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# Mana Wahine Geographies: Spiritual, Spatial and Embodied Understandings of Papatūānuku

by

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in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of

**Master of Social Sciences**



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*This thesis is dedicated to ngā wāhine toa who took part in this research.  
Your experiences and voices excite and inspire this writing.*

*And to all wāhine, past and present, knowingly and unknowingly who have been with me, and  
helped me, on this journey.*

*Thank you all for showing me what mana wāhine is all about.*

*Tēnei taku mihi ki a koutou,*

*Naomi*

Ko Te Ngākau te whare (kei Tarukenga)  
Ko Turi te Tangata

Ko Te Tikanga te whare (kei Ngatira)  
Ko Mitai te Tangata

Ko Huri te whare (kei Pikitū)  
Ko Kapu te Tangata

He whare kotahi tēnei  
Ko Te Ngākau te whatitoka  
Ko Te Tikanga te pou tokomanawa  
Ko Huri te pou tuarongo  
o te whare wairua o Raukawa

Tainui te waka  
Raukawa te iwi  
Ngāti Huri te hapū  
Wharepūhanga te maunga  
Waikato te awa  
Mangaorua te awa iti  
Pikitū te marae, ki roto i te Kaokaoroa o Patetere  
Ko Naomi Simmonds ahau

## ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a theoretical and empirical exploration of Māori women's knowledges and understandings of Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa. The primary focus of this research is on the complexities, connections, and contradictions of Māori women's embodied relationships with the spaces of Papatūānuku – spaces that are simultaneously material, discursive, symbolic, and spiritual. In doing so, I displace the boundaries between coloniser/colonised, self/other, rational/irrational and scientific/spiritual. I demonstrate that Māori women's colonised realities produce multiple, complex and hybrid understandings of Papatūānuku.

This thesis has three main strands. The first is theoretical. I offer *mana wahine* (Māori feminist discourses) as another perspective for geography that engages with the complex intersections of colonisation, race and gender. A *mana wahine* geography framework is a useful lens through which to explore the complexities of Māori women's relationships to space and place. This framework contributes to, and draws together, feminist geographies and Māori and indigenous academic scholarship.

Autobiographical material is woven with joint and individual semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with nine Māori women in the Waikato region. The second strand, woven into this thesis, is a critical examination of the colonisation of Māori women's spiritual and embodied relationships to Papatūānuku. The invisibility of Māori women's knowledges in dominant conceptualisations of mythology, *tikanga* and *wairua* discourses is not a harmless omission rather it contains a political imperative that maintains the hegemony of colonialism and patriarchy. I argue that to understand further Māori women's relationships to space and place an examination of *wairua* discourses is necessary.

The third strand reconfigures embodied and spatial conceptualisations of Papatūānuku. Māori women's maternal bodies are intimately tied to Papatūānuku in a way that challenges the oppositional distinctions between mind/body and biology/social inscription. Māori women's maternal bodies (and the representation of them in *te reo Māori*) are constructed by, and in turn, construct Papatūānuku. Furthermore, women's spatial relationship to *tūrangawaewae*, home space and wider environmental concerns demonstrates the co-constitution of subjectivities, bodies and space/place.

My hope is that this thesis will add to geographical literature by addressing previously ignored knowledges and that it will contribute to indigenous scholarship by providing a spatial perspective.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>HE MIHI</b> .....	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	iv
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	v
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	vi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	viii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	viii
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
Focusing the research.....	6
Research Focus .....	8
Chapter outline.....	10
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>Weaving a kete of theoretical tools</b> .....	13
(De) constructing the ‘Other’.....	15
Kaupapa Māori – Laying the foundation .....	18
Mana Wahine – Past and present.....	22
Hoa mahi - Working friends .....	27
Embodied geographies .....	28
Hybridity.....	30
Conclusions .....	32
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>Methodology: research design and reflection</b> .....	34
Kaupapa Māori/mana wahine methodology.....	35
Ethical concerns.....	37
Weaving qualitative and Kaupapa Māori methods .....	39
Whakapapa and research relationships .....	40
Whakawhānaungatanga and power .....	43
Semi-structured interviews.....	44
Rangatiratanga over knowledge .....	47
Autobiography .....	49

Taku Turanga - My position .....	51
Analysis .....	53
Conclusions .....	54
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>Entanglements of wairua, Christianity and atua wāhine</b> .....	56
Wairua discourses .....	57
Christianity and Papatūānuku .....	68
Mythology - Atua wāhine .....	72
Kei hea ngā atua wāhine? – Where are the female goddesses?.....	76
Conclusion .....	80
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
<b>Reconfiguring Papatūānuku: bodies, home, and environmental responsibilities</b> .....	82
Maternal bodies.....	83
Te Kore, Te Pō, Te Ao Mārama.....	85
Representation of maternal bodies.....	88
Colonisation of birthing practices.....	93
Reconfiguring the maternal .....	95
Home - Spaces of ‘nature’, familiarity and refuge.....	96
Environmental responsibilities .....	99
Conclusion.....	105
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	107
Future research.....	111
<b>GLOSSARY</b> .....	114
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
Appendix One: Information sheet for participants .....	117
Appendix Two: Interview feedback form .....	119
Appendix Three: Consent Form.....	120
Appendix Four: Interview Schedule.....	122
Appendix Five: Letter to participants accompanying draft chapters.....	124
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	125



