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THE MĀORI FEMALE – HER BODY, SPIRITUALITY, SACREDNESS AND MANA. A SPACE WITHIN SPACES.

By

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A thesis

*submitted to the University of Waikato
in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Sciences*



**The
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*Dedicated to my mother, who is a strong, intelligent,
inspiring woman, who has always been loving and
supportive. Thank you for being you.*

*And to my late father, for blessing me with
whakapapa and a truly beautiful culture,
and also for loving his daughters so deeply.
You are with us always.*

Arohanui,

Wikitoria

HE MIHI

I te tuatahi ko te mihi ki te atua te timatanga me te mutunga o ngā mea katoa.
Ko te mihi ki ngā mātua tīpuna kua mene ki te pō, haere ngā mate, haere ngā mate.
Tātou, te hunga ora tēnā tātou katoa.

Ko Kahurānaki te maunga
Ko Tukituki te awa
Ko Ngāti Kurukuru rāua ko Ngai Te Oatua oku hapū
Ko Taupunga te marae
Ko Ngāti Kahungunu te iwi
Ko Wikitoria Theresa August, o te waka Takitimu
Kia Ora

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploration of bodily rituals, practices and cultural spaces of the female Māori body. Critical social theories and Kaupapa Māori research paradigms are combined to disrupt and challenge hegemonic Western knowledges. Qualitative methods – interviews, focus groups and autobiographical experience - are used to understand bodily practices that pertain to being Māori and female. There are three points to my discussion. I argue first, that the embodied relationship between Māori women and urupā and food gathering spaces rests on notions of Papatūānuku and female reproduction. During menstruation or pregnancy most women are restricted from urupā. Many participants, however, view this tikanga positively and describe it as making them feel special. Second, I examine the ways in which Māori female bodies are colonised and positioned between Western patriarchal and traditional ways of being. Due to various reasons surrounding colonisation, there are gaps in younger generations' Māori knowledge and this has led to tensions about which space to occupy. Finally, I discuss mana and conclude by asserting that the Māori female body has not lost individual mana, despite the efforts of colonisation to take mana away from Māori women. Throughout this research I offer cultural perspectives in order to prompt new ways of thinking about the Māori female body.

The views expressed in this thesis are not the views of all Māori. Practices, tikanga and knowledges vary between different iwi, hapū and rohe.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction – Locating the Body

In previous times, the discharge of a woman's womb reinforced her connection to the earth, origin of all things. Each month, undeveloped beginnings of another human came away from her... and thus it was considered inappropriate for her to cast them just anywhere. But values and patriarchal concepts, imposed itself upon the Māori people, this essential wisdom was denied. Underlying her relationship with the land was the traditional Māori woman's perception of the environment as a source of emotional, spiritual and physical sustenance identification and strength.
(Te Awekotuku, 1983:139)

I can remember being at a tangi and going to the urupā for the burial. Everyone was inside the urupā, with the immediate whānau standing around the grave and extended whānau and friends just behind them. There were karakia and waiata to farewell the deceased. Among the songs, tears and crying, I heard a louder crying and heavy sobbing. I looked over towards the gate of the urupā and saw a Māori woman outside of the gate, knelt down by the fence. She was crying heavily and wailing loudly. It seemed to me that she should have been inside the urupā to farewell her loved one. I couldn't help but wonder why she was outside.

The reason why this woman was outside the urupā was because she was menstruating or pregnant. This thesis examines the rituals associated with the Māori female body, its materiality and spirituality. I explore the ways in which the female Māori body becomes inscribed by cultural practices and spaces, but also how these

cultural practices and spaces inscribe the female Māori body. The body rituals discussed consist of restrictions from cultural spaces when the body is hapū or menstruating, as illustrated above, and rituals carried out with parts of the body, all to address the question 'Is the female Māori body losing mana?' The reasons behind why Māori women are restricted from space and do certain things with parts of their body are examined to reveal underlying discourses that are associated with the body and the Māori female body. I examine the effects of colonisation on the female Māori body and I examine knowledges about the female Māori body. I look at Western ways of thinking; how they contrast from Māori ways of thinking and the impact they have had on the female Māori body. I question these Western knowledges and offer a Māori perspective towards looking at the female Māori body.

The main objectives of my research are firstly, to collect knowledge surrounding female Māori embodiment and its various representations. Secondly, to examine, through in-depth interviews and focus groups, whether knowledge surrounding the female Māori body and cultural rituals is being lost, leading to the female Māori body its losing mana. Thirdly, to contribute information to literature surrounding the body, which may provide new ways of thinking about embodiment. And finally, to add information to indigenous knowledges which may serve as a record, or as an incentive for further research in this area.

MAIN THEMES

I examine the female Māori body as a space and within spaces. I look at the female Māori body within urupā and food gathering sites and how entering these spaces is dependent upon whether or not menstruation or pregnancy are occurring at that time. I look at the female Māori body as a space and practices that are carried out with parts of the body, and the reasons behind carrying them out. Restriction from urupā and food gathering sites, and rituals associated with the body are often related back to Atua such as Papatūānuku and mythology. The importance of women is passed down from Atua through mythology and this importance is protected through tikanga. Tapu governs tikanga surrounding women's bodies both in a prohibited and sacred sense. Balance is an important part of the holistic worldview

Māori hold. The unbalance that was created between men and women as a result of colonisation and the effects of this unbalance are central to this research. My second theme examines the loss of knowledges surrounding Māori women, and how this contributes to ways of thinking surrounding the female Māori body. The subordination of Māori language, knowledges and worldviews and their replacement with colonial patriarchal views has contributed to the devaluing of Māori women, making their sacredness invisible. The final theme of my research addresses whether the female Māori body is losing mana, a question that is raised at the conclusion of this research. My opinion on what needs to happen regarding how we think about our bodies, based on this research, is addressed also.

REASONS FOR CHOICE

When I was thinking about a topic for my thesis I remembered the saying ‘write what you know’. I was thinking about what *I know* and so I turned to myself, my body, my experiences – *I know* these. I was thinking about what I wanted to know more about in relation to myself. I looked to my Māori side. This was an area where I considered my knowledge to be lacking and where I could, and would want to, learn a lot more. My reasons for choice are personal and portions of my thesis are autobiographical.

PERSONAL

I have wanted to learn more about my Māori heritage for many years now and I first realised this when I was a teenager. When I was 14 years old my father died. This was a very hard time for me. You do not realise what you have got until it has gone. During my father’s tangi my sister and I were taken back to our marae. Surrounding us was Māori culture, and it was ataahua. We were loved, supported and guided by friends and whānau through a very difficult time. One feeling that I remember experiencing was inadequacy. There were so many tikanga that we were required to uphold, for example, what we should do as his daughters, singing waiata, and saying karakia. I felt inadequate because most of the time I did not know what was being said, what I should be doing, and the reasons behind why certain practices

were carried out. There were always people around to help but I felt ashamed to ask because I thought I should have already known. It was at this point that I realised that I had missed out on learning about my Māori side.

On the day of my father's burial, a close friend was standing outside the urupā. I knew that she would have liked to be inside the urupā and I did not understand why she was not. Later it became known to me that the reason she was standing outside was because she was hapū. She was not allowed in the urupā while she was pregnant because it is tapu. I had not known this and it started me thinking and wondering if there was other tapu or Māori lore that I could break or have broken without even knowing it. This scared me because my father was Māori and my mother is Pākehā. My dad had passed away; where was I going to learn about my Māori side from? I began to realise that I was not the only one 'deprived' of this cultural information.

Throughout the rest of my teenage years I wanted to know more about my culture that was previously put in the background. I started asking a close Māori friend from school questions about Māori culture. She made me realise that I had grown up with Māori culture and customs from my father, but the reasons for these customs were not passed on. I am referring to things like I do not cut my hair or fingernails at night time. As I found out later Māori people use to gather their hair, nail clippings and any other discarded body parts and bury them while saying a karakia. This is because it was believed that others could find these body parts and place mākutū on you. Cutting your hair and fingernails at night time meant that it would be easy for others to get a hold of these body parts and do harm to you. Even though I did not know the full reasons for carrying out certain bodily rituals, I was relieved and proud to know it fitted in with Māori culture. I had been learning Māori rituals from my father without realising it.

During the summer of 2002-2003 when I was thinking about a thesis topic I had the opportunity to be immersed in Māori culture. I attended a couple of tangi, one at my home and one in another area near Gisbourne. While the circumstances were not pleasant, I love being immersed in Māori culture. I noticed at the tangi at home that there was a woman who was hapū in the urupā. As the bearer of this new

knowledge, this upset me greatly because I believed that she would have known better. I knew that this was a practice we carried out in our rohe and that she should not be in the urupā. No one said anything to her, not even kaumātua. This reminded me of the gaps in my knowledge. I wondered if people were thinking the same of me when I knew very little about protocol. The tables were turned in a sense where I was the one 'gazing' and passing judgements when previously this would have been inflicted on me. I started asking, is Māori culture and protocol being lost? What does colonisation have to do with this loss of Māori knowledge? What can I do so Māori knowledge is not lost?

ACADEMIC

During my years of study at the University of Waikato, one thing that I have noticed is that papers have little Māori focus. The paper for example may be talking about environmental issues in New Zealand, however Māori perspectives are skimmed over and given little importance in comparison. In some cases all that would be said in relation to Māori was 'we take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi' or something to that effect. And to me this is not enough. Despite the fact that I found the material I was learning interesting, I could not help but wonder where do I fit in?

I remember sitting in an undergraduate class in my first year and a Māori lecturer came in to give a few lectures about our topic from a Māori perspective. As soon as she said 'Māori perspective' half the class left. To me this is disgusting and disrespectful to the indigenous people of Aotearoa, New Zealand. It also showed me the dominant way of thinking and how people felt about Māori. The only way that I could overcome this problem was to take papers with Māori as the focus. I enjoyed this enormously but at times felt a little uncomfortable because the other Māori students in the class could speak the Māori language and I could not, and they could also draw on personal experiences and knowledge from their areas about Māori problems, debates and so on and I could not. Again I wanted to know more.

Even though I have wanted to learn more about Māori culture I find that University takes me away from my home area and my marae where, I believe, is the

best place to learn about Māori culture. One way to overcome this was to incorporate what I wanted to learn about into my thesis. A main focus of mine, throughout my degree, has been feminism. Feminism is important because it speaks for all the people who 'do not have a voice', whether they be young, old, disabled, homosexual, coloured and so on. Throughout my feminist studies I have noticed that there is also little focus on Māori. Another problem is the generalisation of all women. Something will be said about women in a lecture and I would sit there and think, yes that could be true, but that does not apply to Māori women. I think there is a huge gap in the feminist literature concerning Māori and I want to do something about that.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter two brings the body into focus by examining contemporary geographical and other academic works on the body and how they have been influential to ways of thinking regarding the body. The key ways of thinking that surround this research are described, revealing contrasting worldviews. The paradigms, theoretical perspectives and methodologies are examined, how they were employed, merge together, and their key aspects and benefits. The research methodology explains how I conducted the research, along with the reasons why I chose the methods that I did. The interview group dynamics are outlined, followed with how I analyse the information that I received from interviews with participants.

Chapter three is the start of analysis with a quick summary of what discussions with participants entailed, followed by descriptions of why Māori women are important from authors' and participants' perspectives. Papatūānuku is a key theme that arises here. The Māori female body in relation to space, contemporary debates about space and how participants acted in urupā and food gathering sites when they were menstruating or pregnant is discussed. The Māori female body is then conceptualised as a space, and I examine practices that are carried out with bodily parts and the reasons for carrying them out. Common discussions involved practices associated with hair, nails, not stepping over things or taonga, burying whenua, and practices associated with death. These body rituals can also be

associated with space, from when rituals are conducted, controlling the space where they are discarded and connections to whenua.

Chapter four examines the effects of colonisation and the various ways colonisation was imposed subtly upon the Māori people, with the de-valuing of women, re-telling of mythology and the introduction of patriarchal views, subordinating Māori women. Using participants' narratives dichotomous thinking is challenged and disrupted. The spaces in-between Māori and Pākehā are discussed where clear definitions and choices are difficult to achieve. The effects of colonisation from the participants' perspectives are outlined with disruption of passing on of Māori knowledge surrounding the body being a crucial consequence. Kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa are examined as ways Māori have initiated to aid in rectifying the effects of colonisation.

Chapter five discusses the concept of mana and whether the female Māori body is losing mana. Participants' narratives are employed to help address the notion of mana. What is mana? Can you lose mana? The main points of previous chapters are reiterated to help answer the question 'Is the female Māori body losing mana?' Finally, new frontiers for the body are offered with an alternative to the word 'restriction' as it is used within this thesis, based on the perceptions and feelings of the participants.

CHAPTER TWO

Theories & Methods – Bringing the Body into focus

*By body I understand a concrete, material, animate organization of flesh, organs, nerves, muscles, and skeletal structure which are given unity, cohesiveness, and organization only through their physical and social inscription as the surface and raw materials of an integrated and cohesive totality. The body is, so to speak, organically/biologically/naturally 'incomplete'; it is indeterminate, amorphous, a series of uncoordinated potentialities which require social triggering, ordering, and long-term 'administration,' regulated in each culture and epoch by what Foucault has called 'the micro-technologies of power'.
(Grosz, 1992:243)*

Thinking of the body as a space which undergoes alterations, physical transformations and is inscribed by the environment is a relatively new idea. Only recently has the body become acceptable research material in academic institutions. People have looked confused when I explain that I am looking at body as a space from a Māori female perspective. In this chapter I will bring the body into focus by discussing the theories that underline my research, where I fit into my research and the research methodologies that I employ to examine the body. Throughout this chapter I highlight the main themes, which structure the research.

Over the past few decades there has been an upsurge in academic research and non-academic material concerning the body. Societies are always changing and so too are ideas, norms and stereotypes about gendered embodiment. Discursive constructs from television programmes and magazines are integral to societal thoughts and obsessions with aesthetics, beauty and how to look after your body. In

academic fields the body is becoming a focus for those concerned with identity inequality and difference. The body may be understood as a site of resistance and where spatial experiences differ. Research on the body is relatively new in all academic fields. This is because dealing with the body meant confronting all the 'messy' stuff that was previously unacceptable in academia. "The body is treated obliquely, as a symbol for something else: 'nature', desire or biology" (Davis, 1997:3).

THE BODY AND GEOGRAPHY

The body may not seem to very many as a legitimate geographical area of study, but feminist geographers have challenged how the body is viewed within geography. All kinds of embodiment have been explored from pregnant bodies (see Longhurst, 1998), female body building (see Johnston, 1998), homosexuality (see Bell *et al*, 1994; Cameron, 1993; Gibson-Graham, 1998; Johnston and Valentine, 1995 and Skelton, 1995), disability (see Dorn, 1998 and Chouinard and Grant, 1996), to how the body becomes inscribed (see Pratt, 1998), and disembodied bodies (see Haraway, 1991 and Valentine, 2001), for example. A common theme that runs through the work of geographers exploring the body is that experiences differ depending on embodiment and the space or place where embodiment occurs. Gill Valentine explores the body as a space; a project; taking up space; the body in space and bodies changes over time. When describing the body, Valentine states that

It is a personal *space*. A sensuous organ, the site of pleasure and pain around which social definitions of wellbeing, illness, happiness and health are constructed, it is our means for connecting with, and experiencing other spaces. It is the primary location where our personal identities are constituted and social knowledges and meanings inscribed.

(2001:15, emphasis in the original)

Bodies are the sites of identities, whether identity is chosen or given. Bodies are sexed, gendered, racialised, aged and understood as able or disabled. Bodies are judged and restricted according to appearance, therefore "...difference is treated as essential for understanding embodiment – that is, individuals' interactions with their bodies and through their bodies with the world around them" (Davis, 1997:9).

Bodies are important within geography because they are a site of resistance and struggle. 'Different' bodies challenge hegemonic norms and force the 'norm' to think about their own insecurities. 'Different' bodies are also a site of struggle because negotiating space can be difficult due to embedded ways of thinking and hegemonic discourses. Bodies can be the starting point for breaking down binary thinking associated with Western knowledge. Binaries are a form of Western knowledge used to privilege masculine knowledge over feminine knowledge, which I examine in more detail later in this chapter. By looking at bodies, and the meanings inscribed upon them, it is possible to uncover social constructions and hegemonic assumptions of the 'naturalisation' of subordination between the sexes. "Corporeal differences are the basis of prejudice, discrimination and oppression. Geographical work examines why/how particular bodies are defined as 'other' and marginalized" (Valentine, 2001:48). By exploring the body, feminist geographers not only disrupt what topics are appropriate to study in geography, but also upset 'grand-narratives' previously given by geography's masculine predecessors, such as the common mind/body binary where women are confined by their bodies and men are not. "One of the major, and earliest, achievements of feminist scholars in the social sciences has been to challenge the definition of what is geography, and hence appropriate topics for research, by adding in previously neglected areas (McDowell, 1992:403).

THE BODY AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

Geography is not the only discipline that has taken an interest in the body. The body is under investigation in many spheres such as sociology (see Giddens, 1984, 1991 and Shilling, 1993), the media and cultural studies (see Jackson, 1993), and politics (see Gatens, 1995 and Young, 1993). Researchers are constantly working interdisciplinary because of vast amounts of relative information regarding the body.

The past decade has marked an enormous upsurge of interdisciplinary interest in the body, both in academia and in popular culture. Conferences on the body abound and no annual meeting in the social sciences, cultural studies or humanities

would be complete without at least one session devoted to the body.

(Davis, 1997:1)

An area that has interested me within geography, as well as other disciplines regarding the body, is the changing perspectives concerning the categorisation of women and positionality. No longer are women content with one broad category of women, which is a gross over-generalisation. 'Woman' as a category has been deconstructed. It is now being recognised through studies on the body that experiences differ in all aspects of life because no two individuals are the same.

Approaches which ignore differences in embodiment are rejected as falsely universalistic and unable to do justice to the particularities of individuals' bodily experience. Conditions of embodiment are organised by gender, 'race', sexuality and more, resulting in different possibilities and constraints on individuals' body practices.

