present was invited to participate through documenting their personal spiritual and ritual practices in developing art for the mana wahine exhibition in solicited mana wahine journals over a period of eight months. The consent forms invited them to encourage others who were a part of their mana wahine art collective but who were

a sign of strength and an important ritual function to collectively celebrate, mourn, welcome, release, remember, and heal. I have observed that Māori men cry, often as openly and unashamedly as Māori women. Given the cultural significance of tears and crying in Māori society I found that it was culturally inappropriate to do anything other than listen and hold space in mana wahine wānanga when tears were shed.

¹³³ Rongomaiwahine is an iwi from Mahia peninsula on the east coast of Te Ika a Maui (the North Island).

¹³⁴ Awa atua is a traditional term from menstruation.

not present at Waihinahina, to also participate. None did however, and of the names that appear on the promotional flyer in Figure 3.3, only three participated through solicited journals (plus one other artist present at Waihinahina whose name does not appear on the promotional flyer).



Figure 3.3. Mana wahine exhibition promotional material, 2016

The information sheet and consent forms that accompanied the journals assured the women confidentiality in the research and also stipulated their right to withdraw from the study up to one month following the mana wāhine exhibition. It assured them that whilst they had given me permission to use their kōrero and art for my doctoral work, the copyright and ownership of their contributions remained with them. The forms requested permission to loan the journals and quote from them, and return them at the completion of the study, an option that they all chose. I also indicated in the forms the right of participants to erase or conceal any of their kōrero and/or artworks recorded in the journals, if they so wished.

The journals became a continuation of the ceremonial space and wānanga we shared at Waihinahina in which trust and whanaungatanga were absolutely central. It was important to personalise the journals and mark them as sacred representational spaces. I did this by painting a specific runic glyph¹³⁵ on the cover of each journal, inviting the women to pick the symbol that resonated with them. Each glyph represented a set of personal ritual teachings that I invited them to discover in the course of developing their mana wahine art works. Inside the journals mana wahine quotes were added including the words and translation of the haka Hinateiwaiwā performed to capture Kae.¹³⁶ Four questions were also posted in the front of the women's journals for them to consider:

How do you use your art to explore your spirituality as a Māori woman?

How do you use your art to get closer to the atua wahine?

What is mana wahine to you? How can we nurture it?

The journals became a mana wahine ritual space, a sacred space in which the women sometimes confided about their relationships, the different shades of ritual that they were developing and experiencing, their planning of art works for the exhibition, their poetry and free-hand drawings, their fears, struggles, revelations, reflections and emotionally-charged ventings, and their musings and dreams as mothers. I was overwhelmed with how intimate these journals were and the personal stories within them in which the women revealed their lives. Bryman (2004, p. 322) similarly notes that journals reveal the “inner experience of individuals, how they interpret, understand and define the world around them”. Pākehā scholars Filep, Thompson-Fawcett, Fitzsimons and Turner (2015, p. 1) add:

Diaries help researchers to understand the embodied and the emotional in human geography ... As such, the diary provides deep insights ... The opportunity to muse in private – even in a solicited diary requested

¹³⁵ The runes are an ancient Nordic oracle comprising an alphabet of sacred characters conveying teachings and insights.

¹³⁶ I discuss this pūrākau in detail in the following chapter.

and guided by us as researchers – afforded a freedom to express intense sentiments.

I felt extremely privileged to be reading the participants' intimate thoughts and approached the journals as precious whānau taonga recording a snapshot in time (Simmonds, 2014). The tone of the entries varied between the women writing to themselves, stream of consciousness recordings, and also writing directly to me, sometimes beginning with *'Dear sisi'* and *'Kia ora!!! Here we are ... the time for us to connect again'*. Often I felt like I was reading a private letter and was humbled by the courage the women displayed in sharing their truths, pains, struggles and intimate spiritual and emotional journeys.

Whilst a strength of the journals is the intimate nature of entries, revealing participants inner thoughts, a drawback perhaps is that participants can censor, edit and 'tidy up' their own entries to align with their ideas about what the researcher might want to hear (Bryman, 2004; Filep, Thompson-Fawcett, Fitzsimons and Turner, 2015). I noted that one participants' journal began with tidy writing and blanked out sections, but changed style to a more free-flow form of writing as the journal (and time) progressed, at which point she ceased blacking out entries. At the point in which her writing style changes she records:

20 September 2016.
I have come to the conclusion that I will
restrain myself from reflecting back on all
that I have written in here and also
will not be trying to make any of
this pretty and organized. haha.
I like that I have chilled out heaps
since I first began writing in here.
I like that my material has become
more raw and real. I hope all my
bits and pieces are readable (after
trying to keep my hand writing neat
& tidy) after reverting back to my
quick and natural writing. This exercise
has certainly been a rewarding one
and has made me realize many things

Figure 3.4 Participant journal entry 1.

The participant's entry depicted in Figure 3.4 (with sections highlighted by me in the analysis phase) is poignant in that it records the moment in which she gives up self-censoring and 'tidying up' her work to fit her ideas about what might constitute palatable and appropriate knowledge in academia, and what I might be looking for as a researcher. Her comments reveal the relations of power implicit in research despite my attempts to mitigate them through my methodology. The same participant in one of her last entries records:

15th October 2016.
Olia Ngahua, you will be with us here in
Taerāwhiti a week from now.
till I fight the urge to read back on
all my kōrero, to try and fix things,
to try and tidy this book up! lol
here's hoping you will love my book
any way in all its chaos. I will
literally close my eyes and pack it
up in a bag without fear or doubt.
Without this book being how it is,
it will not be true. I want you to
see all its naked truth so that you
can make real sense of the journey.

Figure 3.5 Participant journal entry 2.

The participant's entry depicted in Figure 3.5 (with sections highlighted by me in the analysis phase) reveals her courage in making a decision to expose the 'naked truths' of her life and spiritual journey despite a fear of being judged by myself, and also academia. Her entry speaks back to power, choosing to be 'real and raw' regarding her life's experiences rather than 'fixing', 'tidying up' or 'toning down' her voice for academia. This decision is powerful in the context of colonial histories in which our voices and experiences as Native women have been censored, denied and subjugated (Evans, 1994a; Jahnke, 1997b; Tamaira, 2010).

Eight months after the journals were disseminated to participants, in which time we continued to communicate through a private Facebook page of the collective, I traveled, once again, with my daughter, to spend an emotional day with the women in the gallery to view their art works (see Figure 3.6), collect the journals, gift koha, and share kōrero and kai. Of the five journals I passed out, three came back. A fourth participant lost her journal but gave me permission to use some of her personal writings on her blog-site.



Figure 3.6 Participant J. Tito (right of frame) explaining her mana wahine art installation in the Paul Nache Gallery in Gisborne, 2016.

The mana wahine artist collective is one of many unique stories of participant engagement in this research that highlights both my responsive approach and the fostering of sacred mana wahine spaces in producing knowledge. Another example began with me hosting a summer solstice ceremony in 2016, which led to the development of *Hine*, a ritual theatre work by Ngā Puhī directors and sisters, Whetu and Kōmako Silver (see Figure 3.7). The Kaha:wi Dance Theatre *Blood Tides* production (see Figure 3.8), provides another example. *Blood Tides*, which premiered in Canada in 2018, involved a collaborative relationship with Kahnyen'kehāka theatre director, Santee Smith, over a period of two years. This culminated in a wānanga with 25 Native women on the Six Nations Grande River Reservation on Great Turtle Island (see Figure 3.9) and a ten-day intensive workshop with the cast of Native women dancers in preparation for the world premiere. Both theatre works demonstrate the diverse ways in which Native women are employing multiple mediums to engage in ritual communion with female deities and re-igniting ritual feminine knowledge.



Figure 3.7 *Hine* ritual theatre promotional material, 2016.

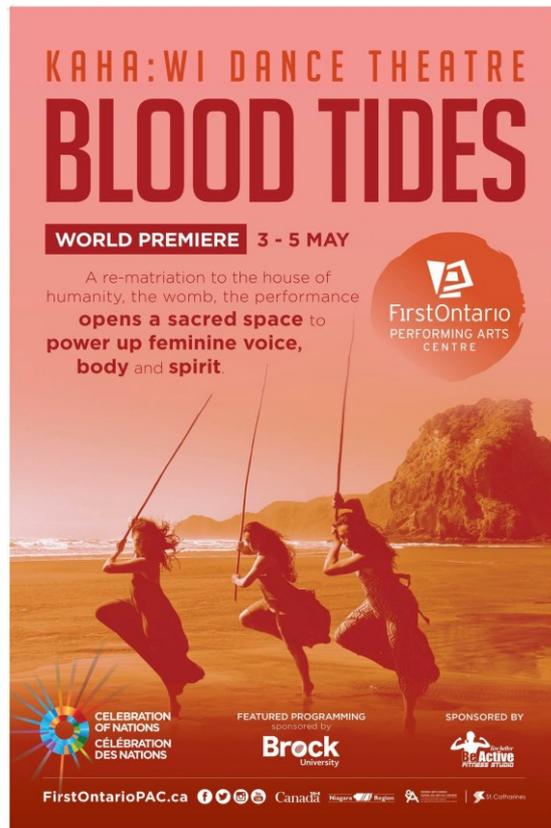


Figure 3. 8 *Blood Tides* promotional material, 2018.

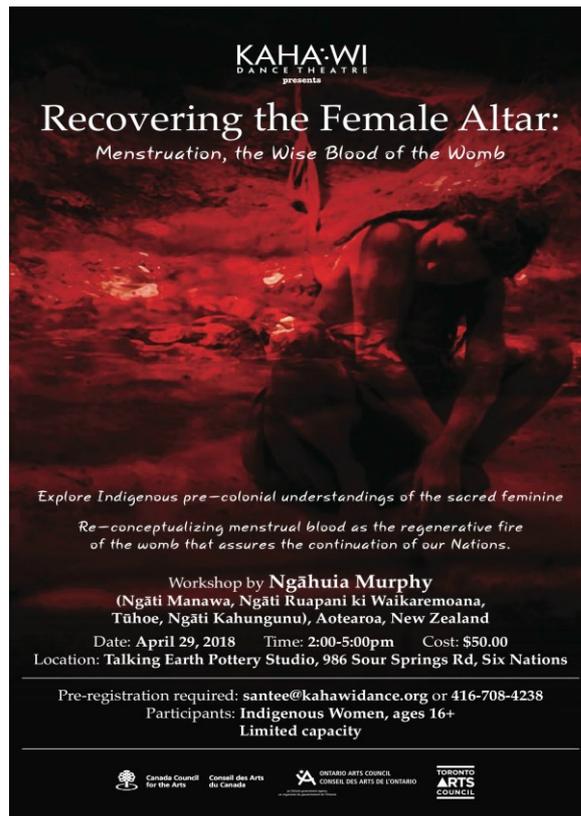


Figure 3.9 Wānanga promotional material. Kaha:wi Dance Theatre 2018.

In this final section I discuss the ways in which I analysed the eclectic material gathered.

Analysis of research material

Analysing data has been described as a process of reducing and organising large amounts of research material through summaries and categorisation to identify patterns, themes and relationships and to make sense of its multifaceted meanings (Kawulich, 2004; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). I employed multiple tools to analyse the very different sets of data that were collected. Underpinning, shaping and driving my analysis were the political imperatives of decolonisation, healing and emancipation that underpin Kaupapa Māori epistemologies and the significance of providing a platform for Native women’s voices and diverse experiences of the sacred to be heard (Irwin, 1992; Pihama, 1994; Smith, L. T., 1992).

In a similar way to Naomi Simmonds (2014) immersion, reduction, organisation, thematic analysis and verification were used as a process of analysis. In beginning I immersed myself in the data transcripts, specific cosmological pūrākau, art works,

photographs and solicited journals to familiarise myself with the terrain (Kawulich, 2004). This process was on-going throughout the entire doctoral study. Nineteen of the interviews and kōrero were transcribed, including five sacred site visits to Koheleleokapō, Kūkaniloko and Hale a Kalā in Hawai'i, Bdote in Turtle Island, and Papakorito in Aotearoa. I transcribed 16 interviews and three were transcribed in full by a professional transcribing service. Because my methodology allowed participants to determine what kōrero was important to share, a huge quantity of transcript material was produced. Therefore, in some interviews I selected sections to transcribe, rather than transcribing in full. Because I often let the dictaphone roll, with consent from my participants, I found that some kōrero was more relevant than others. Some was not necessarily appropriate for a tertiary academic space, such as the intricate details of specific ceremonies that belong to certain communities (Smith, L. T., 2005; St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). Kaupapa Māori and mana wahine epistemological themes assisted in selecting which sections of the kōrero to transcribe. Despite limiting the amount of material that I transcribed I still ended up with 328 pages of data to work with.

Of the 19 interviews transcribed, 12 were sent back to participants to provide an opportunity for them to add kōrero, edit and verify. Only one out of this 12 did not respond. Some of these participants indicated on their consent forms that they would like this opportunity. If there was content that I thought was sensitive, such as emotional and personal experiences and/or historic tribal, cosmological and sacred kōrero, and/or if there were aspects of participant kōrero that I wanted further information on, I returned the transcripts with the relevant sections highlighted for participants to consider. Only one participant came back with significant changes based on concern that her material might jeopardise her tribal relationships. Whilst her changes came in the final months of my thesis and I was disappointed to lose her original kōrero, which I found politically important, I considered her confidence in her own contributions paramount.

Some of my participants expressed the view that they were not interested in receiving the transcripts. This included four of my participants who escorted me to sacred sites. Others I did not want to bother with what they might perceive as 'another job' in their already demanding schedules. An example includes three

participants who were heavily engaged in legal battles in court to protect and defend sacred Native sites that were under assault.

I printed and bound each transcript and throughout the entire doctoral journey kept them physically close as a constant companion and visual representation of the mauri of women's sacred stories. The transcripts were a reminder to me that in the often lonely journey of research, my voice was part of a global collective community of Native women committed to recovering sacred relationships (and even defending them with their very lives).

Because of the volume of data that were generated in the interview transcripts it was important to undertake preliminary analysis immediately after each interview. I did this through a range of tools that included using a précis cover-sheet on each interview transcript, which summarised the methodological, reflexive and conceptual details of the interview, highlighting major areas of interest (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Grbich, 2012). The notes detailed the place of the interview, the time it took to conduct the interview, any activities performed during the interview, who was present, and the wairua of the space. It also included reflexive critique such as the ways in which my own experiences and cultural conditioning shaped my approach and interpretation of stories. On one interview cover sheet I wrote:

The whare tangata questions did not fire her [the participant] up. She got more excited talking about her matakite journey ... These questions need to be carefully tailored to each person ... There's tension and a constant balance between letting go of too much [space] in an interview and asking questions to re-direct the flow if it feels like its going off track, which feels like butting in. Sometimes I feel like asking questions is rude!

These reflexive notes helped me to analyse my own methodological approach, identifying its strengths and weaknesses and how I could develop (Luttrell, 2010).

The cover précis also included a summary of main points and keywords that indicated emergent themes and patterns across the women's voices. Across the transcripts I used color-coding with highlighters to track these emergent themes and patterns. For example trusting intuition in creating personal ceremonies was an

emergent theme. The on-going impacts of colonial patriarchy on Native women's ritual practices and knowledge was another prominent theme.

Content analysis involves reading and re-reading transcripts looking for similarities, differences, inconsistencies and contradictions, which enables the researcher to arrange and develop the data into themes and categories (Aronson, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Kawulich, 2004). This process also includes looking for the interconnections and relationships across the different data sets, noting what areas go together as well as places of contradiction, contrast and complexity (Chowdury, 2015; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Wolcott, 1994). These emergent themes across the transcripts were lifted out and further explored as I describe in the next section.

Mapping, diaries and narrative writing

Using highlighters to color-code the transcript data to begin to organise it into emergent patterns and themes was an important preliminary analytical tool, as was using conceptual whakapapa maps, personal diaries and narrative writing to code material (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Whakapapa maps (also called conceptual maps) are a way to visually represent the emergent themes, clustering diverse data streams such as interview material, contemporary literature, art, photographs, cosmology, and historic tribal narratives into related groupings (Kawulich, 2004; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). I call these whakapapa maps because, whilst they lump together major emergent themes, which also include nuance, difference and contradiction, they can also visually represent and facilitate the exploration of relationships and intersections across the themes. I found whakapapa mapping on large white boards and sheets of paper to be a simple but useful way to organise, reduce and synthesise my diverse mediums of data, "accumulating emerging issues into potential themes" (Grbich, 2012, p, 23). These maps were beginning points in organising my empirical chapters.

Personal reflexive diaries were also used throughout my entire doctoral research process, generating twelve diaries by the end of the study. Patrisia Gonzales (2012, p. 183) notes the importance of journaling "throughout the four seasons and cycles of research", recording the ebb and flow of the journey as a revelatory and personal process. The diaries recorded the details of the research, including notes

immediately following interviews and ceremony. The diaries tracked my plans, observations, reflections, literary critiques, notes on sacred site visits, dreams, participation in ceremonies, supervisory feedback, and conversations with people. I found myself constellating emergent themes and sites of contradiction within the diaries as well as through the whakapapa maps and transcript précis.

The diaries were also a place where I examined my own reflexivity in the research, recording my feelings and intimate reflections towards my experiences of the research. These notes included details of my own personal ceremonies and ceremonies with participants, methodological and ethical notes regarding interviews, wānanga, and participant interactions, and the ways in which I was conducting and developing the work. Manulani Meyer (2008, p. 222) poses a set of questions that engender reflexivity, summoning the researcher to the forefront of their own research. She asks:

What is your intention in doing research? What are your thoughts about your topic? What do you bring to the phenomenon of a moment shared with other? How will you think through the process and product of data collection, or how will you respond to experiences and ideas that will be completely new to you? This is not a distant discussion of your bias or of your deductive or inductive realities. It is the pulse of your character that you must name.

Meyers' comments reflect the understanding that the researchers subjectivities invariably shape the analysis of research and that research and knowledge production is a mutually constituted process (Grbich, 2012).

Pākeha scholars LeCompte and Schensul (1999) describe strategies to begin to reduce, organise and summarise research data which includes writing in narrative form and writing a chronological history of the subject to provide a context. The latter, they suggest, is particularly important when dealing with cultural knowledge where understanding the past assists in understanding and contextualising contemporary stories, voices and conditions. In the first year of my research I thematically ordered large chunks of interview quotes with related mana wahine art and historic and contemporary literatures into three major pieces of free-flow writing to assist me to begin the task of reducing and organising my findings into broad categories.

The first document comprised one-hundred pages of unpolished writing that focused on Hinateiwaiwā and her qualities. Here I traced the whakapapa of Hina pūrākau into histories of Māori tohunga ruanuku and priestesses of war. I then traced these themes into contemporary examples of activism. In this way I was able to find the ‘story’ of the research. This material, however, only comprised perhaps a third of what had been gathered. It also provided no space for the appearance of other atua wāhine who each emerged with their own whakapapa and ritual traditions related to the whare tangata.

A second piece of writing was developed that clumped together a constellation of ideas regarding the liminal and in-between threshold realms of Hinetītama and Hinenuitepō. This writing revolved around the transitional and transformational ritual spaces of the womb, the vulva, and the blood mysteries of women and its multiple representations including birth, death, renewal and star knowledge. My experiences at the sacred sites of Kūkaniloko and Wakaŋ Tipi, which explicitly link the womb with certain constellations and star origins, was placed here.

A third piece of writing clumped together large chunks of participant quotes with literatures loosely charting issues of fear, sexual violation, the impacts of Christianity and legislations, the confiscation of lands and its impacts on the womb-blood rituals that inform the name *Tangata Whenua*. The land, the womb, blood, and Mahuika, the atua of fire, dominated this piece of work. This is significant because Mahuika ritually represents herself in many ways, including purification. That she asserts her presence in writings regarding the violation of the whare tangata and the painful impacts of raupatu is symbolic in decolonising contexts where we, as Native women, look for the healing modalities that will assist in restoring ourselves to wholeness (Reinfeld, Pihama & Cameron, 2015).

Whilst interrelated, these three summaries chartered the different terrains of my research. They were an important way that I began to reduce, thematically organise and analyse the different streams of data gathered.

Critical visual and decolonising methodologies

Pākeha qualitative researcher Carol Grbich (2012, p. 64) suggests “more than one map will need to be developed in order to represent different parts of the database”.

I employed critical visual and decolonising methodologies as a tool to analyse specific mana wahine art works as social, political, cultural and spiritual texts and, in order to develop my understanding, I talked informally with the artists (over email, phone calls and coffee) about the ideas that informed the work, the story behind the making of the work, and the ritual process, if any, with which the work was created (Rose, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

In interpreting and reading the art as text, I was informed by Kaupapa Māori theoretical positionings and motivated by a political agenda of resurfacing mana wahine narratives. I approached the different art works as sites of resistance and decolonising visual discourses that confront, shift and transform patriarchal, colonial interpretations of Native femininities (Rose, 2012). In engaging with the art the following questions were used as analytical prompts:

- Who is the art for and what is its purpose?
- Is the art subversive or politically, or culturally provocative? In what ways?
- What are the social/cultural/political messages conveyed through the art?
- What specific social/cultural/political context has the art been produced from?
- How are themes of mana wahine reflected, represented or constructed by or through the art?
- How does the art represent cultural continuity in terms of mana wahine ritual ontologies?
- What is the cultural, social, political, spiritual significance of the art?
- What are the power relations with which the art is embedded?

Like the pūrākau that I worked with, each reading and re-reading revealed different aspects and interpretations, shifting in response to the intertextuality between the art, literatures and interview material and my own developing analysis and understanding. I agree with Naomi Simmonds (2014) and author, Taupōuri Tangarō (2007) who maintain that the nature of knowledge production is always situated, momentary, temporal and spatially bound.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have discussed how ceremony shaped my research as an embodied expression of my own spirituality. I also described my mana wahine ritual methodology - a highly responsive, fluid and collaborative approach shaped by mana wahine and Kaupapa Māori philosophical tenets. I examined in detail how these tenets were applied in my research, particularly whanaungatanga, whakapapa, wairuatanga, diversity, decolonisation and mana motuhake, and how this transformed my research process in unique and unconventional ways.

The challenges posed by my immersive approach was explored along with some of the complexities and internal struggles that I wrestled with in writing about the intimacies of spirituality and ceremony in an academic context. I detailed the significance of creating mana wahine sacred spaces in receiving Native women's stories and how these spaces mutually constitute and produce Native women's ritual knowledge.

In the next four chapters I map out the multiple ways in which Native women are recovering ceremony and restoring sacred relationships. I begin in the first of these four empirical chapters by analysing historical data that addresses the question 'Did Māori women fulfil ritual and ceremonial leadership roles for the hapū in customary Māori society and what did these roles consist of?' This chapter is important because it uncovers marginalised and unknown histories that challenge colonial constructs of Māori femininity and masculinity. It also establishes a whakapapa foundation in which contemporary Māori women's ceremonial expressions can be understood.

Following on from this chapter in Chapter 5 I examine some of the key colonial processes that smothered the ritual histories and ontologies of Māori women. Participants' stories are drawn on to discuss the consequences of the erosion of Native women's ritual knowledges today. Chapter 6 also draws on participant's stories that speak to the recovery and evolution of Native women's ceremony and the different social, spatial, cultural, political and ecological contexts in which these ceremonies are contextualised. Chapter 7 is largely informed by participant kōrero as well and examines the key site of menstruation rituals that are being recovered and developed today.

CHAPTER 4

Resurfacing the Tohunga Ruanuku



Figure 4.1 Haka party at Rotorua, 1901. Photographed by WHT. Partington. Ref: 1/1-003142-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Reprinted with permission.

histories carry spirits, ancestors waiting, breathing into the years and memories (Gonzales, 2012, p. xvii).

Introduction

Figure 4.1 is a photograph of a haka party at Rotorua during the 1901 visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York to Aotearoa. At the head of the haka party is an armed tipuna kuia, a wahine nanahu (also known as manu ngāngahu)¹³⁷ whose presence disrupts colonial depictions of Māori femininity and opens up powerful mana wahine ritual histories that have been marginalised. The purpose of this chapter is to excavate these understudied and largely unknown histories to challenge colonial constructs and to address the research question ‘did Māori women fulfil ritual and ceremonial leadership roles for the hapū in customary Māori society and what did these roles look like?’

These stories are presented to challenge the assertion that Māori women do not maintain their own profound ritual histories and knowledge. I summon these stories to facilitate decolonisation, to honor mana wahine histories and to inspire Māori

¹³⁷ I discuss the wahine nanahu in further detail later in this chapter.

women today to question the boundaries of what we have been taught to believe about ourselves (Irwin, 1991; Smith, L. T., 2012).

In accordance with the discipline of whakapapa that traces origins, I begin with the Hawaiki pūrākau of Hinateiwaiwā who sits at the navel center of Māori women's ritual arts. Described in literature as the 'role model of Māori womanhood' (see Anderson, 1928; Grey, 1956; Orbell, 1995), a close inspection of Hinateiwaiwā reveals an incendiary figure that transcends colonial constructs of Māori womanhood and opens up histories of ritual and military leadership. I trace the qualities of Hinateiwaiwā across tribal histories of the tohunga ruanuku, wahine nanahu and muru taua that exalt the feminine body as a ceremonial site of birth, death and renewal. Woven throughout these accounts is a critique of the politics of knowledge production that have obscured mana wahine ritual epistemologies to fortify a colonial patriarchal imperative.

The histories outlined in this chapter provide the whakapapa foundations of this thesis. The diverse ceremonial expressions of Māori women today, which are examined in the following chapters, weave into a feminine ritual continuum that extends back through the histories outlined here and into the cosmological story cycle. The stories represent a small but powerful sample of Māori women's ritual histories. Attention is focused on these histories because of their transformative qualities and the way they challenge lingering colonial constructs of both Māori femininity and Māori masculinity. The histories presented here are merely a beginning point and would deepen significantly through iwi specific examination.

Tohunga ruanuku: An obscured history

E ako au ki te haka!

E ako au ki te ringaringa

E ako au ki te whewhera

E kaore te whewhera

E ako au ki te kowhiti

E kaore te kowhiti

E kowhiti nuku e kowhiti rangi

E kowhiti puapua, e kowhiti werewere

E hanahana a tinaku e!

I learn to dance!

I learn to explore with my hands
I learn to open wide
Not to open wide
I learn to twitch
Not to twitch
Pulsating upwards, pulsating downwards
My vagina throbs, my vagina vibrillates
A haven of lingering warmth!
(Karetu, 1993, p. 15-16)

These words comprise an ancient haka,¹³⁸ believed to be the first ever composed (Karetu, 1993).¹³⁹ It is accredited to the atua wahine Hinateiwaiwā who is celebrated throughout the Pacific as the personification of the moon and women's ritual arts (Varez, 2002; Yates-Smith, 1998). Māori oral histories recount how Hinateiwaiwā summoned a war party of up to 40 chiefly women who lasciviously performed this haka, masquerading as a troupe of dancers (Grey, 1956). Their mission was to hunt out the deceptive Kae, a tohunga recognisable by his crooked front teeth, charged with murdering Tutunui, the beloved whale kaitiaki of the whānau of Hinateiwaiwā (Karetu, 1993; Royal, 1998). Their strategy was to use their sexual prowess, through dance,¹⁴⁰ to captivate the crowd and cause them to laugh, thus exposing the culprit with the crooked front teeth. After sailing throughout the Pacific Islands the war party arrived at Te Tihi o Manono, the home of the tohunga (Royal, 1998). Here they performed for their hosts and, as the night progressed, grew increasingly suspicious of a man in the crowd whose lips remained tightly sealed against a sea of titillated faces. Having identified their mark, the women turned to perform the erotically charged *E ako au ki te haka*, their movements culminating in exposing themselves to the electrified crowd. Ensnared by the force of the naked vulva opening toward him, the tohunga loses his

¹³⁸ A haka is a dance accompanied with song/chant.

¹³⁹ This whakapapa narrative is significant to a number of intersecting Māori systems of knowledge that include the origins of haka, taonga pūoro (traditional Māori music instruments), and the whare tapere (the house of performing arts).

¹⁴⁰ Dance is celebrated as a ritual medium of communion and alignment with atua throughout Polynesia (Tangaro, 2007). I discuss an example in Chapter 7.

composure, exploding into a fit of laughter that sealed his fate. Hinateiwaiwā, an expert in the ritual arts, puts the entire house to sleep through incantation before kidnapping the tohunga and luring him off to his death (Karetu, 1993; Royal, 2003).

E ako au ki te haka and the pūrākau behind it graphically narrates the assertiveness with which our ancestresses celebrated their sexual power.¹⁴¹ It is no peculiarity in Māori oral histories, rather it is another wild hillock in a landscape steeped in stories that ritualise the sheer force of women. Today, however, it is rare to witness such startling sexual chants. The sacred songs, stories and knowledge of Māori women that re-affirm and renew female power have retreated to the interior of our communities like the crevices of wild landscape upon the seams of western industrial society. Today, as I point out in Chapter 2, 5, and 7, many Māori women have not been taught to sing, but rather to shuffle and stammer over and around the language about our sexual bodies (Kent & Besley, 1990; Murphy, 2014; Smith, L. T., 2012).

E ako au ki te haka is significant because it casts light on histories that have been denied to Māori women and have become largely unknown. Though it is rare to witness Māori women performing karakia and publicly facilitating ceremony today,¹⁴² as it is widely viewed as a male domain, Māori oral histories suggest that this was not the case in the past. The military leadership that Hinateiwaiwā demonstrates in the story disturbs the sanitised colonial descriptions of Hinateiwaiwā that reinforce Christian and Victorian cultural constructs of what it means to be a ‘good’ woman (Anderson, 1928; Best, 1952; Orbell, 1995). In the pūrākau, Hinateiwaiwā the ‘role model of Māori womanhood’ is a priestess who ritualises the regenerative power of her reproductive body. She is a battle strategist and executer of justice to those that transgress sacred laws (Mikaere, 2017b). These elements all converge in dramatic iwi histories of women in warfare whose

¹⁴¹ Ngata and Jones Ngā Mōteatea volumes (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007) house many examples of women’s chants and songs of this nature.

¹⁴² It is important to point out, however, that some female ritual practices are performed in a way that is often concealed from public view. It is, therefore, difficult to determine the practice of feminine ritual art forms in public spaces.

leadership is relied upon in times of life and death for the whānau, hapū and iwi. I turn now to delve into these histories, examining the tohunga ruanuku first, followed by the roles of women in war.

Despite hegemonic colonial assertions that Māori women “had no karakia” (Macmillan Brown, 1907, p. 68) and were treated “no better than slaves, being drudges and outcasts from religion” due to the ‘profanity’ of their reproductive body (Macmillan Brown, 1907, p. xii), Māori oral histories consistently reveal otherwise:

He mea ano ko nga wahine nga tohunga, a he nui te mana o te wahine tohunga. ... he wahine rautahi ranei, he wahine kau ranei ko te ariki o aua wahine hei tohunga, a mana e mahi nga mahi tohunga katoa, i te mea ka akona ia hei tino tohunga, mana e kai nga kai tapu katoa e kai ai te tohunga ariki.

Women were also tohunga, and great was the mana of a woman tohunga. ...A childless woman, or any woman could from her position as first born, become tohunga and undertake all the tasks of a tohunga. Since she would be instructed as a full tohunga she would eat all the sacred food which a chief priest would eat (Binney & Chaplin, 1986, p. 24).

Kaupapa Māori Ngāti Porou scholar, Ron Ngata (2014, p. 158) in his doctoral thesis ‘Understanding matakite: A Kaupapa Māori study on the impact of matakite/intuitive experiences on wellbeing’ interviews Māori cultural practitioner Te Hānui who talks of the influential Mataatua tipuna kuia Hine-te-ariki:

Hine-te-ariki could foretell when it was a good and bad omen to go into battle. She would dream at night time and then in the morning she would blow the pūtātara and call all the tribe together, and then interpret it and sing a waiata matakite. All the tribes in this area would go to her before they went into battle. They'd ask her: “Can we go into battle today?” She would go to sleep, dream away. Next day, she'd wake up and say: “Kao, not time to go yet.” She was a cultivator, she was a prophecy teller, so she had quite an important role, he arikinui, he tohunga ruanuku. That's the female term for tohunga female, a tohunga ruanuku. He ariki tapairu - she was of the highest of rank on her bloodlines and born and bred here as tangata whenua, part of the original tribes Te Tini o Toi, Te Tini o Awa, Te Hapū Oneone ... the

source of the power of matakite comes from their land, their river ...
her ability to talk and prophesise came from the natural earth.

Te Hānui's description of the tipuna Hine-te-ariki and her influence amongst her people is revelatory in the context of literature that insist that women are "denizens of the cooking sheds" (Best, 1952, p. 101) and are thus, "outcasts from religion and all honored pursuits" (Macmillan Brown, 1907, p. 6). It is powerful in that it acknowledges the institutions of female tohungatanga and the respect this status was afforded by the iwi. Te Hānui's careful explanation of Papatūānuku and tribal lands as the source of spiritual revelation also highlights the impact of confiscation of tribal lands on the sacred ritual knowledges and practices of Māori women, and indeed the entire iwi, a point I return to examine in the following chapter.

Colonial historian, James Cowan (1939, p. 17) offers another profound example of a tohunga ruanuku, Harata Te Kumi a "wise woman of the West Coast" who he describes thus:

She was a ruahine,¹⁴³ a wahine mohio, a kuia matakite; that is to say, she was regarded as being possessed of certain occult knowledge, she was psychic and clairvoyant. She had been instructed in hidden sacred lore by her mother, who also was a wahine mohio, and by an elder who was a tohunga ... It was her part as the ruahine to participate in such ceremonies as removing the tapu from a new carved house, or a new canoe; in her the female element in all nature had its priestess. She was a seeress; she dreamed dreams of strange import; she beheld trance visions whose meaning she interpreted to the people. So wise a woman was a source of strength to any tribe, especially in the old war days.

Harata Te Kumi the priestess learned from the 'hidden sacred lore' of her mother, who Cowan relays gifts her daughter a most beloved whānau heirloom, the heitiki¹⁴⁴ named Panirau, who was imbued with the mana and tapu of successive generations of powerful women in Harata Te Kumi's whakapapa line (Cowan, 1939, p. 17). Cowan's account is striking in the way that it highlights matrilineal

¹⁴³ Ruahine can be translated as priestess. Hinateiwaiwā is said to have originated the ruahine institution and its accorded ritual practices (Orbell, 2005; Yates-Smith, 1998).

¹⁴⁴ The heitiki is a greenstone pendant that is highly prized in Māori society.

ritual knowledge traditions that have been almost entirely expunged from the record and annihilated from the memory of many (but not all) Māori women and their whānau. His acknowledgement of the power of the ‘wise woman’ as a source of formidable strength ‘especially in the old war days’ is refreshing and rare. It provides a clue to the central roles some Māori women played in warfare which represent submerged ritual histories that I examine in this chapter.

Harata Te Kumi’s visions and prophecy may have meant the difference between life and death for her iwi, Muaūpoko, whom she “took under her protection” (Cowan, 1939, p. 17). Her oracular insights were drawn on to navigate the complexities of inter-tribal relationships, issuing the ultimatum of war or alleviating discord and charting a course of peace. Colonial writer Joel Polack (1974/1838 p. 118-19) records a dramatic ritual encounter with a ‘wahine tohunga’ playing a similar role during a pōwhiri¹⁴⁵ in the Hokianga in which the tohunga smooths out the hostilities between the hau kāinga and manuhiri. Whilst the tohunga is characteristically unnamed, reflecting the politics of knowledge production that silence female agency, the description is still significant in the way that it demonstrates the mana that was accorded to female ritual leadership. In recounting the escalating tensions between the hau kāinga¹⁴⁶ and manuhiri, who had on an earlier occasion killed hau kainga tribal members, Polack (1974/1838) records the actions of a tohunga ruanuku of the hau kainga stating:

An elderly priestess then rose up, and commenced a chant commemorative of the circumstances of the visit; imploring the Taniwoa [Taniwha]¹⁴⁷, or divinity of the deep to stay his anger ... also to certain departed spirits which she named, bowing her head and raising her arms as she pronounced the names of each, and supplicated them not to wreak their wrath on us as we passed the sacred shores where their ossified remains lie buried.

¹⁴⁵ A ritual of encounter between the host group and visitors conducted on the marae ātea, the courtyard in front of the ancestral house.

¹⁴⁶ This term in this context is used to denote the hosts and locals of an area.

¹⁴⁷ Taniwha are non-human guardians that protect the wellbeing of certain areas in tribal lands and waterways.

The ancient crone then invoked the names of the illustrious dead who, in this existence, had been enemies to the Hokianga tribes, with whom my companions and I now dwelt, to spare us, who had not joined in the enormities committed by those people. The wahine tohunga commenced her cantatory prayers with a subdued cadence scarcely distinguishable; but, as she entered more fully on the subject, she became animated with fury. Her grey locks streamed in the wind; her eyes sparkled with peculiar brightness; her countenance appeared to dilate; and, from a quiet old lady as I first supposed her to be, she stood now confessed, like the Pythoness of yore, dealing forth to the assembled multitude her oracular inspirations, the truth of which none of her audience doubted (save myself). All listened with profound attention ... After this oration, she sat down exhausted, and both parties seemed on the most friendly terms (pp. 118-9).

The tohunga ruanuku from the Hokianga works between worlds, summoning local taniwha and those tīpuna slain to allow safe passage to the visitors. At the completion of her ceremony any ill will between the groups is alleviated and peace is established. Significantly, this ritual is conducted during the pōwhiri ceremony, something that one would never see on any marae ātea in the country today. It prompts reflection on how circumscribed and inflexible both the pōwhiri ceremony and the speaking roles of women have become in recent times as a consequence of the processes of colonisation and the silencing of these kinds of stories. I discuss the extinguishing of “the collective voice of women” (Evans, 1994a, p. 59) on the marae and in other spaces in Chapter 6. For now, I highlight the revelation that is this tohunga ruanuku from the north, who shifts the colonial frame and offers a glimpse into an expansive world that confounds contemporary narrow gender constructs.

Taming and un-naming

Pākehā scholar Adele Fletcher’s doctoral thesis ‘Religion, gender and rank in Maori society: A study of ritual and social practice in eighteenth and nineteenth-century documentary sources’ (Fletcher, 2000, p. 164-166) provides a sweep of historic accounts that refer to the prophecies of various female ‘oracles’ and ‘prophets’ such as Turoro, mother of a Kororareka chief, and Pori, the partner of one of Te Rangihaeata's warriors, who was famed for her ritual knowledge and regarded as a priestess. Most of her historic examples, however, refer to women that are

unnamed. Their stories remain vague, remote and obscured. This speaks to the way in which the roles, status, knowledge and ritual expertise of Māori women have been concealed by the bland reports of historians promoting 19th century colonial stereotypes of ‘native womanhood’ that fit racist and sexist ideologies (Hudson, 2010; Tamaira, 2010). Their obscurity dehumanises them and devalues their ritual knowledge and leadership (Mikaere, 2003; Pihama, 2001). This lack of depth and detail, Aroha Yates-Smith (1998, p. 43) points out, is “a mark of the marginalisation of the feminine”.

The most striking account amongst Fletcher’s obscure vignettes is of a female matakite’s dramatic intervention at a public sermon in 1839 in Taupō, where she threatens to throw herself into the boiling mudpools if her people turn their backs on their atua and embrace Christianity. Fletcher (2000) quotes the missionary Henry Williams who interprets her public vehemence as an expression of the “enmity of Satan” (p. 165) toward hearing the teachings of Jesus Christ and God. Fletcher (2000) makes the comment that perhaps the seer perceived that Christianity would cast her and women like her “outside the bounds of legitimacy” (p. 165).

This was indeed the case and can be witnessed in colonial representations of Māori women as ‘sexually immoral’, ‘deviant’ ‘wanton’ ‘contaminating’, ‘dangerous’, ‘malignant’ and ‘demonic’ as I discuss in Chapter 2 (Goldie, 1904; Hudson, 2010; Jahnke, 1997a; Pihama & Johnston, 1994). These representations frame Māori women and girls as sexual objects that are “more degraded than the males” (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 144). This led to the targeting of Māori women and girls by missionaries who removed them from the kainga to the mission stations where the ‘savage’ could be ‘civilised’ and their heathen ways put to rest (Fitzgerald, 1994; Jahnke, 1997b; Ross, 2006).

The targeting of Māori women was also motivated by a deeper imperative. It rested in the understanding that the easiest way to stamp out Māori beliefs and facilitate Christian conversion was to isolate and convert Māori women, and then release them back into their communities. As mothers and, thus, first teachers of the future generations, they would ‘convert from the inside’ (Davidson & Lineham, 1989; Ross, 2006). Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Toa Rangatira scholar, Huia Jahnke (1997a, p 101) points out that “The education of Māori women and girls was seen as a way

to transform Māori society into its rightful place as subordinate to Pākehā”.

For nineteenth century Pākehā missionary Johann Wohlers (2009, p. 126) Māori were “a people sunken so low in their scale of humanity” that they were naturally hurtling toward extinction. Their very survival rested in Māori women cohabiting with white men who, as Christian fathers, would ‘discipline’ them and their children and raise “their minds to a higher level of humanity” (pp. 128-29). Wohlers and other early missionaries and colonial historians were deeply disturbed by the agency afforded Māori women and the lack of physical chastisement of children, which to them was a symbol of the inferiority of Māori society. In establishing his mission amongst Māori in Te Wai Pounamu¹⁴⁸ Wohlers (2009) remarks:

The children could no longer be allowed to have their own perverse ways; but as the parents did not know how to correct them, I had to take the chastisement in hand. If children were under a sentence of whipping, they knew that it would be carried out ... When those children felt the guilty weight getting too heavy on their minds, they came to me of their own accord, and begged to have the whipping over, so that they might feel good again (pp. 130-1).

These disturbing statements reflect the colonisation of the mind through the manipulation of Christian notions of guilt, shame and sin that could only be alleviated through violence and subservience to white father/husbands and the authority of the missionaries as agents of god (Pihama, 2001). In the mission stations Māori women were encouraged to abandon their own language and ‘nonsensical ceremonial absurdities’ and assume the ‘superiority’ of white, Christian behaviours (Davidson & Lineham, 1989; Fitzgerald, 1994; Ross, 2006). Here they also learned to censor themselves under the ‘surveilling gaze’ (Foucault, 1975) of the missionary wives who considered their sexually celebratory attitudes ‘repulsive’ and ‘disgusting’ (Davidson & Lineham, 1989). The cultivation of Māori women as domestic handmaidens in mission stations is a far cry from the tohunga ruanuku and wahine nanahu who led war parties, who I discuss shortly.

The colonisation of their minds and spiritualities extended to the taming and

¹⁴⁸ Te Wai Pounamu is the Māori name for the South Island of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

disciplining of their bodies. This involved the cutting of the hair (an extremely tapu ceremonial practice that traditionally involved fasting), and the washing, sanitising and dressing of the body in European women's clothing. Confinement within the mission picket fence where the missionary wives could monitor their behaviour and crush any expressions of indigeneity would have gone a long way in fracturing the practices of mana wahine ritual knowledge (Fitzgerald, 1994; Ross, 2006). Yet it did not stamp them out (as I explore in the following chapters), nor did Māori women 'submit' easily to subservience, as evidenced in the letters of missionary wives who whine of their insolence (Davidson & Lineham 2006; Ross, 2006).

Perhaps Fletcher's (2000) matakite in Taupō, mentioned earlier, who threatened to cast herself into the boiling mud pools sensed the lineage of Christianity, deeply implicated in genocidal histories, including the mass exterminations of Indigenous peoples in the Americas (Lange, 1999; Marmon-Silko, 1996) and the barely concluded witch hunts of Britain and Europe (Federici, 2014). Like the witch - the motif of insurgency toward the Christian, patriarchal moral order - Māori women and spiritual-ritual systems that exalted the whare tangata needed to be silenced in the interests of the new colonial regime. In Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 I discuss ways in which this objective was achieved. In this chapter, however, I want to focus on the veneration of the womb as a cultural tenet within traditional Māori society and the ways in which this shaped mana wahine ritual histories and tikanga practice.

The exaltation of the mother

Whilst Elsdon Best (1902, p. 26-7) consistently denies the ritual leadership of Māori women, examples consistently slip through the cracks of his frigid renditions of womanhood. An example is a tūā chant recited in a ritual process to lift the intense tapu of childbirth from the mother and baby. The chant invokes the power of the ruahine, contradicting Best's own strident assertions that deny such a thing ever existed:

Ka mama ki uta, ka mama ki tai
Ka mama ki nga tupuna
Ka mama ki nga ruahine
Ka mama ki nga taketake
Ka mama ki te hau e tu nei
Kia uaua, kia toa, kia maia

Kia whete, kia hokai, kia tikoro
Kia whete ki nga koromatua
Oi whiwhia! Oi rawea!

The ruahine is invoked along with the power of the land, wind and sea that the child might act fiercely, boldly and courageously in life so ‘that the tīpuna might see’ (Best, 1902). This is similar in tone to the tohi rite for babies in which Hinetītama, the shape shifter whose courage shaped a unique destiny for her, is summoned to instill warrior characteristics (Yates-Smith, 1998).

Ngāti Porou scholar, Hirini Reedy (1996) writes of the oriori¹⁴⁹ institution where the baby within the ahuru mowai – the dark cavern of the womb - is implanted with the ‘warrior spirit’, receiving orientations steeped in the vast network of whakapapa relationships and geographies. The oriori introduces the powerful idea that the whare tangata is the first whare wānanga.¹⁵⁰ It is the first house of learning where the ancestor residing in the womb receives their earliest set of teachings, orienting them in a current of whakapapa that stretches across a vast ocean of time and space (Epiha, 2011; Kahukiwa & Potiki, 1999). Through the oriori, esoteric strands of knowledge are woven with tribal histories and conveyed to the incoming spirit (Ngata, 1951). The deeds and qualities of illustrious tīpuna are mapped out as navigational points for the spirit of the incoming ancestor to further.¹⁵¹ Ngata (1951, p. 6) points out that in former times “if perhaps an unavenged defeat or insult lay

¹⁴⁹ Oriori can be translated as a lullaby chant which is intoned during pregnancy as the ancestor develops in the womb.

¹⁵⁰ I acknowledge the whare tangata as the first whare wānanga to trouble historians and writers who claim that Māori women did not maintain their own sacred learning spaces (Best, 1923; Heuer, 1972). Hirini Mead (2003) and the late Taranaki historian, Te Miringa Hohaia (in Murphy, 2011, p. 110) also challenge this assertion. The later points out that women’s whare wānanga were established around the mountain and photographic evidence remains (in Murphy, 2013).

¹⁵¹ Ngāti Porou tohunga, the late Amster Reedy, points out there are different types of oriori. He recalls the famous Ngāti Porou oriori Pō Pō that was used to call breastfeeding whales to shore so that the milk could be collected for a mother who’s milk may have dried up. Reedy points out that Ngāti Porou have a long and intimate relationship with whale, who carried their tīpuna Paikea to Aotearoa. Thus, for them, the nourishment of their tamariki through the milk of whales, is situated within a profound and ancient whakapapa relationship (in Epiha, 2011).

somewhere on the child's ancestral line, he or she would be incited to deeds of valour”, thus the ‘warrior spirit’ would here be implanted. These examples reflect an entire system of ritual practices that acknowledge the central significance of the whare tangata in shaping the qualities and characteristics of the generations of a whānau whakapapa line.