## LIST OF FIGURES

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Figure 1: Mana wahine conceptual framework.....	25
Figure 2: Indigenous women's research agenda.....	36
Figure 3: Papatūānuku, oil on hardboard, by Robyn Kahukiwa. ....	62
Figure 4: Te Pō by Patricia Grace.....	84
Figure 5: Te Pō and Papatūānuku, pencil on paper, by Robyn Kahukiwa .....	86

## LIST OF TABLES

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Table 1: Suggested guidelines for undertaking Māori research.....	38
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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

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*“Two issues were inseparable that at the moment of my birth, two factors determined my destiny, my having been born black and my having been born female” (hooks 1982, 12).*

This thesis is a theoretical and empirical exploration of Māori<sup>1</sup> women’s knowledges and understandings of Papatūānuku<sup>2</sup> in contemporary Aotearoa. The primary focus of this research is on the complexities, connections, and contradictions of Māori women’s embodied relationships with the spaces of Papatūānuku. It highlights the intersecting and interwoven nature of Māori women’s subjectivities,<sup>3</sup> spaces and places. It seeks to make visible previously ignored knowledges, bodies and spaces by engaging Māori feminist discourses, also known as mana wahine. Mana wahine, as a theoretical expression, extends Kaupapa Māori (Māori theory) by engaging with the complex intersections of colonisation, race and gender. The boundaries between self/other, mind/body, rationality/irrationality and constructionism/essentialism are blurred when Māori women’s embodied, spiritual and material understandings of Papa are examined.

An important focus of this research is the mutability of Māori women’s relationships to the space of Papatūānuku; a space (and body) that is simultaneously material, discursive, symbolic and spiritual. Whakapapa identifies Māori women as being one with Papatūānuku, although not all Māori women choose - or have the opportunity - to identify with Papa<sup>4</sup> (Hutchings 2004). It is argued, by some, that Māori women are

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<sup>1</sup>Like Robyn Longhurst (2008) and Leonie Pihama (2001) I use the term Māori in this thesis but I wish to problematise its use. It has been argued that the term Māori is a convenient colonial construction used to classify and categorise the tangata whenua of Aotearoa. I use the term not as a generalisation or homogenising term but “as a political concept that identifies collectively the Indigenous Peoples of this land” (Pihama 2001, 1).

<sup>2</sup> Papatūānuku is most commonly translated as mother earth. This thesis will demonstrate, however the meaning of Papatūānuku is more complex. Understandings of her vary across time and space.

<sup>3</sup> I choose to use the term subjectivities over identity to encourage the recognition of the multiple and frequently potentially contested possibilities available to human subjects (Panelli 2004).

<sup>4</sup> The term Papa is an abbreviation of Papatūānuku, therefore I will use the two terms interchangeably throughout this thesis.

the human manifestations of Papa and, therefore, we have a unique place from which to speak about environmental issues (Hutchings 2002). Not all Māori, however, hold precious their relationships with Papatūānuku. I draw on multiple understandings of Papa in order to tease out the co-constitution of Māori women's subjectivities and the spaces of Papatūānuku.

I argue that the 'baffling inconsistencies' Māori women confront, and negotiate, in their everyday geographies<sup>5</sup> are a result of the colonisation, and subsequent marginalisation, of mana wahine knowledges, embodied practices, and spiritual discourses. By examining Māori women's spiritual, embodied and material experiences of Papatūānuku I challenge the hegemony of disembodied, 'rational', colonial and masculine articulations of space and place.

This research has three objectives. The first is theoretical, to offer mana wahine as another perspective for geography to re-theorise Māori women's relationships to spaces and places. The second is to examine the colonisation of Māori women's lived, embodied and spiritual geographies. The third seeks to reconfigure conceptualisations of Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa. I have aimed to work against colonial masculinist ideologies that continue to marginalise, and discriminate against, Māori women's knowledges, values and embodied practices.

Following in the same vein as other Māori women scholars (Hutchings 2002; Te Awekotuku 1991a; Yates-Smith 1998) I use the metaphor of weaving throughout this thesis (particularly in chapter 2) to weave together these objectives (strands), and various perspectives and *herstories* that can at times be complimentary but also contradictory. It is fitting that the harakeke plant<sup>6</sup> be used as a metaphor because raranga has inextricable links to Papatūānuku. Furthermore, Jessica Hutchings (2004, 19) points out "like the *herstories* of Māori women, harakeke is diverse, with some varieties having drooping leaves, others growing leaves still and upright as spears. The texture also varies from a silky fineness to a waxy and coarse texture".