(Davis, 1997:9)

Positionality is becoming more important within research because researchers are forced to take into account multiple differences. Researchers experiences and knowledge will affect how they shape research and interpret the data.

It is becoming clear that adequate theorizing about women's position must simultaneously include racial, class, ethnic and other differences as they contribute to an unstable gendered femaleness in specific historical and geographical circumstances. This acceptance of difference, that the subject of Western thought, including feminist theories, bears the marks of its creators as gendered and positioned by race class and culture, has enormous theoretical consequences.

(McDowell, 1992:412)

The body has been vital in the breakdown of the category of 'Woman'. There has been a vast amount of criticism from 'indigenous' feminist writers concerning feminism and the category of 'Woman' (see hooks, 1990, 1994 and Spivak, 1988).

In arguing that most contemporary feminist theory does not begin to adequately account for the experience of black women we...have to acknowledge that it is not a simple question of their absence, consequently the task is not one of rendering their visibility. On the contrary we will have to argue that the process of accounting for their historical and contemporary position does, in itself, challenge the use of some of the central categories and assumptions of recent mainstream feminist thought... Both white feminist theory and practice have to recognise that white women stand in a power

relation as oppressors of black women. This compromises any feminist theory and practice founded on the notion of simple equality.

(Carby, 1993:25)

Focusing on the body and the insights that the body has provided, and the ability for this focus to disrupt previous hegemonic knowledge within geography and other disciplines, has caught my attention. I want to look at the body from a female Māori perspective.

One of the main objectives of my research is to add to indigenous knowledges, which may serve as a record of information, or as an incentive for further research. At the conclusion of my research I not only hope to have increased mine and others' knowledge surrounding the Māori body, its sacredness and difference from others, but also discovered whether body knowledges are being passed on to younger generations, how this may have changed and the effects of colonisation on Māori knowledge. I will now illustrate the kinds of knowledges that are prevalent in today's society, how they can be destructive, and how they differ from Māori knowledges or ways of thinking.

DUALISTIC THINKING

Colonisers not only brought a way of doing into Aotearoa, they also brought a way of thinking. Ideas about patriarchy rest on hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity as distinct and separate categories, with masculinity being considered superior over femininity. This is the use of binaries or dichotomies as they are often called and it is a dualistic way of thinking. Elizabeth Grosz explains dichotomies:

When a continuous spectrum is divided into discrete self-contained elements, these elements exist in opposition to each other. When the system of boundaries or divisions operated by means of the construction of binaries or pairs of opposed terms, these terms are not only mutually exclusive, but also mutually exhaustive. They divide the spectrum into one term and its opposite, with no possibility of a term which is neither one nor the other, or which is both... Dichotomies are inherently non-reversible, non-reciprocal hierarchies, and thus describe systems of domination.

(1989:xvi)

Numerous academics, especially feminists, have addressed the use of binaries and in some cases deconstructed them. There have been works focusing on the mind/body split (see Davis, 1997; Johnston, 2001; Longhurst, 1995, 1997; Longhurst and Johnston, 1998; Valentine, 2001 and Veijola and Jokenin, 1994), self/other and inside/outside (see Longhurst, 1998 and Rose, 1993), culture/nature and association with men/women (see Gatens, 1991a, 1991b and Pratt, 1998), dualisms surrounding masculine work spaces (see Massey, 1996), gendered differences played out in binaries (see Nast and Pile, 1998) and meanings learnt through opposition (see Jones and Guy, 1992). Moira Gatens states that “A feature common to much traditional social theory is a commitment to the dualisms central to Western thought: nature and culture, body and mind, passion and reason” (1991a:1). Binaries have two sides, for example man/woman. Each side becomes associated with other characteristics, which are also binaries. Men are associated with the mind while women are associated with the body. Men are associated with culture while women are associated with nature and so on. Binaries are categories, which distinguish one group from another by associating that which is self and that which is other. The problem with binaries is that one side is privileged over the other side and they act as restrictive boundaries, but also as justification for superiority of one over the other. As I outlined above, men are associated with the mind, as if they can transcend their bodies, and they are not believed to be subject to emotions. Whereas women are associated with the body, confined, and subject to their emotions such as irrationality (Longhurst, 1997). When referring to the work of Gillian Rose (1993) Gill Valentine states “As a result of this belief in the objectivity of masculinist rationality – that it is untainted by bodily identity and experience – Rose claims that it is assumed to be universal, the only form of knowledge available” (2001:17). Binaries define ‘rational’ knowledge as masculine knowledge, therefore undermining feminine knowledge because it is considered ‘irrational’ knowledge. This way of thinking is damaging because it claims masculinist knowledge as the only legitimate knowledge universally, and privileges patriarchal hegemonic thinking, leaving little space for those who differ from the masculine ‘self’, or do not fit into neat categories.

HOLISTIC THINKING

The Māori world view acknowledged the natural order of the universe, the interrelationship or whānaungatanga of all living things to one another and to the environment, and the over-arching principal of balance. Each person was an essential part of the collective whole, each formed part of the whakapapa (genealogy) that linked Māori people back to the beginning of the world, and women in particular played a key role in linking the past with the present and the future. The very survival of the whole was absolutely dependent upon everyone who made it up, and therefore each and every person within the group had her or his own intrinsic value and special role to play.
(Mikaere, 1999a:4-5)

I believe it important to state that these are not the views of all Māori. Māori have different beliefs, tikanga and knowledges based on tribal affiliations and rohe practices. There is, however, a few key underpinning values that are important and I will illustrate these. Māori have a holistic way of thinking where all living things are interconnected and related through whakapapa. This holistic thinking not only encompasses what is visible on the earth, but also that which cannot be seen. Māori believe that the human realm and the spiritual realms are interconnected also (see Irwin, 1984). Whakapapa connects humans with all living things, but also to Atua, the gods that created all life. Whakapapa is a very important principal within Māori culture that connects people to the past, the present and the future.

Māori people believe they are the kaitiaki of the Earth Mother – Papatūānuku and all other domains, for example the sea and forest, through whakapapa. Papatūānuku sustains the people and the people have an obligation to sustain and care for her. Whenua, the land, is important to Māori people not only as a resource but also through tribal affiliations and spiritual connections established through Atua and tīpuna.

Although mythology established the primacy of people in nature and validated their right to use its resources, people were not regarded as above nature and had to observe well-developed rules of prohibition and conservation. People did not own the land, they belonged to it.
(Pawson, 1992:19)

Māori do not consider themselves as 'above' the land because all parts of whakapapa are important and vital to maintain the balance needed for quality of life and the conservation of Papatūānuku for future generations. Ani Mikaere explains the significance of balance.

It is whakapapa which ensures the interconnectedness of all living things and which therefore creates the imperative to maintain a state of balance at all times. The preservation of balance – between people and the gods, people and the environment, the generations, women and men, and the internal balance (spiritual, physical, emotional) of every person – was of paramount importance.

(Mikaere, 1999a:7)

This quote from Mikaere illustrates the balance that occurred in traditional Māori society between men and women. Both men and women had equal significance and one was not considered superior over the other. The holistic way of thinking presented here contrasts to that of dualistic thinking presented previously. Women have been silenced and subordinated through dualistic thinking. Hinematau McNeil shows the balanced roles of men and women, and also the significance of women, which is an essential theme throughout my research.

...women do not whaikorero because they are too tapu. The role of men in whaikorero is to protect the tapu of women. Makutu can be hidden in the speeches of the visiting tribes. Women are the child-bearers, and as we all know, if a victim of makutu is a woman, it resides in her womb and is passed down through the generations. My kuia went on to talk about the role of women and the significance of karanga. The women have the privilege of being the first voice heard on the marae. Their high –pitched call is related to childbirth and their role in bringing life into the world of light. The last voice heard on the marae when anyone dies is the karanga poroporoaki, which sends the dead back to the ancestors and to the heavens. Only women can call up the spirits of the dead for marae rituals. But Kui Wheturangi was very clear about the equal roles of men and women. There is the power of men and the power of women, te mana tangata and te mana wahine, in perfect balance. The women karanga and the men whaikorero. The male element and the female element are motifs that occur in nature; opposites, they come together in harmony. Kui Wheturangi said men and women are like the darkness and the light. Both are necessary for existence.

(1998:148)

Now that I have outlined the theoretical context I turn to some of the perspectives, discourses or paradigms that underlined my research and how I approached the topic of Māori women's bodies. I will also discuss where I fit into the research and the methodologies that I employed to conduct my research.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

I employ the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm to conduct my research. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999:125) describes Kaupapa Māori research as 'Māori-centred' research. Many Māori people are sceptical about research based on fears about what might be done with the knowledge gained, the lack of trust between the researcher and the researched, and very few benefits for Māori after the research has been conducted.

Research is implicated in the production of Western knowledge, in the nature of academic work, in the production of theories which have dehumanized Māori and in practices which have continued to privilege Western ways of knowing, while denying the validity for Māori of Māori knowledge, language and culture.

(Smith, 1999:183)

Kaupapa Māori research developed out of an understanding of the value of research and the involvement that Māori could have with approaches appropriate to Māori (Smith, 1999). Chris Cunningham defines Kaupapa Māori research further, "[R]esearch where Māori are significant participants, and where the research team is typically all Māori; Research where a Māori analysis is undertaken and which produces Māori knowledge" (1998:391). Kaupapa Māori research is centred on positive outcomes for Māori. The rewards of research are not one-sided benefiting just the researcher; the researcher/researched relationship is mutually beneficial. Kaupapa Māori is the primary theoretical perspective that I employ in conjunction with feminism. The holistic worldview, which is central to my research, is an essential component to the Kaupapa Māori paradigm. Benefits for Māori is a primary aim outlined in the Kaupapa Māori paradigm and is one of my objectives.

While I did employ this method there are problems. The methods or tools used in this method are contemporary or mainstream. This research methodology while it has a Māori focus was formulated within Western institutions. "It is not

acceptable for a person to claim that by virtue of being a Māori researcher that their research will be 'more valid' than that of a Pākehā when the tools both are using are viewed by Māori as coming from the same deficit tool box" (Walker, 1992:1). I have a Western education. Even though I am Māori also, my Western education will be embedded within my research and analysis.

There are a number of ethical, cultural, political and personal issues that can present special difficulties for indigenous researchers who, in their own communities, work partially as outsiders, because of their Western education or because they may work across clan, tribe, linguistic, age and gender boundaries. Simultaneously, they work within their research projects or institutions as insiders within a particular paradigm or research model and as outsiders they are often marginalized..."

(Smith, 1999:5)

I would have liked to use Māori research paradigms that are not born out of mainstream initiatives to 'incorporate' Māori, such as Mātauranga Māori (see Taiepa, 1998; Royal, 1998 and Tau, 2001). Mātauranga Māori, when basically defined, means "Māori knowledge" (Ryan, 1995:153). Mātauranga Māori is an epistemology that is based in the time before colonisation. Te Maire Tau describes Mātauranga Māori as:

...simply the epistemology of Māori – what it is that underpins and gives point and meaning to Māori knowledge. Whakapapa is the skeletal structure to Māori epistemology. What about language? Obviously, language is the critical factor. You can never have a complete grasp of mātauranga Māori without a solid understanding of the language.

(2001:67-68)

I am immediately ruled out of using such research paradigms as Mātauranga Māori because I cannot speak adequately the Māori language and also because my knowledge of Māori culture and practices are limited. My positionality within my research determines what methodologies I could and could not use.

Positionality has become a central theme within feminist geography in challenging universality (see Johnston *et al*, 2000:604). Positionality enables an examination of different ways of knowing and perspectives and their relationship to research. We all have varying life experiences and we take those experiences with us

in all circumstances. We have unique ways of viewing situations based on who we are and that will inevitably be reflected in research. Sandra Harding (1987) argues that declaring the position from which one writes may lead to more sound analyses. Personal geographies where the author or researcher plays an important part within the research are becoming more common (see Valentine, 1998). This declaration of positionality and multiple subjectivities has not only helped challenge epistemological universality but has also helped feminists to destabilise the category 'Woman' (see McDowell, 1992:409). Positionality uncovers the power relations and problems that may be embedded within research. Positionality is extremely important within my research. The multiple identities that I hold as an individual led to the choosing of my topic based on the experiences I have had throughout my life. I have chosen to acknowledge my positionality within my research because I believe that it strengthens my research by revealing the positions that I am coming from.

Kaupapa Māori research paradigm is summed up by Smith, she states:

Kaupapa Māori research is a social project; it weaves in and out of Māori cultural beliefs and values, Western ways of knowing, Māori histories and experiences under colonialism, Western forms of education, Māori aspirations and socio-economic needs and Western economics and global politics. Kaupapa Māori is concerned with sites and terrains... They are selected or select themselves precisely because they are sites of struggle and because they have some strategic importance for Māori.

(1999:191)

This explanation of Kaupapa Māori research gives space for researchers, such as myself who occupy multiple identities and positions, to fit in. The fluidity of Kaupapa Māori research with Western knowledges allows positions to be utilised to benefit Māori. In the next section I discuss the theoretical perspectives I chose to incorporate into my research complimenting the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm. I will also cover some key ideas used within the theoretical perspectives that are evident within my research.

The theoretical perspectives that I employ are used as part of the broader perspective of feminism. Feminism has been the driving force in analyses of the body, revealing power relations and inequalities hidden in social constructions of the

body, usually reinforcing patriarchal hegemonic discourses. Many aspects of female embodiment have been explored (see for example Davis, 1997).

The female body has been the subject of numerous empirical studies in a wide variety of specific contexts. These studies focus on how women experience their bodies, on how women's bodies are implicated in various social and cultural practices and on symbolic representations of the female body...attention has been devoted to how institutions and cultural discourses shape women's embodied experiences.

(Davis, 1997:5)

Feminism has allowed me to choose theoretical perspectives in an eclectic manner, because there are no fixed theories or methodologies (although some are more suited than others). "Eclecticism in theory or methodology has never been as sinful in geography as it is in some academic disciplines. Thus contemporary geographers bring a wide range of approaches to their research" (Forbes, 2000:123). Multiple theories inform my research. I highlight the particularities of each theoretical perspective as they relate to my thesis. My chosen theoretical perspectives – feminism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism and Kaupapa Māori – are, at times, complementary, while at other times conflicting. The notion of social constructions is a key component of post-structuralism, which is in conflict to Kaupapa Māori and its holistic view, sometimes associated with essentialism. Some indigenous feminist writers are also in conflict with post-colonialism, because the effects of colonialism are still felt, which is explained in more detail later in this chapter. I have decided to use certain components of each perspective, which I feel will be beneficial to my research and the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm that I have chosen to work within. 'Borrowing' from theoretical perspectives is a technique used by Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham (1996). Gibson-Graham state "In particular we have increasingly ventured outside our disciplinary boundaries and into fields other than political economy and geography" (1996:xii). In the notes explaining this, Gibson-Graham are described as 'theory sluts (good time girls who think around)'. I have employed this method used by Gibson-Graham, and work within different theories, because I believe there are parts to each theory that are beneficial to my research and complementary to

the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm, even though at times that are conflicting. I will now outline the perspectives and the components that I have used.

POST-STRUCTURALISM

Post-structuralism is based on the works of a several theorists but for the purpose of my research I will focus on the works of Michel Foucault (1977, 1978 and 1982) and Jacques Derrida (1991). I use Foucault's analysis of power and disciplining the body, and Derrida's deconstruction method. Post-structuralism's four key components are language; discourse; difference and deconstruction. Chris Weedon (1987:40) defines feminist post-structuralism as "a mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand power relations and identify areas and strategies for change". Feminists have used post-structuralism to critique the concept of difference through the in-depth analysis of binary oppositions. This has also been applied to the supposedly essential unity between women and it has been useful to challenge the category of Woman (see McDowell, 1991).

Foucault's analysis of the body as a social construct has influenced many researchers.

For Foucault, the body is not only given meaning by discourse, but is wholly constituted by discourse. In effect, the body vanishes as a biological entity and instead becomes a socially constructed product which is infinitely malleable and highly unstable.

(Shilling, 1993:74)

On the one hand, Foucault examines the institutions governing the body and the body as produced within discourse. Foucault's notions of discipline and power are beneficial to examining discourses that influence the body. Derrida, on the other hand, has been influential with work surrounding the body with his method of deconstruction and breaking down binaries associated with the body. Binaries such as man/woman, mind/body, rational/irrational and positive/negative, as I have previously discussed. "Derrida's method of deconstruction involves demonstrating that presence (the prioritized term) requires the absent (inferior) term. Post-structuralists thus expose the foundations and limits of theory..." (Johnston *et al*,

2000:625). Derrida encourages us to look deeper into truth claims and to understand these as systems of power and domination.

Language and discourses are relevant to my research because I am concerned with how meanings are constructions embedded within language and the underlying power relations that are involved.

Language is a system through which is constructed and cultural practices are organized. We need to ask a series of questions about how meaning is acquired and changes, and what this acquisition tells us about social relations, especially how power is constituted and operates.

(McDowell, 1991:129)

I use deconstruction as a method to uncover constructed meanings and the power relations behind those meanings. I then examine the effects of the underlying power relations and their association to colonisation. Deconstruction is an analytical method becoming more commonly used within post-colonialism, because it resists hegemonic discourses and aids in challenging them.

However the rise of postcolonial movements, which challenge the views emanating from the privileged and hitherto hegemonic centres of the West, have fused with deconstruction and other variants of reading texts to add an important orientation to this form of analysis. Postcolonial approaches place their emphasis in resistance and the expression of dissent from the totalising discourse of global economic development (or underdevelopment).

(Forbes, 2000:128)

Within Foucault's theory of discourse is the notion of 'reverse discourse'. Reverse discourses can be described as discourses that go against, or are in opposition to dominant discourses. Weedon (1987:110) states that a "[R]everse discourse has important implications for the power of the discourse it wishes to subvert. As a first stage in challenging meaning and power, it enables the production of new, resistant discourses". Reverse discourses are useful in defining actions that oppose dominant discourses and may enable shifts in power. Post-structuralism also has strong connections to subjectivity. "'Subjectivity' is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (Weedon, 1987:32). Subjectivity is interlinked with positionality, which is central to my research.

