Te whakahaumanu i ngā taonga takatāpui

- Belonging and thrivance for takatāpui

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Whakarongo ake au ki te manu

a te Mātūī

tūī

tūī

tuituia

Tuia i runga

Tuia i raro

Tuia i roto

Tuia i waho

Tuia i te herenga tangata

Ka rongo te Pō

Ka rongo te Ao

Tīhei Mauri Ora

I te taha o tōku māmā

Ko Muir Eireann tōku moana

Ko Cnoc na Teamhrach tōku maunga

Ko Boyne tōku awa

Ko Rangitāiki tōku waka

Ko Pye tōku clan

Ko Vikki Julia tōku māmā

I te taha o tōku pāpā

Ko Mauao, Whakapoungakau, Pūtauaki ōku maunga

Ko Tauranga, Te Rotoruanui-ā-Kahumatamamoe, Taupō-nui-ā-Tia ōku moana

Ko Mātaatua me Te Arawa ōku waka

Ko Wairoa, Waiohewa, Rangitāiki ōku awa

Ko Ngāi te Rangi, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Te Arawa ōku iwi

Ko Ngāi Tamawhariua, Ngāi Tamaoki, Ngāti Te Kanawa ōku hapū

Ko White tōku ingoa whānau

Ko Ropiha Jackson Junior tōku pāpā

Ko Te Aorere Kate Ngātai-Tautuku ahau

He tamariki mokopuna, he tauira, he tutū hoki ahau

He tangata takatāpui ahau

Abstract

This thesis celebrates takatāpui[1] belonging and thrivance[2]; created by, with and for takatāpui. It is carefully crafted with an abundance of love for this community to which I belong. Informed by the overarching conceptual framework of Te Pū o te Rākau[3] (pūrākau) methodology (Lee-Morgan, 2019), this thesis follows pūrākau of how takatāpui and queer Māori[4] identify and express belonging and thrivance. The intention of this study is to privilege the voices and lived experiences of people who have been consistently subject to the systematic dehumanisation of Western research conventions.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, anti-Māori racism, homophobia and transphobia have risen exponentially in Aotearoa, spurring an increase in aggressive violent attacks on marginalised communities. It is progressively evident that the fundamental right to tino rangatiratanga[5] affirmed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi[6] to express self-determination has failed to be honoured (Came et al., 2024; Mutu, 2011a). Therefore, it is paramount within this

[1] I specifically use takatāpui within this thesis to acknowledge Māori who identify with takatāpui to express their cultural and diverse sexual identity, and do not conform to or identify with gender.
[2] The term thrivance "accentuates the importance of ancestral homelands and traditional practices to healing and a positive sense of Indigenous identity and dignity" (Baumann, 2023, p. 1).
[3] Te Pū o te Rākau methodology (Lee-Morgan, 2019) is further discussed in Chapter 3. Pūrākau are intergenerational narratives that contain hidden meanings and understandings that can guide us in life. They are powerful accounts of our existence. Pūrākau is further discussed in Chapter 3.
[4] The term 'Māori' is used within this thesis similar to Leonie Pihama (2001) and Ngāhuia Murphy (2011) in that it asserts a "political concept that collectively identifies the Indigenous Peoples of this land" (Pihama, 2001, p.1). I acknowledge that "Māori" as a people are composed of distinct whānau, hapū and iwi communities.
[5] Tino rangatiratanga is a term referred to as Māori autonomy, self-determination, sovereignty, self-government.
[6] Te Tiriti o Waitangi is commonly referred to as the founding document of New Zealand that was signed in 1840 by rangatira of hapū and iwi, and the British Crown.

rangahau[7] to give power to and centralise the voices of takatāpui as they express their experiences of belonging.

Drawing upon the springs of mātauranga takatāpui[8] (re)generated by takatāpui academics, this rangahau is firmly grounded within a takatāpui worldview. Adapted elements from Te Pū o te Rākau methodological framework are implemented in this rangahau to (re)affirm the importance of takatāpui voices and interdependent relationships. Experienced through the ritualistic ceremony of wānanga[9], informed by Kaupapa Māori tenet - titiro, whakarongo… kōrero[10] – I facilitated a wānanga for a group of kaipūrākau[11] to share their pūrākau at Te Kohinga Mārama marae[12]. Throughout the wānanga the kaipūrākau shared hilarious, heartwarming and painful pūrākau about their lived experiences as Indigenous[13] queer people navigating a settler-colonial Western society and their encounters with belonging. These precious pūrākau are then translated into key themes that communicate the findings of this

[7] Rangahau can be and is interpreted as research within this thesis. However, it must be made clear that "research" is a Western concept, and the notion of Western research does not find origins within Te Ao Māori .
[8] Mātauranga takatāpui in this thesis refers to takatāpui epistemologies, knowledge bases, styles of thought, understandings that have been carefully crafted by takatāpui academics, artists, creators and scholars.
[9] Wānanga is both a verb and a noun in te reo Māori. As a verb it means to meet and deliberate, discuss and contemplate. As a noun it refers to a gathering of knowledge, or a seminar. Wānanga is further discussed in Chapter 3.
[10] Titiro, whakarongo… kōrero refers to observing and listening keenly before speaking.
[11] Kaipūrākau is the word used to refer to the co-researchers of the research wānanga, a word that I describe as story teller/s
[12] Marae refers to complex of buildings and its surroundings areas where formal ceremonies and discussions take place.
[13] The use of the word 'Indigenous' within this thesis acknowledges a culture whose world view specifically places significance into the interconnected relationship humans have with the natural world (Royal, 2012). Furthermore, implementing the word 'Indigenous' when discussing elements important to Māori firmly situates this discourse in a global Indigenous context.

rangahau, that are described as Whanaungatanga[14], Tuakiritanga[15], Mana Motuhake[16] and Te Hari Te Koa[17].

[14] Whanaungatanga in the Māori world has many different meanings that can be used in within a variety of contexts. Whanaungatanga as a theme in this thesis refers to belonging. Whanaungatanga is further discussed in Chapter 4.
[15] Tuakiritanga in this thesis refers to the interconnectedness of our identities. Tuakiritanga is further discussed in Chapter 4.
[16] Mana Motuhake is an inherent element grounded in "our Indigenous position in Aotearoa" (Pihama, 2001). Mana motuhake (re)asserts Māori as tāngata whenua, and (re)affirms the guaranteed self-determined rights (re)assured by that identity. Mana Motuhake is further discussed in Chapter 4.
[17] Te Hari Te Koa as a theme in this thesis (re)presents takatāpui humour and joy. Te Hari Te Koa is further discussed in Chapter 4.

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Tiwha – Te Arawa

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[18] Kaupapa whānau in this thesis refers to an interconnected familial network that can be established with shared principles, goals and values.
[19] Aroha refers to affection, compassion, empathy, love.
[20] Kai in te reo Māori is both a verb and a noun. As a verb kai means to consume, to eat, to devour. As a noun, kai refers to food, or a meal.

To my Mum, Granny, and the rest of my whakapapa whānau[21] who have been incredibly supportive throughout my entire Master's journey. You all mean so much to me, and I am so grateful for you all. He aroha mutunga kore.

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[21] Whakapapa whānau can be and is described as an assigned or biological family that can be immediate or extended. I use whakapapa whānau in this thesis to differentiate from whānau (a word that is generally directly translated as family) similar to Pihama et al. (2020) and Doyle (2023) to acknowledge the importance of kaupapa whānau to takatāpui wellbeing, in addition to affirming the intergenerational connectedness of whakapapa whānau.
[22] Tuākana refers to elder siblings.
[23] Te Reo Māori refers to the Māori language.
[24] Mātauranga refers to knowledge(s), understanding(s), wisdom.

To the rōpū[25] wānanga takatāpui from every Wednesday cultural hour in 2024, thank you all for the wānanga, the cackling rounds of laughter, sharing your ophsop hauls and latest rounds of gossip. Thank you for being the community I needed at university.

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[25] Rōpū refers to a group.
[26] Manaaki refers to support, to care for, to give hospitality.
[27] Palestine Waikato is a community organisation based in the Waikato committed to advocacy and raising awareness for Palestine.
[28] Ngā Haumi is a Māori and Indigenous peoples community group committed to advocating for climate justice.

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[29] Noho Matariki was a week-long stay on a marae during Matariki (the Māori new year) for rangatahi takatāpui held in Ōtautahi. It was filled with Kaupapa Māori activities like mau rākau (weaponry wielding), making taonga pūoro (treasured musical instruments) and wānanga about Matariki.
[30] Noho Raumati was a week-long stay at a marae in January 2025 for rangatahi takatāpui that was held in Ōtautahi. It was Kaupapa Māori based with activities like waka ama (an outrigger canoe and sport), trips to the forest to harvest natural medicine or rongoā and raranga (weaving).
[31] Mana Tipua is a Kaupapa Māori rōpū takatāpui based in Ōtautahi, Christchurch
[32] Nevertheless is a Māori and Pasifika Takatāpui and LGBTQIA+ mental-health non-profit organisation based in Heretaunga, Hastings.
[33] Rangatahi is commonly accepted as youth, young people. Though the description of rangatahi can be relational and not dependent on age (Doyle, 2023).
[34] Kura has many different meanings in te reo Māori. In this context, it refers to a school or faculty.

to meet and share space and become great friends with some of the most amazing Māori scholars.

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[35] Tamariki refers to children.
[36] Mokopuna refers to grandchildren.

Kei aku irāmutu, he whakamānawa tēnei nō te ngākau[37]

For my irāmutu; Kalani, Taliah, Tristan, Samaii, Darius, Gabriella, Tiaki, Cora-Jayne, and Manawa.

E kore te totara e tū noa i te parae, engari me tū i roto i te waonui a Tāne

The great totara does not stand alone in the field but stands within the great forest of Tāne.

(Mead & Grove, 2003, p. 36)

[37] To the children of my siblings, this is a dedication from my heart to you all.

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Note. Adapted from Nikora et al. (2013, p. 2)

Encompassed by comfort and engulfed in potential, Te Kore, the absence, the nothingness, reverberates throughout the cosmos. From within this nothing, is something; an uncertainty, yet space for potentiality. As a realm, Te Kore contains the primal elemental energy, the latent beingness of the universe from which all things come into being (Tomlins-Jahnke, 2019). It is here where the seeds of potentiality are fruited within this womb, Te Kore. Te Kore, personified, is a tipuna[38] of magnificent cosmogenic presence and sparks the perception of the senses (Brown & Nepia, 2016). A possibility for mauri, the life essence, and for wairua, the spirit, to develop. Evolving; spiralling inwards, spiralling outwards, Te Pō encompasses the fluidic darkness resonating within, and pushes the bounds beyond darkness, beyond imagination. It is within this bountiful imagination that Te Ao Mārama is brought into the foreground, flourishing with an abundance of mauri and wairua swirling and entangling together into Te Ao Tūroa.

In an unwavering embrace, our[39] primordial parents Papatūānuku and Ranginui encompassed one another, unequivocally entangling their celestial bodies with each other. Papatūānuku, the Earth mother, the whenua[40] and the ethereal feminine essence, while Ranginui, the Sky father, manifested the sky and the divine masculine essence. Their endless aroha bound their entire bodies and metaphysical beings tightly together. In this embrace, their space of Te Kore, the absence, the nothingness, enveloped everything and anything; yet, at the same time, it was fluid and held potential.

[38] Tīpuna refers to ancestor(s)
[39] Similar to Kaupapa Māori scholars Leonie Pihama (2001) and Ngāhuia Murphy (2011) I use first pronouns throughout this thesis including we, us, ours when discussing something in relation to tāngata whenua
[40] Whenua is related to both the land and the placenta.

Their aroha manifested into potentiality, and in between their tight embrace originated the myriads of their children. Descended from magnificent celestial parents, these children were atua[41] whom possessed forces of the natural world. Aeons passed and the children grew increasingly aggravated living under the cloak of restricted darkness, slowly suffocating between the embrace of their parents. Though a quick glimpse of light gleamed through their parents' armpits and a debate sparked to separate their parents. All children except for Tāwhirimātea[42] were eager to separate their parents (Whaanga et al., 2020), and they began to take turns to forcefully divide their parents from one another. Ultimately it was Tāne Mahuta[43] (henceforth, Tāne) who positioned their[44] body as an immense tree to separate their parents. With their back lying flat on Papatūānuku and legs placed against the chest of Ranginui, they pushed and stretched upwards, violently ripping their parents apart. Ranginui was launched and firmly restrained into the sky, and Papatūānuku remained as the whenua. The eternal lovers were severed, forever separated and fixed in each of their innate elemental domains, leading to the enlightening of Te Ao Mārama to Te Ao Tūroa.

Following their release into Te Ao Mārama, the celestial siblings endeavoured to create the ira tangata[45], of which the uha[46], was essential for its creation. Throughout the strenuous expedition for the uha, Tāne experimented with female personifications within their realm,

[41] Atua are transcendent celestial ancestors with particular influence over earthly and metaphysical domains. Their intrinsic connections to the vast environments remain as guidance for their descendants.
[42]Tāwhirimātea is the atua of the great winds and powerful storms
[43] Tāne Mahuta is the atua of the great forest and all forest beings
[44] I use the pronouns they/them when referring to atua as gender is a colonial construct (Mikaere, 1999) and it does not have a place within Māori cosmogony.
[45] Ira tangata refers to the element of human life, human essence
[46] Uha refers to the female essence, the female element

leading to the creation of the birds, insects and trees. However, these female elements were not the appropriate essence for the ira tangata, leading to the siblings concluding that they were powerless in deriving the uha from their celestial realms (Tomlins-Jahnke, 2019). After an extensive and prolonged search for the uha, it was Tāne who was instructed by Papatūānuku to visit a place called Kurawaka[47] where they would be guided to form what is now known as the human body (Pihama, 2020). Throughout the creation process, various atua gifted sacred offerings in the form of body parts and specialised mātauranga (Pihama, 2020; Tomlins-Jahnke, 2019). A gift from the atua, Hineahuone was created from the earth, being of both ira atua and ira tangata, and it was Tāne who shared breath through the hongi[48] (Pihama, 2020).

"Tihei Mauri Ora

I sneezed and therefore I lived".

(Kahukiwa & Grace, 1984).

Therefore it is through the union of Hineahuone and Tāne that human whakapapa[49] and our origins as tāngata whenua[50] emerges. This is my version of this pūrākau[51], and it reveals the immense significance of the uha as a crucial element in the creation of te ira tangata. This is a clear depiction of the complementarity and interdependence of female and male within Te Ao

[47] Kurawaka refers to the pubic area of Papatūānuku
[48] Hongi refers to the pressing of noses, extending connections through the sharing of breath (Pihama, 2001)
[49] Whakapapa is a term that is commonly refered to as geneology. Whakapapa is further discussed in Chapter 2.
[50] Tāngata whenua refers to people of the land; a term that refers to the relationship Māori have with the land and precedes the term 'Māori'.
[51] I say 'this is my version of this pūrākau" to acknowledge the diverse iwi and hapū stories of our creation narrative.

Māori[52] (Tomlins-Jahnke, 2019). Furthermore it informs us of our intrinsic interconnection to the taiao[53] and the relationships we share with all living beings, peoples and the metaphysical realm (Lee-Morgan, 2019).

Tōku Whakatipuranga | My Positionality

I was born in Kirikiriroa[54] but from birth I grew up in South Auckland with my Mum. Until I was eight and had to move to my Dad's in Rotorua[55]. Growing up in Papakura[56] with a strong Māori name, brown eyes, hair and skin, in addition to a Pākehā[57] Mum garnered various confused and amused faces when people realised I was not adopted. My name was a large point of contention living amongst a densely Pākehā-populated area, and the only people in my life who could pronounce my name correctly were my Mum and Granny. I quickly grew to strongly dislike my name to the point of fantasising changing it to something easier for people to pronounce; it was embarrassing hearing my name being butchered every day.

I was an odd kid. As the youngest sibling of four with the nearest sibling in age being 16 years my senior, I basically grew up as an only child. I was always desperate for attention, and that would manifest in embarrassing acts. I was too weird for the Māori kids at school and too loud and annoying for the Pākehā kids. I often found solace in the shade, under trees, playing with

[52] Te Ao Māori refers to the Māori world.
[53] Taiao refers to the environment, the natural world.
[54] Kirikiriroa is the Māori name for Hamilton, New Zealand. It's Māori-English translation "long stretch of gravel" refers to an area on the west bank of the Waikato river.
[55] Rotorua is a town in the Bay of Plenty in Aotearoa.
[56] Papakura is a suburb in South Auckland.
[57] Pākehā is a term that refers to the people who emigrated usually from Britain or Europe to Aotearoa and their descendants.

bugs. When I moved to live with my Māori Dad at eight years old, I was catapulted into Te Ao Māori because Dad held a number of positions in trusts and whānau committees. I thought that because I lived with my Dad in Rotorua, what seemed like to me, a place abundant in Māori culture, I would not be bullied for my Māori name. Dad told me my name came from a kuia on Matakana island whose name was Te Aorere; and he said that my name could not be translated literally. Te Aorere describes a specific moment in the moana[58] where the moonlight glistens over the dancing waves of water and sparkles brightly. For once, I felt proud of my name.

A fact of life is that I am fat, and I have grown up fat for the entirety of my life. When I went to intermediate, my new bullies were Māori, who thought it was hilarious to separate parts of my name into – Te – Ao – rere – the spinning world – and liken my size to the world. These were not isolated incidents, and I continued to be harassed by this group of bullies until I finished school. One of them in particular, the ringleader and class favourite, would continue to bully me, for not only my weight but also my disconnection from my Māoritanga[59].

Although I was usually immersed in Māori environments such as hui and wānanga, Dad never facilitated or nurtured my connections with my taha Māori[60]. Instead, I was expected to quickly adapt to this world that was implied to be ingrained into my being. Dad expected me to understand his commands in te reo Māori, and when I did not fulfill his commands, he would ignore my existence until I apologised to him. This internalised a lot of self-hatred towards my

[58] Moana refers to the ocean.
[59] Māoritanga relates to Māori beliefs and practices, Māori culture, Māori way of life
[60] Taha Māori refers to a person's Māori side, particularly if they have one Māori parent.

Māori whakapapa. It was not until I was removed from Dad's care and moved back in with Mum at 11 that I wanted to explore my Māori side. Learning the basics of te reo Māori and experiencing pōhiri and kapa haka at school allowed me to begin to feel what I had been missing in my life, and I wanted to continue to explore other parts of my identity.

I remember feeling chillingly uncomfortable whenever I would overhear people talking about girls liking girls, especially when the tone of the discussion was always fetishising lesbians. From an early age, I was taught that lesbians and lesbianism was dirty and something that was only ever to be perceived and enjoyed by heterosexual males[61]. Whenever I would catch myself being attracted to girls, a wave of disgust would wash over me as I would remember these discussions and feelings. Even though I felt this way, I still felt that I was a lesbian. Though that thought was often pushed into the depths of my mind as I was consumed by excessive amounts of heteronormativity[62] being promoted to me at school and showcased on television. I was staunch in being a tomboy. I hated wearing feminine clothes or appearing 'girly' because I hated my being reduced to "just a girl". I would mimic what I thought being masculine was, by not brushing my hair and only wearing dark clothes.

When it came to high school, I was initially enrolled in an all-girls school because Dad wanted me to go there. I did not want to attend that school as I was subconsciously terrified of being outed as a lesbian. I had attended the nearby primary and intermediate schools and heard of

[61] Heterosexual is a term referring to women and men who experience sexual desire towards people of the opposite sex

[62] Heteronormativity is the colonial ideology that asserts heterosexuality as the only and Western socially accepted sexuality and gender identity that is considered by the patriarchy as "normal".

rumors that that was a common occurrence there. Instead, I went to a high school on the other side of town, far away from Dad and my previous classmates and bullies. At this new school, I had irrepressible confidence that both assisted and disadvantaged me learning more about my culture. My sustained desire for attention manifested in my robust participation in school. I would often get into trouble and receive top grades in the same week. In our Year 10 English we had a speech assessment, and as a tenacious yapper I was excited to educate my fellow classmates about the LGBTQIA+ community and announce a newly discovered word that described my sexuality at the time, bisexual.

Although I was awarded the highest marks in class and asked to compete in the school-wide speech competition, my English teacher prohibited me from announcing my own bisexuality in my speech. I wanted to challenge her decision, but she would not permit my entrance into the competition if I had not agreed to her demand. Ultimately, I won first equal in that competition and that was the most important thing for me at the time and I moved on from that battle. However, I continued to find myself in arguments with this teacher for the rest of my time at school. These arguments were usually about her blatant racism towards ahurea[63] Māori and my fellow Māori classmates. That was a common trait among the teachers there - institutional racism - and I would find myself in many arguments with different teachers about that same issue. Eventually arguing turned into debating once I was able to articulate my thoughts, and I could get back on the good side of the teachers.

[63] Ahurea refers to culture

In my senior years at high school, I was one of the “token Māori” who were called upon to participate in all things Māori. In my experience as a token Māori, I was called upon to attend and represent our school as a Māori student for various events that had Māori elements, especially welcoming ceremonies, school visits, looking after manuhiri, and many other cultural expectations. I wanted to prove I was a “good Māori" by being the middle ground, but it never worked because the teachers never really respected me, and I didn’t have a strong a connection as I thought I had to my classmates. My understanding of being a “good Māori” meant that I had to conform to the cultural expectations the teachers and the school had of me in order to “go somewhere” with my life. They would often complain about my fellow Māori classmates not complying with their demands, and they would tell them they would not amount to anything. As a result of this, I witnessed many of my Māori classmates being ignored by their teachers when they needed help because they were “bad Māori”, and the teachers did not want to “waste” their time helping them. I felt I had no other options but to comply with their expectations of my identity so that I would receive their help when applying for a scholarship. I could not afford to go to university without a scholarship, so when I received one, I took it as a reward for barely surviving my last year of high school.

Going to university enabled me to connect with amazing people who helped me learn how to be grateful and acknowledge the privilege I had as a rangatahi Māori to be able to attend tertiary education. I am incredibly fortunate that my introduction to a non-heterosexual, non-conforming being in Te Ao Māori was through my Māori philosophy paper, Ngā Iho Matua. Our lecturer Professor Tom Roa spoke about a pūrākau where Tangaroa, a commonly Western-

interpreted male-expressing atua, had a whare tangata[64] and gave birth[65]. This mātauranga altered my whole understanding of what I had learned and thought of our creation pūrākau, and subsequently ignited a spark of curiosity in finding pre-colonial pūrākau of our atua.

Learning about Tangaroa was a key point in my studies as it opened the possibility of gender and heterosexuality being a colonial concept. I was delighted to learn of papa hou[66] and waka huia depicting sexual relations between wāhine figures, as well as waiata[67], and mōteatea[68] written about experiences of same-sex (Te Awekotuku, 1991). This made sense to me. These ideas were something I wish I had known about growing up. Learning that sex and gender are colonial constructed concepts that were forced upon our people (Te Awekotuku, 1991) and that me not being heterosexual or cisgender[69] did not matter because I am part of the whānau (Kerekere, 2017), was an incredible and (re)affirming revelation to me. It was like a weight that carried so much mamae[70] of not feeling accepted was wiped the moment I learned my tīpuna accepted me before I accepted myself. I wrote this whakataukī[71] in the final year of my undergraduate degree in the paper Ngā Pepehā, ngā Whakataukī me ngā Kupu Whakaari: Proverbial and Prophetic Sayings, where I tried to capture how I felt growing up. Feeling like

[64] Whare tangata refers to the ancestral meeting house of humanity, or the womb.
[65] T.Roa, personal communication, March 2, 2021.
[66] Papa hou and waka huia are intricately carved treasure boxes.
[67] Waiata are song(s) that can convey expressions of importance and messages of significance.
[68] Mōteatea are traditional lament(s), chant(s) and sung poetry that are composed to carry historic and oral accounts of significance.
[69] Cisgender or cis refers to "a prefix or adjective that denotes people who identity with the gender they were assigned at birth" (Schimanski, 2023, p. 2)
[70] Mamae refers to pain, ache, wound.
[71] Whakataukī are proverbial sayings that are composed with intent to convey meaningful significance and provide philosophical insight and understandings.

I would not be accepted by my whānau and friends, and the journey I am on to realise my potential.

He moemoeā anuhe kāpō, pūrerehua e puta whānui ki Te Ao mārama.

A caterpillar blind to its dreams, a butterfly with endless possibilities.

- Te Aorere Ngātai-Tautuku, 2022

1.0 Te Kupu Whakataki | Introduction

Today, the right to exist as takatāpui is under threat by the dominating settler-colonial coalition government[72]. The extreme hate and violence towards marginalised communities in Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa) has grown aggressively stronger since the 2019 terrorist attack on the Muslim community in Ōtautahi [73] (New Zealand Parliament, 2023), and the Covid-19 pandemic (Hattotuwa et al., 2023). In March 2023, the trans-exclusionary radical feminist (TERF) Kellie-Jay Keen-Minshull, self-proclaimed Posie Parker, was permitted to speak at two consecutive rallies in Aotearoa (Hattotuwa et al., 2023). Although her visit was met with a powerful counter-protest against her transphobic rhetoric, her mere presence within the country inspired the (re)surgence of vitriolic bigotry throughout Aotearoa (Hattotuwa et al., 2023; Lal, 2023). A recent example of this was the violent storming of a family-friendly drag king show at Te Atatū library conducted by members of the apostolic Destiny Church's programme Man Up (1News Reporters, 2025)[74].