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<sup>5</sup> Similar to Linda McDowell (1996) I use everyday geographies throughout this thesis to refer to the sense of oneself that is given meaning by the actualities of everyday experiences. I am referring to the fabric of day to day life including activities, practices, relationships, values and beliefs that inform how we experience the world.

<sup>6</sup> The harakeke plant is just one of the materials used for weaving. There are many others.

Over the past few decades, feminist geographers and indigenous academics have challenged white, colonial, masculine and heterosexual control over the production of academic knowledge. Increasingly, attention is being directed towards considerations of embodied subjectivities such as gender, sexuality, race, and class. Yet, there still remains little explicit geographic work that focuses on the interface between gender, race and ethnicity in Aotearoa (Larner 1995; Lees and Longhurst 1995; Nagar and Staeheli 2002).<sup>7</sup> This point is reiterated by Leonie Pihama (2001). She has found few theorists and theories that are willing to delve into the intersecting subjectivities of race, gender, class and sexuality. I engage mana wahine theory coupled with feminist geography to explore the intersecting subjectivities of being Māori and being female. Donna Awatere (1984, 45)<sup>8</sup> made the important point that “the oppression of women does not exist in a vacuum: economic and racial privileges cannot be separate from sexual power”. The results of these intersecting oppressions are particularly devastating for Māori women (Hutchings 2002; Pihama 2001; Tuhiwai Smith 1992, 1999).<sup>9</sup> Almost without exception, geographic scholarship on Māori women’s embodied experiences of space and place remains virtually invisible.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Geographers in Australasia are beginning to produce work on the intersections the between ‘race’, sexuality and gender such as August (2005); Johnston (2005a); and Aspin and Hutchings (2007a & 2007b). For the most part, however, the intersections of embodied subjectivities remain largely unexamined.

<sup>8</sup> Donna Awatere wrote the thought provoking and somewhat controversial book *Māori Sovereignty* (1984). There are various debates over this publication that I do not have time to enter into here. What is generally accepted is that this publication was extremely influential in the development of Māori feminist politics.

<sup>9</sup> The report *Focusing on Women 2005* published by Statistics New Zealand notes that Māori and Pacific women are more likely to work in low-skilled manual jobs compared with non-Māori women. The median income for Māori women is approximately \$5000 less than Māori men and \$2000 less than European women. Māori women suffer the highest rates of some diseases, and have higher rates of (and death from) some forms of cancer than non-Māori women (Statistics New Zealand 2005). Violence towards Māori women by their heterosexual partners is 23% higher than European women (Ministry of Women’s Affairs 2008). While these statistics do not represent the reality of all Māori women (myself included) it is a reality for many. I do not in any way want to reinforce the confusion of these abysmal statistics as ‘accepted’ or ‘naturalised’ forms of Māori femininity. I use these statistics to demonstrate that the economic, social and political location of many Māori women continues to be dismal.

<sup>10</sup> With the exception of Wikitoria August (2004, 2005) and Jessica Hutchings (2002).

Mana wahine is about making visible Māori women's knowledges and making heard our<sup>11</sup> voices and *berstories*. It has emerged to describe and analyse Māori women's lived realities. Mana wahine is "about intellect. It is also about culture, spirituality, and economic or material forms, the way we define ourselves and the parameters we impose on that definition" (Hutchings 2002, 9). Furthermore, Kathy Irwin (1992a, 7) contends that "Māori women must be provided with the time, space, and resources necessary to develop the skills to undertake this work, starting with the exploration, reclamation and celebration of our *berstories*, our stories as Māori women". A mana wahine geography framework is a useful lens through which to explore the complexities of Māori women's relationships to place. This framework contributes to, and draws together, feminist geographies and Māori and indigenous academic scholarship.

The colonisation of Māori women's knowledges is an important consideration of this thesis. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 173) rightly points out that "research is an important part of the colonization processes because it is concerned with defining legitimate knowledge". Research has been (and still is) a necessary and important part of colonialism. The control over, and definition of, what constitutes legitimate knowledge is integral to establishing hegemony. Colonial, Western and masculine ideologies, practices and values have been established as 'norm', as 'fact', able to be rationalised by science. Māori knowledges, and tikanga, are subsumed, marginalised and banished to the periphery.

While colonisation is the reality for all Māori (in fact for all New Zealanders) it has impacted on men and women differently. The effects of colonisation are gendered (Mikaere 1999, 2003; Pihama 2001; Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Ani Mikaere (1999, 2003) argues that the forces of colonisation resulted in an imbalance of Māori society. Subsequently, Māori women's knowledges have been defined as 'other' and are virtually invisible. The mana wahine of Māori mythology and wairua has been marginalised and pacified by colonial masculinist ideologies. Ignoring Māori women's

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<sup>11</sup> Similar to Pihama (2001) and Hutchings (2002) I use the pronouns 'we' and 'our' at times throughout this thesis. One of the reasons for the use of personal pronouns is to disrupt the notion that researchers must be objective and written out of text. Furthermore, I agree with Pihama (2001, 27) that "my use of the English word 'we' is not to assume a generalised universal position, it will sometimes mean mātou [refers to we not including the person being spoken to] and other times tātou [means we including all present], that is of course dependent on the positioning of the reader".

knowledges in mythology, tikanga and wairua discourses is not a harmless omission rather it contains a political imperative that maintains the hegemony of colonialism and patriarchy.