Through such whare tangata rituals, young warriors were oriented to their life trajectory. This was further nurtured in some instances through martial art instruction by formidable women. As a young boy growing up in Taranaki, community leader and activist Rawiri Doorbar remembers hearing about how women learned more taiaha¹⁵² moves than men, something I have also heard over the years. Rawiri states simply:

They were the last line of defence and the most fierce line of defence because of the whare tangata, protecting the tamariki. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the way our tīpuna were. This korero shaped how I see women (R. Doorbar, personal communication, November 8, 2016).

Reedy (1996, p. 51) offers the example of Ngāti Porou tipuna kuia, Tama-te-aupoko, who trained her three sons, Uetaha, Tania, and Raramatai as well as others, in the art of war and weaponry. Furthermore, Reedy makes the stunning observation:

In many cases warrior sons were known by the names of their mothers such as Nga Kuri Paaka a Uetuhiao (The Brown Dogs of Uetuhiao), Te Tokotoru a Kokamutu (The Triad of Kokamutu) and Te Koau Tono Hau a Te Ataakura (The wind-soaring cormorant of Te Ataakura). Sometimes warriors named their weapons after their mothers such as Tuterangikatipu, a great Ngatiporou [sic] warrior who named his axe, *Te Karere o Hinemateatea (Messenger of Hinemateatea)* after his mother, Hinemateatea. Te Otane, the famous Ngati Kahungunu warrior named his taiaha and his mere after his mother and grandmother (Italics in original).

The naming of warriors and of weaponry after mothers and grandmothers points to Native constructs of womanhood that are radically different to colonial assertions.

¹⁵² Long wooden weapon.

These examples also challenge colonial re-definitions of Māori masculinity that are steeped in masculinist notions of ‘warriorhood’ that fail to link male tapu to the tapu of the whare tangata and, as an extension, both female and male divinities. This is an important point to make because it unlocks the potential for healing and transformation and provides space for the complexity and nuance of fluid and diverse gender identities.

These examples reflect a culture that celebrates the central significance of the whare tangata and align with comments made by Paula Gunn Allen (1992, p. 28) about the veneration of the ‘mother’ in ritual and tribal societies:

Pre-contact American Indian women valued their role as vitalizers because they understood that bearing, like bleeding, was a transformative ritual act. Through their own bodies they could bring vital beings into the world – a miraculous power unrivaled by mere shamanic displays. They were mothers, and that word implied the highest degree of status in ritual cultures. The status of mother was so high, in fact, that in some cultures Mother or its analogue, Matron, was the highest office to which a man or woman could aspire. The old ones were empowered by their certain knowledge that the power to make life is the source and model of all ritual magic and that no other power can gainsay it ... At Laguna, all entities, human or supernatural, who are functioning in a ritual manner at a high level are called Mother.

My kuia, tohuna tipua Rangimarie Pere, has written about the significance of the mother energy (1982, 1994). Her writings speak to the womb as a cosmological altar, a consecrated site of primary power, and an origin point and axis of intergenerational whakapapa relationships that connect through the navel. It makes sense, then, that rank in traditional Māori society was passed on through the uterine waters, as it also is in Hawai’i and perhaps other places within Polynesia (Binney & Chaplin, 1986; K. Nunes, personal communication, June 16, 2016; K. Pisciotta, personal communication, June 20, 2016). A clue lies in the preliminary Māori question ‘ko wai koe?’ – ‘who are you?’ or ‘whose birthing waters do you come from?’ (Tomoana, 2018).

The late Taranaki historian and tino rangatiratanga activist, Te Miringa Hohaia, supports these statements in his analysis that:

The massive amount of 19th century manuscript material I have within the Te Kaahui Kararehe manuscript is consistently clear that the most prestigious lines of descent are those beginning from leading women of the tribe. Even when significant male ancestors are being presented, the whakapapa returns back to that man's 'ara tamawahine'¹⁵³ line of descent. The explanations, or whakapapatanga koorero were always the same, here is an example:

'Ko Te Rangihatuake, he ariki nui noo teenei iwi o Taranaki, aa, he uri anoo noo roto i te kete ngee o toona kuia nei, o Ueroa'

'Te kete ngee' being the matriarchal gene pool. The male line was never presented in any way comparable to this. This was where mana came from. This was where the tribe placed its pride. Not in the man but in his Kuia.

For me, any notion that male lines of descent are the superior lines, or that whakapapa seniority came down through the eldest son in each generation, are a complete brainwash by the patriarchy enforced mainly through Christianity and European inferiority complex. It's because of this that many Maaori men lost the plot and have inferred a 'noa' status to women and gone along with a dialogue of 'paru'¹⁵⁴ (T. Hohaia, personal communication, January 11, 2010).

The mana and pride of the iwi, according to Te Miringa Hohaia, came from the kuia, the whare tangata, the originator of the people. His revelatory and deeply decolonising comments demolish colonial constructs and reframe notions of gender within oral literatures that convey Tangata Whenua philosophies that exalt the primary power of the whare tangata.

Women played a central role in warrior rites in classical Māori society and these stories comprise a prominent thread within mana wahine ritual histories. One example is puberty rites in which tohunga ruanuku bestow the young warrior with a war belt. James Cowan (1911, p. 152-53) provides an example in his narration of

¹⁵³ This can be translated as female line of descent.

¹⁵⁴ Here Te Miringa is referring to on-going colonial representations of women's menstrual blood as 'paru' and some Māori men's reinforcement of this narrative. I discuss this in further detail in Chapter 7.

the life of British regiment deserter, Kimble Bent, who lived with the ‘Hauhau rebels’ in Taranaki in the 1860s’. Cowan describes the rangatira Tutangē Waionui, a young man and descendent of Turi, the navigator of the Aotea¹⁵⁵ waka, who recounts how his father’s sister conducted ceremony to bestow him with a sacred war mat - the maro taua in preparation for war:

[She] called me to her, together with certain other young men who were of rangatira rank, and who had not yet fought the white man. She was a chieftainess, by name, Tāngamoko; she was of ariki birth in the Ngāti Ruanui tribe, and being possessed of mana-tapu and of knowledge of charms and incantations, she was as a priestess amongst the people. She called us to her, and told us she was about to make us tamariki tapu, that is, sacred children, for the coming battle. She girded us each with a fine waist garment, the korowai, made of soft dressed and closely woven white flax, with short black thrums, or cords, hanging down it. These flax vestures, falling from our waists to our knees, she had made herself. They were the garments of war; she had karakia'd over them and charmed them so that the bullets of the enemy should not touch them, and so that we, their wearers, might conquer in the fight. And very proud and confident tamariki tapu we were now, parading the pa in our bullet-proof korowai, and dancing our weapons in the air as we leaped with our elders in the haka.

The account provides an example of Māori women’s ritual ability to whakatapu and whakanoa, a point stressed by Ani Mikaere (2017a), who argues that the ability to negotiate the boundary between the two stems from cosmological cultural constructs of women as the pathway in and out of the world through the birth canal. Also implicit in the description is the capacity of women to provide psychic and spiritual protection. This is a theme I have examined in earlier work and is further demonstrated in the examples in this chapter and in Chapter 7 (Murphy, 2011).

British naval officer, Richard Cruise (1824, p. 269), documents another account of battle preparation conducted by the tohunga ruanuku on behalf of the iwi:

¹⁵⁵ The Aotea waka is one of the many great migratory vessels that transported Māori to Aotearoa from the ancestral lands of Hawaiki. Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi, Ngā Rauru Kītahi, Ngāti Ruanui are the peoples associated with Aotea.

An elderly female, or kind of priestess, of the tribe of any warrior who is going to fight, abstains from food for two days, and on the third, when purified and influenced by the Atua, after various ceremonies, pronounces him an incantation for the success and safety of him she is about to send into battle.

These descriptions clearly reveal the presence of female ceremonial experts in customary Māori society and demonstrate the central significance of mana wahine ritual arts to the wellbeing of the hapū and iwi, whose lives depended on the success of the ceremonies performed. The central significance of women in these roles is consistent with the fact that the hapū originate from the whare tangata who births the people into being and acts as a spiritual guardian in life and death (Binney, 2010a; Binney & Chaplin, 1986; Mikaere, 2017a).

The historic theme of powerful women equipping young men with the skills necessary to achieve their goals is established in the sacred story cycle of Maui the Polynesian culture hero and trickster figure, whose kuia enabled his daring pursuits (Mikaere, 2017a; Murphy, 2013; Robertson, 2008). Murirangawhenua gives her 'sacred jawbone', an analogy not only for the knowledge of incantation, but also the ritual understanding that what is created above (through karakia and ceremony), manifests below, transmitted in the expression 'te kauae runga, te kauae raro' (Jensen & Jensen, 2005; Smith, P., 1913). Maui fishes up whole archipelagoes with that sacred jawbone, a testimony to the power that comes from women to manifest land/life/bodies out of the amniotic womb water (Kahukiwa & Pōtiki, 1999).

At Haleakalā in Hawai'i, Maui is raised by his mother Hina and given hair from the head of his kuia, Kamaunuiāniho, to braid and snare the sun, slowing its passage through the sky (K. Nunes, personal communication, June 16, 2016). The hair, like the head, represents a concentration of tapu in Polynesian thought and is often used in rites (Te Rangikāheke in Thornton, 1992). It represents 'he iho makawe rau' – 'a line of a hundred strands of hair' that symbolise lines of descent from the tipuna and the sacred knowledge accumulated in each generation (Binney & Chaplin, 1986; Te Rangikāheke in Thornton, 1992). Through the gift of his kuia's hair, Maui is handed matrilineal intergenerational knowledge to 'snare the sun', a metaphor for learning how to be most productive with the time one is given, and in esoteric speak, reaching the zenith of ones potential and purpose.

Maui is also given the power of fire by the kuia Mahuika at her home in Rarohenga (Tikao in Beattie, 1990). In doing so she gifts him with the element that empowers incantation, the element described as the ‘secret and sacred power of mana wahine’- the regenerative fire of the womb (Kame’ele’ihiwa, 1999; Robinson, 2005). The late Kai Tahu tohuka, Taare Tikao (in Beattie, 1990, p. 96) describes the nature of sacred fire and mana thus:

Mana holds from the beginning to the end of the world, and it keeps the world going ... The *mana* of the Maori was nothing but sacred fire. The *whare-mauri* (or *whare-maire*), the *whare-pu-rakau*, the *whare-kura*, and the *whare - wanaka*, which were the old Maori houses of learning, were nothing but fire, and were kept going by the fire of *mana* ... The *tuahu* (altar) was nothing but fire (Italics in original).

German comparative studies scholar, Agathe Thornton (1992) drawing on Ngāti Rangiwewehi rangatira and scholar, Te Rangikāheke, describes fire as the seat of a woman’s power that flashes like lightning from the opening vulva of Hinenuitepō in cosmogonic stories, conveying her ultimate supremacy. Mahuika gifts this power to Maui who casts it aside without regard. When Mahuika realises Maui intends to extinguish her fire and thus kill her (a powerful sexual metaphor and caution for wāhine) she envelopes him in a blaze. Whilst he escapes the inferno, Mahuika’s sister Hinenuitepō, who shares her home at Rarohenga, does not forget this insult and exacts revenge as I examine shortly (Hanson & Hanson, 1983).

These stories represent Oceanic cosmological philosophies that reframe notions of femininity and masculinity within cultural paradigms in which women are recognised as vital repositories of sacred ritual knowledge. These histories defy colonial stereotypes designed to ‘keep women in their place’ as secondary, and men ignorant of the divine feminine within them and the boundaries of their own power (Mikaere, 2017a; Ngata, 2014). Moreover, within the cosmological stories Māori women consistently maintain and enforce their own authority. Like her sister Hinenuitepō and niece, Hinateiwaiwā, Mahuika responds swiftly and aggressively to transgression. As Ani Mikaere (2017a) and Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) point out, the cosmological stories provide the blue print of Māori social orderings. Given the mana of the atua wāhine it follows that Māori women similarly maintained formidable authority in traditional Māori society.

Whilst I have given examples of *tohunga ruanuku* and *wāhine Māori* who conducted specific roles in traditional Māori warfare, they also consistently feature in *whakapapa* histories “in directing operations” (Heuer, 1972, p. 44). In the next few sections I turn to examine these submerged histories in closer detail in the hope that they challenge, inspire, decolonise, and transform the ways that Māori women see ourselves and are seen by others.

At the vanguard of battle

Figure 4.2 is of an unidentified *kuia* dressed in black and displaying *pūkana*¹⁵⁶ at the vanguard of the *haka* party. Her prominent positioning in front of the armed men, who provide her with a wide berth, indicates the significance of her presence, despite the bland caption, which leaves her unidentified (Smith, L. T., 1992; Yates-Smith, 1998).



Figure 4.2: Maori group. McDonald, James Ingram, 1865-1935: Photographs. Ref: PAColl-0477-03. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Reprinted with permission.

¹⁵⁶ To *pūkana* is to dilate the eyes and stare wildly to excite the emotions and bring emphasis to specific words and phrases in *haka* performance (Kāretu, 1993).

Whakapapa accounts of Māori women leading war parties can be traced back to the Hawaiki narrative of Hinateiwaiwā who led her ope taua¹⁵⁷ wāhine across the Pacific looking for the treacherous tohunga Kae. Whilst aligned with childbirth and the creative arts, Hinateiwaiwā was also a powerful spell crafter, military strategist and fighter, as I pointed out earlier. The following incantation of antiquity is credited to Hinateiwaiwā, or rather Hinauri, the name that represents Hina in the dark phase of the moon, who chants this sequence to kill the two other wives of her own husband, Tinirau (Mitcalfe, 1974, p. 21):

*Haruru tenei toki
Ngahoa tenei toki
Hei pao i to uru, tenei toki
He pao i te rori.
Tena toki ka haruru,
Tena toki ka ngatoro te ao
Ko te toki o Whiro te tupua,
Manawa ko koe, Kaitangata.*

*Let this axe roar
This is the axe that will split heads
Bite into skulls, this axe
Will eat your brains,
This axe will roar,
This axe will echo round the universe,
For it is the axe of Whiro the demon,
Power to you, Eater of men.*

Rather than a demure Christian caricature of female domesticity and subservience, Hinateiwaiwā the ‘role model of Māori womanhood’ is an incendiary figure who merges expertise in the ritual arts with military prowess and a scrappy, volatile temperament.

Reedy (1996) charts the continuation of these ‘feminine’ traits across Māori martial art histories stating:

¹⁵⁷ War party.

Women also served as priestesses of war. One woman tohunga, Hinehau of Nga Puhi from Whangarei was famous for her prophecies of war. Even in death she decreed ‘Place my bones in the wahitapu, in the cave at the foot of the hill. On the eve of any battle the chief must sleep beside them and my mana will ensure success. Disobey my command and you will suffer defeat’ (p. 51).

Scottish scholar, John Macmillan Brown in *Maori and Polynesian: Their origin, history and culture* (1907) wrestles with the contradictions that inevitably arise in attempting to impose Victorian and Christian constructs of womanhood onto Māori women, one minute asserting they “had no karakia” (p. 9) to the next breathless observations that they:

were priestesses and seers, whose utterances were received with awe, and whose persons were guarded with reverence. They mingled with the men in warfare, and contributed not a little to the enthusiasm of the battle and the success of the victory. Nay, we hear not infrequently of chieftainesses who led the defence of a pa or the march of the warriors into battle. For the women had practically equal rights of inheritance with the men (Macmillan Brown, 1907, p. 64).

A profound example is found in my own tribal lands in the 1865 battle at Te Tapiri between my Ngāi Tuhoe and Ngāti Manawa relations. Best (1898, 1972, p. 585) writes that despite the simmering tension, “Not a shot was fired before the arrival of the ‘prophetess’” Maraea Tu Te Maota, who directed the seige and was the acting tohunga in charge on the Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Haka Patuheuheu side. Upon a Ngāti Manawa volley into the Tuhoe camp Best (1972, p. 586) records:

Maraea at once sprang to the front of her small party of Patu-heuheu and called on them to fight hard, that the enemy was about to fly. She acted, according to the evidence of observers, like a demented person, and pretended to catch the bullets of the enemy in her hands, without harm to herself.¹⁵⁸

In the Ngāti Manawa contingent was the ‘prophetess’ Hinekou who Ngāti Manawa histories record as a “celebrated kuia matakite who recited ancient incantations, read the signs of earth and sky, interpreted dreams and performed ceremonies to

¹⁵⁸ I discuss a deeper element of this account in Chapter 7.

defeat the enemy” (Reedy, 1996, p. 51). Hinekou fought with “amazonion strength” at the battle of Te Tapiri and led the battle strategy through her prophetic visions (Bird, 1980, p. 20). Cowan provides an extraordinarily detailed account of the *tohunga kuia*:

Among the women of Ngati-Manawa was a highly valuable auxiliary to the fighting force, a celebrated *kuia matakite*, or prophetess and sorceress, by name Hinekou. She was the mother of the two young warriors Te Mau-paraoa and Raharuhi. In her hands rested the direction of what may be called the religious or occult side of the operations. She was of the old cannibal age, and was a sorceress of reputedly terrible powers. She betook herself to her ancient gods, and continually recited *karakia Maori*, incantations of pagan days, read the *tohu* or signs of earth and sky, interpreted dreams, and performed dark ceremonies to confound and defeat the enemy. So wise a woman was a source of enormous strength in stiffening the morale of a Maori war-party (Cowan, 1956, p. 87 *Italics in original*).

Hinekou, the wise woman, waited for a *tohu*, a sign from the gods, and she counseled patience for a little while. The old seeress watched the heavenly bodies at night and presently announced that the propitious time had arrived. The *tohu* was a small star just above the moon. Hinekou announced dramatically that it represented the small war-party of the Kawanatanga - the Government - while the moon symbolized the large force of the Hauhaus. The sight of the star in the ascendant signified that the Kawanatanga would prevail over the foe. The *kokiri* (the storming-party) had already been selected by the prophetess. One by one she told off the men for the assault. Some volunteers were bidden remain in the *pa*, for Hinekou's gods warned her that they would fall if they ventured forth. Certain eager young men marched out in spite of her admonitions and they were killed, as she had predicted (Cowan, 1956, p. 91).

Cowan's (1956) account of the battle of Te Tapiri is striking and rare in that it exalts a female war leader and her ritual leadership. His rich descriptions of Hinekou the 'wise woman' and his emphasis on the enormous strength that her powers brought to fortify the resolve of the war party is perhaps unparalleled amongst the colonial ethnographers, whose patriarchal attitudes led to sweeping censorship of *mana wahine* ritual histories (Murphy, 2011; Yates-Smith, 1998). His descriptions are an anomaly amongst his contemporaries, not only because of the detail, but also because he points out that of the 40 Ngāti Manawa warriors at the siege, half were

women and girls whose names he records. I recount their names here, the fighting kuia from my own iwi:

Maraea Rawiri, Hinekou, Te Pare Tipua, Te Hau, Ramarihi te Hau, Roka Hika, Erena Horomona, Ruihi Eru, Te Amoroa, Mere Peka, Mere Rangiheuea, Ripeka Harehare, Hana Tia Poia, Raiha Poia (wife of Rewi Rangiamio), Kutia Poia, Waretini Paurini, Mereana Harete Peraniko, Ruihi Tamaku, Mera Peka Tamehana, Te Puaka Huriwaka, Nga-Aikiha Marunui, and Heni (sister of Harehare Ahuriri and the wife of Ngawaka Te Toroa) (Cowan, 1956, p. 87).

These histories of women fighting in armed combat, leading the rituals on the battle field and directing military strategy through their oracular insight, demolishes colonial representations of women that relegate them to the domestic realm as inferior and spiritually defiling (Best, 1924; Salmond, 2004). They provide powerful counter-narratives to colonial representations and reopen histories that have been carefully smothered and denied. I turn now to examine in further detail the incendiary figure known as the wahine nanahu – the women who led war parties.

The wahine nanahu

Histories of the tohunga ruanuku are tightly interwoven with tribal accounts of wāhine who fought in armed combat alongside their tribal brothers. In particular, the elusive figure of the wahine nanahu emerges in these whakapapa accounts. Rangitunoa Black explains that the wahine nanahu are women of senior whakapapa lineage who commanded and led war parties into battle. Flipping through a whānau photo album in her lounge one windy afternoon Rangitunoa points to photos of her kuia who were wahine nanahu trained in taiaha, haka and the arts of pūkana. Rangitunoa explains that the meaning of ‘nana’ is the child who frets and cries for the breast:

they nanahu for the source. The ‘hu’ is that they’re so worked up about it ... that’s the ‘hu’ of the war party, they’re so worked up about it...the wahine’s role as whare tangata, and the role of wahine nanahu, is a woman that has bared children and she knows the exact depth of the ‘nana’ of the child therefore of the war party, her job is to create the energy to get that whare taua into peak and slick condition (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016).

Te Arawa poi expert, Ngamoni Huata (2000, p. 44), also describes the role of wahine nanahu as raising the energy by motivating “their men into tumultuous frenzy prior to and during battle”. Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Kahungunu scholar, Tīmoti Kāretu (1993, p. 32) adds that these women would protect the flank of the troupe and were always armed. Examples of women performing this role can be found in a smattering of historic narratives and photographs presented in this chapter, that when clustered together open up a powerful mana wahine socio-political, ritual lineage.

Rangitunoa Black points out that the role of the wahine nanahu was spiritual as much as it was physical, stating that in battle:

Everything was done with the invisible army. The tohunga did not go to war until they had read the astrological charts, they read what the birds were saying, what the water is doing. Everything changes in the forest and on the land when there is warfare. Everything goes quiet, and so in that quiet space they've got to conjure up and prepare for war ... the women were tribal scribes and so they carried in their haka the phrases that would then connect the warriors, raising them to a higher level of vibration ... Wahine nanahu are commander in the armies ... Why was it a woman? Because the whare tangata is now at risk and so the women are required to fight shoulder to shoulder with the men. The women inspire, because of their whakapapa, because of the arranged marriages between them - they are pākūhā women, there is an arranged marriage behind them ... She's fighting for offspring survival and she's leading those men like Mihi-ki-te-kapua¹⁵⁹ did, not only through physical, but through the third eye (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016).

Beyond the weapons they raised and the phrases of haka that elevated the energy of the men, who they then unleashed upon the enemy, these women led through the ‘third eye’ – through spiritual and prophetic revelation. Like the tohunga ruanuku whose oracular insights guided the iwi, the role of the wahine nanahu was a central force in life and death situations.

¹⁵⁹ Mihi-ki-te-kapua is a famous Ngāti Ruapani composer.

Examples of wahine nanahu, tohunga ruanuku, and women who fought on behalf of their iwi, cluster around the 1864 battle of Ōrākau. My own kuia from Waikaremoana, Te Urewera and Ngāti Manawa travelled to Waikato to fight against colonial troops. Here women fought and died, bayoneted to death even as they lay wounded, by colonial troops whose behavior has been described by Pākehā interpreter, William Mair, as ‘obscene’ (New Zealand History, 2014). One hundred and sixty Māori died at the battle of Ōrākau (Cowan, 1955, p. 401), amongst them the famous Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Rangiwewehi chieftaness, Hineiturama, whose famous compositions illustrate that the path of war was, for her, an inheritance laid down by her mother, a wahine nanahu:

*Mōkai taku whaea i riro atu nā,
I waiho ai hei hikihiki taua
Ki te ihu o Pauanui, ko te hapū Pararaki*

*Dishonoured is my mother now departed,
She who once roused warlike bands
To storm the heights of Pauanui, of the Pararaki clan
(Ngata & Jones, 2005, p. 154 – 155).*

The fame of Ōrākau is partly due to the chieftaness, Ahumai Te Paerata, whose response, recorded by Cowan (1935, p. 105) to colonial troops calling for the surrender of the women and children has gone down in history as a rallying cry for Māori resistance to Pākehā hegemony:

‘Ki te mate ngā tane, me mate anō ngā wahine me ngā tamariki! Ka whawhai tonu matou mo ake tonu atu!’ – If the men die, so too shall the women and children! We will fight you forever!

Ahumai Te Paerata paid for her resistance with bullets. Cowan records (1935, p. 113):

On that fatal second of April, 1864, she suffered terrible wounds. She was shot in the right side, the bullet going through her body and coming out on her left side. She was shot through the right shoulder; the bullet went out at her back. She was also hit in the wrist, hand and arm. Yet wounded almost unto death as she was, she struggled through the swamp of death that lay between the Orakau ridge and the Puniu River, the line of retreat on which scores of her comrades were killed. She survived, she reached her distant home at Waipapa, near Lake Taupo,

with her gallant brother Hitiri Te Paerata and the mournful remnant of her tribes, the Ngati-Te-Kohera and the Ngati Raukawa.

It is important to highlight this story and Ahumai Te Paerata's injuries to remind Māori men, particularly, that our kuia put their own lives on the line to defend mana Māori motuhake.¹⁶⁰ To treat Māori women as subservient to 'male tapu', as some Māori men do today, dishonors our tīpuna who worked, fought and died together to preserve the land and our way of life.

Cowan (1955, p. 373) explains that there were three acting tohunga at the battle of Ōrākau who conducted the ceremonies; Apiata, Tiniwata Te Kohika and Ahuriri, a woman gifted with the powers of prophecy. Cowan relays her instructions to a group of scouts in the preparation for battle:

While the people were entrenching the position several men were sent, on the suggestion of a prophetess, to procure some otaota (fern, or leaves of shrubs) from the scene of the bloodshed at Rangiaowhia. The otaota was to be used in ceremonies to propitiate the deities and ensure the successful defence of the fort. But the scouts did not reach Rangiaowhia. One of them was shot in an encounter with some troops near the Manga-o-Hoi, and the others returned without the material for the luck-bringing rite.

The battle at Ōrākau was one of the most important battles of the colonial era in which our tīpuna formed extensive inter-tribal alliances and took up arms to assert tino rangatiratanga over our own lands. It was a battle that was bitterly lost. Cowan (1956, p. 163), once again, records the response of Waikato, Ngati-Raukawa, and Ngati-Haua who in March 1867 attempted to invade the lands of Te Arawa and exact revenge for the role Te Arawa played in blocking the reinforcements from the East Coast who were traveling to join the fighters at Ōrākau. Cowan recounts that the invading Waikato war party, which comprised 70 fighters:

was headed by a woman ... Pare Turanga, a high prophetess and a sorceress or seer of visions (matakite) ... The enemy were led on by Pare Turanga, the chieftainess ... a handsome young woman, tattooed on chin and lips, attired in beautiful native garments of finely dressed

¹⁶⁰ This can be translated as our total autonomy and authority as Māori in our own lands.

flax - a huaki with its double flounce of taniko pattern about the shoulders, leaving the right arm bare, and a korowai of white flax with dangling black dyed thrums around the waist. Huia-feather's adorned her luxuriant black hair. She wielded a long spear-headed taiaha, and this she handled in true warrior fashion as she came running on at the head of her warriors, perfectly indifferent to danger.

Cowan (1956, p. 164) explains that finding themselves outflanked by Te Arawa, the Waikato contingent are forced to retreat. He continues:

The last to leave the battlefield - as she had been the first to enter it - was the fearless chieftainess, brandishing her red feather-decked taiaha, and rolling her eyes in the warrior grimace of the pukana until the shelter of the thickets was reached. Seven Waikato warriors were killed in and around this pa of Te Koutu; their bodies were interred in an ancient wahi-tapu, or burying-ground, which is marked to-day by an old willow-tree.

One of the most striking aspect of Cowan's account is the faith and trust accorded Pare Turanga by the inter-tribal alliance - male warriors, all of whom put their own lives in her hands. Like Maraea Tu Te Maota, Hinekou and Mihi-ki-te-kapua, mentioned earlier, the esoteric knowledge of Pare Turanga and her fighting prowess must have been held in high esteem to place her at the head of the war party.

Cowan's descriptions are an anomaly amongst most of his contemporaries, whose simplistic representations of Māori womanhood conceal not only the mana of Māori women in iwi histories but also the deep bond between tribal sisters and brothers who fought and died alongside one another to protect their way of life (Pere, 1982; Murphy, 2013). Instituting hierarchy between the genders has been a powerful colonial weapon that continues to fragment and violate the whānau unit as I discuss in Chapter 2 (Irwin, 1991; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pitman, 2012).

Figure 4.3 of a Ngāti Kahungunu haka party reflects iwi battle histories in which women and men fought alongside one another to protect their way of life. It conveys an important decolonising and political visual narrative for Māori today, challenging assertions that women do not haka (or hongī as I discuss in Chapter 6) (Mita, 1994).



Figure 4.3 Ngati Kahungunu perform haka powhiri at the wedding of Maud Donnelly and Mr F Churchill (no date). Original photographic prints and postcards from file print collection, Box 2. Ref: PAColl-5584-02. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Reprinted with permission.

I continue to pursue this thread of female ritual and military expertise turning to the muru taua histories.

Muru



Figure 4.4 War dance. Thomas John Grant; artist; 1851; NZ, Permission sought from Te Papa .

Female nakedness, such as that depicted in Figure 4.4 ‘War dance’, is a ritual motif in Māori battle that consistently re-appears, particularly in the muru histories. A striking example is recorded, surprisingly, by Elsdon Best (1902, p. 75) who writes

of a Ngāti Pukeko ope taua comprised solely of women that ambush and defeat Ngāti Manawa male warriors at the battle of Mangatara:

the Amazons displayed wonderful caurage [sic] and knowledge of the art of war. With hair cropped short and bodies nude they charged into the enemy with such force as to throw them into confusion. Moenga specially distinguished herself, she fought with paiaka,¹⁶¹ hewing down the enemy on all sides.

In ‘The great muru’ (1919, p. 100) a Taranaki militia veteran narrates his first-hand experience of witnessing the arrival of a muru party which is led by two naked kuia smeared in black clay in the summer of 1873:

[T]he air was rent with screams, such screams as could emanate only from the throats of highly cultured female savages ... Each held in her hand a lighted torch, and each danced, screamed and reviled our Maoris in the choicest “Billingsgate” they possessed, and their vocabulary was an extensive one.

Arriving to find the village already emptied by an earlier raid, the kuia vent their fury by razing the entire village to the ground. Whilst the account is both entertaining and significant in its challenging of colonial constructs it is limited by the racist and sexist attitudes of the author. Tīmoti Kāretu points out that “no-one ‘screams’ in haka” (1993, p. 33). His comment reflects the significance of what is lost in Eurocentric, culturally condescending re-interpretations. The chants and haka phrases unleashed by the kuia in the above account are rendered down to the profanity of swear words (‘billingsgate’) obscuring the fact that the women were tribal scribes and repositories of knowledge (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016; Mikaere, 2003). They carried in their haka the phrases, ritual formula, and “sequence of thought” (Thornton, 1992, p. 98; Gonzales, 2012) that elevated the energy of the war party. The fundamental understanding that, as guardians and transmitters of iwi knowledge, women were also “guardians of the spiritual welfare of their iwi” (Mikaere, 2003, p. 58) is thoroughly absent in this

¹⁶¹ This weapon is also known as the tewhatewha – battle axe and was constructed of bone or hard wood (Tregear, 1904).

account, re-inscribing colonial imperatives that deny the significance of women (Evans, 1994a; Jenkins, 1992).

The most striking feature of this narrative, however, is that the kuia who lead the muru taua¹⁶² are naked. There is no shame expressed by these kuia, and no hint of supposed inferiority of sex that would see them shirk away to the back of the rank. Rather, the exposed genitalia of the kuia seems to intensify the tapu of the war party or else why would she be placed on the front line? Why would she *lead* the iwi?

American anthropologists, F. Allan Hanson and Louise Hanson (1983, p. 136) provide another brief but striking example describing the facing off of two war parties through the execution of haka led by naked kuia. Daubed in red ochre, genitalia exposed, the kuia hold the frontline of both sides and raise the energy to a peak before unleashing the whare taua¹⁶³ on the enemy.

These accounts are reminiscent of the Hawaiki story of Hinataiwaiwā and Kae. Despite a plethora of tricks it was the allure of the exposed female vulva - the mysterious gate between worlds and portal of pleasure - that caused Kae to abandon his keen senses, which led to his death. Hawai'ian scholar, Kalei Nu'uhiwa, shares an Oceanic perspective of the enigmatic power of Hina stating:

She is captivating. Like the moon, we are captivated by the beauty... She tells us what to do, and we go willingly, especially men. The power of the nani¹⁶⁴ is awesome! ... a lot of our strategic warriors utilised that in war... send women in front and they would entice the men ... they [the men] go willingly to their deaths (K. Nu'uhiwa, personal communication, May 22, 2014).

Hirini Reedy (1996, p. 52) provides a historic example recording:

Women have also used their womanly charms to multiply the battle-efforts of their menfolk by seducing and capturing the attention of the enemy. In Te Aitanga-a-Mate history on the East Coast, Raukohe a

¹⁶² Plundering party.

¹⁶³ War party.

¹⁶⁴ Nani is a Hawai'ian slang term for the vulva.

Maori woman and her twin daughters, Rautu and Raumarie, were taken captive by an enemy war party. Raukohe assisted the rescue attempt of her brother Rangirakaikura by performing an erotic haka which mesmerised her captors and allowed her brother's rescue party to gain the tactical advantage and surprise the enemy.

Rangitunoa Black adds:

If you see women do the haka they pūkana, they use weaponry ... They run up and down the lines and they are inspiring when they haka. If you want men to be inspired put a wahine nanahu in front of them. [Heterosexual] men are the same all over the world - they lose the plot when a woman goes past. This was why they had old men on the pae, because by then they would of lost their interest in having intimacy with women ... the pae had to be focused ... The relationships are quite delicate actually between the men and the women, very delicate, they were treasured. Those days arranged marriages were dynasties that kept the land banks going, there was always trading between them, trading for access to resources (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016).

A stunning example of the allure and power of women was demonstrated by the Kai Tahu hapū, Ngāti Waewae, who, established the whare pū rākau weaponry school 'Te Karara Kōpae a Tūhaitara' under the leadership of Jerry Pū. Ngāti Waewae research participant, Michelle Lee, explains that a significant objective in establishing the school was to reinstitute the ancient ritual custom of the wero wāhine.¹⁶⁵ All members of the whare pū rākau were descended from rangatira wāhine such as Tūhaitara, Wharepapa, Hinekākai, Titohi, Moroiti, Papakura, and Nihorere. Michelle maintains each of these tupuna wāhine were recognised war strategists who lead war parties and were weaponry experts. They fought alongside their men as equals as wāhine of other iwi also did as discussed in this chapter (M. Lee, personal communication, January 9, 2019).

¹⁶⁵ A formal challenge laid down on the marae ātea courtyard and domain of confrontation by a fully trained and armed woman of the host side, to visitors on the marae.

After years of training ‘Te Karara Kōpae a Tūhaitara’ executed a three-stage revival strategy. The first stage comprised of a taua wāhine,¹⁶⁶ which supported the wero at the historical opening of the Arahura Marae and the ancestral house, Tūhuru, in Te Wai Pounamu (depicted in Figure 4.5). The Māori media footage of the event is deeply provocative, disturbing entrenched colonised constructs of Māori womanhood as domestic handmaidens (Te Kanawa, 2014). Flanked by the men, the women move out into the centre of the marae ātea, where the men fall back to reveal the fully armed female fighting force. Baring traditional weaponry and flashing eyes, teeth, and bare open thighs, the women recall Hineteiwaiwā and her war party of Hawaiki historic legend, and further back still to Maui, whose delusions of grandeur were obliterated by the crushing vulva of Hinenuitepō.¹⁶⁷



Fig. 4. 5 From back: B Parker, Z Wallace, C Tumahai, M Campbell, and T Tamainu. Opening of Tuhuru whare tipuna (Robinson, 2015).

Whilst reactions from some across the country derided the women for ‘acting like men’, their swaying undulating hips, rolling pelvic movements and flashing teeth are quintessentially, powerfully, and irrevocably feminine. Their assertive gestures

¹⁶⁶ Female war party.

¹⁶⁷ I discuss this story in detail shortly.

embody the mythological and historic stories of tīpuna kuia who brought down entire war parties through the allure of their femininity.

The second stage of the revitalisation was the enactment of a wero wāhine in which Ngāti Waewae wahine, Te Amo Tamainu, layed a taki¹⁶⁸ at the feet of the Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, Chris Finlayson, upon his arrival at Arahura Marae in 2015. This event is depicted in Figure 4.6:



Figure 4.6 T Tamainu and Honorable Minister for Treaty Negotiations, C Finlayson, 26 March 2015. Te Karere.

The final stage engaged wāhine Māori from outside of Ngāti Waewae. This took place at the Iwi Leaders Forum where, for the first time in living memory, a taki was laid by a wahine, Moana Makapelu Lee, for a wahine, political figure and leader Dame Naida Glavish. Figure 4.7 depicts the event in which the wāhine of the whare tū taua¹⁶⁹ are supported and flanked by the men. The online footage of the wero went viral with hundreds of thousands of views and shares. This, along with media coverage of the wero, generated huge discourse amongst Maori and other Indigenous people about the roles of women and the significance of the reclamation

¹⁶⁸ A ritual challenge.

¹⁶⁹ War party.

of Native women's ritual arts and knowledges as a critical component of wider cultural reclamation (M. Lee, personal communication, January 8, 2019).



Figure 4.7 M Makapelu Lee lays down the taki, which is picked up by Ngāti Whātua, N Glavish. Arahura Marae Iwi Leaders Forum, December 2015. Photographer Brent Job.

These events reflect the major themes of this study – cultural continuation; the necessary re-assertion and reclamation of different forms of mana wahine shaped by whakapapa, tikanga, cosmology, pūrākau, and Māori histories; and resistance to colonial renditions of Māori femininity and Māori masculinity. Further still, implicit in the images, is the central idea of this research, that the feminine reproductive body is a sacred altar and manifestation of the atua and tīpuna wāhine.

Returning now to historic descriptions, in the muru histories, at the vanguard of battle the exposed sexual organs of the kuia represents the life of the iwi whose whakapapa lines issue forth from her womb, and the death of the enemy who face their own mortality when they rest their eyes on the ‘gateway between worlds’ (Mikaere, 2003; Raitt, 1980). Some authors have focused their attention on singular representations of the vulva as the doorway of death and endings, and have thus construed Māori women as the source of misfortune in the world and, therefore, inferior to Māori men (Best, 1924; Biggs, 1960; Heuer, 1972; Smith, J., 1974). Yet the misfortune does not belong to Māori women. Rather, if there is misfortune to be had it belongs to Kae (and Maui before him) who dared to challenge the overarching supremacy of the whare tangata and paid the ultimate price for it (Mikaere, 2017b).

The fact that Māori women are consistently described in the literature as the source of misfortune and death is only because it is (mainly men) who have written that literature (See Best, 1924; Goldie, 1904; Shortland, 1882). This exposes the relations of power implicit in the constant equation of women with misfortune, which seeks to shame women and render them powerless in accordance with colonial patriarchal imperatives. It also exposes the politics of knowledge production that determines which perspectives are privileged and immortalised in print, and which are silenced, censored, distorted, and denied (Murphy, 2011; Simmonds, 2014). Stories and readings that strengthen the intellectual borders of colonial patriarchal supremacy are the ones that have been recorded, whilst stories and knowledge that reveal competing truths are defined as ‘nonsensical’ ‘deviant’ and ‘other’ (Sibley, 1995) and have been omitted from the record (Murphy, 2013; Yates-Smith, 1998). These politics have consolidated an agenda of colonial patriarchy whose consequences are apparent in the lack of knowledge regarding Māori women’s mana, tapu and ritual histories today (Murphy, 2011; Simmonds, 2014).

There is something foreboding about the exposed female genitalia of Māori women in battle. This threat is implicit in an account recorded by Te Arawa scholar, Makereti Papakura (1986, p. 106), who describes a muru taua that seeks justice for a husband whose wife has committed adultery. Like Hinateiwaiwā who pursues justice for the transgression of a sacred relationship (between her whānau and the whale Tutunui), it is the women who lead the quest:

Long before daylight the stamping of feet could be heard keeping time to the takitaki, the leading song of a woman who led the taua party of a hundred people or more. There were the women in front. Then came the injured husband ... the women had their skirts tucked above their knees, and as they led the haka taua, it was a terrifying sight, yet a wonderful one.

The women lead the way symbolising the authority of the whare tangata to maintain the balance of power in tribal affairs. They lead with skirts tucked above the knees. This small detail could easily go unnoticed, however here in the ritual histories of tribal battle it is a small detail that points to a larger picture, or *presence*, perhaps, that of the formidable and unconquerable atua, Hinenuitepō.

The vulva with bite

Colonial narratives of female shame that deny mana wahine ritual ontologies quickly unravel in the face of tohunga ruanuku, wahine nanahu and muru taua histories. Ani Mikaere (2003, p. 40-1) observes that the whakapohane ritual that exposes the female genitalia is:

a graphic way of reminding the men of the ultimate supremacy of female strength. They are shown the pathway to life and death, and reminded that if they ignore, or deny the power of female sexuality, they do so at their peril.

Te Arawa artist Chanz Mikaere (2011, p. 35 - 36) adds the:

exposure of tero is an extreme insult and a signal to restore the balance of power. When whakapohane is performed by women it is a reminder of origin: warning 'Don't forget where you came from' invoking memories of Hine Nui Te Pō and restorative justice. This is when whakama is used as a social control mechanism. Whakapohane shames those with shared ancestry. The whānau must correct aberrations: restoring mana: balancing tapu and noa.

These explanations all refer to a central cosmological story that underpins these kinds of ritual gestures. It is the story of Hinenuitepō and of Maui who sought immortality by returning to his own birthplace between his mother Hinenuitepō's thighs (R. Pere in Murphy, 2011). His plan was to reverse the process of birth by traversing the birth canal and coming out of the mouth of his mother. Kahukiwa and Grace's (1984, p. 58) first person narrative from the perspective of the great ancestress Hinenuitepō is provocative and revelatory:

See Maui now. In the world of light he has achieved all he can achieve. He comes now to challenge me in the world of no-light, seeking to achieve what cannot be achieved ...

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 ...

Come Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga. Your bird companions chuckle and flutter at the strange sight of you, but they are not your undoing. There

is one purpose only for these obsidian teeth. In this your last journey, you will give your final gift to those of earth, the gift not of immortality, but of homecoming, following death.

Fixated on the tara, the gateway ‘between this world and the next’ and his own grandiose plans, Maui is annihilated as Kae is annihilated, overcome by the power of the vulva (Mikaere, 2017a; Royal, 1998). Ani Mikaere (2003, p. 23) points out the “potency of the female sexual organs is unassailable”, a cosmological tenet that is ritualised and embodied in the raised skirts and exposed genitalia of the kuia nanahu. The vulva is the threshold between worlds that guards the path to the womb, the inner temple of the cosmos (Goode, 2016; Van der Meer, 2015). The vulva is set with teeth in Native cosmological story cycles, ready to obliterate those who violate sacred laws and cross the threshold uninvited.

The obsidian teeth of Hinenuitepō are a key symbol in the story of Maui and Hinenuitepō, and one whose potency has not been examined by mana wahine scholars. The myth of the *vulva with bite* is widespread and primordial and versions can be found around the world (Angel, 2013; Raitt, 1980). Pākehā author and scholar, Emma Rees (2013) in her enquiry into the literary and cultural history of the vagina examines the symbology of the tara with teeth, maintaining that the teeth represent the power of autonomous female sexuality. The tara with teeth is supreme, untamable and unbound to men, a description that fits the ultimate power of the atua Hinenuitepō. Not only is the vulva with bite autonomous, she also threatens to consume, castrate and annihilate men who transgress her authority.

These descriptions of the vagina as active, autonomous, dangerous, and all-consuming are very different to the power-relations implicit in some western colonial constructs that represent the female organ as ‘passive’ and mute “receptacles for masculine completeness” (Gatens, 1995, p. 72). Whilst “patriarchy requires that female sexual organs be regarded more as the absence or lack of male organs” (Grosz, 1994, p. 59), in the menacing flint teeth that ‘flash like lightning’ (a ritual motif for danger and transformation in Māori metaphysical thought) in the vulva of Hinenuitepō, we receive a reading that reflects female supremacy in the ultimate scheme of life and death (Grey, 1956; Thornton, 1992). This supremacy is acknowledged in the exposed genitalia of the wahine nanahu and her ‘raised skirt’, a symbol in numerous mythological stories “since even when it is toothless the

vulva is a source of terror” (Rees, 2013, p. 56; Goode, 2016). It is also acknowledged in an ancient term for the vulva - *tewhatewha* - which is also the name of the traditional long handled wooden axe weapon wielded in battle in former times.

Examples of the startling ritual exposure of the vulva can be found in traditional stories across the world from Russia and China to Ireland and the Phillipines (Goode, 2016). In Ireland ritual exposure of the vulva carries multiple meanings including protection, blessing and renewal. The primordial stone images of the pre-Christian goddess, Sheela na gig, whose hands reach down to spread her genitalia so wide “One almost winces” (Goode, 2016, p. 4), casts a shield of protection over the Irish countryside, blessing the land with fertility and asserting sovereignty and guardianship over the lands she surveys (Goode, 2016). Yet her image also repels threatening energies and cancels them out, a motif that re-appears in both Irish and Māori custom. It also appears in Nigeria where Nigerian women have recalled the practice of ritually exposing their genitalia publically in bold activist assertions to challenge colonial oppression by the British. A famous example is the ‘Women’s war’ of 1929 in which the Igbo women protested against a proposed tax by stripping naked, anointing their bodies in ritual symbols, and burning, looting and destroying the native courts. They also marched on the houses of chiefs who were in collusion with colonial powers. Seventy years later in 2002 six hundred rural peasant women employed the same tactic, this time taking on the Chevron-Texaco oil factory of whom the women claimed were responsible for widespread environmental degradation. I think that the anthropologist Terisa Turner’s explanation of this ritual gesture can equally be applied in the *murū taua* histories. She states:

We all come into the world through the vagina. By exposing the vagina, the women are saying: ‘We are hereby taking back the life we gave you’ ... Men who are exposed are viewed as dead. No one will cook for them, marry them, enter into any kind of contract with them or buy anything from them (cited in Goode, 2016, p. 244).