In conflict with the idea of social constructions is the essentialist argument where there is the belief of an authentic or true self. The essentialism verses constructionism has been debated within feminism (see Fuss, 1989). Essentialists argue that the social suppress the natural, and the constructionists argue that the natural is produced by the social. Essentialism has positive aspects where strategic essentialism is employed for political reasons such as claiming indigenous rights. Essentialism has negative aspects also. Claiming an essence limits the possibility of multiple subjectivities. I argue that essentialism and constructionism are not easily divided and that they actually mutually constitutive. I want to share this quote from Smith who talks about indigenous essentialism.

But the essence of a person is also discussed in relation to indigenous concepts of spirituality. In these views, the essence of a person has a genealogy which can be traced back to an earth parent, usually glossed as an Earth Mother. A human person does not stand alone, but share with animate and, in Western sense, 'inanimate' beings, a relationship based on a shared 'essence' of life. The significance of place, of land, of landscape, of other things in the universe, in defining the essence of a people, makes for very different rendering of the term essentialism as used by indigenous peoples.

(1999:74)

The essence talked about here by Smith is not just attributed to humans and goes back further than just the 'natural' body, or 'natural' essence of a woman. This essence outlined by Smith has not changed and is still often discussed among Māori people. How I would argue that essentialism and constructionism are connected is for Māori there are social constructions put in place to protect the essence. One needs the other. You cannot socially construct something unless it is given an essence, or meaning through language.

I believe that post-structuralism is beneficial to my research paradigm and methodology because it not only examines and deconstructs existing structures, discourses and institutions but it also incorporates the individual, their perceptions, experiences and feelings through subjectivity which are central to my research objectives.

POST-COLONIALISM

I use post-colonial theoretical perspectives within my research. Post-colonialism is said to have emerged in the 1980s as a critique, and because of, dissatisfaction with white Euro-American feminism, from women of colour. Post-colonialism is defined by Johnston *et al*, as:

A critical politico-intellectual formation that is centrally concerned with the impact of colonisation and its contestation on the cultures of both colonising and colonised people in the past, and the reproduction and transformation of colonial relations, representations and practices in the present.

(2000:612)

Post-colonialism within feminism has contributed to the deconstruction of the 'category' of woman (Larner, 1995:182). White women feminists were forced to 'take a step back' and understand that social theory could not be based on their experiences alone. Post-colonialism has provided a space in which indigenous writers can reassert and reaffirm themselves. "Part of the project of this book is 'researching back', in the same tradition of 'writing back' or 'talking back', that characterises much of the post-colonial or anti-colonial literature" (Smith, 1999:7). Over the last decade or so there has been an increased number of writings concerning Māori women. Crucially Māori women writers such as Kathie Irwin (1992a, 1992b), Patricia Maringi G. Johnston (1994, 1995 with Pihama, 1998), Ani Mikaere (1999b, 2001), Rangimarie Rose Pere (1982, 1987), Leonie Pihama (1992, 1994), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1990, 1992a, 1992b), and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1991, 1992), have paved the way for Māori women's voices to be heard. Not only are voices being heard but also they are telling their own stories and perspectives, which is very important as a building block to 'decolonisation' and aid the efforts of post-colonialism. These writers talk about the challenges and difficulties Māori women face because of colonisation and other impositions but they also illustrate the importance of Māori women, their various connections to Atua, and their strength. Feminism and post-colonialism together has emphasised the need to consider positionality when producing knowledge.

Definitions of post-colonialism are controversial, however. Post-colonialism has been described as just another way the West displays their power to define the

world (Smith, 1999:14). Indigenous writers have a problem with the term post-colonial because to be 'post-colonial' would mean that the colonisers have left, this however, is not the case. If the colonisers did leave the effects of colonialism would still be evident in institutions and ways of thinking left behind (Smith, 1999:98). Despite these difficulties with post-colonialism I believe that post-colonialism is relevant within my research because it allows a focus on positionality and hybridity. Previously I have discussed binary divisions, these create conceptual boundaries through discourses. Hybridity, therefore, "refers to those things and processes that transgress and displace such boundaries and in doing so produce something ontologically new" (Johnston *et al*, 2000:364). I am a cultural hybrid. There is no nice and neat category for me to fit into. I have both Māori and Pākehā blood and am part of the colonisers and of the colonised. Post-colonialism and its notions of positionality and hybridity, have provided a space for me to write. Homi Bhabha (1994) has been very influential with the concept of hybridity. Bhabha's notion of hybridity has been taken further by Paul Meredith who puts Aotearoa/New Zealand into a hybrid context. He states that in New Zealand there is a strong Māori/Pākehā dualism, which needs to be considered because it is not that simple, due to hybrids that are both (1998:306). I believe these concepts and post-colonialism are beneficial to my research because I can take my positionality and my hybridity and use them both within a Kaupapa Māori research paradigm to work towards rectifying the effects of colonisation. "...[P]ost-colonisation ought not to become a premature celebration of the 'end' of colonialism but instead act as a forceful and unsettling reminder of the constitution of our own colonial present" (Johnston *et al*, 2000:614).

I now outline how I conducted my research and the methodological techniques that I used in conjunction with the above theoretical perspectives and paradigms, why I adopt particular methods and their benefits to my research

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To begin I outline the dynamics of the people that I interviewed. I believe that this is important because it shows the variations in ages, occupations and, most

significantly, the different rohe they come from, which influences their knowledge and tikanga practices.

PARTICIPANTS

Preliminary Interview – 18 June 2003

Kare Wiki (22 yrs) – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou

Full time student

In-depth Interview – 7 July 2003

Mr Brown Wiki – Te Aupouri

Secondary Teacher

Mrs Ripeka Wiki – Ngāti Porou

Secondary Teacher

In-depth Interview – 14 August 2003

Angeline Greensill – Tainui

Lecturer

Focus Group – 15 August 2003

Kristy Apatu – Ngāti Kahungunu

Student and Retailer

Christina Tay (28 years) – Te Arawa

Student and Bank Officer

In-depth Interview – 5 September 2003

Beth Dixon (35 years) – Ngai Tuhoe, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu

Kaitakawaenga/Pouako

In-depth Interview – 5 September 2003

Brenda Karauria – Ngā Puhi

Teacher

All participants were non-randomly selected and asked to participate by myself. I felt this was appropriate because of the sensitivity of the subject and I did not want to offend anyone. I chose people that I thought would have knowledge on the subject or people that I had talked to about my research previously and found they were interested. The participants varied in age and can be grouped as follows: 22 to 30 (3 members), 31 to 40 (3 members) and 50+ (3 members). Not all ages are stated above because that information was optional. It was important to me to acquire participants that ranged in age because I knew that experiences and perspectives would vary. The different age groups gave me diverse information and each age group focused on very different aspects, which will become more evident throughout discussions. I carried all of the interviews out in person, face-to-face. This was important to me because I did not want to be 'disembodied' in the process. It also gave me an opportunity to share what I had experienced and learnt. I interviewed a male participant which may be considered unusual however, the interview was carried out with his wife and I believe this interview has been beneficial to my research because I was able to obtain a male Māori perspective about Māori females and their importance to Māori society.

PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

I conducted a preliminary interview with Kare nearly three weeks before I carried out any other interviews. The interview with Kare was primarily to identify problems areas within my research but also to discover if there were any areas that I had previously not thought about and needed to consider. The interview was conducted in the participants' home so that she felt comfortable. The interview lasted just over half an hour and helped me discover various areas that I could improve on. For example, Kare's interview highlighted the importance of Atua, their role in

tikanga, which was an area that I had not considered greatly, so I carried out more research on Atua before conducting later interviews.

FOCUS GROUP

I decided to conduct focus groups because focus groups seemed to be a forum where participants could interact with each other and the topic being discussed (see Goss, 1996; Goss and Leinbach, 1996; Holbrook and Jackson, 1996; and Longhurst, 1996, 2003). Jon Goss and Thomas Leinbach state:

Focus groups give participants an opportunity to narrate their personal experiences and to test their interpretations of events and processes with others, and whether confirmed or disputed, the result is a *polyvocal* production, a multiplicity of voices speaking from a variety of subject positions.

(1996:118, emphasis in the original)

At the beginning of my research I had hoped to carry out a couple of focus groups with 3-5 participants. This did not happen because of difficulty in finding participants and arranging times where everybody could meet. I conducted one focus group with two participants – Kristy and Christina, and myself. It was supposed to be three participants and myself, however the other person could not make the arranged time because of an emergency. The participants were Māori females who also attended the University of Waikato and the focus group was conducted on campus in a room that we had booked because it was close to everybody and participants could attend the focus group after classes. The discussion was largely informal and semi-structured. At the beginning of the focus group I opened by asking both participants if they had seen the episode of Shortland Street where Tama and Shannon lose their baby and Tama cuts his hair off as a sign of mourning. By doing this, I was able to illustrate the types of body rituals and practices that I wanted to talk about.

Discussing these themes outside of themselves first, without just delving in immediately made it easier for participants to relate it to themselves and talk about themselves personally further on. The focus group lasted approximately one hour. I had planned to conduct in-depth interviews with the participants of the focus group afterwards to discuss ideas or issues in more depth, however this was not needed.

The focus group method is very complementary to Kaupapa Māori research practices. Often Māori are reluctant to speak by themselves or in situations where they feel uncomfortable. Having more people around and the participants' ability to interact with me allowed for conversations to flow and sensitive subjects to arise.

Karen Falconer Al-Hindi and Hope Kawabata state:

Feminist researchers collecting the life stories of Māori women engage in *whakawhanaungatanga*, a Māori concept which refers to the process of building family, or kinship... As an offering of good will, trust and reciprocity, the researchers tell their own life stories to the women whose stories they wish to hear. *Whakawhanaungatanga* helps to bridge the difference between the researchers and the participants, and establishes a permanent bond between them. Offering their own stories as gifts prior to receiving the gift of another's story places the researchers on par with the participant. (2002:103, emphasis in the original)

The participants and myself were relatively close in age and we all shared similar knowledge and experiences, which made for great discussion. Knowledge was being produced and shared within the focus group. This was a huge additional benefit for me because we were all learning, not just myself as the researcher. The researcher/researched relationship was reciprocal, and the discussion beneficial for all involved.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The remaining interviews that I conducted were all in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews have been described as beneficial for documenting life histories or research subjects that are highly sensitive or confidential (see Johnston *et al*, 2000:407). The participants involved in the in-depth interviews were situated in the older age brackets. I felt that it was important to talk to these participants in this fashion because their knowledge and life experiences were so vast and rich, that they needed to be looked at 'in-depth'. All of the interviews were carried out in places chosen by the participant, which was usually the participants' home or place of work. Interviews varied in length, anywhere from 45 minutes to 90 minutes long.

The in-depth interviews were relatively informal and semi-structured. While I had questions that I had prepared, the questions were not fixed, and new or different

issues were often discussed. During in-depth interviews I would let the participant speak freely and try not to structure the kōrero too much. This was beneficial because issues sometimes were discussed to deeper levels than I had knowledge of, or new areas would open up. Having a lack of structure fits in well with the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm as explained by Smith (1999:150) and the decolonisation process in the ability of Māori to be able to define or represent themselves. The variations in tikanga based on different areas and tribal affiliations came through in the in-depth interviews, which helps participants to represent themselves.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

Finally, I draw on and incorporate personal experiences that I have been brought up with and learnt as a Māori female. Throughout the interviews participants shared information with me and I shared information with them. I believe that it is unfair to share others' information without sharing some of my own. My positionality within my research is crucial and to leave out my own experiences, as a Māori female, would be 'disembodying' my research. Deirdre McKay, when talking about autobiographies or autoethnographies, states:

Autoethnography is 'self-writing-culture' – writing of a self back into a culture that has been bounded and determined by the descriptions of previous authors. Former research subjects write themselves back in to the official ethnographic record, resisting and renegotiating their representations as produced and circulated through 'research'. Unlike the specialized academic system of description it critiques, resistance autoethnography may be understood by a much wider audience. Using the everyday strategy of telling personal stories to explain events and contexts makes autoethnography accessible.

(2002:195)

McKay states that everyday personal stories are accessible and this appeals to me. Furthermore, people relating and understanding the stories told by the participants and myself, appeals to me. 'Writing back' about Māori experiences, resisting the norm and producing our own knowledges based on what we view as important is vital.

ANALYSIS

Your beliefs as a person are going to affect the approach you take to study and also the conclusions you might draw...
(Kitchin and Tate, 2000:1)

Before I began analysis I had come to the conclusion that I did not want to take apart the participants' narratives to a large extent. I was asking the participants for their knowledge and experiences and it was important to me, and keeping within the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm to keep the information given whole and how it was reiterated to me. Smith describes the feelings that indigenous people have towards research. "The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous word's vocabulary. When mentioned is conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful" (1999:1). I did not want to abuse the researcher/researched relationship by 'pulling apart' the participants narratives. To analyse the data collected, I followed the fieldwork analysis method outlined in Tolich and Davidson (1999:8-9). Described is a cycle where you begin with Data Collection, followed by Data Reduction, followed by Data Organisation, and then Data Interpretation. After collecting the data and reducing it to relevant information, categorising and sorting the information, drawing conclusions from the information takes place. After transcribing each in-depth interview or focus group verbatim, I organised the information into categories based on what was being discussed, such as restriction from spaces, body rituals, colonisation, mana, Atua and so on. After reading all the material, I worked from the participants' narratives. I identified common or conflicting themes, parts of narratives that supported or went against theoretical perspectives, transgressive ideas and new, important or interesting ways of thinking. Based on what was discovered, I decided which material to incorporate and how it would be used.

CHAPTER THREE

Up Close and Personal – Talking with Participants

*Begin though, not with a continent or a country or a house,
but with the geography closest in – the body...
the politics of pregnability and motherhood.
The politics of rape and incest, of abortion, birth control,
forcible sterilisation. Of prostitution and marital sex.
Of what had been named sexual liberation.
Of prescriptive heterosexuality. Of lesbian existence...
Not to transcend this body, but to reclaim it.*
(Rich, 1986:212-213)

GETTING PERSONAL WITH PARTICIPANTS

I now share what the participants shared with me in the interviews I conducted. Throughout the interviews with the participants we discussed themes relating to the body. We had conversations about bodily practices in relation to nails, hair etc, to more personal topics such as body practices during their menstrual cycle. We did not talk about all tikanga surrounding the body, as there are many, and they vary between areas, and the knowledge of participants varied also. While there were similarities in tikanga, there were also differences. Reasons for this could be because of different rohe and iwi affiliations plus participants' different ages. But it could also be in response to another topic that we discussed, which was colonisation. This chapter begins with the reasons why women are important in Māori society and the justifications for tikanga surrounding Māori female bodies. In particular the main themes are Māori women's relationship to Papatūānuku, restriction from urupā and food gathering sites during pregnancy and menstruation, and rituals carried out with parts of the body, associated with the control of space.

*‘manaakitia te hunga e whakawairua mai
ana i nga koopu o nga whaea’
‘protect the spiritual essence and life force
taking place within the wombs of their mothers’
(cited by Norman, 1992:7)*

The importance of Māori women, from a holistic perspective, is linked to Atua and the powers that were inherited through whakapapa from Atua wāhine. Mikaere states that “The process which brings each of us into being brought the world into being. Our very existence is centred around the sexual power of women” (1999b:38). What I believe Mikaere is referring to here is the connection between women, Papatūānuku and the birthing process which was passed on from Papatūānuku. When asked why the female Māori body is significant in Māori society and tikanga, some participants would make connections to Papatūānuku.

Wikitoria: What can you tell me about the female Māori body? Why is it significant in Māori tikanga?

Angeline: Probably because if we start with Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother, Hine-ahu-one, the beginning of humanity. The female body is the whare tangata, without the female body you have no uri, and the whole of the Māori world is based on whakapapa and continuation.
(Angeline - Tainui)

Angeline highlights the importance of women’s ability to give birth and continue life. This is related to Papatūānuku because from her began life and also out of Papatūānuku came the first human life – Hine-ahu-one.

*‘Ko Papatūānuku te matua o te tangata’
‘Papatūānuku is the parent of all’
(cited by Norman, 1992:8)*

Patricia Grace (1984) gives a detailed account of the female Atua and their importance and role in creating tikanga in her book *Wahine Toa. Women of Māori Myth*.

Angeline also talks about women as *whare tangata*. In the *Reed Dictionary of Modern Māori* (Ryan, 1995:369) the word *whare tangata* means religion by marriage, womb or uterus. Pere (1987) describes *whare tangata* to mean the house of humanity. Pere provides further description concerning Māori language and makes links between vital concepts and women. The importance of females and the legacy passed on from Papatūānuku is shared with me, as Ripeka explains:

Ripeka: In the creation the female element is represented by Papatūānuku. Only the female can actually give birth, although we certainly need the male element as well. This makes the female absolutely essential in the process of life. Without her life would not be able to continue. And this places a huge responsibility on the male, to protect and nurture the one responsible for reproducing life. The *whare tangata* of the female body has to be protected. This sets the platform in determining those things Māori female can or can't do. Her role is to reproduce the progeny and to nurture that progeny.

(Ripeka - Ngāti Porou)

These articulations relating to the beginning of life can be described as essentialist. Diana Fuss (1989:2) defines essentialism as “a belief in true essence – that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing”. It constitutes things that are pure or original and supposedly outside of social construction. Ripeka also illustrates the roles men and women have had and still practice in Māori society. Not to take away from men's roles, as producers of life, but women were the essential reproducers of life and men needed to protect that. This concept is further reiterated in this whakataukī (cited by Norman, 1992:4).

*‘He wahine, he whenua, i ngaro ai te tangata’
‘Women and land are the reasons men die’*

Mikaere (1999b:38) states that this whakataukī “refers to the essential nourishing roles that women and land fulfil, without which humanity would be lost”.

Celebrating and embracing these essentialist arguments takes us back to a time when Māori women were celebrated and looked after, a stark contrast to present times and all the impacts of colonisation.

The body, and associated bodily practices, are often connected back to mythology and Atua, therefore tikanga surround them, as Ripeka explains:

Ripeka: Without her [Māori woman] life could not continue and so the
 necessity to protect her through tikanga declaring the female sacred.
 Why? Being the bearer of offspring.