I argue that to understand further Māori women's relationships to space and place an examination of wairua discourses is necessary. By engaging with the spiritual geographies of Māori women it is possible to displace the dominance of 'rational' 'disembodied' and 'masculinist' geographies. The spiritual realities of Māori women are entangled with our physical realities and provide a unique and dynamic platform through which our experiences of space and place are mediated.

Attempts to examine the spiritual geographies of Māori women raise new tensions and contradictions. I suggest that Māori spirituality is embedded, and enfolded, into the very fabric of colonisation and Christianity and vice versa. The pervasiveness of these latter discourses is evident in Māori women's conceptualisations of Papatūānuku. The crux of this argument is that the binaries between coloniser/colonised, Christianity/Māori spirituality and self/other are not fixed, but that, each is informed by and informs the other. The overall purpose of this thesis, then, is not to seek out a singular 'truth' about Māori spirituality but rather to challenge those 'truths' favoured by the dominant discourse.

Despite the 'othering' of mana wahine knowledges, Papatūānuku and wairua discourses can still be located in the everyday geographies of Māori women. I hope to provide a space where Māori women can define and conceptualise their lived experiences with Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa. One of the purposes of this thesis, then, is simply expressive; to give space and words to relationships and experiences that remain unspoken. By weaving together some of the connections in Māori women's *herstories* the mutually constitutive nature of bodies and spaces becomes evident.

Māori women's maternal bodies are intimately tied to Papatūānuku in ways that challenge the oppositional distinctions between mind/body and biology/social inscription. The colonisation of Māori women's bodies and bodily tikanga has denied many women this relationship. Furthermore, Māori women have had to adopt Western practices and spaces of birth and 'afterbirth'. Despite this, many Māori women are regaining a degree of control over their maternities. By re-positioning

Māori bodily tikanga they are entering into discourses of critique about dominant birthing practices and ideologies. The materiality of maternal bodies can be understood through specific cultural and spiritual contexts as intimately connected to the whenua and to spiritual concepts of tapu and noa. Māori women's maternal bodies, and the representation of them in te reo Māori, are constructed by and in turn construct Papatūānuku. These maternal bodies demand a re-conceptualisation of the binary between biology and social inscription.

I argue that Māori women's spatial relationship to tūrangawaewae, home space and wider environmental concerns provides an important platform from which to examine the co-constitution of subjectivities, bodies and space/place. The spatial imaginary of home is intimately tied to Māori women's understandings and sense of connectedness to Papatūānuku. Environmental responsibilities and practices point to the materiality of Papa's body and the reciprocal relationship of constitution between places and people. These relationships with Papa are by no means straightforward rather there are contradictions and tensions that Māori women must negotiate on a daily basis.

It is important to write about, and make explicit, these contradictions, tensions and inconsistencies, as well as recognise the connections and complicities. In doing so, it is possible to open up a new way to conceptualise Māori women's relationships to space and place. I offer a means to re-theorise Māori women's embodied, discursive, material and symbolic realities, through the use of mana wahine. My hope is that this will add to geographic literature by addressing previously ignored knowledges and that it will contribute to indigenous scholarship by providing a spatial perspective.

### ***Focusing the research***

I first began thinking about this research during work for my undergraduate degree. I immersed myself in feminist literature and became excited by the possibilities feminist theorising offered. Yet, I couldn't help but wonder where do I fit in all this as a Māori woman? Similarly, in some Māori scholarship I could not find space to understand my gendered subjectivity. My tertiary education has equipped me to think critically about those things considered 'authentic', 'natural', 'normal', 'rational' and 'objective'. Such words are invariably used to classify and categorise people (Irwin 1992a, 1992b). I extend this ability to think critically to challenge existing theoretical

frameworks in an attempt to find a transformative space through which I can make sense of my complex subjectivities. As Pihama (2001, 234) argues:

[t]he silencing of Māori women's voices has meant the silencing of our theories, worldviews ... the marginalisation of mana wahine has meant that Māori women are constantly having to try and 'find' ourselves within the texts of the dominant group. We are forever trying to see ourselves in the images created by the colonisers.