The forceful attack on the community resulted in several instances of assault and intimidation that ultimately ignited the flames of resistance within our people who refuse to back down in the face of oppression. Reminiscent as to how I refused to allow my high school teachers to engage in racist bigotry towards my classmates, our people refuse to sit back and allow oppression to go unchallenged. Peoples Against Prisons Aotearoa[75] (PAPA) responded and organised a counterprotest against Destiny Church (People Against Prisons Aotearoa, n.d.),

[72] The current Aotearoa New Zealand government is a right-wing coalition of three parties. https://www.beehive.govt.nz/taxonomy/term/6700
[73] Ōtautahi is the Māori name for Christchurch.
[74] https://www.1news.co.nz/2025/02/16/police-investigate-assault-allegations-at-destiny-church-pride-protest/
[75] PAPA is a prison abolitionist organisation based in Aotearoa.

and a petition has been made to remove Destiny Church's charitable trust status (Glennie, 2025). It is evident that although violent homophobic and transphobic assaults, and attempts to erase takatāpui and LGBTQ+ communities still exist, the prevailing strength in sharing our pūrākau triumphs oppression.

This thesis contributes to the ongoing development of Kaupapa Māori theory in the form of expanding on rangahau takatāpui[76], a (re)emerging element ignited by Mana Wāhine theory (Pihama, 2001) and Te Pū o te Rākau methodology (Lee-Morgan, 2019) to grow conversations of Māori identity. This thesis navigates the complex ways in which notions of race, colonialism, gender identities and sexual diversity intersect. It also engages in an inherently Indigenous interdisciplinary approach by implementing significant components of Kaupapa Māori theory, such as Mana Wāhine theory (Pihama, 2001), Te Pū o te Rākau methodology and wānanga. Professor Jenny Bol Jun Lee-Morgan (Waikato, Ngāti Mahuta, Te Ahiwaru) in her 2008 Doctoral thesis *Ako: Pūrākau of Māori teacher's work in secondary schools* explain that pūrākau as methodology "draws on Māori oral literature tradition, contemporary expressions of pūrākau, as well as narrative inquiry methods within qualitative research" (Lee, 2008, p. 63) and that pūrākau are "predetermined by the need to pass on knowledge" (Lee, 2008, p. 64).

This is especially imperative for takatāpui to share pūrākau of our belonging and thrivance as resistance against the force of settler-colonialism that strives to deny our existence. The pūrākau collected for this rangahau takatāpui were shared by a group of takatāpui that for the

[76] Rangahau takatāpui is rangahau that is created by takatāpui, with takatāpui, for takatāpui.

sake of this rangahau, I have called ngā kaipūrākau - the storytellers. Within each of their precious pūrākau are distinct experiences of belonging, and what that means for the kaipūrākau as takatāpui. Although each pūrākau is uniquely individual, within the intricate framework of everyone's pūrākau are interrelated fragments that inherently connect our beings to one another. This was highlighted within pūrākau of belonging in a mixed Māori and Pākehā whakapapa; pūrākau of belonging within a kaupapa whānau hours away from whakapapa whānau; pūrākau of not feeling belonging to Māori identity, and further, to takatāpui identity. Every single pūrākau shared within the research wānanga informed us all to the precious lives of one another, and the importance of our pūrākau. Ultimately, through our coming together within this rangahau we uncover the power of sharing ourselves through pūrākau.

The term takatāpui is an ancient te reo Māori kupu found in Māori traditional cultural ways of being (Te Awekotuku, 1991). Separately (re)discovered by two takatāpui academics in the 1980s, Emeritus Professor Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku MNZM[77] FAWMM (Te Arawa, Waikato, Tūhoe) and Lee Smith (Ngāti Kahungunu) the kupu takatāpui was found in Te Arawa[78] rangatira Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke's manuscript (c1840s, as cited in Kerekere, 2017) within the popular (re)telling of the heterosexual[79] romance between Hinemoa and Tūtānekai (Te Awekotuku, 2001). The use of the term takatāpui within this manuscript described the special relationship between Tūtānekai and Tiki, his close male friend. In 1871 it was translated

[77] MNZM refers to a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit.
[78] Te Arawa is the overarching iwi of the Rotorua district
[79] Heterosexual, heterosexuality is a term referring to women and men who experience sexual desire towards people of the opposite sex

to mean "intimate companion of the same sex" (Williams, 1871)[80], the kupu takatāpui provided insight into the relationships between Hinemoa, Tūtānekai and Tiki (Grey, 1885; Te Awekotuku, 1991). According to Adjunct Professor Elizabeth Kerekere (Ngāti Oneone, Te Aitanga a Māhaki, Whānau a Kai, Rongowhakaata, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri), after their (re)discovery Te Awekōtuku and L. Smith gifted the kupu to their respective communities of Māori lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender peoples; Te Awekōtuku through Māori and Pacific lesbian networks, Smith through sexual health networks and both of them through their academic networks (Kerekere, 2017).

Prior to its (re)discovery, Māori who did not conform to the Western standard of cisheterosexuality[81] only had access to words from Western the LGBTQ+ framework to describe their identities (Hutchings & Aspin, 2007; Te Awekotuku, 1991). However, some Māori who claimed these Western identities and subsequently joined those communities would encounter the underlying embedded colonialism exerted through racism (Hutchings & Aspin, 2007). As the imposition of settler-colonialism has had a grave impact on Māori expressions of identity (Walters, 2007) having access to and (re)claiming takatāpui as an identity for queer Māori is an incredibly important act of self-determination. A kupu embedded within whakapapa and imbued with cultural significance, takatāpui is used today to encompass the vast expressions of Māori sexual diversity and difference (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007; Te Awekotuku, 2001). Kerekere has offered a contemporary definition of the kupu takatāpui as an

[80] The first translation of the kupu 'takatāpui' was in the second edition of the Māori dictionary in 1852 and was defined as "travelling companion". It was updated in 1871 to mean "intimate companion of the same sex" in the third edition and has been consistent in every book since.
[81] Cisheterosexuality is a two-part identity referring to a person who is both cisgender and heterosexual.

> "umbrella term that embraces all Māori with diverse gender identities, sexualities and sex characteristics including whakawahine, tangata ira tāne, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer. Takatāpui identity is related to whakapapa, mana and inclusion. It emphasises Māori cultural and spiritual identity as equal to – or more important than – gender identity, sexuality or having diverse sex characteristics. Being takatāpui offers membership of a culturally-based national movement that honours our ancestors, respects our elders, works closely with our peers and looks after our young people." (Kerekere, 2015; Kerekere, 2016)

As this rangahau is based within Kaupapa Māori theory, te reo Māori is an integral element of this thesis. Therefore, I have added footnotes for descriptions of kupu Māori[82] where used in the first instance. There are also some te reo Māori words and passages I have intentionally left untranslated to retain the integrity and respect the mana[83] of te reo Māori. Throughout this thesis there are particular words that have brackets around them, such as (re)assert, (re)affirm, (re)generate, and (re)emerge. This is something I have taken inspiration from Lee-Morgan (2017) in her *Tikanga Rangahau webinar: Pūrākau as methodology* where she spoke about being conscious of the need of decolonisation and to be critical. The implementation of pūrākau methodology within this rangahau is a strengths-based approach to rangahau with takatāpui as it strives to empower their voices. Throughout the thesis, I highlight an array of intersected

[82] Kupu Māori refers to Māori word/s
[83] Mana is an important concept and practice in Te Ao Māori. It is immense

pathways. The pathways I have chosen are not necessarily superior to another, they instead have been selected to align with my positionality in relation to this thesis.

For this rangahau, Kaupapa Māori rangahau and Kaupapa Māori theory form the foundation from which this takatāpui rangahau grows. Six key Kaupapa Māori principles informed by Kaupapa Māori theory inform the philosophical theories and cultural practices of this study. These principles are depicted in the table below.

Table 1. *Six Key Kaupapa Māori Principles for This Rangahau*

Principle	**Description**	**Relevant concepts and methods**
Tino Rangatiratanga	Principle of self-determination, of relative autonomy	He Whakaputanga Te Tiriti o Waitangi Mana Wāhine | Mana Takatāpui
Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho	Principle of cultural aspirations and identity	Pūrākau Tīpuna Te Reo Māori me ōnā Tikanga Tuakiritanga Wānanga Mātauranga Mana | Motuhake Aroha
Whānau	Principle of implementing Māori cultural frameworks that	Whakapapa Tuakiri Whanaungatanga

	"emphasise the 'collective' rather than the 'individual' such as the notion of the extended family"[84]	Whakawhanaungatanga Relational accountability Reciprocity Collective responsibility
Te Reo Māori me ōnā Tikanga[85]	Principle of the unbreakable bond that is Māori language and Māori cultural customs	Whakawhiti kōrero Pūrākau Wānanga Whakatau
Ako Māori	Principle of implementing a culturally preferred pedagogy	Wānanga Te Reo me ōnā Tikanga Marae Hui
Kaupapa	Principle of working towards a collective vision	Mana Wāhine | Mana Takatāpui

Note: Adapted from Bishop, 1995; Doyle, 2023; Pihama, 2001; G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 2015

[84] Doyle, 2023
[85] Te Reo Māori me ngā Tikanga refers to the Māori language and cultural practices, customs and protocols.

2.0 He Kohikohinga Mātauranga | A Collection of Knowledge

The drawing in the previous page is something that came to me in a day dream. I was lying on the floor of a wharenui I had never seen before, but it felt so familiar. As I glanced around the walls, I noticed the whakairo[86] glow with iridescence. The whakairo were intricately detailed and depicted androgynous rangatira. I was curious, I had never seen ambiguously carved rangatira before. As I inched closer to the whakairo, I plunged forward and propelled into space before waking up. I do not dream often, so this felt special; I felt like I should try to capture what I dreamt of. When I think about that dream, I envisage myself lying on the floor, listening to the sounds of whare. A collection of knowledge waiting to be embraced.

He Kohikohinga Mātauranga is a Kaupapa Māori approach to a literature review. I named my literature review He Kohikohinga Mātauranga as an acknowledgement of this collection of mātauranga Māori. As a Māori student researching a Māori identity within a Māori realm, Kaupapa Māori research is the only foundation this takatāpui rangahau can grow from. The essence of Kaupapa Māori research is clarified by Emeritus Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou) where she explains she sees

> "it really simply: it's a plan; it's a programme; it's an approach; it's a way of being; it's a way of knowing; it's a way of seeing; it's a way of making meaning; it's a way of being Māori; it's a way of thinking; it's a thought process; it's a practice; it's a set of things you want to do. It

[86] Whakairo refers to carving(s), specifically intricately detailed carvings that portray the pūrākau of the figure depicted.

> is a kaupapa and that's why I think it is bigger than a methodology."
>
> (Smith, 2011, p. 10)

As such, Kaupapa Māori principles have informed the dynamic fluidity of the theories and methodologies utilised within this study as outlined within Chapter One.

Kaupapa Māori is a term that encompasses Māori aspirations to (re)affirm our cultural philosophies and practices (Pihama et al., 2002). At its core, Kaupapa Māori is about the desire of Māori to be Māori. As a theory, Kaupapa Māori celebrates te reo Māori me ōnā Tikanga, our philosophical worldviews and cultural practices while simultaneously asserting inherent curiosity within Māori (Bishop, 1999; Murphy, 2011; Pihama, 2001). It was established by the following distinguished Māori academics including:

- Dr L. T. Smith CNZM[87],
- Professor Graham Hingangaroa Smith CNZM FRSNZ[88] (Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Apa, Ngāti Kahungunu),
- Professor Leonie Pihama FRSNZ (Te Ātiawa, Waikato, Taranaki), and,
- Dr Fiona Cram NZOM[89] (Ngāti Pahauwera)

among others as a response to the imposition of the settler-colonial state schooling systems and their detrimental impacts on tamariki Māori that sought to assimilate, civilise and integrate them into Pākehā society (Pihama, 2001; Pihama et al., 2002; Smith, 1997; Smith, 2012). The settler-colonial state schooling system is just one component of the colonial regime

[87] CNZM refers to the Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit
[88] FRSNZ refers to the Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand
[89] NZOM refers to the Member to the New Zealand Order of Merit

implemented within Aotearoa society following the signing and consequent dishonouring of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi[90] was first signed on 6 February 1840 between Māori rangatira[91] and representatives of the Crown. Professor Margaret Mutu (Ngāi Tahu, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Whātua) explains Te Tiriti of Waitangi as

> "a treaty written in the Māori language that confirmed the 1835 He Whakaputanga, preserving the rangatiratanga (power and authority including sovereignty) of the rangatira, of the hapū and of the people. It devolved kāwanatanga (governance) over British immigrants to the Queen of England" (Mutu, 2015, p. 6)

Ultimately, it was clear to Māori that Te Tiriti o Waitangi documented the conditions upon which the British citizens could continue to reside in this country they referred to as 'New Zealand' (Mutu, 2011a). Furthermore, Te Tiriti o Waitangi recognised and validated the substantive sovereignty that came with the 1835 He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni [92] (henceforth He Whakaputanga). He Whakaputanga was signed by 34 Ngāpuhi rangatira in 1835 to establish an independent state under the United Tribes of New Zealand and was formally recognised by the King of England in 1836 (Waitangi Tribunal, 2014). The document acknowledged that the British Crown, (re)affirmed the absolute sovereignty of the rangatira (Mutu, 2011a; Waitangi Tribunal, 2014).

[90] Te Tiriti o Waitangi refers to the Māori language version of the treaty.
[91] Rangatira is a term that refers to someone who possesses leadership qualities; someone of high rank, chief.
[92] He Whakaputanga o Nu Tireni refers to the Declaration of Independence.

In essence, Te Tiriti o Waitangi reaffirmed the agreement that was laid out in He Whakaputanga. Over 500 rangatira from throughout the country signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi that was written in te reo Māori (Menzies & Ruru, 2016). However, Te Tiriti o Waitangi was not the sole version of this agreement, and the more commonly known English text, 'the Treaty of Waitangi' was the variant that had been signed by representatives of the Crown (Mutu, 2011a). Kaupapa Māori scholar and lawyer Sharon Toi (Ngā Puhi) explains "the English version …was written subsequent to the events at Waitangi at 1840, and differs considerably in its translation from the Māori text" (Toi, 2019, p. 29).

The discrepancies between the two versions of the texts were manipulated by the settlers to claim that Māori had ceded sovereignty by signing the Treaty of Waitangi (Mutu, 2011a; Toi, 2019). Although this was not the case, it ignited the steady encroachment of British control over tino rangatiratanga of Māori; first attempting to assert British laws through proclamations and ordinances (Johnson, 2006). The settler-colonial machine fuelled its imperial expedition to infect, infiltrate and invade our lands, resources, language, cultural customs, philosophies, identities, and so much more. A marginal four years passed since the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi before two decades of land wars broke out between the settler-colonial militia and Māori. This ultimately resulted in significant Māori casualties and the forced dispossession and subsequent confiscation of Māori land (O'Malley, 2019).

The establishment of the settler-colonial government in 1852 gave jurisdiction to an expansive range of vitriolic imperial laws that further entrenched British control and power, such as the Native Lands Act 1865 and the Native Schools Act 1867. The Native Lands Act enabled the settler-government to secure lands they could not acquire through war by asserting inequitable systems of law like individual land ownership; a concept foreign to Māori collectives (Sorrenson, 1956). In 1867 the Native Schools Act established a settler-colonial schooling system which sought to civilise, integrate and assimilate Māori into Pākehā society, and enforced the prohibition of speaking te reo Māori (Timutimu et al., 1998). Timutimu et al. (1998) explain the extensiveness of the systematic oppression of the Native schools, especially as "Pakeha teachers appointed to these schools were expected to engage with Maori in specific ways designed to undermine their cultural values, practices and language and replace them with those of the Pakeha" (p. 112). Thus, the imposition of Western ideologies and constructions of cisheteropatriarchy, misogyny, and racism, in addition to many other colonial structures, were internalised and eventually perpetuated by many Māori (Mikaere, 1999).

One of the most detrimental impacts of this embedded settler-colonial invasion was the destruction of the significance of wāhine Māori in traditional Māori society[93] (Mikaere, 1999; Pihama, 2001). Prior to the infringement of the settler-colony, Māori society acknowledged the interrelationship of all living things and upheld a prevailing principle of balance (Mikaere, 2019; Pihama, 2020; Tomlins-Jahnke, 2019). This overarching value laid a foundation where wāhine and tāne alike could hold various important and influential positions within the

[93] In a similar approach to Lee (2008) I use the term 'tradtional Māori society' to "refer to a time when Māori social, political and economic systems functioned to ensure whānau, hapū and iwi were strong and cohesive" (p. 36)

collective (Mikaere, 2019). Renowned Māori lawyer and academic Ani Mikaere (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou) expands on the magnitude of wāhine Māori within traditional Māori society where "Māori women occupied very important leadership positions in traditional society, positions of military, spiritual, and political significance" (Mikaere, 2019, p. 9). Furthermore, the patriarchal stripping of the importance of wāhine Māori within Māori society is directly connected to the colonial destruction of the concept of whānau (Kerekere, 2017; Metge, 1990; Pihama, 2001; Pihama, 2020).

In traditional Māori society, wāhine were crucial members to the collective of whānau, hapū and iwi (Jenkins, 1986, as cited in Mikaere, 1999). Traditionally, Māori culture was an oral culture; our pūrākau, waiata, mōteatea and whakataukī were primary sources of transmitting knowledge, and are the instruments which our tīpuna beliefs and concepts could be passed intergenerationally (Mikaere, 1999). These treasures were predominantly composed by wāhine Māori and thus illustrate the importance of wāhine Māori as sustained living repositories of tribal knowledge (Mikaere, 1999; Pihama, 2020). However, the Māori philosophy of balance did not benefit the grand regime of colonialism. The enforcement of derogatory assimilative practices towards wāhine Māori quickly devastated their crucial significance within Māori society (Mikaere, 1999).

This is particularly evident within the destruction of pūrākau through Pākehā retellings of our traditional narratives (Lee-Morgan, 2019; Pouwhare, 2016) where the women in the stories were demonised, fetishised, marginalised and stripped of their significance (Mikaere, 1999; Pihama, 2001; Pihama, 2020; Te Awekotuku, 1991). Sto:lo First Nation academic and story

teller Q'um Q'um Xiiem OC Jo-Ann Archibald asserts that the colonial implementation of "Indigenous story-taking and story-making" (Archibald et al., 2019, p. 5) were vital components to research; an essential tool for the perpetuation and maintenance of colonialism. The colonial mythical reinterpretations of pūrākau were then taught back to us in the state schooling systems as fantastical legends for generations; interlaced with underlying cisheteropartiarchal norms that were ultimately internalised (Lee-Morgan, 2019).

Lee-Morgan asserts the destructive impact of these colonial reinterpretations of pūrākau to Māori identity, where "not only have our traditional understandings of our world been severely diminished, but our hearts too have been affected – our faith and confidence in our stories and ultimately ourselves" (Lee-Morgan, 2019, p. 153). Tuhiwai Smith describes this process of disruption as a key strand of colonialism and imperialism that informs "an epic story telling of huge devastation, painful struggle and persistent survival" (Smith, 2012, p. 20). Thus, demonstrating the power and significance of Indigenous peoples telling their own stories. Archibald (2019) highlights the insidious intentions of Western research reinterpreting Indigenous stories through a colonial lens, as it is "more than a theft of cultural property, this 'research' was an intellectual, cultural, and spiritual invasion that cast Indigenous characters in particular roles, framed from the vantage point of the 'hunter'" (p. 5). Therefore, as a Māori researcher carrying out research with Māori people, with takatāpui, it is imperative that decolonising methodologies is a critical component implemented within this rangahau.

Kaupapa Māori Theory and Rangahau

Kaupapa Māori theory embraces Māori cultural epistemologies and practices; a Māori world view that informs Māori ways of being (Pihama et al., 2002; Smith, 1997). The development of mātauranga within this Kohikohinga Mātauranga is underpinned by te reo Māori me ona tikanga as critical elements of Kaupapa Māori knowledge (Nepe, 1991). Not to be confused with hegemonic knowledge systems, transformational Kaupapa Māori rangahau is firmly situated within a distinctly Māori cosmological knowledge base (Pihama et al., 2002). An Indigenous and decolonial approach that (re)cognises, (re)creates, (re)presents and (re)searches-back implementing and theorising Māori philosophies and epistemologies. As I mentioned earlier, the necessity of Kaupapa Māori theory rose out of the detrimental impacts of colonial state school education enforced upon tamariki and rangatahi Māori that sought to assimilate, domesticate and homogenise Māori into Pākehā culture (Smith, 1997). Thus, Kaupapa Māori theory at its core innately challenges, critiques and questions the hegemonic expectations of Westernised notions of knowledge through encapsulating uniquely Māori approaches to rangahau (Walker et al., 2006).

The development and transformative potential of Kaupapa Māori as a foundation of theory and research emerged out of a sustained Māori struggle for mana motuhake and tino rangatiratanga (Pihama et al., 2015; Smith, 1997; Smith, 2000). Kaupapa Māori as both theory and rangahau represent a defined cultural and political intent to consistently challenge Western research through (re)asserting Indigenous theories (Pihama et al., 2015; Smith, 1997; Smith, 2000). As opposed to Western research where the researcher is expected to uphold an a-cultural, objective

position to their research, Kaupapa Māori rangahau is firmly grounded within Māori epistemologies and frameworks (Pihama et al., 2015).

Kaupapa Māori rangahau is especially crucial to counteract the devastating impacts of Western research done to Māori as a colonial means to forcefully assimilate Māori into Western culture (Jackson, 2018; Mikaere, 2013; Smith, 2012). As Kaupapa Māori scholar Pihama (2015), alongside others (Hutchings & Lee-Morgan, 2016; Smith, 2012) argue "Kaupapa Māori theory is part of the wider struggle against colonisation" (p. 6). As an Indigenous theory, Kaupapa Māori advises a powerful approach to research informed by innate Māori ways of being (Pihama, 2001; Pihama et al., 2015; Smith, 1997; Smith, 2012; Walker et al., 2006). G. H. Smith (1997) in his trailblazing Doctoral thesis *The development of kaupapa Māori: theory and praxis* asserts three key elements that are imperative to discussions of Kaupapa Māori: the struggle for tino rangatiratanga as vital to Māori struggle, the validity of Māori is taken for granted and the revival of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga. Therefore Kaupapa Māori rangahau encompasses an abundance of branches thoroughly grounded within Kaupapa Māori theory, including Pūrākau methodology and Mana Wāhine theory (Lee, 2008; Pihama, 2001). This demonstrates the necessity of constant reflective and transformative growth within Kaupapa Māori to adapt to the diverse lived experiences of Māori (Pihama et al., 2015).

Mana Wāhine Theory

This Kaupapa Māori approach to a literature review prioritises literature that was made by Māori, for Māori. Additionally, the scope of this Kohikohinga Mātauranga applies a Mana

Wāhine perspective. Mana Wāhine is an element of Kaupapa Māori that embodies the intersectional aspects of wāhine Māori and celebrates the profound significance of wāhine Māori and te ira wahine within Te Ao Māori (Te Awekotuku, 1991; Waitere & Johnston, 2009). Where the hegemonic dichotomy that underpins Western institutions seeks to deconstruct and segregate ourselves from ourselves (Waitere & Johnston, 2009), Mana Wāhine amplifies the intricate complexity of te ira wahine (Te Awekotuku, 1991). Accentuating the stories and crucial contributions of Mana Wāhine is a critical component to this Kohikohinga Mātauranga, especially considering its connection to Mana Takatāpui (Beckford & Nikora, 2016).

Mana Wāhine theory is informed by mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori me ōna tikanga that provides a lens where ideas and understandings can theorise the issues faced by Māori women (Pihama, 2020). Mana Wāhine theory is especially important as it challenges the imposed colonial cisheteronormative gender ideologies that seek to destroy the innate significance of Indigenous women (Pihama, 2020). Mana Wāhine theory is asserted by takatāpui activist and researcher Kerekere[94] (2017) as appropriate when facilitating research with takatāpui as it addresses the impact of heteropatriarchy on traditional Māori experiences of diverse sexual and gender identities. This is especially significant when it comes to conversations including and not limited to trans, intersex, gender-fluid and non-binary peoples. The essence of Mana Wāhine and Mana Takatāpui within literature are inextricably connected as they are the voices that are absent from discussions pertaining to the struggle for Māori autonomy (Beckford & Nikora, 2016; Pihama, 2001; Te Awekotuku, 1991).

[94] A further discussion of Kerekere is located in the section 'Ngā Pou Rangatira o Tōku Rangahau'

This is further evidenced by the fact that many of the early discussions regarding the wellbeing of takatāpui were centred around tāne takatāpui and their experiences, omitting takatāpui who are wāhine, trans, nonbinary, and intersex completely (Beckford & Nikora, 2016; Kerekere, 2015; Kerekere, 2017; Te Awekotuku, 1991). Upholding a Mana Wāhine perspective throughout this rangahau is vital to committing to transformational Kaupapa Māori rangahau; recognising the colonial imposition and destruction upon Māori traditional beliefs towards the balance between wāhine and tāne (Mikaere, 1999). Furthermore, Mana Wāhine empowers the flourishment of Mana Takatāpui by providing a foundation for mātauranga takatāpui to (re)generate (Green & Pihama, 2023; Pihama, 2020).

At its core, Mana Wāhine theory intrinsically challenges colonial heteronormative beliefs that seeks to ridicule women as subordinate to men and that diverse sexual and gender identities are debaucherous and perverted (Kerekere, 2017; Pihama, 2001; Te Awekotuku, 1991). However, in order to engage with Mana Wāhine theory, I need to address the persistent impactful forces of colonialism upon wāhine Māori and takatāpui. Indigenous peoples are no stranger to colonial violence disrupting the significance of women and others in the community who did not subscribe to Western notions of gender and sexuality (Johnson-Jennings et al., 2020; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). For Māori, our entanglement with the colonial machine

began with the invasion by Pākehā on the coast of Tūranganui a Kiwa[95] in 1769 (Salmond, 1991).