These themes of the power of the *tara* as a gate of life and death (and also renewal) are central to *mana wahine* ritual histories. Whilst I will return to the startling motif of the *tara* I want to shift emphasis now to the broader story of *Hinetitama*’s transformation into *Hinenuitepō* and examine it through a *mana wahine* lens to

provide insight into the ritual histories showcased in this chapter. Hinenuitepō may not have always been furnished with her menacing and formidable teeth, for she was once Hinetītama whose enquiry of her paternal lineage set her on a path in which she would elevate to her true potential power. If we approach the pūrākau as a ritual map facilitating transformation, the fact that Hinetītama asks the question at all, suggests that she already intuitively knew the answer within herself (K. Aton, personal communication, June 13, 2016; T. Tangarō, personal communication, May 19, 2014). The question becomes a catalyst for the change required for Hinetītama to fulfill her highest function, for she has ‘outgrown her skin’. In finding that her husband is also her father, she sets out on a journey, a metaphor for the transformation of consciousness that leads to an elevation of status and/or maturation into ones full power (T. Tangarō, personal communication, May 19, 2014). Hinetītama retreats to the darkness, crossing over the threshold between worlds into the safety of the Pō, a women’s space that represents the cosmogonic womb of becoming and un-doing, dissolution and rebirth (Kame’elehiwa, 1999; Robinson, 2005). In the womb of darkness¹⁷⁰ she passes through the different stages of initiation, taking on the transitory name *Hinekura* (Yates-Smith, 1998). Kura can be translated as ritual and occult knowledge, something precious and ceremonial red, the colour that marks people, places, and objects as tapu (Williams, 1991). As Hinekura, she sheds skins to become who she was born to be to fulfill her highest function. She takes the name Hinenuitepō to mark the moment as a rite of passage.¹⁷¹

I think that the qualities found in the Hinetītama/Hinenuitepō sacred story - courage, fortitude, strength, swift, bold, decisive action, and the ability to transform, shift-shape and transcend to ones full power – are the reason why Hinetītama was

¹⁷⁰ Hinetītama is said to have retreated to Rarohenga the underworld. Yet where is Rarohenga? In treading the pathway out of the world did Hinetītama (like Maui) choose the path of which she entered the world? Is Rarohenga, then, the womb-realm of the mother Papatūānuku? (Yates-Smith, 1998). A deeper line of investigation is required here.

¹⁷¹ The taking of another name is one of many pre-colonial Māori puberty rites (Murphy, 2014). This is one of the (many) reasons why I view the story of Hinetītama’s transformation into Hinenuitepō as a story of initiation.

summoned to instill warrior characteristics in boys in tohi rites of old that I mention earlier (Yates-Smith, 1998, p. 175 and p. 190). These active ritual interpretations of Hinetītama are significant in the context of colonial renditions that represent Hinetītama as a ‘pretty face’ who ‘flees’ in ‘shame’ to the underworld (Orbell, 1995; Patterson, 2000). There are many ways to read her story, each with its own spiritual, ritual and political outcome. If we approach Hinetītama and her story as a set of ritual instructions that exemplify a ‘warrior spirit’, we reflect on her courage to ask a question that may unravel her sense of self and take her on a journey of no return. She asks the question ‘who is my father’ (who represents her function) to the posts of her ancestral house (that represents her foundations). She knows that, in asking, her foundations might collapse. This is necessary, however, for she must move into a broader reality for her spirit to grow (K. Aton, personal communication, June 13, 2016).

Yet there is another quality of Hinetītama that I want to highlight here because it relates to issues that some of my participants shared. Rangitunoa Black points out:

Hineītama has twin energy, she’s female and she’s male, she has tama at the end of her name, which is the male energy, it’s the sun. Hine is the female energy. The tī is the stars, the cosmos, the star clusters ... It’s a bird sound, it’s a high vibration - Ka tahi tī, ka rua tī - ¹⁷² they are connecting the above and below ... Everyone thinks we are just made up of hine but we are not. We are made up of the two. One is stronger than the other or you get the situation with transgenders ... that’s the Hinetītama that I know and it’s locked inside the sexualities (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016).

Upon examination of Hinetītama, we find that her name and nature spans the gender continuum. We also find that our elders describe her as beautiful: ‘*Ko Hinetītama koe, matawai ngā karu i te tirohanga*’ (Riley, 2013, p. 455). We assume the beauty of which they speak is physical yet this may not necessarily be the case at all (Marmon-Silko, 1996). Perhaps the beauty that makes their eyes well with tears is communicated in her name that straddles the threshold of stars, the space that

¹⁷² This is the first line of an ancient star-chant from Te Urewera that is used in fire rites to lift the frost from food crops in winter.

reflects a continuum rather than a binary? Perhaps the beauty is expressed in her qualities of strength, courage, vision and initiative that see her embark on a journey of initiation, where she will sacrifice her old self and be reborn into her full power as an atua of transformation and renewal? (Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001; Yates-Smith, 1998). Through her name and journey to the underworld, becoming Hinenuitepō, Hinetītama is an atua that embraces the fluidity and metamorphic power of the in-between. She collapses the binary between male and female, death and rebirth, this world and the next. She represents the moving and active passage of becoming (Murphy, 2013; Nopera, 2016).

I offer this reading of Hinetītama in solidarity with Rangitunoa who asserts the need to decolonise notions of Indigenous gender:

Because I am childless and because I am gay people don't actually believe that I know anything. Or that I am going to give any life back because I haven't given life. It's screwed up ... The suiciding of takatāpui people is a whare tangata issue because you as a mother have produced a child that is suiciding. He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata!¹⁷³ With takatāpui, how many people really know what it's like to be transgender when you are born with twin energies? How many people know what it's like for a transgender child to have breasts and have to stand and do haka and hit her titties and it hurts because someone said you're a man this is how we do it? And this is what's happening with our kids. When we talk about rituals and ceremonies for women these are the bigger issues (R. Black, personal communication, September 28, 2016).

Re-reading our sacred story cycle, including the story of Hinetītama, to harvest healing codes of instruction is a critical component of decolonisation. It re-affirms that the solutions to the challenges Native people face can be found in our own epistemological traditions (Cajete, 2000; Duran, Duran, Brave Heart & Yellow Horse, 1998; Irwin, 1991; Schultz, Teyra, Breiler, Evans-Campbell & Pearson, 2018; Smith, L. T., 2012). The significance of Hinetītama in threshold ritual spaces and takatāpui ritual knowledge traditions are areas that demand further investigation. As a deity who occupies the liminal space between genders,

¹⁷³ 'What is the most important thing in the world? Tis people!' This is a well - used Māori proverb.

sexualities, forms, personalities, states of being and worlds, she holds significant healing, decolonising and transformative potential.

Death, renewal and the elevation of consciousness

Betrayal, pain, death and annihilation in ritual stories, such as the Hinefītama/Hinenuitepō story, can be interpreted as powerful catalysts that facilitate the revolt necessary to undergo internal transformation (Tangarō, 2007). Pākehā artist and author, Kirstin Zambucka's (2012, p. 16) reading of Hawai'ian ritual prose speaks to this idea:

Pain accompanies all birth. There is pain when we are born and there is pain when we are re-born as old facets of the personality die away ... or are brutally torn out of our life pattern...to make way for the new ... Do not resist ... there is a balancing power at work ... your new self is about to enter the world.

As the prose suggests, death and annihilation brings the potential of rebirth (Sanchez, 2004). The Hinefītama/ Hinenuitepō story is a story of initiation into wholeness that “spans the cosmogonic milestones of creation, procreation, annihilation and re-creation” (Kanahele, 2011, p. xiv). She is an oracle of transformation who demonstrates how to trust our own instincts and courage to shed that which no longer serves our growth. Her obsidian teeth represent the idea that through undertaking a process of transformation she has matured into her own autonomous power, her own mana motuhake as an atua with *'bite'*. Thus, she provides a precedent, a pathway of transformation for her descendents to follow, one that instructs in the ways of the ritual arts of healing and cultivating personal power.

Alarmingly, over the years I have heard this story being used as a weapon to justify sexual violence toward women and girls and to re-present Māori women as somehow inherently ‘shameful’. It is time to shift the emphasis and pursue a reading with a different socio-political and spiritual outcome. Naomi Simmonds (2014, p. 140) declaration that cosmological stories can be read as “statements about our current realities” is important here for whilst female shame has been a central motif in colonial renditions of Māori femininity, the power to shed that which does not feed our spirits is more aligned to our current story of decolonisation in Aotearoa.

Misfortune, like shame, has been consistently aligned to Māori women through the pūrākau of Hinefītama/Hinenuitepō, but the misfortune does not belong to women. Narratives of the “booby trapped vagina” (Rees, 2013, p. 54) - *te whare o aituā*,¹⁷⁴ *te tewhatewha* - which threatens to annihilate men, can be traced into Māori cultural beliefs regarding the act of copulation, of which the Maui and Hinenuitepō story is one reading (Hanson, 1982). Ngāti Maniapoto scholar, Bruce Biggs in *Māori marriage* (1960, p. 20) describes sex from the male view as a “pleasure fraught with danger” and Buck (1950, p. 510) concurs that “it is the female organ which figuratively kills its male antagonist” in the act of copulation. Hanson in *Female pollution in Polynesia* (1982, p. 91) references the ritual chant that describes the copulation of Tānemahuta with Hineahuone “as a battle between the male and female organs, Tiki, and Karihi. Tiki attacks bravely, but Karihi draws him further and further into herself and there overcomes him”. In ejaculation the male dies a “little death” (Walker, 1996, p. 1036), momentarily loosing his senses of the external world. Ngāti Kuri, Te Aupouri scholar, Waerete Norman (1992, p. 6), points out that this moment is referenced in the term ‘*te whare o te mate*’ because in the swirl of climax the virility of the penis is usurped by the power of the vulva. Norman continues that it is in this moment, in traditional thought, that conception is possible.

Te Miringa Hohaia, takes a slightly different angle. Informed by the 19th century Te Kaahui Kararehe manuscripts, Te Miringa maintains:

To me the death of Maui is the account, the history, the condition of all males. We have to be encouraged by women to understand what is required in a relationship. Men refuse to reciprocate and therefore remain ignorant. They'll take a woman but not give to the relationship with any awareness of what is required of them. Men remain this way until they are challenged, some will then change ... This is what is meant by the death of Maui, he suffered of this ignorance and did not

¹⁷⁴ As with other Native peoples (such as the Dakota who use the term *wakan*), power and that which is deemed intensely sacred, carries both creative, life-giving qualities and destructive elements (J. Rock, personal communication, 6 June, 2016). Perhaps this understanding of power is also implied within the dual terms for the whare tangata as ‘*te whare ora*’ (the house of life) and *te whare o te mate/te whare o aituā* (the house of death and destruction) (Yates-Smith, 1998).

learn the alternative ... Here is an example taken from karakiatanga koorero:

'Kotua atu ai e te whaanau a Hinekureru,

te tauaa e haere ki te takitaki i te mate a Maui'

'The heads of the family of women are bowed in respect,

the war party that goes to avenge the death of Maui'

It's very clear, that it is women who constantly go forward to avenge the death of Maui. No-one can convince me, that this death is not male ignorance ... I have no doubt that in his lifetime, Maui had been screwing her [Hinenuitepō] for a while, but then a little bird chirped! The messenger. That Maaori way of introducing a realisation, a premonition. She realised in her mind that Maui was not conscious, he was ignorant. She closed her legs on him, she stopped him from having any more sex with her, she was in control. It was the death of Maui ... There was a condition that went with that ... you may have heard the term 'toro tii toro taa'... this is what happens to men when they don't know what is required in a relationship, they masturbated, toro tii toro taa being the foreskin drawn and pushed (T. Hohaia, personal communication, January 10, 2010).

Implicit in both Te Miringa and Waerete's korero is the idea that women facilitate a shift and elevation of male consciousness. This idea resonates with Hawai'ian epistemologies put forward by Kalei Nu'uhiwa in speaking of the archetypal feminine qualities of Hina:

Males will fight over who have a Hina on their side. Because they know, after a while, when you stay on the same plane and there's no elevation for you and no moving forward, you need a female to bring in the change (K. Nu'uhiwa, personal communication, May 22, 2014).

This reading also aligns with sacred story-cycles across the world of feminine deities whose opening and closing vulva holds the power to create, destroy, bless, protect, repel malevolent energies, renew and activate elevated states of consciousness as a "transitional zone, a pathway between different states of being" (Mikaere, 2017b, p. 59; Goode, 2016; Jensen & Jensen, 2005). Examples of these

deities include the startling Sheela na Gig¹⁷⁵ from Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, Kālī from India, Baubo from the Mediterranean, and the pre-Olympian Gorgon Medusa from classical Europe (Goode, 2016).

I highlight these qualities because of the way that much of the literature focuses on aligning the female genitalia with death and misfortune (Best, 1972; Grey, 1956). Narratives of rebirth and regeneration (like readings of the power of the vulva to castrate those who transgress sacred law *a la* Maui and Kae) transcend the colonial binary that cast female genitalia as ‘lacking’, ‘inferior’, ‘mute’ and ‘passive receptacles’, all constructions steeped in relations of power (Gatens, 1995). The vulva, when described by active verbs such as pulsating, birthing, crushing, consuming and facilitating the transformation of states (from this world to the next, from erect to flaccid, from ignorant to enlightened) is a far cry from the passive construction of the term vagina. Its roots are Latin for a sheath or scabbard. Just as disturbing is the Latin term ‘pudenda’, which means “that of which one ought to be ashamed” (Rees, 2013, pp. 20, 27).

In the story of Hinenuitepō and Maui, and later, Hina and Kae, we see that the tara has not lost her bite. Her teeth have not been ‘knocked out’ by the narratives of shame, submissiveness or inferiority that are prolific today. Neither have her teeth been ‘knocked out’ by men who believe that “women’s sexuality must be somehow forcibly tamed” (Rees, 2013, p. 54).¹⁷⁶ Rather, Maui is annihilated, as Kae is annihilated, by the tara with teeth whose bite enforces sacred laws. All of this is

¹⁷⁵ Starr Goode’s (2016) revelatory work *Sheela na gig: The dark goddess of sacred power* examines the prolific stone images of Sheela na gig, the female deity most common in Ireland who spreads open her vulva with her hands, offering up her ‘ripe sex’ yet with a repelling and foreboding grimace. Carved above doorways, windows, bridges, and sacred wells, and perched high on Church walls built on ancient Native sacred sites, the Sheelas carry multiple functions. Like Māori, Irish histories also speak to the ritual exposure of the vulva as a means to intimidate and neutralise any threat and to shield and protect.

¹⁷⁶ Rees (2013) provides examples of myths where the vaginal teeth are ‘knocked out’ through rape and violation. She mentions a Baiga story from India and a Zuni and Hopi narrative from central and North America.

summoned on the frontline of battle by the wāhine whose exposed genitalia represents the formidable presence of the atua Hinenuitepō and the gate between worlds that opens before the enemy. Unlike derogatory and amorphous colonial readings of the atua wahine, here in the tohunga ruanuku and wahine nanahu histories, the atua are embodied in the fleshy, corporeal feminine body at the vanguard of battle.

Tongan poet, Karlo Mila's (2005, p. 59) provocative poem 'Legendary' encapsulates some of the ideas discussed in this chapter, concluding it succinctly:

*You are my Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga
Demigod to me
Trickster of the heart
I just hope I'm pulling you in
Because you could slow the sun for me
Māui
You could have
Every finger of my fire
But remember
I am woman
And I do not doubt
That you will die
Between my legs.*

Conclusion

Māori women occupied positions of key spiritual and military leadership in warfare. Their visions and ceremonies instructed and guided the war party. They often led the battle charge and their oracular prophecies and visions directed the siege. Their naked bodies on the battleground represented the foreboding presence of Hinenuitepō whose bared obsidian teeth and crushing vulva promised annihilation of the enemy.

The aim in this chapter was to address the research question 'did Māori women fulfil ritual and ceremonial leadership roles for the hapū in customary Māori society and what did these roles look like?' The ritual legacies of the tohunga ruanuku and wahine nanahu outlined in this chapter provide a clear positive answer. My goal in this chapter was to uncover these hidden histories that they might facilitate decolonisation and positive transformation for Māori whānau today. By presenting

these stories I challenge the legitimacy of lingering colonial representations of Māori womanhood that deny our ritual-political leadership and recast our reproductive bodies as spiritually defiling. The histories I presented, rather, speak to the power of female genitalia, ritualised and revered by the iwi as a cosmological and ceremonial site that carries the capacity to create, destroy and regenerate. The histories also demonstrate respect between men and woman as tribal sisters and brothers. That we fought shoulder to shoulder to survive is a powerful reminder that our wellbeing rests in us working together in a balanced and respectful way.

In the following chapter I discuss some of the colonial processes that combined to obliterate these powerful mana wahine ritual histories. Drawing on primary data I examine the consequences for Māori and other Native women with similar colonial histories who struggle to recover their ceremonial and spiritual lives today. I also discuss examples of contemporary resistance to colonial re-definitions of femininity and the re-activation of feminine ritual knowledge through artistic mediums.

CHAPTER 5

Stolen tongues: The struggle to recover ourselves

Whilst Māori women have powerful ritual histories that exalt the feminine reproductive body, little of this history is known today (Evans, 1994b; Irwin, 1991, 1995; Yates-Smith, 1998). The stories have been largely omitted from the historic record and replaced with simplistic colonial narratives of female insignificance and profanity as discussed in Chapter 2. In this chapter I examine key colonial processes in Aotearoa that attempted to annihilate Māori (and other Native) women's ritual ontologies. These include Christianity, legislations, raupatu, and the deliberate plundering of navel and womb geographies. I parallel the violation of mana wahine ritual landscapes with the use of sexual violence by colonising forces as a means to crush Native spiritual and prophetic movements of resistance. I also draw heavily on participant kōrero that reflects the spiritual disorientation and struggle that some Māori and other Native women experience in recovering a sense of themselves and their relationships to ceremony as a consequence of the colonial present (Johnson & Larson, 2013). Their stories seek to recover stolen histories, stolen identities and stolen tongues – the language that venerates mana wahine ritual ontologies. Bold assertions of resistance and the re-activation of Native women's ceremony through multiple mediums also weave through this chapter.

Spiritual dismemberment and disorientation

Most Māori in Aotearoa today are unaware of the ritual histories that exalt the whare tangata as a cosmological altar and embodiment of atua wāhine. Most are unaware of the stories of tīpuna kuia who provided their iwi with spiritual/ritual and political leadership as discussed in the previous chapter. These histories have been censored and supplanted by colonial, Victorian and Christian caricatures of a debased womanhood that strip the ceremony from the feminine regenerative body (Anderson, 2000; Simmonds, 2014; Yates-Smith, 1998). Ngāti Kahungunu ki te Wairoa, Rakaipāka, Ngāti Porou wahine, Sophronia Smith's (2012, p. 97) strong response to hearing celebratory pre-colonial Māori menstruation ceremonies at a

hui ¹⁷⁷ exemplifies the internalisation of colonial representations of Māori womanhood:

I feel awkward as she asks us to shout out loud two words ‘menstrual blood’ ... Outwardly I appear composed, but inwardly I am yelling, and with vigor and anger. I am reminded of those voices and words that educated me about the flow; ‘Paru,¹⁷⁸ Yucky, Gross’. The blood has flowed month after month and has stained my psyche with self-hate, self-disgust.

I later acknowledge I am not paru after all. I feel fortunate to know this information. But how many of my sisters do not know this? And how many more will there be that will bleed monthly, but bleed pain of self-hate because of their paruness?

Sophonria’s comments reflect the silencing of language and histories that venerate the ceremony of the whare tangata and their replacement with misogynist colonial representations that institute feelings of shame toward the blood as the ‘Curse of Eve’ (Shuttle, 1978; Sjoo & Mor, 1991). Ani Mikaere (2017a, p. 18), who witnessed similar emotional reactions from women in the audience at the hui that day, remarks:

That a presentation about the significance of menstruation in the pre-colonial Māori world should affect so many women, so profoundly, speaks volumes about the extent to which we have internalised the messages about the inherent inferiority of femaleness.

Colonisation has fundamentally impacted the way that many Māori women see ourselves and our roles in the world (Mikaere, 2017a). As Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out:

Many of us [Māori women] see ourselves, and our female body, through colonised eyes, rather than as the embodiment of the tipuna. We have learned not to look for it [divinity] in us, and the atua too. We

¹⁷⁷ This conference was ‘Kei Tua o Pae: Changing worlds, changing tikanga, educating history and the future’ hosted by Te Wānanga o Raukawa in 2012.

¹⁷⁸ Paru can be translated as dirty.

talk about them 'out there' when they also exist within us (L. T. Smith, personal communication, July 12, 2016).

Hinewirangi Kohu adds:

we're told the atua gave this and the atua gave that [in cosmological stories regarding the origins of women and humanity] but we don't actually believe it. We don't live it (H. Kohu, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

Linda and Hinewirangi's reflections align with the observations of Whetu and Komako Silver, who worked with a cast of wāhine Māori to develop the 2016 ritual theatre work, *Hine*. In *Hine*, theatre was used as a healing and decolonising medium to reconnect both the cast and the audience to the atua wahine and to celebrate menstruation as a sacred ceremony. In developing the work the directors witnessed a deep spiritual disorientation and struggle for identity felt by many of the cast. Whetu explains:

There's this line that came to my head, 'Once upon a time I was told I was divine. Once upon a time I believed it. Now I'm not so sure' ... I wanted to believe again ... there was the real desire to find a celebration within ourselves and within each other around being proud to be Māori women, but then that brought up lots of mameae¹⁷⁹ for some. Some had been through really shocking emotional, physical, sexual mess-ups, or identity, like feeling like their whole identity had been stolen, so they were discovering what that was for them. [The theatre work] was trying to reclaim and help each other re-align to the atua wahine and their own true divinity cause no one can take that away. It's never lost it's just maybe not activated. We live in a space where some women don't even know it exists or think it's lost forever because they are tainted in some way (W. Silver, personal communication, August 30, 2016).

Whetu's observations that some Māori women feel that their 'whole identity had been stolen' and that their connection to the atua is 'lost forever because they are tainted in some way' is very powerful. When placed alongside Linda's comments that 'we have learned not to look for the atua within us' it begins to paint a picture about the intimate impacts of colonisation on Māori women's ritual geographies.

¹⁷⁹ Pain.

The infiltration of Christian doctrine that defines divinity as exclusively male (see Best, 1924; Goldie, 1904; Shortland, 1882), the erasure of mana wahine ritual histories and the re-coding of the feminine reproductive body as a defiling source of female shame (Murphy, 2013; Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001) have directly impacted many Māori women's sense of self. Yet just as significant is the theft and desecration of tribal lands that cradle matrilineal ritual sites, which will be discussed later in this chapter, and the systematic violations of whare tangata ritual traditions that have stranded many Māori women in spiritual exile (Walters, Beltran, Huh & Evans-Campbell, 2011). This was brought home to me profoundly in a recent experience when a Māori woman spoke to me about yearning to (re) connect with Hinataiwaiwa but didn't know how. As the full moon was rising I said to her 'just go outside and sit with her, talk to her, sing to her'. Her response threw me. She said in all earnestness and with tears in her eyes *'But she might be angry at me'*. When I asked her why she thought that, she was genuinely surprised and struck by her own response, answering that she did not know.

Colonial histories have created ambivalence, fear, and a state of deep disorientation regarding how we might even begin to re-forge relationships with the atua who seem, somehow, *'lost forever'* and out of reach. Commenting on the impacts of colonisation on the ceremonial worlds of Māori women, Hinewirangi shares:

There's so much that I have had to create because there hasn't been too many that practice the rituals of the whare tangata. I think that it's a long impact of colonisation and taking us away from the basic knowledge of what we know. We don't know anymore. When you don't know you don't practice. But also, it's even more insidious than that, it's actually not just what you don't know anymore but it's also what you don't believe in anymore. We are too afraid to trust that intrinsic knowledge. We are too afraid to trust and believe in ourselves (H. Kohu, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

Alicia conveys a similar perspective in commenting on Native American contexts in Turtle Island:

Alicia: Part of the reason this culture is suffering so bad and there is so much hate and anger, frustration and disconnection, is that people aren't giving themselves the ceremonies to help honor the different

levels and different parts of life and changes of life (A, Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2016).

Ngahuia: That's right. We are disconnected from our own spirituality.

Alicia: If we could get connected with the water we'd be good.¹⁸⁰

Ngahuia: You know this talk about menstrual blood being dirty is really symbolic of how messed up a civilisation is, if they are talking that way about the river of life. Women's ritual knowledge has been recorded in a way that's perverted. The consequence is sexual, physical and emotional violence toward women and we hate ourselves. That's the thing about our instincts and intuition right, we look to our intuition and

Alicia: You don't trust.

Ngahuia: That's right we've been taught not to trust so this is the thing, just reminding our women that we can trust ourselves and we know who we are and we know what to do.

Alicia: A lot of people every time they have any sort of in touch with their intuition they get scared. And they doubt. And this culture, our culture, my culture, is all about feeding on the doubt and fear ... Our job is to let go of as much doubt and fear as possible so that we can make room for that intuitivity [sic] to come back into our lives.

Feelings of fear, doubt and disconnection from our own intuitive knowing as Native women in restoring ceremony and sacred relationships to pre-colonial deities appears consistently across my participant kōrero. The ability to trust in ourselves to reclaim and design ceremonies that promote healing and restore relationships with customary deities and spiritual entities, is a critical site of tino rangatiratanga (La Duke, 2005; Mikaere, 2017b; Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012).

It is important to trace where feelings of fear originate in order to transcend them. In the next section I turn to examine some of the colonial histories that establish a climate of fear that some Māori women struggle with today.

¹⁸⁰ The significance of water to women's ceremony is discussed in Chapter 7.

Tracing fear

A mark of the success of the colonial project is the self-doubt and fear that stops many Native women from re-forging a living relationship with te ao wairua as a primary site of mana motuhake and tino rangatiratanga. Kai Tahu performance artist and matakite, Cathy Livermore observes:

Theres a lot of fear around wairua naturally through colonisation because a lot of what colonisation was about was the interference with that connection, that self-determining connection that is unto ourselves and ourselves alone which was always practiced by Māori. It was severed and then fear was put in there (C. Livermore, personal communication, November 17, 2015).

In Aotearoa the fear that some Māori women experience toward wairua is the consequence of a number of factors that include colonial re-definitions of Māori women as spiritually contaminating, profane and inferior (as discussed in Chapter 2); Christian teachings that demonise Native spiritualities as ‘dangerous’, and ‘superstitious’ ‘devil worship’ (Buller, 1878; Wohlers, 2009); and legislations that targeted and criminalised Māori spiritual practice (Ngata, 2014; Simmonds, 2014).

As one of the most effective of colonial weapons, Christianity was unleashed on Māori and other Indigenous peoples around the world to destroy their identity, autonomy and communal relationships steeped in tribal landscapes (Anderson, 2000; Federici, 2014; Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012). Federici (2014) points out the reframing of Native peoples as uncivilised devil-worshippers supported the fiction that Christian conversion of Indigenous peoples was not an unabashed quest for lands and resources, but a quest to save the souls of ignorant savages. She continues that culturally annihilating ideologies that reframed Native spiritualities as denigrated and backwards were a key component of widespread conversion to Christianity. The early Pākehā missionary, Reverend James Buller (1878, p. 207) provides an example in his exclamations:

Their conversation was sensual, their ideas filthy, and their language obscene. Chastity was rare, if known at all. They were given to sorcery, witchcraft, murder ... I dare not describe in detail their every-day life. Such descriptions would shock the moral sensibilities of English readers.

Missionary Johann Wohlers (2009/1881) comments below also characterise the scorn and ridicule heaped upon ancestral spiritualities, spiritualities that Ani Mikaere (2003, p. 96) maintain, “seethed with the force of female sexuality” that would have repelled the missionary inheritors of the witch hunts:

There was a belief in the old Maori religion, that the goddess of death was dwelling in the world of night (their Hades), and drawing her children (she having before been the original mother of mankind) down to her. That gave them no comfort. But it comforted them to learn that Jesus died upon the cross, that he rose again and went to his Father in heaven - and that he will draw all men unto him (p. 126)

there is something in the human mind, also in the mind of the miserable savage, which ... longs for something ... when the spirit of Christianity was brought near their heart, then they felt that that was the very thing which gave them relief in their inward groaning (p. 124).

Wohlers comments convey the idea of Christianity as the pinnacle of evolutionary thought and truth (Mikaere, 2017b; Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012). The atua wāhine, and Hinenuitepō more particularly, became symbols of the savagery and innate inferiority of Māori, producing feelings of shame:

[Māori] when instructed in Christian truths, blush at their own former ignorance and superstitions, and look back with shame and loathing upon their previous state of wickedness and credulity (Grey, 1956, p. viii).

Christian conversion, which accelerated as Māori died in their tens of thousands, has always been contested, however, and remains incomplete (Atholl, 2014). The early colonial artist, Augustus Earle records a fascinating encounter between rangatira and ministers in the Hokianga where rangatira had assembled to learn something of the sacred mysteries of the white men. He records that Māori had no conception of a punishing god, and believed that when they died they would be furnished with abundance and “enjoy a state of uninterrupted happiness” (Davidson & Lineham, 1989, p. 36). The chiefs recoiled in horror upon learning of hell and the vengeful god of the ‘white faces’ and remained sure that “such a place could only be made for the white faces, for they had no men half wickid [sic] enough in New Zealand to be sent there”. When the ministers vehemently claimed “all men’ would be condemned, the savages all burst into a loud laugh, declaring ‘they would

have nothing to do with a god who delighted in such cruelties” (Davidson & Lineham, 1989, p 37).

Over one-hundred years later the incredulous and humoured response of these rangatira is replaced in many Indigenous peoples by a bitter lassitude founded in intergenerational experience of Christianity as a colonial tool of subjugation. This is captured in Vanuatu poet, Albert Leomala’s (1980, p. 121) ‘Cross’:

*Cross I hate you
You are killing me
You are destroying
My traditions
I hate you Cross
....
Take your ideas
And your civilization
And go back
To where you belong.*

Christian values were encoded into colonial settler legislations, reinforcing their impact in eradicating Māori women’s spiritual and ceremonial practices (Simmonds & Gabel, 2016). Examples of legislations that would have impacted on Māori women’s ritual ontologies include:

- Criminal Code Act, 1893 which issued up to one years hard labour in prison for anyone who ‘pretends to exercise or use any kind of witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, or conjuration, and/or who fraudulently claims any knowledge or skill in any occult or crafty science’ (see <http://www.nzlii.org.nz>);
- The Māori Councils Act, 1900 which sort to regulate tohunga and threatened to punish through fines all those who ‘practice upon the superstition or credulity of any Maori in connection with the treatment of disease’ (see <http://www.nzlii.org.nz>);
- Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 that criminalised Māori spiritualities (see <http://www.nzlii.org.nz>);

The Tohunga Suppression Act 1907,¹⁸¹ particularly, has been widely critiqued by Māori scholars due to its sweeping impact on te ao Māori¹⁸² (Durie, 1997; Ngata, 2014; Stephens, 2000). Leading Ngāti Raukawa, Rangitāne scholar, Mason Durie (1997, p. 34) asserts:

the greatest blow to the organisation of Maori knowledge and understanding occurred in 1907 when the Tohunga Suppression Act was passed. By outlawing traditional healers, the Act also opposed Maori methodologies and the legitimacy of Maori knowledge in respect of healing, the environment, the arts, and the links between the spiritual and the secular.

The act, introduced by Māori male member of parliament, James Carroll, criminalised spiritual leaders, acting to curb those (such as Rua Kenana at Maungapohatu) who nurtured the independence of hapū and iwi at a time when the confiscation of Māori lands and plummeting population signaled the immanent success of colonial annihilation (Binney, 2010b; Pool, 1977). Law scholar, Malcolm Voyce (1989) observes that English witchcraft provisions were imported into New Zealand legislature from 1893 onwards to crush tribal spiritualities as beacons of autonomy and resistance against state control (Dow, 2001). In Britain and Europe witch hunt legislations targeted ‘rebel bodies’ often defined as outspoken female healers and midwives whose autonomy challenged feudal power at a time of ‘transition to capitalism’ and colonial expansion (Ehrenreich & English, 1973; Federici, 2014). A climate of fear and hysteria was fostered to coerce, control, and subjugate these bodies, millions of whom endured public torture and execution (Chattopadhyay, 2017; Sjo & Mor, 1991). Like many of the colonial ethnographic re-definitions of Māori womanhood, colonial legislations geared to obliterate Native spiritualities find their philosophical origins in the witch hunt histories (Ngata, 2014).

One of the first to be prosecuted under the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 was a Taranaki woman, Puna Himene Te Rangimarie (Lange, 1999). A tohunga described

¹⁸¹ The Tohunga Suppression Act was repealed in 1963.

¹⁸² This can be translated as ‘the Māori world’.

by one of the investigative police officers as “one of the smartest Maori women it has been my lot to meet” (Maclean, 1996), Puna was regarded with ‘reverence’ by many in Taranaki who flocked to support her during her trial in the Hawera Magistrate’s Court in September 1910 (Clement & Johnston, 1993; Reinfeld, Pihama & Cameron, 2015). Found guilty of gathering ‘Maoris about her by practicing on their superstition or credulity’ Puna escaped imprisonment but was fined and forced to abandon spiritual healing work and the sharing of spiritual teachings with her people (Clement & Johnston, 1993). This story highlights the imposition of a forced silence on Māori women’s ritual systems of knowledge through threat of imprisonment, and the criminalisation of Māori gathering in sacred spaces around spiritual leaders who held the capacity to foster community and cultural cohesion in an environment of increasing death, disease, displacement, marginalisation and poverty (Durie, 1997; Stephens, 2000).

The impacts of the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 have been intergenerational (Ngata, 2014; Simmonds, 2014). One of my kuia shares that when she was growing up her mother warned her repeatedly never to speak of certain wairua knowledge ‘lest the Pākehā lock you up with killers’ (as they did to her koroua, a tohunga, in Mount Eden prison). She learned as a child to silence her own tongue and never voice aloud the mysteries of our world.¹⁸³ Another of my kuia speaks of kuia who practiced Catholicism by day, but by night turned to old karakia and atua. Whilst maintaining a front of perfect submission to the god of the coloniser, behind closed doors and concealed from the glare of Pākehā authorities, traditional spiritual and ritual practices continued.

¹⁸³ As a consequence certain ritual and sacred knowledges were not passed on to the next generation (Simmonds, 2014; Yates - Smith, 1998). As I point out in Chapter 4, the censorship of Māori women’s ritual ontologies began in the mission stations where Māori women and girls experienced the recoiling horror of the missionary wives whose Christian sensibilities were affronted by the open and celebrative Māori attitudes toward sexuality.

The threat of Pākehā intervention upon expressions of Native spiritualities lingers¹⁸⁴ creating a sense of unsafety and uncertainty for some Māori today (Ngata, 2014). One research participant, Ngāti Maniapoto wahine, Ninakaye Tanetinoarau, spoke of guidance that came from her ancestral river to ‘jump in and pūre’, a ceremonial practice of immersion in water used traditionally to release *mamae*.¹⁸⁵ She stopped herself from fulfilling that instruction, however, because her *awa* ran through a large city and was considered dangerous to ‘swim’ in. She imagined telling Pākehā authorities that her ‘*awa told her to do it*’ and the ridicule she might meet, along with the threat of being ‘*thrown in the looney bin*’ (N. Tanetinoarau, personal communication, January 10, 2017). At the 2018 Kare-a-roto symposium in Waikato, my kuia, Rangimarie Pere described a Māori woman she had met in Tokanui¹⁸⁶ who had been locked up for talking about wairua knowledges. Aunty’s response to this woman was ‘*do not share these stories with your whānau or anyone who does not understand*’.

Ron Ngata (2014) points out that these kinds of examples are not isolated incidents but are the continuation of an old story, an intergenerational struggle to conceal our sacred ways lest we suffer the threat of prosecution and captivity (Deloria, 1999; Waziyatawin, 2012; Yates-Smith, 1998). The systematic repression of Native spiritualities and the continued assault of Pākehā hegemony in Aotearoa is why bold, public acts of ritual to our own deities is a powerful and necessary assertion of our own *mana motuhake*. It is an assertion that re-orientes our place in the world as sacred and connected to our elders, the *atua*, which colonial legislators and missionaries assumed we would abandon.

Another legislation that would have been instrumental in fragmenting Māori women’s ritual ontologies is the Midwives Act 1904 (see <http://www.nzlii.org.nz>).

¹⁸⁴ Conversely, Native spiritualities are also co-opted and mis-appropriated by sections of white society who seek spiritual revelation through Native philosophies due to the loss of their own spiritual/ritual histories. I discuss this in the following chapter.

¹⁸⁵ There is a Māori saying ‘*herea ki te wai*’ – ‘take it to the water’ (to be released) that reflects customary practices of purification through the element of water.

¹⁸⁶ Tokanui Psychiatric Hospital was opened in 1912 and closed in 1988.

This Act regulated and institutionalised the ancient arts of midwifery, relocating these knowledges within masculinist and colonial medical discourses (Banks, 2000). The Act demanded that all midwives and birth attendants be registered in order to practice, and formalised midwifery education in alignment with colonial cultural ideologies (Banks, 2000). Naomi Simmonds (2014, p. 31) points out that traditional Māori birth attendants (tāpuhi) were forced to undergo training in order to register, a process that, alongside the Tohunga Suppression Act “stripped away many of the spiritual elements, ceremony and tikanga of birth and further marginalised mana wahine maternal knowledge”. A feature of the Act was the power of the Registrar to determine whether the midwife was of ‘good character’ - a sharp irony given the history between midwives and the medical profession tracing back to Britain and Europe. As Pākehā authors Ehrenreich & English (1973) maintain, the witch hunt period that targeted midwives as autonomous knowledge holders coincides with the rise of the male medical profession as an elite industry.

The regulation of midwifery contributed to driving mana wahine ritual ontologies underground and led to Māori women birthing in Pākehā hospitals where the laws of tapu that protected the sanctity of the whare tangata were violated (Lange, 1999; Simmonds, 2014). Te Aroha Burgess Beaumont (in Coney, 1993, p. 59) shares a harrowing account of just such an experience, which I imagine is a common story for countless Māori and other Native women:

I was strung up like a sheep carcass in stirrups. It was terrible. I didn't ask for the afterbirth. I was too frightened in hospital. I thought my spine would break, lying on my back with my legs in the air. It was terrible being swabbed. It was all an embarrassment. Nothing was tapu. They examined you down there, but that never happened at home. The area was never touched. At home you were taught to do things yourself, they showed you. I helped a neighbor give birth to twins. I'd been taught. But in a hospital you couldn't do anything. They did everything to you.

Te Aroha's powerful story reflects the violation of the whare tangata ceremony of birthing – one of our most sacred rites. The consequences of such violations are intergenerational. This example would surely have been followed by the incineration of the placenta, which up until recently was hospital procedure following births. The burning of the placenta broke intergenerational rites of

returning the placenta to tribal lands to re-affirm whakapapa to Papatūānuku and to signal continued land occupation. Furthermore, as Taare Tikao (in Beattie, 1990, p. 97) points out, the burning of the placenta - seen as a living entity tied to the well-being of the child - also violated the child's mana and mauri with direct consequences that impacted on the child's physical and spiritual vitality.¹⁸⁷ In earlier research I observed that rites involving the burning of the placenta, or any womb-blood, acted to 'seal the womb' rendering it infertile (Binney & Chaplin, 1986; Murphy, 2013). This practice, then, speaks volumes symbolically in relation to the colonial agenda of the extermination of Māori (Mikaere, 2017a).

Like Sophronia's earlier comments that reflect internal struggle and awkwardness to say the words 'menstrual blood' out loud, Te Aroha's use of the term '*down there*' to denote the tara is indicative of a history in which language and stories that venerate the feminine reproductive body have been supplanted by colonial renditions of female shame (Mikaere, 2017a; Murphy, 2013; Yates-Smith, 1998). As a consequence, after almost two centuries of colonial contact, many Māori women shuffle around language about their reproductive body in complete contrast to our tīpuna kuia who celebrate their sexuality through compositions that are still sung today (Murphy, 2013). Yet, as Ani Mikaere (2017a) points out, in some of these compositions the *tara*, the *tero*, the *teke*, the *uha*, the *kohe*, the *kehokeho* and the *hika*, all names for the vulva, have been rewritten using the 'highly ambiguous' Māori word '*mea*', which can be translated as 'thing'¹⁸⁸ (see Ngata & Jones, 2004, 2005). The use of the term '*mea*' entrenches colonial patriarchy by erasing language that acknowledges the mana and tapu of Māori women (Murphy, 2013, 2016). One cannot read the tara as a threshold between worlds, as a guardian of sacred law, as a portal that connects the generations to the atua through language such as '*mea*'. The demonstrations of mana by Hinetītama, Hinenuitepō, Hinateiwaiwā and the countless rangatira wāhine who expose their genitalia as a powerful assertion of

¹⁸⁷ Certain wāhi tapu within our own tribal lands hold the capacity to mitigate the impacts of this trauma.

¹⁸⁸ Yet *mea* also translates as red and reddish (Williams, 1991).

female supremacy, are made invisible (Binney & Chaplin, 1986; Kent, 2011; Mikaere, 2017a).

At the same time, language is living, contested, volatile and can be used in different ways. It can shift in its meanings and resonances over time and space. An example is the cervical smear campaign led by the late Te Arawa wahine Talei Morrison that used the catch-cry ‘*smear your mea*’ to encourage young Māori women to undertake cervical smear tests (Nyika, 2018). The term is used counter-hegemonically to open a space for Māori women to discuss and care for their reproductive bodies and employ humour to counter the intergenerational silence that now shrouds the tara in many whānau. Here, ‘*mea*’ is used strategically to facilitate transformation and promote a positive socio-political outcome.

*Kei te rau o te huia, kua rere ai koe ki te aiotanga, te huinga o te kahurangi. Ki kōna koe ki tō tipuna a Hinenuitepō okioki atu ai eeee...*¹⁸⁹

Te Arawa artist, Chanz Mikaere also breaks the silence surrounding the tara in her confronting artwork ‘*Me inoi tatou*’ (see Figure 5.1). Used as a verbal prelude to invite the collective intoning of the Lords Prayer translated into Māori, the phrase ‘*Me inoi tatou*’ (Let us Pray) is aptly subverted by Chanz who re-codes it by placing it in a composition with hands cupped in Christian prayer that double as a large, open vulva. Chanz uses a vulvic palette of pinks and browns. She displays sharp teeth along the inner labia as a visual mnemonic of the supremacy of Hinenuitepō whose teeth reinforce the upholding of sacred laws (see previous chapter).

¹⁸⁹ These words acknowledge Talei who passed over during this study.

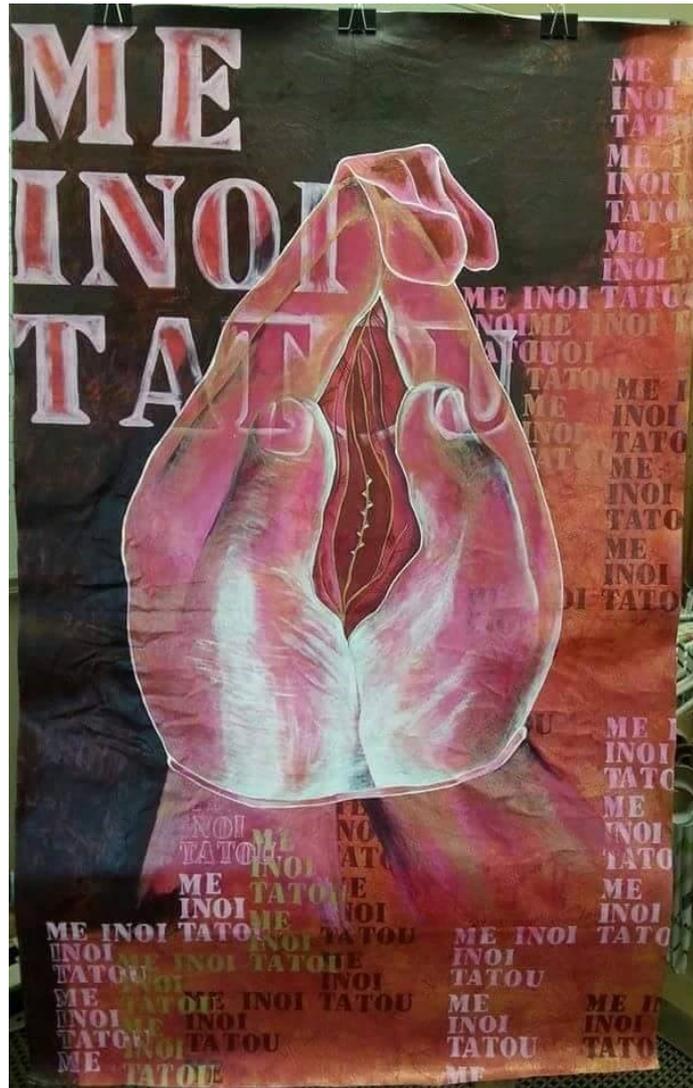


Figure 5.1 Me inoi tatou. Acrylic on canvas. By C Mikaere. Used with permission.

In '*Me inoi tatou*' Chanz re-inscribes the vulva as a female altar, a site of communion with deity, recalling cosmologies that venerate the central significance of female sexual organs in regenerating the cosmos (Jenkins, 1992; Mikaere, 2017a; Norman, 1992; Pere, 1982). Yet she also recalls ancient mana wahine rituals of whakapohane, that whakanoa or cancel out malignant, threatening and dangerous elements through the exposure of female genitalia. In this instance Christianity and its detrimental impacts on Māori women's ceremonial lives is identified and ritually expunged from the collective psyche of Māori women through the contemporary medium of paint on canvas. The work is a powerful political comment and an act of resistance that subverts colonial re-definitions (Best, 1924; Biggs, 1960; Heuer, 1972).

In this research ‘*Me inoi tatou*’ reinforces my central thesis that the Native female reproductive body is a ceremonial landscape and site of subversion, decolonisation and resistance (Gonzales, 2012; Mikaere, 2017a; Smith, A., 2005). The work challenges Māori male leadership that denies mana wahine and confronts Māori women, some of whom have come to believe that the silence that emanates from the subject of the tara and menstrual blood, is ‘traditional’ because of its ‘tapu’. A perusal of tribal literatures reveals the opposite (see Grey, 1853; Hanson, 1982; Mikaere, 2017a, 2017b; Murphy, 2013; Ngata & Jones, 2007). The difference highlights the impact of colonisation, silencing ritual systems of knowledge that elevate wāhine Māori (Anderson, 2011; Cook, 2008; Yates-Smith, 1998).

Settler-state legislations have created a lineage of fear toward wairua and whare tangata ritual ontologies. Yet there are other intertwined histories that I now turn to examine.

Te kaikōkā – The violation of the mother

The waters of Waikaremoana are described as ‘te wai ahuruhuru’ by my kuia, Dr Rangimarie Pere - the cherishing waters of the womb. The coloniser, who invaded Waikaremoana and applied the scorched earth policy in 1865, burning, looting, murdering, and then confiscating our beloved maternal lands, is described by my people as ‘te iwi kaikōkā’ – a people who would consume and violate their own mother, the earth (Pere in Sykes, Mika & Armstrong, 2004, p. 2). Rangitunoa Black describes the impact of the raupatu on Māori women’s whare tangata rituals and points out that the breach and disappearance of certain whare tangata ritual traditions goes hand in hand with the confiscation of tribal lands:

The women had their babies on the land, not in a confined space and that was their way of claiming their hapūtanga. Tangata whenua nē? Their hapū is their actual marking of the land, whenua ki te whenua ... The breaches of the whare tangata started when the land was taken ... the impact on our people because they became whāngai to their land, they were orphaned off, the raupatu ... no land.

The claim to the land is through birthing. The birth of the babies records the Tangata Whenua occupation. That’s what they were discussing on the waka. They brought women with them to birth the babies on the land so that they could mark it with the red blood ... I

found old records of where the Tuhoe women were having their babies directly on the land to mark occupation ... I spent years trying to figure out 'who are we'? That's who we are ... The burials of the pito in the trees close by, those are all land claims. (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016).