(Ripeka - Ngāti Porou)

It could be argued that these are again essentialist, but I ask, what are the positive and negative and contradictory aspects of essentialising? While I do not find it negative to be Māori, a woman and connected to Papatūānuku, the problem of essentialising is that it may limit women to one ‘essential’ being. There were, however, other important roles that Māori women had in traditional society apart from reproduction, and having tikanga based around the sacredness of women and their importance cannot be seen as negative either. This is an example of the ways in which perceived roles of women (reproduction) are understood through language (spaces, practices and so on) to produce a body that is gendered and sacred. In the next section I discuss the spaces and practices associated with Māori women’s bodies.

SACRED BODIES AND SACRED SPACES

Discussions about Māori spaces and cultural practices have already been debated. Irwin discusses the marae space and debates about the gendered speaking roles. There is the perception that because women are not allowed to whaikōrero on many marae that sexism is being exercised and there is a denial of human rights.

The speaking rights of women on the marae is one of the most misunderstood and abused contemporary issues of our culture and time. Many of those engaged in the debate, and identified as ‘on

the Pākehā side', have been accused of trying to analyse Māori culture in Pākehā terms, in order to give the colonisation of our culture and people a twentieth century face, in the name of feminism and equality of rights.

(Irwin, 1992b:8)

Irwin (1992b) also discusses how Māori men and Pākehā men are bonding through patriarchy resulting in speaking protocol being extended to Pākehā men who know little te reo, however the same courtesies are not given to Māori women. Dame Mira Szászy (1993) describes the marae as a 'patriarchal institution' where the role of women mirrors the larger society; therefore the denial of rights of Māori women on marae legitimates and reinforces the structures, which subordinate them in the Pākehā world. "Denial of speaking rights, in itself, appears on the surface to be harmless, and acceptable to many women, because the custom is said to be traditional. But, like education in our school system, it is the 'unwritten curriculum', with its hidden messages, that is so corrosive" (Szász, 1993:289). Pere (1993) describes her role as a woman as one that is complementary to that of the men, and specific to her marae. So there are varying perspectives about the speaking roles of women on the marae. One perspective expressed by Smith (1992a) is because there are vast tribal differences and variations in the roles of women, this might suggest that women were able to gain and maintain power at a higher level, through key leadership roles and individual achievement, for example, and this in turn was made the norm. Mikaere communicates the need to be aware of whether our tikanga are our own and reflect our own values or whether they are introduced and reflect the views of the larger society.

I hope that my sisters, my daughters and all my female relatives will be recognised for the strengths that they bring to any situation and not prevented from taking on particular roles by some spurious extension of tikanga. For in the end, it is the imposition of patriarchy which I believe to be the most damaging impact of colonisation.

(Mikaere, 1999b:47)

Wendy Larner (1995) communicates that there are differences between the experiences of Māori women as indigenous peoples and Pākehā women as descendants of colonial settlers. Larner also expresses that there is more than one way of interpreting gender relations and Pākehā feminists need to understand this.

The debate from contemporary Māori feminists is that Māori women need to write about their own experiences. “As Māori women, we are simultaneously crafting and constructing our own representations in forms that empower and validate our own interpretations of our own differences. The outcome for Māori women of much theorising about difference is a distancing from Pākehā feminist discourses” (P. Johnston, 1998:29).

What I examine and discuss with participants are their restrictions from spaces as Māori females when their bodies are either menstruating or hapū. What I bring to the surface is not only the reasons why they carry out these practices, but also how they feel about the restriction. By doing this I hope to give them an opportunity to express their own feelings and also upset common western binaries that restriction from space means that you are subordinate. The common spaces deliberated about here are the urupā and food gathering sites. The common times when women are restricted are when they are menstruating, or have their mate, and when they are hapū, or pregnant. Beth talks about an example of restrictions from the urupā and food gathering sites and some reasons for it.

Beth: I can always remember my Nan telling me to stay out of urupā and the sea when I was menstruating. This, eventually, became an automatic thing and now I don't do either...The urupā and the sea are important realms in Te Ao Māori – spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally. They provide sustenance in one way or another and so, going into these 'tapu' places would breach this tapu...I consider myself to be in a tapu state when menstruating and so, will not have sex, swim in the sea, go into urupā etc. I have said a karakia to protect myself if I have desperately wanted to acknowledge a tūpāpaku, if I am menstruating.

(Beth - Ngai Tuhoe, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu)

Beth illustrates the sacredness of these sites and how it would be a breach of tapu to go into one of these areas in a tapu state. Tapu was expressed to me again with an explanation by Kare:

Kare: ...in terms of when they have their period because they are bleeding, they are spilling blood, they're deemed tapu and so um, having a woman so exposed like a woman's mauri, woman's, um, I want to say soul, but it's not right, mana, everything, a woman is so exposed... when they are so tapu like that.

(Kare - Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Definitions of tapu are difficult to explain and vary depending upon the circumstances under which tapu is being exercised. James Irwin (1984) gives an account of what tapu means and entails. When he discusses the notion of blood “[w]omen suffered a number of ritual disabilities[sic], especially at the time of their menses, during pregnancy, and both during and immediately after childbirth. This was not merely because of the loss of blood...” (1984:26). Irwin describes restriction as a disability. In my personal opinion I do not feel that being restricted from spaces because of my period is a disability. This quite possibly is the opinion of a host of feminist writers. Irwin does not appear to be closely aligned to Māori and feminist perspectives. Furthermore, Irwin states that the tapuness of a woman is connected to the mythical accounts of Maui and Hinenuitepo, where Maui tried to obtain eternal life for humans by attempting to reverse the process of birth, by entering her birth canal and was crushed to death between her thighs.

Pere (1982:35) discusses tapu in relation to noa, using the theme of blood. “The power of noa has a vitally important place in the ceremonies of removing tapu from people who had shed human blood in battle, from newly born babies and their mothers, from people who transgressed in ignorance...”. Pere takes away the notions that tapu is bad or scary that may be commonly held, in her summary of tapu. “Tapu can include spiritual restriction, ceremonial restriction, putting something beyond one’s power, placing a quality or condition on a person or an object or place; but

whatever the context its contribution is establishing social control and discipline, and protecting people and property” (1982:36). Pere’s notion of ‘social control and discipline’ inherent in tapu can be applied to Foucault’s work *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the Prison* (1977). Foucault talks about the body as socially constructed and the disciplinary discourses used to gain power over the body. Smith (1999) has used Foucault’s notion of discipline to examine the ‘colonizing of the Other’. Smith states that “[T]he most obvious forms of discipline were through exclusion, marginalization and denial. Indigenous ways of knowing were excluded and marginalized” (1999:68). Tapu can be compared to the Panoptican where prisoners disciplined themselves through the ‘gaze’ of an authority, even though they may not have been being gazed upon. The chance of the gazing by an authority occurring however disciplined prisoners. Tapu can work in the same sense. Tapu is a higher power, something intangible, sometimes considered dangerous and used in social control. Even though you cannot see tapu, you abide by the rules of tapu to protect against something bad happening, disciplining your actions and your body.

While not all participants found themselves restricted from the urupā during pregnancy because of tikanga in their rohe, one participant explains why that practice takes place.

Kare: ...going into the urupā is a place for, yes it is our whānau, but it’s a restricted space from everyone that carries new life, which needs to be protected. Ngā mate o nehe ra, those who have gone before us, and that is their place of rest, and to take in a life, in terms of a pregnant woman is an unbalance and I can’t explain it, I can’t explain that, but I know that it is an unbalance, of taking in a life that has not yet started, they haven’t received the first tihei mauri ora, the breath of life, so they are not quite living and it’s the whole thing of Hinenuitepo and that is the gate to the underworld, that is their resting place physically before they move on, it’s a gate to elsewhere and it’s an operation of all those realms that you don’t confuse life and death.

(Kare - Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

This quote is really interesting to me. What I gathered from it is that there are two forms of tapu. One with being hapū (life giving) and one with the space of the urupā (death), and to mix the two would create an unbalance, as Kare states. Ripeka and Brown reinforce this further.

Ripeka: As a young girl all I was told was if you've got your mate you don't go into the urupā, they didn't really explain to us why. Menstruation is part of the birthing process and so the whare tapu had to be protected, therefore tapu. Quite different to that associated with death.

Brown: You don't mix it.

Ripeka: Yes, you don't mix that with the "tapuness" of death. When you have your mate wahine, or are hapu that's a part of the process of giving life and you don't want any contamination with that because in the urupā that's associated with death. With death and so you probably have two different forms of tapu there.

(Ripeka – Ngāti Porou and Brown – Te Aupouri)

What is evident in this conversation is the essentialist notions of women as nurturers and bearers of life and tikanga surrounding that notion. At no time were you suppose to put you or your baby in danger, or in a situation that could damage your responsibilities as a reproductive woman. Irwin (1984:28) states, "Any person who has broken a tapu prohibition is considered liable to serious misfortune, illness, madness or death. He or she is contaminated and becomes a potential threat to the well-being of the community or the immediate family".

Different tikanga and rohe means that not all participants were restricted from the urupā because of their reproductive capacities. Angeline discusses the making of her urupā noa.

Angeline: In terms of urupā I'm not sure, I can't, in our area it's really interesting in our urupā when my grandfather died she [her grandmother] carried out a ceremony to lift the tapu on the urupā. So that the children and the mokopuna could come there freely so that they wouldn't feel whakamā, to come at any time. And she took up a cup of tea and laid it all out and she actually had food up there to just make the place noa. So people, I don't know whether people, even if they are hapū, have stayed out of that space. Yeah, so I think it depends on your area and your beliefs and how staunch you are on those sorts of things.

(Angeline – Tainui)

Another participant talked about being restricted from the urupā during menstruation but not during pregnancy.

Wikitoria: And are you restricted from the urupā when you are hapū as well?

Kathleen: No. Not our hapū. I mean not where we're from, we're not restricted but then again I don't know, maybe that was a traditional tikanga, but you know a lot of our traditions are watered down.

(Kathleen – Ngāti Awa)

The urupā is not the only space where participants find themselves restricted from when they are menstruating. When I was in my second year at University I was flatting with five other women and we had invited another flat with six people over for a 'boil-up'. Every one of my flatmates had their mate and I had to pick enough watercress for 12 people, with another woman who did not live with us. It took us a very long time coupled with the fact that it was my first time picking watercress. Restrictions from food gathering sites during menstruation are also to do with tapu. This is how it was explained to me.

Kare: By gathering food and that you are making that food tapu and that food gathered is for everybody else to eat and they can't eat it if you've touched it, aye. There's things like not going to the beach cos that's of course another food basket, not going to gather anything, pretty much staying dormant around what you really need to do.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Angeline: And therefore if you have got your mate that there is basically you haven't produced anything, so it's died and it's something to cry over really that's there no life coming from that. And [going into food gathering space while menstruating] also if you're going to grow food, it's got to be something that's going to be living and if you go in there then maybe you'll have some impact on that particular space. And of course you're at that time tapu, tapu, untouched. And if you're going into food, that's a noa space, you're growing food so you've got two sort of staunch areas.

(Angeline – Tainui)

Makereti clarifies this concept in her account of 'The Way it Used to Be' in *Growing up Māori* edited by Witi Ihimaera. She states,

It was important for a girl to know, because when she was mate wahine there were many things which she must not do because she was tapu (unclean) in the eyes of the old Māori...She could not prepare a hāngi (oven) or cook tawa berries. If she did, they would not be cooked. She would not gather shellfish, as this would make them all go to another part of the coast. Nor would she go on cultivated ground, as the crops would be a failure.

(1998:25)

While it was not commonly talked about there are some discussions which focus on restriction from spaces due to the relationship one had with someone who had just died. This was also a practice that I am familiar with. When we were taken back to our marae we did not know a lot of tikanga, however, it was evident that immediate family are restricted in activities so that they can grieve. A participant goes more in-depth about her experience at a loved one's tangi.

Kare: ...it reminded me of how when my nanny died we were the immediate whānau, we were the whānau pani and we weren't allowed to lift a finger, we weren't allowed behind the kitchen. If we were clearing dishes we cleared them only as far as um, you know the cubical spaces where they roll the doors up and down for the dining hall. We were only allowed to clear them as far as that but, there were constantly people around us who were taking it out of our hands and things.

Wikitoria: So the whole area of the actual kitchen, preparing food was forbidden?

Kare: Yeah, all of that was forbidden. But at the same time there was only things that the female could do, going to get the rākau down from the certain trees up in the forest. That was a role for us to go and do because we were whanau of our nanny and therefore it was for us to welcome the rest of the whānau on.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Kare speaks of the restrictions surrounding food because of your relationship to the tūpāpaku. Pere (1982:31) states “No food was allowed near the wharemate, the figurative house of mourning. Even the smell of cooked food wafting across the wharemate would have been regarded as an insult and a form of transgressing the tapu that was placed on the deceased and his or her immediate kinship groups”. I went to a tangi in another area during summer and the wāhine in the immediate family ate in a separate area from everybody else. They had their food brought to them in a special room that was always shut off to others. My friend, who was immediate family, told me it was because they were with the tūpāpaku all day and he was tapu, and they therefore were tapu, so they were not allowed any where near food, so other people would not get sick, which is similar to what Kare expresses. When my father died we had everything done for us but we were allowed to eat with everybody else in the dining room.

‘BODY BITS’ AND PERSONAL SPACE

All the participants have personal preferences and beliefs, which influence their bodily practices. I am interested in the connections between their bodies and their bodily practices and what it means to be a Māori wahine. When I was growing up my father would tell me not to do things, such as not cutting my hair or nails at night, but was vague about the reasons why. When discussing topics like this friends gave me various reasons for why you do certain things as a Māori female and from then on I have been interested in Māori females’ practices, the reasons why, but also interested to find out if others have been lacking in Māori knowledge like myself.

HAIR

Some participants do not cut their hair or nails at night. At other times of the day hair and nails may be collected and buried with an appropriate karakia. This is not an exclusive female practice; it can apply to both male and female Māori. Beth discusses her reasons for this practice.

Beth: ...nor do I cut my hair after dark. I believe in mākutū and if nail and hair were left where someone could get them, whose to know what might happen if someone who doesn’t like me gets hold of them.

(Beth – Ngai Tuhoe, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu)

Another participant also had a similar response as to why you should not cut hair or nails at night.

Angeline: Yeah it’s something that my mother told me I wasn’t to do...Um and I think a lot of it had to do with mākutū stuff. That they could get a hold of someone’s things and they were clever enough they’d use those things to carry out their purposes. That was sort of my

understanding as to why those parts, they were part of you and they had to be put in a safe place, put away.

(Angeline – Tainui)

Both Beth and Angeline mention mākutu and the fear that someone else could get a hold of your body parts for their own purposes. When talking to my cousin recently about bodily practices he told me that the reason behind this practice was if they had enough knowledge, a person could place a mākutu on you, and this could be for revenge for deeds dating long ago or family and personal vendettas. My cousin also stated that there are mischief wairua around. The restriction from this practice at night is elaborated further.

Angeline: But I think mine was mainly something to do with, you don't do it at night because night is a time when you see anything I suppose, spirits come around and all that.

(Angeline – Tainui)

A central theme to this practice was that body parts were buried or disposed of. Kare talks about controlling the space in which they are placed. This could also be related to mākutu and ensuring that no one gets a hold of them.

Kare: ...when you do cut your nails gather them all and then know where they are all going, bury them, put them in the fire, or put them into the rubbish bag. I don't know, I know people bury them, but I haven't been taught that, just to maintain the space, to control the space with which those things are being placed.

(Kare – Te Pupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Pere states "...hair and nail cutting must not be done after sunset...hair and nail parings had to be buried in a special, private place. The practice of makutu (sorcery) was sometimes carried out using the hair and nail parings of the person to be

influenced” (1982:37, emphasis in the original). Other reasons given for burying them, other than for personal safety, are to do with Papatūānuku and returning body parts to where they came from – the whenua.

Kristy: Um, especially if I am cleaning my hairbrush I return it to Papatūānuku.

(Kristy – Ngāti Kahungunu)

Angeline: Probably just putting stuff back to the whenua. You know, you come from the whenua you go back to the whenua. That would be my understanding. Everything breaks down and goes back.

(Angeline – Tainui)

Another common theme spoken by the participants was the connection between hair cutting and mourning. I was particularly interested in this practice because my sister and I cut our hair when our father died. We did this without being told and our main motivation was to put a part of ourselves - that was not materialistic - in with our father. A few years later a cousin’s Pop died and she cut her hair very short, and it became evident that it was to show that she was mourning a loved one. Māori females writers have written about cutting hair when mourning. “We both cut our hair, me and my sister. We did it after she went, as a sign of sorrow – each without the other knowing. But the memories didn’t go” (Nehua, 1995:23). This practice can be related back to the mythology of Taranga and her youngest son Maui-potiki.

Maui-potiki is my youngest child, the child of my old age. I gave birth to him in the beach, secretly. He was still born. Without proper ritual or ceremony, I cut off my hair, wrapped him in it and put him on the sea to be cared for by the gulls and fishes. But I knew the power of my hair. I returned home not knowing fully what would happen, but believing that this child could one day seek me out both in earthly land and the land of the manapau trees.

(Grace, 1984:40)

A participant mentioned this mythology in a conversation we had about cutting hair and mourning.

- Kristy: You can relate that back to Maui when he was born and his mum cut her hair because she thought he had died and that was her sign of mourning and some people still do that.
- Christina: Is that quite an old tradition?
- Kristy: Yeah it is.
- Christina: Oh because I've never heard of it. I'm learning all these new things [whisper]. I've never heard that one either.
- Kristy: I've seen that with my cousin when Nan passed away. She had beautiful long hair and she just cut it off.
- Wikitoria: That's like me with my cousin too. Long, long hair chopped off, real short too, it's not just a little bit.
- Kristy: Yeah.

(Kristy – Ngāti Kahungunu, Christina – Te Arawa)

Throughout this conversation information is being shared and passed on. The participant relates the practice back to mythology and the topic is fascinating for Christina and myself. Discussing this practice and realising that other people did it too, made me feel happy and glad that I had done it for my father. It makes me think that something deep down inside of my sister and myself, that which is not tangible, told us to do it.