Western civilisation brought with them Christianity and their expectations of women and sex, and they were appalled to find an Indigenous culture rich in influential, powerful women and vast sexual diversity (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007; Kerekere, 2017; Mikaere, 1999; Te Awekotuku, 1991). The missionaries and British settlers endeavoured to infiltrate and violate the fluid sexualities that our tīpuna embraced to instil cisheteronormativity[96] and patriarchy into the minds of our tīpuna, a feat that persists through mythical legends and ingrained repeated acts of binary gender norms (Lee, 2009; Lee-Morgan, 2019; Mikaere, 1999). Distinguished African American author, educator, theorist and poet, bell hooks, describes patriarchy as

> "a political-social system that insists that male are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain dominance through various forms of psychological terrorisms and violence" (hooks, 2015, para 3)

Thus highlighting the profound threat of patriarchy to the Māori principle of balance and the complementarity between feminine and masculine. Furthermore, the imposition of the

[95] Tūranga nui a Kiwa is the original Māori name for Gisborne. Its meaning refers to the great standing place of the tīpuna Kiwa.
[96] Cisheteronormativity is the Western social norm that those who identify with the gender they are assigned at birth and are heterosexual are "normal" or superior to trans, non-binary, among other diverse sex and gender identities.

Christian religion upon Māori was integral to the colonial agenda, and played a profound role in the distortion of fluid Māori sexuality (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007).

The infliction of colonial heteropatriarchal ideologies was forcefully asserted by Pākehā male ethnographers on our traditional pūrākau after tāne Māori would recite Māori cosmogony to them (Jenkins, 1986, as cited in Mikaere, 1999). Nevertheless these Pākehā male writers lacked the understanding and significance of Māori culture and intentionally destroyed the importance of wāhine Māori narrated in fabled interpretations (Mikaere, 1999; Pihama, 2001). This verse of the colonial pūrākau invaded into and fabricated to destroy an integral aspect of Māori society: the sacred and influential female essence (Murphy, 2011; Toi, 2019). Mikaere (2019) discusses this process of colonisation where the deliberate modification of our narratives recreated us in their own image, and thus ultimately mutilated the female and masculine equilibrium that had underpinned tikanga Māori (p. 110).

The esteemed Moana Jackson CRSNZ [97] (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou and Rongomaiwahine) asserts within the context of Indigenous peoples that "the founding myths serve a particular purpose that is integral to colonisation itself: they justify the current status quo by masking the reality or extent of dispossession that shaped the past and present" (2018, p. 89). Therefore, Mana Wāhine as a (re)emerging contemporary theory is an essential element to this takatāpui rangahau. Mana Wāhine is also a movement that centers the (re)affirmation and (re)surgence of the mana of Māori women throughout the past, present and future (Pihama,

[97] CRSNZ refers to the Companion of the Royal Society of New Zealand

2020). Furthermore, Mana Wāhine and Mana Takatāpui are intrinsically interconnected as they both fundamentally challenge settler-colonial cisheteronormative ideologies that seek to deny their inherent vital significance within Māori communities (Doyle, 2023; Pihama, 2020; Te Awekotuku, 1991)

Rangahau Takatāpui

> "In the world that existed before Tasman, Cook and the arrival of outsiders, I believe there was a really robust and vigorous and intense exploration of sexualities, and an acceptance of them" – As stated by Te Awekōtuku in the podcast BANG! Season 2 Episode 6: takatāpui (Thomas, 2018, 18:05).

I open this section with a quote from Te Awekōtuku to highlight how takatāpui were embraced by whānau, hapū and iwi prior to the invasion of settler colonialism. Today, the contemporary kupu takatāpui encompasses an array of lived identities. The two most evident, of course, is that of being Māori and being LGBTQIA+. These terms can be and are not limited to: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, aro, ace, non-binary, and genderfluid. Similar to Indigenous epistemologies that affirm deeply inherent interconnectedness, Māori are familiar with identities that influence and overlap with others (Hokowhitu et al., 2010; Johnson-Jennings et al., 2020; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

To say that we could separate these identities from one another would be remarkably inaccurate, as separating a part of ourself from self goes against our intrinsic essence as Māori (Smith, 2006). As we are reminded from our creation pūrākau, tāngata whenua are descended from atua, and therefore every living aspect of our lives is a truly substantial aspect of our being (Cram, 2005; Rameka, 2016). This innate connection is represented through tāngata whenua inheriting ira tangata or mauri[98] from atua, where Māori are described as "the repositories of whakapapa" (Cram, 2005, p. 54).

The core of whakapapa always returns us to our creation pūrākau of Papatūānuku and Ranginui (see Tīhei Mauri Ora, p. 14-15), and serves as an unchanging reminder of our place in the world (Tomlins-Jahnke, 2019). Used by our people as a sophisticated teaching methodology (Smith, 1997), whakapapa is a powerful agency to understand our world and relationships (Pihama, 2001). Kaupapa Māori scholar and politician Angeline Greensill (Tainui) explains whakapapa as the foundation stone from a tāngata whenua perspective, as all species and elements of the world possess mauri, and therefore are interrelated and interconnected (Greensill, 1999). Whakapapa is a central component to our identity as Māori (Rameka, 2016). The word whakapapa is "to place in layers, or lay upon one another", illustrating a foundation of generations that are reinforced and supported with upcoming generations (Ngata & Ngata, 2019).

[98] Cosmogenic life essence, celestial life force, seed descended from atua

Esteemed Māori academic Tā[99] Hirini Moko Mead (2013) explains whakapapa as the "social component of the ira, the genes" and connects our being to our ancestral maunga, awa, moana, waka, iwi, hapū and whānau. Kerekere (2017) further explains that whakapapa "encompasses the relationships and obligations within and between generations" (p. 21) bringing attention to our responsibilities as Māori to ourselves, to each other and to our tīpuna. Our (pro)creation pūrākau of Hineahuone and Tāne (as per Tīhei Mauri Ora, p. 15-16) informs us of the spiritual and cultural interdependence and interrelationships between te taiao and Māori, and therefore cannot be separated from one another (Mead, 2019). The extensive components that make up whakapapa illustrates an esoteric connection between our beings as ira tangata to our intrinsic ira atua. This is extremely important to our tuakiri takatāpui[100] as it (re)affirms our place in Te Ao Māori which is crucial to the feeling of belonging to our cultural identity as Māori (Pihama, 2020).

Ngā Pou Rangatira o Tōku Rangahau Takatāpui | The Pillars of My Takatāpui Research

This rangahau is only possible because of the immense foundation of mātauranga takatāpui that has been (re)generated from takatāpui rangatira. Though efforts of settler-colonialism have been and are persistent in attempting to destroy the sacred belonging takatāpui have within whānau, hapū and iwi, many takatāpui rangatira have vehemently resisted these endeavours through their research. These rangatira have nurtured the groundwork from which takatāpui knowledge is able to flourish, and have carved space for takatāpui rangahau to be built upon. I

[99] Sir
[100] Identity

have used the term ‘rangatira’ to describe these people so as to recognise the profound contributions they have made for takatāpui, especially through their efforts in advocating for takatāpui health and wellbeing.

Although I have selected five takatāpui rangatira to acknowledge, it does not disregard the fact that there have been and are many takatāpui rangatira who also have made significant contributions to the thrivance of takatāpui. For that, I acknowledge and offer my gratitude to my tīpuna Wairaka and Muriwai, Aotearoa politician and world’s first transgender Member of Parliament Georgina Beyer MNZM (Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou), trailblazing performance artist and activist Carmen Rupe (Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Heke-a-Wai) and all takatāpui who have come before us, are with us now, our future generations and all their meaningful contributions to our community. This next section recognises the profound efforts of these chosen rangatira takatāpui and the spaces they have carved for takatāpui to belong and thrive.

Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku

Te Arawa

Tūhoe

Waikato

Mana Wahine Māori: Selected Writings on Maori Women’s Art, Culture and Politics (1991)

Ruahine: Mythic Women (2003)

He Reka Anō – same-sex lust and loving in the ancient Māori world (2005)

Emeritus Professor Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku MNZM FAWMM is a takatāpui artist, activist, curator, critic, writer and award-winning researcher (Husband, 2023). A trailblazer of Māori activist group Ngā Tamatoa, and a front runner for the women's movement and gay liberation in Aotearoa, Ngāhuia (Te Awekotuku, 1991) remains an advocate for the freedom of marginalised communities. She is a critically acclaimed writer and continues to create and contribute to a spring of mātauranga takatāpui that highlights robust accounts of Māori experiences of diverse sexual characteristics and sexualities (Te Awekotuku, 1991, 2003, 2005).

Te Awekōtuku's *Mana Wahine Maori* (1991) is a collection of writings that centres the stories of wāhine Māori and te ira wahine, disregarding the binary confines of gendered assessment. Challenging the evangelical propaganda espoused by the colonial Western academy that has flooded scholarly literature, Te Awekōtuku accentuates and (re)affirms the expansive and diverse sexual identities Māori enjoyed within historical and contemporary contexts. Historic oral accounts tell us that prior to the invasion of cis-heteronormative Christian principles, takatāpui were innate members of the collective, and were free to exercise takatāpuitanga[101] within their community (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007; Kerekere, 2017; Laurie & Evans, 2005; Te Awekotuku, 1991).

[101] The essence and/or spirit of being unapologetically takatāpui.

Resisting the Western patriarchal distorted myths of tīpuna wāhine by white male ethnographers, Te Awekōtuku's 2003 book *Ruahine* (re)claims these colonial interpretations with takatāpui insight (Te Awekotuku, 2003). Through boisterous athleticism and enchanting charisma, Te Awekōtuku's depiction of her chosen takatāpui wāhine represent fluid embodiments of takatāpuitanga throughout these pūrākau (2003). Liberating the unique lives of these magnificent wāhine, Ngāhuia (2003) (re)affirms the multidimensional aspects to these wāhine, as warriors, as sexual beings, as heroine, among many other dynamic intelligent roles within her cheeky and exciting (re)tellings of these colonial myths.

Te Awekōtuku's (2005) paper presented at the Outlines Conference: Lesbian and Gay History in Aotearoa 2003, *He Reka Anō – same-sex lust and loving in the ancient Māori world*, explores her various findings of mōteatea, manuscripts, pūrākau and whakairo, and their explicit expressions of takatāpui sexual experiences. The manuscripts in particular were authored by Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke and highlighted an explicit account of traditional Māori social acceptance of diverse gender and sexual identities. The pūrākau of Hinemoa and Tūtānekai is examined and revisited by Te Awekōtuku to acknowledge Tūtānekai's hoa takatāpui[102], Tiki. Accompanying this is an analysis of traditional mōteatea and their original messages of same sex relationships that were altered by various prominent Māori scholars to conform with colonial heteronormativity. Te Awekōtuku particularly revered in (re)discovering intricate whakairo that depicted female same-sex activity, which she was especially excited about as

[102] The term hoa takatāpui as it was depicted in Te Rangikāheke's manuscript is translated to "friend", however the wider context of the use of the term hoa takatāpui is further discussed in Pūrākau of Tīpuna Takatāpui.

female relationships were not as commonly depicted as male same-sex relationships (Te Awekotuku, 2005).

Te Awekōtuku's important rangahau specifically highlighted takatāpui belonging within traditional Māori society. Her critical engagement with ngā taonga tuku iho[103] demonstrated the extent that they have been influenced by settler-colonial cisheteropatriarchy and uncovered traditional social acceptance of diverse sexual and gender identities (Te Awekotuku, 1991). The way Te Awekōtuku has (re)presented these various pūrākau establishes a platform from which our tribal histories and knowledges can be taught, learnt and understood. Her research serves as a testament to takatāpui resilience through attempts of Pākehā assimilation and the absolute rejection of eurocentric cisheteropatriarchy.

Clive Aspin

Ngāti Maru

Ngāti Whanaunga

Ngāti Tamaterā

Sexuality and the stories of indigenous people (2007a)

Reclaiming the past to inform the future: Contemporary views of Māori sexuality (2007b)

[103] Historical treasures that have been intergenerationally passed down. Particularly (re)presented in historic oral accounts, pūrākau, mōteatea, whakairo, waiata, and whakataukī among other cultural elements.

Associate Professor Clive Aspin is an Associate Professor at Te Herenga Waka's School of Health and is a leading Māori public health researcher, specialising in HIV, sexuality and suicide prevention (Husband, 2024). Offering the much needed yet absent takatāpui voice within Māori health and wellbeing, Aspin has been a key leader in creating discourse around takatāpui sexual health and challenging the impacts of heteropatriarchy within Māori health outcomes (Aspin et al., 1998).

Aspin has (re)generated hauora[104] for takatāpui through significant literature, including *Sexuality and the stories of indigenous people* (2007) and *Reclaiming the past to inform the future: Contemporary views of Maori sexuality* (2007). These intricate and intimate (re)presentations of hauora for takatāpui written by an array of takatāpui offer insightful representations critical to wellbeing and survival.

Sexuality and the stories of indigenous people edited by Aspin and Dr Jessica Hutchings (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Huirapa, Gujarati) is a collection of pūrākau composed by various prominent takatāpui community members (2007). This book uniquely captures personal takatāpui perspectives of sexuality and wellbeing by allowing the authors to implement an imaginative

[104] Health, vigour

style in which they (re)present their testimonies of takatāpui identity (Hutchings & Aspin, 2007). Powerful first-person narratives illustrate takatāpui experiences of belonging, coming out, and struggling with subliminal colonialism through cisheteropatriarchy in Māori communities and colonial racism within lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities (Hutchings & Aspin, 2007). Most significantly is that these narratives contextualise historical settler-colonial procedures that have shaped contemporary expressions of takatāpui identity (Hutchings & Aspin, 2007). Hutchings also contributes to the book focussing on creating open conversations around wāhine Māori and HIV/AIDS and the impact of these illnesses on takatāpui (Hutchings & Aspin, 2007). This was especially significant as Aspin and Hutchings (2007) were able to share personal pūrākau of prominent takatāpui community members.

Reclaiming the past to inform the future: Contemporary views of Māori sexuality written by Aspin and Hutchings (2007) is a discussion of traditional and contemporary understandings of diverse Māori sexualities. This text draws upon various ancient knowledge embedded within archival material including whakairo and pūrākau to describe lived experiences of Māori sexuality pre-colonisation. These descriptions are further informed by the Māori Sexuality Project, a study of diverse knowledge and understandings of contemporary Māori sexuality (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007). Demonstrating that in pre-colonial Aotearoa, diverse Māori sexualities were a part of life. This was especially important as this text was published three years following the 2004 Civil Union Bill which granted partnership rights for lesbians and gay men in Aotearoa (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007). Aspin and Hutchings highlight the sustained settler-colonial impact of Christianity upon Māori communities, particularly represented within the Destiny Church.

The apostolic Destiny Church, of which has substantial Māori membership, actively promote and enforces colonial ideologies of heteronormativity and nuclear families[105] subscribed to a lifetime of monogamy (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007). Aspin and Hutchings (2007) explain how this colonial process "works in a way that denies the existence of sexual diversity and, as such, would have us believe that monogamous heterosexuality was the norm within Indigenous cultures" (p. 417). Moreover, the adoption and further perpetuation of conservatism within some Māori has led to tamariki being rejected from their whānau on the assertion of their diverse sexuality (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007). The persistent existence of homophobia within whānau Māori[106] and communities have devastating effects on whānau members who do not conform to the model of heterosexuality. The negative impacts can include poor health outcomes and risks, disconnection from cultural relationships and isolation. Therefore, Aspin and Hutchings argue that it is vital for Indigenous peoples to have open access to their historical tribal knowledges in order to flourish and thrive (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007).

The contributions of Aspin to takatāpui rangahau established a foundation upon which the health and wellbeing of takatāpui could be advocated for in the Aotearoa health system. His rangahau addresses the maintained colonial impact of cisheteropatriarchy within our governmental systems as well as internalised cisheteronormativity within Māori communities. Importantly, Aspin's literature unreservedly rejects the colonial notion that traditional Māori

[105] The Western concept of a nuclear family refers to a familial unit comprised solely of the parents and child(ren).
[106] Māori families

societies perpetuated monogamous cisheterosexuality and instead evidences historically-informed social acceptance of diverse gender and sexual identities.

Elizabeth Kerekere

Ngāti Oneone

Te Aitanga a Māhaki

Whānau a Kai

Rongowhakaata

Ngāi Tāmanuhiri

Takatāpui: Part of the whānau (2015)

Part of the whānau: The emergence of takatāpui identity: He whāriki takatāpui (2017)

Te Whare Takatāpui: Reclaiming the Spaces of our Ancestors (2023)

Professor Elizabeth Kerekere is a takatāpui activist, artist, scholar, former Member of Parliament, and is now an Adjunct Professor, School of Health, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington . Her work within the culture of takatāpui whānau and the mental health sector are a testament to her ongoing dedication to takatāpui health and wellbeing. In 2001 she founded Tīwhanawhana Trust for takatāpui to tell our stories, build our communities and leave a legacy (Tīwhanawhana, n.d.).

Released by Kerekere in 2015, *Takatāpui: Part of the whānau*[107] is an accessible educational resource published by Tīwhanawhana Trust and the Mental Health Foundation. This text (re)presents takatāpui identity within the context of whānau, specifically asserting that takatāpui have existed and have been embraced within Māori communities pre-colonisation (Kerekere, 2015). This resource is based on Kerekere's lived experience, research, and political activism interwoven with her creative explorations of art and the pūrākau of takatāpui rangatira, rangatahi, pākeke[108] and kaumātua[109]. The key contributors to this text include Jennifer Edwards (Ngāti Porou, Te Arawa), Ahi Wi Hongi (Ngāpuhi), Hinemoana Baker (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Te Āti Awa, Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Kiritea), Kevin Haunui (Ngāti Rangi, Te Ātihaunui a Papārangi, Ngāti Kahungunu, Tūhoe, Whakatōhea, Te Whānau a Apanui) and Morgan Cooke (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi). A brief history of the kupu takatāpui is discussed as well as its contemporary meaning. The text then expands on this discussion by incorporating critical elements for sustained takatāpui self-determination: Mana Tīpuna[110], Mana Wāhine[111], Mana Tipua[112], Mana Takatāpui[113] and Mana Whānau[114]. These elements are further informed by testimonies of the key contributors and their lived experiences of takatāpui identity. Most importantly is that this resource is specifically created to support takatāpui and their whānau.

[107] You can access this resource at https://takatapui.nz/takatapui-part-of-the-whanau
[108] Adults
[109] Elderly people; grandparents.
[110] Living ancestral knowledge
[111] The transcendent feminine element
[112] Divine supernatural identities
[113] Contemporary self-determination for the expression of takatāpui identities
[114] Actively supportive and nurturing family

A ground-breaking piece of mātauranga takatāpui, Kerekere's Doctoral thesis entitled *Part of the whānau: The emergence of takatāpui identity: He whāriki takatāpui* (2017) was the first Kaupapa Māori qualitative study to explore in-depth research into the identities of takatāpui. Kerekere (2017) weaves together extensive discussions of historical pūrākau of takatāpui identity through whakataukī and mōteatea. This is also extended to incorporate oral narratives of her key contributors who were featured in the resource above. In her thesis she draws upon diverse gender identities, sexualities, knowledge from various iwi and whenua, highlighting expansive expressions of takatāpui identity.

Engaging with takatāpui participants whose identities included tangata ira tāne, whakawahine, gay, bisexual, trans and queer Kerekere captured an array of lived experiences of takatāpui identity. These discussions reflect the persistent influences of settler colonialism that have impacted expressions of takatāpui identity. This thesis presents a metaphorical construction of takatāpui identity and wellbeing manifested as a whāriki takatāpui[115], providing a platform for the sustained emergence of mātauranga takatāpui and the endless possibilities of rangahau takatāpui (Kerekere, 2017). This thesis is also where she started the development of conceptual framework *Te Whare Takatāpui* as a vision of health and well-being framework for takatāpui and their whānau.

Kerekere's rangahau specifically focussing on supporting takatāpui and their whānau navigate takatāpuitanga is imperative to takatāpui finding and manifesting belonging within whānau,

[115] A woven mat that establishes a platform for future takatāpui research and advocacy

hapū and iwi. Her important framework Te Whare Takatāpui (Kerekere, 2023) has gone on to inform health policy recommendations including *Warming the Whare*[116] (Parker et al., 2023) and the Green's political party rainbow policy (Green Party of Aotearoa, n.d.). Kerekere's rangahau and efforts within takatāpui communities are sustained testaments to her ongoing support and leadership.

Leonie Pihama

Te Ātiawa

Ngāti Māhanga

Ngā Māhanga ā Tairi

Honour Project Aotearoa (2020)

Honouring our Ancestors: Takatāpui, Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQI+ Well-being (2023)

Professor Leonie Pihama is a mother, grandmother and activist, and is a leading Kaupapa Māori educator and researcher. Her trailblazing 2001 Doctoral thesis entitled *Tihei mauri ora - honouring our voices: Mana Wahine as a Kaupapa Māori theoretical framework* is a ground-breaking piece of Kaupapa Māori theory that has contributed to the (re)invigoration of Mana Wāhine theory. Pihama has since continued to develop Kaupapa Māori rangahau through her

[116] A guideline and recommendation report for trans inclusive perinatal care informed by Te Whare takatāpui.

various efforts within education that have been both nationally and internationally recognised. Her ongoing support to the upcoming generations of Māori scholars in the Māori and Indigenous (MAI) Doctoral Programme is a testimony to her leadership. She is renowned for her valiant Kaupapa Māori critique expressed openly to media when discussing issues of colonisation, racism, sexism and tino rangatiratanga.

(Re)claiming tino rangatiratanga over takatāpui wellbeing, through multi-disciplinary decolonial research methods, the *Honour Project Aotearoa* (2020) centralises takatāpui wellbeing, made by, for and with takatāpui. Alongside Leonie Pihama, this resource is written by leading Kaupapa Māori scholars including Alison Green (Ngāti Pūkeko, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tamarāwaho), Dr Carl Mika, Dr Matthew Roskrudge (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Tama), Shirley Simmonds (Raukawa, Ngāti Huri, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa), Dr Tawhanga Nopera (Te Arawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Tainui, Ngāpuhi), Dr Herearoha Skipper (Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāti Hako, Ngāpuhi) and Rebekah Laurence (Ngāti Maniapoto), the Honour Project Aotearoa is a strengths-based understanding of takatāpui health and wellbeing.

Applying a Kaupapa Māori perspective to hauora counters Western health systems that continue to marginalise takatāpui in Aotearoa (Pihama et al., 2020). This study facilitated the fluid diversity needed to explore a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and methods, such as pūrākau and the Honour Project survey, to analyse and understand experiences specific to takatāpui (Pihama et al., 2020). This report is a culturally-informed response that demonstrates the historical and continued detrimental impacts of Western health systems upon hauora, specifically capturing the lived experiences of takatāpui (Pihama et al.,

2020). Most importantly, this publication is a strengths-based understanding of takatāpui health and wellbeing. This project acknowledges the lived experiences of expressing unapologetic sexual identities and sexualities, and understanding and reaffirming takatāpui belonging within the Māori world as fundamental to takatāpui wellbeing (Pihama et al., 2020). Simultaneously, this project recognises the extensive health disparities for Māori in nearly every major disease category and determinants of health, as well as the sustained necessity for a study of this magnitude (Pihama et al., 2020). A significant response to prior empirical Western medical interpretations of hauora, the *Honour Project Aotearoa* provides a Kaupapa Māori (re)presentation of takatāpui hauora experiences (Pihama et al., 2020).

Inspired by the HONOR project (Walters, 2007) and Honour Project Aotearoa (2020), *Honouring our Ancestors: Takatāpui, Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQI+ well-being* explores pūrākau of wellbeing and thrivance from takatāpui, Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQI+ scholars (Green & Pihama, 2023). This book is embedded with strengths-based understandings to takatāpui, Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQI+ peoples wellbeing and thrivance. Drawing from ancient tribal knowledges and incorporating contemporary personal elements offers a culturally-informed insight to (re)present dynamic expressions of Indigenous sexuality. Speaking to significant elements of empowerment, healing, resistance, reclamation and transformation, these pūrākau recognise the violent impacts of colonialism upon Indigenous experiences of sexuality and offers healthy conversations of fluid Indigenous sexual identities (Green & Pihama, 2023). This collection of pūrākau is a testament to the Indigenous independent authorities that recognise our shared and individual qualities by honouring

Indigenous languages and cultures, and how these components celebrate our relationships (Green & Pihama, 2023).

Pihama's profound efforts within takatāpui rangahau has transcended past determining our belonging within Māori society to celebrating our thrivance as a people. By speaking back to settler-colonial narratives of a hegemonic binary and patriarchal cisheteronormativity, Pihama's rangahau asserts that takatāpui have always belonged within whānau, hapū and iwi. Her significant contributions to takatāpui rangahau has established space for takatāpui to learn and understand our history so that we can celebrate our survival and thrive in our present and future.

It is evident throughout the literature presented in this chapter that takatāpui have always been an embraced part of Māori whānau, hapū and iwi. The five takatāpui rangatira that have been acknowledged within this chapter have (re)asserted the significance of takatāpui rangahau by (re)claiming rightful space within Kaupapa Māori rangahau. Their important contributions have inspired this rangahau takatāpui ensuring it is firmly grounded and supported to grow. I close this section with a poem by Wodi Wodi descendant and Critical Indigenous Studies lecturer Dr Andrew Farrell as it captures the fat, queer, Indigenous right to claim and occupy space.

He Kōrero Tairitenga[117]

Fat Queer Colony

I occupy too much space.

My sartorial choices are

just as I should.

Options are standard, flagrant designs

to keep my body maligned.

Like cartography, I am

Interpreted and assigned.

Settler colonies remain strict on size.

Sleek and confined

the BMI

Is a symptom of a racist quasi science.