Rangitunoa highlights the notion that where tangata rituals intimately shape, underpin and embody the name we give ourselves - Tangata Whenua, which can be translated as both People of the Land and *Placenta People*. Womb-blood rites that signified and re-affirmed tribal occupation include the birthing waters, the burial of the whenua and placement of pito and menarche and monthly menstruation rites (see Chapter 7 for further discussion). The importance of these rites in defining who we are is signified not only in the name we give ourselves but also in the plurality of te reo Māori that conceptualises women and the earth as one. For example 'te where tangata' is used as a term for both women and land. Ūkaipō, I point out in earlier work (Murphy, 2013, p. 43), is a beloved name for Papatūānuku that:

refers to the pre-dawn breastfeeding hours when a mother provides her baby physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual nourishment and sustenance through the milk. The use of the term in relation to Papatūānuku speaks to the divinity of the earth in its capacity to nurture and fulfil all the basic needs of humanity.

Whenua, a term for both the land and the placenta which nourishes and sustains the tipuna in the womb provides another example (Gabel, 2013; Pere, 1982; Sykes, 2010; Te Awekotuku, 1983; Williams, 2004). In describing the connection between women and the earth, Mohawk midwife and elder Katsi Cook (2008, p. 156) shares a philosophy identical to Māori:

Of the sacred things that there are to be said about this, woman is the first environment; she is an original instruction. In pregnancy, our bodies sustain life. Our unborn see through our eyes and hear through our ears. Everything the mother feels, the baby feels, too. At the breast of women, the generations are nourished. From the bodies of women flow the relationships of those generations, both to society and to the natural world. In this way, our ancestors said, the earth is our mother. In this way, we as women are the earth.

Naomi Simmonds (2014, p. 137) writes of the intimate relationship between women and land in Māori ontological traditions:

the whare tangata is intimately entangled with whakapapa, whenua and wairua. A mana wahine reading of the maternal body as te whare tangata makes inextricable the individual from the collective, the physical from the spiritual and the present from the past and future.

Women and the land sustain and regenerate the iwi, a view that is captured in whakatauki¹⁹⁰ and in Māori terms that combine primary kinship groupings with the reproductive ceremony of Māori women's body. For example *whānau* can be translated as both 'family'¹⁹¹ and 'to birth', and *hapū* can be translated as 'conception', 'pregnant' and a cluster of whānau related through a common ancestor. Terms for menstrual blood, such as *ikura*, *waikura*, *atua*, *rerenga atua* and *awa atua*, ritualise the intimate relationship between women and land as I examine further in Chapter 7 (Kahukiwa & Potiki, 1999; Mikaere, 2017a; Murphy, 2013).

What are the impacts, then, upon Māori women's ritual ontologies when maternal lands are desecrated and sold off and te reo Māori, which conveys philosophies that centralise the whare tangata, is suppressed? What happens to our sense of self when the whare tangata rituals that inform the name Tangata Whenua are violated and severed through raupatu, legislations and language that vilifies the reproductive body of women? Whetu's earlier comments that some Māori women feel like "*their whole identity has been stolen*" and that their relationship to the atua wāhine has been "*lost forever because they are tainted in some way*" and Hinewirangi's comments that "*We don't know anymore ... We are too afraid to trust and believe in ourselves*" is, deeply entangled in the theft of Native language and the

¹⁹⁰ An example is 'Mā te wahine ka tupu ai te hanga nei, te tangata. Mā te whenua ka whai oranga ai ... He wahine, he oneone, i ngaro ai te tangata. (Women create humans. The land nourishes them ... Without women and land, humanity would be lost) (Sinclair, 1975).

¹⁹¹ I refer here to Māori notions of family rather than heteronormative capitalist nuclear units. Drawing on Waikaremoana tohuna tipua, Dr Rangimarie Pere, I explain in Chapter 2 that Māori notions of 'family' encompass human and non-human relations across creation. These inter-relationships are bound through whakapapa that Māori women's reproductive bodies convey through the navel, the womb and menstrual blood.

confiscation of tribal lands marked with birthing blood that ritually binds Tangata Whenua to the whenua.

In my work I am concerned with the way that the confiscation and violation of tribal lands has compounded with colonial narratives and Christianity to sever the ritual traditions of Māori and other Native women (Mikaere, 2017a; Walters, Beltran, Huh & Evans-Campbell, 2011). I became profoundly aware of these associations as I was escorted to ‘navel’ and ‘womb geographies’ throughout Hawai’i and Turtle Island. Kneeling to lay prayers at the ancient altar at Pu’u o Kohe (The mound of the vulva) on Hawai’i Island with Native Hawai’an sacred activist and musician, Hāwane Rios, our ceremony was repeatedly interrupted by the dropping of bombs by the United States military who use the surrounding site as a ‘training ground’. Dropping bombs on the Pu’u o Kohe area, the regenerative organs of the mother, Papahānaumoku, attacks the mauri of the people in exactly the same way as colonial narratives that recode female genitalia and menstrual blood as filthy and inferior do. It creates spiritual disjuncture, disorientation and disconnection that impacts on Native women and their whānau today.

Hāwane describes Kaho’olawe Island in the Hawai’ian archipelago as “the last blood in our whakapapa ... the last blood of Papahānaumoku”¹⁹² (H. Rios, personal communication, June 16, 2016). The smallest of the eight main volcanic islands that comprise the Hawai’ian Islands, the sacred isle of Kaho’olawe was used as a bombing range by the United States Military during World War Two.¹⁹³ In writing of Kaho’olawe, scholar Wennifer Lin (2008, p. 78) astutely comments:

Is it any surprise that the military chose the metaphorical genitalia of the Hawaiian earth mother as target for bombing practice? Is it no

¹⁹² Papahānaumoku is a Hawai’ian term for mother earth.

¹⁹³ After fierce protest and political agitation from Native Hawai’ian activists, the United States Military ceased its live-fire training exercises in 1990 (Bailey, 2009). As I point out in Chapters 2 and 6, however, whilst the bombing has stopped on Kaho’olawe, it continues elsewhere throughout the Hawai’ian islands, and more specifically, at matrilineal ritual sites that cradle the mauri of the Native Hawai’ian people.

wonder that just as the vulva and womb of the land have been violated and defiled, so have those of many native women's bodies?

These reflections resonate on Great Turtle Island at the significant Native feminine cosmological site, Wakaŋ Tipi. Dakota midwife Autumn Cavendar-Wilson (in Gould & Rock, 2016) writes:

Wakaŋ Tipi is a place that is both literally and metaphorically a 'womb of the earth,' a place where the boundary between this world and the other is permeable. With death being more or less a reversal of birth, prepared bodies of the deceased were brought to this womb so that their souls could more easily transverse the spiritual space between here and the Wanagi Tacaŋku [road of the spirits, identified with the Milky Way]. Dakota philosophy understands the hereafter and the here before to be one and the same, the home of both our ancestors and our descendants. The female body, and by extension women's ceremonies, were held in the highest esteem, thought to be one of the primary seats of spiritual power on this plane (p. 227).

For the Dakota, Wakaŋ Tipi, is the womb of the earth mother Maka Ina and the place where they entered into this world from "their stellar home near the backbone of the buffalo constellation" (Gould & Rock, 2016, p. 226). Like Kūkaniloko, the ancient birthing temple in Oahu, Hawai'i, Wakaŋ Tipi connects the womb to specific star constellations as well as terrestrial geographies, collapsing Cartesian binaries that locate women exclusively within a devalued earthly terrain.

Like the other womb and navel geographies I visited on Great Turtle Island and Hawai'i, Wakaŋ Tipi has been dynamited, desecrated and almost completely annihilated through colonial invasion and industrial waste (Gould & Rock, 2016). Sealed off from public access by elders of the American Indian Movement in the 1970s, Wakaŋ Tipi is slowly being restored, yet remains vulnerable under the hegemony of white American settler society (Gould & Rock, 2016; Waziyatawin, 2008).

Sexual violence as a colonial weapon

The violation of feminine cosmological sacred sites coincides with the violation of Native feminine bodies (Lin, 2008; Smith, A., 2005). The use of sexual violence as a colonial weapon to crush Māori spiritual and prophetic movements of resistance

during the years of confrontation is a critical and largely unspoken history that is important in terms of understanding the contemporary *mamae* and fear that some Māori women experience today (Pihama & McRoberts, 2009).

In 2017 I travelled to Parihaka and Maungapōhatu to witness the Crown apologise for the invasion of both communities at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁹⁴ Parihaka Papakāinga Trustees Chairperson Te Puna Bryants address detailed histories of the repeated rape of her tīpuna whaea by colonial militiamen at the time of the invasion and occupation of the pā in 1881. Those words hung heavy in the still and silent atmosphere on the day, witnessed by Taranaki hapū and other iwi from across the country who had traveled to attend the event. Following the admission, the women of Parihaka moved onto the marae ātea and performed a waiata poi¹⁹⁵ - Muri ahiahi¹⁹⁶ - wreathed in parekawakawa,¹⁹⁷ a symbol of mourning. The waiata poi concluded with the women on their knees, wailing for their kuia whose violation represents the pinnacle of a colonial agenda of annihilation, targeting the wellspring of the generations. Moving forward onto the marae ātea, the men of Parihaka lifted the women from their knees and removed the parekawakawa from their heads in a symbol of ritual release. The Crown watched on in the stifling psychological heat, heads bowed, confronted by the enormity of their own monstrous historical lineage

Maungapōhatu had travelled down from Te Urewera mountains to support Parihaka that day. The courtesy was returned two months later when Taranaki, in turn, traveled up into the rainforests of Te Urewera to witness the Crown begin a process

¹⁹⁴ The Parihaka-Crown Reconciliation Ceremony was held at Parihaka on the 9 June 2017.

¹⁹⁵ A waiata poi is a song performed with a poi. Poi consist of a light ball on a string of varying lengths that is twirled rhythmically. Ngaahina Hohaia points out that the poi is used as a medium of karakia and ritual (N. Hohaia, personal communication, 20 March, 2016).

¹⁹⁶ This is the title of the waiata poi.

¹⁹⁷ Parekawakawa are head pieces often woven of the kawakawa plant and worn at tangihanga-traditional Māori funerary rites.

to pass legislation to pardon the prophet Rua Kenana and his community¹⁹⁸ for ‘sedition’.¹⁹⁹ This was a trumped up charge used as justification to crush the prophetic movement that, like Parihaka, fostered Māori autonomy and resistance to colonial rule (Binney, 2010b; Lange, 1999). On that misty spring morning up in the mountains the gathered people witnessed the same thing, the hau kainga revealing the most disturbing detail of the invasion of their community - the rape of their kuia during the three-day confrontation with armed police who had stormed their mountain stronghold.²⁰⁰

The rape of Māori women during the invasion of both Maungapōhatu and Parihaka, arguably two of the most significant spiritual movements of resistance of the last two hundred years, speaks to the deliberate use of sexual violence as a colonial weapon, violating the tapu of the whare tangata to break the resistance of the people (Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pihama et al., 2016). Ngāti Kahungunu, Rongomaiwahine decolonisation educator, Mereana Pitman’s (1996, p. 45) comments highlight the gravity of rape in traditional Māori contexts and it’s collective and intergenerational impact:

Māori saw rape and especially incest as transgressing the mana, the status, the dignity and the future birthright of not only the victim but also the abuser and his people ... People still remember today, in tikanga, the transgressions of Sexual Violence [sic] dating back 1,200 years.

¹⁹⁸ Discussion around the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 notes how spiritual movements such as Rua Kenana’s were impacting on the Māori workforce who were dropping out of the capitalist colonial economy and flocking to congregations of the prophets. These spiritual and prophetic movements posed a major threat to the stability of the colonial economic machinery whose manual workers comprised Māori bodies (Lange, 1999; Stephens, 2000).

¹⁹⁹ The signing of an agreement by the (then) Minister of Māori Affairs, Te Ururoa Flavell, that set in motion a process to pardon Rua Kenana, was held on 9 September 2017.

²⁰⁰ Despite the historic atrocities of the New Zealand Police at Maungapohatu during the invasion, I observed that there were only low level local police officers who actually fronted to support the kaupapa on the day. There was no representation from the Head Office of the Police. Other than the Māori minister of the time, Te Ururoa Flavell, there were no other Crown dignitaries that day either. Their absence speaks to the on-going minimising of the brutality of colonial legacies and their impacts on present day generations.

Ngāti Tahinga scholar, Denise Wilson's comments similarly express a Māori world view of rape as an intergenerational trauma:

This distress is not only physical or psychological in origin, but also spiritual and has multiple dimensions to it. Not only is this a violation of the woman herself, but also a violation of her tipuna and her future generations. Spiritual distress is often a dimension that is neither recognised nor acknowledged, but one that impedes recovery and healing (n/d, p.5).

Whilst the atrocities of Maungapōhatu and Parihaka are iwi specific, the events that transpired at that time would have reverberated out across the motu, associating Māori spiritualities with danger. The impacts of sexual violence on the ritual ontologies of Māori women would have been direct, overwhelming, and intergenerational (Pihama & Cameron, 2012). The scale of this hidden history is very difficult to estimate due to the silence and shame that often accompanies sexual violation. It is a history that is conveyed in Figure 5.2 in the photograph of a young girl caught on the border of the King Country and Tamaki Makaurau during the war period. She appears very young, possibly even pubescent, with a demeanor that is solemn, childlike, afraid and helpless. She is surrounded by three militia-men. The men on either side of her incline toward her, knees pressed against her, hemming her in. The casually reclined male figure behind her, whose body language reflects his power in this situation, ensures that she is trapped. The male on the left is armed with an axe, which rests comfortably in his right hand. He appears unhurried, self-assured, relaxed and in complete control. The male on the right leers toward the girl with a hint of a smile on his lips. She is his entertainment, a manifestation of the colonial fetish for the "little brown gal" (O'Brien, 2006, p. 5) who is young and sexually compliant. As a discursive text the image is clear enough, sexual conquest becomes a metaphor for Native subjugation to colonial domination (O'Brien, 2006; Tamaira, 2010).



Figure 5.2 Temple, William, 1833-1919. Members of the Imperial forces, and a young Maori woman. Ref: PA1-q-250-49-2. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Used with permission.

The image reflects predatory colonial attitudes that sexualise and dehumanise Māori women and girls who are re-defined as sexually promiscuous and as available ‘for the taking’ as Māori lands (Hudson, 2010; Pihama & Johnston, 1994, 1995). As Pākehā art historian, Heather Leigh Waldroup (2004, p. 30) argues, colonisation claims not only geographical space but “the bodies within that space”. Trapped on the border and trapped by the photographic frame, this tipuna is presented as a symbol for the subjugation of the Māori world.

E te raukura kia tau iho rā to wairua ki raro i ngā manaakitanga o te wāhi ngaro eee.

Mediums to purge, resist, recover and re-ignite

A number of profound creative and performative pieces composed by Native women reflect issues of struggle, spiritual disorientation, and loss, as well as resistance, and the re-activation of mana wahine within the wider context of decolonisation and Native sovereignty. The ritual theatre work, *Marama*, by director Nina Nawalowalo, is one example. Showcased during the 2016 Auckland Arts Festival *Marama* began with depictions of the domestic, sacred, ritual, cosmological and social worlds of Polynesian women all intersecting fluidly on

stage, collapsing dualistic Cartesian borders that separate the sacred from daily living.

The reverie shifts from the gentle rhythms of women's worlds to a scene of violation, signalled by a blinding light which turns on the audience, and the sound of chainsaws. The forest floor, rich, soft, deep green and velvety, is violently peeled back and 'opened up'. The kaitiaki of the forest, depicted as a woman, lies injured. A woman stumbles on to stage, lost and disorientated in a torn disco dress and smeared makeup, with one broken red, high heel shoe. The red shoe recalls the myth²⁰¹ that speaks to it as a symbol of craving and consumption, looking to fill the void created by the loss of spiritual, ceremonial and cultural traditions that foster an understanding of inter-relatedness, identity and community cohesion (Estes, 1992; Kimmerer, 2013).

The scene shifts through the karanga, which rises to a crescendo and culminates in a fully-fledged women's haka, replete with the brandishing of traditional Polynesian weaponry. Here Hinataiwaiwā and the wahine nanahu who lead war parties in pursuit of justice are recalled. A birdscull kaitiaki in a feather korowai is woken on the stage, snarling – a symbol of Hinenuitepō who brought death to those that transgressed sacred laws in Māori story-cycles (Pere in Murphy, 2013).

Marama theatre represented a call to direct action, challenging Native women to 'live the meaning of indigeneity' through defending and protecting sacred relationships to the earth in a time of unrelenting environmental plunder fostered by capitalist ideology and empire (Waziyatawin, 2012; Wildcat, 2009). Native women's ceremonies that renew and reassert sacred connections to the earth, sky and waterways take place in this critical context. These themes were demonstrated powerfully in the stand-offs at Mauna Kea in Hawai'i and Standing Rock in Great Turtle Island, which both took place during the time I was conducting this research. Native women lead both political movements, couching their activism within ceremony in defense of sacred relationships that comprise Native identities. I return

²⁰¹ Storyteller Clarissa Pinkola-Estes in her book *Women who run with the wolves* (1992) recounts a Magyar-Germanic version of The Red Shoes.

to discuss the movement to protect Mauna Kea and Standing Rock in the following chapter.

Themes of loss, spiritual disorientation, violation, reclamation and the re-activation of the sacred feminine were also showcased in Kaha:wi Dance theatre company's *Blood Tides* production that premiered in Toronto, Canada in 2018 under Kahnyen'kehàka director, Santee Smith. The work was an international collaboration between Māori, Fijian, Mohawk, Zapoteca, Guna, Tainō, and Kickapoo women to reactivate menstruation ceremonies and sacred practices. Like *Marama* theatre, *Blood Tides* was a ritual theatre work that sought to recover the missing stories, voices and knowledge of Native women who have endured colonial violence.²⁰² A stand out scene within *Blood Tides*, and pertinent to the themes in this chapter, was Fijian performance artist Jahra Rager Wasasala's solo performance, 'Urgency'.

Accompanied by the searing vocals of the phenomenal Tuscarora songstress, Pura Fe, and the haunting taonga pūoro²⁰³ of Tapuika musician, Jo'el Komene, the scene reflects a broken woman, raised without ceremony and community on the margins of a white dominant society that despises her. In the scene she becomes trapped by her own ancestors who channel her into life situations that force her to confront the enormity of her own loss of identity and place. In her dance she wrestles with her face - the mask - the re-definition of her femininity imposed by others. She appears to painfully rip off the mask, stripping away the negative colonial re-definitions that

²⁰² Under pressure from bereaved Native families, communities, organisations, activists, and a host of non-government organisations and international human rights agencies and advocacy groups (such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch), and government reports, the Canadian Government launched an independent National Inquiry into the intergenerational phenomena that is missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in 2016. Violence toward Indigenous women and girls, whose deaths and disappearances continue to escalate, spans a 500 year history of colonial invasion on the continent of Turtle Island (Brown, 2018). Poverty, racism, sexism, systemic police misconduct, official indifference and on-going colonising legislations and policies have been identified as key components underpinning the epidemic (Kubik & Bourassa, 2016). Nearly 1200 Indigenous women have been murdered or gone missing in Canada alone in the last 30 years (Kubick & Bourassa, 2016).

²⁰³ Taonga pūoro are traditional Māori musical instruments.

engender violence. As she reactivates her slackened jaw incoherent words tumble from her mouth. Her words find clarity and a poem emerges. It is a symbol that resonates throughout the entire *Blood Tides* production and this study. It is a symbol of Native women reasserting the right to define ourselves and tell our own stories in ways that make sense for us (Gunn Allen, 1991; Irwin, 1991). It is a symbol of the power of Native women to reactivate ceremonies that heal and transform our own lives. The work ends with the woman purifying herself (as depicted in figure 5.3) with water to lift the tapu of her healing ceremony.



Figure 5.3 Kaha:wi Dance Theatre. *Blood Tides* – Production, 2018. Urgency scene. Performer Jahra ‘Rager’ Wasasala. Photographer: Ian R. Maracle. Reprinted with permission.

These works represent a growing movement nationally and internationally to reclaim the divine feminine and women’s spirituality as a critical component of Native self determination. I anticipate similar examples of art and activism on the horizon as western civilisation continues its plunder of the environment, forcing Indigenous peoples to stand in defense of sacred relationships embedded in place.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed how Christianity, legislations, raupatu and sexual violence have been used to erase mana wahine ritual ontologies. Combined with the colonial re-definitions of Native womanhood outlined in Chapter 2, the

consequences have created spiritual disorientation, self-doubt and fear that many Native women experience today in relation to their spirituality. Despite this, Native women continue to resist colonial depictions and reassert notions of themselves that are grounded in Indigenous metaphysics, ritual and cosmology. Moreover, they are re-igniting different ceremonial forms to heal, decolonise and emancipate themselves, demonstrating a vibrant self-renewing spiritual system that responds to contemporary contexts and is connected to the past and future.

In the following chapter participant kōrero is drawn on to discuss in general terms the multiple ways in which Indigenous women are recovering ceremony to reforge ancient relationships with the spirit-world, the tīpuna, and the atua. The chapter begins with a contemporary karakia and journal entry that conveys the major theme of continuity and the evolution of ritual forms that respond to current contexts. Following on from this in Chapter 7 an examination of the key site of menstruation ceremonies is undertaken, offering participants stories that describe examples of ancient rituals that are being renewed and re-developed today.

CHAPTER 6

Coming home to ourselves: Recovering the sacred

*Rewa mai ki te pae e taku koko ariki
Rehu ki mua i ahau taku uha amokapua
Koi nunumi atu au i to aroha ē
Whitikiria to tatua whakamaui ki taku hope nei e
Nahana ra te po ukiuki i raranga
Nahau ra e wawe ai te komiri atu
Hinateiwaiwā!
Piki mai i taku tuahu katanuku!
Kia mārama ai taua e*

*Rise beloved, rise before me, your priestess
That I may fold into your grace
Secure is the ancestral belt
Woven by the myriads
Whose paths you once caressed
Hinateiwaiwā!
Mount this moving shrine!
That I may know you²⁰⁴*

Summer solstice 2016 - On the cusp of sunset a group of Māori women gather at a fire to chant the rise of Hina in the sky and welcome the return of Hineraumati.²⁰⁵ As we raise our invocations, one or two lonely stragglers walk past and linger a moment to witness our ceremony. In that moment, and ever since, I have pondered on the historic significance and rarity of what they witnessed that night; Māori women in a public place raising karakia to our own ancient female deities, using our voices and bodies as instruments of communion.

One passer-by attempted to question us but we did not break chant. Through round after round of karakia we kept unison, raising the energy to a climactic peak, the summit of exaltation, of which, Hinateiwaiwā, as the atua of childbirth, represents. It felt ancient, rare, precious, and affirming, like we were taking control of our destinies in a sacred, wild, and very powerful, female space. There was a time not too long ago when we would have been criminalised for publicly raising ceremony to our own deities like this. The Tohunga Suppression Act 1907, repealed when my parents were children, and the intrusion of Christianity, saw our rituals of

²⁰⁴ Composed by N. Murphy 2015. Translated by R. Tibble, 2016.

²⁰⁵ Hineraumati is the atua that personifies summer.

communion go underground. But we are entering a new time where the longing to reconnect is being harnessed as a sacred fire to fuel our chants. We want to know the atua wāhine. We want to feel and find them within ourselves to transform our own lives. We are moving beyond fear and trusting ourselves to reach for them and they are responding. Three of the women following this ceremony became hapū. Two boys and a girl have since been born. This is what can happen when you summon forth the atua who rules the ceremonies of the whare tangata! (personal journal entry, December 24, 2016).

The karakia that opens this chapter is a direct summoning of the atua Hinatēiwaiwā to align and ‘mount the chanter’ that they become one (Tangaro, 2007). It is not a traditional chant but a contemporary composition originating in my own ceremonial practice. I open in this way to highlight the major theme of this chapter - cultural continuity and the movement to recreate ceremonies that connect us directly with our own pantheon of female deities. The recovery of these ancient relationships represents the deepening of our decolonising journey that moves to restore our spiritual foundations (La Duke, 2005; Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2012).

In this chapter the stories of Māori and other Native women recovering the sacred through reclaiming and evolving ceremonies of communion with atua wahine and te ao wairua is examined. These voices and stories are largely absent and unchartered in academia. They are healing stories that carry codes of resistance. They offer “a language of possibility, a way out of colonialism” (Smith, L. T., 2012, p. 204). They are stories in which Native women assert the right to define themselves in relation to evolving spiritualities. The stories gathered here are diverse, reflecting mana wahine and the heterogeneity that characterises our tribal identities (Hutchings, 2002; Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001). They are also diverse because they come from Aotearoa, Hawai’i and Great Turtle Island. Whilst the stories are complex and point to multiple channels in reforging relationships with the atua wāhine, there are broad themes that emerge across the women’s stories. These themes are canvassed, which include: the right of Native women to connect directly with feminine deities; the significance of looking within for spiritual revelation; creating a living spirituality; moving fluidly on the threshold between reclaiming ancestral practices and creating new ceremonies that respond to social, spatial, spiritual, political and ecological contexts; and finally the intergenerational fatigue that some Native women experience as a consequence of

on-going colonial realities. This last point provides a context to understand the significance of ceremony today and the emancipatory potential it holds for tribal communities.

Connecting directly

One of the most powerful themes to emerge out of my research is a remembering amongst Māori (and other Native) women that the atua are within us as well as in the world around us, and that we have the ability to connect directly to them through the crafting of personal ceremonies of communion. Whilst the idea of the atua being located within is simple enough, it is a radical departure from literatures that position Māori women as ‘repellent to the atua’ because of the so called ‘profanity’ and inferiority of the tara and our menstruating, birthing bodies (Biggs, 1960; Heuer, 1972).

One of my research findings is that there is a growing movement nationally and internationally to reassert mana wahine and recover the divine feminine (Yates-Smith, 1998). This movement, which has generated momentum over the last 40 years, is expressed through multiple channels that include prolific transformative scholarship such as the work of Rangimarie Pere (1982, 1994), Aroha Yates-Smith (1998), Ani Mikaere (2017a, 2017b), Leonie Pihama (1994, 2001), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1992; 2012), Lilikalā Kame’eleihiwa (1999), Kalei Nu’uhiwa (2012), Kim Anderson (2011), Leanne Simpson (2000), Patrisia Gonzales (2012), and the late Paula Gunn-Allen (1991, 1992). It is also celebrated in the film, creative and healing arts of Robyn Kahukiwa, the late Merata Mita, Roma Pōtiki, Patricia Grace, Hinewirangi Kohu, Te Raina Ferris, Maraea Rakuraku, Donna Campbell, Ngahina Hohaia, Sarah Hudson, Regan Balzer, Rosanna Raymond, Santee Smith, Chanz Mikaere and Terri Crawford. It is demonstrated in the activism of the late whaea Eva Rickard, the late Hana Jackson, Mereana Pittman, Annette Sykes, Hilda Halkyard-Harawira, Tere Harrison, Dayle Takitimu, Ladonna Brave Bull Allard, Sylvia McAdams, Waziyatawin, Pua Case, Hāwane Rios, Mehana Kihoi, and Ruth

Aloua to name just a few.²⁰⁶ I honour these women and the many more who are central in the movement to recover, reinstate and reassert mana wahine. This thesis provides one of many platforms that celebrate the eclectic ways in which Native women are recovering Native spiritualities that honor the divine feminine.

As I identified in the previous chapter, a key element for my participants in restoring ceremonial and spiritual practice is re-learning to trust inner knowing, and the ability and right to connect directly to the atua wāhine. In the context of colonial histories, where many have been taught that the esoteric arts belong exclusively to a select few men, looking within and trusting ourselves to connect directly to the atua is political.

In coming to ceremony, re-learning to trust ourselves to connect directly to the atua is wrapped up in issues of ‘permission’. Can anyone connect with deities? Can anyone put together a ceremony and how does one begin? Is this not reserved for men and/or for tohunga only? Is it dangerous? Do you need to know exactly what you are doing? There are multiple views on these questions that weave throughout this chapter. Alicia points out that in some Native American communities, Catholic priests maintain control over communion with the divine which hinders Native women from connecting directly to their own power:

You have to understand we are still coming from a place of complete indoctrination where we still think that you have to have this heavenly anointing ... We still come from that cultural catholicism which means you don't have the connection directly to creator, you have to connect through somebody else who will then make that connection ... A lot of times people don't feel like they can do the ceremonies until they have that permission ... The whole concept that somebody's going to give you that permission, that you have to be given that from a higher medicine man or something like that, it's a little hard for me because,

²⁰⁶ Native scholarship that recovers the divine feminine parallels international literatures and art in the west that also seek to resurrect older matriarchal traditions that venerate the ‘triple goddess’. Key literatures include Ardinger (1995), Barrett (2007), Batten (1995), Budapest, (1980), Conway (1994), Lin (2008), Noble (1991), Rountree (2004), Starhawk (1979), Stein (1991), Sjoo & Mor (1991), Whitmont (1997), and Woodman & Dickson (1996).

to me, this is our birth right. These ceremonies are our birth-right (A, Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2016).

I agree wholeheartedly with Alicia. Whilst specialised sacred knowledges and certain ceremonial forms continue to be held by certain whakapapa lines,²⁰⁷ each person has a fundamental right and ability to connect directly with the tīpuna, atua and te ao wairua as relations. In connecting with the atua we connect with ourselves and our own atuaanga.²⁰⁸ Ngāti Kahungunu freedom fighter Moana Jackson's reflections on the nature of our relationship to divinity denotes an autonomy that would have posed a fundamental problem to the colonising project:

In my understanding of the years before colonisation that relationship or link was simply seen as part of our reality – the atua were/are tipuna and thus beings with whom we could communicate as we wished. In that relationship tohunga were not like Pakeha priests telling us how to pray but people who had the gift and training to ensure that our tapu and mana remained safe. They were guardians of who we were in relation to the atua not the definers or mediators.

You may have heard me tell the story of how my koro used to karakia every day. He would often go outside and just sit on the ground and korero. I remember asking him once why he never bowed his head when he did that, as Pakeha do when they pray to their odd god. He simply replied that when he was talking to atua he was talking to his tipuna and you don't need to bow your head to whanaunga.

In colonisation of course bowing to the White god was an important part of submission to the White power he represented. I do get frustrated sometimes that we still do that but then colonisation continues to exert its awful hold on our people, continues in fact to

²⁰⁷ It is important to note however, that there is movement here too. Certain knowledges that have been kept concealed by specific whānau whakapapa lines are moving out beyond the borders of these lines because of the wider environmentally transformative times we are in, according to discussions I have heard in healing and matakite circles. Whakapapa lines that maintained specific ritual traditions are also changing as a consequence of colonisation. For example karanga, once reserved for senior genealogical lines (tuakana) and elder siblings, is changing due to the lack of kaikaranga available.

²⁰⁸ Divinity.

separate us from our tipuna and thus our atua (M. Jackson, personal communication, March 1, 2018).

Moana's comments highlight the intimacy of our everyday spiritualities where we communed with the atua as tīpuna, as whānau bound by whakapapa. We did not need permission from anyone else to come into union with the forces of the cosmos that are intrinsically who we are. As Moana points out, tohunga did not mediate, define (or control) this relationship like Pākehā priests, rather their role was as kaitiaki, ensuring the safety of one's mana and tapu. The story of his koro sitting on the ground everyday to karakia *through kōrero*, linking in with his tīpuna, the atua, is powerful in its simplicity. It conveys a broader definition of karakia than the more formal and classical class of karakia that remain rigid, unchanging and often restricted in their application with only certain people trained in their forms.²⁰⁹ It also reflects an embodied spirituality that activates mana motuhake - our own authority to connect to the divine. We did not bow our heads, Moana's koro points out, to the atua because we are one whānau. To do so, as many now do, is to signify the internalisation of colonial hierarchy that fragments and separates in order to dominate, coerce and control (Gunn Allen, 1992; Pihama, 2001). To bow the head is to demonstrate a servility that finds no 'sane rationale' within philosophical constructs of whakapapa as an inclusive and expansive evolving network of relationships that span the cosmos (Mikaere, 2017b). To bow the head is to symbolise, as Moana points out, that "colonisation continues to exert its awful hold on our people", normalising hierarchy and the systems of oppression and submission that characterise our experiences of colonisation (Smith, A., 2005).

It is very difficult to wield control over a people whose authority stems from a direct connection to their deities (LaDuke, 2005). It is very difficult to colonise the mind and body with narratives of psychological violence that reposition Native people as inferior when we see ourselves as the embodiment of atua (Mikaere, 2017b; Smith, L. T., 2012; Thiong'o, 1986). Moana's comments highlight why Native

²⁰⁹ Prominent Ngāti Mutunga scholar, the late Te Rangi Hīroa (Sir Peter Buck) (1949) points out that there are multiple classes of karakia. He argues that in traditional Māori society everyone maintained their own corpus of karakia for daily use and for a variety of functions. Tohunga were only consulted when specialist assistance was required.

spiritualities were actively targeted throughout colonial histories and why they continue to be powerful sites of resistance (Smith, L. T., 2012; Waziyatawin, 2012).

Whilst the majority of my participants locate the atua within, some of them are even more specific, locating the atua wahine within the cycles of the womb, overthrowing colonial re-definitions of the Native female body as an inferior source of misfortune (see Best, 1924; Biggs, 1960; Heuer, 1972, Smith, J., 1974 and Salmond, 2004 for examples). The below discussion between Taranaki healer Amiria Raumati and I, and following on, Rangitunoa Black, is illustrative of this perspective:

Amiria: In the last month of my pregnancy I kept having this re-occurring vision of me dying during birth almost to the point of fear around giving birth to him. It had been 16 years since I had been through that ceremonial process ... then a week before I gave birth this ancient voice inside of me said to me ' its not a physical death that you are about to encounter, your going to be reborn, reborn as your whare tangata opens'. It's this portal. Your womb opens and your pepi descends, your soul is ascending, incredible! And it was. She's the oracle ... The whare tangata is the mother. She is the healer, the doula, the sage, the wisdom keeper. She is the birther of transformation. She is life. She is that oracle that guides you from light into darkness (A. Raumati, personal communication, November 1, 2015).

Ngahuia: Just like Hina [the moon]

Amiria: Do you think that she is the physical embodiment of Hina?

Ngahuia: Ae

Hine-te-iwaiwa the goddess is guiding us back into it but we tend to overlook that because we've been tampered with through hospital birth ... I've found with women who have talked with me about their pregnancies, they talk about the same things, you know, they listen to their body, they don't know if they're listening to their atua, their kaitiaki, because they have already been taken out of that, but all things the same, you can't get rid of her, she's in you, she is everywhere in you, everywhere ... This ceremony thing, it comes from you (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016).

Whetu also locates the atua within the visceral female body. In her development of the mana wahine ritual theatre work, *Hine*, Whetu discusses the significance of

shifting one's awareness out of the hinengaro²¹⁰ and into the body to reconnect with the atua wāhine directly:

For some women even just acknowledging [their divinity] was quite a big shift for them. There was something about them shifting from this mental space, as well, to their hearts and into their puku, into their whare tangata, into their wairuatanga, to understand, to even let go of the limitations of the mind. [In Hine theatre we were] trying to constantly conceptualise these ideas of the divinity inside yourself that is what creates access to the divinity all around (W. Silver, personal communication, August 30, 2016).

Moving ones awareness out of what is considered by Pehiaweri matakite Shellie Hanley to be the “conundrum of the mind” (S. Hanley, personal communication, August 8, 2018) and into the body, the puku, the whare tangata, the tara and also the heart as seats of intelligence and spiritual communion subverts colonial western ideologies that align the (female) body with profanity and the (male) mind with enlightenment (Longhurst, 2001; Simmonds, 2009). In the theatre work *Hine* the arbitrary dualism collapsed as the cast explored the female body as a ceremonial site. A tūāhu, which was a tactile expression of the mauri and wairua of the theatre work, was used to facilitate this process:

What became very apparent is that it was another way for them to realise that their body is also an altar. It's the sacredness of how you look after your body as an altar to worship ... Because you are a physical manifestation of the goddess ... Women are creators. We hold the creative centre of all things (W. Silver, personal communication, August 30, 2016).

Whetu's understanding of the atua wāhine is also reflected in Hinewirangi's comments. Resonating with Rangitunoa's earlier statements that the ‘ceremony comes from you’ Hinewirangi shares:

Look for it [ritual] kei roto i a koe because the atua never ... left you without what you needed to go on in this world. We just put the shit in front of it, we can't see. Take the weeds out and then the garden will flourish. Nobody told me how [to compose ritual]. But my puku knows,

²¹⁰ The mind.

my body knows, because my body is given to me by ngā atua remember?
(H. Kohu, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

The power to create ceremony and connect directly to the atua is contextualised as a matter of urgency given the extreme disconnection that many people suffer living in the spiritual vacuum of western civilisation, that plunders the earth without foresight of what that means for our descendants (Hartmann, 2004; Jensen, 2006; Wildcat, 2009). Timoti Robinson (2005, p. 11), descendant of the Kai Tahu tohunga, Teone Taare Tikao states:

we are at a major turning point ... the new era calls for individuals to connect to the spiritual powers themselves ... The greatest and clearest message from my teachers was that the time of having someone conduct your spirituality for you is over. Now is the time to be your own tohunga, say your own prayers, see your own visions and know your own gods on a very direct basis.

The role of the atua Hinataiwaiwā here is important. In the places that I have visited in this research there is a gathering momentum to reclaim the sacred feminine, or rather, people are channeling her re-emergence back into the consciousness of humanity. This is happening through multiple forms, including the arts, academia and activism as I mention at the beginning of this chapter. This research bears witness to that global movement (Yates-Smith, 1998). Kalei Nu'uhiwa speaks of Hina the ancestress and Hina the archetype, providing a way of viewing her returning consciousness in this time:

She is the catalyst of change. She brings about change. Whenever she shows up in a story it means you have to pay attention to what's happening because she is going to bring about change. She's the little spark plug that makes a different story occur because of her existence
(K. Nu'uhiwa, personal communication, May 22, 2014).

Chanz Mikaere (2011) makes an important point, stating that uplifting the whare tangata does not deny mana tāne, or the mana of male ritual lineages, rather it returns Hine/Hina to her rightful place as the generative force of the cosmos (Yates-Smith, 1998). I agree with Manulani Meyer (in Lin, 2008, p. 76) who maintains:

We women are not seeking power; we are seeking balance, harmony, union with all that is all of us. That's why the feminine is necessary today. Because it has been mis-placed, mis-understood, and mis-

takened. Truly. So it's time. It's time now to bring us back to that balance, and the feminine - the Hina principles ... These are things we need to ritualize back into our intelligence. So that we know how to live ... to love ... to get back to balance ... in a world that is tremendously out of step ... That's why the feminine is here ... to bring us back to wholeness.

Manulani's comments link directly to my research, which seeks to facilitate the restoration of balance and ritualise the divine feminine within the consciousness of Indigenous (and broader) communities to facilitate socio-spiritual, political and environmental change.

Looking within

Responding to the returning current of Hina consciousness perhaps, a friend of mine commented that there is a huge desire in many Māori women to reconnect with the atua wāhine yet many are unsure where or how to begin. Hinewīrangī brings clarity outlining some basic, yet powerful, tenets. Describing a ceremony that she created to thank the atua wāhine for the gift of her whāngai daughter Hinewīrangī shares:

You trust your instincts and look into your own heart for guidance ... There's something inside you, if you listen, that says this is a special moment, this is a moment of learning for everybody. Now let me put together something. I don't know what yet. I wonder what our tīpuna did? You go there. But actually, it was nothing more than common sense. It was simple ... I just talked to them, just like this. There was no special kupu. I wasn't even matatau ki te reo. I didn't even know right, except my heart felt it ... for me it's all kei roto i a koe ... Hina, she's inside me ... the ritual is inside ... look for it kei roto i a koe (H. Kohu, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

Two other participants shared similar whakāro stating:

Our rituals are in us. We never lose them. They are just asleep (S. Kane, diary entry, August 20, 2016)

No one can take that away [the connection to the atua wāhine]. It's never lost it's just maybe not activated (W. Silver, personal communication, August 30, 2016).

These assertions to 'look within' and 'trust your instincts' in crafting ceremonies of communion with the atua who lie within is an incredibly transformative and

empowering message for many Māori and other Native women who have learned to externalise divinity beyond the borders of their own bodies. It is a powerful act of mana motuhake when Native women look to themselves for guidance to create the rituals that will facilitate healing, particularly in the context of colonial discourses that both debase Native femininity and advance narratives of cultural loss and the extinction of ‘pure’, ‘authentic’ and ‘legitimate’ cultural practices (Anderson, 2000; St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995).

Whetu observes that “*there are many shades of ritual*” (W. Silver, personal communication, August 30, 2016) encapsulating the tenor of Hinewīrangī’s and Rangitūnoa’s comments that our rituals are deeply personal and diverse. St Pierre and Long Soldier (1995) maintain that although there is a pattern and consistency to Lakota ceremony that is handed down the generations, very personal ritual practices are the norm. These practices are shaped by a person’s childhood, whānau, whakapapa, geography, dreaming-life, beliefs and relationship with specific teachers and kaitiaki that may be human, animal or elemental, and that may occupy this world or the spirit worlds. The authors (1995, p. 146) continue:

It is not enough to copy the songs and ceremonies of another holy man; this means nothing. If you truly have the calling, the spirits will teach you your ceremony, then you will have power.

It is these deeply personal, private and unique spiritual and ceremonial experiences that concern me in this research. The attempted obliteration of mana wahine ritual ontologies through the severance of intergenerational transmission has meant that many of my research participants are developing their own ways of conducting rituals (Simmonds, 2014; Yates-Smith, 1998).

For Hinewīrangī, connecting with the atua was simple. She did not use elaborate chant or karakia. She spoke words directly from her heart. In my humble experience participating in all manner of ceremonies over the years, words raised with intention straight from an open and honest heart can be very powerful. My feeling on this is reiterated in the recollections of a research participant in a project that gathered traditional healing stories from Taranaki. In discussing karakia the participant noted in Reinfeld, Pihama & Cameron (2015) shares:

The grandmother would just wash us with water, that's all, and karakia, they did a lot of that ... that [karakia] was part of it, that was part of the healing. She was not religious, no, it was just from her heart. That's the best of the lot you know ... they just say it as it comes. It's something that anybody would do (p. 85).

These descriptions convey an informal and fluid understanding of karakia and ceremonial forms. They soften and collapse the rigid borders that many of the colonial ethnographic and later writers have erected that re-define the esoteric arts within a narrow gendered hierarchy that promotes exclusivity (Best, 1924; Biggs, 1960; Salmond, 2004). In highlighting this informality I do not intend to diminish or undermine the authority of ancient karakia that have been preserved and conveyed across the centuries through oral mediums that remain unchanged (Tangaroa, 2007). Nor do I intend to diminish those that carry these kinds of traditional knowledges. In highlighting the creation of private and personal ceremony in this research, I simply draw attention to a process of recovery in which Native women are restoring sacred relationships to foster healing and enlightenment, with or without knowledge of traditional forms.

For some of my participants the journey to recover mana wahine ritual ontologies has been a journey taken alone. Some spoke of not being able to learn from their own kuia because they may have died, or they may not know, and/or they may not have the ability to express in words an understanding that is lived rather than articulated with words. This is an observation also made by Naomi Simmonds (2014) in her research. Another perspective from some of my participants is that certain sacred and ceremonial knowledges in Native contexts are not necessarily for everyone to learn, rather they are maintained within specific whakapapa lines and fiercely guarded to maintain their tapu. Whilst certain ritual traditions continue to pass down specific whakapapa lines, I speak to something else. I speak to the inherent right to connect directly with the atua wāhine who are our relations. In this, words spoken from the heart carry power. Hawai'ian kumu hula and sacred activist Pua Case points out:

Sometimes a prayer doesn't really mean anything. It can just be a rote prayer ... It doesn't mean it has a lifeforce to it ... [Prayer can be] an active means of communicating with the spirit world. It's active ... But

you have to really command that prayer. Live that prayer (P. Case, personal communication, June 20, 2016).

Mauna Kea in Hawai'i is the highest mountain in the world measuring from sea-floor to summit, standing at 32,000 feet. It is considered a sacred temple, a portal to the cosmos, the piko²¹¹ of the world and the home of the atua Poliahu and Wākea. It is a sacred geography where the navel chord of babies are placed, anchoring them to the navel of the world in alignment with Hawai'ian cosmology. The summit of Mauna Kea, which was traditionally reserved exclusively for the atua, is the proposed site of a 'mega' Thirty Metre Telescope (TMT) which will stand eighteen stories high and be the biggest and most powerful in the world to date. The summit of the Mauna will be dynamited to build the telescope, threatening the aquifers and causing massive environmental damage. Native Hawai'ians have mobilised in numbers to protect the mountain from desecration, fighting in the courts and sharing their stories of resistance on social media and at international gatherings. For Kealoha Pisciotta, the president of Mauna Kea Anaina Hou, an organisation dedicated to protecting Mauna Kea from development, the mauna represents the right of Native peoples to peacefully pursue their own religion and sacred traditions in their own lands and to protect the environmental integrity of these places (Lafrance, 2015, para 7). As journalist Adriene Lafrance (2015, para 30) points out:

the fight over Mauna Kea is not just about a telescope, or even just about a sacred mountaintop. It is about the fate of a people whose land was stolen and whose cultural identity was desecrated, and almost destroyed, as a result. For those who believe native peoples have the right to determine the use of the land they originally occupied, even scientific progress on the grandest imaginable scale may not be enough to justify the construction of a telescope.

In the stand to protect Mauna Kea and the sacred ancestral relationships that the mountain represents, Pua describes prayer, chant and ceremony as the foundations of their activism and “*all we had*”:

When the movement really began everything really began in prayer. Nothing happened without it ... it was traditional prayer, it wasn't

²¹¹ Hawai'ian for navel.

Christian prayer, which was necessary because if we were going to stand for our beliefs and for our old life ways and we were saying that we were standing for the deities and for the spirit world then we had to be saying those prayers that address that spirit world. This was not a time for Jesus and Mary. This was a time for us to call upon those beings, honor them, speak to them and so we started doing traditional prayers and what sticks out in my mind is when we are standing in our lines the difference between us and the other side. Their side had guns and ours had chant. And we were stronger than them ... We had our voice, our spirit, our prayer, and our mountain herself.

The unborns are on that mountain, in the form of the pregnant women taking the front line, police coming, holding the line with the babies in their wombs ... you have to go from the womb all the way to the spirit world. Every generation has to be represented ... Everybody in perfect alignment (P. Case, personal communication, June 20, 2016).

What Pua's and Hinewāangi's earlier comments capture is a spirituality that is lived. Hinewāangi looks within to her own heart to create a ritual to thank her elders, the atua wāhine, for blessing her with a daughter. In doing so she facilitates cultural continuity and a relationship with the atua that is embodied in her every day life. Up on the mountain with her people, Pua learned to "Live the prayer" standing in an alignment of ancient whakapapa relationships connected directly to the atua who fueled her with the courage to go up against an armed police force. The photo of Pua's daughter, Hāwane (see Figure 6.1), clothed in traditional Hawai'ian ceremonial dress, hand and voice raised in chant, body blocking a bulldozer set to 'dig up' and desecrate the summit of the mountain, captures a prayer that is lived. It is a prayer of reverence for whakapapa relationships that define who we are as Native Peoples. And it is a call to direct action, to stand against the violation of these sacred relationships. The image is a visual discourse of the continuity of both Native resistance and sacred Indigenous ways of being. The fact that Hāwane is a young wahine reiterates themes of continuity encapsulated by the whare tangata who assures the continuation and counter-hegemonic resistance of Native tribal nations (Murphy, 2013; Smith, A., 2005).