The final aspect of hair that was discussed during interviews was not cutting hair when hapū. When I had a discussion with Brenda (Ngā Puhi, 5 September 2003) she explained to me that the head is very tapu, and it holds knowledge and strength. During pregnancy she explained your baby is in a way 'feeding' off you

and needs all your strength, so to cut your hair during pregnancy would be depriving your baby of nourishment and strength, because your hair is part of your head.

There were other various reasons for this.

Kristy: I did not cut my hair. My great grandmother said to me 'do not cut your hair or you'll go through a hard labour' and then I had another friend that told me that she was saying 'your child will have short hair' [giggles], stunt the growth... I didn't cut my hair, that's one thing I didn't do. And the other thing was I warned my sister in law 'don't cut your hair, don't cut your hair, ever', she cut it and she had the most difficult birth ever.

Wikitoria: Did she?

Christina: Oh no.

Kristy: Yep, she had to have a caesarean and stuff so, I said to her 'don't cut your hair, even if you're trimming it'.

Christina: You can't even trim it?

Kristy: No, you can't even trim it. Just, yeah, because it's part of your body so it's connected with you as a whole.

(Kristy – Ngāti Kahungunu, Christina – Te Arawa)

Kristy in this conversation strengthens the notion that hair is part of the whole body and is required for the baby's growth and development. Therefore to cut the hair may have detrimental effects, such as stunted growth or a hard labour. I heard that if you cut your hair during pregnancy that your baby would come out bald and be bald for a long period of time.

What is evident throughout all the discussions with participants is that hair has a significant place in tikanga surrounding their bodily practices. Whether it be not cutting hair because of mākutū or to retain strength for a baby, to cutting your hair as a sign of respect or to show mourning. The head is considered very tapu and there are various tikanga surrounding the head. “The head has always been regarded as the most tapu part of the person. It should be treated with the utmost respect” (Pere, 1982:37). This could be a reason for tikanga surrounding hair.

NOT STEPPING OVER THINGS OR PEOPLE

When discussing body rituals with participants not stepping over things or people was a common theme and it was also a theme that came up initially when starting discussions. When asked what body rituals they carry out as a Māori female not stepping over things was usually discussed first, and usually in association with not sitting on pillows or tables. Here are some examples.

Kare: Things like not stepping over taonga or anything really because of the tapuness that a woman holds, not sitting on pillows, not sitting on tables, um, not being allowed to go the beach when you have your period, quite a few things I think that you just don't really think about. I am sure there's a lot more but because they happen everyday you tend to consciously forget them.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Christina: I never sit on the table or on pillows.

Kristy: Same. I try to teach my daughter that as well. When she's at crèche kind of thing, since it's Pākehā and they don't know those Māori things, so I teach her at home so she knows that. So when she goes into crèche then she will hopefully learn.

Wikitoria: Do you not cut your hair or nails at night time?

Christina: Ae and I never step over men.

(Kristy – Ngāti Kahungunu, Christina – Te Arawa)

Wikitoria: Not stepping over things?

Kathleen: Yeah not stepping over things, particularly careful about it on the marae because they make sure that you are doing things appropriately. And sitting on pillows is a no no. And that's because the head is sacred and the head is generally sleeping on the pillow, so you don't want to be putting your bum on it, basically.

(Kathleen – Ngāti Awa)

Kare and Kathleen gave some reasoning as to why these practices were carried out relating to the tapuness of women and the head. Makereti (1998:25) talks about this a bit more in depth, relating to times when women are menstruating. "When a girl is in this condition she is careful not to step over a man who is lying down or over a man's sleeping place, not to sit where a man sleeps, especially where his head rests...Any of these things would desecrate the laws of tapu". Irwin discusses this practice and reasoning which is similar to that of Makereti.

Women had to be careful to avoid stepping over a recumbent male, or food, or standing in the steam of an earth oven. There was a ritual that called for the eldest daughter of a family of rank to step or stand over a male who had lost health, whereas in other circumstances it would destroy him. Is this because of the power of the female sex or is it because of the power of blood that the woman represents and the mysterious connection with creation?

(1984:26)

Kare goes on in her interview to mention this kind of practice and the protection of men during battle.

Kare: ...In haka and waiata they speak of the ability of the woman to 'whakatapu' men during battle to protect them so this mana must be protected during menstruation.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

In a seminar on 'Mana Wahine' Ani Mikaere (2003) a different narrative was discussed concerning whakatapu and stepping over men. This was practiced to restore tapu and courage that may have been lost during battle. She also talked about one of her ancestors, who saved her people by passing each one of them between her legs. The passing between female sexual organs means life and death, and this has been represented within mythology also. The notion of whakatapu and stepping over men to restore tapu is in a sense a reverse discourse. It is not the common practice to step over men but as Mikaere describes it was a practice that was carried out. The whakatapu practice however, has been 'silenced' and I believe it is due to binary divisions. With the introduction of dualistic thinking from the colonisers, into Māori society, men became associated with tapu and women associated with noa, dulling the importance of women and whakatapu. Another reason that was associated with these practices was hygiene and courtesy.

Beth: ... I don't step over people (male or female), nor do I sit on pillows and tables... At the end of the day it comes down to common courtesy, hygiene and common sense. Why would you sit on things that were specifically made for other uses?

(Beth – Ngai Tuhoe, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu)

Brenda: ...I remember the shock I got when my mate who had taken me to my first Kapa Haka practice took me aside and told me to stop sitting on the table. I thought he was joking, now I can't believe how we could grow up and not learn these basic things... It all makes sense in a

hygiene way, too when you think about it, but it wasn't how we were brought up.

(Brenda – Ngā Puhi)

Not stepping over men and other things, such as taonga, and not sitting on pillows or tables as expressed by participants is correlated to the tapuness of women and the head as have been discussed. Passing between a woman's legs is representative of life and death illustrated in the story of Maui and Hinenuitepo, and the practices carried out in war times when a man needed his health or tapu restored. These practices may be carried out in present times due to these reasons or to more contemporary reasons linked to hygiene and common courtesy.

Hygiene and courtesy reflect learnt behaviours that are usually associated with dominant discourses present in society. Women were and are possibly still regarded as unclean because of menstrual blood and others' feelings of abjection towards this. Abjection is feelings of disgust that you have when boundaries are crossed. Discussing abjection in relation to the body involves bodily boundaries being crossed, such as the inside coming out and spaces between the self and other being blurred. Grosz explains.

The personal disgust and the various social taboos associated with *waste* also attest to a psycho-social horror at what transgresses borders and boundaries. Bodily fluids, wastes, refuse – faeces, spit, blood, sperm etc. – are examples of corporeal byproducts provoking horror at subject's morality... For example, faeces signifies an opposition between the clean and unclean which continually draws on the opposition between the body's interior and exterior.

(1989:75, emphasis in the original)

Māori women's restrictions from places and practices because of their bodies have become coupled with the thought of women as unclean. Ranginui Walker illustrates women's prohibitions from activities because of menstrual blood.

Tapu in the sacred sense applied to people of rank, places of worship and ancestral houses. Tapu in the prohibited sense applied to pursuits such as carving. Women and children were prohibited by tapu from going near tohunga whakairo while they were at work. Tapu in the unclean sense applied to menstrual blood, which

prevented women from gardening or other pursuits connected with food.

(1990:67)

Walker describes menstrual blood as unclean. Berys Heuer (1972:11) talks about women's clothing and resting places being unclean because of the 'spiritual powers of the menstrual flow'. It is hard to determine where these views of women and menstrual blood as unclean originated. Heuer (1972) sourced his material from Elsdon Best (1901, 1924) resulting in Heuer interpreting Best's work, which was an interpretation of the information that he sourced from Māori men and Māori writers at that time. It is possible that other or original meanings were lost through interpretations. Mikaere argues that the changing of our mythology to cast women as powerless, evil and unclean is introduced because of its consistency with the Bible.

The one figure who could scarcely be characterised as passive was Hine-nui-i-te-pō. Given the way in which Maui died, it was extraordinarily difficult to ignore or minimise her supreme strength. Faced with the irrefutable expression of female sexual power that Hine-nui-i-te-pō posed, the redefiners of Māori cosmology recast her as evil and destructive. This fitted nicely with biblical notions of woman being responsible for sin. The negative connotations that men attached to the female sexual organs were also entirely consistent with Old Testament notions of women being unclean because of menstruation.

(1999b:41)

When discussing menstruation with a participant she reinforced some of Mikaere's notions about women being unclean as an introduced notion. She then gives her view on menstruation and how it is considered to be 'sad', not unclean.

Angeline: ...our people were very natural people but when the British came I think that the dominant patriarchal society looked on women as unclean. And therefore if you have got your mate or something that there is basically you haven't produced anything, so it's died and it's something to cry over really that's there no life coming from that.

(Angeline – Tainui)

BURYING THE AFTERBIRTH

The whenua or afterbirth is remarkable because of its relationship through naming as meaning both land and placenta, illustrating the importance of women and the connection to Papatūānuku. “The ‘whenua’ (placenta) is the lining of the womb during pregnancy, by which the foetus is nourished... Whenua is also the term used for land, the body of Papa-tuanuku, the provider of nourishment and sustenance to humanity” (Pere, 1982:17). The placenta is extraordinary because it is part of two bodies, that of the mother and that of the child. This makes it very significant when thinking about bodily practices and parts bodies. Fox and Mikaere (2003) and Makereti (1998) examine the burying of the whenua and how it would be carried out. Participants often talk about burying the whenua when discussing practices relating to being hapū.

Brenda: We buried all of my babies’ whenua, too, I had to ask for my nine year olds when she was born, but now they [medical staff] ask you. Would have liked to have had a special karakia for them then, and when they were born too, but no one around knew, not many people know them.

(Brenda – Ngā Puhi)

Kristy: The other thing is when I had Maia, you know, with your after birth and stuff and the ritual of that is burying it. Rawiri did that all. Did his karakia, took it up into where he lives, there’s kind of like a little, I suppose forest area kind of thing, just near the tennis ground and court and stuff that you can walk up into. And he buried it under a kowhai tree and did a karakia and stuff. Which was kind of nice. Usually mum and dad take them home but they usually bury it but Rawiri was like ‘Oh can I?’ [giggles]

(Kristy – Ngāti Kahungunu)

Participants illustrate the practice of returning the whenua to the whenua. My understanding of the practice, burying the afterbirth in land establishes turangawaewae – a place to stand. This physically connects the person to the land from which they came and connects the person to ancestral lands. When chatting with people about burying the whenua they may have been restricted from burying the whenua in ancestral land and so would bury it at their home or another significant place. This may be due to reasons based on alienation from land and urbanisation. They still feel it to be significant, however, to return the whenua back to the whenua. One participant illustrated the practices she went through after giving birth and returning the whenua to homeland.

Kathleen: ...Um yeah, so once we had the baby, and I birthed the after birth, we kept it in a container and then we planted it into a pot plant which was a Miro tree which, when we had her naming ceremony we took back home and buried. The pito was kept and taken back to Daryl's side of the family and planted in his whānau urupā. That ceremony was just him and me. We just did our own karakia and did that, and the whenua was quite an auspicious occasion, because of the way we named her...

(Kathleen – Ngāti Awa)

Kathleen and her family rituals mean that her baby is connected to both sides of her parents' ancestral lands. The practices and importance of the processes like those of Kathleen and her family, is further reiterated by Pere (1982:18). "The 'whenua' of a baby was buried in a special place where it could not be walked over by any person... The urge to return to the whenua from whence they came, which includes both the burial place of the placenta and the ancestors, is strong indeed".

EMBODYING DEATH

Bodily practices relating to death is not a topic that I specifically set out to discuss. However, it did arise because during interviews I talked about my father's

death and how that was the first time I felt I was immersed in tikanga and found myself struggling because I have little knowledge about Māori tikanga. Participants also brought it up when talking about their own experiences at tangi and practices connected to the urupā. I have already discussed restrictions related to death, I now discuss parts of the body relating to death, signs of mourning on the body and their significance. This is what one participant shared with me about her grandmother and what she performed when her husband died.

Angeline: But yeah when my grandfather died, my grandmother actually spent every night, at midnight she would go up to the cemetery, and it was quite a steep climb for an old dear, she was in her 60's and she would stay there all night and come down in the morning. And she never washed for six months. She just stayed with all her hūpē and stuff on her body. She didn't want to get rid of him, you know. And so just holding all those things close that were still in that sort of tapu tapu relationship I guess.

Wikitoria: Oh.

Angeline: Yeah.

Wikitoria: Far out.

Angeline: Yeah. And my mother said to her 'you stink mum, go and have a wash' but she refused aye. So for six months she was like that. She died two years later, she pined away really.

(Angeline – Tainui)

I was fascinated by what Angeline shared about her grandmother. What I think this discussion illustrates was the importance of one's own body and how personal one's body is. I can relate to this practice because after my father died I used to have

trouble sleeping, so I would go and sleep in my father's bed because I could smell him there and it put me at ease, enough so that I could sleep. Kare also talks about bodily secretions.

Kare: When women grieve, the hūpē me ngā roimata, this is the release women have coming from their wairua, the nurturer's instincts for life so we provide the balance for our tāne, thus the whanau in letting go.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

As hair was one way of showing mourning, bodily secretions such as hūpē and tears were another way of showing grief and dealing with the pain of a loved one.

Visitors were able to express grief and share that of the immediately bereaved family through the release of tears and mucus or through blood from self inflicted lacerations. The tangihanga was a time for both men and women to express and give vent to their emotions openly and freely.

(Pere, 1982:31)

As Pere mentions here, Kare also discusses the self-infliction of wounds as a sign of mourning. This is what she said after we were talking about cutting hair as a sign of mourning within the grieving process.

Kare: ...In the grieving process our kaumātua use to draw blood by scratching themselves for grief.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Irwin gives an explanation of rituals surrounding death.

In earlier years those arriving at a tangihanga would perform haehae (lacerate) on the face and chest with a pipi (mollusc) shell until the blood ran. This was utu for the death... Today these dramatic gestures have been abandoned and mourners pay utu in three main ways: (a) by weeping and wailing, (b) by oratory and (c) by the exudings of the nose and mouth. These are considered appropriate forms of utu for the loss by death of a member of the tribe.

(1984:50)

I have explored the body within space and the body as a space in pre-colonial and present times. The connection between Papatūānuku, as the beginning of humanity and Māori women as *whare tangata* establishes the importance and the need for *tikanga* to surround Māori women. Restriction from *urupā* and food gathering sites during menstruation and pregnancy were explained in relation to *tapu* - *urupā* and food gathering sites as *tapu*, and the body as *tapu* during menstruation and pregnancy. Participants explained their spatial restrictions and they elaborated on how they felt about their restrictions. Body rituals carried out by Māori women were also examined, along with the reasons why. Body rituals were related to *mākutu*, mourning, strength, *tapu*, *whakatapu*, representative of life and death, and more contemporary reasons such as hygiene, because women's bodies have become associated with being unclean. The body rituals carried out by Māori women can also be related to space. Whether it is when they are conducted, as with not cutting hair or nails in the space of night, controlling the spaces where you put discarded body bits, or connections to *whenua*; establishing *turangawaewae*, or returning body parts back to the *whenua* – Papatūānuku.

CHAPTER FOUR

Colonisation – Colonising Bodies

*‘Puhi wahine e pao i runga i to kura pounamu
Arā ki te haro ahau
Ko au tonu te mekemeka ka nohu i runga i nga take o nga
puhi maunga puha i te korero:
Ko au tonu te uha o taku mana
Ko au tonu’*

*‘Nobel women chant upon your greenstone rock
That if I am to be shattered
I am to be the greenstone necklaces that will sit upon the base
of every female mountain that activates the words:
I am the source of my own power
I am’
(cited in Pere, 1982:92)*

Colonisation in Aotearoa, New Zealand is a known fact. The damaging effects of colonisation can be seen in the everyday lives of the aboriginal people of Aotearoa. My personal experiences are further proof of this. The teachers at my father’s grandmother’s school caned her for speaking Māori language. Te reo Māori was not passed onto my father, while he could understand it quite well, he did not speak it well. Because of what my great grandmother experienced at the hands of the colonisers, I was not brought up speaking te reo, which I view as a missed basic human right. When I started high school and I was choosing subjects to take, instead of Māori language my father told me to take French and Japanese, because that was ‘the way the world was going’ and to learn ‘what the Pākehā learn’. And so I did.

Brenda discusses similar experiences with me from the perspective of a teacher and the experiences from her students and their grandparents.

Brenda: ...There's a big loss in the 'grandparent' generation I see it at school too. The parents, they will and are learning with the kids, but there was a huge gap with their parents whose parents, the great grandparents, etc were punished at school, for speaking Māori. [I] have learnt about some of these ways of thinking from courses, reading, etc, [and] my Dad still says we're one sixteenth, he's one eighth, etc, from policies of that time.

(Brenda – Ngā Puhi)

Colonisers' ways of thinking were passed down through our own ancestors because of what they themselves experienced and how they were taught to think. Wendy Larnier and Paul Spoonley illustrate the beliefs of colonisers in earlier stages of colonisation. "Both the missionaries and administrators were imbued with the belief that their institutions and values were superior to *te tangata whenua*, or Māori as they insisted in calling them" (1995:42, emphasis in the original). Spoonley (1993) states that institutions such as schools were a tool that not only gave Māori minor labour skills but also acted as a force that convinced Māori that their traditional cultural values and institutions should be replaced with those of Pākehā. Walker further reiterates this point. "The assumed superiority of the incoming Europeans was built into the institutions of the new society. The first such institutions to be transplanted and take root in New Zealand were the mission schools" (1990:85).

Waerete Norman discusses similar experiences and the loss of language due to inevitable changes for survival strategies in a changing world.

My mother and father were both classical speakers of *te reo* Māori and we were not prohibited from speaking *te reo* in any way, although our upbringing was fairly strict. The shift to Auckland however, resulted in the loss of *reo* for my two brothers who understood clearly what was said but couldn't speak *te reo* fluently except some rude swear words.