I was excited when I began to read about Māori feminisms written during the 1980s and 1990s. As I discuss further in chapter two, Māori feminisms have been important to the development of feminist theory here in New Zealand. In the 1970s struggles such as land rights, the retention of culture and language revitalisation occupied the energies of many Māori women (Larner 1995). Notwithstanding, a handful of Māori women recognised that gender relations needed to be addressed in indigenous communities (Irwin 1992a, 1993; Szasy 1993). Irwin (1993) asserted the need to re-establish the mana of our women to allow us to stand tall beside our men in our whānau again. In the 1980s and 1990s Māori women began to take issue with the monolithic category 'woman'. Traditional gender debates were problematised by highlighting the intersecting oppressions experienced by Māori women. They pointed out that their experiences were not the same as Pākehā women. Linda Alcoff (1996, 26) insists that "feminist theory has committed analogous errors to andocentric theories in insidiously privileging the position and experiences of academic European American women". Non-Western women have been lumped into a homogeneous category. The '80s and '90s were an important time for Māori feminist discourses and more Māori women began to write about and present their experiences.<sup>12</sup>

My excitement was curbed when I discovered that, despite the assertions made by Māori women, nearly three decades ago, there was still little theoretical or empirical material through which I could engage with Māori women's experiences. While grounded in these Māori feminisms from the '80s and '90s mana wahine is a relatively new theoretical concept. The Western academy has been, and continues to be, dominated by white, heterosexual, able bodied men (Bondi 2002). Patricia Johnston and Leonie Pihama (1995) argue that, within the academy, we as Māori

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<sup>12</sup> Also, in 1993 a mana wahine claim was filed with the Waitangi Tribunal. It argued that the Crown had breached its treaty obligations to Māori women by failing to protect their rangatiratanga (Mikaere 2003).



women are constantly trying to find space where we can represent and give voice and legitimacy to our experiences. They make the point that “it is for us, as Māori women, to decide what differences count” (Johnston & Pihama 1995, 36).

My whakapapa is drawn from mixed sources – my father is Māori and my mother Pākehā.<sup>13</sup> My whakapapa links me back to the land; back to Papatūānuku. Being Māori and being a woman are two of the factors that also meant there was no comfortable space for me in the academy. I understand my subjectivity as Māori, as Pākehā, as a woman, to be woven together, inseparable. The amalgam of these subjectivities and others (sexuality, class, spirituality, upbringing) means I occupy complex, multiple and, at times, contradictory positions. I state my whakapapa and positionality explicitly as this thesis is part of a personal journey as well as an academic one.

### ***Research Focus***

In 1995 Wendy Larner wrote an important and thought provoking article concerning feminist theorising in Aotearoa. She asserts that the geographical location that researchers are located, and the inherent politics of that place, is just as important as the theoretical and ideological spaces they come from. In other words ‘place matters’. This thesis emerges from a specific context and in no way claims to be universal. As I will show in chapter two, mana wahine is a place specific theoretical framework that recognises the ideological, political, and cultural specificities of being located in Aotearoa. Larner (1995) argues that local articulations of feminism are good examples of situated knowledges. Mana wahine can contribute to wider indigenous and feminist scholarship by challenging hegemonic colonial masculinist ideologies. While ours is a physically isolated country it is intimately connected to wider theoretical and ideological frameworks (Kearns and Panelli 2007). As Lynda Johnston and Robyn Longhurst (2008, 248) note “these unique localised knowledges are both informed by and contribute to international debates”. Aotearoa is simultaneously local and global.

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<sup>13</sup> The word Pākehā is a highly contested term (Larner 1995). The word is an indigenous New Zealand expression that has become an important marker in feminist politics. New Zealanders vary in their attitude to the use of the term Pākehā. My use of the word in no way seeks to assume universality or generalise about identity. I recognise the fluidity of subjectivities and that these are not fixed or stable.

The continued employment of dualisms offers little to conceptualisations of Māori and Pākehā relations, and gender relations, where there are multiple subject positions, constructs and contrasts (Meredith 1999). Coloniser and colonised cannot be understood as distinct or separate concepts but each relies on the other for its definition (Meredith 1999). Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues that the West has relied on concepts of ‘authenticity’ in order to posit indigenous cultures as stagnant and static, unable to change and recreate themselves and still claim to be indigenous. I argue further that ‘authenticity’ is a concept that has been adopted by the West but also by indigenous communities in attempt to secure the boundaries between self and other.

Mana wahine is not intended to perpetuate the binaries between Māori and Pākehā but to recognise the distinctiveness of Māori women’s everyday geographies. This is not to say that it is derived from an ‘authentic’ sense of what it means to be a Māori woman. Rather, the approach necessarily recognises and provides for the plurality of Māori women’s lived realities.

It is also absolutely vital that the full range of Māori women’s experiences be validated. Colonisation has impacted on individual women in so many ways. The life experiences of a woman who has grown up away from the marae, with neither language nor strong whānau connections are just as much a part of what it now means to be Māori as those of the woman who has grown up in a rural, marae-centred Māori community, is fluent in the language and secure in her iwi identity. All Māori women are involved in the struggle, some consciously, others without even realising it; whether rural or urban, whether fluent or not, whether they choose to bear children or not, whether lesbian or heterosexual, whether proud or ashamed of being Māori. Ultimately, we are all connected by whakapapa, to one another and to our Māoriness. To question the authenticity of one another’s Māori womenness, as though there is a standard definition to which all ‘real Māori women’ must conform, is to deny the complexities of colonisation. It is also highly destructive, introducing divisiveness which Māori women can ill afford (Mikaere 2003, 141-142).