Figure 6.1 H Rios on Mauna Kea, Hawai'i. Photographed by Pua Case, 2014. Used with permission.

Like Māori women, who have long fulfilled leadership roles in the movement for tino rangatiratanga, the image speaks to the whakapapa of Native Hawai'ian women who stand “on the front line, in the glare of public disapproval ... [they are] articulate, fierce, and culturally grounded” (Pihama, 2001; Sykes, 1994; Trask, 1999, p. 94;). Hawai'ian scholar Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa (1999, p. 3) maintains that the strong female leadership evidenced on Mauna Kea is reflective of the female akua²¹² who empower Hawai'ian women. “They are our ancestors; they are our inspiration; they live in us” she asserts. Ngāti Tuwharetoa scholar, Marata Tamaira (2010) similarly argues that in Aotearoa the atua wāhine are not supernatural heroines stranded in an irrelevant mythology, rather they are actual ancestors, genealogically linked to female descendants. All Polynesian women, Marata (2010, p. 6) asserts, “may be seen as being imprinted with the same potent material as their respective goddesses – powerful entities who are reborn in each succeeding generation of women”. In Aotearoa and Hawai'i, on the frontline of Native

²¹² Hawai'ian word for atua – deities.

resistance, I recognise Hina and Hinenuitepō who continue to defend the sacred laws of balance through the stand of Indigenous women.

To forge a spirituality based on a living relationship with the atua wāhine is to acknowledge that they are still here. They have always been here (Gonzales, 2012). What is required is the creation of space and time to nurture the relationships, just like any other. Hinewīrangī adds:

If you think that because I'm old the wisdom comes well there's no such thing. It is that you've learned to slow down enough for the universe to talk to you, it's always been talking to you, but you slow down so much so, that finally you can hear. You can hear the universe speaking. It's not your knowledge. It's nothing we know that belongs to us. That's living with the atua. That's not talking about the atua, that's living with them (H. Kohu, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

Slow down, make space, speak from the heart, listen and trust your own intuitions are some of the ingredients participants identified as necessary for creating a living relationship with the atua wāhine. I turn now to discuss this in more detail.

Lived spirituality

For Pua on the mountain, connecting directly to the atua and spirit world has become a way of life based on re-learning to trust:

It's about trusting every little thing. It's something that was put away a long time ago, be it through colonisation, be it Christianity, be it ourselves and our patterns ... you put something away because you were told it's no longer valid, it's no longer real, we don't really know how to practice that ancestral spirituality and all that that means. And then when you say that you are going to open that door and you are going to peek in ... you are going to start to trust that what your ancestors really believed and what you read in the books and what your great grandparents said was true, that they still talk to you, that you can still hear them, see them, feel them, and once you align with them and they say, 'don't worry we have this, we are doing this for you,'²¹³

²¹³ In this comment “we are doing this for you because you folks are losing connection with us” Pua is talking about the Thirty Meter Telescope project which has mobilised Native Hawai’ians to take a stand in defense of their sacred relationships that are embedded in place.

because you folks are losing the connection with us, this is for you because if you don't reconnect to us it's going to go into a chaos', and 'this is for you because you have to transform faster'. So this situation is a gift, if you use it correctly ... those who can see them, hear them, feel them, connect to them are in a cognisance about it ... If something happens they are automatically thinking what is the spirit telling us? And then when you finally get to a place where you just have complete trust in the spirit world, that is when you know that everything is going to be okay ... Its really about having the direct connection and not having to trust what another person says is happening ... Maybe we are never going to get fully there 'cause we weren't born trusting it. That time had passed and so now we are having to re-establish that along with everything else, you know, but it is still a beautiful journey (P. Case, personal communication, June 20, 2016).

Like Pua, learning to trust te ao wairua has been a path that has led Cathy Livermore to 'service to spirit' and a lived spirituality. Cathy's journey of direct spiritual revelation deepened with the activation of her womb through pregnancy and birth, which she describes as traumatic. During this time her awareness of the suffering of 'the mother' Papatūānuku became heightened, something I also experienced during pregnancy and in the two years following the birth of my daughter.²¹⁴ The acute sense of pain, suffering and spiritual disconnection that is characteristic of industrial capitalist society (see Hartmann, 2004; Kimmerer, 2013) was channeled into the activist dance theatre work *Mana whenua, Mana moana*, performed in Australia with the Atamira Dance Company in 2012. Cathy explains that for the first time in her career as a dancer, the cast:

made a decision that each time before we went on stage we would karakia and just say 'come through what needs to be shared in this time, in this piece. Come through what needs to be shared (C. Livermore, personal communication, November 17, 2015).²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Naomi Simmonds (2014) also writes about a heightened sense of connection to Papatūānuku in her interviews with first-time pregnant Māori women.

²¹⁵ Cathy's description aligns with my own research methodology in which I have created sacred space to call in tīpuna, kaitiaki, and the atua wāhine to shape and guide the research process. As I discussed in Chapter 3, the research becomes a collaborative adventure with the spirit-world and an expression of a spirituality that is lived.

The response from te ao wairua, Cathy observed, responded directly to the audience each night:

Each time the lights would come up at the end and you would see the audience and go 'I get it'. One night it was full of brown faces and that's when we were hysterical and they were chuckling and it was like 'yea boom that's how you needed to hear it'. When it was really heavy, pulling people in and really taking the time of weightedness - all whitehaired seniors.

In sharing her journey of deepening her communion with tūpuna, atua and the spirit world Cathy describes:

I was practicing saying yes to anything 'they' asked. Just curious to see what would happen. That was from 'Mana whenua, Mana moana' experience from the stage ... Things happen when I step aside ... I only have my instinct and them. They are helping me remember but it's actually what I already know ... we are powerful unto ourselves ... we have to learn to trust it. 'Cause for me a lot of the damage we do is 'cause we don't trust. We don't trust our power 'cause we don't trust what we will do with it. And there's confusion around how we manage power as individuals, how we organise ourselves in relation to each other and life, and it's our confusion that's bringing us into disharmony ... I think that the highest vibration and resonance we can achieve in this form is unconditional love ... for me service has been a way and a practice to help me find a closer point to that resonance ... All I learn is that I do nothing on my own. Any healing will come when I step aside and allow myself to just connect and be the vehicle for divine creation to do its work.

In a similar way to Pua and Hinewīrangī, Cathy speaks to a level of collaboration with the spirit world - following their guidance and direction, 'stepping aside' and trusting what she is guided to do - as a way of being, as a way of life. Her description aligns with Alicia who stresses the importance of living your spirituality and "learning from direct experience rather than from books" (A. Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2016). This is a contention also made by Manulani Meyer, who asserts "words only point to the truth; *genuine knowledge must be experienced directly*" (in Tangarō, 2007, p. xiii. Italics in original). Alicia maintains "there's some kinds of knowledges that you can't be taught. It comes from doing" (A.

Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2016). Hawai'ian cultural practitioner, Kanani Aton, adds:

How do you get on Tangaroa's website? How do you access Pele's repository? Through the pule,²¹⁶ but you have to live it. Live it. Build a relationship to those words over your life. And then you understand the layers of meaning in this chant ... Your password is your oli,²¹⁷ your voice, your chant. But how does a mother know the sound of her child? How does our mother, Papahānaumoku,²¹⁸ hear your heart? Hear your sound? Papahānaumoku hears your heart when you are quiet. Your sound, for mother earth, is silence. And it's a meditation to know. Which chant do I chant to this rock face? Which chant do I chant to this ocean? Which chant do I chant to this hale?²¹⁹ Because there is a chant. And if it hasn't been written yet what are the words? And in that silence you write it. And she moves through you. She moves, she pivots through you and Makua²²⁰ told me when you are ready, you get ready for the pivoting of the universe in the doorway of you! That's our insight, of our library and our passwords, to our repositories that have never been wiped away! They will forever be imprinted here [she gestures to her own heart]. We think someone will wipe them but it's not gone ... we have to remember ... It's a remembering and a reconnection and that's all it is. There's no guilt, there's no sadness. Because when you unify back to that kumu, to that source, that teacher, it's a wholeness again. So you fragment, come whole again (K. Aton, personal communication, June 13, 2016).

Kanani's comments reiterate a strong theme across participant kōrero that ritual knowledges are not lost or 'wiped away'. Rather, sacred knowledges move in and out of the world and are even stored within our own bodies as the corporeal manifestation of whakapapa that carries intergenerational memories, ancestral

²¹⁶ Pule is the Hawai'ian word for prayer.

²¹⁷ Oli is a Hawai'ian term for chant.

²¹⁸ Papahānaumoku is a Hawai'ian name for Papatūānuku – mother earth.

²¹⁹ Hale is a Hawai'ian word for house.

²²⁰ Hale Makua was a kahuna (tohunga – priestly expert) famed throughout Oceania who passed away in 2004. Kanani Aton was a student of his and travelled with him throughout Polynesia. Keli'i Makua who escorted me to Kūkaniloko with his wife Sunnie and others, is Hale Makua's nephew.

knowledge, traumas, revelations, creativity, inspiration, and ties to all our relations born and unborn across time and space (Duran, Duran, Brave Heart & Yellow Horse, 1998). This connection cannot be severed by the assault of colonisation and Christian patriarchal doctrines of female spiritual defilement. Nor can it be severed by the denial of women's ritual and spiritual mysteries. We cannot be severed from that which we are. We can only forget. To remember, then, is holy (Diamant, 2002).

Kanani's comments link with the reflections of Hawai'ian kumu and author, Pualani Kanahēle's (2011, p. xv – xvi) who writes:

The Hawaiian cultural knowledge one possesses, along with the clues presented in chants, creates a stage for enlightenment – a junction where memory and na'au²²¹ meet and produce instantaneous moments when ancestral knowledge is reborn again.

Theoretical physicist F. Allen Peat's (1996, p. 67 - 8) observations also emphasise the cyclicity and continuity of Native sacred systems of knowledge that are a major theme in this thesis. He writes that Native epistemologies are regarded as:

a living thing that has existence independent of human beings. A person comes to know by entering into a relationship with the living spirit of that knowledge... I have heard stories of people who go into the sweat lodge or attend a sacred ceremony not knowing the particular songs. As soon as the drum beats they say that the song enters into them – the song sings them. Although traditional ways may appear to be lost, some Elders are confident that when the time is right this knowledge will come back. Like the grass that grows again each spring, it will reappear in dreams or during ceremonies.

Patrisia Gonzales (2012, p. 187) adds that her elders maintain that the old knowledges are all still present but that people have forgotten how to listen. She writes:

sometimes knowledge disappears because it is abused, and sometimes it recedes so as to endure and return at the right time. Such knowledge returns through ceremonies, dreams, and deep exchanges. It is in the

²²¹ Na'au can be translated as the seat of intuitive intelligence located in the gut.

uncontainable dream world that living Indigenous knowledge also resides, waiting to be called forth.

What these comments highlight is the vivacity of Indigenous spiritualities that renew themselves across the time space continuum (Marmon-Silko, 1996; St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). This brings me to one of my most significant research findings, which is discussed in more detail in the following section.

On the threshold between the old and new

In most of my participant kōrero it was not only reclaiming pre-colonial ceremonies that was important. Having the confidence to create new tikanga and ceremonies to decolonise, heal and empower ourselves and our whānau today was also significant. Many of my participants saw this as being a responsible ancestor of future generations, ensuring that we leave practices that heal and re-affirm whakapapa relationships across the cosmos. I argue that we should neither fear seeking out and renewing ancient rituals, nor evolving new ones to suit contemporary contexts. St Pierre and Long Soldier (1995, p 59) point out:

For a culture, a way of life, to remain vital it must change and be added to as social, environmental, and technological changes take place around it and some practices are left behind. The symbols and core beliefs that explain a people's place in creation must, however, be preserved and reinterpreted in these changing rituals.

Hawai'ian activist and author, Haunani Kay Trask (1999), Paula Gunn Allen (1992) and Patricia Gonzales (2012) also maintain that Native peoples must look for the symbols and values that have been carried across the generations in the evolution of cultural forms, particularly values that reveal the responsibilities of humans in the family of creation. These symbols are conveyed in ancient oral forms such as karakia, mōteatea, whakataukī, kōrero tongi²²² and pūrākau, although pūrākau, as I discuss in Chapter 2, often need to be reinterpreted because of colonial ethnographic distortions.

²²² Prophetic sayings.

Decolonisation is a critical element in the evolution of Native cultural forms. Because of the corruption of tikanga, specifically pertaining to women, it is important to question whether tikanga empower women and engender harmony and balance (Anderson, 2000). Mana wahine academics have critiqued tikanga interrogating the rigidity and infiltration of colonial patriarchal ideologies that are oppressive and violating of principles of balance embedded in whakapapa (Evans, 1994b; Mikaere, 2017a, 2017b; Pihama, 2001; Ramsden, 1995). Kathie Irwin (1991, p. 18) points out whilst tikanga are evolving we are also witnessing:

the evolution of strange new cultural practices in which men are bonding to each other, through patriarchy, to give each other participatory rights across Māori and Pākehā culture, in ways which exclude Māori women.

Kim Anderson (2000, p. 36) similarly comments that in Native American contexts:

Many of the ‘traditions’ we now know stem from Euro-Christian patriarchal ideals, and many of our own Indigenous traditions have been twisted to meet western patriarchal hegemony.

As Indigenous Peoples stand on the cusp between reclaiming and re-activating ancient ceremonial forms and crafting new ones we have a responsibility to “question how these traditions are framed, and whether they are empowering us” (Anderson, 2000, p. 37). Do our rituals and practices restore the balance violated through colonising histories? Do they seek to heal, empower, nurture and reweave the whakapapa web of relationships? Do they facilitate the shedding and purification of patterns and beliefs that limit us? Are they motivated by the politics of love and emancipation?

Growing up in a household of decolonisation educators and activists I have come to understand decolonisation as a ceremony of movement and purification, one that involves shedding, reclaiming, dreaming up and creating new forms that will heal and elevate our spirits. To do this we must move with fluidity between the old and the new in order to facilitate cultural continuity, much like our tīpuna did when they followed the star-paths across the vast Pacific ocean expanse seeking to create a new reality for their descendants.

The whakataukī *‘ki tēnā whakatipuranga, ki tēnā whakatipuranga, ki tēnā*

whakatipuranga’ can be read in multiple ways including the responsibility that each generation has to ensure that tikanga fosters the wellbeing of the collective whānau of creation. Hawai’ian cultural practitioner, Mahealani, reveals an important layer of teaching inherent in this saying in his story of approaching his uncle to learn about the Hawai’ian birthing site Kūkaniloko on the island of Oahu. His uncle’s response and Mahealani’s reflections speak to the responsibility of each generation to connect directly to source and evolve knowledge and cultural practices that nurture, empower and activate each generation and that respond to the socio-political, spiritual, and ecological times:

I can’t teach you nothing. The stones can teach you. You gotta come here every day, all year long, all night long. You gotta pay attention to the stars... observe the stones ... It is a place where knowledge is being born. So even the ancients when they came here, even though they saw things that they could encapsulate for us to know for that time and space, they knew themselves that they were not saying ‘this is our time, our knowledge is the only knowledge ever’ (Mahealani, personal communication, June 14, 2016).

Puni’s following story reflects where some Native people are located in recovering and evolving ritual practices. Puni points out that the reclamation of traditional ceremonies of burying the placenta back to Papahānaumoku is relatively new in Hawai’i and that most Hawai’ian births are currently still in hospitals where, up until recently, hospital staff would confiscate the whenua to sell to pharmaceutical companies to make beauty products. Puni shares:

So now we are at this stage and our friend who is the one who fought legally for that right for us to take the ewe²²³ home, says his cousin called him, and I really love this story cos it’s a great metaphor of where we are at as a lāhui.²²⁴ His cousin calls him from the hospital, ‘I just had a baby and I have the placenta’. So he thought he was trying to escape. I mean there were multiple babies where literally the families had to steal [the placenta], running from the security to steal it, so that’s where his mindset was. He goes ‘no no no no, I’m fine, I’m home.

²²³ Ewe is both a Hawai’ian and Māori term for placenta.

²²⁴ Community.

I have it. They gave it to me, but I don't know what to do with it'. And so that's what's happening. We know its mana. We know it belongs to us. We don't know what to do with it and so we need the researchers who are able to say this is the pule... and not just for the placenta but for all of our practices and then we also need the efficacy of the individual Native person to say 'I know my language, I am connected to 'āina enough that I know I have a place that I feel safe, and I know how mana works enough to create my own ceremony and or looking at ancient ceremony and make one new for my own, or revisit one from my family, or find those things, or dream them up again (P. Jackson, personal communication, June 16, 2016).

Puni's comments are highly relevant to my research in that I am interested in the threshold space between recovering old and creating new rituals and the trust, confidence, responsibility and obligation this requires. This threshold space is a transformatory space in which we activate mana motuhake, guided by the values of our tīpuna and the emancipatory politics of decolonisation. Puni provides a further story of moving with fluidity in her own ceremonial practice sharing ritual knowledge that has come to her through her own cultural understandings, direct experience and a lived spirituality 'on the land' and in her lāhui. In speaking of the birth of her son Puni shares:

With his birth we were by the fire, we had a fire for him and the last two breaths the fire was important ... not from any kind of archival research but from my own relationship to the spirits here ... for the births the fire helps to fortify that bridge between the realms ... that's what makes sense for me and my family. That is not something that I was taught. It was something that made sense for me and I share that as my own practice ... It's not an ancient practice or maybe it was who knows?

Sunnie: Right! But it's things that are purposeful, like there's a reason why ... Wouldn't our people have these type of things that there's something that we need to do? This makes sense? This feels right? 'Cos why would it stop?

Ngahuia: Just giving ourselves the authority to trust what we need.

Puni: And like the reason I am doing it is to bring an ancestor forward. So that's pretty ancestral! But it's not archival. It's not documented.

Sunnie: And not everything was documented.

Puni: And who would have told McAllister that anyway! ²²⁵

What stands out to me in this kōrero between Puni, Sunnie and I, is not only the intimate and informal tenor of the kōrero which reflects my mana wahine methodology, but also the fact that we are not necessarily concerned with issues of cultural ‘authenticity’ in the evolution of ceremonial forms for ourselves and our whānau. Rather we respond to need and ‘what feels right’ and ‘makes sense’ in the context of today, activating what we know from our own cultural knowledge base, direct personal experience, and intuitive intelligence, rather than limiting ourselves to documented expressions of our culture.

However, a key point in Puni’s kōrero is that she does not claim that her ritual practices are ancient or traditional. Rather she maintains an honest and transparent approach and highlights that the rituals her whānau practice are what makes sense for them. In evolving and creating ritual practices, particularly in the public domain, it is important to consider how ritual forms are represented and what is claimed about them. Asserting practices as traditional when they are not is misleading. Honesty and transparency are critical components in creating new ceremonies, as is humility and respect toward ancestral ritual chants that have been preserved for centuries (Tangaro, 2009).

These comments take on an added significance in light of the rampant misappropriation of Native spiritualities by white consumer society and ‘New Age’ communities who assume the right to take elements of Native spiritualities and apply them without any responsibility to communities and lands from which they arise (St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995; Trask, 1999). Underpinning white assumptions of a right to take are ideologies of conquest and genocide that assume Native people, as conquered and vanishing people, have no boundaries to violate

²²⁵ J Gilbert McAllister authored *Archeology of Oahu* (1933). Puni’s point regarding the withholding of certain kinds of knowledge from white historians, ethnographers and scholars is also made by Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) who maintains that very few Māori women informed Pākehā ethnographers in Aotearoa. Most of the participants of early colonial historians were Native men, some of whom were reluctant to discuss women’s knowledge. Aroha also points out that due to the cultural bias of the early historians, very few would have even considered, much less comprehended, Native women’s ritual paradigms and mana wahine systems of knowledge.

and no authority to independently preserve and develop their own customs. Feminist and activist writer Andrea Smith (2005, p. 125) adds that the commodification of Native feminine spiritualities by some white feminists “in their efforts to heal from patriarchal violence” is particularly troubling. She contends that it hinders the healing of Native women themselves and, indeed, perpetuates patterned histories of colonial violence and injustice leveled at Native women.

An example of this very issue was demonstrated in the explosive kauwae moko debate in 2018 in which a Pākehā woman claimed Māori women’s ritual markings of moko kauwae for herself as a symbol of healing and empowerment. Given that some Māori women expressed feelings of ‘not being worthy’ or ‘culturally equipped enough’ to wear kauwae moko themselves (as expressed on social media platforms) the audacity of a Pākehā woman to claim the kauwae moko was particularly insulting. The sense of white entitlement underpinning it was met with a strong backlash from some Māori women who maintained that the kauwae moko, as a symbol of whakapapa and bastion of survival and tino rangatiratanga, was not for Pākēhā women to claim (N. Hohaia, personal communication, May 25, 2018; Ngata, 2018; Penehira, 2011). For daring to assert boundaries and protect their taonga, the Māori women who took a stand came under intense public attack and derision in both social media forums and private messages (Pihama, 2018). Very few Māori men publicly supported the Māori women (Jackson, 2018 provides a stunning exception). Some of the Māori male tā moko²²⁶ artists who were challenged for ‘giving away’ the kauwae moko to white woman nationally and internationally, assumed a belligerence indicative of colonial histories that have privileged Māori male voices as the only authoritative voices in Māori society, and beyond reproach (Evans, 1994a; Mikaere, 2017a; Smith, L. T., 1992).

Whilst the public debate exposed the internalisation of colonial patriarchy and ongoing white entitlement, it also drew out words of encouragement by Māori women for Māori women regarding the claiming of moko kauwae as a birthright. Following the debate a number of Māori women across the country held hui amongst

²²⁶ Traditional Māori Tattooists.

themselves to receive the moko kauwae, inspired by kōrero such as the following from Ngāti Porou political commentator Tina Ngata's (2018, para. 6):

What I really want to write about is this notion of what it takes for Wāhine Māori to 'deserve' moko kauwae, because now, more than ever, I am seeing a lot of judgement on Wāhine Māori flying around the place ... That in your natural state of Wāhine – you are not enough. That as a member of a line of wahine who descend down from Hina – you are not enough. That as a survivor of multiple generations of attempted genocide, as a survivor of this very specific battleground of settler colonial racism and patriarchy – you are not enough. That as a vessel for the continuation of our existence as Māori – you are not enough.

And to that I say: E Hine, You ARE enough [sic].

Intergenerational fatigue

Why does it matter for Native women today to recover and recreate our ceremonial and spiritual lives and sacred spaces? What is really at stake? What does this recovery represent? These questions have underpinned my entire research journey and are key to the whole study. They link directly to my overall research questions that investigates the hidden, censored and denied legacies of Native women's ritual ontologies as a site of Indigenous resistance, recovery, continuation, decolonisation and emancipation.

Over the years that I have conducted this research in Aotearoa, Hawai'i, and Turtle Island, I have been struck by the consistent observation that with the erasure and denial of Native women's personal ceremonial lives, ritual traditions and leadership, some have forgotten how to provide space to nurture their own well-being. Consequently, I witnessed and heard stories time and time again of Native women feeling depleted and burned out in the struggle of living, defending, protecting, and resisting on-going colonial violations alongside the demands of raising whānau and contributing to and driving tribal and community initiatives.

In Aotearoa the arrival of te awa atua²²⁷ provided a monthly ceremonial almanac for our tīpuna, ushering in a time of rest, retreat, and renewal that was supported by the whānau in recognition of the central significance of the whare tangata in regenerating the iwi (Murphy, 2013, 2014). Native Hawai’ian women also retreated during menstruation to rest and observe their Hina ceremonies (see Chapter 7) (K. Nu’uhiwa, personal communication, May 23, 2014; H. Rios, personal communication, June 20, 2016). In the following kōrero Kanani, Sunnie and I discuss the significance of reclaiming mana wahine ritual space to replenish ourselves:

Kanani: In traditional times you would go to the Hale Pe’a²²⁸ for that time. [All the] women in your house ... That [menstrual] cycle pulls everybody. So what are we doing? We are checking out all the support roles and everything the mother is doing for everybody else and for a week we are with our peeps. Just us. So even in the matching of our cycles our bodies are saying ‘This is your voice, this is who you are and it’s silent ... Our cosmic clock, to the moon, Papahānaumoku, Haumea, Pele, Hi’iaka ... You have time to rejuvenate (K. Aton & S. Makua, personal communication, June 13, 2016).

Sunnie: And you know just physically we were able to just sit. And just lean back into the earth.

Ngahuia: That ritual, that ceremony. I’ve had a growing awareness that when we return that blood to Papa with love, reverence and the intention of reconnecting with her, that deepens our communion with her but it also brings her healing in this time of huge upheaval and environmental crisis. The blood feeds her mauri ... These women’s rituals that we once did are really critical now and necessary for the mother and ourselves.

²²⁷ A customary term for menstruation.

²²⁸ Pe’a has been translated as ‘filthy’ and ‘unclean’, aligning menstruation with Victorian cultural constructs (Andrews, 1865), yet, authors Jensen & Jensen (2005) argue that Hale Pe’a can be translated as ‘House of the kapu (tapu) cross’. They point out that pe’a means ‘extremity’, ‘border’ and ‘edge’ and that it also means ‘cross’ or X of timber which was placed at the boundary of the site of the Hale Pe’a which lay at the edge of a village. Like Kanani Aton, Kalei Nu’uhiwa and Hāwane Rios, the authors maintain that the Hale Pe’a in traditional Hawai’ian society was a women’s ritual space in which the flow of sacred blood was honoured.

Kanani: I love it ... that's the wisdom of our customs. A very smart matriarch said 'We need a Hale Pea' to lift that fatigue. Cos you were talking earlier about how birth is getting harder cos the girls are fatigued over generations.

Sunnie: And then they're numbing it 'cause hospitals are all about using the epidural ... They deaden the body. You don't feel. You don't go into your mana, you don't activate the mana inside of you. And I'm like why would you do that?

Ngahuia: 'Cause we are taught to be afraid.

Sunnie: And there's also this fatigue where we feel that we can't.

Kanani: Yea like we don't have our wits about us ... It's like if we are going to drive the car to a destination you gotta understand the dashboard. The car is not on automatic pilot you have to drive yourself there ... You are not going to be driven by a doctor. He's not going to take you to the goddess destination. He's not going to take you to Hi'iaka. He's not going to take you to Papahānaumoku. You have the mat! So going back to Hale Pe'a and making that space and that time. This is Hale Pe'a now! ... We can make space for the boys but this is needed to address intergenerational fatigue. Which ultimately if we are feeling fatigue then Papahānumoku, mother earth, is showing signs of fatigue. How do we return back to balance? We have to make the Hale Pe'a, be quiet, rejuvenate, do these things, and with reverence just return those birthing bloods back in the earth.

The tenor of the kōrero highlights the reality that many Native women have lost control over the ceremonies of the whare tangata that fortify our endurance and reaffirm our cosmological connections. Native birthworkers, Alicia and Puni, and Māori midwives, Heather and Joanne, all talked about the way that fear is instilled in women from the male medical profession who strip the ceremony from birth and confidence from women to trust their own instincts in the birthing process (Banks, 2000; Coney, 1993; Simmonds, 2014). Consequently, Puni argues, for Native whānau the birth space demands warriorhood, not only from the birthing wahine who ushers in the next kupuna,²²⁹ but also the fathers and men who are required to

²²⁹ Hawai'ian term for ancestor.

defend the space from physically, psychologically and spiritually violating western male medical models that “*have no relationship to maui*”²³⁰ (P. Jackson, personal communication, June 16, 2016).

These assertions highlight birth as an important site of tino rangatiratanga. As Patrisia Gonzales maintains:

To be sovereign or self sufficient, Native people must have control of the life cycle from birth through death (2012, p. 66).

When indigenous women assert their right to birth as a ceremony, they establish their womb as a site of self-determination. It is not the only act, but it is an important one of communal proportions (2012, p. 234).

In Hawai’i, Puni maintains some Native Hawai’ian men are stepping up to the responsibility of protecting the birth ceremony space. Alicia’s comments from Turtle Island convey a different story:

What I have observed is that women show up to birth already tired. Tired from their life, tired from this family, tired from the work, tired from carrying that burden of hundreds of years of being the person who has to care for everybody else ... It leaves them emaciated at the end of the day and all of a sudden the one function that they are supposed to do, which is allow their bodies to relax enough to pass this baby through the birthing canal, that exhaustion comes into play because if you ask them to go further, they just have got nothing else to give ... then they usually get transferred to surgery ... It’s the result of the balance being off within our tribes to where they aren’t being taken care of from day one (A. Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2006).

Implicit in Alicia’s comments is the on-going impacts of the internalisation of patriarchy in tribal societies, which relegates women to a secondary status that normalises violence and subjugation (Chaw-win-is, 2012; Pihama & Cameron, 2012; Pitman, 2012). Whilst I do not argue that customary Māori and Native societies were a utopia in which gender violence did not occur, it is clear from Native literatures and oral histories that violation toward women and children was

²³⁰ Maui can be translated as life-force. Mauri is the Māori term.

regarded as a serious offence against the entire collective kin group, rather than an individual (Pere, 1982; Pihama & Cameron, 2012). As such, perpetrators of violence toward women and children were held accountable by the collective and were subject to muru plundering parties headed by the aggrieved whānau and hapū, and banishment that, in tribal societies reliant on communality to survive, would have been akin to a death sentence (Maning, 1912; Pere, 1982; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009).

Alicia maintains the intergenerational fatigue that she encounters working with Native women in the birth space is the consequence of the erasure and denial of women's menstrual blood mysteries that have been reframed as spiritually defiling to Native men's ceremonies (A. Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2006). This has created an undercurrent of ambivalence toward Native women and their reproductive body. Her comments link to Ani Mikaere (2003, p. 89-90) who points out:

Māori women have not merely had their spiritual role minimised nor have they simply been rendered invisible. Their once revered role as facilitators of the movement between tapu and noa states has been characterised in purely negative terms. They are now perceived, principally, as polluters of tapu.

Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) and Mereana Pitman (2012) argue that the direct consequence of such narratives is domestic and sexual violence toward women and also children who have been re-defined as chattels of men within colonial, western paradigms. In Aotearoa, Māori women, as 'polluters of tapu' are refused the traditional hongī²³¹ greeting by some Māori men, which the late Ngāi Tahu, Rangitane educationalist, Irihapeti Ramsden, argues constitutes abuse (Ramsden, 1995). Ngā Puhī playwright Briar Grace-Smith (1995, p. 101) speaks to this in her poem 'They've taken away our hongī':

*They've taken away our hongī
Replaced it with a kiss*

²³¹ Hongī is a traditional Māori greeting in which the breath of life is shared through the pressing together of the forehead and nose.

*A 'there you go little lady kiss'
While the fulla next to me gets the works
Spouse I should be grateful it's no more noses
No flat squishy ones
Long pointy ones
Hairy ones and dripping ones
Just a safe mouth to cheek and maybe a rub on the back
I could even get used to this
But I won't
I shall grab your hand firmly, there will be no confusion, no nose kissing
We shall greet each other the way we always have
With a hongī
Pressing
Knowing
The mingling of breath
Of life force
Tena koe.*

Briar Grace Smith's reassertion of mana wahine is a reoccurring theme in my research, as is a challenge extended to Native men to step up to the responsibility of decolonising themselves and their own understandings of gender in order for tino rangatiratanga to be realised (Irwin, 1991, 1992; Pihama, 1994). I agree with Ani Mikaere (2017a, p. 129) who states:

While the denial of women's tapu and the destruction of the whānau brought about by colonisation may offer explanations for the level of abuse suffered by Māori women and children at the hands of Māori men, they do not offer excuses ... Māori men have to take responsibility for the fact that their behavior is resulting in the further oppression of Māori women. Māori men must confront the extent of their own colonisation and consciously address it before the balance between male and female can be restored. Until this occurs, the potential of Māori communities will continue to be obstructed by 'the tensions within' and all Māori will continue to be the losers.

Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou scholar, Aroha Mead (1994, p. 3-4) also agrees adding:

[t]he sexism which has occurred in Māori society originates more from colonisation than heritage, and it is a problem as common in international indigenous societies as is alienation of lands and resources. Maori leadership has got to work this through and de-programme all that does not rightfully belong within our Iwi histories.

From Turtle Island Kim Anderson (2000, p. 114) comments:

We can talk about self-government, sovereignty, cultural recovery and the healing path, but we will never achieve any of these things until we take a serious look at the disrespect that characterizes the lives of so many Native women.

The fatigue that some Native women experience, which makes the restoration of ceremony an important political, healing and emancipatory initiative, must be understood in the context of the nuances of on-going colonial violence perpetuated through patriarchal attitudes. One example is illustrated earlier in the 2018 kauwae moko debate. Another example that occurred during this research was a depiction of mana wahine by a Māori male which came under intense scrutiny from Māori women in the community. Rather than support the women who asserted the right to maintain control over the imaging of themselves, a prominent Māori male involved in the project attempted to use his mana whenua status and knowledge of te reo Māori, tikanga and whakapapa to silence the women's voices of dissent. As Ani Mikaere (2017a, p. 129) states some Māori men "have become so accustomed to acting as spokespersons on behalf of all Māori that they seem now to expect to do so" regardless of whether it is appropriate.

It is important to point out that whilst some Native men (and women) deny women's ritual knowledge and practice, my participants stories reveal that women are forging ahead and practicing rituals anyway and reinstating tikanga practices that restore the balance. In addition, some Native men are actively supporting women's ceremony and facilitating the return of the divine feminine as I discuss in the following chapter.

Some of my participants were actively working alongside Native men to facilitate decolonisation in relation to gender. One example is Hinewīrangī who works with Māori men in prisons in Aotearoa to re-instill an awareness of the mana and tapu of women and children through teaching Māori men how to whaikōrero.²³² She

²³² Whaikōrero is a ritual art of welcome that Māori men, and in some tribal areas, Māori women, perform.

ensures that the men mihi to the whare tangata in their wider acknowledgements before introducing themselves. Another example is from the Mauna Kea movement in Hawai'i in which Native Hawai'ian women have assumed leadership in the stance to defend the Mauna from desecration. Pua describes the decolonising journey of Native men on the Mauna:

Up on the mountain the men started coming up and they didn't know what was expected of them. Even in themselves they didn't know how they were supposed to be warriors. Were they supposed to come up with their fists or take the front line or were they supposed to be vocal ... Every time a group of men came I would say 'Ok men, this is what I need from you' ... One day I gathered them together and I said to them 'I am going to tell you exactly what we need as women, 'cause women will take our places. We'll go frontline, no problem, because that's the nature of a woman, their gonna protect their everything with all that they have' ... I said 'When I am here on the frontline and I am looking down at police, construction workers, TMT corporation, what our women do is we stand there and we open our heart, wide open. And we send this vibration down and we say 'May you be changed'. 'May you be softened before you reach me'. 'May you be confused before you get here'. 'May you not really understand what you are doing here'. And we will change your heart ... That's why we are the frontline ... 'When my heart is wide open anything can come in and out. I am in the most vulnerable place that I could be because I am not even thinking of my own protection. Your job is to protect me with everything you have. But you protect me in silence without me having to worry about you coming out of your strength ... You are guarding my heart' ... Our men didn't know that. It was like they were warriors one day a long time ago and then they were farmers or whatever the government made them be ... So in an instant they lost what that meant. And then we never really gave them a reason to have to do that again. 'Cause we women stepped forward and we said 'If you can't do it, don't worry, we will'. And this mountain gave the men the opportunity to begin to train ... [I saw the women] go into their full power. But they always were, they always had it (P. Case, personal communication, June 20, 2016).

On the Mauna some Native men are recovering a sense of their 'warriorhood' through transformative processes that are shaped by both the retrieval of customary gender roles and the 'remaking' of gender in a way that restores balance (Chawwin-is, 2012; Pihama & Cameron, 2012).

For Xicana, Mexica-Yaqui scholar and dancer, Ramona Beltran, decolonising gender is a key site in the intergenerational struggle of the emancipation of Indigenous peoples. She maintains:

There's a lot of heteropatriarchal misogyny and homophobic transphobia you know. I feel like I don't think anyone has bad intentions it's just they are a product of their context ... Restoring traditions is a part of decolonising but it doesn't happen all at once. It has to happen in stages ... Our people's ways had to go underground ... And one day it will come back up, so now all these things are coming back up ... We have the drum and we have the dancers but we still have the part of the church that controlled our roles in gender through Christianity and through that gender binary ... It's time for us as women to take some of that ownership we need so we can carry these ways for our people to heal (R. Beltran, personal communication, June 3, 2006).

Ramona's point about reclaiming control over our own ceremonial lives and decolonising our sexualities beyond the gendered hierarchical binary comes from first hand experience. She shares a very personal experience of having an elder conduct ceremony to celebrate the one-year milestone of her son's life. Gathered at the ceremony were a number of her beloved two-spirit whānau. During the ceremony the elder said words that were hurtful toward her two-spirit whānau, which affected the entire ceremony. Ramona found that in order to clear the transgression and restore the balance she had to conduct another ceremony with the people involved. In sharing this experience, Ramona and Alicia express some of the complexities that some Native women feel in assuming the responsibility to lead community ceremonies and the pressure of ensuring cultural integrity:

Ramona: [The experience] made me feel like it's time.

Ngahuia: To take leadership? To conduct ceremony for ourselves?

Ramona: Yes, and to allow myself to be a facilitator of ceremony when I can and when I am asked.

Alicia: The community needed it real bad.

Ngahuia: That's what it takes ay?

Alicia: It is what it takes but at the same time why do we have to wait 'till we are pushed to that space of uncomfotability before we step up?

Ramona: Exactly.

Alicia: Just because you have been given permission it doesn't mean you are honoring things the right way, and just because you haven't been given permission [does not necessarily mean] your gonna botch it.

Ramona: I feel like there's something in the middle ... I feel like if I say that I am not asking for permission anymore then I am also supporting folks who appropriate our ways. They don't ask permission because they think that they don't need that permission. They can just take whatever. So I feel like I still need permission in terms of support and guidance from elders I trust in that way, so that I am not just wily nily creating some fufu.

Ngahuaia: But you do it in collaboration with your ancestors and guardians?

Ramona: Yep.

Alicia: Nothing you are gonna do is fufu cos you are too thoughtful about it and too intentional about it and that's also our own self doubt repeating (R. Beltran & A. Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2006).

This story raises a number of tensions and complexities. A fascinating nuance is the relationship between politics and spirituality. The elder who facilitated the ceremony brought his politics into the sacred space by offering his opinion on two-spirit whānau. In doing so he compromised the wairua of the space. Ramona insists that her elders have taught her that politics and spirituality do not mix, a teaching that my kuia also asserts. Yet there are others who argue that the two cannot easily be separated. For example, including two-spirit in ceremony is also a political act. It is a politics of inclusion rather than a politics of exclusion.

Whilst politics that engender debate are inappropriate in the context of ceremonial space itself, Native ceremonies and spiritualities are deeply political. An example is the Hawai'ian movement to protect Mauna Kea from the Thirty Meter Telescope development. Pua explains that when Native Hawai'ians started to mobilise and gather upon the mountain they were told to leave their politics at the base of the mountain before ascent, including different Native sovereignty agendas. She explains that the movement to protect the mountain was 'only about the mountain'

and that the sacredness of the space needed to be carefully maintained and protected (P. Case, personal communication, June 20, 2016). Yet a striking feature of the Mauna Kea movement that mobilised Native Hawai'ians to stand in defense of their sacred relationships and spiritualities, was the way it reinvigorated, not only Native Hawai'ian struggles for independence, but other Indigenous peoples political struggles around the world.

The movement at Standing Rock in North Dakota to halt the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline projected to cross the Missouri River, threatening the regions clean water and Native burial grounds, provides another example. Ladonna Brave Bull Allard (in Halpin, 2017), who began the movement at Standing Rock, explains:

The youth, when they were going to the front line, would all gather and pray before they went up there. And I think that was the essence of everything. Prayer. How did they stay in prayer? When you are there, that's all you have. When they are shooting you with tear gas and water and concussion grenades, and screaming horrible things at you – all you have is prayer.

Mauna Kea and Standing Rock represent two contemporary political movements in which Native peoples are using prayer, ceremony and spiritual revelation as the foundations and context of powerful expressions of activism. These examples are not too dis-similar from the prophetic, spiritual and political movements at Parihaka and Maungapohatu during the years of colonial confrontation in which the prophets Te Whiti o Rongomai, Tohu Kaakahi and Rua Kenana, respectively, offered spiritual revelations that became beacons of Native political resistance.

Whilst politics and spirituality within Native spaces are deeply intertwined, it is easy for the dynamics of human politics to transgress ceremonial spaces and states. The balance is delicate indeed. Words uttered in ceremonial spaces need to be placed with great care. In writing of her kuia's life as a traditional birth attendant, Te Arawa, Ngā Puhī scholar Aroha Harris (2001, p. 3) captures an important instruction in relation to entering ceremonial space - "kia tapu to māngai - let your mouth be sacred". In birth space, like any ritual space, words carry the power to uplift, detract and/or obstruct. Speaking intentionally, and motivated by aroha

throughout the duration of ceremony to protect and foster states of tapu, is paramount.

Another issue that the discussion between Ramona, Alicia and I raises is the perceived requirement of permission from elders in leading ceremonies to ensure cultural integrity. This is critical if the ceremony is in the public domain rather than the personal and private sphere. Yet what if elder permission is not forthcoming? What if there are no elders to ask? As I travelled across Hawai'i I heard many women speak of a deep desire to resurrect the Hale o Papa, the women's ceremonial house, as a matter of urgency to nurture women who are the backbone of family and community. What one or two of them informally shared was that in some (but not all) instances, some elders did not support the resurrection of the Hale o Papa. Some of the women that I spoke with are moving cautiously in this area, only beginning to discuss reclaiming and recreating ceremonies amongst themselves. Others are quietly gathering and moving forward, creating the space and time to nurture themselves, research old ceremonies and create new ritual practices for today, particularly in relation to menstruation as I discuss in the following chapter.

One of the major tensions that arise in discussing issues of permission is that it is not only about reclaiming pre-colonial ceremonies to heal ourselves but also the requirement to evolve ceremonial forms to suit the times we are in. These 'times' are times of decolonisation and cultural renewal to be sure, yet, even more pressing, perhaps, are long standing Native prophecies concerning massive planetary shifts and ecological collapse (Deloria, 2003; Marmon-Silko, 1996; Nelson, 2008). Prominent Dakota scholar and activist, Waziyatawin (2008, p. 13) maintains:

Human beings are on the cusp of a great change in the world. The flourishing of empire has advanced societal models based on principles of domination, exploitation and violence. This has served to harm human beings, plants, and animals, as well as the air, lands and waters, thereby pushing us into a planetary crisis. Today we are witnessing the beginning of catastrophic collapses of the existing systems, both natural and man-made, as empire is ultimately self-destructive

Waziyatawin (2012, p. 35-6) calls on Indigenous peoples to emancipate and decolonise their own minds and that the first step is recovering spiritualities and traditional knowledge that can be used to remodel and remake the world. She

maintains a “monumental psychological leap” is required in which we must first dream and imagine a reality independent of colonial industrial society, followed by steps to actualise our freedom.

Her comments highlight one of the major complexities that I have witnessed in my research. There is a belief that humanity is entering a new time that requires, in some instances, new ceremonies that some elders may not have either seen before, or understand. Elders often need to be addressed and negotiated with if these ceremonies are public. This space is incredibly complex and fraught. What if your elders are Christian and do not agree with the reclamation or evolution of ceremonial forms that strengthen relationships with traditional Native deities? What if in following the instructions of your tīpuna, kaitiaki and atua who guide you to craft a particular ceremony, you offend your elders? There are no simple answers here. Despite these difficulties, I have observed many of my participants quietly reclaiming and creating the personal rituals they need to restore themselves to wholeness as individuals and as communities.

Conclusion

One of the main aims of this chapter was to disrupt the idea that spirituality, the atua, and the esoteric are external to Native women, which has led some to seek spiritual connection and revelation outside of themselves. This is not to say that seeking guidance, teachings and healings from others is not beneficial. Rather it is to assert the fundamental idea that we each have the capacity to connect directly to divinity and that this is a birth right.

We also have a responsibility as ancestors of future generations to evolve tikanga that empowers, heals, and decolonises our whānau and uri to come. It is not enough to reclaim ancestral ceremonies, we must also be confident to intuitively craft new healing practices and ceremonies motivated by decolonisation and the restoration of balance in a time of ecological crisis. Assuming the authority to design the ritual practices that we need as Indigenous peoples to facilitate healing and emancipation is a powerful act of mana motuhake, assuming control over the way we conceptualise our very being in the world - in relationship to others.

My contention is that when Native women start to decolonise our own spiritualities and connect directly with the atua within, we begin to fundamentally heal, transform and empower ourselves and take control of our own lives. When we do this it impacts positively on our whānau, hapū and iwi. Nowhere is the idea of assuming control over our own ritual knowledge as Native women so pronounced as in the bodily functions and practices of menstruation and birth. I turn now to examine these key areas, offering descriptions of menstrual rituals that are being reclaimed and created in response to current socio-political, spiritual and ecological contexts.

CHAPTER 7

Te rerenga atua: The ritual conduit

*From the womb,
the Temple of Communion,
the headwaters flow Red
a ritual supplication
To open the Pathway
It is clear,
It is protected,
It is done.*

*From the womb,
the incarnate
Ancestor
Receives her first set
of orientations,
Star-skinned and fractured light
Contracting to expand
in a current of whakapapa*

*From the womb,
She sees me
And I will know her ...
Always
in the warmth of the land
in the expanse of the sea
and spiraling above,
Luminous one.²³³*

Introduction

The invocation that opens this chapter reflects pre-colonial Māori philosophies of menstrual blood as a powerful ritual conduit, which is a major theme in this chapter (Mikaere, 2017b; Murphy, 2012, 2013). I begin with a discussion on the vilification of menstrual blood as a symbol of women's regenerative ritual power and the way in which colonial re-codings of the blood as 'spiritually defiling' have attempted to

²³³ Author's composition, 2017.

erase histories that venerate the blood as a conduit of whakapapa. Current market ideologies that promote an antipathy toward women's menstrual bodies and create a culture of concealment that influences women to feel ashamed of the blood is also examined. Wrapped around these dialogues is a wider investigation of the contestations of power over women's reproductive bodies. The discussion then shifts to initiatives that seek to decolonise the site of menstruation and reclaim menstruation ceremonies as a critical component of broader struggles of Native emancipation and tino rangatiratanga.

I examine participants' stories from Aotearoa, Hawai'i and Great Turtle Island that describe four specific ritual observations taking place. The first two are menarche rites and rituals of rest and retreat during menstruation. Customary Māori rituals of returning the blood to Papatūānuku and ceremonial practices that conceptualise the blood as a powerful agent of purification are then investigated. The last example opens up a vast network of historic feminine ritual practices whose philosophical underpinnings have been largely forgotten.