(1998:124)

This quote highlights the effects of urbanisation as a product of colonisation.

Another article that highlights the effects of urbanisation and focuses on the Māori body is that by Gregory A. Waller (1998) 'Embodying the Urban Māori Warrior', which analyses the well-known New Zealand film *Once Were Warriors* released in 1993, based on the novel written by Alan Duff (1990). Waller traces the movement, adornment and actions of the Māori body in urban space and different variations of embodiment. When reading material surrounding the effects of colonisation on Māori (see Greenland, 1991; Irwin, 1992b, 1993; Moana Jackson, 1993; Kupenga *et al*, 1993; Mead, 1994; Mikaere, 1999b; Pihama, 1994; Ramsden, 1993; Smith, 1999 and Sykes, 1994), it becomes evident that the status, role and respect of Māori women was and still is largely affected by colonisation.

Firstly, I discuss the devaluing of Māori women with the introduction of colonial patriarchal views and the re-telling of Māori mythology. I then examine how this has affected tikanga and the views Māori men have of Māori women. Secondly, I outline binaries and their relationship to ways of thinking and empirical data provides evidence of disruption to binary thinking. Finally, I discuss Kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa as Māori initiatives employed to 'fight' the effects of colonisation.

DE-VALUING MĀORI WOMEN

When the colonisers came to Aotearoa and settled they brought with them their own ethnocentric beliefs and values that were based on a patriarchal society, the belief in one God, as well as notions surrounding gender (see James and Saville-Smith, 1989). Kupenga *et al*. state,

Changes in the status of Māori woman occurred with the arrival of the Pākehā, who brought with them a new economic system. Inherent in their system were individualistic and sexist values. It was a system that not only rewarded the individual, but undervalued women.

(1993:37)

There was a focus on the individual, land and economic gain. These were not values that Māori held. As the quote above illustrates, Māori women suffered the effects of colonisation the most because the values and beliefs that celebrated women were

being subordinated and replaced with the views of the colonisers. Kupenga *et al.* outline the importance of Māori women.

Māori woman lived and drew her strength from the example of her tūpuna wāhine (female ancestors). Her presence and contribution was respected by the whole whānau (family group), and accordingly she was granted material and power considerations equal to that of men. This provided the forum for her to participate in the decision-making processes at whānau hui where the major decisions were made.

(1993:305)

It becomes obvious that the notions surrounding women already in Aotearoa, and the foreign notions brought in, were contrasting. Colonisation (with its emphasis on one truth) meant that Māori ways of thinking were to be eliminated.

...Māori women occupied very important leadership position in traditional society, positions of military, spiritual, and political significance... When the missionaries and early settlers arrived in Aotearoa, they brought with them their own culturally specific understandings of the role and status of women.

(Mikaere, 1999b:39)

The colonisers' worldview was patriarchal and so the colonisers' set about to change the view Māori men had of Māori women. While I acknowledge that there possibly were gender politics occurring in Māori society before colonisation, I do not believe that the status of Māori women was less to that of Māori men prior to colonisation. Smith highlights a common view, which is gender roles preceding colonisation were balanced.

It is argued by some Māori women that Māori society prior to colonisation was one which relied on a balance of roles between female-ness and male-ness. This position is frequently espoused in terms of the *complementary* roles played by men and women in pre-Pākehā society. In order for society to survive the balance in roles needed to be maintained. Colonisation upset this balance by promoting the activities and perspectives of knowledge held by Māori men at the expense of Māori women.

(Smith, 1990:17, emphasis in the original)

RE-TELLING OF MĀORI MYTHOLOGY

As I have illustrated in previous chapters, the importance of women is connected to their relationship to Atua. There is an inherent relationship to

Papatūānuku and other female Atua. Tikanga surrounding Māori women and their bodies are sourced from mythology and female Atua. The colonisers devalued the status of Māori women to one that was more acceptable to British standards by re-telling Māori mythology. Kuni Jenkins describes contrasting thoughts between colonisers and tangata whenua, and how Māori women became devalued.

Western civilisation when it arrived on Aotearoa's shore, did not allow its womenfolk any power at all – they were merely chattels in some cases less worthy than the men's horses. What the coloniser found was a land of noble savages narrating...stories of the wonder of women. Their myths and beliefs had to be reshaped and retold. The missionaries were hell-bent (heaven-bent) on destroying their pagan ways. Hence in the re-telling of our myths, by Māori male informants to Pākehā male writers who lacked understanding and significance of Māori cultural beliefs, Māori women find their mana wahine destroyed.

(as cited by Mikaere, 1999b:39)

Mikaere (1999b) takes the re-telling of Māori mythology debate further and illustrates that Māori cosmology was altered and turned away from that which focused on the balance between Ranginui and Papatūānuku, male and female, to one that mirrored Christianity with the introduction of one God, the supreme male God Io. The balance that Māori society was based upon was destroyed and women's power left extremely subordinate to that of the men. The individualistic, economically driven and selfish view that the colonisers had, in regards to Māori women, is outlined in the following quote. "Aside from being regarded as the wives and children (the property of Māori men, or potential bedmates for white men), Māori women were also sometimes regarded by the settlers as potential sources of land and economic security" (Mikaere, 1999b:41).

WHAT HAPPENED TO MĀORI MEN?

The changes in the values and ideas of Māori men towards Māori women with the introduction of patriarchal worldviews and the subordination of our own is further reiterated by Kupenga *et al.*

Under a Pākehā system, the only demand was for males. Gradually the attitudes of Māori men began to change. They began to model themselves on their Pākehā bosses and workmates, regarding their

earnings as belonging to themselves... With this psychological shift, Māori women began to experience a new social order, manifested not only in the new individualistic attitude, but also in the new attitude towards them as decision-makers, partners, wives, lovers, mothers, nurturers, caregivers and sisters.

(1993:308)

Due to patriarchal ideas colonisers privileged Māori men over women. It was men with whom they traded and negotiated with, and it was men who they conversed with about Māori culture and beliefs. Introduction of patriarchal beliefs has occurred in cultural spaces and an example of this is the way in which male roles became more important than women's roles on marae. Here is another example illustrated by Irihapeti Ramsden.

A small but significant system of the early ideas of Judaeo-Christianity and its impact on the gender roles in Māoridom is the refusal of some Māori men to hongi with Māori women. This restricts the greetings of our ancestors to men only, and often Pākehā men at that. The effect is to degenerate the mana of Māori women and therefore of all Māori.

(1993:349)

The hongi is a significant cultural practice and one that is used to symbolise Māori often in television advertisements and so on. The refusal to hongi Māori women depicts the depth in which patriarchal views have penetrated Māori culture. When I was discussing debates about marae space with one of the participants she gave me her views about hongi.

Wikitoria: I read some readings by Pākehā feminists about the marae being a space where women are subordinate.

Kathleen: Oh yes, well I mean they can think what they like but they're not Māori aye. I mean, I guess they're talking about whaikōrero and how women don't. But women have other roles, they karanga and karanga is the equivalent of a male whaikōrero. I don't have a problem with that. What I do have a problem with is Pākehā men getting up before Māori women. I know that when you go to harirū, like when you go to hongi at the end of it, if Pākehā men get up and go before me I'll

push in front of them. So I mean I guess, and my sister does it too because we won't let Pākehā go before us on the marae [laughs].

(Kathleen – Ngāti Awa)

This quote displays Kathleen's assertion of her rights as Māori and her views, which cement the marae as a Māori space. It can be seen as an attempt to discontinue the colonisation of Māori spaces. Here is a quote from Kathleen giving her perspective of some Māori men today and the effects of colonisation.

Kathleen: ...I think the body and the fact that you are the whare tangata gives you mana. I think that's why a lot of Māori men today are intimidated by successful Māori women because they have that extra mana of being female. I think that the dialogue surrounding the female body has been, how would you put it? Rendered invisible, I mean you don't talk about it, it's like, I don't think that traditionally that we didn't talk about it, I thought we talked about it all the time through different forms, through waiata. There are waiata that specifically talks about females etc. But I think it's the colonising of our culture that has kind of put women in the background and not focused on them at all. We should be celebrating our bodies and be proud except we're not. And that's not a Māori thing, not in my opinion, it's a Pākehā thing.

(Kathleen – Ngāti Awa)

Taking note of Kathleen's assertive actions to put Māori women on level ground with Māori men in marae spaces, we will now look at how I disrupt binaries and reveal the importance of Māori women in Māori spaces.

DISRUPTING BINARIES

The binaries that I focus on are the man/woman binary, the inclusion/exclusion binary and the superior/subordinate binary. While I do not want to reinforce further the Māori/Pākehā binary, it needs to be examined to illustrate the differences in

worldviews and disrupt universalistic meta-theories. The Māori/Pākehā binary is already problematic with the emergence of cultural hybrids, consisting of both Māori and Pākehā blood. Hybrids split the binary because they traverse both Māori and Pākehā spaces confidently. What I specifically look at is the notion that restriction from certain spaces is often linked to being subordinate, or othered. Robyn Longhurst (1998) examines pregnant women's experiences of the public space of a shopping mall and how that space is constructed in a way that excludes them from participating in that space easily, but also discursively, through advertising. Longhurst discusses how people have feelings of abjection towards full term pregnant women because binaries and their bodily boundaries may break down. Pregnant women are both self and other, with their insides threatening to come out and as such, they are constructed as leaky bodies. Similarly I examine Māori women's restriction from spaces when their bodies are in certain stages. What I aim to achieve is a disruption of binaries associated with subordination and exclusion from spaces based on bodily functions as a woman by putting forward a non-western Māori perspective. The hypothesis that I work from is that Māori women are restricted from space during certain times (menstruation and pregnancy) because of the power they hold as a female, they are tapu or sacred during that period. In a sense what I aim to do is unsettle the hegemonic discourse and convert the binaries. This can be described as a reverse discourse, where I have flipped the binary in an attempt to subvert the power of the dominant discourse.

Fundamental to being able to disrupt the binaries related to restriction from space were the participants' perceptions and feelings towards that restriction. Bodies are sites of identities, whether the identity is chosen or given. It is the participant's body that is restricted and it is their body that is being judged and noticed by others. After discussing where, when and why they are restricted from spaces I asked the participants how they felt about being restricted.

Wikitoria: When you are restricted from space how does that make you feel?
Like does it make you angry? Or...

Kathleen: Oh I feel special, it's good. Because why would you be angry for being special? Aye. I don't know. Certainly doesn't make me angry at all, I wouldn't have even thought of that. It makes me feel cool [giggles].

(Kathleen - Ngāti Awa)

From this statement it is obvious that Kathleen did not feel subordinate because of her restriction, she herself describes the feeling as 'special' and 'cool'. Kathleen was not restricted from spaces when she was hapū because of the tikanga in her rohe.

Kathleen did discuss with me however, how she felt restricted in Pākehā spaces during her pregnancy.

Wikitoria: And during your pregnancy were there any times when you were restricted from certain spaces?

Kathleen: Um, in the Māori world do you mean? Or in, because I think in the Pākehā world that it's restrictive in terms of access to places and just feeling out of place, you know fugly and big and blah, blah, blah. Whereas you feel more comfortable in Māori situations, like having a puku at the marae I felt really special. Because people would comment on it and look at it and talk about it and blah, blah, blah. Whereas in Pākehā public spaces they 'othered' you and they kind of didn't even want to look at you [giggles]. So yeah you felt better in Māori environments.

(Kathleen – Ngāti Awa)

Kathleen's description of pregnancy within Pākehā public spaces is supportive of Longhurst's work (1998) about pregnant bodies and public spaces. Kathleen feeling comfortable in Māori situations reinforces the notion that Māori women are not restricted from cultural spaces because they are subordinate, and that dualistic thinking is reflective of hegemonic thinking. Kathleen experienced that her puku was

talked about and that the talk was positive. Longhurst discusses the role the mind/body dualism plays in relation to knowledge in geography.

The mind/body dualism plays a vital role in determining what counts as legitimate knowledge in geography. So long as the mind is privileged over the body, the hegemonic group in geography will continue to edit out what they consider to be dirty... What constitutes appropriate issues and legitimate topics to teach and research in geography comes to be defined in terms of reason, rationality and transcendent visions as though these can be separated out from passion, irrationality and embodied sensation.

(Longhurst, 1998:494)

The body is the lesser 'other' of the mind and is undermined in everyday Pākehā situations and mundane experiences. Kathleen's statement upsets the mind/body binary by not being subordinate to the mind in Māori situations; her body is not othered, rather it is talked about without inhibition.

Another participant was brought up to understand these practices and she talked about observing her cousins who were pregnant at that time, at her Nan's tangi and her feelings about it.

Wikitoria: So how does this restriction make you feel? Are there positive and negative feelings?

Kare: Um, well that's the thing, there are both positives and I guess Western negatives, things in which because of human rights and you know so forth, it makes us feel like we deserve that person to be there, but understanding tikanga, nothing overrides that so that's the positive of it, it's yeah, you don't play with that you just know it's there for a reason and it operated there for a reason.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

This statement from Kare was very interesting to me because she described the negatives as 'Western'. By describing them as 'Western' and therefore foreign this places an emphasis on ethnocentric values being imposed upon Māori cultural practices. Kare highlights the positive as tikanga; it has a purpose, a reason. This to

me seems like Kare puts Māori values such as tikanga first in values and other values not inherently Māori further down the list. Kare's statement disrupts the inclusion/exclusion binary because she does not view the restrictions as negative. Kare illustrates how inclusion in other aspects of the tangi makes it easier with dealing with restriction.

Wikitoria: Do you think that your cousins, they might have felt better after the tangi about not going into and breaking tikanga?

Kare: Yeah, well at the same time, they were there right the way through the tikanga process aye, the grieving processes for so many days, so because they were involved in that and they walked right up to the fence where, you only take the body with the feet first through the fence and that's to help walk them through so their walking in the right direction to where they are going to go next and to be able to see up to that point, not necessarily see the body go down but come away, go back to the marae, which is the welcoming back on of the whānau and its new life, to celebrate the life that has just gone, the poroporoakī ends it all off. Because they are involved in that I don't think they would have had any negative feelings about their restriction from the urupā itself. They understand that they have a new life and it's certain places for certain tikanga. Our tīpuna were with them as mentioned also.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Māori have a very holistic worldview. Tīpuna are always with us in the world that we physically occupy. The realms that separate the 'living' and the 'dead' are not closed off. Kare describes the tangi as more than just where Māori women are restricted. There were other processes, which her cousins were involved in and tīpuna were always around, so negative feelings were not present. This holistic

approach is a disruption of the life and death binary. Again the importance of tikanga is highlighted. Another participant reinforces the ideas expressed by Kare.

Wikitoria: So how does this restriction make you feel, like say from the urupā or from gathering food and is it positive or negative feelings?

Kristy: ...I did all my mourning...

Wikitoria: When the body was there?

Kristy: Yeah when the body was there and before the closing and I said my goodbyes there and then, knowing that I couldn't go into the urupā, so that kind of eased the...pain of not going into the urupā.

(Kristy – Ngāti Kahungunu)

What is evident when discussing Māori women's bodies is that restrictions are based on underlying principles in Māori society. Mikaere (1999b) talks about the power of women being shown in mythological stories of Papatūānuku, Hine-ahu-one and Maui's kuia that guided him. Mikaere sums up feelings about restrictions nicely in this quote.

Certainly, we were aware that there were restrictions concerning menstruation, but how could such restrictions be construed in a negative sense when the role of women as the nurturers of future generations was so fundamentally important, and children so treasured? How, I was to wonder in later years, could my femaleness possibly be the source of my disempowerment when I had found childbirth to be such an extraordinarily empowering experience?

(1999b:46)

SPACES IN-BETWEEN MĀORI AND PĀKEHĀ

While the majority of participants did not view restrictions as negative, one participant had a different view. After asking how she felt about the restriction and if there were positives and/or negatives she stated:

Christina: For me it would be a mixture of both... Because by not doing it I feel like I'm letting down like my grandmother and my mother and you know. Because I've been able to abide by these rules and now I'm bringing in my colonised spinning just sort of thinking well it's more convenient for me to ignore these rules.

(Christina – Te Arawa)

While this does not reinforce the binaries discussed, it does show the effects of colonisation. Tikanga and knowledge are subdued because of new options that are available. Christina knows what should be carried out in terms of tikanga but chooses an alternative, 'more convenient' option. Beth discusses the positives and negatives of colonisation surrounding menstruation and methods used during menstruation, and how they have changed how we think and act in situations where tikanga would have been taken very seriously.

Beth: Auē! Taukuri e! Colonisation. What hasn't this influenced? It has a lot to answer for. The introduction of tampons, sanitary pads, sanitisation, is a positive. No longer do we have to use a soft type of moss as a pad when menstruating, no longer do we have to be in a separate whare when in labour, out in the cold. Yes, there have been some positive influences, but what about the other side of the coin? Now we have the problem of apathy. Because we can use tampons, more women will see this as a way to swim in the sea while menstruating regardless of the fact that it is still tapu to do so... Gone are the days when you said you couldn't go into the urupā because of it. Now there are no visible signs to say that you've got it – so you can 'get away with it'. Technology and colonisation have positives, yes, but at the same time they are taking away our history, our basic rituals, which is simply common courtesy and basic hygiene.

(Beth – Ngāi Tuhoe, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu)

Beth reinforces that notion that tikanga and knowledge surrounding the body are changing because colonisation has introduced more convenient options. It is not as obvious when a woman has her mate and so tikanga is overridden. While this is the choice of the individual, one participant talked about tikanga having to take second place because there was no other option.

Kristy: The other thing is the preparation of food, not touching meals and everything. In a way I kind of thought now I've got Maia and my mindset is I have to prepare food for her so I've kind of taken that boundary, you know sort of thing.

Wikitoria: Like things aren't so much enforced these days?

Kristy: Yeah, it isn't actually because you kind of think right you know even though I got taught your not allowed to prepare red meat if you've got your period, and you're not allowed to collect seafood, something which I abide by, just the seafood when I've got my period and I kind of bum out because I want to go out and help and that's the other thing that I like to help. But like in terms of food preparation now I think no I've got to feed my daughter so I've got to get ready and yeah.