While this thesis takes Māori women’s experiences as its central subject, I do not claim to represent a definitive account of Māori women’s understandings and conceptualisations of Papatūānuku. Nor is it my intention to ‘romanticise’ Māori women’s relationship to Papa.

“The course now charted seems to be one of heterogeneity, in which we attempt to combine the multiple, fragmented, layers of knowledge(s) about the world(s) that we

inhabit” (Birke 2000, 597). I do not seek to promote an essentialist understanding of Māori women’s relationship with Papatūānuku. I want to break down the categories of essentialism and social constructionism by understanding how they inform each other. Johnston and Pihama (1995, 84-85) argue:

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

There is now general acceptance within feminist geography that the subjectivity of an individual is multiple and shifting and that there can be no monolithic category ‘woman’ that can be studied (Ekinsmyth 2002).

In this thesis, I seek to find connections, as well as recognise and provide for the contradictions of Māori women’s relationship to Papa. I hope not only to provide a language of critique about the impact of colonialism from a mana wahine perspective but also to reconfigure Māori women’s knowledges and experiences of Papatūānuku. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 4) argues “the past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices – may all be spaces of marginalisation, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope”.

### ***Chapter outline***

In this introduction I have highlighted the theoretical and empirical need to investigate further intersecting subjectivities, oppressions and spaces of Māori women. I introduced the main strands of this research: to offer mana wahine as another perspective within the discipline of geography; to provide comment on the colonisation of Māori women’s relationship to Papa; and to examine the ways in which Māori women interact with, and relate to, Papatūānuku today. Mana wahine as a place-specific framework enables me to engage with the complex, and sometimes contradictory, experiences of Māori women. I identify the need for this research. In

addition, I have begun to integrate my personal journey into the development of this research. I believe that this research will provide an original contribution both to geographic and wider indigenous academic scholarship.

Chapter two examines the theoretical framework used for this research. I begin to weave together a theoretical kete that is grounded in mana wahine. I review Kaupapa Māori as the overarching theoretical umbrella under which mana wahine is located. Key elements of mana wahine are then discussed. I extend my use of theory and examine elements of feminist geography that can be woven into my theoretical kete in order to further understandings of place and space.

Chapter three focuses on the methodological considerations of this research. I examine the distinguishing features of Kaupapa Māori, mana wahine and feminist methodologies. I describe the ethical concerns and obligations of conducting research within a mana wahine framework. In this chapter I weave together the Kaupapa Māori concept whakawhānaungatanga with qualitative research methods, namely semi-structured in-depth interviews and autobiography. I critically reflect on my position within this research and argue that my embodied subjectivity cannot be extracted from the construction of this thesis.

Chapter four addresses the entanglements of colonialism, spirituality and mythology. I draw on interview material to comment on the colonisation Papatūānuku and argue that wairua discourses are important in examining the geographies of Māori women. The pervasiveness of Christian discourse is evident in participants' articulations of Papa. The colonisation and Christianisation of Māori mythology is then examined. I demonstrate that Māori women's colonised realities mean they occupy hybrid, complex and sometimes contradictory subjectivities, spaces and places.

The aim of chapter five is to reconfigure conceptualisations of Papatūānuku. Drawing on participants' experiences I provide an examination of the multiple and malleable ways that they experience and understand Papa. Moving through a range of geographic scales, from the body, the home through to wider environmental concerns, I explore the constitutive and mutually defining spaces of Papa and participants' embodied subjectivities.

Finally, chapter six weaves together the main strands of this thesis. I revisit the research objectives of this research and highlight the need for further research pertaining to mana wahine and Papatūānuku. I identify important and potentially rich avenues for further research including research on the medicalisation of Māori birthing practices; further consideration of Māori women's maternal bodies; the investigation of Papatūānuku within environmental legislation and decision making authorities; and, the further development of mana wahine as a theoretical, methodological, and political framework.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Weaving a kete of theoretical tools

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*It is important to have a critical understanding of some of the tools of research – not just the obvious technical tools but the conceptual tools, the ones which make us feel uncomfortable, which we avoid, for which we have no easy response (Tuhivai Smith 1999, 40).*

Many of the existing theoretical ‘tools of the trade’ for critical social science provide for diverse and complex understandings of the relationships between people, space and place. Both the conceptual and technical tools of research, referred to in Tuhivai Smith’s quote above, are continually being developed by critical social theorists to enable geographers to understand people, power and place further. Feminism, post-structuralism, queer theory, post-colonialism, and many other critical epistemologies disrupt the hegemony of traditional Western, colonial, masculine and disembodied knowledge. Despite these developments there are very few tools that adequately deal with the intersections of multiple oppressions such as racism, sexism, homophobia and classism (Larner 1995; Pihama 2001). Moreover, the existing theoretical tools (when used in isolation) do not, in my opinion, effectively provide for the lived, embodied and spiritual experiences of Māori women.