[117] A meaningful, symbolic poem

A fat queer Aboriginal body

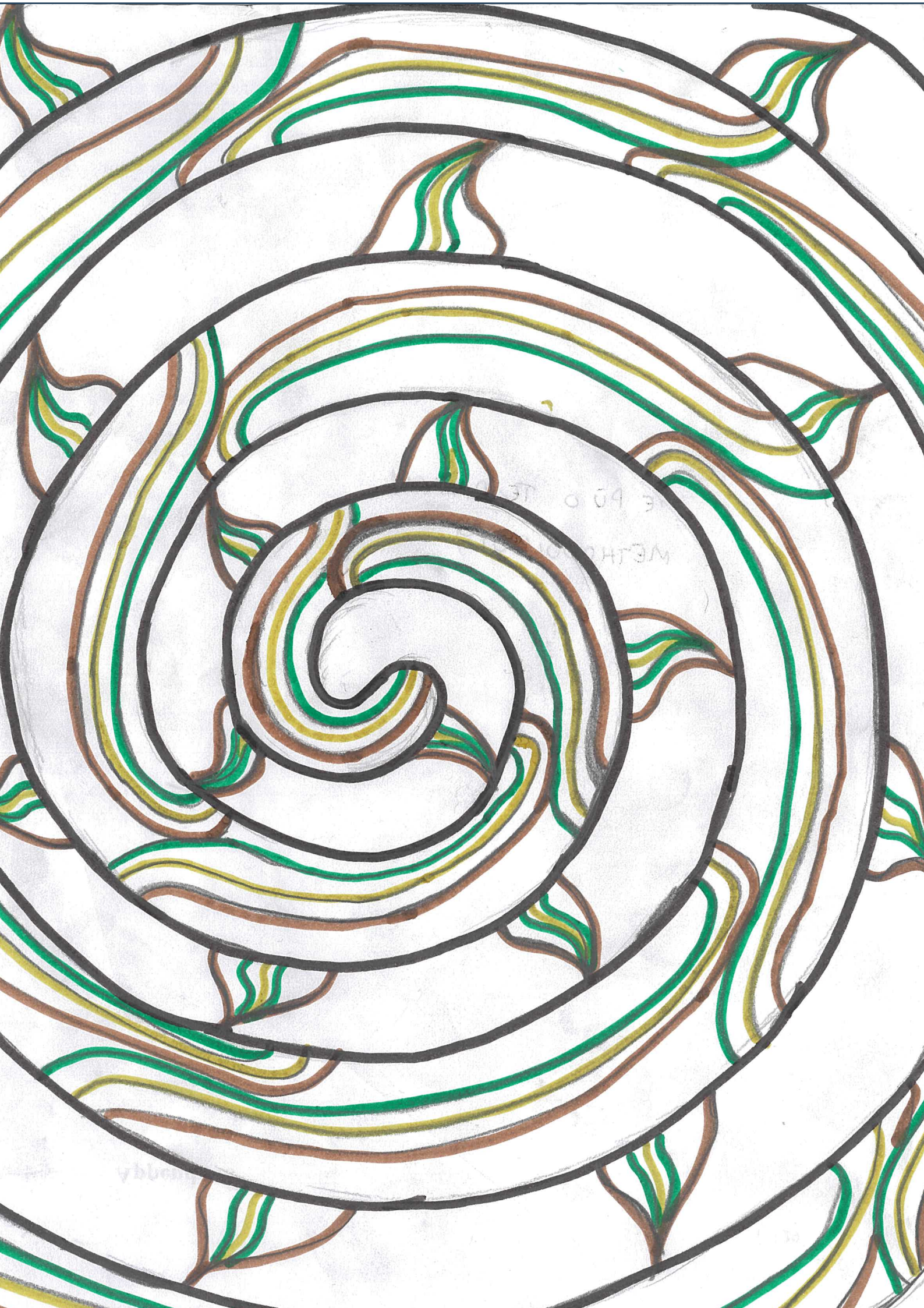
Nothing comes in that phenotype.

Surpassing the gayze

I shed the colonial weight.

I will occupy too much space.

- Andrew Farrell (as cited in Whittaker & Ross, 2023, p. 48).



3.0 Ngā Momo Tūkanga | Methodologies

The illustration that opens this section is an interpretation of the core of a rākau[118]. The concentric rings of growth (re)present our interconnected whakapapa, with the colourful lines in between (re)presenting our individual and collective interrelated pūrākau. Each story unique in composition, and equitably crucial to the framework of the rākau. These lines – these connections – are intrinsically interrelated and interwoven. They are not static, fixed in space; they adapt and transform to address the fluctuating environments the rākau grows in. It is something I often visualise when I listen to and think of pūrākau.

As stated earlier the fundamental framework of which this rangahau has been carefully created and envisioned is Kaupapa Māori theory. These approaches have been broadly described as research done for, with, and by Māori as a counter narrative to the excessive amounts of Western research done by Pākehā on and to Māori people (Bishop, 1999; Pihama et al., 2002; Royal, 2012; Smith, 1997; Smith, 2012; Walker et al., 2006). This chapter discusses the branches of Kaupapa Māori rangahau that have been chosen to inform the positionality of this study. The overarching conceptual framework and methodology for this thesis is Lee Morgan's Te Pū o te Rākau methodology (Lee-Morgan, 2019), and Indigenous story telling as a decolonial approach to rangahau with takatāpui. Mana Wāhine is a key theory established throughout this thesis, particularly by prioritising literature and other forms of rangahau that have been crafted by takatāpui. However, throughout my journey gathering the knowledge for He Kohikohinga Mātauranga, Mana Wāhine rangahau is more accessible than rangahau

[118] Rākau refers to tree(s), specifically trees that are native to Aotearoa.

takatāpui. Just as settler-colonialism has detrimentally impacted and (re)told our pūrākau that demonised, fetishised and minimised wāhine Māori (Pihama, 2001), it also erased takatāpui from pūrākau completely (Te Awekotuku, 1991). Though by (re)presenting the colonial (re)tellings of our pūrākau like Te Awekōtuku (2003), takatāpui are able to (re)story[119] our own important pūrākau. I expand on the history of takatāpui as a pre-colonial kupu and how it is used today to describe an array of gender identities, gender expressions, sexual identities and sex characteristics. Following that is an introduction to wānanga, which is one of the main methods of this rangahau.

Prior to the elaboration of the above elements, a discussion of colonisation is necessary to understand its underlying and persistent impacts within Aotearoa society today. Colonisation is a violent process by which a dominate, powerful country enforces oppressive philosophical constructions and excessive military force upon Indigenous peoples (Jackson, 2018; Mutu, 2019). The barbaric exertion of imperial power continues to be justified by the Western legal principle referred to as the Doctrine of Discovery (Mutu, 2019). An imperialist fabrication established in 1493; the doctrine asserted colonial powers as superior and sanctioned invasions, pillaging, vanquishment and the oppression of Indigenous peoples, as well as the confiscation of their lands and precious resources (Mutu, 2019; Te Kōmihana Whai Hua o Aotearoa, 2022). Indigenous peoples were thus deemed as ‘savages’ and ‘inferior’ by their oppressors and were forcibly stripped of their culture, language and traditions to assimilate into colonial

[119] (Re)story in this thesis refers to the process of (re)constructing new messages, perspectives and understandings from colonised pūrākau

constructions (Mutu, 2011b). Indigenous studies Professors Eve Tuck (Unangax) and K. Wayne Yang explain the barbaric constructed forces of colonialism stating,

> many Indigenous peoples have been forcibly removed from their homelands onto reservations, indentured, and abducted into state custody, signalling the form of colonization as simultaneously internal (via boarding schools and other biopolitical modes of control) and external (via uranium mining on Indigenous land in the US Southwest and oil extraction on Indigenous land in Alaska) with a frontier (the US military still nicknames all enemy territory 'Indian Country') (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5).

This colonial violence was also experienced by Māori in Aotearoa. British colonialists were accustomed with these vigorous beliefs of white supremacy when they reached the shores of Aotearoa in 1769 (Salmond, 1991). They were met with generous hospitality by our tīpuna rangatira who considered these foreign settlers as manuhiri, and were provided with protection, support and were sometimes supplied with land so that they would contribute to the wellbeing of the community (Mutu, 2019). Regardless of this generosity, eventually lawlessness exhibited by the settlers became increasingly troublesome for our rangatira to manage (Mutu, 2019). Eventually, rangatira called upon the British Crown King George IV to send a British ambassador to control the unlawful settlers. Although the British resident James Busby and shortly thereafter Governor General William Hobson were sent, neither accomplished their foremost objective to control the lawlessness of the British settlers (Calman, 2011).

Instead, the British resident James Busby encouraged rangatira to adopt a flag to assert their sovereignty over Aotearoa as a step further towards internationally recognised independence and further alliance with the British Crown (O'Malley, 2017). This flag, Te Kara, was the first official flag of Aotearoa and (re)presented the United Tribes of these rangatira (O'Malley, 2017). This discussion eventually broached the idea of a Declaration of Independence, and after further consultation He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni [120] (He Whakaputanga) was drafted and signed by 34 rangatira at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands in 1835 (Mutu, 2019), with an additional eighteen rangatira who signed in 1839 (O'Malley, 2017). The four articles of He Whakaputanga translated by Dr Mānuka Hēnare were as follows:

1. We, the absolute leaders of the tribes (iwi) of New Zealand (Nu Tireni) to the north of Hauraki (Thames) having assembled in the Bay of Islands (Tokerau) on 28th October 1835. [We] declare the authority and leadership of our country and say and declare them to be prosperous economy and chiefly country (Wenua Rangatira) under the title of 'Te Wakaminenga o ngā Hapū o Nu Tireni' (The sacred Confederation of Tribes of New Zealand).
2. The sovereignty/kingship (Kīngitanga) and the mana from the land of the Confederation of New Zealand are here declared to belong solely to the true leaders (Tino Rangatira) of our gathering, and we also declare that we will not allow (tukua) any other group to frame laws (wakarite ture), nor any Governorship (Kawanatanga) to be established in the

[120] From this point on will be referred to as He Whakaputanga.

lands of the Confederation, unless (by persons) appointed by us to carry out (wakarite) the laws (ture) we have enacted in our assembly (huihuinga).

3. We, the true leaders have agreed to meet in a formal gathering (rūnanga) at Waitangi in the autumn (Ngahuru) of each year to enact laws (wakarite ture) that justice may be done (kia tika ai te wakawakanga), so that peace may prevail and wrong-doing cease and trade (hokohoko) be fair. [We] invite the southern tribes to set aside their animosities, consider the well-being of our land and enter into the sacred Confederation of New Zealand.
4. We agree that a copy of our declaration should be written and sent to the King of England to express our appreciation (aroha) for this approval of our flag. And because we are showing friendship and care for the Pākehā who live on our shores, who have come here to trade (hokohoko), we ask the King to remain as a protector (matua) for us in our inexperienced statehood (tamarikitanga), lest our authority and leadership be ended (kei whakakahoretia tō mātou Rangatiratanga). (Hēnare, 2001, as cited in Hēnare, 2021, p. 20-21)

Although the majority of these rangatira were from the far North of Te Ika a Māui[121], the two rangatira from outside Te Tai Tokerau[122], Te Hāpuku of Ngāti Te Whatuiāpiti[123] and Te

[121] Te Ika a Māui is described in te reo Māori as 'the fish of Māui', which refers to a pūrākau of the tīpuna Māui and their fishing up of what is commonly referred to as the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand
[122] Te Tai Tokerau refers to the Northland of Aotearoa
[123] Ngāti Whatuiāpiti is a hapū of Ngāti Kahungunu iwi in Te Matau a Māui, Hawke's Bay

Wherowhero[124] of Waikato-Tainui[125] were both prominent leaders within their regions, this document marked the beginning of working towards collective forms of governments among vast amounts of iwi and hapū across Aotearoa (O'Malley, 2017). Internationally, this document recognised the sacred Confederation of Tribes of New Zealand as the sovereign entity of New Zealand. Though this declaration was only established for five years before Te Tiriti o Waitangi was discussed, drafted and signed between rangatira and the British Crown in 1840. A document that (re)affirmed He Whakaputanga and structured the conditions upon which Pākehā settlers could remain in the country they declared 'New Zealand' (Mutu, 2011a), was quickly broken to advance the colonial regime. This included the establishment of a Western government, implementing Western laws and enforcing a Western prison system upon Māori (Jackson, 1987), fabricating myths and lore that demonised, minimised and marginalised diverse Māori identities that some of our tīpuna internalised (Lee-Morgan, 2019), and has been adopted and perpetuated by our whānau, hapū and iwi today (Pihama et al., 2020).

The vitriolic impacts of colonialism within Aotearoa have widely influenced expressions of Māori identity, denying our assertion of mana motuhake[126] and tino rangatiratanga. Tino rangatiratanga as a fundamental right is protected and guaranteed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi that (re)affirms Māori absolute sovereignty and autonomous power (Pihama, 2001). However, as Te Tiriti o Waitangi has never been upheld by the settler-colonial government, generations of Māori leaders have consistently challenged British imperialism and have made revolutionary progress in repairing extensive colonial damage (Mutu, 2019). Though the raging machine of

[124] Te Wherowhero would later become Pōtatau Te Wherowhero the first Māori King in 1858.
[125] Waikato-Tainui is the overarching iwi of the Waikato district
[126] Mana motuhake is further discussed in He Wānanga takatāpui

colonialism within this settler-colonial government is still violently attacking Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the denial of Māori rights derived from it (New Zealand Parliament, 2025). Therefore requiring not only the acknowledgement of settler-colonialism and its ongoing detrimental impacts upon Māori, but an ongoing commitment to liberated and transformational futures for tamariki and mokopuna.

(Re)claiming Takatāpui

The kupu takatāpui is firmly rooted within the ancient Māori world. Resisting the colonial attempts of eradication, takatāpui survived through our oral accounts, most famously so in the renowned pūrākau of Hinemoa, Tūtānekai and Tiki (Te Awekotuku, 2005). For the majority of the 20th century the meaning of takatāpui was defined as "intimate companion of the same sex" (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007; Te Awekotuku, 1991; Williams, 1871), though takatāpui academics have (re)discovered the more profound understandings of the kupu (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007; Green & Pihama, 2023; Kerekere, 2017; McBreen, 2012). The further insights into takatāpui identity highlight the violent impacts of colonialism stripping our identities to indoctrinate eurocentric heteronormative ideologies as our own, whereas the term takatāpui is found to have embraced all diverse gender, sexes and sexualities (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007; Kerekere, 2017; Pihama et al., 2020). Kerekere offered a brief contemporary understanding of the term takatāpui, (re)asserting that:

> We have reclaimed it to refer to all Māori who identify with diverse genders sexes, sexualities, and with diverse sex characteristics. And who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, gender diverse, non-binary and all manner of other identities, so that

it's an inclusive term"- As stated by Kerekere in the podcast BANG! Season 2 Episode 6: takatāpui (Thomas, 2018, 16:32)

As an all-encompassing identity, takatāpui embodies the limitless realities of being queer. Instead of forcing the definition into a category under the Western structure of LGBTQI+, takatāpui is inclusive of all queer identities and people with innate variations of sex characteristics (IVSC) (Kerekere, 2017). Hence, it can be argued that takatāpui is an inherently Māori umbrella term. Its fluid dexterity provides a medium where takatāpui can ebb and flow through an array of identities, with no expectation of a fixed decision. Where Western definitions expect individuals to divide their being into culture, sexuality and gender, takatāpui embraces all of these components. To identify with takatāpui is to acknowledge one's whakapapa and sexuality as equitably significant.

Likewise, other Indigenous peoples also recognise the innate connection between culture and sexual identities. Our tuākana throughout Te Moana nui a Kiwa[127] also have an array of words similar to takatāpui. These identities include and are not limited to Māhū of Hawaii, Vaka Sa Lewa Lewa of Fiji, Palopa of Papua New Guinea, Fa'fafine of Sāmoa, Aka'vaine of Cook Islands, Fakaleitī of Tonga and Fakafifine of Niue (Brown-Acton, 2014; LeVa., n.d.; Te Awekotuku, 1991). Though it is becoming increasingly more common to use the acronym MVPFAFF+[128] coined by Fakafifine activist Phylesha Brown-Acton to acknowledge Pasifika

[127] Te Moana nui a Kiwa refers to the Pacific Ocean
[128] The plus in MVPFAFF+ is to acknowledge the other islands within Te Moana nui a Kiwa and their own indigenous sexual identities and gender expressions (Le Va, n.d.).

Indigenous sexual identities and gender expressions (Brown-Acton, 2014). Similarly, some Indigenous peoples in Turtle Island[129] also utilise the contemporary term Two-Spirit to express their cultural and sexual identity. Two-Spirit is described by Elm et al. (2016) as a "contemporary, unifying, intertribal term adopted by some AIANs[130], First Nations, and Aboriginal peoples to signify their spiritual, sexual, gender, cultural, and community identities" (p. 2). Today, the (re)assertion and (re)clamation of distinct Indigenous collective identities are deliberate acts of self-determination, resisting settler-colonial conformity. Therefore, it is imperative to acknowledge the pūrākau and whakapapa of the kupu takatāpui, and how it has been (re)claimed to be utilised by various generations today.

Pūrākau of Tīpuna Takatāpui Hinemoa and Tūtānekai and Tiki

Growing up in Te Arawa, one of the first pūrākau I heard was of Hinemoa and Tūtānekai. In the most well-known version of this pūrākau, it details the colonial perspective of a heterosexual forbidden romance between Hinemoa and Tūtānekai (Szekely, 2013). Especially because Hinemoa swam under the night sky to Mokoia Island with the guidance of Tūtānekai's seductive performing of his koauau[131] (Grey, 1885; Orbell, 1995; Reed, 1954). These narratives were dominating reinterpretations by eurocentric authors such as Governor George Grey (1885) and Alexander Wyclif Reed (1954) who would saturate the stories of our tīpuna with influencing narratives of patriarchal and heterosexist[132] elements (Te Awekotuku, 2001).

[129] Turtle Island is an Indigenous name for Earth and the Americas use by some First Nations peoples to describe North America.
[130] The acronym AIANs refers to American Indian, Alaskan Native nations.
[131] Kōauau refers to a small flute typically made of bone or wood.
[132] Heterosexist is a term that refers to the discrimination or prejudice against nonheterosexual people established on the colonial ideology that heterosexuality is the only standard of sexuality.

The colonial bowdlerisation (Pouwhare, 2016) of this narrative is from a patriarchal lens and has been consistently challenged by Te Awekōtuku (1991, 2003, 2005). Kaupapa Māori academic Dr Robert Pouwhare (Ngāi Tūhoe) explains the bowlderisation of our pūrākau as a type of victorian censorship where elements that were colonially considered as offensive or vulgar were (re)constructed to placate Christian needs (Pouwhare, 2016). Kerekere (2017) asserts that these colonial acts of distorting intergenerationally passed down narratives were outright attempts at erasing sexual fluidity, which our tīpuna unashamedly enjoyed.

Lee (2009) discusses one form of decolonisation is by reclaiming our story-telling and retelling our traditional stories. Te Awekotuku (2024), a descendant of Hinemoa, has contributed to the exceptional generation of mātauranga takatāpui and uncovering pūrākau of tīpuna takatāpui for upcoming takatāpui generations challenging the dominant heterosexual narratives. In this extract below from her book Ruahine (2003), she (re)presents a (re)interpreted pūrākau from Hinemoa's perspective; offering a captivating alternative to the well-known and Western socially accepted heterosexual (Grey, 1885; Orbell, 1995; Reed, 1954) and heterosexist (Te Awekotuku, 1991) adaptation of the pūrākau. This section portrays Hinemoa after she had accomplished her monumental marathon of a swim from her point in Ōwhata to Mokoia island in the middle of the Rotorua lake, now soaking in a healing waiariki[133]:

[133] Waiariki refers to a hot spring, thermal pool

“Her body had warmed. Her throat felt silky, open. She breathed in. He was passing her pool again. Imitating her father’s arms-training voice, she growled,

‘Boy! Over here. I’m thirsty!’

His eyes popped; he froze mid-stride.

The torchlight trembled; he nearly dropped his gourd.

‘Āe, who’s there? Who are you?’

‘Just a friend warming himself up. Hei aha. Put the hue over there, on the side.’

Curious, the young man obeyed.

Saw a hand come out, snatch the hue.

Half empty it into an unseen mouth.

Then insolently throw it back, where it cracked spilling against a rock, broken.

He cursed… Moa wanted to howl with laughter.

This was really funny; he didn’t seem very bright.”

(Excerpt from ‘Hinemoa’ in Ruahine: Mythic Women by Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, 2003, p. 116).

Te Awekōtuku (2003) elucidates the ways in which Hinemoa embodies her tānetanga[3] and recalls in this pūrākau the way in which she disguised herself as a manly warrior to achieve what she wanted. Hinemoa accomplished her efforts in mischievously taunting and bewildering Tiki, Tuanekai's hoa takatāpui (Te Awekotuku, 1991, 2001, 2003). (Re)discovering that Hinemoa was not a meek, lovestruck maiden and was actually a confident and skillful fighter, and that Tiki was Tūtānekai's hoa takatāpui was a significant revelation for mātauranga takatāpui. As stated earlier, in the 1980's takatāpui activists Te Awekōtuku and L. Smith found within a manuscript of Te Arawa tīpuna and scholar Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke the first use of the kupu takatāpui.

> "Ka aroha atu a Tūtānekai ki a Tiki, ka mea atu ki a Whakaue, ka mate ahau I te aroha ki tōku hoa takatāpui, ki a Tiki.
>
> Tūtānekai loved Tiki, he told Whakaue, I am stricken with love for my friend Tiki." (Te Rangikāheke, n.d., as cited in Te Awekotuku, 2005, p. 8)

With this added knowledge, Te Awekōtuku deduced that Hinemoa and Tūtānekai saw each other for who they were; Hinemoa understood the relationship Tūtānekai and Tiki shared and wondered to herself if they had experienced the feeling of being watched by others as she had (Te Awekotuku, 2001). This is one of many pūrākau that shares with us how our tīpuna navigated through life (Te Awekotuku, 1991). The ways in which they interacted with the world, and interacted with each other (Lee-Morgan, 2019), and how we as their uri[134] can

[134] Uri is a term that refers to descendant(s)

comprehend their hidden messages that offer guidance in our lives as takatāpui (Te Awekotuku, 1991).

Te Pū o te Rākau Methodology | Story telling as Methodology

> We must not overlook the fact, that each of us is born with story, and each of us has responsibility to pass those stories on. To fortify our children and grandchildren, and to help them cope with an increasingly material and technological world, we have to tell them the stories which re-enforce their identity, build their self worth and self-esteem, and empower them with knowledge. (Mita, 2000, p. 8)

I open this next section with a quote from the innovative Māori film maker Merata Mita CNZM (Ngāti Pikiao, Ngāi Te Rangi) to highlight the importance of sharing our individual and collective pūrākau to invigorate and encourage the identities of the current and future generations. The use of Kaupapa Māori methodological framework Te Pū o te Rākau methodology (Lee-Morgan, 2019) is fundamental to this rangahau. Describing the innate architecture of our native trees, Te Pū o te Rākau literally translates to the core (pū) of the tree (rākau) (Lee-Morgan, 2017). At the base of this methodology, we are reminded that we are the trees, and the trees are us (Lee-Morgan, 2019). As it directly connects to our creation pūrākau where Tāne Mahuta separated their parents Papatūānuku and Ranginui (see Tīhei Mauri Ora, p. 14) Te Pū o te Rākau methodology is a constant reminder of our inherent interconnectedness to the world (Lee-Morgan, 2019). Dr Lee-Morgan describes pūrākau as methodology

> "is examined from the inside-out, challenging Western research conventions with its preoccupation on 'data' gathering, 'data' observation, and 'data' analysis – which could be viewed as working from the outside-in. With decolonial intent, pūrākau encourages us to begin in a different place – the heart" (Lee-Morgan, 2019, p. 152)

For takatāpui, opening up can often incite sharing pūrākau of our whakapapa whānau, and uncovering what is inside can be a difficult, and sometimes painful kōrero to share (Kerekere, 2017; Pihama et al., 2020). Therefore, within the relational nature of pūrākau methodology, it is imperative to share our important pūrākau in a space that allows for takatāpui to belong and thrive. Lee-Morgan (2019) (re)affirms the significance of interdependent relationships among pūrākau and how they need other pūrākau to grow and sustain themselves, as they are always connected (p.156). Nigerian author and activist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about the importance of rejecting a single story (Adichie, 2009). Instead, allowing space for many stories to be told and to be heard, she highlights especially how "stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize" (Adichie, 2009, p. 6). This is built upon by Lee-Morgan (2019) where she states that "in order for *pūrākau* to grow, they actually require other *pūrākau*" (p.156) demonstrating an interrelated relationship among pūrākau where they support one another to flourish. Pūrākau do not stand alone, they find their place among other pūrākau that have interconnected and traversed throughout theirs and others.

As such, pūrākau do not have starts or ends, and are not measured by an unchangeable truth – quite the opposite. I agree with Lee-Morgan and her whakaaro where she explains that:

> "our *pūrākau* will only find meaning and richness alongside other *pūrākau*, because perhaps, at its heart is not the "truth," but how people feel about their story, and how the story makes them feel at that point in time" (Lee-Morgan, 2019, p. 157)

Implementing Te Pū o te Rākau methodology within takatāpui rangahau establishes an unyielding platform from which takatāpui can share their pūrākau. The Honour Project Aotearoa (2020) attests to the power of pūrākau methodology and pūrākau as method in takatāpui research. As discussed by Pihama et al. (2020) pūrākau are "simultaneously powerful stories, as well as the act of telling powerful stories" and "powerful tools for transmitting important knowledge to future generations" (p. 56), highlighting the profound significance of pūrākau in sustaining important knowledges, whakapapa, and identities shared from takatāpui across a range of ages, genders, sexual genders and whakapapa identities. From my experience, it feels natural, it feels almost effortless to be in the space where I know I am sharing an important part of myself with people I feel an intrinsic belonging to and comfortable with. An interwoven space of belonging for takatāpui. Thereby establishing a foundation from which this rangahau has grown from. Through sharing each other's own pūrākau we are (re)presenting ourselves and asserting our tino rangatiratanga as takatāpui (Pihama et al., 2020)

Tuhiwai Smith (2012) identifies story telling as one of the 25 research projects undertaken by Indigenous peoples (p.145-146). Pūrākau and Indigenous story telling connects the past with the future, containing the beliefs and values of a culture through intergenerational narratives (Archibald, 2008; Lee-Morgan, 2019; Smith, 2012). Pūrākau methodology is utilised in this

rangahau as this methodology is based on relationality (Wilson, 2008). Opaskwayak Cree academic and Associate Professor Shawn Wilson in his critical work *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* describes relationality as "the importance of relationships, or the relationality of an Indigenous ontology and epistemology" (Wilson, 2008, p. 80). These relationships extend to people, environment, ideas and the cosmos (Wilson, 2008). In our research wānanga the pūrākau methodology allowed us to connect and relate to one another, and provided a space where we could share our precious lives and experiences with each other through the ritualistic ceremony of wānanga.