Wikitoria: Do you think that's kind of because it's changed from being a big whānau, whānau base, where you'd have heaps of people to help with food prep and stuff like that where maybe you could sit out but now it's changed where it's more like households?

Kristy: Individuals aye... Yeah it has, especially if you've moved away from whānau.

(Kristy – Ngāti Kahungunu)

Kristy discusses knowing tikanga and what should and should not happen in regards to food gathering and preparation but talks about not having a more convenient option. The introduced change which focuses on individuals and not the whanau or communal living makes it harder for participants to carry out tikanga because there are not the people around to help with domestic situations like the preparation of food during menstruation, which there would have been in pre-colonial times. Christina also discusses the changes to how we use to live and urbanisation.

Christina: ... I don't collect a lot of kai moana but you know if I've got my period and I need something out of the garden then I'll go and get it. Like you say just that whole structure's changed. You know once before when everybody assumed a role and that's just the way things ran but now with, I don't know, urbanisation or whatever. If my tane is not home I just run out and grab the parsley and just get on with tea you know.

(Christina – Te Arawa)

It is evident from what participants have stated that colonisation has affected knowledge surrounding the female Māori body by introducing more convenient options, but also by leaving us with no other options which is apparent when discussing the change from communal living in rural areas to individual living in urban areas. Another effect of colonisation, which is also linked to urbanisation and the move from a rich Māori learning environment, is the lack of knowledge being passed on. Christina talks further about how she feels about restriction from the urupā.

Christina: I've just learnt this year, because I'm 28 now that the reason my cousin stood at the gate when my Nan died was because she had her period. And I just felt that was such a harsh rule because I've only just

learnt it. It almost felt as if she didn't have a chance to say goodbye properly. I don't know if that's the right thing to say.

(Christina – Te Arawa)

Christina outlines here her feelings towards restriction from the urupā during menstruation. She then reflects upon her feeling this way as being due to the fact that she has just learnt the practice, having not been brought up with it. The lack of knowledge and understanding of Māori culture can be seen as an effect of colonisation. During the focus group and we were all sharing information about restriction from food gathering sites Christina talked about her up bringing.

Christina: Just, yeah, I was whangai'd by a Pākehā family, so I just haven't really had those things drilled as much as the other stuff I was saying. And even going into the garden at home mum didn't come in the garden with dad and me. And I'm just not sure that I would adhere to that either.

(Christina – Te Arawa)

Christina reveals here that it is because she was brought up with a Pākehā family that tikanga, surrounding restriction from spaces has not been 'drilled' into her, but basic tikanga, such as not sitting on tables, has. These narratives from Christina are great examples of hybridity. Christina has been influenced by Māori and Pākehā practices and traverses in both Māori and Pākehā spaces. On the one hand, Christina's hybridity is good because she has the freedom to make her own choices. On the other hand her hybridity makes it hard for her to make those choices regarding tikanga because of the influence from her Pākehā family members 'not drilling in [Māori] stuff', and a sense of obligation to Māori family members and their practices, carrying on tradition. She is in two minds about which set of values to follow or adhere to. It can be assumed that it is easier to dismiss tikanga and not adhere to it when there is little understanding as to why it is in place or when knowledge has not been passed on fully.

Having a more convenient or no other option, a lack of knowledge and knowledge not being passed on to full potential, were the main effects of colonisation that were raised by participants in relation to the female Māori body. One of the ways that these effects were implemented was through changes to the way Māori lived communally. Angeline discusses another way, the introduction of new religious beliefs.

Wikitoria: You've told me that you believe there has been a change in carrying out of body rituals over time. How has colonisation influenced Māori knowledge surrounding the body?

Angeline: I think colonisation brought with it a particular worldview which as a worldview that was influenced by the Bible, we were colonised by the English who came from an Anglican background basically, the Church of England. And if you go into the Bible its domination usually by men and the women and children have to obey the husband. And a lot of that actually started, 1800's, you start getting the churches going up north, the Catholics and everyone else telling you what you can do, what you can't do and our people adopting it because they already had a spiritual wairua base anyway. And so it was just another god to them I guess. But they picked up what they perceived to be parts of the culture. I mean if you get immersed in it you start being influenced. You know, trading, they started picking up a whole lot of things that weren't ours. And in the same way I think knowledge about the body has become a little bit distorted because of that.

(Angeline – Tainui)

Angeline reinforces what I have discussed previously in this chapter regarding introduced religious beliefs. She goes on to discuss earlier writers that have become famous for their writings on Māori people and how they were involved in

colonisation being implemented and effects executed, through ethnocentric interpretations or misinterpretations of information and knowledge.

Angeline: ...When Matahoro did his writings and that stuff was supposed to be sent to the museum, people got hold of it like Elsdon Best, Percy Smith and all those people, and they wrote their interpretation of what he had actually said in the wananga that he did for his people through his stories. So they've got a lot of knowledge, which is good stuff but it's their interpretation of what he had done, and it was supposed to be published. And yet people have been able to draw on his teachings you know. But they got all the kudos and they got all the books out of his work. And so you get changes like that through people interpreting and writing because our people were not writers at that time. In English anyway. We weren't the anthropologists. People come and look at you as an object and come up with ideas about this is how it is and in fact they may not even be seeing what is going on. They may be misinterpreting. So they brought in values that were not ours.

(Angeline – Tainui)

Kare discusses a different angle about the same topic.

Wikitoria: Do you think rituals like we have talked about are being lost or not being carried out to their full potential like in pre-colonial times?

Kare: Yeah, definitely. I think it has a lot to do with colonisation, there were far more tikanga that we operated under as a society pre-colonial times, and to *our disjunction* came colonisation and so much has happened with it, our society had a balance and once a western patriarchal society entered here the role of women was diminished, straight away, you know, the balance was tipped. You have those

writings from Elsdon Best, and all those male figures, because they were male academics and because males were the strongest sex in the western society they could only relate through their own eyes, their ethnocentric ways and they could only relate to our Māori males. So what Māori males were thinking was okay, they're asking us about our role so here it is, the problem arose that Elsdon Best and alike were disinterested in our women!

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

These ways of thinking which left out Māori women and in turn their bodies, impedes on the passing on of knowledge because our women are subordinated, ignored, de-valued and rendered powerless. All around you, you hear from people, the media, institutions, that knowledge is power. The colonisers took away Māori women's power by taking away knowledge about their bodies, their identities as women, their mana wahine. Colonisers prioritised the knowledge which was important and which was not. Angeline discusses this.

Wikitoria: Did colonisation impede on the processes of passing on of knowledge?

Angeline: Yes because there were only certain knowledges that were prioritised. What they did was they set up a framework of education. Mainly starting with missionary education first. Which taught our people their rules, their values, their stuff. And over time attempted to replace the traditional values of our own people on issues. And so you have the education system that we have today, that is still influenced that way. We are working within a framework that is not ours. We are still within the systems that are Western based and they have economic imperatives rather than historical or cultural.

(Angeline – Tainui)

Angeline outlines foreign systems of education and economic imperatives as systems that have influenced Māori and contributed to the loss of knowledge. On a more personal level Kare shares with me the loss of knowledge that she has witnessed in the people of our generation where their bodies are concerned, and how she feels about the loss that has occurred.

Wikitoria: Have you seen from our generation, the loss of knowledge about the body?

Kare: Ermm, you see a lot of it, a lot at school but also coming through you see a lot of Māori women sitting on pillows, having sex in marae, um, things like that, how can you miss the most basic tikanga like that? Sitting on tables, um, sitting on the couch and lifting their legs up on to their boyfriends legs, things like that, that I know my nanny use to observe and kaumātua would really frown upon it. They would never diminish the mana of the person in front of anybody else, but they would be hurt themselves for this generation gap that has occurred in New Zealand with Māori because of the introduction of the western legal system and everything that has imposed on this country has really affected everybody down to the lowest levels where our generation has either got it or they don't. And it's sad because they know they are breaking tikanga but they don't understand why they shouldn't do it so it still carries on and it's not unless they are ready to understand that you can, perhaps, I don't know, stop stuff like that, but there are so many people around that don't have an understanding of it and it's sad.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Kare states that some of our generation know that they are breaking tikanga but it continues to happen because the reasons why you should not break tikanga and why

tikanga is important are not known. Loss of knowledge surrounding our tikanga is a huge impact of colonisation inflicted upon the younger generation.

Saying that the younger generations do not understand does not mean that they do not want to. When talking to participants, many found the receptivity of younger generations towards knowledge was relatively good and there was a willingness to adopt Māori practices.

Wikitoria: How do you find the receptivity of younger generations for learning Māori cultural practices and knowledge surrounding the female Māori body?

Angeline: Very good I think in some of the rūmaki classes and that, they sort of come through kōhanga. I think they adopt it very well. I think they adopt it very well. I think about my daughter having her baby, trying to keep it you know our way, surrounded by whānau and welcoming your baby into the world, all that sort of stuff. I think they've adopted some of those practices... Today you can talk with young people and they want to ask questions, they are not afraid to ask questions about why you do things.

(Angeline – Tainui)

When talking with Ripeka about the receptivity of younger generations she reinforced what Kare stated earlier about the reasons why you do certain things is what is missing from the equation not so much that it is because the younger generation is not receptive to learning Māori culture and practices surrounding the body.

Ripeka: ...they know that you do certain things but they don't know the why. A lot of them don't know the why. It's taken for granted. They'll go and do these things but there's no learning about why you do those things and I think that's where the big gap is. It's not that they don't want to know but a lot of them aren't educated as to why they are

doing things. You know why do we do this? Why is that so? So they're not getting that kind of information given to them, or it's not nurtured every time. Whatever they do, tikanga should be brought into it all the time. What is the tikanga? Why are we doing it like this? I find they're told what to do but not told why they should. And it's not that they're not receptive, if they want to know, and it's not until you sit down and actually talk with them, then you find out, then they really are captivated when they know 'is that why we do that?'

(Ripeka – Ngāti Porou)

FIGHTING BACK

Māori focused initiatives such as Kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa Māori are aimed at rectifying the effects of colonisation outlined previously. Māori language is not just speaking the reo. Encompassed within the reo are identity, tikanga and knowledge. The reasons why we have tikanga are not lost within the reo. "Te Kōhanga Reo equips Māori children with positive reinforcements of their identity, their culture and language within an environment which supports Māori principles and philosophies" (Johnston, 1994:24). Aroha Mead describes Māori who have been through these education systems as 'unlike any other'.

The Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa generation are a generation of Māori unlike any other. Their experience of colonisation has been tempered by the provision of an intensive mana Māori motuhake education. They are able to live comfortably in both worlds – Pākehā and Māori. They are fluent in both languages and cultures and they are being trained to look to their taha Māori for sustenance, direction, expertise and vision.

(1994:12)

The first Kōhanga reo was opened in the early 1980s and by the early 1990s there were over 800. Kōhanga reo existed outside of State funded projects and relied on the support of whānau and people donating their time. Kura kaupapa Māori developed from Kōhanga reo to meet the needs of the first Kōhanga graduates (see Johnston, 1994 and Mikaere, 2001). Participants talked about Kōhanga reo and Kura

kaupapa Māori as places where people could learn Māori language, history and tikanga.

Wikitoria: Do you believe female Māori body rituals are significant in today's society?

Kare: Yeah they are, I think they are. I think they are becoming more significant and more um, Māori are regaining their sense of history, you know the development of Kōhanga reo, Kura kaupapa, Wānanga centres...

Wikitoria: Where you can learn these rituals?

Kare: We can learn basic tikanga, you can't just learn Māori language aye, and you've got to learn the tikanga behind it all. It's the a/o kind of things, what's important, what's not, you need tikanga behind saying taua instead of tāua, you know, you are learning tikanga all the time, in terms of who can say the karakia, who can go onto marae, all of those things you learn through learning Māori language in these kind of institutions and now that those institutions have developed it's calling for a return for Māori to operate in Māori society, and I think it's important to remember those, we need a balance as Māori, we need to re-strike it.

(Kare – Te Aupouri, Ngāti Porou)

Beth: The younger generation have been brought up with Technology and they have become good friends! However, there are those that are lucky enough to be educated by those who are still practising what they were taught. Tyler, Te Amorangi, Reremoana, for example, are lucky enough to have mothers and teachers who are careful about such things. They are being taught tikanga everyday at home and at

school. Unfortunately, they are few. 80% of Māori children are being taught in mainstream schools and don't get taught these things in health or social studies – and more often than not, aren't being taught at home either.

(Beth – Ngāi Tuhoe, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu)

Children going through Kōhanga and Kura are good examples of hybrids that are getting the best of both worlds in a sense. They are learning Māori language and practices in these schools, but are also learning other knowledges outside of the schools in everyday society and interacting with technology. Beth highlights the fact that Māori children are not getting taught the things that are essential in relation to Māori culture in mainstream schools, and most likely at home as well. Kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori are different educational systems because Māori are the focus, a place where being Māori is normal.

Kōhanga Reo not only provides a safe environment for Māori children, but also reinforces the positive aspects of being Māori – that the language and culture is valid, that Māori philosophies are normal and worthwhile and that being Māori therefore is also valid, normal and worthwhile. Māori is therefore centred in Te Kōhanga Reo as opposed to being marginalised, the latter of which occurs in the State education system.

(Johnston, 1994:28)

Independence from the State educational systems allowed for Kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa Māori to teach values that were important to Māori. In spite of economic struggle what was being taught in Kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa Māori was not governed by outside bodies. Kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa Māori have since become part of the State Educational systems (see Johnston, 1994). This has given rise to funding now available to these facilities, however it comes with a warning. “Te Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori are perhaps examples of programmes that have been established through Māori initiative and energy, but even these two interventions are at risk and will continue to need vigilant protection” (Smith, 1992a:50). These facilities that are Māori centred and designed for the benefit of Māori children are under threat from outside sources and are now

vulnerable to the effects of colonisation discussed previously because of systems imposed by the State. Johnston states:

Kōhanga has become just another Early childhood development, a childcare facility and as such, the State legitimisation of Te Kōhanga Reo no longer supports the differences. The fundamental infrastructures by which Te Kōhanga Reo operated in the past, have changed to accommodate the accountability systems imposed by the State. These systems are in conflict with those of Te Kōhanga Reo's because the accountability systems support the interests of the State, not those of Māori. The trade-offs for Te Kōhanga Reo movement of its own control and independence from the State to one of being financially supported and legitimated by that same State, has resulted in the kaupapa being corrupted.

(1994:33)

Māori initiatives developed to help combat the effects of colonisation are too under threat from colonial forces. Pania McARDell raises a good question.

Te Kōhanga Reo has shown Māori women creating alternative educational structures which are relevant to Māori people. Unfortunately, the resources needed are still subject to control by other people. *How can Maoridom be expected to continue to resource these initiatives, when it is well known that Māori people have the least resources to draw on?* The preservation of tikanga and te reo Māori are, after all, the responsibility not only of Māori people, but of everyone who claims to have the right to live here.

(1992:88)

Mikaere offers a perspective which helps people to believe that fighting back is not in vain and is in fact worthwhile. "Kōhanga reo represent a powerful practical expression of tino rangatiratanga, one which Māori are unlikely to give up in return for the limited state funding which is now available" (2001:18).

In conclusion to this chapter, I have agreed that colonisation brought in a new way of thinking that was passed down through subsequent generations. Māori women were de-valued with the introduction of patriarchal beliefs and the belief in only one God. Values and beliefs that celebrated women were subordinated, resulting in the balance between Māori men and Māori women being upset. Māori mythology was re-told to mirror that of the colonisers – Christianity. Atua wāhine were made invisible. Pākehā men were conducting all the writing at the time of colonisation and they rendered Māori women invisible by focusing on Māori men.

Pākehā men only dealt with Māori men in trading negotiations and working relationships, patriarchal views were passed on to Māori men through these relationships, which have now permeated cultural spaces, such as marae. Participants' narratives disrupt binaries associated with the female Māori body and restriction from space. Restriction from space was described as negative only from a 'Western' perspective. Restrictions made participants feel 'special' or 'cool'. I examined the spaces in-between Māori and Pākehā, where tensions arise about which set of practices to adhere to. The introduction of more convenient options, or having no other option makes it harder to practice tikanga. The lack of knowledge being passed on because of colonisation makes it easier for tikanga to be overruled. Without the reasons why tikanga is practiced, it is easier to dismiss. This does not mean however, that younger generations of Māori do not want to learn tikanga. Kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa are Māori initiatives brought about to aid in rectifying the effects of colonisation. In the next chapter I discuss the notion of mana, and whether the female Māori body is losing mana due to colonisation and the introduction of new 'Western' ways of thinking.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Female Māori Body – Is it losing Mana?

*“The Māori believes that the earth is the elemental
womb to which we must all return.
Folded within her, carefully placed, bones complete
the cycle; for as she gives, so does she receive.
And female in essence, she moves within the
consciousness of many women.”
(Te Awekotuku, 1983:139)*

I have discussed many issues in an attempt to answer the question ‘is the female Māori body losing mana?’ In this concluding chapter, I incorporate new information, quotes and narratives from participants to aid in answering this question. The participants have been vital to exploring tikanga, restrictions from cultural spaces and body rituals. I believe it is important to examine mana and possibly the loss of mana from their perspectives also. After all, part of the foundation of this research is based upon their narratives. With the participants I have examined body rituals and practices surrounding the female Māori body, where the practices and rituals originate and why they are significant. I have examined the effects of colonisation, how it was imposed and the outcomes. I have even shown evidence of initiatives that resist the effects of colonisation. All of which I revisit to aid in answering the above question. Before I do however, I directly address the notion of mana. What is mana? Can you lose mana? I then consider whether the female Māori body is losing mana. Finally, after which, I offer some new ways of thinking about the body.

WHAT IS MANA?

Mana in *'The Reed Dictionary of Modern Māori'* (Ryan, 1995:143) means "integrity, charisma, prestige". Cleve Barlow (1991) describes mana as a power from the gods. Barlow also states that mana has taken on various meanings, not only power of the gods, but also power of ancestors, power of the land and power of the individual (1991:61). From Barlow's interpretations of mana it becomes apparent that mana is acquired through a number of means; from sacred rituals pertaining to the gods, family prestige, burying placenta in the land, and to developing one's skills. Irwin describes mana.