My academic journey to date has involved a continual and often frustrating search for the tools that would help me come to terms with my own embodied identity as a Māori woman. This has also been the experience of other Māori women academics (see August 2005; Hutchings 2002; Webber 2008; Pihama 2001; Tuhivai Smith 1999). This has led me to mana wahine, a relatively recent theoretical development where intersecting subjectivities such as being Māori and being female can be examined.<sup>14</sup> I have found a conceptual framework where being Māori, being a woman, and more importantly being a Māori woman is central to understanding place and space. In this chapter, and in accordance with my first research objective, I offer mana wahine as another perspective within geography.

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<sup>14</sup> This journey is by no means over, nor do I think that there is a possibility that there is an achievable destination in sight. The search for and development of meaningful and useful theoretical tools is never ending and is continual.

Despite arriving at this, seemingly comfortable (and definitely longed for), conceptual space (mana wahine), I am not so quick to dismiss other critical theories. To do so would be arrogant and would deny the importance of feminist, post-colonial, post-structural and queer theories in shaping my academic journey so far. It is my goal, in this thesis, to weave a kete of theoretical tools drawing from a number of conceptual frameworks. By engaging with multiple epistemologies I seek to disrupt the notion of a monolithic theory. In doing so, I promote the fluidity of theoretical (and disciplinary) boundaries to enable the complexities of intersecting subjectivities to be fully realised.

Drawing from multiple theories means that I occupy complex and, at times, uncomfortable conceptual spaces which provide me with very few, if any, straight forward responses to challenging theoretical debates.<sup>15</sup> Notwithstanding, mana wahine allows me to follow the tradition of other feminist geographers who are eclectic in their use of theory (see August 2004; Brown 2008; and Gibson-Graham 1996). Furthermore, theoretical approaches drawn from feminist geographies, in particular embodiment and hybridity, add diversity and complexity to my kete. It has become evident, in this research, that participants also negotiate hybrid, diverse and complex lives and spaces. I contend that, all of the theoretical strands woven into this thesis are necessary in order to tease out the complexities and inconsistencies which these women experience on a daily basis.

In what follows, I outline some hegemonies of binary thinking that this thesis attempts to disrupt. Particular attention is paid to power relations between coloniser and colonised including, but not limited, to patriarchal discourses. The marginalisation of Māori women, at a number of levels, is a visible result of dichotomous Western, colonial and patriarchal ideologies. The kete that I weave throughout this chapter is done so in the hope that the politics of knowledge production can be made explicit so that underlying (and intersecting) racist and sexist ideologies are challenged. I take issue with traditional geographical knowledge that excludes particular ways of being and experiences of place and space. Mana wahine knowledges about Papatūānuku are limited; this is not simply a harmless omission

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<sup>15</sup> Such as those discourses surrounding essentialism and social constructionism, biology and inscription. This will be expanded on further in chapters four and 5.

but is a very deliberate result of historical and contemporary processes of colonialism and patriarchy.

Following this, I explore the key strands that make up my theoretical kete. Firstly, Kaupapa Māori theory is introduced and the distinguishing features of this approach described. Perhaps the most important part of Kaupapa Māori is that it provides space to engage with knowledge derived from a blend of spirituality, mythology and lived experiences. Secondly, I review the emergence of Māori feminisms in the 1980s and 1990s moving through to contemporary assertions of mana wahine as a theoretical framework. Drawing mostly on the work of Māori women scholars, I argue that a mana wahine framework has the ability to re-affirm the everyday geographies of Māori women. At this point I review the new and exciting contributions to mana wahine of Māori women scholars, Leonie Pihama and Jessica Hutchings. A précis of the key elements of mana wahine, identified by Pihama and Hutchings, is provided. Thirdly, various elements of feminist geography are summarised. Embodiment and hybridity are two important concepts that are examined and can be woven into this thesis to enhance mana wahine understandings of Papatūānuku. Rather than simply provide a descriptive account of these theoretical perspectives my aim is to weave them together to produce a complex and theoretically significant contribution to both mana wahine and feminist geography.