Kaupapa Māori academic Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (Ngāti Whanaunga, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāpuhi) describes wānanga[8] as a space where exchanging thoughts lead to the creation of mātauranga Māori (Royal, 2012). Tuhiwai Smith (1999) presents some key examples of cultural values that communities would consider respectful. Titiro, whakarongo… kōrero are essential guidelines that provided fundamental ways forward throughout the wānanga, we are present, looking, listening to each other and responding (Cram, 2001, as cited in L. T. Smith, 2006). Therefore, in these spaces of relationality where we observe and listen to others share their pūrākau before responding and sharing our own pūrākau, it is important that we are ā-tinana, kanohi ki te kanohi, where we can see and feel each other in an authentic exchange (L. T. Smith, 2006). Tuhiwai Smith (2012) describes the Indigenous project *Story telling* and reminds us that "new stories contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place" (p. 145).

Pūrākau are kōrero tuku iho[135] manifested into stories that inform us of our ways of life and our ways of being (Pouwhare, 2016). They comprise of metaphysical reflections, evolving epistemologies, and they leave traces of knowledge that are fundamental to our identity as Māori (Lee, 2009). Pūrākau actively connect our being as tāngata whenua to our intrinsic mātauranga Māori, engaging in the intergenerational transfer of this knowledge (Hakopa, 2019). Historically, our pūrākau have been weaponised through colonisation to infiltrate our communities; stealing, distorting, or completely disregarding our tribal intellectual knowledge (Lee-Morgan, 2019).

Lee-Morgan (2019) illuminates the profound colonial influence on our pūrākau by Pākehā anthropologists and ethnographers and the subsequent destruction of their significance. These processes of assimilation imposing new values, beliefs, and social norms, undermined and marginalised our mātauranga Māori, our practices, and our ways of being. The loss of this balance has had lasting repercussions on the social, cultural, and spiritual fabric on Māori (Mikaere, 1999). The significance of pūrākau as methodology (re)instates the significance of Indigenous peoples (re)asserting their perspective over their own experiences and stories. Therefore the implementation of pūrākau as both method and methodology within this thesis is reflected within the process of sharing our distinct narratives and the (re)positioning of takatāpui being the voices of our own stories.

[135] Kōrero tuku iho are oral histories and historical accounts that have been intergenerationally passed down.

Wānanga

The method of gathering pūrākau for this rangahau was compiled through wānanga. This wānanga was ethically approved by Te Kāhui Manu Taikō[136] on May 16, 2024. Wānanga is a living, powerful practice that has developed across generations (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020). The intricate and nuanced approach to knowledge generation in the contemporary use of wānanga have generated limitless potentialities being practiced both within and beyond Māori communities (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020; Royal, 2005). The origins of wānanga have long been debated within Kaupapa Māori rangahau (Kia Eke Panuku, n.d.; Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020; Royal, 2005; Walker, 1986). Some tribal accounts say wānanga finds its roots within Rangiātea, one of the founding places of knowledge enlightenment visited by Tāne Mahuta on his quest for attaining mātauranga Māori (Walker, 1986). Whereas others argue the first wānanga was the debate of separation amongst the tamariki of Papatūānuku and Ranginui (Mahuika, 2019, as cited in Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020, p. 370). These arguments speak directly to wānanga as an inherited practice from our atua, a transmission ritual of intergenerational knowledge dispersed throughout Te Ao Māori (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020; Royal, 2005).

Within Te Ao Māori, wānanga is both a noun and a verb (Royal, 2005; Smith et al., 2019). Wānanga as a noun is described as ancestral, tribal knowledge, as an educator or a sagacious person, as well as conference, forum and symposium (Smith et al., 2019). A key component of this dimension to wānanga are Whare Wānanga, a traditional space of knowledge development of learning and teaching pedagogies, practices and protocols (Kīngi, 2010; Oxenham, 2013;

[136] Te Kāhui Manu Taikō is the ethics committee within Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao.

Smith et al., 2019). Whare Wānanga are also contemporary Kaupapa Māori knowledge institutions that facilitate what is described as "Māori-centred pedagogical learning environments" (Kīngi, 2010, p. 182), unrestricted by place, space or time, wānanga learning and teaching is fluid, and can adapt to the needs of the community (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020; Oxenham, 2013). As a verb, wānanga is to engage in meeting to discuss and to deliberate matters deemed relevant to the collective (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020; Smith et al., 2019). The duality of wānanga provides a place for cultural knowledge to transmit within an esoteric cultural sense (Laenui, 1997, as cited in Pohatu & Warmenhoven, 2007, p. 120). Most importantly, wānanga allows the space and time to reflect and remind ourselves of our place in the universe (Pohatu & Warmenhoven, 2007).

As a dynamic practice, wānanga is fluid and can change form dependent on what is needed by the community (Royal, 2005). Royal (2005) describes wānanga as an activity as the "active process of exploring and considering" (p. 11), therefore providing a space for shared knowledges to be deliberated and contemplated. This was especially important within the wānanga for this rangahau as all kaipūrākau had brought with them their own mātauranga from the different iwi, environments and identities to which they belong. Kaupapa Māori scholars Dr Nēpia Mahuika (Ngāti Porou) and Rangimārie Mahuika (Ngāti Rangiwewehi) also engage in this discourse and explain wānanga as a "dialogue or group discussion on any number of issues deemed relevant to the collective" (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020, p. 370). Furthermore, Mahuika and Mahuika (2020) explain that "through each era, wānanga carries the living cultural and historical curricula of the tribe, and has been crucial to the survival of local dialects,

iwi oral histories, arts, rituals and identities" (p. 370). I would argue this is also how our mātauranga takatāpui survived being thwarted in amongst the heteropatriarchy turmoil.

At the beginning of planning for the wānanga, I wanted to ensure I had enough pūtea to cover the cost of the booking the marae, dietary-friendly meals and snacks, stationery resources, fuel vouchers and koha for everyone involved in the wānanga. As a full-time Masters student who works alongside their studies, finances are a common restriction, so I applied for funding from the Burnett Foundation Aotearoa[3] Hononga Takatāpui Fund. The Hononga Takatāpui Fund is a fund that specifically supports takatāpui communities and their kaupapa, which perfectly suited the kaupapa of the wānanga. Fortunately this project was selected as a funded kaupapa which allowed for financial stability and fluidity throughout the planning and duration of the wānanga.

It was important for us to wānanga at a marae, particularly at Te Kohinga Marama at the University of Waikato. I wanted to hold the wānanga at a marae because of my experience staying on the marae Te Aranga in Heretaunga[137] for the Manioro festival. In those three days we stayed there, I felt more belonging staying at that marae with fellow takatāpui and their whānau than I had ever experienced in my life. Everyone feeling an ease in being able to express themselves in ways they felt most comfortable with people they had only met that week. I strived to create an environment of belonging like that for the kaipūrākau, beginning with the marae.

[137] Heretaunga refers to the Hastings area

He Wānanga Takatāpui

The mauri of this rangahau emanates from the research wānanga held for this study. Kaupapa Māori scholaars Pia Pohatu (Ngāti Porou) and Tui Warmenhoven (Ngāti Porou) assert the significance of wānanga as a culturally determined space for the transmission of knowledge that actively decolonises traditional Western research methods by placing the collective knowledge generation as a central component (Pohatu & Warmenhoven, 2007). This is alongside knowledge translation as opposed to depending on the outputs of research and a restructuring of the relationships between the researcher and the researched (Smith et al., 2019). As highlighted throughout this thesis, Kaupapa Māori theory is a core tenet of this rangahau and thus was intsrumental to the development and process of the wānanga. The wānanga took place over one day, split into two sessions at Te Kohinga Marama marae, the whare kaupapa[138] of the Kirikiriroa campus at the University of Waikato. As a whare kaupapa, it has been a place of comfort for many Māori scholars and students during their time at the University of Waikato, and possesses immense cultural and spiritual signficance to the university community. Te Kohinga Marama marae was intentionally selected as a space to wānanga safely under the cultural guidance of our tīpuna and tikanga.

Tuhiwai Smith (2019) asserts the significance of marae as an "expression of collective identity and a site where this identity is often contested and recreated" (p. 94). Holding the wānanga at a marae was intended to foster these discussions of identity both as an individual within a

[138] A meeting place where a shared topic of discussion can be held

collective and as a collective within an individual. Marae are direct sites of our ancestral connection to atua (Irwin, 2019), of whom two prevail within this space. At the front of the wharenui, outside on the courtyard is the territory of Tūmatauenga, atua of war; while inside the wharenui lies the realm of Rongomātāne, atua of peace (Irwin, 2019). It is within this peace where conversations of identity, recollections of mamae and expressions of belonging can transcend space-time, opening a portal to a world rich in interconnectedness and architectured by our tīpuna.

To maintain a sense of intimacy, I planned for a maximum of 6-10 people to collaborate in the wānanga. This was intentional to provide a space for genuine connections to develop through whakawhanaungatanga[139]. Dr Arama Rata (Ngāruahine, Taranaki, Ngāti Maniapoto) and Dr Faisal Al-Asaad argue that whakawhanaungatanga,

> provides a framework for intercultural interactions that does not force people of colour to make out their silhouette against the backdrop of Pākehā culture, but rather, allows people of colour to define themselves in relation to and build relationships with one another" (Rata & Al-Asaad, 2019, p. 220).

Thus, whakawhanaungatanga established a platform from which the kaipūrākau could assert self-determination over sharing elements of their identity. This is particularly expressed by PW with their proclamation as a "non-practicing man", and Tiwha as an "atua". Both were enthusiastically welcomed by the other four kaipūrākau and myself. This ability to freely articulate our identites and for them to be embraced further reaffirmed the decision to hold a

[139] Whakawhanaungatanga refers to the process of establishing familial connections

smaller, more intimate wānanga. Thus, our robust rōpū was constituted of six kaipūrākau and myself.

As stressed by many takatāpui scholars (Diamond, 2007; Green & Pihama, 2023; Kerekere, 2017; Pihama et al., 2020), the representation of takatāpui voices is crucial. Moreover, it was my intention to be as inclusive and flexible as possible with the recruitment of the kaipūrākau to reflect the fluidity of takatāpui identity. These identites can be encompassed through and by all means is not limited to trans, non-binary, gender fluid, IVSC, cis, lesbian, gay, bi, queer, ace, and aro. When it came to recruiting the kaipūrākau, whanaungatanga in the form of prior established familial connections (relationality) was essential in creating a safe space for the rōpū. Thus, whanaungatanga through community connections were essential to the development of this rangahau.

Implementing a fundamental Māori concept and core Kaupapa Māori methodological and theoretical practice, Kanohi kitea, was an essential component to this research wānanga. Tuhiwai Smith describe Kanohi kitea as "the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face" (Smith, 2012, p. 124). Being amongst each other's presence and to be a face that is seen was an imperative element to our whakawhanaungatanga process to engage in reciprocity with manaakitanga[140] and aroha. Moreover, the importance of physical presence within hui and wānanga have long been intrinsic to Māori for generations and is understood to be key in establishing and developing ongoing relationships (Bishop, 1999).

[140] Manaakitanga refers to the process of hospitality, to engage in respect and generosity to others.

Furthermore, the sustained risk of Covid posed a complex situation that needed to be addressed. As several key components of tikanga[141] are involved with physicality, tikanga was adapted to ensure the safe wellbeing of the kaipūrākau and their whānau. This was an especially important aspect of any wānanga to protect our vulnerable whānau such as kaumātua, kuia, koroua, people who are immunocompromised, tamariki, and mokopuna. Consideration was given to holding a virtual wānanga online, however it was decided to hold a wānanga that could facilitate a physical space of takatāpui belonging. Therefore, the kaipūrākau were required to complete a RAT[142] prior to their attendance to the wānanga and encouraged to stay home if they felt ill. This was in addition to all of the windows and doors of the wharenui that remained open throughout the wānanga to ensure constant ventilation. Moreover, guidelines for health and safety both for Covid-19 and in general were provided by the University of Waikato. These were utilised in collaboration with common sense to ensure safe health practices and to uphold our legal obligations to keep one another safe during the wānanga was fulfiled.

Two weeks prior to the wānanga I made contact with the kaipūrākau both in-person and online via Zoom. In order to establish a relationship between them as contributors to the wānanga and to introduce myself as the kairangahau of this study. This provided an opportunity for the kaipūrākau to feel a sense of whanaungatanga with me when we eventually met together as a rōpū. These individual hui also formed a base from which the kaipūrākau felt comfortable to ask any important questions prior to, and after, the wānanga. I followed up these hui with an

[141] This is including and certainly not limited to mihimihi (greetings) through hugs, kisses on the cheek and hongi (to press noses in greeting).
[142] RAT refers to a Rapid Antigen Test that detects the presence of the virus that causes Covid-19

email attached with the invitation to the wānanga as seen in Figure 1 and the wātaka[143] depicted in Figure 2 amongst the kaipūrākau to give them an idea of what to expect from the wānanga. Although there are times and events, this wātaka offered a guideline for our rōpū to loosely follow. This would allow for flexibility during our times of discussion while also providing fluid direction of the wānanga. The email also included information and guidance of what to expect from the whakatau of the wānanga, as well as basic tikanga. It was important to include these details as it was not assumed that all kaipūrākau were instinctively confident in their knowledge of tikanga on marae. It is not uncommon for Māori to feel fluctuating levels of comfort when taking part in the tikanga of a marae for a myriad of valid reasons (Pihama et al., 2020).

This was particularly important for me as I am typically assumed to understand tikanga processes, especially on the marae. As referred to earlier I grew up predominantly with my Pākehā family, and I did not grow up with a lived experience of tikanga and marae processes. For this reason, it was important for me to experience and take part in facilitating a variety of different hui and wānanga in preparation for this wānanga takatāpui. I acknowledge the Palestine Waikato and Ngā Haumi communities for allowing me to hold space as a facilitator in various events leading up to the research wānanga.

The design of the wānanga was guided by my experience facilitating community events, hui and wānanga alongside Palestine Waikato, Ngā Haumi and the takatāpui and queer Māori

[143] Wātaka refers to a schedule

hapori[144] at the University of Waikato. Most importantly, though, are the philosophical foundations of Kaupapa Māori theory that informed the core beliefs and processes of the wānanga. With a key focus in creating a safe[145] and comfortable enviornment for the kaipūrākau to wānanga, it was imperative to be conscientious to the needs of the kaipūrākau throughout the sharing of their pūrākau. This was particularly guided by Kaupapa Māori practice titiro, whakarongo... kōrero, a practice of which Tuhiwai Smith (2012) explains is "a basic code of conduct in a number of situations for researchers" (p. 126), where the kairangahau must watch and listen keenly before responding. I provided Māori games created by pākihi Māori[146] as a way to create opportunities of further developing whanaungatanga amongst us. According to Harko Brown (Ngāti Raukawa ki Patatere, Ngati Whātua ki Kaipara, Ngāi te Rangi) our tīpuna delighted in both developing and taking part in games, especially as games "were socially constructed by our ancestors as educational, psychological and physical tools to enhance the resilience of their tribes" (Brown, 2014, p. 14). Topics of discussion were guided with a set of questions that were open-ended to allow for multiple interpretations and discussions to unfold. The questions were primarily to bring the discussion back to the kaupapa if we trailed too far out of the topic, and were by no means a rigid structure to follow.

In terms of holding our discussion, the kaipūrākau and I intrinsically gravitated to sit in a circle, symbolically like the base of a rākau. Wilson (2008) writes about the concept of the "talk story" wherein which research collaborators "won't necessarily follow each other in a circle, but we will use the same underlying rules of non-judgement and non-interference" (p. 100). The ethic

[144] Hapori refers to a community, society
[145] The notion of being and feeling safe was self-determined by the kaipūrākau.
[146] Pākihi Māori refers to Māori business

of non-interference is described by Mohawk academic Dr Clare Brant as “a behavioural norm of North American Native tribes that promotes positive interpersonal relations by discouraging coercion of any kind, be it physical, verbal, or psychological” (p. 535). As such, we followed a more informal process with careful consideration to not interrupt each other. This was so that kaipūrākau had the chance to build upon each other’s stories and could ask direct questions when they arose. In this approach, Kaupapa Māori principles of Tino Rangatiratanga, Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho and Whānau are manifested. Allowing this wānanga to capture not only the lived experiences of the kaipūrākau for this study, but to foster and develop collective mātauranga to be intergenerationally passed down.

Facilitating a wānanga takatāpui was how I gained experience with the takatāpui hapori at the University of Waikato. This was an idea my supervisor and I had at the beginning of 2024 as a response to the absence of the takatāpui community on campus. Finding said takatāpui community to join the wānanga was something we did not want to actively promote via postering or social media. This was especially important as this was a few weeks following the Destiny Church’s vandalisation of rainbow crosswalks in Tāmaki Makaurau (RNZ, 2024) and Tūranganui a Kiwa (Williams, 2024), and violent protests against Drag Queen rainbow story times at local libraries (NZHerald, 2024). Therefore, whanaungatanga was essential to create the foundation from which our wānanga takatāpui could grow from. Thus, from April 2024 on the second Wednesday of every month during cultural hour[147], I would facilitate a wānanga takatāpui in a classroom at the Pā[148]. Our topics to wānanga about ranged from te reo Māori

[147] Cultural hour is a one-hour time slot at the University of Waikato where clubs will hold cultural events and activities
[148] The Pā is the new landmark building at the University of Waikato situated at the heart of the Kirikiriroa campus

me ōna tikanga, thrift shopping adventures to exciting and thrilling plans for our bright futures. These wānanga takatāpui ignited sparks of belonging within me, and seeing, hearing and feeling takatāpui joy resonate throughout the space (re)affirmed the decision to hold a wānanga takatāpui for this rangahau. The following two images are illustrations produced by the author that were used for the research wānanga.

Figure 1

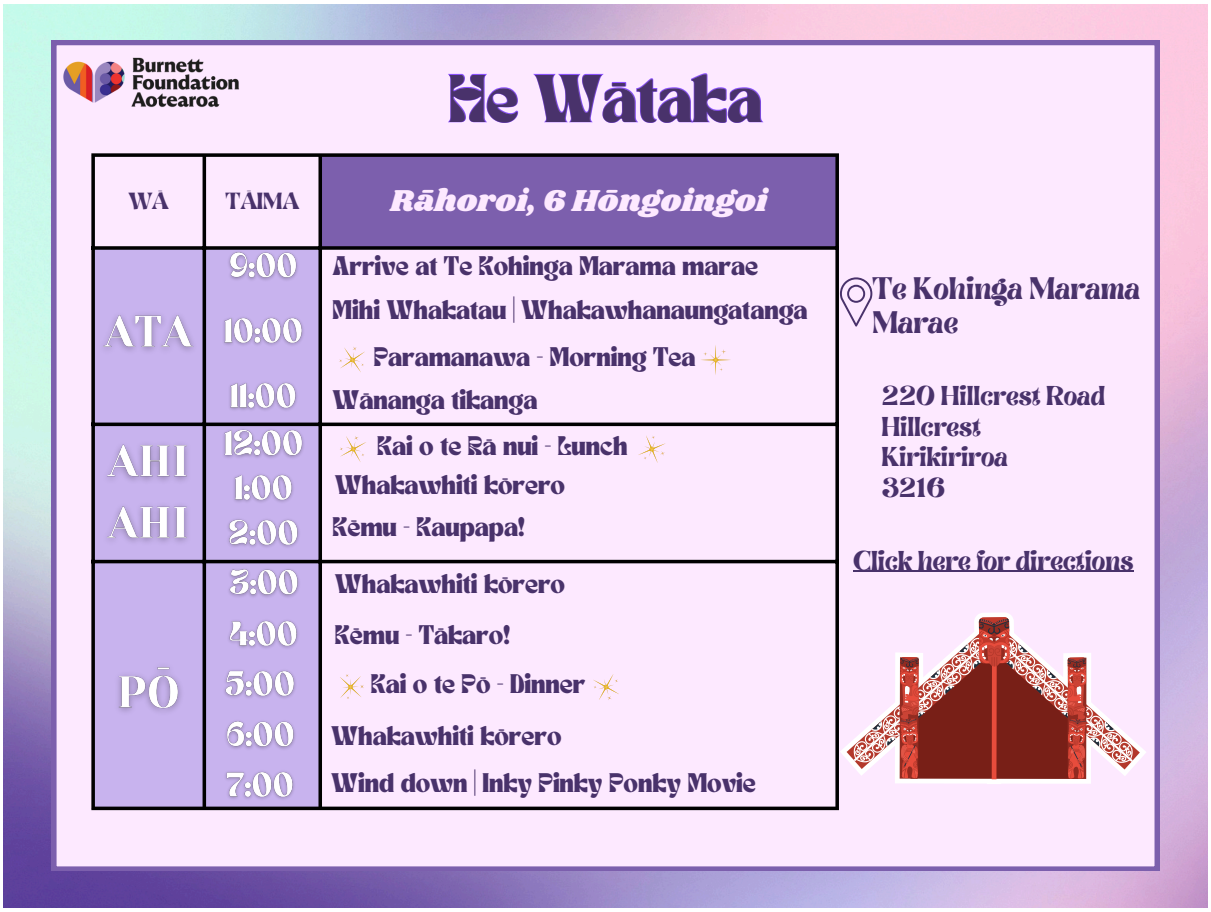
He Hononga Takatāpui Wānanga invitation

Note. He Hononga Takatāpui invitation that was sent to each of the kaipūrākau

(Image supplied by author)

Figure 2

He Hononga Takatāpui Wānanga Wātaka



Note. Wānanga schedule that was sent to each of the kaipūrākau

(Image supplied by author)

On a crisp Saturday morning within the cool grasp of Hine Takurua[149] I entered into the wharenui of Te Kohinga Marama, Te Ao Hurihuri, and set up the resources for our day. As the kaipūrākau began to flow into the warm embrace of the wharenui, one by one, we joined around

[149] Hinetakurua is the atua of winter.

the game of Kaupapa[150] as we waited for everyone to arrive. Playing the board game Kaupapa eased the way into whanaungatanga amongst the kaipūrākau as it requires teamwork, communication, and provided an air of humour. Some kaipūrākau knew each other, and for others, it was their first time being in a space dedicated for takatāpui. Once everyone arrived at the marae, we sat together while I recited a karakia to open our wānanga.

Whakataka te hau ki te uru	Cease the winds from the west
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga	Cease the winds from the south
Kia mākinakina ki uta	Let the breeze flow over the land
Kia mātaratara ki tai	Let the breeze blow over the ocean
E hī ake ana te atakura	Let the red-tipped dawn come with a shapened air
He tio, he huka, he hau hū	*A touch of frost,*
Tīhei mauri ora	and a promise of a new day

[150] Kaupapa is a Māori board game where players can learn te reo Māori through playing.

4.0 Te Wānanga Takatāpui

Ko Ngā Kaipūrākau

Hutia te rito o te harakeke	If you pluck out the centre shoot of the flax,
Kei whea te korimako e kō	Where will the bellbird sing?
Ka rere ki uta, ka rere ki tai	It will fly inland, it will fly seawards.
Kī mai koe ki au	*If you ask me,*
He aha te mea nui i te ao?	What is the most important thing in the world?
Māku e kī atu	*I will reply*
He tangata, he tangata,	*People, people,*
he tangata!	*people!*

(Metge, 1990, p. 55)

I open with this whakataukī to reflect the vital essence of this rangahau, the kaipūrākau. The kaipūrākau of this study were made up of a group of six people who self-identified as takatāpui or Māori and LGBTQIA+[151]. The ages of the kaipūrākau ranged from 21 being the youngest and 28 as the oldest, which made our group predominantly comprised of rangatahi. Inspired by the Honour Project Aotearoa (Pihama et al., 2020) the ability for kaipūrākau to self-identify within takatāpui rangahau is intentional to reflect the concept of rangatiratanga, and is therefore

[151] Although I reiterate throughout this thesis that LGBTQIA+ is a Western framework, it is still a framework that is currently being utilised by queer Māori (Kerekere, 2017; Pihama et al. 2020; Doyle, 2023). Therefore, the use of LGBTQIA+ within this thesis is to extend inclusivity.

fundamental to the integrity of this research. The names of the kaipūrākau below are a combination of pseudonyms, nicknames, initials and birth names, all of which were determined by each kaipūrākau. The following section are descriptions of the kaipūrākau and how they came to join this rangahau project.

PW – ia/they/them

The first person I asked to contribute to this rangahau as a kaipūrākau was PW, a friend of mine and self-proclaimed "non-practicing man" with a sharp wit. PW is an uri of Ngāti Hako and Ngāti Mahanga and grew up in a te reo Māori speaking whakapapa whānau in Kirikiriroa. Their education was grounded in Te Ao Māori, and attended Kura Kaupapa Māori[152] where they actively challenged their school's authority when it came to gendered expectations, their clothes and other issues to do with their autonomy. We had had many prior conversations about our identities and lived experiences as queer Māori, and I thought their candour would be a great element to the eventual rōpū of kaipūrākau. After discussing my ambitions of the wānanga, I asked them if they would be interested in contributing to the research and they agreed. Their agreement kick-started a fluid approach to finding the rest of the kaipūrākau. The importance of fluidity in Kaupapa Māori research processes is emphasised by Leonie Pihama (2001) to ensure that it is not controlled by a selected handful or remains static and unchanged.