What is missing in discussions of ritual renewal related to the blood-tides of the *whare tangata* is menopause ceremonies. This is a large area of investigation that I have chosen to omit due to the constraints of space. It is an important and worthwhile area of study that is yet to be thoroughly examined in Māori contexts.

The vilification of women's ritual power

In Aotearoa many Māori girls and women see menstruation as something 'paru', something 'shameful', something unspoken, something hidden, and a mark of female inferiority. In stark contrast to the bold, reverent, ritual chants of our ancestors that celebrate menstruation as a powerful symbol of life,²³⁴ for many Māori women and girls today, there are simply "no words for the blood 'down there'" (L. T. Smith cited in Murphy, 2013, p. 65). The silence represents a stolen vocabulary, a result of the censorship and warping of tribal histories that exalt the female body (Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001; Yates-Smith, 1998). Housed in the

²³⁴ Examples of chants that celebrate menstruation can be found in Grey (1853, p. 281) and Ngata & Jones (2007, p. 260-261).

silence is an entire colonial legacy of violation that targets the womb of women that represents our continuation as Indigenous peoples.

The distortion and erasure of Māori and other Native women's ritual arts hinge upon the vilification of the blood by some of the most influential colonial ethnographers (and later historians) who relocate it within discursive claims of symbolic pollution (Best, 1924; Smith, 1974; Salmond, 2004). Elsdon Best provides an example, stating that menstruation was regarded by Māori as a specific kind of tapu, which could be compared to “the condition termed ‘unclean’ in the Scriptures” (Best, 1929, p. 7). His description reveals more about Christian and Victorian cultural constructs related to menstruation than it does about Māori philosophies (Murphy, 2011; Rountree, 1998).

Berys Heuer (1972, p. 10-11), another champion of colonial patriarchy, provides an example of the reproduction of this material, re-trenching colonial narratives that recast Māori femininity as inherently ‘inferior’, ‘degraded’ and ‘destructive’:

Women's clothing, and places where a woman's body had rested were regarded as unclean and defiling because of a presumed residual effect of the spiritual powers of the menstrual flow.

The menstrual flow breaks the border of the vagina (Grosz, 1994; Longhurst, 2001, 2005; Rees, 2013). As Pākehā authors Buckley and Gottlieb (1988) and Sibley (1995) point out, the breaking of borders become a focus of anxiety, fear, abjection, and ultimately, surveillance and control. The female body that opens a path between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, ‘public’ and ‘private’, this world and the next, life and death, is a liminous ‘threshold space’ that breaks borders through birth and the flow of blood (Blackford, 1999; Longhurst, 2001; Sibley, 1995). Whilst Māori ritualised these constructions through karanga and the wahine nanahu, muru taua histories, and inscribed these readings onto carvings in the meeting house and onto the skin through the kauwae moko, in the west the liminous female body continues to be regarded with ambivalence (Binney & Chaplin, 1986; Blackford, 1999, p. 15; Grosz, 1994; Houppert, 1999; Yates-Smith, 1998).

Buckley and Gottlieb (1988, p. 92) argue that fear toward the female body and its menstrual flow have caused it to be a “focus and object of control”. The most

dramatic example of this is the witch hunt period of Britain and Europe that occurred concurrently with European colonial expansion, the capitalist system and the development of a male dominated medical profession, between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries (Ehrenreich & English, 1973; Federici, 2014). Indian geographer, Sutapa Chattopadhyay (2017, p. 6-7), describes this period as the “mass institutionalization of the state’s control over the female body” that became reinscribed as a machine for the capitalist workforce (Federici, 2014). During the witch hunts entire villages were emptied of their female occupants, whose bodies were the targets of the “consolidation of patriarchal power” (Federici, 2014, p. 15). Federici (2014, p. 102-3) makes a powerful observation that:

The definition of women as demonic beings, and the atrocities and humiliating practices to which so many of them were subjected left indelible marks in the collective female psyche and in women’s sense of possibilities. From every view point – socially, economically, culturally, politically – the witch hunt was a turning point in women’s lives ... the cause of the downfall of the matriarchal world. For the witch hunt destroyed a whole world of female practices, collective relations, and systems of knowledge that had been the foundation of women’s power ... Out of this defeat a new model of femininity emerged ... While at the time of the witch hunt women had been portrayed as savage beings, mentally weak, insatiably lusty, rebellious, insubordinate, incapable of self control, by the 18th century the canon has been reversed. Women were now depicted as passive.

What is striking about Federici’s observations is that discourses of female submissiveness that followed the violence of the witch hunt period in the 18th century have been transposed onto colonial re-definitions of Māori womanhood as I discuss in Chapter 2. Colonial ethnographer, Elsdon Best (1924, p. 77), provides an example stating:

The seed of life is with the male, with the female is the passive, nurturing haven bed. The seed (or fruit) of the god is with the male, because he is the offspring of gods. The female sprang from the earth, and with her are the nurturing waters. The blood and the vital essence emanated from the god ... Woman was fashioned after the image of the male.

These assertions have been deeply internalised by many Māori whānau across the decades. Makareti Papakura’s (1986, p. 76) descriptions of Māori womanhood

provide an example of this internalisation stating “The Maori woman was a faithful and affectionate wife, who lived for her husband and family and hapu”. Papakura (1986, p. 90) continues “A wife generally looked up to her tane, and upheld him in all that he did. Maori women were like this”.

Colonial narratives that reframe Māori womanhood within the narrow confines of nuclear, gendered, white domesticity act like a linguistic lobotomy on Native women’s ritual systems of knowledge, stripping them from our memories and histories (Simmonds & Gabel, 2016; Tamaira, 2010; Yates-Smith, 1998). Yet as I argue in this chapter, despite the attempted annihilation of these knowledges, Native women’s wisdom traditions continue and are also being renewed and developed.

The politics of control over women’s bodies, however, also continues in multiple forms. In the birth space, homebirth midwife Claire Ecclestone observes:

There is a massive modern day witch hunt happening at the moment for midwives.²³⁵ We are hunted in the media and on Facebook comments. We don’t burn but it’s a super powerful form of social control that paints midwives (those who hold trust in women’s birthing bodies and the intelligence of nature and cycles) as neglectful, stupid and ill informed. In doing so it perpetuates a strong social belief that birth is something to be feared, that all women need highly medicalised experiences to be safe, and that women/whānau can’t do it by themselves. This in turn holds a lot of women and whānau back from stepping into their sovereignty over their birthing (C. Ecclestone, personal communication, March 28, 2018).

Alicia and Puni also speak about the instillment of fear and self-doubt in Native birthing women, arguing that one of their main roles as birth support people is to eliminate fear. Heather adds that those, like Puni, Alicia and herself, who offer alternatives to highly interventionalist medicalised birth experiences that strip the sacred from the birth rite, are targeted:

²³⁵ Claire refers to the article ‘Midwives hit back at birth danger study’ (2015, October 21).

Those who challenge or don't conform to the medical Pākehā model become a target. Unless you're a good little brown girl, you're a friggen target ... It's not risky because you are doing risky stuff, you're just doing what whānau want to have ... You have to be brave every day that you're a midwife otherwise you are practicing defensive midwifery ... I'm brave everyday and I challenge the mainstream model (H. Muriwai, personal communication, February 3, 2016).

Medical anthropologists, Davis-Floyd & Davis' (1996, p. 239) illuminate further the tensions and contestations of power over women's bodies that are discursively inscribed by western masculinist medical models as inherently 'defective', requiring intervention. They state:

There is increasing evidence that midwife - assisted homebirth is as safe as, and often safer than, hospital birth ... but this evidence is little known and not at all acknowledged in the wider culture, which still assumes the authority of the technomedical tenet that hospital birth is far superior to birth at home. Thus, as health care practitioners, all midwives, even those who attend women in their homes, are under tremendous cultural pressure to 'do birth according to medical standards', as one midwife put it. But 'doing birth according to medical standards' will in many cases mean using interventions and/or transporting the woman to the hospital, despite the midwife's alternative judgment.

Naomi Simmonds and Ngāti Kahu, Te Rarawa scholar, Kirsten Gabel (2016) draw out the politics of birth-spaces in Aotearoa, highlighting that this space is a battlefield of power relations that assert the hegemony of western obstetric, technocratic, male medical models, models that came to power assisted by the witch hunts of Britain and Europe (Chattopadhyay, 2017; Federici, 2014). Simmonds and Gabel (2016, p. 149) argue:

Colonial and patriarchal interventions infiltrated almost all aspects of Māori maternities, resulting in the marginalisation of the maternal figure, the medicalisation and institutionalisation of the maternal body, and control over the rearing of our children being vested in patriarchal frameworks of Western education. For example, the policies of medicalisation and the disenfranchisement of tohunga and tāpuhi in the early 20th century, have seen pregnancy and childbirth, for most Māori women, relocated from home to hospitals.

As I point out in the previous chapter, many Māori and Native women have lost

rangatiratanga over the birthing ceremony and their own bodies through the institutionalisation of birth. Intergenerational whare tangata ritual knowledge has “become obsolete” for many whānau (Coney, 1993, p. 59). Despite this, as Patrisia Gonzales (2012, p. 66) states, “Womb knowledge is being renewed as a critical part of indigenous reclamation movements”. Birth, death, puberty and menstruation rituals are all critical sites of decolonisation, healing, resistance and cultural reclamation for Native peoples (Cook, 2008; Gonzales, 2012; Simmonds, 2014). This thesis contributes to the international movement to re-ignite and restore whare tangata ritual ontologies and recover the divine feminine implicit in these ceremonial practices.

A culture of concealment

From birth to the blood of the womb in menstruation, the control of women’s bodies also continues through market ideologies that reframe menstruation as ‘messy’, ‘disruptive’, ‘dirty’ and a source of ‘female shame’, requiring containment. Contemporary marketing of menstrual products builds on colonial narratives of menstrual disgust to create a ‘culture of concealment’ that influences women to feel ashamed about their bleeding bodies, and thus, ‘docile’ consumers of menstrual products (Mok, 2014, para 12). Pākehā writer Holy Blackford (1999, p. 15) points out that market ideology has contained, cleaned up, and civilised the bleeding body. She continues that “Painted, groomed, dried, deodorized and ‘protected’, we have commodified our own bodies”. Rees (2013, p. 24) states that the demonisation of menstruation, through consumer marketing, “attempts to fill women with self hatred” and continues “if you can instill feelings of shame and inadequacy at a young enough age then you’ve probably got a consumer for life”. She quotes feminist author Germaine Greer who observes “genuine femaleness remains grotesque to the point of obscenity” in western industrial society and that “Advertising of sanitary protection can no more mention menstrual blood than advertising of toilet paper can mention shit” (cited in Rees, 2013, p. 37).

The erasure of Māori and other Native peoples’ ritual histories that venerate the blood as a medium of whakapapa, and their replacement with standardised statements of menstrual filth have been internalised by many Native girls and women (Kent & Besley, 1990; Murphy, 2013, 2016). Whilst menstruation for our

tīpuna was regarded as a medium of whakapapa connecting women to the atua, male and female, many of the colonial ethnographers have employed language couched in the politics of colonial conquest to represent it as ‘spiritually defiling’ in accordance with their own cultural and religious beliefs (Mikaere, 2017b; Murphy, 2012; Pihama, 2001). As I have mentioned, re-presenting menstruation as ‘filthy’ has been a key element of colonialist ethnographic reports that proclaim the inferior status of women in traditional Māori society. Such representations have been reproduced for well over a century. These politics are patriarchal in that they attempt to subordinate women, but they also concern Māori whānau in general because the language is embedded in the politics of Native extinction. In earlier research I have argued that it should concern all Māori that the blood, which represents our sacred relationships and our survival, has been described as ‘polluting’ and a ‘source of shame’ (Murphy, 2013, p. 141).

Operating in such narratives is the power of psychological violence as a colonial weapon of subjugation. As Kenyan social activist, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s (1986, p. 3) argues:

the biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against the collective defiance [of Native peoples] is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves.

That many Māori whānau have come to view menstrual blood as ‘dirty’ and the tara as something so vile it has no language to describe it, indicates the extent of the impact of the colonial, “cultural bomb” that strikes at the very centre of our regeneration as Native peoples (Mikaere, C., 2011; Murphy, 2013; Thiong’o, 1986, p. 3).

Whilst white women’s bodies are also discursively constructed as “an emblem of disgust” (Blackford, 1999, p. 14) irrationality and uncontrollability, Native women’s bodies are marked by the intersectionalities of race, sexuality, class and the politics of colonial conquest (Jahnke, 1997b; Pihama & Johnston, 1994). Kim Anderson (2000, p. 139) maintains “Native females have been subjected not only to racist

notions of the savage, but to the sexist notion of a debased womanhood”. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1992, p. 33) adds:

Māori women belong to the group of women in the world who have been historically constructed as ‘Other’ by white patriarchies and white feminisms. As women, we have been defined in terms of our differences to men. As Māori, we have been defined in terms of our differences to our colonisers. As both we have been defined by our differences to Māori men, Pākehā men and Pākehā women. The socioeconomic class in which most Māori women are located makes the category of ‘Other’ an even more complex problematic.

Colonial relations are racist, gendered, classist and sexualised, re-locating Māori and other Native women at the periphery rather than at the center of social, spiritual, political and economic relations as the ‘wellspring’ of the generations (Gonzales, 2012; Lin, 2008; Smith, L. T., 2005). What is at stake in colonial narratives is control over Native lands and the subjugation of female power that births bodies that resist and threaten the stability of white supremacist settler societies (Gebre, 2008; Smith, A., 2005).

Reclaiming rerenga atua ceremonies

Despite the reproduction of derogatory colonial narratives and contemporary advertising that erase readings of the blood as sacred, a movement to reclaim Māori and other Native menstruation ceremonies is underway. The renewal of menstruation rituals is “grounded fundamentally in a resistance movement” (Pihama & Johnston, 1994, p. 95) and is a part of a continuum of reclamation of Native philosophies, practices and spiritualities. In particular, it relates to decolonising the narratives of the *whare tangata* and the revival of Native practices related to pregnancy, birth, and post-natal ritual customs such as the burial of *whenua* and concealment of *pito* in tribal lands (Gabel, 2013; Simmonds, 2014; Smith, 2012; Te Awekotuku, 2007).

It is very hard to determine how many Native women are conducting menstruation rituals because they tend to be private and intimate practices, however, I do get a sense that this is a growing movement. I base this on the intense interest from Māori communities on the *wānanga* that I and others run in this area and on the community initiatives that are appearing around the country that foster a positive attitude

toward menstruation.²³⁶ Ngāi Tuhoe community educator and advocate for the reclamation of traditional menstruation teachings, Haley Lowe, has noticed a dramatic interest in discussing menstruation amongst Māori communities based in South Auckland in recent years. She contrasts this with a few years ago when she was regarded as an anomaly for speaking about it. Hayley observes that the reluctance of some Māori to talk about menstruation may be related to:

This misconception that kōrero around menstruation is 'tapu'. Working with wahine and tane to dispel this myth and unpack why this is the current day thought has led to people becoming more open and wanting to understand more about who we truly are as Tangata whenua. I am also noticing the role of tane changing as we have these discussions. Vaginal Blood was seen as disgusting and something to be hidden. The understanding of the wahine continuing the whakapapa and role of the tane in this journey - I have witnessed our men cry as they realise the significance of menstruation at a deeper level. We are now seeing strength and mothers/sisters/kuia/aunties are considering ways in which they can create tradition and welcome young wahine to this sacred space (H. Lowe, personal communication, March 28, 2018).

The growing interest in this area can also be observed in the development of Māori 'puberty' rites of passage for boys and girls such as the 'E Hine' and Poutama Tane programmes run in Whaingaroa.²³⁷ 'E Hine' was trialled in 2015 in response to the request for immediate support with 'puberty education' for a group of Māori girls

²³⁶ The Tukou Legacy Community Fund, established in 2017, is an initiative based in the Far North that seeks to empower Moerewa and Kawakawa wāhine and the community through a variety of enterprises that include the distribution of menstrual cups that aim to eliminate period poverty. Menstrual cups are a feminine hygiene product made of flexible medical grade silicon, which is inserted into the vagina during menstruation to collect the blood. Period poverty is a term used to describe the inaccessible cost of menstruation products to some girls and women. Menstrual cups eliminate the on-going costs of menstruation because the cups are reusable each month. They also eliminate waste caused by disposable menstruation products. 'I am Eva' and 'My Cup' are both businesses that sell reusable menstrual products with a philosophy to empower women about menstruation. Whilst 'My Cup' pairs with Māori community initiatives, such as Tukou Legacy to donate products, 'I am Eva', operated by Māori women, has been launched as a decolonising initiative to minimise waste and facilitate the reclamation of matrilineal ritual traditions (I am Eva, 2018).

²³⁷ Whaingaroa is the Indigenous name for Raglan, situated on the west coast of the North island of Aotearoa.

from Raglan Area School. Delivered by various members of the Whaingaroa community and based on a holistic Kaupapa Māori paradigm, ‘E Hine’ aimed to “reawaken Hine and retell her stories in ways that are relevant for girls coming into womanhood. These stories become the basis for learning about our bodies, fertility, sexuality” (Madelin, personal communication, June 29, 2016).²³⁸

Poutama Tāne, the male equivalent, is a community lead wānanga that draws on mātauranga Māori, ceremony, outdoor adventure, male mentorship, and the philosophy of non-violence to form rites of passage for teenage boys. First piloted in 2015, the wānanga offers skilled support and guidance to boys transitioning into manhood. Rituals such as the traditional pūre and tohi water rites are conducted by local kaumātua acknowledging puberty as a time of transition. These wānanga have been designed to counter the negative statistics, struggles and realities of many (Māori) boys and men in Aotearoa (Coates, 2018).

In the Poutama rites of passage model, mana tane and mana wahine teachings complement one another as they once did in pre-colonial Māori society. Hayley’s earlier comments on observing Māori men cry on the wānanga that she runs when educated about the significance of the blood as a conduit of whakapapa reflects the impact of resurfacing sacred knowledges that provide cohesion and balance between mana tāne and mana wahine. This is an important element of decolonising initiatives. In relation to the renewal of menstruation ceremonies, the inclusion of mana tāne is particularly powerful because of strong Māori ritual histories that reveal male participation (Murphy, 2011). Yet while, like Hayley, I consistently experience positive responses from Māori men on the wānanga I run related to menstruation, it is not reflective of all Māori men as I discuss shortly.

The move to reclaim menstruation rituals is partially being fostered in Aotearoa by a growing awareness of both the expense and the negative environmental impacts of menstrual products and the push to promote menstrual cups and natural products

²³⁸ The ‘E Hine’ educational programme is a community initiative that has been supported by ‘My Cup’, who have donated menstrual cups to workshop participants as part of their free cup programme (My Cup, 2017).

(Gathey, 2018; Wenman, 2018). These environmentally friendly alternatives to disposable menstrual items are accompanied with much more positive messaging around menstruation, encouraging women and girls to reconnect with their bodies during this time (Lawton, 2018). The use of menstrual cups and natural products such as organic bamboo, hemp and cotton pads make it easier to perform blood rituals and are growing in popularity. Even so, based on the workshops I have run and the kōrero I have had in Māori communities over several years it is my opinion that most Māori girls and women use these products without any ritual or sacred elements. Access to Māori ritual knowledge related to menstruation is still limited (Gathey, 2018; Wenman, 2018).

The spaces in which menstruation ceremonies are being conducted vary greatly depending on the kinds of ceremonies enacted. Whilst some are intensely personal and are conducted alone in working and middle-class urban neighborhoods and in the privacy of women's bathrooms, bedrooms and gardens, others are taking place with the support of the whānau and in rural and tribal lands and spaces (this is particularly, although not exclusively, the case with menarche rites). I turn now to examine a cluster of specific rituals, practices and philosophies that are being reclaimed and renewed in Aotearoa, and overseas in Hawai'i and Great Turtle Island.

Menarche



Figure 7.1 Kaha:wi Dance Theatre. Blood Tides Production 2018. Performer J Blackbird & M Acevido. Photographer: Ian R. Maracle. Used with permission.

Figure 7.1 depicts a scene from the Kaha:wi Dance Theatre Companies' production, *Blood Tides*, which premiered in Canada in April 2018. The scene portrays the intergenerational nature of menarche rites in Native communities. This is also captured by Rangimarie Pere when she recounts the words of her kuia greeting the arrival of the blood with the saying "*Kua mimiti taku puna tamariki engari kua timata to puna*" (R. Pere in Murphy, 2014, p. 11). The image and the kōrero reflect understandings of the blood as a symbol of the regeneration of whānau whakapapa lines. As such, in traditional Māori contexts it was celebrated through ceremonies such as the cutting of hair; piercing of ears; claiming of kauwae moko; taking of a new name; whānau hākari;²³⁹ presentation of taonga; washing the blood from marked clothes with sacred water; and the return of the blood to Papatūānuku in tribal homelands (Murphy 2013, 2014). Today this blood is also returned to sacred trees in pots and quiet corners in domestic suburban gardens as a consequence of the confiscation of tribal lands and fragmentation of whānau and hapū that has caused dislocation and loss of tribal identity (S. Kane-Matene, personal communication, May 11, 2016; P. Jackson, personal communication, June 16, 2016).

Whilst intergenerational menarche ceremonies have been severed in many whānau, there is a movement to restore, recreate (as well as continue) menarche rites in Aotearoa, Hawai'i and Great Turtle Island (Anderson, 2011; Markstrom, 2008; Murphy, 2013, 2014). These ceremonies are occurring within wider contexts of decolonisation and Native sovereignty movements that celebrate the reclamation of traditional practices as solutions to contemporary struggles (Cajete, 2000; Cook, 2008; Smith, L. T., 2012).²⁴⁰

In the duet, 'Weaving', pictured in Figure 7.1, Zapotec performer, Marina Acevedo, and Mohawk dancer, Juilianne Blackbird convey a ceremony of remembering and

²³⁹ Family and community feasts.

²⁴⁰ Moves to reclaim menarche ceremonies are also occurring beyond Native communities (Barrett, 2007).

re-activating ancient Native menarche rites that bind the generations in honour of the blood that assures the continuation of tribal nations.

The significance of, both, continuing and reclaiming menarche rites is captured in the following statements by St Pierre and Long Soldier who maintain:

the tradition of marking the first menstrual flow with ceremony is still strong ... The mysterious powers that create new life are, as always, essential to the survival of the people (1995, p. 71)

the menstrual ceremony, despite the banning of ritual by the federal government and the admonitions of Christian missionaries, held such central metaphor and symbolism for the continuation of Lakota life that the ceremonies were continued in semisecret (1995, p. 68).

Kim Anderson (2011, p. 88) agrees that menarche ceremonies were central to tribal life because they represented the “continuance of the people, and of life itself”. She adds that they were also linked to the rejuvenation of the earth and were a time of healing and blessing for the entire community. As such menarche rites were fiercely guarded and continued in secret.

Whilst there may be some whānau and tribal nations in Aotearoa, Hawai’i and Great Turtle Island that continue unbroken menarche traditions, it was more common in my research to find whānau in a process of reclaiming ancient cultural practices and evolving new ones. Hinewīrangī shares a whānau story of the arrival of her daughter’s ikura and the ceremony she created to celebrate this time:

Hinewīrangī: We think it’s lost, but I don’t think so. I know the ceremonies that need to happen, the ceremonies of that first ikura ... For my daughter I had a ceremony with all her girl cousins and we took her first ikura and took it up to our koroua, our kuia tree, in Taumata ... She was reconnecting with Papatūānuku by returning the toto to her (H. Kohu, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

Ngahuia: How did you know what to do?

Hinewīrangī: Because that’s what my heart says! Because it was simple, offering back the toto ki a Papatūānuku, her first ikura, and then each one of us gave a gift to her...That koroua tree is still there, everybody still goes to the koroua. They take their placentas and their ikura. We just tipped our ikura back in there. The thing was it was

significant because it was her first, actually it was our first one, ever, because these girls had never been through this ceremony. Neither had I. It was OUR ikura. Her first ikura was OURS ... I had some clothes made for her, the kuia, her aunties, brought it to her, dressed her, and then my brothers and all my boy cousins and my uncles waited to celebrate her in the world of men.

Hinewīrangī makes a number of significant points. The first is that the ceremony was significant to all of the girls and women who participated because none of them had experienced the ceremony themselves due to processes highlighted in Chapter 5 (Anderson, 2000; Simmonds, 2014; Yates-Smith, 1998). The second point is that in creating ceremony to celebrate her daughter, Hinewīrangī looked to her own heart for instructions on how to design the ritual. This is a major theme in my research findings as discussed in the previous chapter. The third point is the men of the whānau were involved in the ceremony following the return of the blood to the earth. The return of the blood to Papatūānuku, the use of water to lift the tapu of ceremony, and the inclusion of men all reflect traditional Māori tikanga and are examples of the dynamic nature of Native spiritualities. Older ritual patterns re-emerge when we trust our own instincts and intuitive wisdom grounded in a broader lived cultural understanding (Kanahele, 2011; Peat, 1996).

In my own whānau the arrival of menarche was greeted with similar ritual components. The burial of the blood in tribal lands with karakia to re-affirm ahi kā and connection to Papatūānuku,²⁴¹ washing in sacred water, waiata, presentation of taonga and whānau hākari all comprised different elements of the ceremonies. Like Hinewīrangī's ceremony for her daughter, it was a first in our whānau. It was a pivotal healing and decolonising moment, unraveling generations of silence and shame toward menstruation that is the consequence of internalised colonial narratives (Mikaere, 2017b; Murphy, 2013, 2016).

²⁴¹ With one family member the menstrual blood and also birthing bloods were buried in a quiet corner of the garden, which was not on tribal lands. However, when that property was sold on, karakia was performed to shift the mauri (life-force) of the blood, back to tribal lands. This ceremony was completed through ritual processes upon physical return to the tribal lands. I use this story to demonstrate the different ways in which some Native Peoples negotiate colonial realities underpinned by ancient ritual philosophies and values.

On a research trip to Oahu, Hawai'i in 2017 I presented to a gathering of thirty Native Hawai'ian girls and women who had come together to recover and create ancestral and contemporary menarche ceremonies. The wāhine had composed a prayer, a powerful symbol of decolonisation, rejecting on-going re-definitions of the blood as dirty and re-orienting their language, beliefs and practices within empowering ancestral paradigms. The pule recites:

Ka Pule Waimakalehua

*E ke akua a me na kupuna,
We thank you and ask your guidance and protection
To honor our gift that was bestowed upon us,
From a place of mana
The sacredness of womanhood;
To end our time as kaikamahine (children),
And begin our journey as wahine (women),
When we become women
We become warriors,
By introducing the presence of a new era,
Through the ancestral flow
Generation to generation
The blood that flows from our beloved ones
From the Lehua flower of many forms.
The moment she swells with the nectar that nourishes her
A seed that will bear the fruit with the face of her kupuna (ancestors)
We connect to the past, present, and future
In a period of time, we as mana wahine
Will stand together at this special time of
Waimakalehua
Amene, amene, amene,
Amama, ua noa, lele wale ke pule.*

At the conclusion of the chant, both the Christian words, 'amen', and the traditional Hawai'ian 'amama ua noa' are used, signifying a fluid state of movement between our colonised realities as Indigenous peoples and initiatives of decolonisation and cultural reclamation. The space we occupy in-between is a creative space of tensions and contradictions but also possibilities. Shedding oppressive colonial re-definitions of who we are as Indigenous peoples can be painful, and imperialist power relations continue to assert control over Native minds, bodies and territories. Even so, the fluid state of movement that many of us occupy in re-creating practices

to heal and empower ourselves is a hopeful and emancipatory space (Smith, L. T., 2012).

Rest, retreat and ritual

The blessing of blood. The gift of bleeding monthly, the shedding, renewing, rebirthing of sacred waters. Sacred is the womb flow of Woman! (A. Raumati, personal communication, November 24, 2015).

Monthly awa atua rituals performed today are often personal and intimate. Despite the onslaught of derogatory consumer discourses and recycled colonial narratives of menstrual ‘symbolic pollution’, some Māori and other Native women are reclaiming menstruation as a time of rest, ritual and renewal, much like our tīpuna once regarded it (Hohaia in Murphy, 2013, p. 110; K. Nu’uhiwa, personal communication, May 23, 2014; Pere in Murphy, 2013). Three of my participants share personal reflections of reclaiming ikura as a time of rest and spiritual communion in their diaries:

I give in to rest. I am tired. I have so much I need to reset and nourish for the busy month ahead ... I really look forward to ikura time when I can take advantage and choose to do minimal of everything else and more ‘me time’ ... sometimes I am counting down the days to ikura time so I can run away with my ritual again (S. Kane-Mātene, diary entry, May 20, 2016).

I am relishing in my ikura, big deep breaths, releasing ... it was one hell of an emotional rollercoaster with life lessons and tests around every corner, like a maze you can’t find your way through. But today I feel out the other end ... self-healing, self-love, self-assurance - my new everyday practices (T. Kutia-Tataurangi, diary entry, August 10, 2016).

Tonight in ceremony as I connected with Hina, grandmother moon ... she reminded me of the importance of solitude, of rest, of that quiet space in which most women deny themselves in today’s busy world. She spoke about the power of self-healing, self-care, and the importance of connecting with Papatuanuku, anchoring and drawing from the earth and elementals ... They are merely waiting to be acknowledged, so they can guide us back to wholeness ... The more we heal ourselves, the more we heal the earth (A. Raumati, personal communication, August 28, 2015).

In these examples ikura is welcomed as a blessing and a time to retreat into spiritual

communion with atua wāhine, rejecting Christian colonialist notions of the blood as ‘the curse of Eve’ (Anderson, 2011; Jensen & Jensen, 2005; Markstrom, 2008). Retreat, in the context of hyperbolic capitalist settler societies that view the female body as “machines for the reproduction of workforce” (Chattopadhyaya, 2017, p. 5) are bold expression of resistance and re-assertion of Native feminine spiritualities and principles of balance.

Like some Māori in Aotearoa, some Native Hawai’ian women are also reclaiming the ceremony of menstruation as a time of retreat, rest and ritual. Kalei Nu’uhiwa shares that traditionally:

When we bled it was a time of Hina ceremonies. We think of it as a negative thing but our kupuna didn’t talk about it in a negative way at all ... the term haumia, to be defiled, comes later when the missionaries arrive. Them calling it ma’i, which means to be sick, is a missionary introduction ... we used to call it waimakelehua, the cascading red petals of the lehua (K. Nu’uhiwa, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

Hāwane also speaks of the shift in menstrual discourse stating that traditionally menstruation was a sacred and ceremonial time when women were:

Secluded in our prayers and power ... after Christianity happened people just stopped talking about it and they started seeing it as, instead of Haumea,²⁴² haumia meaning defiled. It was dirty, and carried all these really negative connotations... I was taught from a young age that our hiua²⁴³ is a sacred time for the body to cleanse, rest, and regenerate. The women in my family raised me to understand and honor the protocols linked to our blood. My mother would place a lā’ī (Ti Leaf) in my regalia while in wahi kapu (sacred places) and would guide me to where I would hold space for the ceremony. She told me that our mana is so powerful during this time that our presence in ceremony is to be in the outer circles or in the back of procession lines (H. Rios, personal communication, November 13, 2018).

²⁴² Haumea is one of the Hawai’ian names for the earth mother.

²⁴³ Hiua is a traditional Hawaiian term for menstruation.

Like our Hawai'ian relations, Māori sacred menstrual terminology that orients the blood within cosmological paradigms, have been erased and replaced with misogynist, colonial language. 'Mate',²⁴⁴ and the Hawai'ian equivalent 'ma'i', both translated as women's sickness, are now the most common terms used for menstruation. The shame that many Māori and other Native women feel toward their blood is entrenched and perpetuated by this kind of terminology that aligns with Victorian and Christian cultural constructs rather than Native philosophies (Jensen & Jensen, 2005; Murphy, 2013).

The reclamation of pre-colonial names that reflect the mana of menstrual blood is, therefore, a powerful site of resistance and is a simple but pivotal step in facilitating transformation and decolonisation. It is slowly happening in Aotearoa with the reclamation of terms such as *awa atua*, *rerenga atua*, *ikura*, *wai-o-Rona*, *waikura*, and *waiwhero* and it is also gathering momentum in Hawai'i with the reclamation of terms such as *waimakelehua* (Murphy, 2013, 2014, 2016).

On Great Turtle Island, moves are also afoot to renew menstruation ceremonies and ritual knowledge. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Kaha:wi's full production work, *Blood Tides*, performed in May 2018 in Toronto, Canada, aimed to stimulate the renewal of Native women's menstruation ceremonies and spiritualities. Working with an international Indigenous cast of female artists, the director, Santee Smith, used the analogy of re-gathering the shards of a smashed pottery vase to speak to the violent disruption of Native women's ritual and spiritual lives through Christianity and colonisation (Anderson, 2011; LaDuke, 2005; Simmonds, 2014; Yates-Smith, 1998).

Santee explains that in preparation for the *Blood Tides* theatre work, ceremony was a key methodological process that included rituals of returning the blood to the earth in wind, rain and snowy conditions. Fasting and sweat lodge ceremonies were also

²⁴⁴ I did not find the term 'mate' in any of the Māori oral literatures (such as chants, incantations and songs) that I canvassed in earlier work although it is in some of the colonial ethnographic literature. It is debatable whether the term is a traditional Māori term for menstruation (Murphy, 2013, 2016).

integral to the process. Alicia also speaks to participating in private sweat lodge ceremonies but during menstruation:

For me, with our little sweat lodge at home, that's the perfect time for me to go in there ... I am the most available to the emotions coming through. I am not suppressing them. I've stopped working when I am on my moon time ... that's the time for me to go in there and to be connected directly (A. Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2006).

Alicia's sweat lodge, which she has built for herself and her daughter, creates a temple of communion with deities in her backyard and is regulated by the flow of menstrual blood. In this instance ceremony and the sacred is constructed in ways that suit Alicia and is expressed in her everyday domestic geography (Lane, 2002).

Sites of struggle

The fact that Alicia retreats to bleed in the sweat lodge is significant. Alicia and Ramona highlight that women are often excluded from the sweat lodge and sun dance ceremonies during menstruation:

In some places the women aren't allowed to go into the lodge on their moon cycle. The rationale is they are already purifying ... and that their purification can affect others around them. For me it teeters on the thinking that 'we don't know about it so we don't like it' ... The moon is it's own sacred ceremony ... I think we've kept ourselves away from it because we are afraid of what that power will be. We are afraid of what that woman will say. We are afraid of what that blood will tell ... I have actually been in one [sweat lodge] before, when they have said 'One of you women here is on your moon and you need to get out of here because you are affecting other people'. Or even at vision quest or at sun dance ceremony, they call it 'moon camp' and they will push them out to be as far away from everybody as possible ... it's really put into a derogatory form ... The tone is you are doing harm by being here. Not 'your doing a gift and we appreciate you are doing it for all of us to keep our tribe alive ... Womb, vaginal opening, birth is all represented here. It's all based off of that same womb design ... that sweat lodge is the womb (A. Cardenas, personal communication, June 3, 2006).

I look back on some of my experiences like at the sundance where the people stopped women from being near the ceremony who were on their moon. I got my moon, and first, they banished me from the sundance,

then they put me in a hotel, and when anybody would come to the hotel, the minute they would leave, they would make sure everybody saw that they would smudge themselves down because I was so bad medicine ... at that time I just felt shame, but looking back on it now, that was wrong ... It was the wrong teaching, it was the wrong spirit, because that sundance ceremony is a birthing ceremony. It's about growth. Recommitting yourself to the cycle of life and to the people (R. Beltran, personal communication, June 3, 2016).

In her interviews with Native women, Kim Anderson (2000, p. 37) noted how some Native men were using tradition and culture to “exclude women, render them invisible, or to shame them by twisting traditions that are related to female power”, an observation also made by mana wahine scholars in Aotearoa (Evans, 1994a; Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001). She adds that often “The failure to explain the values behind certain practices and the way in which some traditions are enforced can alienate women” (Anderson, 2000, p. 37). I experienced an example of this at a Māori gathering of healers where an elder with ties into the tribal area we were in stood up during kōrero explaining protocols for ceremony the following day, declaring:

If any of you women here are bleeding you are not to enter the water during the ceremony. That is our ancestral water and you are not to go in there and pollute it with your blood.

The impact of the tone of her words was immediately perceptible across the hui cutting violently through the space and sucking the jubilation straight out of the atmosphere. Uncertainty, bewilderment, shock, anger and shame were all visibly expressed in the countenance of the women (and men) gathered (who included Native people from across the world). A stunned lull fell momentarily over the gathering. I waited for one or two of the elders who knew better to challenge her. They did not. Soon after I left feeling an overwhelming sadness for all of us, for all who continue to wrestle with the brutality of colonisation that continues to express and find power in language such as this. Language that makes us shrink, that makes us uncertain of ourselves, that makes us feel, somehow, ashamed (Anderson, 2000; Thiong'o, 1986). My issue then, as it is now, is not with the instruction insisting that menstruating women stay out of the water. Rather, it is the tone of disgust and use of the colonial lynchpin term - ‘pollution’ to describe the sacred blood.

‘Pollution’ is a term used to sever the navel cord of Native women’s power, it is a term used to violate the sacred relationships that the blood represents, it is a term used to desecrate our origins in the world. It is a mistake to assume that the use of this language to describe the blood that represents our continuation as Indigenous peoples does not affect every single one of us.

Whilst Ramona and Alicia point to the shaming of menstruating women by Native men, in the above example from Aotearoa the perpetrator of shame is an elder Māori woman. This example demonstrates the ways in which many Native women have internalised patriarchal, colonial narratives of menstrual putridity and shame. This, however, is not stopping some Native women from re-creating menstruation ceremonies as a powerful site of healing, decolonisation, cultural resurgence, and tino rangatiratanga.

Ikura

Although iwi histories, stories and matrilineal knowledges are diverse in Aotearoa, and across Hawai’i and Great Turtle Island, the ritual of returning menstrual blood to the earth is a common thread. In Aotearoa, these practices fold into a continuum of whare tangata rites that are being reclaimed such as the careful burial of birthing bloods and whenua and placement of pito in tribal lands (Simmonds, 2014; Te Awekotuku, 2007; Smith, L. T., 2012). In earlier work, my kuia Rangimarie Pere explains the whakapapa and cosmological significance of these rituals:

I heke mai te awa o te tangata mai i a Papatūānuku. He tika kia hoki atu te awa atua ki a ia. He tika kia hoki atu te whenua ki a ia. I hou mai tatou mai i a ia. Whenua ki te whenua, awa tapu ki a Papatūānuku. (The river of humanity descends from Papatūānuku. And so the divine river returns back to her. So too the placenta returns to her. It was gifted to us from her. Placenta back to the land, sacred river back to Papatūānuku) (R. Pere in Murphy, 2013, p. 97. Italics in original).



Figure 7.2 Hineahuone at Kurawaka. By R Balzer, 2014. Used with Permission.

Te Arawa artist, Regan Balzer's depiction of Hineahuone (in Figure 7.2), the first human, sculpted from the menstrual waters of her mother Papatūānuku at Kurawaka, the vulva of the earth, convey a women's version of the origins of humanity that is not well known or recorded.²⁴⁵ In this version Tāne seeks the elusive material capable of bringing te ira tangata, the human element into the world of light. Under his mother Papatūānuku's counsel, he returns to his own birthplace and discovers ikura, the precious red medium pooling between the thighs of his mother (Kahukiwa & Grace, 1984; Mikaere, 2017a; Murphy, 2014). Tāne gathers the ikura - the vital menstrual blood - to form the first human, Hineahuone. Upon entering Hineahuone's vulva, Tane experiences "a tremendous force from within Hine, a powerful force, such as he had never experienced before" (Pere, 1982, p.

²⁴⁵ To my knowledge Murphy (2013, 2014) are currently the only publications that represent this particular version.

10-1). What he experiences, in my opinion, is the potent fire of the womb, the blood of the creatress mother, Papatūānuku that activates Hineahuone and brings her to life (Murphy, 2013, 2014). It is from Hineahuone that Māori women inherit the matrilineal river of power (menstruation) and the name wahine (Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama, 2001). The ancient term 'ikura' for menstrual blood also derives from this pūrākau. It is a reminder of the cosmological origins of menstrual blood (Murphy, 2014). Ikura is a name that continues to be used by some whānau and is being reclaimed by others.

This version is very different to the oft-quoted standardised versions that have Hineahuone 'scraped from dirt' by a male god, Tāne, (Best, 1924; Cowan 1930). In these renditions Tāne is reminiscent of Adam who forms Eve from a 'bent rib', a metaphor for the inherent 'deviousness' of woman's nature (Kramer & Sprenger, 1971). In this reading Hineahuone is 'his' creation. He is her 'god'. Authority (and ownership) rests with him. Leonie Pihama (2001, p. 157), drawing on radical feminist writer Mary Daly, argues:

if God is constructed as male [and white, as Leonie further points out] then it may be equally said that men are constructed as God, which is a state that then functions to maintain the subordination of women by man/God.

This is clearly evident in some ethnographic reinterpretations of this story such as the following from Elsdon Best (1924, p. 89):

On the whole Māori leaned towards agnatic filiation, the male, he possess greater mana that does the female, for is not man descended directly from the gods, while woman had to be created from earth!

Best's assertions deny that Papatūānuku herself is an atua, and in fact is the mother of the entire pantheon of atua, including Tāne himself (Mikaere, 2017a). In many of the colonial ethnographic retellings of this story the mana of Papatūānuku is denied and Hineahuone is relegated to a pile of dirt with language that erases the mana and tapu of the feminine body (Murphy, 2011, p. 73). This rendition is used today to reinforce patriarchy in the Māori world. One example was shared with me by a prominent Māori community worker who spoke of witnessing an elder at a gathering who sought to 'put women in their place' through his assertions that

women are ‘below’ men because they ‘come from dirt’. Whilst the statement could be ignored as preposterous given the male atua were also birthed by Papatūānuku (except the lofty Io whose origins Ani Mikaere (2017a) robustly interrogates), the comments are chilling in light of Māori domestic violence statistics and impending ecological devastation that many Native and non-Native people maintain is the consequence of ‘broken relationships to the earth’ who is stripped of her sacredness by capitalist ideologies (Jensen, 2006; Kimmerer, 2013, p. x).

Regan’s painting in Figure 7.2, then, is a site of decolonisation that shifts colonial interpretations. Here Māori women’s mana, tapu and mauri is located in the same blood that birthed the pantheon of atua, including Tāne himself. To consider this is to completely dismantle on-going colonial narratives that recode menstrual blood as spiritually ‘polluting’.

Taranaki artist, Jo Tito’s descriptions of returning her menstrual waters to the earth must be understood within a continuum of whare tangata rites as mentioned earlier. These include birthing on the land and returning the placenta to the earth in *whenua ki te whenua* rituals. The return of birthing bloods, placenta and menstrual blood - all mother’s blood - back to the earth are ancient devotional rites that re-affirm ahi kā and underpin the name Tangata Whenua as discussed in Chapter 5. They all fold into a continuum of rituals that venerate the whare tangata as a primary axis point of relationships that span the time-space continuum (Cajete, 2000; Cook, 2008; Kahukiwa & Potiki, 1999). Jo shares:

Today I returned my blood back to the earth... I have recently started using a moon cup, so this time I poured my blood over my plants rather than digging a hole... In the past I would have thought that it was quite disgusting what I was doing... But in that moment, what was I really saying about myself? I am unclean and yet, I feel in my heart that I am of this earth, so if I return a part of me back to the earth, then I am giving back to that which has given life to me. Pouring my blood over my mother’s ferns was like gratitude for her, giving her blood back to her, the blood that nurtured and nourished me into this world (J. Tito, personal communication, July 10, 2016).

My ‘waikura’ came on the full moon...it was a healing spiritual experience for me, merging with the landscape and listening to the messages that were shared with me. I came home even more determined

to honor my sacred blood, to continue to offer my blood in ceremony each month, to honor who I am as a Maori woman, honoring those who have gone before me and those who are to come (J Tito, personal communication, August 27, 2016).

Jo conveys an intensely intimate decolonising experience in which she finds spiritual revelation in her own menstrual blood as a medium of whakapapa connecting her to the atua wāhine, tīpuna and uri across time and space. Her comments that she may have found this practice ‘disgusting’ in the past highlight a connection that some Native people are making, that to vilify the blood (and the tara) as inferior, ‘disgusting’, and polluting, is to desecrate oneself and one’s own origins in the world. For Māori particularly, who have inherited cosmologies that celebrate the blood as a medium of ancestors, descendants and atua, to vilify the blood is to diminish the connection to our own divinity (Murphy, 2013, 2017).

Hāwane shares her own experiences of a similar ceremony from a Native Hawai’ian perspective:

For a few years before the frontline aloha ‘āina movement on Mauna Kea²⁴⁶ began, I traveled to Kanaloa Moku²⁴⁷ for the opening and closing Lonoikamakahiki Ceremonies.²⁴⁸ Women on their hiua are asked to stay back and look for hō‘ailona (elemental signs) while the ceremonies are in session. I often pondered what it would be like to spend that sacred time at the Hale o Papa, the ancient house of women, that still stands next to the river bed in Hakioawa. I longed to be there to sit with the ancestors while offerings to Lono were presented at the ‘ahu.²⁴⁹ I longed for a place to delve deep into my prayers as my blood tides ebbed and flowed. I asked the land where I should go and I was led to Hakioawa Iki, a beautiful small beach where we go to bathe. I put my hands on the earth and heard the land say to me, ‘dig a hole and

²⁴⁶ I discuss this movement in the previous chapter.

²⁴⁷ Kanaloa Moku is a Native Hawai’ian name for Kaho’olawe.

²⁴⁸ The Lonoikamakahiki ceremonies, which celebrate the atua Lono (in Māori this atua is called Rongo), begin in November and mark the ancient Hawai’ian new-year, Makahiki (Matariki in Māori, which is the Pleiades constellation).

²⁴⁹ The Hawai’ian ‘ahu is the Māori tuahu – ceremonial altar.

bleed into me, blood to blood'. I resonated with this message deeply knowing that Kanaloa Moku was formed from the last drops of birth blood of Papahānaumoku.²⁵⁰ I chanted as I dug the hole and let my blood meet the sand as my voice met the wind in prayer. I carry that moment in my womb with me in my walk in this world. It was the moment that I remembered the sacred lineage of power that I come from, all the way back to the blood of mother earth, to the blood of the thousands of women who breathed me to life, to my grandmothers, to my mother, to me. I knew right then and there the mana in knowing that I am Papa and she is me (H. Rios, personal communication, September 23, 2018).

Strikingly similar to Māori cultural concepts, Hāwane articulates notions of the blood as a matrilineal ritual conduit that binds the generations back to the mother, Papahānaumoku/Papatūānuku (Jensen & Jensen, 2005; Kahukiwa & Grace, 1984; Pere, 1982; Murphy, 2013; Yates-Smith, 1998). Her statements that “*I am Papa and she is me*” is mirrored exactly in Māori whakatauki such as ‘*Ko te whenua ko au, ko au te whenua*’ (Hutchings, 2002; Simmonds, 2014). The ceremonial return of menstrual blood to Papatūānuku re-affirms this cosmological Polynesian tenet.