Mana is a supernatural force said to be in a person, place, object or spirit. It is commonly understood as prestige, status or authority – although the status is derived from possessing mana. Mana is a dangerous power both to the possessor and to those who come into contact with it; thus certain ritual observances are necessary to prevent harm coming to a community or individual.

(1984:23)

Like Barlow, Irwin highlights mana as 'prestige, status or authority', but Irwin also gives a new dimension to mana, that of 'ritual observances'. I have discussed in previous chapters the rituals surrounding Māori women and their bodies, and how this is intricately connected to notions of tapu. Irwin elaborates on the notion of mana, relating to tapu.

Mana, as a supernatural power, carries with it certain problems. The 'power' of mana is undifferentiated and dangerous unless it has some controls. Just as a nuclear pile requires insulation to protect the experts, the unwary and the ignorant from radiation, so mana has its protective shield to prevent illness or death arising from the dangerous force of mana. This system of controls, or shielding, is termed tapu.

(1984:23)

How does this relate to Māori women? Māori women have certain tikanga in place because of their bodies and the 'tapuness' of their bodies. What Irwin is stating is that these tikanga are a way of protecting a woman's mana. When talking to Kathleen about the passing on of Māori knowledge surrounding the body and if she thought it contributes to mana and identity, she stated:

Kathleen: ...I think the body and the fact that you are the whare tangata gives you mana. I think that's why a lot of Māori men today are intimidated by successful Māori women because they have that extra mana of being female.

(Kathleen – Ngāti Awa)

Kathleen highlights the point that women have 'extra' mana because they are the whare tangata. Women have mana that needs to be protected because women are important; women have 'power'. Angeline shares a narrative from her family with me, which illustrates where she believes women get their mana from.

Angeline: ...But the female body, I think it's a very powerful body and I think a lot of it comes from Hine-nui-te-po, the maid of death, I used to hear that from my mother. When we got our land back she was going to put this big archway up and it was going to be Hine-nui-te-po and whenever anybody came they had to come through this archway. And John Rangihau, she was talking to him from Tuhoe, and he said 'even if I come to your place, I'm not going under your gateway'. You know the mana of Hinenuitepo. It was just too much for the men; they're terrified of women. And that's what she used to say, they're frightened of women because they can cause death. You know, and so the body was really important all right, there's lots of stories about it. Yeah just sort of thinking through some of those stories. No, my mother used to always say that to the men 'you're just afraid of the women aye?'

(Angeline – Tainui)

This narrative from Angeline shows that the power and mana from the Atua that was passed onto women is still something to be wary of, and something that is feared by some men. Angeline describes how her grandmother was a person of great mana and how she acquired that mana.

Angeline: ...I guess I look at my own grandmother who appeared to be a very tapu, tapu person. I can remember her, and I was six when she died. And she had been schooled in all the tohunga school. She was the only woman. And that was because she was nosey. She ended up being dragged into the middle of the floor after sitting outside, two years outside the whare they were teaching in. And so she learnt all that stuff... But she was a possessor of all the knowledge our people needed, both sides. And she was the one who schooled the next generation of kaumātua coming through which had been taught by the men. So she was unusual in that respect so for her she was a person of great mana. She was the healer; she would send the people to get the herbs for the medicines. But not only that, she was skilled in both Māori and Pākehā language. She preferred Māori.

(Angeline – Tainui)

Angeline outlines how her grandmother acquired her mana through the knowledge that she held and she was respected for that. The interviews with participants reinforce definitions of mana outlined previously as something that can be inherited and acquired from the gods. Using discussions with participants I now examine mana and tikanga, and whether a lack of knowledge in tikanga practices diminishes mana.

CAN YOU LOSE MANA?

I can remember when I first started learning more about tikanga practices and the rituals that I needed when visiting my father at the urupā. I was told that you were not supposed to go into the urupā when you have your mate. I could not remember if I had gone into the urupā while menstruating before I knew that you were not supposed to, but I can remember the feeling of shame because I could have. I could have broken tikanga without knowing it. The feeling of shame I experienced, to me, definitely felt like a loss of mana. To find out whether a lack of knowledge about your body, the female Māori body, contributes to the de-valuing of Māori women that

has occurred, I asked participants what could be some ramifications for breaking Māori lore and whether it would diminish one's mana. Here is what Ripeka and Brown said in relation to breaking Māori lore or tikanga.

Ripeka: ... Did it diminish one's mana? It would definitely diminish your own self worth, self-esteem. If you're talking about mana, your own self-esteem, ae. It had dramatic effects. Probably in the old days if there was something wrong, one of the consequences would be death because that's how strongly you would feel about it, and that's what it would cause you to do. The consequences that you would face because it involved not only you, but your whānau, hapū, and iwi, yes because iwi then would also have to carry the consequences of that wrong deed, if you caused it. It may be a battle...

Brown: Physical, emotional, and mental stigma...

Ripeka: Yes, a huge impact...

Brown: A burden, that probably your family suffers with it.

(Ripeka – Ngāti Porou, Brown – Te Aupouri)

Ripeka and Brown state that it would diminish one's own mana if they knew about tikanga and willingly broke tikanga anyway. It would take away from your own self-esteem. Ripeka discusses death as a consequence of breaking Māori lore in the old days. What I think she is talking about here is the guilt and the burden that you feel because of breaking Māori lore and how that affects you mentally and physically. Ripeka and Brown bring up another important aspect when discussing mana and that is family or whānau. A person breaking tikanga may not only face personal loss of mana, but also loss of mana of their whānau. Beth illustrates this point.

Beth: ... Some might think that it destroys their mana if they are connected to the person, because they have been embarrassed, shamed for the lack of knowing, tikanga not being practised. For me though, I think mana is a personal thing and the only mana being diminished is that of the person who is unaware of what has been done. If they genuinely are unaware of their wrong doing or mistake, then there is no problem. If, however, they have been taught these things and simply decide not to practise then that's a different story. They have a responsibility, if not obligation, to practise what has been taught to them in order to carry on family 'tradition' or hygiene practices. Deliberate disregard of these is deliberate disregard of family and tikanga. They destroy, to me, their own mana and that of their family. What is this mana? It is personal pride. Without pride in oneself, you have no mana. You'll do almost anything that disregards your safety and the safety of others just so you can do whatever. No pride. No mana. The ramifications, therefore, is personal belittlement.

(Beth – Ngai Tuhoe, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu)

The ramifications of breaking tikanga could be personal loss of mana, however it could result in the loss of mana for your whānau also. Breaking tikanga may cause others to look at you disappointedly because of a lack of knowledge, or a blatant disregard, which reflects upon the whole family and wider community.

When discussing with Angeline why the female body is sacred she brought up the subject of mana and how with whakapapa comes mana.

Angeline: ...teach your children the same, your girls, the same thing that they are the whare tangata, and there are areas of prohibition, which is what tapu means to me - an area that is prohibited. Or for your own protection as well. But it's basically coming down, because you're a descendant, to me anyway, of your tūpuna and the mana that they may

have had and carried, it actually passes down through your generations.

(Angeline – Tainui)

This discussion from Angeline is really interesting to me and I think that it brings up an important point. Whakapapa is fundamental in Māoridom. Your whakapapa links you not only to every other living being, but also to the past, the present and the future. The extra dimension that Angeline brings into view when discussing whakapapa and mana is, not only do you carry the mana of those who are here on earth with you, but you also carry the mana of your tūpuna who have gone on. It is important to pass on knowledge surrounding the female Māori body and tikanga because it is not only your mana that needs to be protected but the mana of your tūpuna as well. Brenda talks about the importance of passing on of knowledge to her children.

Wikitoria: How important to you is it to pass on Māori knowledge concerning the body and body practices to your children? Why/why not? Do you think it contributes to mana, tikanga and identity?

Brenda: *Very!* As mentioned above, all three above so they can stand tall, no matter what situation they are in, and know what to do.

(Brenda – Ngā Puhi)

As the participants have shown, an awareness and knowledge about tikanga is important to guard against the loss of personal mana, whānau mana and mana passed down from your tūpuna. Being able to ‘stand tall’ is imperative, knowing what to do, learning about yourself and asking questions will shield you from the feelings of shame or a loss of mana. Knowing yourself and the power women hold will safeguard you from others who attempt to take mana away from you.

IS THE FEMALE MĀORI BODY LOSING MANA?

This question is an important one when examining the female Māori body. In pre-colonial times Māori women held a lot of mana. This can be seen as I have outlined through women's connection to Papatūānuku, the earth mother. Mana, strength and power were passed down to women as bearers of life. This mana that was awarded to women can be seen in whakataukī that were recited often and are still present today. This mana can be seen in the Māori language where values that are considered important such as whenua, hapū and whare tangata are also accorded to the female body. Tikanga surround the female Māori body because of its importance and its connection to Atua. An example of this is the cutting of hair when mourning which was what Maui's mother Taranga did when Maui was still-born, she wrapped him in her hair. Another example is the burying of the whenua in the whenua, returning it to Papatūānuku. This kind of evidence shows the mana that women did have.

Women's mana and importance was devalued at the time of colonisation. The imposing of foreign beliefs led to degradation of Māori women and in turn their bodies. Mythology that showed the mana that women Atua held was de-valued or the Atua that were in those mythologies were defaced. An example of this is the recasting of Hine-nui-i-te-pō as evil and destructive. This rendered women Atua invisible and so too women's mana. The coloniser's brought with them a new way of thinking that focused on a patriarchal society. This was easily transferred to Māori men because all negotiations and trading were carried out with the men. Early writers that were documenting Māori stories only had discussions with the men, because of an ethnocentric view. Māori women were again rendered invisible and their mana de-valued.

The effects of colonisation can be seen in my own experiences and in the experiences of some of the participants. Knowledge has been lost as a consequence of colonisation. Language was lost and subsequently tikanga that were inherent in the language. Colonisation has introduced 'more convenient' options for Māori women, even though they know the tikanga that should be carried out. Changes in Māori society do not make it easy for participants to carry out tikanga all the time.

Knowledge is not being passed on to its full potential, which has had dramatic effects. Disregard of tikanga takes away from personal mana but also the mana of whānau and tūpuna. Participants highlighted the fact that being told what the tikanga is, is not enough. Being told why tikanga are in place and why tikanga should be carried out is what is essentially needed because young Māori women are more likely to carry tikanga out surrounding their bodies if they understand the reasoning behind it.

Investigating these contrasting notions of women has brought me to present times where colonial views of women are still at hand. Binary divisions are prevalent in western ways of thinking. Binaries reinforce notions of women as subordinate to men because one side of the binary is privileged over the other. If you are restricted from space it is justified by a 'supposed' subordination. I have challenged these binary divisions using participants' narratives and how they felt about being restricted from certain spaces because of their bodies. In most cases participants did not feel subordinate, but 'special' for being a woman and the power that they held. In other cases participants were influenced more highly by colonisation and were unsure about how they felt because of a lack of knowledge. Participants discussed positive initiatives that have been brought about by Māori women in an attempt to rectify the effects of colonisation. Kōhanga reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori have been fundamental in reviving Māori knowledge that has been deemed inauthentic and inferior to the knowledge of the colonisers.

*... 'Mana Wahine Māori' – reclaiming and celebrating what,
we have been and what we will become.
It is not a re-action to males, and their violence against us;
it is a pro-action, a determining of ourselves as
Māori women, with authenticity and grace.
And its ultimate aim is a rediscovery and renaming of
that essential strength and harmony, that complementary
relationship between genders,
that may have occurred on these islands two centuries past.
(Te Awekotuku, 1991:10)*

It would be wrong to say that the Māori female has not lost mana. As a larger body all Māori women have had mana taken away from them because of colonisation and the degradation of the complementary roles that were said to exist once between Māori men and Māori women. “The whole process of colonization can be viewed as a stripping away of *mana* (our standing in our eyes), and an undermining of *rangatiratanga* (our ability and right to determine our destinies)” (Smith, 1999:173, emphasis in the original). Not all women were affected to the same degree. This is evident in speaking roles on marae. In Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāti Porou for example women have to right to whaikōrero. The loss of individual mana is a result of personal choice. If you choose to disregard your power as a Māori female and your obligations then mana is lost. Despite it being a personal choice, the individual cannot be separated from the community because personal choices reflect upon that person’s community. Whether the female Māori body is *losing* mana still, I would have to say no. Participants made this clear in their narratives about how they felt about restrictions. New initiatives, Māori female writers and a greater awareness of Māori women’s difference from others and their importance is more evident than say, a decade ago. No longer are Māori women’s voices silenced to the same degree. When I talked to the participants I asked all of them if they thought what we had talked about was important enough to pass on to future generations, their children and mokopuna. All of the participants replied yes, they thought it was very important.

NEW FRONTIERS FOR THE BODY?

I would now like to take the opportunity to offer a new way of thinking towards ‘restriction’ from space as it was discussed in previous chapters. I asked the participants various questions from why Māori women were restricted from certain spaces (urupā and food gathering sites) when their bodies were in certain stages (hapū or menstruating), to how they felt about having to be restricted from these spaces. The general feeling from participants explained to me that their bodies were tapu while hapū or menstruating and to go into those spaces would be tapu also. I would say that instead of ‘restriction’ from space, participants had a ‘respect’ for that space, but also a respect for their bodies. Participants respected the cultural space and the

higher forces of power such as tapu that can be associated to such spaces. Participants also respected their bodies, the tikanga practices associated with their bodies, but more importantly protecting one's own body and possibly the 'new body' it is, or could be carrying. One participant said to me 'nothing overrides tikanga', and that always stayed with me because it showed a high respect for herself but also others. Others who are or become associated with the spaces discussed, her body, or others who could become affected by the ramifications if she was to commit a wrongdoing. This notion of respect can be associated with mana, which it is often translated as. In correlation with respecting ourselves I believe the mind/body binary needs to be dismantled. It would be more productive to understand the mind and body as linked so that bodies can and think synergistically. Attention to feelings and respect for bodies would construct new ways of thinking and new types of spaces. Learning and understanding embodiment is a powerful tool to increase Māori women's mana.

After all, Māori have survived the onslaught of colonisation, the tenacity of our ancestors leaving us now poised to take up the challenge of regaining the self-determination that we once had. We owe it to them, to ourselves and to those who will come later to do so.

(Mikaere, 1999a:22)

Finally, Māori knowledge about the female Māori body is essential for the protection of one's mana. Knowledge of the power that was passed down through whakapapa from Papatūānuku and other Atua wāhine, allows Māori women to stand tall, to be respected and to respect themselves and others. Understanding identity and what makes us who we are, is vital. As these two quotes from Mikaere and Te Awēkotuku illustrate, we carry our tīpuna with us and we owe it to them, and to future generations to be proud of Māori women, their bodies, their spirituality, their sacredness, and to be proud to be a Māori woman.

*For as we measure our gains (and losses) in the overall struggle,
we move forward with a commitment that grows even stronger;
our resilience increases with our knowledge;
reinforced with a deeper understanding of who we are,
and whom we have come from.
For their memory carries us.
(Te Awēkotuku, 1991:11)*

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GLOSSARY

ae	yes, agree
ātaahua	beautiful, attractive, graceful
Atua/atua	God, gods
auē!	On dear!
haka	fierce dance
hangi	earth oven
hapu/hapū	pregnant, sub-tribe, clan
harirū	shake hands
Hineahuone	first human life
Hinenuitepō	Guardian of the underworld
hongī	smell, press noses
hui	gather, meeting
hūpē	mucus, snot
hūpē me ngā roimata	physical cleansing, release or weeping
iwi	tribe
kai moana	sea food
kaitiaki	guard, caretaker
Kaitakawaenga	Liason person
karakia	prayer-chant, religious service
karanga	call, shout
kapa haka	dance team
kaumātua	old man, elder, adult
Kaupapa Māori	Māori strategy, theme
Kōhanga reo	language nest
kuia	old lady
Kura Kaupapa Māori	Māori school, education
mākutu	bewitched, black magic
mana	integrity, charisma, prestige
Mana Māori Motuhake	Māori autonomy, independence
mana tangata	human rights, strong man
mana wahine	strong woman
marae	meeting area of whānau or iwi
Matauranga Māori	Māori knowledge
mate	sickness, death (used to describe menstruation)
mate wahine	menstruation
Maui/Maui Potiki	name for Maui-Tikitiki-a-Taranga
mauri	life principle, special character
mokopuna	grandchild, young generation

noa	free from tapu
Papatūāuku	Mother Earth
pito	navel, umbilical cord
poroporoakī	farewell, closing ceremony
Pouako	learning assistant
puku	abdomen, stomach
rākau	tree
reo	language
rohe	area, boundary, territory
rūmaki	immerse, plant
taha Māori	Māori side, aspect
tāne	husband, male, man
tangata	person, human kind, people
tangi/tangihanga	wail, mourn, funeral
taonga	treasure, property
tapu	sacred, forbidden, taboo
tapu tapu	untouched
Taranga	Mother of Maui
taua/tāua	that/we two
taukiri e!	how horrible!
tikanga	meaning, custom, criterion
tipuna/tīpuna	ancestor(s), grandparent(s)
tūpāpaku	corpse, cadaver
tupuna/tūpuna	ancestor(s), grandparent(s)
tūrangawaewae	home turf, standing place
uri	descendant, offspring
urupā	cemetery
waiata	sing, chant, song
wairua	spirit, soul
wānanga	learning, seminar
whaikōrero	make speech
whaka (+ prefix)	cause to do, in the direction of
whakamā	shy, embarrass, loss of mana
whakapapa	genealogy, cultural identity
whakatapu	bless, make sacred, consecrate, ordain
whakataukī	proverb
whānau	extended family, give birth
whānau pani	family of the bereaved
whānaungatanga	relationship, kinship
whāngai	adopt child, care for

whare
whare mate
whare tangata
whare tapu
whenua

house
chief mourners, death house
womb, uterus
sacredness of the whare tangata
land, country, after-birth, placenta

The words in this glossary were sourced from *The Reed Dictionary of Modern Māori* (Ryan, 1995), or from the text as participants used them. These words may be used differently from stated above in everyday language, different contexts or dialects.