[152] Kura Kaupapa Māori refers to a schooling system that operates under a Kaupapa Māori framework.

Uri – ia/she/her

Following PW's agreement to contributing to this rangahau, I talked to almost anyone about it, including Te Kuru, my friend and colleague who enthusiastically supported my passion. He was ecstatic in suggesting his "nephew-niece" Uri, and my face definitely contorted as I believed he had just misgendered[153] his whakawahine niece. This inner presumption I had made that Te Kuru misgendered his niece was an insight into my internalised assumptions of whakawāhine and how they want to be treated. I had assumed because Te Kuru had called Uri his "nephew-niece" that he was distant whanaunga[154] from her and did not know how to address someone who is trans.

This assumption of mine was an underlying ongoing perpetuation of the same Western assumptions of our identities that I, too am guilty of, and am working through. Uri's whakapapa whānau are incredibly accepting and fiercely protective of her. Te Kuru expressed to me how he has been very close with and adores Uri, so much so that she (Uri) was his "favourite nephew". A rapid testament to this statement, Te Kuru proceeded to ring Uri at that very moment so that she could speak to me. He did not have to wait long before she picked up and they caught up shortly before he told her about me and handed me his phone. When I spoke with Uri she was incredibly gracious in accepting a call from someone who was unknown to her. However, because of her strong relationship with her uncle, she trusted in her uncle that she could share an important part of her identity with me. After speaking with her for a brief five minutes about this rangahau, she was more than happy to contribute. Uri descends from

[153] To misgender or misgendering refers to the use of incorrect pronouns or gender-specific words when referring to or speaking to someone, especially a trans person.
[154] Whanaunga refers to relative, relation

Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe, Tainui and Te Arawa and grew up in Whakatāne[8] in the care of her supportive and compassionate whānau. Knowing who she was from a young age, her whānau was a big element in her life whom contributed to the confident and fearless woman she is today.

William – he/him

William was the third person to become part of the kaipūrākau and he actually volunteered himself to contribute to this rangahau. William is an uri of Ngāti Whātua ki Kaipara and grew up with his Mum and siblings on the North Shore of Tāmaki Makaurau. William self-identifies as a "trauma-based gay who is a father and is in a heteronormative-esque relationship with [his] wife". His quirky personality is nicely complimented by his genuine care and consideration for the people in his life. I had been discussing with him how I was looking for more people to become a kaipūrākau and he eagerly offered to contribute. This was the first instance William and I had talked about our respective identities with each other, and as we discovered we were among the few in our workplace who were not heterosexual, we became close friends quite quickly. At that stage I was delighted with my progress in recruiting these people and I wanted to continue with the fluid approach to selecting kaipūrākau.

Shawnee – she/her

Eventually I had caught up with a dear friend Shawnee, who drove us down to the festival Manioro[155] in Heretaunga. Shawnee is an uri of Ngāti Maniapoto, Kāi Tahu, and Ngāti Rārua and spent most of her childhood in Te Kūīti living with her siblings. Shawnee is a selfless and sincere person who greatly cares about the wellbeing of her whānau and friends. Shawnee and I have had many kōrero about using the word takatāpui to describe ourselves, and how after using Western terms like lesbian, gay and queer to describe ourselves, takatāpui was the one word that fundamentally resonated with our beings. It had been close to two months since the last time I had last seen her and we reminisced about our life-altering experience at Manioro and our yearning to be in a space of belonging like it again. Thus I had an inclination to ask if she wanted to contribute to this kaupapa, and she gracefully agreed.

Angel – she/her

I was extremely grateful in meeting with the next kaipūrākau as she is an incredibly busy law student and works a demanding job. Angel is an uri of Ngāti Mahuta and grew up south of Tāmaki Makaurau in Māngere, primarily living with her Pākehā family. She self-identfies as a "bisexual woman with a white boy as her partner". Angel is a fierce, no shit-taking woman who is unnerved in speaking her mind. One day I was visiting the store she works at and we had a conversation about white queer spaces and the lack of presence of takatāpui and queer Māori on our campus. I informed her of the biweekly wānanga takatāpui that had started on campus, but at that time she was quite busy with her law studies and could not attend. Therefore

[155] Manioro 2024 was a festival celebrating the lived experiences of takatāpui and MVPFAFF+, hosted by mental health non-profit organisation Nevertheless. https://neverthelessnz.com

I decided to ask if she would be interested in contributing to this rangahau that would fall between a break in her studies, and she keenly accepted.

Tiwha – ia/they/them

Asking the final person to contribute as a kaipūrākau within this rangahau was quite straightforward. This person is one of my best friends and flat mate, Tiwha. Tiwha is a staunch uri of Te Arawa and sporadically moved and lived in various places across Te Ika a Māui. Tiwha is a no-nonsense-taking, unequivocally candid person, and they have been a part of my life since I was 15. Tiwha and I have had many conversations around our whakaaro of takatāpuitanga and why we feel affirmed using takatāpui to identify ourselves with. I knew Tiwha was definitely someone I wanted to ask to contribute as a kaipūrākau, however as we live together and discuss many matters in our lives, I kept forgetting to ask them. When Angel reconfirmed her involvement within the rangahau, I was sitting next to Tiwha which prompted me to finally ask them to contribute to this research. Fortunately, they were more than happy to be a kaipūrākau.

Te Aorere – ia/they/them

As kairangahau[156] of this thesis and facilitator of the wānanga, I acknowledge my position upon this predetermined platform that initiates a power imbalance between myself and the kaipūrākau. Although I did participate in sharing my stories with the kaipūrākau during the wānanga, this rangahau provides a platform for the voices of the co-researchers of this rangahau.

[156] Kairangahau refers to the person who is carrying out this research

Wilson (2008) explains there is power within establishing connections and creating new ideas, and thus it is imperative to maintain a reciprocal power balance within the relationship. Therefore, it is imperative that I am conscientious of the various ethical considerations as I engage with the stories shared by the kaipūrākau. This is in particular regard to the cautionary guidance as provided by Tuhiwai Smith (2012) to get the story/stories "right," as well as being an insider-outsider (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2010) which adds layers of trying to ensure cultural expectations and ethical considerations are upheld so that this rangahau is sincerely transformative for our communities.

The pūrākau presented here intend to whakamana[157] the kaipūrākau, and the stories they shared during the wānanga and to acknowledge the fundamental understandings we came to learn together. Tuhiwai Smith (2012) (re)affirms the dynamic elements of story telling and asserts that "importantly, story telling is also about humour and gossip and creativity. Stories tell of love and sexual encounters, of war and revenge. Their themes tell us about our cultures" (p.146). The following four themes are listed in an order below, and they are not attributed to being fixed in a space in time during our wānanga. No theme was superior to any other. Quite the opposite, all of the themes (and many other sub-themes that can be explored in later rangahau) were prominent at different times and intrinsically reoccurred throughout the wānanga. Thus, the presentation of the pūrākau within these themes does not follow a chronological order. These themes are Whanaungatanga, Tuakiritanga, Mana Motuhake, and Te Hari Te Koa.

[157] Whakamana refers to the process to uplift mana, or to empower mana.

Whanaungatanga

Within a Māori world view, whanaungatanga is a fundamental cultural concept and everyday multifaceted practice (Pere, 2019; Pihama, 2001); and is essential to takatāpui thrivance (Hamley et al., 2024). The implementation of whanaungatanga within this thesis is twofold. Firstly, whanaungatanga is represented as a foundational concept within a Māori world view and is carried out as a cultural value and as a social process (Bishop, 1999), and secondly, it is the kupu Māori that is interpreted as belonging in this thesis. Whanaungatanga is comprised of three key words with their own distinct descriptions (Rewi, 2014). The first kupu is whānau, to which I describe as a familial network that can comprise of whakapapa whānau and kaupapa whānau. The second kupu is whanaunga, to which I describe as a kin member, relation or relative. The third kupu and central word of this theme, whanaungatanga, describes expansive familial relationships developed through shared interconnected experiences amongst people; dynamic relationships that provide a sense of belonging (Bishop et al., 2014; Doyle, 2023; Hamley et al., 2021). This is especially important as the concept of whānau is inherent within the concept takatāpui (Cooper, 2007; Kerekere, 2015; Kerekere, 2017; Reynolds, 2007; Rua'ine, 2007), upon which connectedness is a core construct (Pihama et al., 2020).

It has been highlighted in Kaupapa Māori literature that whanaungatanga is an integral element within Kaupapa Māori rangahau. As an essential component to this rangahau takatāpui, whanaungatanga is not only represented as a key theme of this thesis, but it is also experienced as a fluid, dynamic process shared amongst the kaipūrākau and myself. The way in which whanaungatanga was thoughtfully carried out within the wānanga was intentional to establish a shared space that could nurture connections and contribute to flourishing relationships.

Hamley et al. (2021) propose whanaungatanga as a potential "restorative practice for enhancing takatāpui wellbeing" (p. 1). I agree with the above scholars, furthermore I also assert that whanaungatanga is essential to takatāpui thrivance.

When I asked the kaipūrākau what their experiences of belonging were, they all expressed diverse encounters with and opinions of belonging. Their experiences of belonging primarily encompassed instances with whakapapa whānau and eventually their kaupapa whānau. Tiwha (they/them) comes from a strongly connected intergenerational whakapapa whānau and explained they have been immersed in belonging both within their whakapapa whānau and their kaupapa whānau, saying:

> *I don't think I've ever questioned my belonging in anything, in my whānau, even moving here, my chosen whānau, all the people I've surrounded myself with the last year or so are all great people. And I just see myself in every single one of them and we all share something, and a lot of it is takatāpuitanga* - Tiwha

Uri (she/her) related to Tiwha in the sense that she also had strong relationships with her whakapapa whānau. When Uri realised she did not identify with the gender she was assigned at birth at a young age, she began leaving her whare in a boy's uniform and would change into the girls uniform at school. The girlfriends Uri made at school were especially supportive of her and not only gave her the aforementioned girls uniform to wear during school hours, but they would also take the uniform home and wash it for Uri to wear the following day. Uri would

continue to do this for a few years, assuming her whakapapa whānau would not accept who she was, until one day when

> *my Mum picked me up cos I was sick and I forgot to change my skirt. But she knew, she always knew, [and] she just looked at me like it was nothing. She was like "are you ready to go?" and I was panicking that I've got the skirt on. It was funny, but yeah. My Mum already knew, my dad already knew, my siblings knew, and I had a lot of girlfriends and they were very open, [and] they saw me as a woman growing up.*
> - Uri

Uri did clarify that although the majority of her whakapapa whānau were supportive of her being who she is, her brothers took the longest to accept her as their sister. Nevertheless, her kaupapa whānau or her girlfriends were constantly reaffirming Uri's identity when Uri's brothers would attack her with transphobia, she explained they would argue "don't say that she's your brother, that's your sister!". Uri's further support would be asserted by her gang whānau[158] where they promptly called her niece following her transition. Māori gangs formed in the 1960s as a result of Māori urbanisation and subsequent loss of connection with their iwi and hapū communities (Newbold & Taonui, 2011). They were typically created to provide a sense of community and brotherhood to those who had been subject to state violence (Newbold & Taonui, 2011). Uri acknowledged that as a result of her staunch whanaungatanga expressed

[158] Gang whānau in this thesis describes whakapapa whānau who are in gangs.

by her whakapapa whānau, her gang whānau and her kaupapa whānau, she had a very good upbringing.

Although some kaipūrākau had a pleasant relationship with their whakapapa whānau and experienced belonging amongst them, others felt innately different to their whakapapa whānau and at times, felt disconnected from them. PW (they/them) is the youngest sibling in a large, interconnected whakapapa whānau, and they explained that for them in their whakapapa whānau they feel there is a

> *difference of mindset between me and even my own family. A lot of the times we do get along. We don't fight, we have nice conversations, but there aren't too many commonalities that we can bond over this idea of being relatives. In a lot of big family things, I get along with several of the relatives, a lot of the aunties, some of my cousins, my sister, but a lot of the time as well, there's just a difference in how they interact with each other and how I interact with them. I care about how I interact with them, and because of that I feel sort of disconnected from them. I don't feel much belonging.* - PW

William (he/him) built on this discussion and opened up about his relationship with his whakapapa whānau and his experience with belonging within his whakapapa whānau knowing he was different. He responded with

that's really funny[159] *because you represent, not you, but that mindset represents my entire family and then that's me. Like if you put me next to my siblings and everyone else in the family, that's like so different. Sometimes I feel like an alien.* - William

William further explained that although he does not feel belonging within his whakapapa whānau, he has come to experience his own belonging within the acceptance of himself.

This past trimester, I've actually came in and I've had to learn to be OK with sitting by myself and I think I'm OK with it. And the idea of belonging hasn't been so much how I'm accepted by everyone else, but how I'm accepted by myself. - William

As that last sentence left Williams lips, all of us took a moment as we all felt the profound sincerity in what he had just shared with us.

As a person with mixed whakapapa Māori and Pākehā, Angel (she/her) explained her struggles navigating whanaungatanga and being bicultural[160]. Angel grew up mainly with her Pākehā family, and they would often make derogatory comments about Māori that were poorly disguised as an attempt of a joke[161]. She shared with us

I had that kind of like Pakeha, like family, and then even now, they're just like, they have all the, like, Māori jokes, and you know, they're just

[159] I will address how William claimed Tiwha's reply was not "funny" and actually represented a coping mechanism in the Te Hari Te Koa section

[160] Bicultural is used within this thesis to describe people who descend from both indigenous and non-indigenous whakapapa.

[161] These attempts at jokes wherein which they were actually harmful will be further discussed in the Te Hari Te Koa section

> *like, what's your opinion? And like, I'm not engaging with you in this.* - Angel

I could relate to Angel, especially growing up primarily with my Pākehā family and experiencing microaggressions. Microaggressions are described by Buchanan (2011) as "brief and often subtle everyday events that denigrate individuals because they are members of particular groups" (p. 336). For Angel and I, these microaggressions were ineptly presented as degradation towards a fundamental part of ourselves, exhibited by members of another core part of ourselves. These challenges would ultimately introduce a disconnection between us and these members of our families. However, these challenges did not solely occur within our Pākehā families, as our whakapapa whānau also engaged in microaggressions of other forms. Angel continued this discussion and conveyed that

> *when I, like, first started to, like, realise that everything I did was not straight. But, um, obviously not having that relationship with like my Māori whānau. I can't really know what they'd be like, because, on the one hand, my godparents are takatāpui, but my grandparents are members of Destiny's Church. They're very good friends with Brian Tāmaki and they post about very very homophobic, transphobic and don't like pronouns, don't like other genders, so yeah, we just keep that secret to me.* – Angel

The kaipūrākau and I were quite shocked and worried for Angel as we learned her grandparents are members of Destiny Church. Aspin and Hutchings (2007) highlight the threat of Destiny Church to takatāpui and LGBTQIA+ communities, explaining "it is clear from the Destiny

Church website and other information disseminated by the church that its members are vehemently opposed to homosexuality and equally supportive of heterosexuality as manifested in nuclear families based on lifetime monogamy" (p. 417). Though, as Angel explained it is for this reason that she has chosen not to come out to her grandparents. Shawnee shared her experience with microaggressions made by her whakapapa whānau, and how hearing these comments about her identity ultimately contributed to suppressing who she was.

> *I think I repressed a lot growing up, like I always knew I was queer I just didn't know what it was. But hearing everything about me and the way that people talk I was like 'oh there's something wrong with me I can't do anything about that, let's just leave that in a box over there'. Then yeah, it was more my siblings that more like, they used to tease me about it, but in a fun way. I used to get so shamed out, I'd be like 'shut up'* - Shawnee

These kinds of comments were something the kaipūrākau and I were extremely familiar with. Even more so that these comments would often come from whakapapa whānau, or others who we love and care for. These comments are more thoroughly explored in Te Hari Te Koa.

Throughout the research wānanga, the kaipūrākau highlighted the significance of whanaungatanga to takatāpui. Whanaungatanga (re)presented in its dynamic and transformative forms provides a foundation for takatāpui to develop meaningful familial relationships with other takatāpui, and other people outside their whakapapa whānau. Especially in instances where takatāpui do not feel belonging within their whakapapa whānau,

hapū or iwi, whanaungatanga is an important conduit for creating and maintaining spaces of belonging for takatāpui to thrive.

Tuakiritanga

To understand the various embodiments of ourselves, Tuakiritanga is the kupu within this thesis that constitutes the interconnectedness of our identities. Tuakiritanga is usually understood to be identities (Hamley & Doyle, 2023; Paora & Steagall, 2022), though it is much more significant than that. Some of the most prominent Māori minds (Durie, 1985; Pere, 1988; Walker, 1989) have extensively (re)asserted the importance of Māori identity as crucial to our survival. Kaupapa Māori academic and Aotearoa's first openly non-binary Member of Parliament for the Green Party (Te Wake & Gunson, 2024) Benjamin Kauri Doyle (Ngāpuhi, Te Kapotai, Te Popoto) in their Master's thesis *Mana takatāpui: Self-determination for queer rangatahi Māori* asserts identity as "crucial to consider the intricate and many threaded weave of our sense of self, both intrinsically and collectively" (Doyle, 2023, p. 71). Thus, the way in which this theme is presented acknowledges our individual and collective identities by allowing these considerations to flow freely throughout the (re)telling of the pūrākau.

While the Kaipūrākau and I talked about first realising our queerness[162], many of us related to knowing we were queer at young ages. At the same time, we did not know there were words that could describe what we were intrinsically feeling. Once these words from the Western

[162] In some instances, I use queer/queerness in place of takatāpui to acknowledge that many of us (including myself) did not know the kupu takatāpui until very recently. Queer and queerness does not and is not used as a direct translation of takatāpui, it is used intentionally within this thesis as a political identity.

framework of LGBTQIA+ were discovered, many of us entered into complex relationships with these identities. PW talked about their relationship with their queer identity and explained that for them,

> *It was more like always knowing and then find, and then later on finding an oh, there's actually a word. In my case, it's a generalised lack of attraction, sexual or romantic to pretty much anybody, which I was quite adamant about it for quite a long while, too. And then later on, found out, ah, there's a word for that. And then later on, started calling myself asexual, aromantic, that sort of thing.* – PW

PW continued to describe their identity with a metaphor that simultaneously explained their dislike for pizza, stating

> *It is where I also found out that people tend to be, it's kind of like saying you don't like pizza. People tend to be really uppity about you not liking things that society says you should like. it's like, how could you not like pizza? It's pizza. [This is] what people are wankers about. And because I'm me, and I'm the sort of person who doesn't like being badgered and bothered into doing things, it later gave me, later it would push me into [an] even harder rejection of sexual, romantic attraction.* – PW

Within the kōrero above, PW's discussion demonstrated the impact of repeated and imposed heteronormative societal expectations on to their identity and their subsequent approach to relationships. This is significant because the construction of heterosexual organised gender binaries are (re)enforced through repeated performances of eurocentric cisheteronormativity (Butler, 2014). The Western cisheterosexual binary confines perpetuate yet another extension

of colonialism that repeatedly asserts colonial power and control over gendered norms[163] (Schimanski, 2023). As PW navigated through their journey with their queerness, they eventually came to understand their Tuakiritanga in their own joyful way, explaining that they

> *have a partner now... and that's because in recent years, I've also found out that just because I don't feel attraction in the same way most people do, does not mean I can't actually engage with people... and I find that it is quite fun engaging with people in that fashion.* - PW

Tiwha also spoke to knowing they were queer at a young age and their experience coming out[164] to their parents

> *I knew quite young, like I was different. Like, neither he, she, not they, I don't fuck with they. Ia. Ko ia ahau. My takatāpuitanga? When I did like, come out to my parents, I didn't come out, I was just like I like girls, I like boys, I like people. And my parents were like, yeah, makes sense. Like wow ruin my whole thing.* - Tiwha

Thus, within Tiwha's kōrero above, the phrase "*wow ruin my whole thing"* could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, Tiwha's nervousness in coming out can be attributed to the disclosure of their sexuality and gender identity would entail the rejection of their whakapapa whānau, or

[163] Gendered norms refers to "A set of socially- and/or culturally- defined principles that govern the societies expectations of what attributes, behaviours, and roles are appropriate or normative for males and females. Gender norms encompass gender stereotypes regarding masculinity and femininity, as well as the gendering of spaces, objects, activities, appearances, and bodies." (Schimanski, 2023, p. 4).

[164] Coming out or to come out refers to "shortened versions of the metaphor, *coming out of the closet*, which refers to the process in which one comes to accept and/or identify with their own sense of gender and/or sexuality, and in turn discloses their gender identity and/or sexuality to others" (Schimanski, 2023, p. 2).

secondly, the anticipation that their whānau would deliver an enthusiastic acceptance. Though Tiwha was anxious in anticipation coming out to their parents, their parents were unphased and concurred Tiwha's statement.

As the kaipūrākau and I began to discuss when we first started to identify with and use the kupu takatāpui, the majority of us realised we had only recently encountered the kupu within the previous five years or so. Angel said she "didn't actually know the term takatāpui until I started [University at] Waikato", while Tiwha explained that they had "just started using takatāpui". Therefore, when we were in wānanga about us being takatāpui, many of us initiated our kōrero by acknowledging we had utilised other terms from the Western LGBTQIA+ framework. In doing so, some of us recognised that none of these Western identities really resonated with our beings. Shawnee touches on how although she knew she was queer growing up, she never grew an affinity with the terms she had access to and felt like she had to use. Though when she finally came across takatāpui, she felt a more intrinsic connection, saying

> *I never knew the term takatāpui, so I just called myself queer. And I'd go from like 'yeah I'm queer' and then it depends on the situation or the context and then I'd repress it again and be like 'oh yeah I'm straight, I have a boyfriend now' and I'd do that and I'd be wildly unhappy because I didn't want them to touch me or kiss me. It wasn't really til this year that i realised that I was doing that all the time with like, one lecture I had in [Lecturer]'s paper which was on Mana Takatāpui, which was the first time I'd come across the term takatāpui. And the lecturer kind of explained about how lots of people don't realise*

> *that they're hiding who they are to the world. It just feels like that's what you have to do. And I was like oh that is what I do. Yeah, it's, I don't know it was weird. It was like, I've always been queer, and I've always known that. I've never, like, felt like I fit any labels like lesbian or bi or- none of it fits. But yeah, kind of being able to claim the term takatāpui, yeah, that makes a lot more sense to me*. – Shawnee

The fact that Shawnee felt compelled to declare her sexual identity as a heterosexual after she got into a relationship with a cis man speaks to the embedded cisheteronormativity within our Western society today. As Shawnee felt she had to conform to the Western social expectations of a cisheterosexual romantic relationship, she ended up engaging in a relationship that was harmful to her. It was only when she discovered the kupu takatāpui at university where she was able to begin her journey in understanding her identity with a culturally-informed perspective.

Angel talked about how her whakapapa whānau would talk about queer people as if being queer was an otherworldly concept and not something she, or any of her family could be a part of, which then contributed to how she viewed her own sexuality.

> *It's like being spoken to as if you're not part of it. So you grow up thinking, Oh, that can't be me, because your family's just like, No no, the gays, the queers. And then you're like oh*. - Angel

Uri talked about her appreciation for takatāpui as a kupu that encompasses fluid sexual identities and gender identity compared to the catergorisation of Western labels. She explained that she is

> *glad that takatāpui was introduced, well now we know it was always there, but we just got familiarised with that and the fact that Māori terms are very inclusive of all of our categories, because we really are one. There's Te Ao Pākehā that puts you in these boxes separately. I'm glad that takatāpui is a word that's very well used now by Māori and even non-Māori.* - Uri

William followed Uri's kōrero with his perspective. William's whakapapa whānau are among the many that have been intergenerationally impacted from the forced and violent assimilation of Māori into Pākehā culture. William's kōrero highlighted the embedded settler-colonialism within Aotearoa and its detrimental impact on (re)claiming Māori identity. He opened up about how these profound impacts have ultimately impeded on how he views his Tuakiritanga.

> *I grew up in a very Pākehā house, so the term takatāpui isn't something that I really would identify myself as. But I don't know how much of that is me resisting the term, because for a long time I didn't really think of myself as Māori. Like I knew that I was but it was usually only when something bad would happen. My brother and sister were, like, in and out of jail. That's when we were Māori. But then as soon as, like, I did well at school, that was like, yay, a little white family.* – William

This was something I could relate to as a child of a Pākehā parent and a Māori parent, who primarily lived with their Pākehā family. At a young age I wanted to change my tīpuna name[165] and would dream of waking up with blonde eyes, and lighter skin. The internal battles of people with mixed Māori and Pākehā parentage is further elaborated by Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora FRSNZ (Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngāi Tūhoe) in her doctoral thesis *Maori Social Identities in New Zealand and Hawai'i* where she explains "for some children, having Maori ancestry positioned them as targets of negative discrimination leading them to actively reject a Maori ethnic identification, choosing instead to disassociate themselves from things Maori and Maori people, including their Maori ancestry" (Nikora, 2007, p. 86). Demonstrating that being a descendant of both the oppressed and the oppressor can lead to an ongoing internal struggle to (re)claim Māori identity.

Moreover, William's commentary on his experience with microaggressions was supported with hums of agreeance from the rest of us in the wānanga. This indicated a familiarity amongst us as we would all eventually speak to some of the microaggressions we have experienced throughout our lives. When William spoke about his journey navigating sexuality, he highlighted how people would force their expectations of sexual identities onto him:

> *back in like maybe my early 20s, when I was trying to find myself, I guess, and I noticed that most people sort of impose queerness onto me by the way I look and how I sound and all that. And their like head*

[165] Joeliee (Hotukura) Seed-Pihama's 2017 Doctoral thesis *Ko wai tō ingoa? The transformative potential of Māori names* further discusses the significance of (re)claiming Māori names, specifically tīpuna names.