Another element of this ceremony is the understanding amongst a few Native ritual practitioners that not only does the return of the blood to land nourish Native women, it also nourishes Papatūānuku’s life-force in a time of ecologic collapse and transition (Jensen, 2006; Waziyatawin, 2012; Wildcat, 2009). It is, therefore, an example of world-renewal rites that only women can undertake. If the women who resonate with these particular ceremonies do not undertake them they will remain undone.

Returning menstrual blood to the whenua in ceremony to re-affirm cosmological connections, is a powerful ancient practice that is being renewed by some Native whānau. A specific element of this practice is further examined in the next section.

²⁵⁰ Here Hāwane refers to Hawai’ian cosmologies that recount the whakapapa origins of the Hawai’ian islands.

A Whānau kaupapa

In Jo's earlier example her rituals are conducted alone yet this is not the case for some women. A striking example is offered by Bicol, Ilocano, Pasig Philippino artist Sarah Kane-Matene who shares an intimate account of an ikura ceremony in which she is joined by her tamariki and Ngāti Konohi husband:

Yesterday I rinsed out all of the biodegradable cloths soaking in my bucket while I recited karakia ... My husband, babies, and I gathered on our front porch beneath the light of the stars and the darkness of the new moon. I recite karakia and ask my family if they understand the ritual that we were partaking in and ask them to explain to me their understanding. Bloodlines, sacred ritual, whakapapa, ikura, waiwhero, wharetangata, Papa, whenua, just some of the many answers I received. I am stoked with my famz [sic]. The kids ask if they could feed their kowhai tree [holding their whenua]²⁵¹ with my ikura themselves. I was happy to do this. My husband declared his love and devotion to us. It was just beautiful and felt totally natural. This ritual has given me a grounding. I have let go of the fact that my babies whenua sit in pots instead of with Papa. This has always made me feel pouri²⁵² that I haven't got/found whenua to lay my babies whenua with ... Giving my ikura back to my babies whenua has shifted my thoughts. I feel good. I feel like I can stop worrying about this aspect of my existence (S. Kane-Matene, personal communication, May 11, 2016).

²⁵¹ Placenta in this instance.

²⁵² Sad.

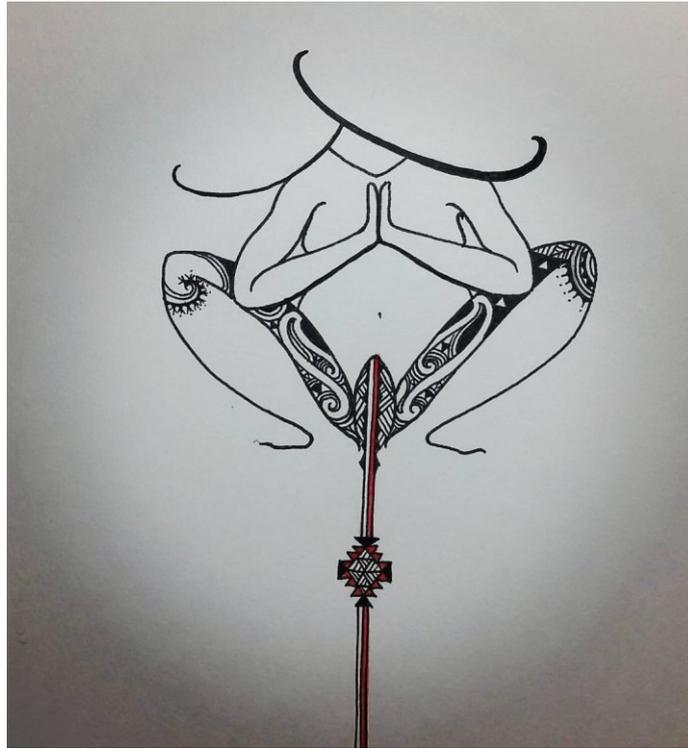


Figure 7.3 Returning ikura sketch. S Kane-Matene. Used with permission.

That Sarah's ritual (which she depicts through the sketch in Figure 7.3) is performed with her whānau is incredibly significant because it shifts the frame of thinking of menstruation as both a 'source of shame' and a private 'woman's issue'. In pre-colonial Maori society menstruation was seen as a 'whānau issue' because the blood represents whakapapa (Murphy, 2013, 2014). Whilst I am sure some menstruation rituals in former times were private, the mōteatea and karakia that I have surveyed in earlier research demonstrate that they could also be public and highly political.

Historically, te awa atua rituals nurtured a bond between the genders. The gathering of special foods, the giving of gifts, the preparation of meals and the assuming of responsibility over domestic chores at the onset of menstruation when women retreated to rest, are some of the male practices that reflect respect towards the whare tangata (R. Pere in Murphy, 2013). Yet respect for the mana of the blood ran deeper than support within the domestic realm. Unlike some other cultures whose men shied away from the power of menstrual blood, Māori men learned to harness its symbolic power and used it in rituals to clear metaphysical obstructions heading into battle as I have discussed in earlier research (Gunn Allen, 1992; Murphy, 2013). They anointed weaponry to increase their potency and anointed themselves

for protection (Grey, 1853; Murphy, 2013; Ngata & Jones, 2004). They offered the blood up as a ‘sacred food’ for their deities at the altar in times of war to clear mākutu and psychic obstructions (Murphy, 2014; Ngata & Jones, 2004; Williams, 1991). Their ritual supplications expressed ancient metaphysical philosophies of menstrual blood and the entire female reproductive body to protect, to intensify ritual workings, and to neutralise obstacles. I maintain that this is because the womb and her blood mysteries carry the power to create, destroy and renew as the primary regenerative force of the cosmos (Grahm, 1993; Murphy, 2011).

These rituals comprise a powerful historic corpus of knowledge that is largely unknown today. Furthermore, notions of menstrual defilement have eclipsed this knowledge and created negative attitudes to menstrual blood and the female reproductive body. One of the most unsettling stories that I have heard from Māori working in the health care sector regards a prominent Māori male leader who declares to Māori health professionals that women’s menstrual blood and the blood expelled after the birth of a child is ‘pollutive’ to male tapu. According to him, it is, therefore, ‘inappropriate’ for a Māori father to climb into a birth pool if there is birthing blood in the water least his tapu be defiled. Another story recounts a female Māori cultural advisor to a district health board stating that because the vagina is tapu it is inappropriate to talk about it with Māori girls who are afflicted with sexually transmitted diseases.

The stony wall of silence implicated by one, and the derogatory tone explicit in the other, are both the direct consequence of three significant factors: the omission of ritual histories that reflect the power and central role of Māori women (Yates-Smith, 1998); the misogynist Victorian and Christian values of the colonial ethnographers who re-defined notions of Māori womanhood (Hudson, 2010; Simmonds, 2014), and the systematic reproduction of this distorted material for almost two centuries (Mikaere, 2017a; Pihama 2001). This has created powerful narratives of Māori female inferiority that deny Māori women’s ritual systems of knowledge and the mana of the visceral blood as a conduit of whakapapa and divine connections.

Despite varied Māori male attitudes to menstruation today, Māori cosmological whakapapa narratives and ritual histories clearly locate tāne within blood kōrero. In one story, recounted by Ngāti Kahungunu tohunga, Nepia Pohuhu, menstruation

originates with Papatūānuku as she ripens into her procreative power within the cosmogonic womb of Te Pō (Smith, P., 1913). The blood that women bleed today birthed the entire pantheon of atua, male and female. One of these atua, Tānemahuta, discovered a whole new world beyond the confines of Te Pō when he dived into the current of his mother's menstrual tide and rode out of the womb of Papatūānuku and into Te Ao Marama, the world of light, precipitating an evolutionary leap (Hanson & Hanson, 1983; Murphy, 2013; Smith, P., 1913). Ancient names for menstrual blood such as *atua*, *awa atua* and *rerenga atua*, which are being reclaimed, are based on this story and construct the blood as a supernatural power, a conduit of atua - Tāne and his siblings who are conveyed on the tide.

In another version from Ngā Pōtiki and Ngā Uri a Maui, recounted by Rangimarie Pere in my earlier research, Maui seeks immortality, yearning to imitate Hinataiwaiwā's cyclic dance of death and rebirth in the sky each month. Maui returns to his mother Hinenuitepōteao and attempts to re-enter her body via the tara to achieve his wily goal. Crossing the gateway between worlds and entering his mother's tara, uninvited, Maui transgresses sacred laws. Hinenuitepōteao upholds the sanctity of these laws by crushing his body with her vulvic teeth. In doing so Maui becomes the first menstruation to come into the world, achieving immortality through the menstrual blood that assures the continuity of whānau whakapapa lines (R. Pere in Murphy, 2013, p. 60).

Māori men's involvement in contemporary menstruation ceremonies then, maintains whakapapa traditions. In earlier work my kuia points out that these traditions reflect the balance our tīpuna strived for between the genders (R. Pere in Murphy, 2013). I turn now to examine another angle of contemporary menstruation ceremonies, which constructs the blood as a medium of purification and renewal.

A ceremony of renewal

Some Native women are using the time of menstruation as a sacred ceremony of purification in which they release personal obstacles on the flow of blood. An ancient mōteatea from Ngāti Porou, gifted to prominent Ngāti Porou scholar, Sir Apirana Ngata in 1929, reflects this idea in Ngata & Jones (2007):

He Waiata Aroha

*Taku mea e haramai nei, ē,
He whakahou mai ki ahau, ē;
He torotoro i tō waimanu, ē,
E mau nei, kei te paheke, nā.*

*E hua noa ana te ngākau, ē,
He haohao I aku mahara, ē,
Tāria ia rā kia tuakina, ē,
Katea ia rā kei te marae, rā.*

A Love Song

*My blood is approaching,
To renew my source;
It searches out the overflow,
Held here and then flows out.*

*My heart is abundant
And draws my thoughts together,
Wait until the flow begins,
It will be released, fully purged, over the courtyard (pp. 260-1).*

The ‘love song’ conveys a personal ceremony of renewal, not just physically, but also spiritually, psychologically, emotionally and psychically. This renewal can operate at multiple scales. There is a growing awareness amongst some Māori and other Native women today that the *rerenga atua* can be used to ‘shed’ not only personal obstacles, but also trauma at a wider scale through the whakapapa line.

Mohawk activist and educator, Sylvia Maracle, states “we carry the memories of our ancestors in our physical being ... We live with the trauma that has plagued the previous generations” (in Anderson, 2000, p. 25). Naomi Simmonds (2014, p. 130-131) adds “the hurt and whakamā²⁵³ experienced by previous generations is often lived by women today ... [it] is lived and embodied through whakapapa”. As a conduit of whakapapa, menstrual blood carries the capacity, activated through ritual intention, to shed ancestral trauma in order to ‘clear the way’ for the future

²⁵³ Whakamā can be translated as shame. Yet, I have also heard it being used as a process of purification and release.

generations. Choctow historic trauma scholar, Karina Walters (2012), contextualises the significance of rituals such as this stating:

In this moment I am my granddaughter's ancestor. In this moment I am my grandmother's granddaughter. In this moment I am all of these things ... Any action that I take today will have an impact on the future generations. Any action that I take today also has an impact on past generations. What a marvelous opportunity for healing. Take care of myself now and I can heal my ancestors and heal the future generations ... I am just a vessel, a tool. What a great honor.

Apache/Lakota scholar, Eduardo Duran (2012) also maintains:

Everything we do affects seven generations. Its not just seven generations forward but also backwards ... We are dealing with the past and future in the present ... Those that work to heal themselves today affect and impact both ancestors and descendents.

Whilst many Māori pursuing decolonisation acknowledge that their efforts are for whānau today and the future generations, few are cognisant of the idea that their efforts can also impact upon and liberate tīpuna within the whakapapa line. To work in this way is to acknowledge the whare tangata as a primary origin point, the place of creation, destruction and regeneration, where things can be done and undone (Grahn, 1993; Murphy, 2013).

Amiria extends the healing ritual beyond herself and her own whakapapa line to Papatūānuku. In her descriptions bleeding becomes an act of purging trauma within the wider collective feminine psyche, and a microcosmic expression of the greater 'purging' of Papatūānuku as she seeks to restore planetary balance:

My whare tangata is picking up on the mamae of the lines of the collective womb. This past year has been the hardest year, the most challenging emotionally, physiologically, physically and spiritually and its because I have been called, amongst many others, to serve the collective through healing the whare tangata and ancestral lines of my people ... Some months I was filled with anger, trauma so deep I couldn't control it, and it wasn't just my shadow I was channelling and being confronted with, but the collective shadow of the divine feminine and all the generations of pain she has endured. What we are doing is not the path most would chose ... it aligns with the womb of the world that sits deep within Papatuanuku. When you activate and heal your own womb ... you activate and heal the womb of Papatuanuku. We are

birthing together, everything she is going through, all this purging and re-activating, we are going through too - The ancient womb, which is Hina (A. Raumati, personal communication, November 2, 2015).

Amiria locates Hina *as the womb*, within the earth and within ourselves. It is no coincidence that the marginalisation of the status of Māori women through patriarchal colonial processes also silenced the central significance of this deity (Tāwhai, 2013; Yates-Smith, 1998). Similarly, Hina's re-emergence through art, literature, and ritual practice signifies the sweeping rise of the divine feminine within Native tino rangatiratanga movements and globally to restore balance (Meyer in Lin, 2008; K. Nu'uhiwa, personal communication, May 22, 2014; Yates-Smith, 1998). In the following section I locate these particular rituals within a wider constellation of ancient Māori ceremonies that reveal an entire metaphysical system of thought that exalts the reproductive body of Māori women.

Clearing obstructions

Understandings of the power of menstrual blood to purify and release *mamae* are contextualised within a broader constellation of ancient ritual philosophies. It is important to investigate these Māori metaphysical constructs carefully because they unveil striking understandings of women that challenge colonial assertions. These ritual philosophies have been fragmented through patriarchal colonial processes. My aim is to re-weave them into a coherent framework that reflects a *mana wahine* ritual ontology grounded in histories and traditional cultural practices. This is, by no means, the only *mana wahine* ritual ontological tradition. Rather it reflects one constellation amongst many.

Linking to the above argument regarding the ability of the *whare tangata* to both hold, and release trauma, Rangitunoa shares:

Through birth, through blood, and through the women's tangi. Women tangi at different waves and frequencies ... The deeper, lower, from the puku, the whare tangata, the deeper the clearing. She [talking about a friend] needs to release even deeper to release her own people, the trauma in her own families (R. Black, personal communication, March 15, 2016).

Ngāti Porou matakite, Rhonda Tibble, also adds:

The whare tangata is a time capsule of a number of realities ... It's job is to purge the trauma ... it's a physical whakawātea. If we recognise that, then we would be cognitive of what we needed to send with it ... Women know how to bleed and we know how to cry. When we cry in the wailing terms we shift things out of the space. Karanga is meant to move ay, to move the wairua ... when we line up in a karanga, you never actually put children in front of you, always put old women because you don't know what's spiritually going to be met in the space (R. Tibble, personal communication, November 17, 2015).

These examples of clearing and releasing (trauma, obstacles, iwi mamae) through bleeding, birthing, wailing (tangi apakura, puna roimata)²⁵⁴ and karanga are directly related to ancient menstrual blood rituals mentioned earlier. Anointing the head of warriors, pre-battle, to clear psychic/spiritual and psychological apprehensions (caused through transgression - see Best, 1941; Murphy, 2013); the laying of menstrual blood at the altar before battle to clear māku²⁵⁵ and 'smooth the way' to war (Ngata & Jones, 2004; Murphy, 2013); and the careful placement of menstrual cloths in war-belts for the same purpose are examples (Best, 1941; Murphy, 2013). As I discuss in earlier work, the blood represents the qualities of purification, yet also the presence of an atua, a whānau kaitiaki summoned to neutralise and clear psychic obstructions and to protect the war party (Gluckman, 1976; Murphy, 2013).

These understandings are demonstrated at the Te Tapiri battle in Chapter 4 in which the kuia Maraea Tu Te Maota led the Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Haka Patuheuheu contingent, guided by the atua, Te Awanui, who was her stillborn child (Best, 1903, 1898, 1972). As I argue in earlier work, menstrual blood and aborted and still-born babies are conceptualised in ancient Māori thought as spiritual entities - atua - that can cross between worlds (which is another reason why the blood was called *atua*, *rerenga atua* and *te awa atua*) (Murphy, 2011; Ngata & Jones, 2004). Maraea Tu

²⁵⁴ Tangi apakura and puna roimata are ancient women's ritual arts that involve wailing, the shedding of tears and intoning of incantations that capture poetic and metaphorical verse, used to acknowledge the dead and release the pain of the collective. These oral forms are traditional healing technologies that are used in traditional Māori funerary rites.

²⁵⁵ Curses.

Te Maota leapt, unafraid, into the pathway of flying bullets because of an unshakable faith in the power of her own blood, conceptualised as an atua and kaitaki for her and her people.

Directly related to these examples are ritual constructs of the tara that shields, protects, neutralises and clears any perceived threat. My kuia provides insight in the statement that:

[Women] can protect a child or anyone by bringing them under our skirt between our legs, and god help anyone who touches them. That's why some wharenuī you will find a woman just above the door, so it means you go underneath her you see, so you are safe (R. Pere, personal communication, July 12, 2010, in Murphy, 2013, p. 124, Italics in original).

Margaret Orbell adds that female ancestors were often placed above the entrance to a tipuna whare “because the female organ (in which female powers were concentrated) was thought to be especially powerful in overcoming enemy sorcery”²⁵⁶ (Orbell, 1995, p. 187). Historic examples that extend this argument include the pūrākau behind the famous haka *Ka Mate Ka Mate*, composed by Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Raukawa rangatira, Te Rauparaha. Pursued by Waikato enemies, Te Rauparaha finds refuge in the lands of Tūwharetoa under the rangatira, Te Wharerangi, who commands Te Rauparaha to conceal himself in the kumara pit. Te Rangikōaea, the wife of Wharerangi, squats above him, concealing him under the folds of her skirt. Te Rauparaha, hidden below Te Rangikōaea ponders ‘will I live or will I die? (*Ka mate? Ka mate? Ka ora? Ka ora?*). Whilst the enemy tohunga recites karakia to flush Te Rauparaha out of hiding, the incantations hit upon a protective shield, the force of Te Rangikōaea’s tara, which neutralises the karakia and renders them ineffective (Karetu, 1993).²⁵⁷ Interior knowledges held by

²⁵⁶ The penis in customary Māori thought, also carried the capacity to render mākutu powerless. An example of karakia demonstrating this belief chants ‘*Kai ure ngā atua, kai ure ngā tapu, kai ure ou mākutu*’ – ‘The penis eat your demons and curses’ (in Hanson & Hanson, 1983, pp. 51, 202).

²⁵⁷ Some versions of this story state that it was the kumara which rendered the karakia ineffective because kumara, being food, is noa, whilst the karakia is tapu. Noa cancels out tapu.

Tūwharetoa women state that Te Rangikōaea was in her time of power (menstruation).²⁵⁸ This is completely consistent with Māori ritual histories that speak to the blood as a potent supernatural force, a medium between worlds, unparalleled in its ritual capacity to clear obstacles and neutralise opposing psychic forces.²⁵⁹

Whether Te Rangikōaea was ‘in her time of power’ or not, the force of her genitalia, which saved Te Rauparaha’s life, is revered in the haka stanza ‘*Tū ana te kehokeho!* - *Long live the vulva!*’ (Kāretu, 1993, p. 41). This is a far cry from the New Zealand All Blacks Rugby team whose renditions of this haka celebrate their masculinity. How ironic that at the height of their phallic exaltations they venerate the power of the *whare tangata*, who ultimately determines which *whakapapa* lines will continue and which will fall into the obscurity of the Pō.

‘*Tū ana te kehokeho*’ may also very well have been the catch cry amongst Te Arawa who in 1823 became stranded on Mokoia Island and surrounded by armed invading Ngā Puhi. Amongst the invading force was the *rangatira*, Te Ao Kapurangi, a Te Arawa woman kidnapped in an earlier raid. Te Ao Kapurangi pleaded with Ngā Puhi to spare her *whānau*, to which Hongi Hika responded that all those to pass between her thighs would be saved (Stafford, 2007). Te Ao Kapurangi then sprinted for the *whare tipuna*, Tamatekapua, and climbed upon the roof to straddle the doorway, calling her people to pass under her genitalia and into the safety of the house. All those that crammed within the *whare* were saved. Indeed it has been recorded that the force of Te Ao Kapurangi was so great that the crowd left outside of the house on the *marae ātea* were also saved, shielded by the *mana* of the chiefteness (Stafford, 2007).

These philosophies underpin the *murū taua* and *wahine nanahu* histories in which specific women lead the pursuit of justice on the frontlines of war. Poised on the

²⁵⁸ This information was relayed to me at a *wananga* I facilitated at Turangawaewae Marae in 2016

²⁵⁹ Neutralising negative energies was not the only ritual use of menstrual blood however. It was used in a spectrum of rites including love and healing charms, cursing and protection rites as I discuss in earlier work (Murphy, 2013).

vanguard of battle with the tara exposed, these women embody multiple readings including the power of the female reproductive body to protect and clear psychic obstructions laid down by enemy mākutu (Murphy, 2013). This is in the same way that menstrual blood cleared obstructions in ancient war rites and in the same way that the karanga clears energies left on the marae ātea. I think that this understanding stems from the mana of the womb as the inner temple of creation (Goode, 2016). The womb carries “the gift of life, death and rebirth”, the eternal dance of the cosmos (Jensen & Jensen, 2005; p. iii). The sacred passage to the womb is through the tara - the transitional gate between worlds, the ancient portal that facilitates a transformation of states. Through embodying these ritual qualities women have the power to whakawātea – to override, purify, reset and neutralise. As Manuka Henare (1988) maintains, the power of women to whakanoa in this way is women’s tapu and women are tohunga because of it.

The ritual practices related to women’s capacity to clear psychic, psychological, emotional, and spiritual obstructions, is extended by Rangitunoa who recalls that on the marae ātea:

Elderly women always sat on the ground, they never sat on chairs they sat so that their whare tangata was directly vibrating with mother earth. The practice of the Tuhoe traditions is the kuias sit on the ground so she’s connected and vibrating and can guide the whaikorero on the marae. There’s another level there of directing energy that they knew about ... they sit on the whenua by the pae, they all sit on the ground to connect and they separate out the vibrations that are positive from those that are negative, through their whāwhā²⁶⁰ (R. Black, personal communication, September 28, 2016).

Māori are not the only peoples with metaphysical and ritual philosophies like this. Kim Anderson (2000, p. 74-5) discusses the erection of ‘moonlodges’ for menstruating women during public ceremonies. The menstruating women work with the tides of their blood to ritually filter and release any negative energy occurring during the conduct of the main ceremony being performed in another space. Anderson observes that men planned tribal activities such as fishing and

²⁶⁰ Vagina.

harvesting around the monthly cycle of women. This observation also makes sense in Māori contexts of war where the precious menstrual blood of powerful women was anointed on warriors and weaponry, tucked into warbelts, and laid down as an offering at the altar before battle (Best, 1904, 1941; Ngata & Jones, 2004; Murphy, 2013).

These examples complicate the simplistic logic of many of the colonial ethnographers and more recent historians that argue that the female genitalia and menstrual blood ‘pollutes’ male tapu (Jensen & Jensen, 2005). In these examples, both menstrual blood and the vulva mark the difference between life and death as Ani Mikaere rightly clarifies (2017a). Many authors have recast Māori femininity as intrinsically noa (Best, 1924; Biggs, 1960; Heuer, 1972; Salmond, 2004; Smith, 1974). Yet the issue is not that women are aligned with noa but that noa has been re-defined by Pākehā within gendered hierarchical binaries that privilege tapu (and men) as superior and noa (and women) as inferior (Henare, 1988). In the above examples the ritual application of noa can be understood as women’s ability to purify, clear, liberate, neutralise, shield and protect the iwi from malignant forces. Ani Mikaere (2017a, 2017b) and Tuhoe scholar Rawinia Higgins (2004) effectively collapse the binary, arguing that Māori women have the capacity to whakatapu and whakanoa. Indeed as those who occupy the threshold between worlds through the tara, whare tangata and menstrual blood, women embody the entire tapu - noa continuum, moving fluidly across the spectrum.

The waters of time

In this final section I come full circle to one of the main atua who has guided this work from the beginning - Hinateiwaiwā. Hinateiwaiwā is the atua that sits at the navel of Polynesian women’s esoteric arts. As the moon her monthly waxing and waning that pulls the blood-tides of the womb, emulate the fluid continuum of birth, death and regeneration. Readings of her name convey that central to the esoteric arts of women are these blood mysteries of the whare tangata. Whilst some readings refer to her as the feminine regenerative force of the cosmos that fulfills this function through conception, pregnancy and birth (iwa means nine, as in nine months in the womb), others emphasise the terms *wai* - the waters of *wā* – time and space (Yates-Smith, 1998). *Waiwā* the waters of time can be read in multiple ways,

including the menstrual waters of the womb that convey and connect the generations of humanity across the time - space continuum (R. Pere in Murphy, 2013; H. Kohu, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

Katsi Cook's (2003, para 1) comments are relevant in that they ritualise the connections between water, women and Hineteiwaiwā the moon:

We know from our traditional teachings that the waters of the earth and the waters of our bodies are the same water. The follicular fluid which bathes the ripening ovum on the ovary; the dew of the morning grass; the waters of the streams and rivers and the currents of the oceans – all these waters respond to the pull of our Grandmother Moon. She calls them to rise and fall in her rhythm. Mother's milk forms from the bloodstream of the woman. The waters of our bloodstream and the waters of the earth are all the same water.

Cathy adds:

The whare tangata is water ... it's more water than it is matter. And because it is that, we are water. We are water beings born of a water planet ... Water is the intelligence of this universe and it holds all the memory ... Water has always been our sacred tool. It's the transformational element ... The one thing we can't go without is water ... Water is our mirror ... and the waters of our planet are dying. Therefore we are dying ... the planet will survive but the waters are mirroring to us what we are doing to ourselves and that we are bringing this story to an end if we don't figure this shit out and transform it. That's what I learned through the postnatal depression ... Life can't grow from that place ... Water for me is the last frontier. Because it is life ... once we cross that line, that boundary, and we tip that over there ain't no turning back. The story comes to an end (C. Livermore, personal communication, November 17, 2015).

Native Peoples are actively organising themselves to defend the sacred waters of the planet that sustain their tribal nations. Standing Rock and the aquifers upon Mauna Kea are two contemporary examples that I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6. Native women are the backbone of these political campaigns, guarding the waters of the world as an extension of the waters of the womb (Cook, 2003, 2008; C. Livermore, personal communication, November 17, 2015).

The ritual potency of women's waters are implicit in Hinataiwaiwā's name and also the pūrākau concerning her. The Kae narrative that I recount in Chapter 4 begins with Hinataiwaiwā in the throes of the birth ceremony, a reoccurring motif in whakapapa story cycles as birth is the genesis of whakapapa (Simmonds, 2014). At the climax of birthing her son, Tūhuru, Hinataiwaiwā unleashes a karakia summoning her child to be released into the world:

*Turu turu ra
Taku turuturu
Hei turu turu mohou
Ehineti maku e
Ko wai kei runga nei
Horahia ra te moenga
Te Moenga i Hinemata iti
Kia piki ake au ki runga nei
Kia te uira
Kia te awaha
Kia tikina mai aku toto
Aku tahe, aku parapara
Kia kau tahangatia
E tapu au e
Ko te tama a te pakipaki
Ko te tama a te reia
Reia ki waho e tuku tahe
Tuku toto, tuku parapara
Whano tae o kuka
Whano tae o tangata ki waho*
(Te Rangihaeata, 1852, in Royal, 1998, p. 103)

Let me 'ascend to the lightning, to the storm' and 'fetch my blood, my menses and my talents that they may be exhausted', speaks to the exaltation of the birth ceremony that represents the zenith of women's reproductive power (Kahukiwa & Pōtiki, 1999; Lin, 2008; Royal, 1998). Ascending to the lightning and the storm, symbols of opening up and activation, Hinataiwaiwā offers herself up to the tides of the cosmos to release the next generation into the world. The force that moves the sun and moon through the sky also courses through the birthing body and in this moment in the story, Hinataiwaiwā ascends to the height of that force. Her association with the zenith of power is also acknowledged in karakia moko kauae where her name is invoked to denote the climactic moment, the summit of pain,

where every ounce of strength is required to ‘cross the threshold’ (Orbell, 1995). Here on the other side of that initiatory moment, the woman discovers, like in birth, that her boundaries of endurance are an illusion. She is limitless. This is the domain of Hinateiwaiwā. And rightly so, for some whakapapa place her as the daughter of Hinetītama, who sacrifices herself upon the altar of transformation in order to elevate to her true potentive power (Yates-Smith, 1988).

Samoan artist, Rosanna Raymond activates ancient Polynesian understandings of the power of the waiwā – the waters of time and space that cross between worlds. Whilst *Blood Clot* might be described by some as a radical performative work, Rosanna’s explanations convey a ceremony in which she aligns with Nafanua, the Samoan goddess of war through the body, through the blood, and through the vā/wā – the liminous threshold space that wāhine continuously occupy (Tamaira, 2010; Wendt, 1999). She explains:

I was acti.VA.ting Blood Clot ... using the body to share the same space with her. In Samoa Nafanua was born of a Blood Clot and brought up in the under world ... So I was remembering, but also using the body to collapse time and space so we shared in the now. They are living through me and me through them. It's about creating that space where we converge through the past into the present. So I don't call them performances. I ain't performing. I have to be in such a strong state of mind and soul to share her. She does have volatile qualities but also very creative and visceral (R. Raymond, personal communication, August 25, 2015).



Figure 7.4 Blood-Clot by R Raymond. Photographed by Salvador Brown. Used with permission.

The photograph in Figure 7.4 shows Rosanna using her body as a ceremonial site on Ponsonby Road in Auckland city in rush hour traffic. In doing so Rosanna disrupts the hegemonic cityscape and collapses the borders between the public and private, sacred and secular (Nuechterlein, 2005; Spicer & Hamilton, 2005). Her body becomes an altar, a medium of communion with deity, spilling out and bloodying the masculinist city streets (Longhurst, 1997; Valentine, 2001). Her provocative and subversive ‘communion’ represents ancient Polynesian constructs of the body as a ‘perch’, altar, and shrine for deity to ‘mount’, summoned through chant, haka, and dance (Tangarō, 2007). The image conveys a re-occurring motif throughout this chapter and the research as a whole that the feminine reproductive body is a sacred ceremonial site, and the *rerenga atua* that flows each month, a ritual conduit that connects us directly to the *atua wāhine*.

Conclusion

In summary, I have discussed the *rerenga atua* rituals that are being reclaimed and recreated today and have located this revival within wider contexts of decolonisation, cultural resurgence and also ecological crisis. These discussions are placed against on-going colonial relations of power that seek control over women’s bodies and blood that regenerates Native communities.

The pre-colonial practices highlighted in this chapter consist of a vast network of feminine ritual forms that constellate around the belief that the *whare tangata* carries the capacity to protect, clear and neutralise obstructions as the house of conception, death and renewal (Murphy, 2011). Today these ancient philosophies underpin contemporary ceremonies in which *te rerenga atua*, as a conduit of *whakapapa*, is used for personal purification and rituals of releasing trauma from the *whakapapa* line to ‘clear the way for descendants’. Rituals of this kind and rituals that return the blood to *Papatūānuku* to increase her life-force in a time of ecological collapse are ritual arts that cannot be undertaken by men. If women do not perform the world renewal rites that lie within our own domain, they will remain undone.

The ritual ontologies presented in this chapter are not widespread (and indeed, will not resonate with some Native women), but they continue to be quietly, and not so quietly, practiced by some, and are being renewed and developed by others. As the move to decolonise, heal and emancipate ourselves as Indigenous peoples grows, I suspect that Native rites of passage that include menstruation, birth, (but also menopause and funerary rites which are not discussed in this work) will increasingly be reclaimed. The need for educational materials to promote this movement, however, is urgent. My hope is that this research will facilitate, in a small way, the re-igniting of *te rerenga atua* rituals that heal Native women, their *whānau*, and the mother, *Papatūānuku*.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions

I was raised in the Mormon Church and they used to make me do the morning church karakia ... But I'd get up there and I'd go 'My dear heavenly father and my dear heavenly mother'. They tried to tell me not to ... and I fought all my life just to be able to say, 'And my dear heavenly mother' (H. Kohu, personal communication, October 23, 2015).

Life begets itself, Patrisia Gonzales (2012) maintains, through the cosmogonic milestones that move endlessly through cycles of birth, growth, undoing, renewal, and returning. This work charts the power, the demise and the renewal of mana wahine ritual ontologies that venerate the feminine as a cosmological centre point and axis of Native continuity.

The aims of this research were to investigate if Māori women fulfilled ceremonial leadership roles for the hapū in customary Māori society and, if so, what these roles entailed? What colonial processes impacted on Māori women's ritual ontologies and what some of the consequences look like today? Just as significantly I wanted to determine whether Māori women were recovering and evolving ceremony and, if so, in what social, spatial, cultural, political, spiritual and ecological contexts? Lastly, I wanted to reflect on what the re-activation of Native women's ceremonial lives represented and the emancipatory potential of these knowledges for Native communities.

I included the stories of Indigenous women from Hawai'i and Great Turtle Island in this study to place the recovery and re-activation of Māori women's ceremonial lives within a broader Polynesian and international Indigenous context. This was important to situate the work in alignment with wider Indigenous sovereignty struggles in which the recovery of the divine feminine is identified as critical in order to re-establish balance (Anderson, 2000; Gould & Rock, 2016; Pihama, 2001; Yates-Smith, 1998). As argued in Chapter 2, this is necessary because colonisation, as a patriarchal process, has instituted discord between Native men and women through the establishment of a gendered hierarchy (Mikaere, 2017a; Simmonds, 2014). This hierarchy has infiltrated Native communities with oppressive and

violent outcomes (Pitman, 2012). It has subordinated the divine feminine, including Papatūānuku, the earth, who is re-positioned, not as a creator and mother, in accordance with Native cosmologies, but a resource to be exploited (Hutchings, 2002; Yates-Smith, 1998). I have argued in this study, like other scholars and activists, that the consequences of such thinking has led to ‘broken relationships with the earth’, resulting in the ecological crisis that humanity now faces (Hartmann, 2004; Kimmerer, 2013; Waziyatawin & Yellowbird, 2012).

This research was conducted using mana wahine and other Indigenous anti-colonial theoretical frameworks that are motivated by emancipatory, healing and decolonising agendas (Irwin, 1991; Pihama, 2001; Smith, 2012). Mana wahine was particularly pertinent because its imperatives seek to resurface marginalised sacred feminine ritual epistemologies to facilitate healing and transformation (Mikaere, 2017b; Simmonds, 2014). Key to the project of facilitating transformation is the creation of space for Native women to assert authority and agency, to define ourselves and our stories, knowledges, realities, spiritualities and ceremonies (Evans, 1994a; Pihama, 1994). These stories reflect the struggle to know and recover our own voices and spiritual ways. They point to a path of emancipation based on ancient relationships and philosophies that comprise the foundations of Native world-views based on interrelatedness (Cajete, 2000; Gonzales, 2012).

The stories of Native women were gathered through employing a mana wahine ritual methodology that created sacred, informal and intimate spaces for Native women to share kōrero. This methodology was shaped by Māori philosophical and cultural tenets and was grounded in my own spiritualities and subjectivities (Simpson, 2000; Struthers, 2001). It was also highly responsive, providing unique, unconventional and multiple entry points into the research for my diverse participants (Mikaere, 2017a; Simmonds, 2009). I focused on personal ceremonies and the multiple ways Native women are crafting their own practices of communion with the divine feminine.

Through an excavation of Māori pre-colonial and early colonial contact histories in Chapter 4 I addressed the question of whether Māori women fulfilled ceremonial leadership roles for the hapū in customary Māori society and, if so, what these roles consisted of. In examining Māori oral literatures such as karakia, mōteatea,

whakataukī, tribal, navigational and cosmological histories, and re-interpreting colonial ethnographic material through a mana wahine Kaupapa Māori lens, dynamic histories of Māori women as ritual experts were discovered. These histories are important to unearth because they are understudied and largely unknown today and also because they defy lingering colonial depictions of both Māori femininities and masculinities.

An examination of tribal histories and cosmologies reveal consistent and striking examples of female ritual leadership. I have uncovered the names of kuia from across the motu²⁶¹ such as Hinekou (Ngāti Manawa), Hine-te-ariki (Mataatua), Maraea Tu Te Maota (Ngāi Tuhoe), Mihi-ki-te-kapua (Ngāti Ruapani), Pare Turanga (Waikato/Ngāti Raukawa), Harata Te Kumi (Muaūpoko), Tāngamoko (Taranaki), Hinehau (Ngā Puhi), Papakura (Ngāti Waewae), Moenga (Ngāti Pukeko) and others who were tohunga, who led war parties, who were regarded as prophets and priestesses, and whose spiritual revelations and military prowess guided the iwi. I also uncovered profound ritual histories of women who conducted war-rites, who trained boys in the arts of weaponry, and who conducted the puberty rites of bestowing young warriors with the war belt. The summoning of the ruahine priestess in tūā rites that devoted babies to specific atua and the naming of weapons and warriors after mothers and grandmothers such as Nga Kuri Paaka a Uetuhiao, Te Tokotoru a Kokamutu, and Te Karere o Hinetamatea, reflects a society that venerated the divine feminine and the whare tangata as a primary seat of power in this world.

The examples provided are a beginning point of a large area of inquiry. This material challenges notions that Māori female political, ritual and spiritual leadership is an anomaly or fluke, revealing rather an entire cultural orientation that acknowledges the formidable power of women (Mikaere, 2017a; Smith, L. T., 1992). In these histories Māori men embraced the understanding that to exalt the whare tangata is to also exalt their own mana and tapu as those born from the house of women. These histories convey a deep bond between tribal sisters and brothers

²⁶¹ Country.

who fought and died alongside one another to protect their way of life during both pre-colonial inter-tribal battles and the colonial sovereignty wars. It is vital to highlight these historic examples in order to urgently address the domestic violence that is prevalent in many Native communities today (Chaw-win-is, 2012; Pihama & Cameron, 2012).

The material in Chapter 4 provides a whakapapa foundation in which contemporary Māori women's ceremonies can be understood as part of a historic cosmological continuum. Despite the obscuring of women's ritual histories, which have created spiritual disorientation and a lack of knowledge today, a sweep of initiatives are underway that seek to restore the divine feminine as a critical site of Native sovereignty.

Native women have not passively accepted the on-going assault of colonial patriarchy, which is outlined in Chapter 5. I highlight examples of wāhine who resist, rebel and push against that assault and examine some of the multiple ways in which Indigenous women are re-activating ancient ritual practices. Ngahina Hohaia's art '*Fighting Terrorism since 1860*' recalls the ritual and military leadership of Māori women, relocating current mana wahine activism within powerful anti-colonial histories. Chanz Mikaere's re-inscription of the vulva as a seat of communion with feminine deities that recalls ancient constructs of the power of the tara to neutralise negative forces is conveyed in the work '*Me inoi tatou*'. Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's *Blood Tides* used the theatre as a ritual space to purge intergenerational trauma and re-activate the memories and knowledges of women's rerenga atua ceremonies. *Hine* theatre celebrated the revival of ancient Māori menstruation ceremonies as a conduit connecting us to the atua wāhine. Nina Nawalowalo's *Marama* theatre summoned Polynesian themes of women who pursue justice and the laws of balance in times of transgression. Nawalowalo's work challenged Native women to take direct action to defend sacred relationships to the earth in a time of relentless environmental plunder (Waziyatawin, 2012; Wildcat, 2009).

The call to defend sacred relationships located in Native places is evident in Chapter 6 in the stories of the wāhine of Mauna Kea and Standing Rock. Mauna Kea and Standing Rock represent two contemporary political movements in which Native

peoples are using prayer, ceremony and spiritual revelation as the foundations of activism against on-going environmental degradation. Native women have led from the frontlines, acting on behalf of the earth as her human counterpart (Cook, 2008; Kahukiwa & Grace, 1984). These examples in which Native women are re-igniting a living spirituality responds directly to current socio-political, spiritual and ecological realities. In this chapter I canvassed some of the major themes that arose out of participants' stories of re-activating sacred relationships including the right to connect directly to deities, looking within for the atua and revelation, and re-learning to trust and move beyond fear and self doubt. In the context of our colonial histories where many Native women have been taught that the esoteric arts belong exclusively to men and a select few, I maintain that looking within ourselves and trusting ourselves to connect directly to the atua is deeply political. These discussions reveal vibrant living spiritualities that reinvigorate Native resistance and activism (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008; St Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). They are healing and decolonising stories that represent Native continuation and are full of transformative possibilities (Bishop, 2005; Smith, L. T., 2005). They symbolise a growing confidence amongst Indigenous peoples to both reclaim and create emancipatory tikanga practices as responsible ancestors for the future generations.

In most of my participant kōrero it is clear that it is not only about reclaiming pre-colonial ceremonies, it is also about having the confidence to create new tikanga and ceremonies to decolonise, heal and empower ourselves and our whānau today (Gonzales, 2012; Gunn Allen, 1991). I have argued that we should neither fear seeking out and renewing ancient rituals, nor evolving new ones to suit contemporary decolonising and ecological contexts. This is especially relevant for Native women who have inherited corrupted tikanga that attempts to subjugate, demonise and demoralise women as a political imperative of colonial conquest (Anderson, 2000; Pihama, 2001; Smith, A., 2005; Tamaira, 2010). The fatigue that some Native women experience as a consequence makes the restoration of ceremony an important political initiative. Re-igniting Indigenous women's ceremony is important to not only restore the well-being of women but to uplift the entire whānau born of the whare tangata.

In Chapter 7 the specific site of menstruation ceremonies is examined. In particular I discuss the reclamation of menarche rites, rituals of rest and retreat and rituals that return menstrual blood to Papatūānuku each month as part of a cosmological continuum of rites that return ‘womb blood’ back to the earth. These rites are being reclaimed as sites of tino rangatiratanga. The reclamation of Indigenous customary names that venerate menstrual blood as a medium between worlds, as a medium that connects women directly to a pantheon of atua, as a medium of ancestors and descendants, and as a medium of purification and renewal are also being recovered in Aotearoa, Hawai’i and Great Turtle Island. New chants and prayers are being composed to actively honour the blood that assures the continuation of tribal nations and these prayers and chants are being used as vehicles to ritualise the monthly flow of blood once more.

These are devotion rites that are being reclaimed to deepen connections to Papatūānuku/Papahānaumoku, Mahuika, and also Hinataiwaiwā, whose monthly cycle reflects the tides of the regenerative and renewing womb. Understandings of te rerenga atua as a ceremony of purification and renewal are being extended by some who recognise that the blood, as a medium of whakapapa, carries the potential to ritually clear intergenerational trauma from the genealogical line. These women understand that rituals performed today are intimately linked with the past and future. As such they can facilitate personal healing and assist to liberate ancestors stranded by the brutality of colonisation. They can also work to clear obstacles for future descendants. Others recognise that the blood symbolises the activating and quickening fire of the womb and as such can be returned to the earth in healing and devotional rites to ‘feed’ the life force of Papatūānuku in a time of ecological collapse.

Current rituals that conceptualise the blood as a powerful agent of purification that carries the capacity to clear ‘obstacles’ at different spatial scales opens up a constellation of ancient ritual constructs related to the whare tangata that have been fragmented through colonial histories. I argue in this study that the power of the whare tangata to shield, purify, neutralise and protect against malignant energies stems from the idea that the womb is the house that carries the cosmogonic

milestones of creation, destruction and regeneration where things can be created and dissolved (Kanahele, 2011; Mikaere, 2017b).

The rerenga atua ceremonies canvassed in this study are significant because of the way that colonisation has demonised the blood and reframed it as a symbol of female pollution and inferiority. I have discussed the vilification of menstrual blood as a symbol of women's regenerative ritual power and the way in which colonial re-codings of the blood as 'spiritually defiling' has attempted to erase the mana of Native women. I have also discussed the politics of power and control over the Native feminine body as a site of colonial conquest (O' Brien, 2006; Smith, A., 2005). Market ideologies that promote an ambiguity toward women's menstrual bodies fortify and perpetuate a culture of concealment that prompts women to feel ashamed of the blood (Blackford, 1999). Yet some Native women are reclaiming the site of menstruation and their own reproductive bodies as a ceremonial and cosmological site of communion with ancient pre-colonial deities. Whilst some continue old ritual traditions, others are using their intuition, dreams, cultural knowledge, and elder instructions to recreate ritual traditions that reflect today's socio-political, ecological, spatial and spiritual contexts. In doing so they are activating tino rangatiratanga guided by values and cultural tenets of the past.

Future research

This study represents a preliminary examination of the continuation and re-igniting of Native women's ceremonies and spiritualities that seek to recover relationships with pre-colonial feminine deities. Yet, no research can cover all of the ground to be investigated. The time and space of a doctorate study constricts the parameters of what is achievable. During the research process a number of interesting areas emerged for future work. One such area is customary Māori fire ceremonies. In earlier research investigating Māori menstruation ceremonies and through this study I have become increasingly aware of the atua Mahuika and the significance of fire ceremonies in classical Māori society. The knowledge and practice of ritual fires has become almost obsolete today. Even more obscure, however, are Māori women's fire ceremonies and the close associations between Mahuika, Hinenuitepō, Hinateiwaiwā, fire and the whare tangata, fire and te rerenga atua and fire in birth, death and divination rites. I centralise Mahuika in this study to honor

the significance of her role in women's ritual histories yet deeper investigations are necessary. Examining purification, healing, initiation, renewal, release, protection, conception, birth, puberty, death and divination fire rites from a mana wahine perspective would exponentially deepen understandings of Māori women's ritual ontologies. Contextualising this study within the sacred fire traditions of Polynesia would be another strand that strengthens our whakapapa relationships and shared ritual histories and philosophies across Oceania.

Another research area is menopause. Menopause is a huge area of investigation that is currently largely unexplored in mana wahine and Kaupapa Māori scholarship. Some questions might include what, if any, ritual practices marked the cessation of the flow of menstrual blood in pre-colonial Māori society? How were these rituals conceptualised? In what spaces were they performed? Were they personal, individual ceremonies or communal rites? Also, what knowledges, ritual practices and roles were assumed by menopausal women and why? Moreover, are menopausal rites being reclaimed and recreated within broader movements of cultural resurgence? What transformative potentialities do these ritual ontologies hold? This study could include the histories and roles of the ruahine in Aotearoa and across Polynesia.

Another research project that would considerably deepen this study is iwi led investigations into the ritual and political histories of women and their significance within the iwi. Biographies on women such as Mihi-ki-te-Kapua, Maraea Tu Te Maota, Hinekou, Hinehou, Pare Turanga and others and their roles in negotiating contestations of political power through ritual revelations and military prowess would be an important iwi and mana wahine research endeavor. Such studies are an important step to educate and facilitate positive transformation concerning gender relations in Māori communities based on the authority of historic cultural traditions.

Yet another site of investigation that emerged during the research is the significance of mana tamariki and the roles that Māori children played during the sovereignty wars in Aotearoa. Whilst important kaupapa Māori scholarship has been undertaken on mana tamariki to counter the intergenerational violence that impacts some whānau, historic research on tamariki who fought and died for the land and their

way of life alongside their whānau and hapu is understudied (Pihama, 2013; Simon & Smith, 2001; Taonui, 2010). It is an important stream of investigation that reminds whānau today that the mana of tamariki was equal to that of other whānau members and that they demand the same respect and reverence for sacrificing their own lives that we might live.