> *explodes when they find out I have a cisgendered wife. I think that's mainly when it started, because we sort of connected over the fact that she was also not straight. She had no one to talk to, and I didn't really want to talk to anyone about it, so it sort of opened me up to all this internal dialogue surrounding it.* - William

Uri shared more intimately her journey growing up in Whakatāne as a young whakawahine with a lack of trans guidance, and how she had to move to Tāmaki Makaurau to find more of her people.

> *I think growing up, I always knew I was a woman, but I dressed up to please the eyes looking, the eyes that were watching. But then I got to a point in my life where I was like, you know what? I look beautiful, I feel beautiful, so I just became me later on in life. I think being in Auckland, the bigger cities there's a lot more people for me to talk with and get guidance so that definitely helped. Cos Whakatāne is a very small town, growing up I was the only transwoman, yeah growing up in a very small town. And then I moved, and my eyes were opened, there's more people like me!* - Uri

Tiwha spoke to their experience growing up and being able to freely float between activities that had been considered masculine or feminine, and how this fluidity contributed to the confident way they carry and present themselves today. They explain:

> *I'm very similar, I just never really questioned it, like yeah this is how I was. I wanna dress like this and I wanna act like that, and that was just my every day. Nobody else questioned it but that's because I have a big family. I have like majority boys in my whānau, so it was normal to be rough and roughhouse with the guys. And then it was normal to help your Mum in the kitchen, do the washing and whatever those "feminine" roles I suppose. But yeah, I've never really thought about describing and understanding it. Especially since I've really started just this year coming into my takatāpuitanga. I've liked ladies for a while but my takatāpuitanga, like yeah I don't identify as anything I guess, atua? May as well.* - Tiwha

The kaipūrākau and I agreed that navigating labels and feeling the Western social expectation to choose a single definitive term to describe our identities was an ongoing struggle. Shawnee talked to the societal pressure in feeling like she needed to choose a Western label to align with her identity. However, she could never find one that felt right to her until coming across takatāpui. She explained:

> *Ok I was a tomboy, like a big tomboy. All my friends were boys, I didn't really get along, well I don't know if it was, I didn't get along with girls or I was just a bit nervous like "oooh". But yeah, like I knew something was different, but I didn't know what it was, and I still don't know. Like you said, I was always looking for a label because everybody was all about labels like "what are you?". So many times, I've been asked*

> *"well what are you?" like I'm a human? And they'd be like "do you like boys? Do you like girls?" and I'm like "both!" and they're like "so you're bisexual?", like no. I don't have, nothing fits. The only thing that fits is takatāpui for me really* – Shawnee

Shawnee continued to speak to her sexuality, and her experiences being cautious with who she shares her identity with. She also shared that she had only been able to discover the kupu takatāpui because of university.

> *But I'm still kind of on that journey because up until last year I wasn't in the closet but I'm like kind of in and out depending on where I am in life. Because I was in a relationship with a woman for like 5 years and it was absolutely awful. And I was just like "nah, never again" and then I got into a relationship with a man, and I was like "Ok no, not this" but yeah it's a work in progress. Still trying to figure it out how to describe and understand my takatāpuitanga. It's just really weird. Coming to uni, is not a place I expected to find this*. - Shawnee

In the kōrero above, Shawnee's comment "coming to uni, is not a place I expected to find this", 'this' referring to the kupu takatāpui highlighted the impact of Western institutions on identity, and specifically, its impact on Māori identity. Shawnee's surprise in discovering takatāpui at university reflects a long-established history of ingrained Western notions of cisheterosexuality within institutions. Shawnee expanded on this and explained "like a year ago, if I were to see myself sitting here, I would've been like 'no way' but this is really awesome". Within this quote, it could be interpreted that had Shawnee not heard of the kupu takatāpui, she would have

never been involved in this rangahau. Further demonstrating the need for greater accessibility to takatāpui resources.

Expanding upon the idea of utilising takatāpui as a kupu to (re)claim an identity that describes our whakapapa, sexual and gender identity, the kaipūrākau explained takatāpui and queer Māori have varying degrees of comfort with (re)claiming takatāpui as an identity. Uri explained:

> *I'm just happy that there's a word for us to use now actively. takatāpuitanga is what we use now, and I proudly use it. At the beginning I was gay, actually at the beginning I was just a poofter. That was the word we used back in our days, back in the stone ages. We had poof and then we had gay and then I used trans and now takatāpui and I use it a lot now. Because before that I think Fa'fafine was used predominantly a lot, even with the Māori family cos that was the only word we knew of, was Fa'fafine. But now that we have takatāpuitanga as a word now for us to use, I use it wholeheartedly with every introduction. But I'm glad we're living in a world now where a lot of people are aware of takatāpuitanga now. It does seem a little bit easier than it was in the early 2000's.* - Uri

Within the kōrero above, Uri outlined how other whakawahine like herself initially used kupu from other cultures such as Fa'fafine from Sāmoa to identify themselves with. This was due to having access to the word Fa'fafine before takatāpui or whakawahine to (re)claim and identify herself with. Though the kupu takatāpui was shared to the communities of Ngāhuia Te

Awekōtuku and Lee Smith (Kerekere, 2017) in the 1980's, Uri's discussion highlighted the extent of the reach of that community.

Tiwha extended this kōrero with their preference in using the kupu takatāpui to identify themselves with compared to feeling like they had to choose a single identity within the Western framework of LGBTQIA+. They said:

> *that's why I wholeheartedly embrace takatāpui because it's just the whole umbrella. I don't have to decide whether I'm bi or pan or non-binary, it doesn't really matter. And that's why I like takatāpui. That's my word.* - Tiwha

Tiwha's discussion of (re)claiming takatāpui as their identity highlights the kupu being recognised as a term that encompasses diverse gender and sexual identities. Furthermore, (re)claiming our identities as takatāpui is especially significant and is what Green et al. (2023) assert that "constitutes a deliberate act of agency, of tino rangatiratanga, which is an essential component of hauora Māori (Hutchings, 2007)" (p. 30). This discussion is expanded upon by other kaipūrākau who did not share a similar pull to claiming takatāpui as an identity, though for PW, this could also be attributed to their being primarily in Pākehā queer settler spaces.

> *considering I've been mainly in white queer spaces, I'm unaccustomed to it and thus don't use it very much. I haven't had enough exposure to exclusively takatāpui communities, nor have I been shaped in such communities to feel comfortable to use the term. Not that I feel discomfort using it, it's more that it's a wholly neutral to me.* – PW

The kōrero from PW above could be interpreted to highlight the impact of white queer spaces upon Indigenous diverse gender and sexual identities. This is in particular relation to the underlying argument that white queer spaces are built upon and continues to perpetuate white queer settler colonialism (Estrada, 2015; Ravecca & Upadhyay, 2013). Indigenous scholars Associate Professor Maile Arvin (Kanaka Māoli), Dr Tuck, and Professor Angie Morrill (Klamath) assert that settler colonialism "is a persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/colonisers/settlers come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to disappear the Indigenous peoples that are there" (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 12). As white queer people can still experience privilege from their whiteness, they can also privilege from and contribute to ongoing settler colonialism (Alqaisiya, 2020; Arvin et al., 2013; Lorde, 1984). Therefore, white queer settler colonial spaces can and do actively sustain settler colonial control over Indigenous representation (Rosenberg, 2021).

Whereas for William, the Western framework of LGBTQIA+ was all he had access to. William talked about when he first came out to someone and how they had to move away which ultimately led to him not being able to discuss his identity with anyone until he met his wife. He explains

> *I think when I was 14 when I first came out to someone as bisexual, like I sort of like boys. But then, she was in and out of school and then eventually her parents took her out, so I pretty much had no one. I didn't really like repress it, but it just went unsaid*. - William

It is clear within the kōrero of the kaipūrākau that tuakiritanga, and the free assertion of it, is a significant element to takatāpui belonging and thrivance. Though it is evident within the kōrero of the kaipūrākau that the persistent detrimental impacts of settler-colonialism is still prominent within our whakapapa whānau, hapū and iwi communities, in addition to it being fabricated into the Western society we live in. Therefore, having obtainable access to our tīpuna knowledge in the form of pūrākau and te reo Māori is vital to (re)discovering the truth of our tīpuna, and the ways in which they embraced and celebrated sexual and gender identities.

Mana Motuhake

Mana Motuhake is asserted by Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku as a sustained "rallying cry for Māori solidarity, a vision of independence, affirming cultural integrity and our rights as an indigenous people" (Te Awekotuku, 2004, p. 76). It is within this innate call to self-determine and (re)affirm takatāpui autonomy that mana motuhake finds its place as a theme within this takatāpui rangahau. Mana motuhake represents a clear notion of the Indigenous sovereign ability to self-govern one's own destiny and is manifested by the kaipūrākau through various forms. In explaining mana motuhake in relation to our Indigenous positionality as tāngata whenua, Leonie Pihama (2001) writes "mana motuhake, like tino rangatiratanga asserts Māori as tāngata whenua, and the expectation of autonomous rights in line with that identity" (p. 128). In accordance with that, this section of the thesis will reflect how mana motuhake has been expressed by the kaipūrākau unique to them and their subsequent embodiment of it.

In terms of affirming their mana motuhake by not conforming to cisheteronormativity and Western societies expectations of being cisgender, PW explained their approach when it comes to assumptions:

> *For quite a while I wouldn't call myself closeted. How do I put it? Basically, if anybody assumed I was conventionally straight or male, that's on them. That's their problem. If they brought that up to me I would correct them, but usually it was not a concern of mine to be seen specifically as. It probably wasn't at the time considered to be seen specifically as aromantic or asexual or that sort of thing. The biggest reason I call myself a non-practicing man is because presenting as a man in this society has its perks and I'd rather not get hatecrimed. But yeah gender is pretty unimportant to me. I keep it around basically because of the social privilege it gets me and the safety and I can keep from it.* – PW

PW continued to expand on this discussion by emphasising their complete and utter disregard for Western societal expectations of them and their identity by saying:

> *I'm often the to put it blankly 'no, fuck off, I'll do my own thing' sort of person. When confronted with a cultural system that says 'you must go out with woman, you must be strong man, you must be into rugby and getting shit faced at the pub and being a wanker in a fast car' I said, no, fuck off.* – PW

Kaupapa Māori academic Dr Kim McBreen (Waitaha, Kāti Mamoe, Kāi Tahu, Pākehā) argues that the imposition of Western cisheteronormativity is a hostile attack on takatāpui identity that perpetuates prolonged, devastating impacts on our community (McBreen, 2012). She asserts that "talking about heterosexuality as if it's the only normal option as opposed to just a common way of being, laughing at people who are different… it is an attack on our mana and our wairua" (McBreen, 2012, p. 57). Experiencing assumptions and expectations of cisheteronormativity was something the kaipūrākau and I all agreed we had encountered before. Although for some, dismissing or confronting these comments was an easy task, for others, addressing these remarks meant directly challenging whakapapa whānau and their views. William spoke to his experience within his whakapapa whānau and talked about how his dad would try

> *to impose being straight on me. I remember having a shirt that said, 'ladies' man' and he would tell other people to watch out for me when I was a little kid. I remember he came to a disco to pick me up and I was dancing with one of my friends, and for the next couple of years he would always be like 'how's your girlfriend?'. But she was just my friend. I think it wasn't until I was 17 where we'd talk on the phone maybe 3 times a year, and he'd always asked if I'd kissed a girl yet or had a girlfriend and then the last time he asked he was like 'do you have a girlfriend?' and I was like 'no'.* - William

However, William explained that once his dad ceased in repeatedly assuming and expecting cisheteronormativity from him, William was more inclined to openly express himself

> *[dad] was like 'do you have a boyfriend?' and I was like 'oop, um no'. And then he said, 'is that what you're looking for?' something like that.*

> *And I was like 'not really'. And he was like 'OK' but that was like one of the moments where I started to open up to myself.* - William

In terms of whakapapa whānau, Kerekere (2015) asserts that "it is the fundamental job of whānau to look after each other and especially their children and young people" (p. 33). It is within this kōrero of William's that illuminates that the small, yet significant change of William's dad's questioning to go beyond repeatedly assumed cisheteronormativity contributed to the way in which William was able to further develop the assertion of his mana motuhake. Tiwha explained that although they felt belonging within their whakapapa whānau, their complex relationship led them to find the acceptance of themself within their self.

> *It's weird, the belonging thing is really weird like I've always felt that I belong, and there were times where, questionable, but yeah [I] got kicked out, always questioned 'do you really love me?' but nah at the end of it, for myself I knew in myself that I belonged. it sounds weird, but I've always accepted the way I am, I'm just a little bit weird and that's OK*. – Tiwha

Tiwha's unreserved embodiment of mana motuhake is reflected within the argument of Kerekere (2015) where she states that "the more takatāpui embrace their diverse gender, sexuality or sex characteristics, the more resilience and confidence develop" (p. 23). Tiwha goes on to explain that

> *sometimes I feel awfully alone, like fuck someone save me! but give me 10 minutes and I'll save myself... I don't give a shit what people think of me. When people look at me I'm like 'look at me do I look straight?' I'm not your conventional looking person, if you don't like that well get*

> *fucked. That's how I roll. I am takatāpui ki te Ao. Everybody knows and they will know. I'm very proud of who I am, how I've found myself. Still getting there, obviously, still exploring, learning, but yeah any chance I get 'yeah I'm takatāpui, and what?'.* – Tiwha

PW chimed in and supported Tiwha with their last comment, saying "*I feel like we're kind of similar in that 'I am what I am, deal with it' sort of gravitation*", to which Tiwha agreed. Uri shared her journey in knowing from a young age that she was not the gender she was assigned at birth and how she navigated being trans in her small hometown of Whakatāne:

> *Growing up, I always knew I wanted to be a woman, but I dressed up to please the eyes looking, the eyes that were watching. But then I got to a point in my life where I was like, you know what? I look beautiful, I feel beautiful, so I just became me later on in life. Expensive lifestyle being a woman though… I think being in Auckland, the bigger cities there's a lot more people for me to talk with and get guidance so that definitely helped. Cos Whakatāne is a very small town, growing up I was the only transwoman, yeah growing up in a very small town.* - Uri

Uri expanded on this conversation and explained how her whakapapa whānau are fiercely supportive of her being whakawahine. This was further supported in when the Kaipūrākau and I engaged in a kōrero around tā moko[166] and moko kanohi[167] (moko). Nikora et al (2007) explains that for whānau Māori and Māori communities moko "confronts how Maori think

[166] Tā moko refers to a traditional Māori tattoo.
[167] Moko kanohi refers to a traditional tribal face tattoo.

about ourselves, histories, continuities and change. It is a mark of critical reflection and conscious choice, and signals an ongoing engagement with the decolonisation" (p. 488). Wearing moko is another form of (re)asserting Māori identity and self-determination, and rejects colonial expectations of aesthetics (Nikora et al., 2007). Uri explained her relationship with her moko kauae[168], saying

> *I wear mine on the inside, but yeah sometime in my life I'll get one. I've already asked my kuia, and it was her that gave me the OK to wear a moko kauae, she was like 'whenever you're ready, wear one'. Yeah so I have a lot of support with the hapū to get a kauae, but I think when I'm ready*. – Uri

This is further elaborated by Professor Mera Penehira (Ngāti Raukawa, Rangitāne) where she talks about the significance of receiving and wearing moko as an expression of mauri, she explains

> "the recipient determines the relationship between their mouri[169] and the moko. For some people, however, it is as if the moko already exists within themselves or within their whakapapa. As such many view the moko as enhancing and giving outwards expression to their mouri" (Penehira, 2023, p. 164).

It was clear from the way in which Uri spoke about the immense support of her whakapapa whānau that they had greatly contributed to her mana motuhake and how she holds and

[168] Moko kauae refers to a chin tattoo usually adorned by people who are assigned female at birth.
[169] 'Mouri' is a tribal dialectal variant of the kupu 'mauri'

expresses herself so fiercely today. Although Uri and her whakapapa whānau represented a relationship of care and support, others within the kaipūrākau did not share a similar experience with their whakapapa whānau.

As explored in whanaungatanga, Angel expressed how her whakapapa whānau had displayed overtly homophobic behaviour growing up and therefore she could not safely explore her identity. However, once she moved from home in South Tāmaki Makaurau to Ōtākou[170] in Te Waipounamu[171] for University, she was able to freely navigate her identity

> *right after high school, when I moved to the South Island completely away from everyone I knew. I kind of had that freedom to be like, Oh, this is okay. I can think about this now and then. What kind of confirmed it for me is one night, I went out, got really drunk and hooked up with five girls, and I went, oh yeah. It was five girls to one boy, and I was just like, oh* [laughs]. - Angel

Angel shared that once she eventually came out[172] to her whakapapa whānau about being bisexual, they continued in engaging with microagressive homophobic insults poorly excused as jokes out of her sexuality.

[170] Ōtākou refers to Otago, a southeastern region in Te Waipounamu
[171] Te Waipounamu is one of the Māori names for the South Island of Aotearoa
[172] Coming out or to come out are "shortened versions of the metaphor, *coming out of the closet*, which refers to the process in which one comes to accept and/or identify with their own sense of gender and/or sexuality, and in turn discloses their gender identity and/or sexuality to others" (Schimanski, 2023, p. 2).

> *I came home, and then I told my entire family, and they just started laughing. And then anytime I'd leave the room, they'd be like, bi. So, when I got home, like, it was fine, and like, they kind of stopped doing what they were doing, but like it was definitely, like a little bit of a shift, but it also kind of opened up the door for me to be queer in my skin and everything.* – Angel

However, Angel explained that although she had been impacted by microagressive taunts by some of her whakapapa whānau, an important member of her whakapapa whānau found confidence within Angel being out[173] and also came out to their whakapapa whānau:

> *But also, for, like, my cousin-sister, we all have one of those, like, come out as bi as well when she was, like 16. So, like, there's definitely pros and cons. It's kind of mine still have to navigate my way through that.* – Angel

The kaipūrākau and I briefly touched on pronouns[174] and whether they use them. Uri explained that for her:

> *I think I'm so comfortable in my own skin, that everybody else's opinion I don't let it bother me. It used to, alot. But now I'm just happy and just like 'okay cool' even like pronouns, if they use the wrong pronoun that*

[173] Out in this instance refers to how Angel came out to her whakapapa whānau.
[174] Pronouns are third-person pronouns which can be used to describe an individual's gender identity. Pronouns will be touched on in Te Hari Te Koa

I don't use, I'm not bothered. It's like a two letter word, it's alright. I'm not gonna let it keep me up at night anymore. I've grown. – Uri

PW added to this and said "*thats the fun thing about te reo Māori you don't need those bloody gendered pronouns*". Which was followed with support from Tiwha saying "*that's it, that's why I like using the term takatāpui, it's such a broad umbrella. You can call me anything, you can call me koro I don't care*" – Tiwha

Within the pūrākau of the Kaipūrākau, it was evident that Mana Motuhake is an imperative element to takatāpui belonging and thrivance. To (re)assert our inherent self-determination over our identity as takatāpui is incredibly powerful while living with the settler-colonial context. For Kaipūrākau who proudly (re)claim takatāpui as their identity and for Kaipūrākau who choose not to claim takatāpui as their identity, what mattered most was the collective acceptance of each other's right to Mana Motuhake. Navigating the world entrenched in settler-colonialism, yet guided by the teachings of our tīpuna, takatāpui thrive in environments where we can comfortably (re)assert our identity.

Te Hari Te Koa

The theme Te Hari Te Koa (re)presents the limitless potentiality of takatāpui joy, particularly manifested through humour. Importantly, Te Hari Te Koa acknowledges the underlying influences of settler-colonialism on takatāpui identity and how it impacts on our humour and joy, while simultaneously capturing the unlimited potential of takatāpui humour and joy as

resistance against settler-colonialism. It is said that "Māori are not afraid to fling words at each other, to speak our minds" (Black, 2023, p. 9), and that humorous discourse reminds us not to take 'it', or ourselves, too seriously (Gilbert, 1997). The humour shared amongst the kaipūrākau and myself emerged in various forms particularly meaningful to each of us. Navigating our identities as takatāpui and queer Māori have often resulted in experiencing a range of homo/queer/transphobic and racial assaults on our intrinsic beings (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007; Pihama et al., 2020; Veale et al., 2019).

Within the kaipūrākau, many found that their whakapapa whānau were often the perpetrators of these attacks. For some of us, these encounters contributed to the formation of protective layers that would shield us from the immense mamae we would endure. Though these protective layers would also assist in developing the confidence to speak up for ourselves and critique the dominating Western cisheteronormative societal expectations of our beings. Therefore, it was no surprise to me that this wānanga was full of booming and cackling laughter that echoed throughout the wharenui. However, the cause of the abundance of hilarity danced along the lines of genuine comedic prowess and painful memories wrapped in humour.

Pihama et al. (2020) argues that there is "a pervasive and often covert level of homophobia, heterosexism and violence continues to be promulgated against LGBTQI-plus people, which directly affects their health and wellbeing and that of their whānau and friends" (p. 18). As briefly touched on in the theme Tuakiritanga, William explained how once his and his wife's baby was born, they had to move in with his wife's family where they would make homophobic insults intended to cause William harm and pain. Though William referred to these as jokes

which reflected in him downplaying the severity of pain they had caused him. He explained they would

> *always make gay jokes, everything. If anything was long they would like make a joke with me. Like if I was cutting a cucumber or something they would be like "ooh you like that?" or something like that. Yeah, it got pretty bad to the point where we actually moved down here. There was one of them, I won't say who but they said that I should leave their bubba alone and go find a husband. They called me disgusting, yeah, so. I've had to sort of distance myself from her family which, she's a really family-orientated person, so I really don't want to take that away from her because, you know. Everyone's having kids now so, yeah, I'll just, yeah that's why I like sort of let it go every now and then for a couple of days or a week or two so that she can have that time* – William

In so doing, William prioritised his wife and her relationship with her family which led to the further oppression of his identity. McBreen (2012) talks about the detrimental impacts of homophobic insults and their synchronisation to colonial oppression as an instrument of forcibly conforming to the dominant cisheterosexual standard, explaining "sexual or gender difference, being gay or camp, is the punchline of so many jokes. And most of us will internalise those messages. Whoever we grow up to be, these are really damaging and limiting messages" (p. 56). These verbal homophobic assaults made by his wife's family were eventually internalised by William where he would go back and forth doubting himself and his sexuality:

> *at the start it really bothered me cos it got to the point where I was like questioning if I was actually fully gay. I used to like have panic attack cos I would think 'oh my gosh I am just leading her on, eventually I'm just gonna stop liking women and all of a sudden I'm gonna be lying to her' and all this. And it sort like of created this sort of like gay panic and straight relief where one day I'd be you know my attraction would be to men and I would be like 'oh my god I'm lying to her' and all of a sudden it would flip and I'd be like 'whew! I'm not gay anymore'* [laughs] - William

William explained that he was ultimately forced to be indifferent towards others' perspectives of him to protect himself, saying

> *I think over the years, I've just, cos I've had to learn to not care what people say in terms of how I look and how I am, so I think that's just sort of crossed over to that. I literally, they can make a gay joke and I would probably laugh harder than they do now. It's not- it might be a defense mechanism, I don't know, but at the moment it just doesn't bother me. I'll make a joke back to them.* - William

As William acknowledges, him pivoting to returning the "jokes" to his wife's family could be a defence mechanism. Though when William makes his jokes, they are made consciously while acknowledging the predominant cisheterosexual standards that marginalised his sexuality in

the first place. Gilbert (1997) explains that "through self-deprecatory material, a comic ridicules the society that creates ideals for appearance and behavior as well as individuals who subscribe to those standards" (p. 319).

As William finished sharing this kōrero with us, PW (they/them) made a humorous jest that William and his wife were "*straight in a gay way*", sparking a giggle fest in our wānanga. William chuckled back and asked, "*were you waiting to say that*?". To which PW explained that they and their partner describe each other as "*straight in a gay way*" to poke fun at the dominant Western cisheteropatriarchal[175] societal expectations of relationships. William and PW's sharing of their relationships illustrated the impact of assuming cisheterosexuality and the Western ideology that identity is fixed and binary. Their experiences were among many shared throughout the wānanga that evidenced that gender and sexual identity are fluid. As Pihama et al. (2020) explain, gender and sexual identities "cannot be reduced to biological understandings or descriptors" (p. 28). PW further explained their thoughts on gender and explained that

> *the biggest reason I call myself a non-practicing man is because presenting as a man in this society has its perks and I'd rather not get hatecrimed. but yeah gender is pretty unimportant to me. I keep it around basically because of the social privilege it gets me and the safety and I can keep from it. Especially since I've been heavily weakend by*

[175] Cisheteropatriarchal refers to the perspective of the predominant culture within a society wherein which cisheterosexuality is fabricated as the societal "norm" and all other forms of sexual diversity, gender identities and sex characteristics are regarded "unnatural"

> *disease and I am unable to defend myself in an attack... We frequently joke that she's [PW's partner] the knight and I'm the princess.* - PW

Our wānanga burst into a cackling laughter as those words left PW's lips, even more so with William agreeing, sharing a similar experience with his wife, saying "*same with me. If there's spiders I am shooing them her way. There's scary noises out there [wife] go check*". PW continued with their kōrero and said

> *another frequent joke is that I'm the wife because of stuff like, i got her a model kit and she got really fixated on building it, she loved it and she was crouched over the desk building this model while I cleaned the room around her. So, the joke is that she's the husband engrossed in the hobbies while I clean the room up. Speaking of that, here is a picture of me in her dress.* - PW

PW proceeded to show us all a picture of them in one of their partner's dresses, much to the ecstatic adoration of the entire wānanga squealing in unison "*awwwwwwwww*". Although Uri agreed that this picture of PW was quite sweet, she did not let a beat pass before she quipped "*wow you look like a 60's housewife. Now who's the kuia? You'll never catch me wearing a tablecloth!*". This was a running joke in the wānanga as PW called Uri a kuia after she was slow to understand an aspect in the game Kaupapa. This jab at PW's sense of style was well received by PW who bantered back that Uri was "*still the kuia!*"

When Angel talked more about her relationship with her partner, she also spoke to her queerness being in a relationship that is heterosexual-presenting[176]. Her partner, she explains, is enthusiastically supportive of Angel being Māori and queer, she shares that

> *I found my queerness before I met my partner. Now we've been together for like 4½ years and he's just like flexes that I'm Māori and that I'm bi and I'm like I didn't have to lose that part of me in a straight relationship, well a straight-looking relationship. But everyone that I know is just like yeah, you're queer! It's OK* [laughs]. – Angel

Additionally, she spoke to her experience with her whakapapa whānau who are members of the notoriously violent homophobic and transphobic Destiny Church, and how she would not disclose her sexuality to them to remain an inheritor in the will.