The development of a ritual almanac for Māori women that includes maramataka²⁶² kōrero, seasonal ritual work, elemental charts, ritual orientations associated with the elements and directions grounded in cosmological stories and ritual histories conveyed through Māori oral literatures, is a project that has been sparked by this doctoral research and that I am interested in pursuing further. This could also include the development of an oracle based on the teachings, instructions, knowledges, functions, aspects, qualities and characteristics of the atua wāhine and ways in which Māori women can recover a dynamic living relationship with them. This research would have practical and educational outcomes.

Lastly, the relationship between ceremony and activism today in the context of ecological collapse was a theme in this study, yet it requires deeper examination. The different kinds of world renewal ceremonies taking place in Native communities (particularly in relation to water), the different Native prophecy traditions that focus on this epoch of time, the complexities and negotiations between spirituality, ceremony and politics, and, on a different note, the nuances around Native men working to re-activate the feminine today, are all interesting lines of investigation. The ritual practices of takatāpui, māhu and two-spirit communities in the past and today is another important area for study. Of particular interest are world renewal rites and activist leadership by takatāpui, māhu and two-spirit communities, and the complexities of their relationships to mana wahine and mana tāne ritual ontologies.

²⁶² Traditional Māori lunar calendar.

One cycle ends and another begins...

This study contributes to the international movement to restore whare tangata ritual ontologies and recover the divine feminine implicit in these ceremonial practices. Its original contribution is in demonstrating that the atua wāhine are present, dynamic, alive, and moving in and through our lives as Native women. They can, and are, being called upon through multiple channels to heal, decolonise and fortify Native peoples' resistance today.

This work applies a mana wahine, Kaupapa Māori lens to bring new insights into historic material that reveals striking examples of bold Māori female ritual, military and prophetic leadership. It also traces these histories into contemporary ritual practices and demonstrates that the lives that Māori women lead today are intimately connected to the practices of our tīpuna. Menstruation rituals that purge and clear intergenerational trauma from the whakapapa line and the 'gifting' of the regenerative blood to the earth to sustain her life force speak to the evolution of ceremonial practices that respond to contemporary challenges, based on ancient ritual understandings. These stories demonstrate the endurance and vivacity of Native rituals and spiritualities as living knowledges that continually renew themselves in every generation.

The ceremonies in this study represent the fires of Native continuation. Fire purifies and burns away that which no longer serves our spirits. Fire clears the way for rebirth and renewal. Fire connects the generations. Fire can be seen from the spirit world. Fire opens the path and conveys our chants and prayers to those passed and those still to come.

In these pages *I tahuna te ahi* - a sacred fire is lit within the ritual houses of Native women.

Nau mai haere e taku taonga e whita rā koe ki runga ki ngā motu, ki ngā moana o te ao e.

Glossary of Māori & Hawai’ian Terms

Ahi kā	occupation rights, Māori land tenure system
Ahuru mōwai	womb, sheltered haven
Aituā	accident, ill omen
Aotearoa	Indigenous name for New Zealand
Ariki	chief, leader, priest
Ariki Tapairu	chieftaness, High-born woman
Aroha	love, compassion
Atua	deity, supernatural being, menstrual blood
Atua kahu	entity conveyed through menstrual blood
Atuatanga	divinity
Atua wahine	female deity
Atua wāhine	female deities
Awa atua	menstrual blood
Haerenga	travels
Haka	dance
Hākari	feast, gift, entertainment
Hapū	be pregnant, sub-tribe
Harakeke	Native flax used for weaving
Hauhauaitu	listless, weak, without heart, faint
Hau kāinga	traditional tribal homelands
Hika	vulva
Hikoi	walk, march, journey
Hina	the divine feminine
Hine	girl, daughter
Hineahuone	the first woman
Hinenuitepō	goddess of transformation
Hine/Hinateiwaiwā	goddess of the moon and women’s ritual arts
Hinetītama	goddess of the dawn
Hongi	Māori greeting, smell
Hononga	union, connection
Hui	gathering
Ia	he/she, him/her
Iho	umbilical cord
Ikura	menstrual blood
Iro	maggot
Iwi	collection of related families, bone
Kai	food, to eat
Kaihautu	leader
Kāinga	home, village, settlement
Kaitahi	to share food

Kaitiaki	guardian (human and non-human), caretaker
Karakia	chant, incantation
Karakia whakaoho	incantations used to vivify the life force
Karanga	women's ceremonial call
Kaua	do not, had better not
Kaupapa	topic, subject, theme
Kauwae moko	women's ritual skin carving that adorns the chin
Kehoheho	vulva
Kete	basket, kit
Kitea	to see
Koha	gift
Kohe	vulva
Kōhine	girl
Kōkōwai	red ochre
Kōrero	talk, to speak, narrative
Koroua	elder (male and female)
Koru	spiral pattern
Kuia	elderly woman
Kurawaka	vulva of Papatūānuku
Mahi	work, undertaking
Mahuika	female deity of fire
Mamae	pain
Mana	prestige, authority, control
Mana motuhake	separate identity, autonomous
Mana Wahine	power and authority of Māori women
Manuhiri	visitors
Māori	Indigenous People of Aotearoa, fresh water, normal
Marae	open area in front of meeting house
Māui	Polynesian cultural hero and demi-god
Matakite	seer, prophecy, intuition
Maunga	mountain
Mauri	life force
Mea	thing
Mihi	acknowledge, greet
Moko kauae	traditional woman's chin tattoo
Mokopuna	grandchild(ren), young generation
Mōteatea	laments, selection of tribal songs
Motu	island
Ngēri	fierce chant
Noa	be free from restriction
Oriori	lullaby
Pākehā	non-Māori, European settlers
Pao	song, strike, scattered
Papatūānuku	Earth mother

Paru	dirty
Patu	strike, hit, weapon
Pepeha	proverb, motto
Pito	navel
Pūkana	stare wildly, dilate the eyes
Puna roimata	wellspring of tears
Pūrākau	traditional, contemporary and cosmological stories
Pūrē	(also pūre) sacred, ritual to remove tapu, purge
Rangatahi	youth
Rangatiratanga	authority, self-determination, sovereignty
Rangatira wahine	female chief
Ranginui	sky father
Raupatu	confiscation
Rerenga atua	menstrual blood
Ruahine	female priest
Taiaha	weapon
Takatāpui	a person who identifies as gender fluid
Taki	ritual challenge
Tā Moko	Traditional Māori skin carving
Tana/Tona	his or hers
Tāne	male, man
Tānemahuta	atua of forests, trees and birds
Tangata	person
Tangatatanga	humanity
Tangata Whenua	people of the land
Tangi (hanga)	wail, mourn, funeral
Taonga	treasure, possession
Tapu	be sacred, set apart, under atua protection, restricted
Tara	vulva
Tatau pounamu	arranged marriage for political purposes
Te Ao Māori	the Māori world
Te Ao Mārama	The world of life and light, physical world
Te ira atua	divine life principle
Te ira tangata	human life
Teke	vulva
Te Kore	the void, the primordial womb
Te Pō	the darkness, the night, place of departed spirits
Te reo Māori	the Māori language
Tero	vulva
Te Taiao	the environment
Tekoteko	carved figure on the gable of a meeting house
Tikanga	procedure, custom, practice, habit
Tipuna/Tupuna	ancestor
Tipuna/Tūpuna	ancestors

Tipuna kuia	ancestress (singular)
Tīpuna kuia	ancestress (plural)
Titiro	look
Tino Rangatiratanga	political, social, cultural and economic autonomy
Toa	be brave, strong
Tohunga	specialist, chosen expert, priest
Toto	blood
Tūā	ritual chants for birth, naming of child
Tuakana	elder sister of a female, or elder brother of a male
Tungāne	brother of a female
Tipuna whare	ancestral house
Tūrangawaewae	place to stand, home
Tūturu	real, trustworthy, traditional
Uha	female genitals
Ūkaipō	Papatūānuku, night feeding breast
Uri	descendants
Utu	price, reciprocity, satisfaction, reward, response
Wā	time, season
Wahine	woman
Wāhine	women
Wāhi tapu	sacred sites
Waiata	song, sing, chant
Waikura	menstrual blood
Wairua	spirit, soul
Wairuatanga	spirituality
Waiū	milk
Wā kāinga	home
Wānanga	learning, series of discussions, occult science
Whāea	mother, aunt, female relative
Whaikōrero	to make a formal speech
Whakanoa	to remove tapu
Whakapapa	genealogy, descent lines, to layer
Whakapōhane	ritual exposure of female genitalia
Whakarongo	listen
Whakatapu	to place something/someone under restriction
Whakataukī	proverb, saying
Whakawhānaungatanga	to make relationships
Whānau	family, to be born, conceive
Whanaungatanga	kinship, relationship
Whānau pani	bereaved family
Wharenuī	ancestral meeting house
Whare Tangata	womb, house of humanity
Whare tipuna	ancestral house
Whare Wānanga	schools, environments of learning
Whāriki	woven mat
Whāwhā	vulva

Whenua	land, placenta
‘Ahu	altar
Ali’i	chief/chieftaness
Aloha āina	love for the land
‘Āina	land
Akua	deity
Akua wahine	female deity
Ewe	placenta
Hale o Papa	ceremonial house of women
Hale Pe’a	menstrual house
Haumea	the divine mother earth
Haumia	defiled
Hi’iaka	the atua of regeneration and patron of the hula
Hiua	flowing rain, menstruation
Hō‘ailona	elemental signs
Ho’o kupu	offering for deities
Kahuna	priest, expert
Kumu	source, teacher
Kapō’ulakina’u	shapeshifter atua wahine
Kokopuna	spring blood (first menstruation)
Kupuna	ancestor
Kūpuna	ancestors (plural)
Lāhui	community
Lā’ī	ti leaf
Ma’i	sickness
Mauli	lifeforce
Mauna	mountain
Na’au	intuitive intelligence located in the gut, gut feeling
Oli	chant
Papahānaumoku	mother earth
Pele	atua wahine of volcanoes
Piko	navel
Pule	prayer
Wahi kapu	sacred place
Waimakalehua	the cascading red petals of the lehua blossom

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Appendix 1: Ethical Approval

Ngahuia Murphy
Professor Robyn Longhurst
Associate Professor Leonie Pihama
Dr Naomi Simmonds
Geography

23 July 2015

Dear Ngahuia

Re: *FS2015-21 Lady of the woven light, lady of the tide: Hinateiwaiwa and the ritual knowledges of the whare tangata* (Working Title)

Thank you for sending me your amendments. You have addressed all the points in my letter exceptionally well and I am happy to give you formal ethical approval.

I wish you well with your research.

Kind regards,

Ruth Walker

Chair

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee.

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Appendix 2: Information sheet for ritualists, artists, healers, matakite, sacred activists

*Lady of the woven light, lady of the tide: Hinatēiwaiwa and the ritual
knowledges of the whare tangata (working title)*

*Ko Tawhiuau te Maunga
Ko Rangitaiki te Awa
Ko Rangipo te Wehenga o te Tuna
Ko Ngāti Hui te Hapū
Ko Ngāti Manawa te Iwi
Ko Tangiharuru te Tangata*

*Ko Panekire te Maunga
Ko Waikare te Moana
Ko Waikaretaheke te Awa
Ko Ngāti Hinānga, Ko Ngāti Hinekura, Ko Ngāti Hika ngā Hapū
Ko Ngāti Ruapani te Iwi
Ko Haumapuhia te Tuoro
o ngā Hapū ki Waikaremoana*

Ko Ngahuia Murphy taku ingoa

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Thank you for taking the time to consider being a part of this study. I am a doctoral candidate in the Geography Programme at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato. My supervisory panel consists of Professor Robyn Longhurst, Associate Professor and Director of Te Kotahi Research Institute, Leonie Pihama, and Dr Naomi Simmonds.

In this research I am gathering stories about the revival of Māori women's ritual and ceremonial practices. I am particularly interested in talking with people about their knowledges and experiences of atua wahine, specifically Hinatēiwaiwa, and Hinenuitēpō. The overall goal of this research is to provide a space for Māori women to share their personal stories of encounter with our atua wahine, to document some of the personalities, characteristics and traits of these atua in order

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to reforge deeper connections with them, and to document the revival and evolution of ancient rituals in the context of today.

Your involvement

I would like to arrange to kōrero with you to talk about Hinateiwaiwā, Hinenuitepō, and other atua wahine who you may have encountered. I am interested in your thoughts, reflections, knowledges, dreams, insights, experiences and understandings of these atua wahine. I am interested in learning about their personalities, characteristics and traits and the kinds of rituals that they are often involved in. I also want to learn some of their pūrākau and karakia and how Māori women can use them today to empower our whānau and ourselves. You are welcome to bring along whānau members or others for support to our korero together. Our kōrero would be at a time and place that suits you. The kōrero would last between 1-2 hours, however, that depends on your needs and wishes.

Confidentiality

I will treat all our kōrero as private and confidential and will not share it with anyone outside of the research except my supervisors. Unless your permission is obtained, your name or any other identifying characteristics will not be disclosed in the final report or any other report produced in the course of this research. The recordings and written transcripts from our kōrero will be stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet at home, or at University, accessible only to me. Any electronic information will be accessible only by password and this will be changed regularly to ensure security of the documentation. I will securely keep the transcripts of all kōrero for a period of five years at which time the data will be returned to participants or destroyed. If you are interested in the return of your audio recording and transcript at the completion of this research in order for it to be archived in a repository for your whānau/hapū/iwi, you can indicate this on the consent form attached to this information sheet. All identifying references to third parties (whose consent I may or may not have) will be removed in my thesis to protect and ensure their anonymity.

Your rights

You have the right to:

- Decline to participate;
- Decline to answer any particular question;

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- Withdraw from the study up until one month after the initial interview;
- Decline to be audio-recorded;
- Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time;
- Ask for the erasure of any materials you do not wish to be used in any reports;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.
- Participate in our kōrero in te reo Māori or bilingually

The results

The results of this research will be presented as part of my PhD thesis. In accordance with University guidelines, four copies must be produced, three hard copies and one online accessible copy. One hard copy of the thesis and an online copy will be available through the University of Waikato Library. The research findings will also be used in conference presentations, seminars, wānanga and journal publications. You own the copyright of all of your kōrero and contributions in this research for all time. By signing the consent form you allow me the right to use your kōrero in my thesis. The copyright of the thesis and any other publications related to this research will be held solely by me.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Waikato. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240.

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Consent Form for ritualists, artists, healers, matakite, sacred activists.

“I agree to take part in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this information sheet and signed consent form. I understand my rights as a participant in this research and that my identity will remain confidential and anonymity guaranteed unless I state otherwise. I understand that I may bring along whānau members or others to support my kōrero with Ngahuia. I also understand that I can communicate bilingually and in te reo Māori. I have had adequate opportunity to discuss the above information and I am satisfied with the answers that have been provided.”

I would like to take part in:

A kōrero with Ngahuia Yes / No

I consent to our conversation being audio-recorded. Yes / No

I consent to the use of images or photographs of my art in Ngahuia’s PhD thesis and any presentations that she may deliver as long as my work is acknowledged as being mine. Yes / No

I would like the transcript of our kōrero returned to me so that I have an opportunity to modify, comment, add or delete any of my kōrero Yes / No

If yes, would you like the transcript posted to you or emailed? (please circle)

I agree to return the transcript within 14 days of being received with any modifications Yes / No

(Note: If the transcript is not returned to me within 14 days I will assume that there are no changes to be made and will proceed with writing up my thesis and reports)

I would like the audio-recording and transcript of my kōrero returned to me at the completion of this research so that it can be archived for the whānau/hapū/iwi Yes / No

I would like the audio -recordings and transcript of our kōrero returned to me after 5 years (and if you cannot contact me at that time, you will ensure that these are destroyed) Yes / No

I would be willing to pass Ngahuia’s details on to women who might be interested in participating Yes / No

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_____ (to be signed and dated by participant)

“I agree to abide by the conditions set out in the information sheet/consent form and I will ensure that no harm will be done to any participant as a result of this research”

_____ (to be signed and dated by Ngahuia Murphy)

Your Details (for my records)

Name:

Phone number:

Email:

Postal Address:

Iwi and Hapū:

If you have any questions at any point during this research please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and for being an important part of this research.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Ngahuia Murphy

poitahu@gmail.com

Cell: 027721861

Supervisor: Associate Professor Leonie Pihama

lpihama@waikato.ac.nz



Questions for kōrero with ritualists, artists, healers, matakite, sacred activists

These questions and lines of enquiry are a guide only for our kōrero. I maintain a flexible and open approach, respecting your wisdom and knowledge in this area. This means that you can determine how the discussion flows and in what directions. My questions will be shaped in response to the kōrero and pūrākau that you share. As a participant in this research you have the right to alter, remove, and add questions, comments, or lines of enquiry that you think are important or that you wish to speak to.

Theme 1: Your story

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Where are you from and where did you grow up?

Looking back, are there significant moments in your life as a Māori woman that have fundamentally shaped your spiritual journey?

How do you express and explore your spirituality through your art?

*Who are the atua wāhine you most like to connect with through your art practice?
Can you show me some of your art that speaks to this exploration?*

Theme 2: Hinataiwaiwa; Your experiences

Have you ever encountered or experienced Hinataiwaiwa in your art or healing practice in any way? What was your feeling/impression of her? Did she have a message or teaching for you?

How was her message/teaching communicated to you? (through intuition, inner knowing, dreams, symbols, or any other ways?)

What can you tell me about Hinataiwaiwā? What does she represent to you? What is her personality like? Is she still relevant today?

Have you ever represented her, or the whare tangata in your art practice? What messages did you want to convey? Why are these messages important to you? How did it feel to create this work? What was the journey like to develop this work?

Do you know of any of Hinataiwaiwa's rituals around pregnancy, childbirth and menopause?



Have you or your whānau participated in any of these kinds of rituals? If so can you tell me about the experience and why it was significant to you and your whānau?

Have you or anyone in your whānau created your own ritual and ceremonial practices related to menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, the post-natal period and menopause? What did these rituals look like? How/why were they important for your whānau?

Are there rituals that you know of related to the different phases of the moon? How can these rituals be re-constructed/reclaimed by Māori women?

How can Māori women re-create ceremony to heal and empower ourselves? Do you think this is important?

Theme 3: Hinenuitepō; Her rituals and pūrākau

Do you have a memory of an event or an experience where you encountered Hinenuitepō? What can you tell me about her? What does she represent to you?

What are some of her rituals? For what purposes can she be summoned in ritual and ceremony?

Has she ever come through in any of the healing work that you have been involved in?

Have you or anyone in your whānau created your own ritual and ceremonial practices in which Hinenuitepō was present or other atua wahine made themselves present? What did these rituals look like? How/why were they important for your whānau?

Are there other atua wahine that you have observed, in the past or today, that are making a come back? What is significant about them? What do they teach us in the context of today?

What would you tell Māori women who are looking to reconnect with atua wahine? How could they go about doing that?

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Appendix 3: Information sheet for Gisborne Mana Wahine Art Collective

Lady of the woven light, lady of the tide: Hinateiwaiwa and the ritual knowledges of the whare tangata (working title)

*Ko Tawhiuau te Maunga
Ko Rangitaiki te Awa
Ko Rangipo te Wehenga o te Tuna
Ko Ngāti Hui te Hapū
Ko Ngāti Manawa te Iwi
Ko Tangiharuru te Tangata*

*Ko Panekire te Maunga
Ko Waikare te Moana
Ko Waikaretaheke te Awa
Ko Ngāti Hinekura te hapū
Ko Ngāti Ruapani te Iwi
Ko Haumapuhia te Tuoro
o ngā Hapū ki Waikaremoana*

Ko Ngahuia Murphy taku ingoa

Tēnā koe,

Thank you for taking the time to consider being a part of this study. I am a doctoral candidate in the Geography Programme at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato. My supervisory panel consists of Professor Robyn Longhurst, Associate Professor Leonie Pihama, and Dr Naomi Simmonds.

In this research I am gathering stories about the revival/continuation of Māori women's ritual and ceremonial practices related to the whare tangata. I am also interested in talking with people about their knowledge, experiences and reflections of atua wahine, specifically Hinateiwaiwa, Hinetitama/Hinenuitepō and Mahuika. The overall goal of this research is to provide a space for Māori women to share their personal stories of encounter with our atua wahine, to document some of the personalities, characteristics and traits of these atua in order to re-forge deeper connections with them, and to document the revival/ evolution / re-creation of ancient rituals in the context of today. It is also a space for Māori women to share stories about their own spiritual journeys that they may express and explore through their art practice.

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Your involvement

I would like to follow your progress in developing art work for the mana wahine exhibition in Gisborne in September 2016. With your permission I will follow your progress by asking you to jot down your thoughts, reflections, processes, dreams, insights, experiences and understandings of your developing art piece in the journal that I provide for you. I am interested particularly, in any thoughts, reflections and ideas you might have about te whare tangata and mana wahine. I am interested in learning your personal story about your own spiritual journey as a Maori woman, especially in relation to any of our atua wahine. I am also interested in hearing about any little ceremonies or rituals you might perform for yourself during the course of developing your art for the exhibition. You are welcome to use the journal as a personal diary of reflection to chart your journey. After the exhibition I will ask you to loan the journal to me to use to inform my research. If there is anything recorded in the journal that you decide you don't want me to use feel free to cross or blank it out. I will return the journal to you at the completion of the research in 2019. I would also like to use a photograph of the mana wahine art work that you develop for the exhibition in this research.

Confidentiality

I will treat all our kōrero as private and confidential and will not share it with anyone outside of the research except my supervisors. Unless your permission is obtained, your name or any other identifying characteristics will not be disclosed in the final report or any other report produced in the course of this research. The recordings and written transcripts from our kōrero will be stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet at home, or at University, accessible only to me. Any electronic information will be accessible only by password and this will be changed regularly to ensure security of the documentation. I will securely keep the transcripts of all kōrero and your journals until the completion of the research in 2019. At this time I will return the journal to you or destroy it. All identifying references to third parties (whose consent I may or may not have) will be removed in my thesis to protect and ensure their anonymity.

Your rights

You have the right to:

- Decline to participate;
- Decline to answer any particular question;

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- Withdraw from the study up until one month after the mana wahine exhibition;
- Decline to be audio-recorded;
- Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time;
- Ask for the erasure of any kōrero/images you do not wish to be used in any reports;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.
- Participate bilingually or in te reo

The Results

The results of this research will be presented as part of my PhD thesis. In accordance with University guidelines, four copies must be produced, three hard copies and one online accessible copy. One hard copy of the thesis and an online copy will be available through the University of Waikato Library. The research findings will also be used in conference presentations, seminars, wānanga and journal publications. You own the copyright of all of your kōrero and contributions in this research for all time. By signing the consent form you allow me the right to use your kōrero in my thesis. The copyright of the thesis and any other publications related to this research will be held solely by me.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Waikato. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240.

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Consent Form Mana Wahine Gisborne Collective

“I agree to take part in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this information sheet and signed consent form. I understand my rights as a participant in this research and that my identity will remain confidential and anonymity guaranteed unless I state otherwise. I understand that I may bring along whānau members or others to support my kōrero with Ngahuia. I also understand that I can communicate bilingually and/or in te reo Māori. I have had adequate opportunity to discuss the above information and I am satisfied with the answers that have been provided.”

I would like to take part in:

The research by documenting my story in a journal Yes / No

I consent to our conversation being audio-recorded. Yes / No

I consent to the use of images or photographs of my art in Ngahuia’s PhD thesis and any presentations that she may deliver as long as my work is acknowledged as being mine. Yes / No

_____ **(to be signed and dated by participant)**

“I agree to abide by the conditions set out in the information sheet/consent form and I will ensure that no harm will be done to any participant as a result of this research”.

_____ **(to be signed and dated by Ngahuia Murphy)**

Your Details (for my records)

Name:

Phone number:

Email:

Postal Address:

Iwi and Hapū:

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If you have any questions at any point during this research please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and for being an important part of this research.

Ngā mihi maioha,
Ngahuia Murphy
poitahu@gmail.com
Cell: 0277218614

Supervisor: Associate Professor Leonie Pihama
lpihama@waikato.ac.nz

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Appendix 4: Information sheet for midwives /birthworkers

Lady of the woven light, lady of the tide: Hinateiwaiwa and the ritual knowledges of the whare tangata (working title)

*Ko Tawhiuau te Maunga
Ko Rangitaiki te Awa
Ko Rangipo te Wehenga o te Tuna
Ko Ngāti Hui te Hapū
Ko Ngāti Manawa te Iwi
Ko Tangiharuru te Tangata*

*Ko Panekire te Maunga
Ko Waikare te Moana
Ko Waikaretaheke te Awa
Ko Ngāti Hinekura te hapū
Ko Ngāti Ruapani te Iwi
Ko Haumapuhia te Tuoro
o ngā Hapū ki Waikaremoana*

Ko Ngahuia Murphy taku ingoa

E ngā mareikura, tēnā koutou katoa.

Thank you for considering participating in this research. I am a doctoral candidate in the Geography Programme at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, embarking on research about the revival/continuation of Māori women's ritual and ceremonial knowledge's related to te whare tangata. My supervisory panel consists of Professor Robyn Longhurst, Associate Professor Leonie Pihama, and Dr Naomi Simmonds.

I invite you to attend this kōrero to share in a supportive and CONFIDENTIAL space, your stories, experiences, feelings and reflections as Māori midwives working with Māori women and their whānau. I am interested in your stories of how Māori women may be reclaiming tikanga/ceremonies related to pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period and what those ceremonies and tikanga look like. I am interested in hearing your experiences and stories about the struggles and issues that Māori women face related to te whare tangata. I am also interested in hearing some of your concerns working in this field. I anticipate that our kōrero will run for 2 hours.



Confidentiality

I will treat all our kōrero as **private and confidential** and will not share them with anyone outside of the research except my supervisors. At the beginning of our kōrero we will discuss confidentiality as a group and I will strongly encourage each of us to maintain this. The importance of confidentiality is also in the consent form that each participant must sign. There is an option for you to be anonymous in this research to protect you, your clients and their whānau. In this case your name or any other identifying characteristics will not be disclosed in the thesis or any other report produced in the course of this research. If you choose to be named I recommend that you maintain discretion and take care to minimize the identifiability of clients and staff in your kōrero.

The recordings and written transcripts from our kōrero will be stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet at home, or at University, accessible only to me. Any electronic information will be accessible only by password and this will be changed regularly to ensure security of the documentation. I will securely keep the transcripts and audio-recordings of all kōrero for a period of five years at which time the data will be destroyed. All identifying references to third parties (whose consent I may or may not have) will be removed in my thesis to protect and ensure their anonymity.

Your rights

You have the right to:

- Decline to participate;
- Decline to answer any particular question or withdraw from activities during our kōrero;
- Withdraw from the study up until one month after our kōrero;
- Ask for the erasure of any materials you do not wish to be used in any reports up until one month after our kōrero;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.
- Contribute bilingually or in te reo Māori

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The results

The results of this research will be presented as part of my PhD thesis. In accordance with University guidelines, four copies must be produced, three hard copies and one online accessible copy. One hard copy and an online copy of the thesis will be available through the University of Waikato Library. The research findings will also be used in conference presentations, seminars, wānanga and journal publications. You own the copyright of all of your kōrero and contributions in this research for all time. By signing the consent form you allow me the right to use your kōrero in my thesis. The copyright of the thesis and any other publications related to this research will be held solely by me.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Waikato. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240.

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Consent Form Midwives/Birthworkers

“I agree to take part in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this information sheet and signed consent form. I understand my rights as a participant in this research and that I have a right to anonymity. I agree to not disclose to anyone outside of this kōrero what was discussed and who was present. I understand that I can communicate bilingually and in te reo Māori. I have had adequate opportunity to discuss the above information and I am satisfied with the answers that have been provided.”

I would like to take part in:

A kōrero with Ngahuia and other Midwives Yes / No

I would like to remain anonymous in this research Yes / No

I understand our kōrero will be audio-recorded. I consent to Ngāhuia using my recorded contributions Yes / No

I would be willing to pass Ngahuia’s details on to people who might be interested in participating Yes / No

_____ **(to be signed and dated by participant)**

“I agree to abide by the conditions set out in the information sheet/consent form and I will ensure that no harm will be done to any participant as a result of this research”

_____ **(to be signed and dated by Ngahuia Murphy)**

Your Details (for my records)

Name:

Phone number:

Email:

Postal Address:

Iwi and hapū:

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If you have any questions at any point during this research please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and for being an important part of this research.

Ngā mihi nui,
Ngahuia Murphy
poitahu@gmail.com
Cell: 0277218614

Supervisor: Associate Professor Leonie Pihama - lpihama@waikato.ac.nz



Questions for Midwives/Birthworkers

These questions and lines of enquiry are a guide only for our kōrero. I maintain a flexible and open approach, respecting your wisdom and knowledge on this topic. This means that you can determine how the kōrero flows and in what directions. My questions will be shaped in response to the kōrero and stories that you share. As a participant in this research you also have the right to alter, remove, and add questions, comments, or lines of enquiry that you think are important or that you wish to speak to.

In this research I am personally committed to providing a platform for you to share the stories related to the whare tangata that you think are most urgent.

Theme 1: Personal story

- 1. Tell me a bit about yourselves: Where are you from? How did you come to be working in this field?*
- 2. What can you tell me about working with the whare tangata? What are the highs and lows? What do you love about this work? What do you struggle with?*
- 4. Can you think of any experiences you have had with Māori women during your work that has touched you, changed, or deeply affected you in a positive or negative way?*
- 4. What are some of the issues, barriers Māori women face in accessing reproductive healthcare for themselves in your experience? How can these be addressed or overcome?*

Theme 2: Maintaining the Mana and Tapu of Māori Women

- 1. In your experience how do the Māori women that you work with feel about their whare tangata-reproductive body? Are their issues or challenges to overcome?*
- 2. In your experience how are Māori women treated in hospitals, birthing centers and health clinics? Are they environments that nurture the mana and tapu of Māori women?*
- 3. Is the mana and tapu of Māori women ever compromised in these spaces?*
- 5. What (if anything) needs to change in these environments to make them more culturally appropriate and safe for Māori women and their whānau?*



6. Do you see the politics of colonisation playing out in your profession? If so, in what ways?

7. What are the things that Māori women and their whānau can do to reclaim and reassert their mana and tapu during pregnancy, birth, and the post-natal period?

8. Do you see that happening?

Theme 3: Tikanga Revival

1. Do you see Māori women reclaiming or recreating rituals and ceremonies/tikanga around pregnancy/ birth/and the post-natal period? What are some general examples?

2. Why are they significant for Māori women and the whānau?

3. Have you heard of the atua Hineteiwaiwa who rules over the whare tangata? Have you ever experienced her influence/energy as a midwife?

4. Have you ever heard karakia or seen rituals conducted to her?

4. As midwives do you have your own special tikanga that you do to prepare for births?

5. What are some of the most empowering and beautiful experiences you have had as midwives?

6. What are some of the hardest experiences you have had as a Māori midwife?

6. As a midwife of Māori women how do you see yourself? What role do you play?

7. Do you consciously work alongside any of our atua in your work? Which ones? How do they communicate with you?

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Appendix 5: Information sheet for international participants

Lady of the woven light, lady of the tide: Hinateiwaiwa and the ritual knowledges of the whare tangata (working title)

*Ko Tawhiuau te Maunga
Ko Rangitaiki te Awa
Ko Rangipo te Wehenga o te Tuna
Ko Ngāti Hui te Hapū
Ko Ngāti Manawa te Iwi
Ko Tangiharuru te Tangata*

*Ko Panekire te Maunga
Ko Waikare te Moana
Ko Waikaretaheke te Awa
Ko Ngāti Hinānga, Ko Ngāti Hinekura, Ko Ngāti Hika ngā Hapū
Ko Ngāti Ruapani te Iwi
Ko Haumapuhia te Tuoro
o ngā Hapū ki Waikaremoana*

Ko Ngahuia Murphy taku ingoa

Tena koe,

Thank you for taking the time to consider being a part of this study. I am a doctoral candidate in the Geography Programme at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato. My supervisory panel consists of Professor Robyn Longhurst and Associate Professor and Director of Te Kotahi Research Institute, Leonie Pihama.

In this research I am gathering stories about the revival and continuation of, primarily Māori, but also other Indigenous women's ritual and ceremonial practices related to te whare tangata (the womb). The overall goal of this research is to provide a space for Indigenous women to share their personal experiences of ceremony and to bear witness to the continuation and reclamation of the ceremonial houses of Indigenous women within the context of cultural resurgence.

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Your involvement

I am interested in listening to your thoughts, reflections, knowledges, experiences and understandings regarding Native women's ceremony. I would like to hear about how you explore women's ceremonial and sacred knowledge through your life/activism/art/healing modality. Our talk together would be at a time and place that suits you. You are welcome to bring along family members or others for support. The conversation would last between 1-2 hours, however, that depends on your needs and wishes.

Confidentiality

I will treat all our conversations as private and confidential and will not share it with anyone outside of the research except my supervisors. Unless your permission is obtained in the consent form attached, your name or any other identifying characteristics will not be disclosed in the final thesis or any other report produced in the course of this research. The recordings and written transcripts from our talks will be stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet at home, or the University, accessible only to me. Any electronic information will be accessible only by password and this will be changed regularly to ensure security of the documentation. I will securely keep the transcripts of all conversations for a period of five years at which time the data will be returned to participants or destroyed. All identifying references to third parties (whose consent I may or may not have) will be removed in my thesis to protect and ensure their anonymity.

Your rights

You have the right to:

- Decline to participate;
- Decline to answer any particular question;
- Withdraw from the study up until one month after our talk;
- Decline to be audio-recorded;
- Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time;
- Ask for the erasure of any materials you do not wish to be used in any reports up until one month after our talk;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during your participation

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The results

The results of this research will be presented as part of my PhD thesis. In accordance with University guidelines, four copies must be produced, three hard copies and one online accessible copy. One hard copy of the thesis and an online copy will be available through the University of Waikato Library. The research findings will also be used in conference presentations, seminars, wānanga and journal publications. You own the copyright of all of your kōrero and contributions in this research for all time. By signing the consent form you allow me the right to use your kōrero in my thesis. The copyright of the thesis and any other publications related to this research will be held solely by me.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Waikato. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240

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Consent Form International Participants

“I agree to take part in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this information sheet and signed consent form. I understand my rights as a participant in this research and that my identity will remain confidential and anonymity guaranteed unless I state otherwise. I have had adequate opportunity to discuss the above information and I am satisfied with the answers that have been provided.”

I would like to take part in:

Talking/ sharing story with Ngahuia Yes / No

I consent to our conversation being audio-recorded. Yes / No

I consent to the use of images or photographs of my art in Ngahuia’s PhD thesis and any presentations that she may deliver as long as my work is acknowledged as being mine.
Yes / No

_____ (to be signed and dated by participant)

“I agree to abide by the conditions set out in the information sheet/consent form and I will ensure that no harm will be done to any participant as a result of this research”

_____ (to be signed and dated by Ngahuia Murphy)

Your Details (for my records)

Name:

Phone number:

Email:

Postal Address:

Tribal Nation:

If you have any questions at any point during this research please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and for being an important part of this research.

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Appendix 6: Method/Participant Table

PARTICIPANTS		AGE RANGE	IWI/ETHNICITY	METHOD/ POINT OF ENGAGEMENT
1	Amiria	31 - 38	Tainui, Ngati Te Ata	Kōrero/semi-structured interview, ceremony
2	Cathy	35 - 43	Kai Tahu, Waitaha	Kōrero/semi-structured interview
3	Joanne	45 - 55	Ngati Apakura	Kōrero/semi-structured interview
4	Heather	45 - 55	Taranaki, Tangahoe, Ngāti Tupaia, Ngāti Tanewai	Kōrero/ semi – structured interview
5	Claire	40 - 50	Tauīwi	Social media
6	Rangitunoa	55- 65	Tuhoe, Te Whanau a Apanui, Ngāti Tuwharetoa	Kōrero/semi-structured interviews
7	Hinewirangi	60 - 70	Tauranga Moana, Ngāti Kahungunu, Rongomaiwahine	Kōrero/semi – structured interview
8	Whetu	28 - 35	Ngā Puhi, Ngati Pakahi	Summer solstice ceremony, skype kōrero, collaboration in the development of 'Hine' mana wahine ritual theatre
9	Komako	18 - 25	Ngā Puhi	Summer solstice ceremony, skype korero, collaboration in the development of 'Hine' mana wahine ritual theatre
10	Shellie	48 - 56	Ngā Puhi, Pehiaweri	Multiple ceremonial experiences, kōrero, photography,
11	Tema	30 - 38	Ngā Puhi, Pehiawēri	Summer solstice ceremony
12	Jo	40 - 48	Taranaki, Te Arawa-Tuhourangi, Ngāti wahiao, Ngāti Pīkiao	Wānanga, ceremony, Rongomaiwahine sacred site visit, mana wāhine journal, blogsite
13	Sarah	38 - 45	Bicol, Ilocano and Pasig tribes of the Philippines	Wānanga, ceremony, Rongomaiwahinesacred site visit, mana wāhine journal, art
14	Charlotte	30 - 40	Rongomaiwahine Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Nga Puhi	Wānanga, ceremony, mana wāhine journal
15	Te Rangiroimata	30 - 40	Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngāti Konohi	Wānanga, ceremony, Rongomaiwahine sacred site visit, mana wāhine journal
16	Huhana	58 - 67	Rongomaiwahine Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Kahungunu	Wānanga, Rongomaiwahinesacred site visit, ceremony
17	Elizabeth	48 - 58	Ngāti Oneone, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Whānau a Kai, Rongowhakaata Ngai Tāmanuhiri	Rongomaiwahine sacred site visit, ceremony
18	Chanz	40 - 50	Te Arawa	Kōrero, art



19	Cholena	30 - 40	Ngāti Kahungunu, Kai Tahu	Mana wahine art and korero over email and social media
20	Rosanna	48 - 56	Samoan	Photographic art, korero over email
21	Ngaahina	40 - 48	Taranaki	Mana wahine art, kōrero
22	Pirimaia	13 - 17	Ngati Manawa, Ngati Ruapani, Ngati Kahungunu	Ceremony, multiple sacred site visits
23	Hayley	35 - 45	Tuhoe	Kōrero via social media
24	Natalie	50 - 60	Ngāti Porou	Kōrero
25	Terri	50 - 60	Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu	Wānanga, kōrero via social media
26	Ninakaye	40 - 50	Ngāti Maniapoto	Kōrero
27	Hemi	60 - 70	Ngāti Ruapani, Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Awa	Ceremony, Kōrero
28	Rhonda	45 - 55	Ngāti Porou	Kōrero/semi-structured interview
29	Rāwiri	50 - 60	Taranaki	Kōrero
30	Michelle	45 - 55	Ngāti Waewae	Kōrero over social media and phone calls
HAWAII				
31	Pua	55 - 65	Kanaka Maoli	Kōrero, ceremony, sacred site visits (Mauna Kea Hawai'i, Papakorito Waikaremoana, Aotearoa)
32	Hāwane	28 - 35	Kanaka Maoli	Kōrero, ceremony, wānanga, sacred site visits (Pu'u o Kohe Hawai'i, Papakorito Waikaremoana, Aotearoa)
33	Kealoha	48 - 57	Kanaka Maoli	Ceremony, Kōrero, sacred site visit (Koheleleokapō, Ka'u, Hawai'i),
34	Sunnie	48 - 57	Kanaka Maoli	Wānanga
35	Puni	45 - 55	Kanaka Maoli	Kōrero
36	Keone	60 - 70	Kanaka Maoli	Sacred site visits (Kukaniloko, Hina and Maui sites - Hawai'i)
37	Keli'i	45 - 55	Kanaka Maoli	Sacred site visits (Kukaniloko, Hina and Maui sites - Hawai'i)
38	Kanani	48 - 58	Kanaka Maoli	Wānanga, ceremony, sacred site visit (Pele – Hawai'i)
39	Mahealani	45 - 55	Kanaka Maoli	Sacred site visit (Kukaniloko-Hawai'i)
TURTLE ISLAND				
40	Jim	60 - 70	Dakota	Kōrero, ceremony, sacred site visits (B'dote, Wakan Tipi – Minnesota, Turtle Island)
41	Roxanne	50 - 50	Ojibwe	Ceremony, sacred site visits (B'dote, Wakan Tipi – Minnesota, Turtle Island)
42	Alicia	45 - 55	Aztec, Mayan, Taos Pueblo	Kōrero
43	Ramona	39 - 45	Xicana, Yaqui	Kōrero
44	Santee	45 - 55	Kahnyen'kehāka	Blood Tides Theatre development
45	Waziyatawin	50 - 60	Dakota	Kōrero

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Appendix 7: Feedback to Participants 1

(email correspondence)

June 28, 2017

Tena tatou katoa i runga i nga ahuatanga o Takurua a Mere, te tohu o te tau hou. Mauri ora ki a tatou!

Wāhine mā, it's coming up 1 year since many of you shared with me your beautiful korero, stories, art, ritual/spiritual experiences and knowledge to inspire and inform my PhD research. The korero regarding your journeys and projects is incredibly empowering and transformative and I have LOVED working with these precious whakapapa kōrero that you all carry. Thank you for trusting and sharing with me. May these stories work to increase the return of the atua wahine within the consciousness of the people and help heal and empower our whānau and communities.

I have mostly finished gathering beautiful kōrero in ceremony, wananga and one on one 'interviews', and am now sitting down to analyse and write up my findings. I thought it was time I fed back to you all about some of the broad themes that are emerging in the research.

I have attached a one page summary for your interest.

If you have any questions at all, or kōrero or just want to get in touch with me I would love to hear from you.

Arohanui,

Ngahuia



Summary of Emergent Themes for Participants

Lady of the woven light, Lady of the tide: Hinateiwaiwā and the re-activation, renewal and continuation of Native women's ceremonial lives (working title).

Historic Themes:

- Traditional Māori philosophies of the whare tangata and its ritual capacity to house and clear intergenerational trauma;
- Whare tangata ceremonies and traditional practices that inform the name - Tangata Whenua;
- Wahine nanahu histories – censored and largely unknown histories of Māori women as ritual /spiritual/ military leaders on and off the battlefield.

Contemporary themes

- Stories of Māori and other Native women who are re-igniting connections with customary deities through multiple channels (such as ritual, art, theatre, activism, dance, healing arts);
- Stories of women reclaiming traditional ceremonial forms and designing new ceremonies for today;
- Stories of women reclaiming and recreating menstruation ceremonies
- Intergenerational fatigue, disconnection, fear, Christianity and its impacts on women's ceremony;
- Issues of permission, trust, intuition, connecting directly, and transcendence of colonial narratives of Native women as inferior and symbolically 'polluting' to the sacred;
- The significance of Native women's ceremonies today in relation to the plundering of Papatūānuku and desecration of matrilineal sacred sites;
- Sexual violence as a colonial weapon and its impacts on Native women's ceremony.

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Appendix 8: Feedback to Participants 2

(email correspondence)

August 6, 2018

Kia ora koutou, ōku tuahine. Nei rā ngā mihi tino aroha ki a koutou i runga i a Takurua-a-Mere, te tohu o te tau hou. Mauri ora ki a koutou me o whānau whānui.

Blessings to you my beloved sisters, aunties, mentors, co-collaborators and participants on this beautiful research journey contributing to facilitating the resurgence of the divine feminine in these times of massive global and ecological purification, crisis and world renewal. I acknowledge the powerful and profound works every single one of you are engaged in to facilitate healing, transformation, empowerment, and (re)connection in the communities with which you work. I feel incredibly privileged to have walked and worked with you and received your precious stories, experiences and knowledge in my research. Thank you.

It is the final 5 months of my PhD journey and I have been weaving your stories with ancient oral and contemporary literatures and art works to draw out themes of Native female ritual resurgence and continuation. The thesis is on track to be submitted in February 2019. I have attached a summary of my chapters to keep you all in the loop regarding how its all shaping up. Please contact me if you have any queries at all. I would love to hear from you.

*The thesis should be marked by mid next year at which point I am happy to send you a pdf copy. **Please let me know if you would like a copy of the completed, marked thesis.** I would love to give the work back to you.*

Heoi anō wāhine mā, I hope you are all happy and well and I look forward to reconnecting with you all again.

Mauri ora,

Ngahuia

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Thesis Chapter Outline for Participants

Lady of the woven light, Lady of the tide: Hinataiwaiwā and the re-activation, renewal and continuation of Native women's ceremonial lives (working title).

6 August 6, 2018

Chapter 1 Introduction: Laying down the kaupapa –the significance of the resurgence of Native women re-activating, reclaiming and re-creating rituals and ceremonies of communion with female deities.

Chapter 2 Context: Theories and influences that shape the work - decolonisation, mana wahine and kaupapa Māori Indigenous theories of empowerment, liberation, healing and transformation. Wider Indigenous and wiccan narratives about the return of the divine feminine in a cusp-time of ecological transformation/crisis/rebirth and renewal.

Chapter 3 Methodology: How I did the research – A '*rolling with the wairua*' approach – gathering stories from Native women in Aotearoa, Hawai'i, and Turtle Island through ceremony, wānanga, interviews, solicited diaries, artwork, photography, theatre, sacred site visits. The significance of dreaming as a research process.

Chapter 4 Unearthing censored histories: Tracing the priestess from cosmology and mythology (Hinataiwaiwa) into historic examples; Stories of ancestresses who lead war parties (naked) and conducting war-rites as historic examples of the ritualization of cosmological and mythical stories; the vulva set with teeth that *bite*, the vulva as a gateway between life and death (Hinenuitepō); the psychic power of the whare tangata (womb) to neutralise metaphysical 'obstructions' as the house of creation and destruction; examples of female priestesses in classical Māori society are all histories that have been largely censored from the written record and are both denied and mostly unknown today.



Chapter 5 Stolen Tongues: An outline of colonial processes that have impacted on Māori and other Native women’s ritual traditions and leadership, including raupatu (land confiscations), Christianity, legislations, the sovereignty wars, sexual violation as a colonial weapon to break prophetic movements in Aotearoa, and the reproduction of misogynist colonial ethnographic material that deny female spiritual and ritual leadership. Also Native female resistance to on-going colonial and patriarchal processes through activism, arts and scholarship.

Chapter 6 Coming to ceremony: Eclectic stories of Native women strengthening/renewing connection, through multiple channels (such as theatre, art, ceremony, dance, healing arts), to a cluster of traditional female deities, and the significance of this in terms of decolonisation and cultural resurgence. Issues of ‘permissions’, trust, fear, intuition, two spirit and sexual diversities, connecting directly, evolving ceremonial forms to ‘meet the moment’ of ecological crisis/world renewal are all explored in this chapter.

Chapter 7 Te Rerenga Atua, the ritual conduit: The movement to reclaim Native women’s menstruation ceremonies in Aotearoa, Hawai’i and North America. Menstruation as a ritual medium that releases trauma from the whakapapa line; reclaiming rituals of rest and retreat each month; issues of on-going colonial narratives of female inferiority and menstrual filth internalized in some of our tribal communities and the ways in which these are being challenged and transcended by Native women and their whanau.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and further research pathways: A conclusion of the main themes and some of the ways in which this research could be developed in the future.