> *But yeah I haven't had any bad experiences, like grandparents that are destiny church members they're probably the only ones that I won't tell because I want to stay in the will* [laughs]. - Angel

This garnered an electric cackle amongst the kaipūrākau and myself, especially as Uri followed quickly with "not too long to go", to which was rewarded with another wave of laughter. The supportive laughter and added jests from the kaipūrākau while talking about painful situations were indicative of a interwoven shared experience and a sense of whanaungatanga as we

[176] Heterosexual-presenting is a term that refers to a relationship that appears to be heteronormative but one or both members in the relationship are queer.

confided in each other. Though it also demonstrated the prompt resort to laughing off harmful experiences in an attempt to alleviate the gravity of experiencing discrimination.

Moreover, Angel explained her rationale for maintaining this relationship with these homophobic whakapapa whānau members, saying "*yeah it's like why disrupt my peace when you're not going to see from my perspective. So I'm like, I can exist and have that relationship outside of queerness*". Angel acknowledges that although she probably will never share that side of herself with that side of her whakapapa whānau, it is done out of safety.

Tiwha added on to Angel's discussion with their experience with whakapapa whānau members who were heavily involved in religion and would also engage in homophobic insults. They shared

> *cos that's my relationship with my pastors [Tiwha's grandparents] in my life. My nan knows I like girls, but like, she doesn't want to know. I have a lot of openly lesbian aunties and whenever she sees them at the marae she always says just ugly stuff, you know? And I'm just like, bro. I'm right here, you know how I am, like, if you don't like it, could you leave? I don't care about your cancer if you don't care about me laughs But that's how much I don't give a fuck about people.* – Tiwha

Tiwha's retort to their nan's blatant homophobia revealed the extent to which they had experienced the normalisation of microagressive homophobic attacks within their whānau,

hapū and marae. Though what Tiwha said was hilarious in that moment, their kōrero gave insight into how they have had to protect themselves by fiercely rebutting against homophobic attacks. Indigenous comedian and activist Dallas Goldtooth (Mdewakanton Dakota and Diñe) observes "I think comedy allows us to process information and experience, and in the case of reconciliation and trauma, in a different manner that provides some positive healing and provides a positive discourse on the subject" (Baker III, 2016). Therefore, humour is a coping mechanism as much as it is political commentary (Scudeler, 2020).

Uri's whakapapa whānau, however, were incredibly supportive and would encourage Uri in her ability to fill the shoes of many on their marae, saying "*yeah I get teased about that all the time! Like 'you could run the whole marae yourself, come and do karanga, run around and do a whaikōrero', and I was like you know what, I could*".

Though this teasing was different to the "teasing" other kaipūrākau and myself had been subject to. Uri's whakapapa whānau teasing that she could run the whole marae was a (re)affirmation of them enthusiastically supporting Uri and her identity. Furthermore, it was an extended testament to the richness of aroha within a whakapapa whānau, and how that abundance of love and compassion can contribute to the confidence of takatāpui (Kerekere, 2017).

As the kaipūrākau talked more to our identities, we eventually reached a succinct discussion about their thoughts on pronouns. In te reo Māori, we do not have gendered pronouns such as

he/him or she/her, we have one pronoun, ‘ia’, that is used to describe all people (Te Aka - Māori Dictionary, n.d.). I have presented their responses in order of their chiming in to answer:

PW: *pronouns can go fuck themselves.*

Tiwha: *yeah*

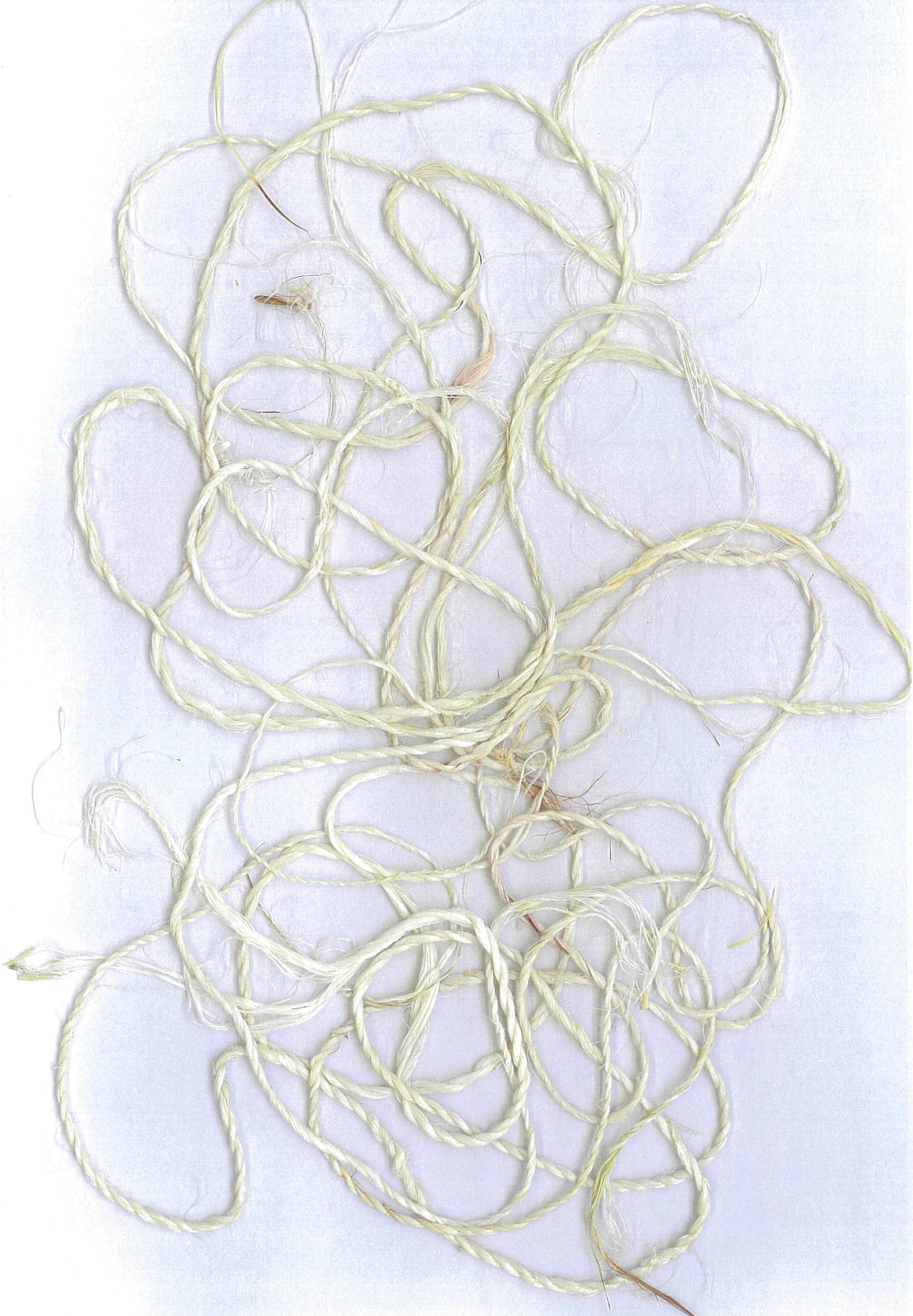
Shawnee: *for me, call me Shawnee.*

Uri: *like yeah, I have a name, thank you.*

Although, as acknowledged throughout this chapter and the thesis overall, pronouns are used within our day-to-day lives. The world we live in today is built upon and continues to perpetuate settler colonialism, systemically and systematically constructed by Western cisheteropartiarchal standards of identity and categorisation (Smith, 2012; Te Awekotuku, 1991). Therefore the world demands us to conform and assume pronouns that compartmentalise sections of our identity as separate. Though the kaipūrākau vehemently resisted conforming to pronouns, and prefer to be referred to by their first names.

Being in a kaupapa Māori space that was takatāpui-focussed, being among other takatāpui and being able to share and relate to each other’s pūrākau was and is incredibly powerful. The wānanga provided a space in time for us all to take a break from the world outside the wharenui, to relish in each other’s rich stories and experience belonging within ourselves and amongst one another. As Dallas Hunt (Wapsewsipi Cree) asserts, “listening, storytelling and laughter

provide an intersubjective space wherein both the cultural and political can flourish for Indigenous communities" (Hunt, 2023).



5.0 Te Kupu Whakakapi | Conclusion

The photo above depicts some muka[177] that I processed while staying at Mana Tipua's Noho Raumati earlier this year. It was one of the many exciting activities I took part in while staying at this noho[178]. From start to finish, the preparation of this muka ran through the hands of various rangatahi takatāpui at the noho. The harakeke[179] was harvested by some of the rangatahi takatāpui, and I processed it under the guidance of a tuakana takatāpui and a fellow rangatahi takatāpui. It was my first time preparing muka, and it felt even more special to me that the entire process involved rangatahi takatāpui. This photo (re)presents the interconnected collectivity of takatāpui, and it also acknowledges our individual value within our collective.

Through the experience of wānanga, of the gathering of takatāpui and sharing our pūrākau, the main themes that manifested within our space of takatāpui belonging were Whanaungatanga, Tuakiritanga, Mana Motuhake and Te Hari Te Koa. Each kaipūrākau embodied these themes in their own dynamic expressions and were interwoven within the mauri of our wānanga.

To be within the presence of other takatāpui and feeling comfortable to share and freely express our distinct pūrākau was a genuine embodiment of whanaungatanga. In my experience, as a tangata takatāpui who has a complicated relationship with their whakapapa whānau, whanaungatanga within my kaupapa whānau has been essential in developing belonging to my identity. This was especially prevalent within this study's wānanga takatāpui, as the

[177] Muka is the prepared fibre extracted from the harakeke plant
[178] Noho has many different meanings in te reo Māori. In this context, I am referring to the Noho Raumati stay.
[179] Harakeke is a flax fibre plant that is native to Aotearoa.

kaipūrākau were comfortable sharing and expressing their entire unapologetic selves within the rōpū shortly after meeting each other. Whanaungatanga allowed the kaipūrākau to relate to one another personally, leading to mutual understanding, and the development of close bonds early in the wānanga. Within the research wānanga, it was evident that growing up within a whakapapa whānau who perpetuate colonial ideologies have impacted on how the kaipūrākau assert their identity. This was particularly experienced and discussed by William, Angel, Tiwha, Shawnee, and myself. In our case, this manifested as a disconnection to claiming takatāpui as an identity. This is particularly important as it highlighted a further disconnection from their whakapapa whānau, from Māori ways of being, and from their identity as Māori. Thus, whanaungatanga is an important element for takatāpui to further develop belonging within collectives outside of their biological family. One of the key findings within our kōrero about whanaungatanga was the need for takatāpui to have our own kaupapa whānau outside of whakapapa whānau ties. When takatāpui are able to be with each other in a space that is run by takatāpui for takatāpui, we are able to thrive in a space and with people that (re)affirm our identity. We are able to belong and continue to thrive in this settler-colonial society when we are with each other.

Engaging in sharing the pūrākau of our lived experiences enlightened a kaleidoscope of identities, of Tuakiritanga. As an inherited taonga from our tīpuna, Tuakiritanga is an inherent component to takatāpui thrivance. Particularly, the (re)clamation and affirmation of our identities as takatāpui is an intentional assertion of agency, of tino rangatiratanga (Pihama et al., 2020) as it represents and retains a direct connection to our inherent values of an Indigenous collective identity. The significance of reclaiming takatāpui as an identity that captures the

essence of our culture and allows for a fluid interpretation of diverse sexual and gender identities is described within this kōrero from Tiwha:

> *when I do think about it in LGBTQ, like rainbow way, like I'm constantly questioning myself aye. Like I think about it a lot, I don't know exactly where I sit on the spectrum, so that's why I wholeheartedly embrace takatāpui because it's just that whole umbrella. I don't have to decide whether I'm bi or pan, non-binary, it doesn't really matter. And that's why I like takatāpui. That's my word* – Tiwha

Within our research wānanga, Tiwha, Uri and Shawnee shared how they all felt an immense connection with their (re)claimed identities as takatāpui. Particularly how asserting their identity as takatāpui not only highlighted their resistance to identifying with terms from the Western framework LGBTQI+, but their interconnectedness with takatāpui as an inherently Māori identity. (Re)claiming identity as takatāpui calls for an intentional act of agency, to enact tino rangatiratanga, as it represents and retains a direct connection to our inherent values of an Indigenous collective identity. It is important to highlight that not all kaipūrākau felt a connection with claiming takatāpui as their identity which was for a variety of valid and legitimate reasons. Although PW grew up immersed in Te Ao Māori and attended Kura Kaupapa, their schooling experience involved expectations of cisheteropartiarchal gender performance, of which they firmly resisted. The underlying encroachment of settler-colonialism and perpetuation of Western gendered norms within their Kura Kaupapa Māori schooling experience ultimately impacted on how PW asserts their identity as someone who is Māori and queer. PW's experience particularly highlighted the persistent influence of Western

cisheteropatriarchy within a Kura Kaupapa, and its subsequent impact on their impartiality to (re)claiming Māori identity.

Where PW grew up within a whakapapa whānau that is immersed in Māori culture, William grew up within a whakapapa whānau that is disconnected from their Māori identities. As a result of this, William felt he could not (re)claim takatāpui as his identity because of the microaggressions freely expressed within his whakapapa whānau. This is expanded upon by McBreen (2012) where she explains that these are effects of oppression, and how our parents and kaumātua endured "massive pressure to conform to the dominant, colonising values" (p. 56). Though this certainly does not excuse the racist and homophobic abuse exercised by whakapapa whānau, it does provide an insight into the underlying insidious impacts of cultural imperialism within whakapapa whānau. I argue that this demonstrates the ongoing necessity for the decolonisation of our settler-colonial governing system.

Listening to the kaipūrākau unapologetically share their disdain for cisheteronormativity and having to conform to settler-colonial binaries were refreshing invigorations of Mana Motuhake. This is especially significant for takatāpui and the affirmation of identity today where the threat of cisheteropatriarchy is embedded within society constructed by an intergenerational settler-colonial government (Mikaere, 1999; Te Awekotuku, 1991), that has ultimately been internalised and projected by some whakapapa whānau. This was also particularly highlighted throughout the discussion of the research wānanga as each kaipūrākau shared their distinct experiences of homophobia and transphobia within their whakapapa whānau. In Angel's experience, she grew up with microaggressions exercised by her whakapapa whānau on a

regular basis to an extent to where she did not feel safe sharing parts of her identity with them. Angel had to leave her whakapapa whānau and move hours away from them to feel comfortable enough to navigate her identity, and in so doing, she found her confidence to assert Mana Motuhake within her kaupapa whānau.

In my experience as someone who grew up within a whakapapa whānau who were nonchalant towards the implications of race and expressions of sexuality, but had friends who would make openly racist, homophobic and transphobic microaggressions, I also had a complicated journey navigating my identity. Especially as there were times where I believed I could confide in certain whānau members about my experiences, but they would quickly demonstrate they were not safe people to share important personal information with. However, Uri's experience of being embraced within a fiercely compassionate whakapapa whānau who are proudly and enthusiastically supportive of her identity has undoubtedly contributed to her assertion of Mana Motuhake through her confident presence.

This was particularly illustrated in her pūrākau of her whakapapa whānau and kaupapa whānau who would and continue to advocate for Uri in spaces where she is not unequivocally embraced for who she is. Uri's pūrākau also demonstrated how Mana Motuhake can be asserted through an interconnected understanding amongst whānau that transcends colonial ideologies of the terms sex and gender and the subsequent performance of them. As Uri expressed, she could care less if she is misgendered intentionally or not and is especially not afraid to assert her Mana Motuhake in returning sharp quips if she is. Uri's pūrākau revealed a key finding that when whakapapa whānau unashamedly embraces their takatāpui children, their takatāpui

identity thrives in the face of adversity. Therefore, Mana Motuhake is a core element to takatāpui thrivance as it is an inherited element from our tīpuna and interconnects us to a whakapapa that embraced us for who we are (Kerekere, 2017).

Another key finding within this wānanga takatāpui was how takatāpui use humour to navigate our lived experiences. The contagious essence of Indigenous joy through cackling laughter reverberating throughout the wānanga was a consistent reminder of our resilience and thrivance as takatāpui. The potentiality of Indigenous joy represented in the theme Te Hari Te Koa was an unwavering element of laughter. Laughter at hilarious discourse, certainly, though most especially laughter as medicine to overcome oppression (Johnson-Jennings, 2025). Indigenous humour, laughter and joy is described by Johnson-Jennings (2025) as resistance against settler-colonialism, and joy in spite of injustice is particularly noted as armour or weaponry in the fight against oppression (Watego, 2025). Within our research wānanga, the kaipūrākau and I loved to use humour to laugh at how ludicrous some of our lived experiences were. However, this same laughing was also used as a mechanism to cope with the suppressed pain we had endured from these experiences.

Shawnee highlighted within her pūrākau how she had to repress her identity after constantly hearing queerphobic microaggressions made by her whakapapa whānau. She shared this while giggling that she had to separate this part of her identity from herself as she believed something was wrong with her. Shawnee's pūrākau further indicated the detrimental imposition of Western cisheteropatriarchy that is securely embedded within some whakapapa whānau, and its subsequent damaging effects on Māori identities. Shawnee laughing at the awful

experiences she endured was a dual insight into her knowing takatāpui were embraced within traditional Māori society and the embedded settler-colonial influence within her whakapapa whānau. Shawnee's pūrākau was closely expressed by other kaipūrākau, recognising that many takatāpui utilise laughter to shrug off hurtful experiences. Recognising that we are able to laugh and find joy regardless of adversity we constantly go through. Being within the wharenui and within each other's presence where we could share these experiences felt truly healing. It felt like we were in our own space-time that transcended all the abuse and discrimination as we laughed so hard at times we could not breathe. Feeling each other's presence being engulfed with Indigenous joy further (re)affirmed our belonging within our wānanga, as a collective within an individual, and as an individual within a collective.

Limitations

A part of every research project are limitations. As I progressed through this rangahau and crept closer to my submission date, I became increasingly overwhelmed with work committments, moving house, and losing contact with some of my whakapapa whānau. For these reasons, this rangahau takatāpui could only engage in certain extents of the concepts I explored. Particularly around pūrākau methodology, of which I wanted to dedicate a good part of my thesis to. Pūrākau is usually something that comes natural to me as someone who loves to kōrero and share opinions. In relation to pūrākau methodology, I briefly touched on Indigenous story work with the works of Archibald, Johnson-Jennings and Wilson, though this is another area where I would have liked to explore further. This notion is also extended to mātauranga takatāpui. As the months went by I slowly began to encounter more rangahau takatāpui that I wanted to incorporate into this thesis, but I was unable to. Some of the rangahau that I particularly wanted

to acknowledge is: Dr Tāwhanga Nōpera's 2017 Doctoral thesis entitled *Huka can haka: taonga performing tino rangatiratanga* (Nopera, 2017), and the 2019 Counting Ourselves report that looked into the health and wellbeing of trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa (Veale et al., 2019).

In the days leading up to the research wānanga, my two co-facilitators (both of whom are takatāpui) were unable to attend due to familial commitments. Further, I rolled my ankle three days prior to the wānanga which severely limited my movements. I did consider to potentially postpone the wānanga so that the other two co-researchers could later join and to heal my ankle, however this was not possible due to a variety of reasons such as marae availability and prior commitments from the kaipūrākau and myself. A learning from this experience is to plan more thoroughly in preparation for the possibility of postponing and what this looks like in terms of people's time and finances.

As stated by Kara Beckford (Ngāti Whakaue) and Nikora where it is demonstrated in their report *takatāpui: A Place to Start* that there is "not nearly enough studies which centre on wahine takatāpui" (Beckford & Nikora, 2016, p. 2). For this reason it was taken into consideration to potentially hold a wāhine takatāpui only wānanga, however, as someone whose identity resides beyond the binaries of gender I felt that that study could be explored in further rangahau. Throughout the duration of this Master's project, I attended a number of events, wānanga and workshops that were specifically dedicated to encourage takatāpui belonging and thrivance. These events include Manioro 2024 hosted by Nevertheless, and Noho Matariki and Noho Raumati that was hosted by Mana Tipua. These events were designed

by takatāpui rōpū for takatāpui to be unapologetically ourselves while making meaningful connections and relationships with other takatāpui. It was at these events where I was able to get a glimpse of fully-realised takatāpui belonging and thrivance on a large scale. It made me think about the situation where I live in the Waikato, and the lack of a visible takatāpui community that I know exists here. In furture rangahau, I would like to explore Kaupapa Māori takatāpui organisations that are committed to uplifting takatāpui communities through (re)connecting or (re)strengthening our connections to Te Ao Māori.

Final Reflections

Something I want to emphasise is that when I started this rangahau, I had recently been made aware of the ongoing genocide in Palestine. As an Indigenous person who is conscious of the genocidal history of my people with our oppressors, it was painfully paralysing to watch the genocide of another Indigenous nation on my phone. I felt like I was going crazy, watching universities being bombed while sitting in a university classroom writing about decolonisation. It felt like a fire burned in my heart, and I began to attend weekly protests for Palestine. At these protests I met my community, who quickly became my kaupapa whānau. Every week, we would come together to mourn the lives of Indigenous people taken too soon on their own lands, and I found comfort being able to grieve with others who were like me.

As the year progressed, the government entertained and introduced bills that would cause devastating impacts to our whenua (like the Fast-Track Approval Bill[180]), our society (the

[180] https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/fast-track-approvals/

removal of Section7AA in the Oranga Tamariki Act[181]) and incite division amongst Māori and everyone else in Aotearoa (the Treaty Principles Bill[182]). Every week writing this thesis felt like the settler-colonial regime and its supporting oppressors would find new ways to instigate violent extremism and hatred towards marginalised communities. I sometimes felt powerless, and would find myself avoiding writing about the very things that were currently happening to my communities. The only way I made it through writing this thesis was by surrounding myself in my kaupapa whānau. Passionate for thriving Indigenous peoples and our future, my kaupapa whānau within Palestine Waikato, Ngā Haumi, Mana Tipua and Nevertheless have consistently reminded me that our communities are powerful. Our voices, our pūrākau, are vitally important to takatāpui belonging and thriving within our whānau, hapū and iwi. As the upcoming generation of tīpuna, there is power in knowing and sharing our pūrākau.

It is clear that the imposition and internalisation of settler-colonialism has enduring violent impacts on expressions of takatāpui identity today. As I write this conclusion during the peak of Hineraumati in the safety and comfort of an air-conditioned studio, I have had to constantly take a step back and recognise what is happening in Aotearoa and the rest of the world. Today, March 7, is the first day of Tū Whakahīhī e Te Whanganui-ā-Tara, the Wellington Pride Festival 2025. Though this weekend's pride parade has had to prepare extra precautions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of festival goers, especially as a potential protest could break out (McCaull, 2025). The New Zealand Parliament has just finished hearing oral submissions from the public about the Treaty Principles Bill, a bill that has sparked nationwide protest

[181] https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/LMS216331.html
[182] https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2024/0094/latest/whole.html

hikoi [183] and has fundamentally framed the insidious intentions of the current coalition government. By allowing the introduction of a policy that targets takatāpui who are trans and non-binary (Stephens, 2024) and refusing to strip the charity status from violent religious entity Destiny Church (Edmunds, 2025), this current coalition government clearly permits oppression.

There are ongoing genocides in Palestine, Congo, Sudan, Kanaky, and West Papua in addition to many other Indigenous nations that are funded and sustained by dominant imperial regimes across the world that further cement the global colonial system. All of which are not met with adequate national or international intervention. As the current next generation of ancestors, we have the right to challenge and transform the settler-colonial structures we inherit (Benjamin, 2025). Takatāpui need spaces where we can belong and thrive stronger than ever, and to find joy and laughter as we resist against settler-colonialism together. That is why, in the world that continues its attempts to deny the existence of takatāpui, it is incredibly important for takatāpui to share our pūrākau of belonging and thrivance in spite of settler-colonialism. This study of takatāpui rangahau is in and of itself a direct challenge to settler-colonialism and is a testament to the thrivance of our people. I close this thesis with a poem from Ōne, a member of my kaupapa whānau and fellow takatāpui, who composed this poem for our takatāpui community.

Dream of your Tīpuna when our

Palm read the sky

[183] Protest march

We were children carved with the Bones of Tangaroa

Our vaka steered by our sister Te Moana

Your stories wove imaginations on nights

We sweat and cried salt water

Drowning in the sentiment of home

You drew words like ink unto pressed bark

Your incantations etched in our skin

Bound ourselves to your song

Pūrākau of Awa

Your veins root unto Maunga

Like ropes rooted in the fabric of our whakapapa

Remember your Tīpuna

The shape of their Kite a mold still ardent

Ngā Tohutoro

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