### ***(De) constructing the ‘Other’***

*Identity must be recognised as fluid and flexible, rather than a matter of binaries as espoused by those who seek to define the world according to narrow Western ways of looking at it, a tension that has been prevalent throughout the history of colonisation and indigenous peoples. Such a framework is based on a mindset that revolves around concepts of so-called normality and of the ‘other’ (Aspin and Hutchings 2007a, 423).*

Dualisms dominate Western discourse. They serve to solidify and secure the boundaries of Western knowledge, hegemonic colonial masculine identities, and embodied and institutional practices. Constructing and securing the boundaries of the self necessarily requires constructing and enforcing the boundaries of an ‘Other’. Colonisers’ identities were/are secured by creating Māori as ‘Other’, as ‘native’, ‘primitive’ and ‘uncivilised’ (Tuhiwai Smith 1992). Cultural politics in Aotearoa is centred on the binary between Māori and Pākehā (Meredith 1999). With this in mind, Māori subjectivities are constructed as ‘different from’ Pākehā. These differences are



often reduced to an oversimplified and essentialist set of characteristics which legitimise a particular kind of Māori subjectivity (Matahaere 1995).<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, men's subjectivities are secured by creating women as 'Other'. Western discourses define 'male' and 'female' sensibilities as oppositional; the former being aligned with rational, scientific and transcendence and the latter confined to the experiential and the imminent (Hutchings 2002). It is evident then that binary thinking is rarely symmetrical (Cloke and Johnston 2005). Elizabeth Grosz (1994, 3) asserts that "dichotomous thinking necessarily hierarchizes and ranks the two polarized terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other its suppressed, subordinated, negative counterpart". Within this framework difference becomes a basis for conflict, discrimination and exploitation.

The power to define, measure and control compartmentalised space is also the power to exclude, marginalise and discriminate. Ultimately, knowledge and power become enfolded into each other (Mutu 1998). There is, of course, the power of resistance. It is necessary to identify the power relations inherent within particular hegemonies in order to resist and challenge them (Pihama 2001). Powerful ideologies such as colonialism and patriarchy are premised on the dualistic thinking described above.

Māori women experience firsthand the effects of the interplay between powerful colonial and patriarchal processes. When intersecting subjectivities are investigated the process of 'othering' takes on another level of complexity. Tuhiwai Smith (1992, 33) argues:

[a]s women, we have been defined in terms of our differences to men. As Māori, we have been defined in terms of our differences to our colonisers. As both, we have been defined by our differences to Māori men, Pākehā men and Pākehā women. The socioeconomic class in which most Māori women are located makes the category of 'Other' an even more complex problematic.

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<sup>16</sup> Matahaere 1995 and others (see Hokowhiti 2008; Meredith 1999; and Webber 2008) note that common Māori realities and representations have been co-opted as 'authentic' or 'traditional' Māori identities. For example, Hokowhiti (2008) discusses Māori masculine identities, such as warrior and sportsman, as being taken as 'true' markers of Māori masculinity rather than as hybridized versions of masculinity resultant from our colonial history.

I agree with Tuhiwai Smith's sentiments and argue further that the spaces and places for Māori women have also been marginalised. The pervasiveness of binaries extends to conceptual and academic spaces.

Theory is not divorced from the power relations ingrained in the duality of Western thought (Pihama 2001). 'Legitimate' knowledge (and those who can possess it) is aligned with rationality, objectivity, culture, mind and masculinity. Women, nature, irrationality, body, and emotions are posited as the 'Other' in this binary (Birke 2000; Little 2007; Longhurst 2001; Young 2005). The boundary between these binaries requires constant securing in order to legitimise particular knowledges (Longhurst 2001, 2005, 2008). Certain groups (colonisers and men) are more likely to have their knowledge affirmed through the use of particular theories than 'others'. Indeed, geography has not been immune to dichotomous thinking and it has been convincingly argued (Clope and Johnston 2005; Longhurst 2001) that the polarities rational/irrational; mind and body; object/subject; and masculinity/femininity remain a persistent and powerful force within the discipline. If Māori women's geographies are to be taken as legitimate in their experience of place and space then theoretical developments that challenge the privileging of one side of a binary over the other is vital. This thesis seeks to engage with multiple theories that have the parallel goals of decoupling the oppositional pairs discussed above.

Many challenges to Cartesian dualisms fall short if the binary is simply reversed. The underlying structure of opposition where each pair is distinct, separate and impermeable remains intact. What is now coming into focus for many scholars (such as August 2004; Hokowhitu 2008; Longhurst 2001, 2005, 2008; Teather 1999; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Webber 2008)<sup>17</sup> is that binaries are not mutually exclusive pairs but are involved in mutually constitutive relationships. For example, Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 14) argues that "'we', indigenous peoples, people 'of colour', the Others, however we are named, have a presence in the Western imagination, in its fibre and texture, in its sense of itself, in its language, in its silences and shadows, its margins and intersections". There is more at stake here. It is worth exploring the Western

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<sup>17</sup> I have only pulled a select few names that are prominent in asserting the mutually constituted nature of binaries. There are many more theorists asserting these claims within the discipline of geography and also within indigenous academic communities.

presence in the Māori imagination, in our sense of ourselves, in our lived and embodied realities. The struggle for decolonisation (in the sense of ‘freeing ourselves’ from the influences of our colonised realities) appears, to me, to be impossible. The interwoven realities of coloniser and colonised mean that endeavours to gain access to ‘truths’ about ‘our’ past will be perpetual (Aspin and Hutchings 2007a). Notwithstanding, it is important to embark on endeavours to rewrite and re-right our histories, as much as possible, in order to decentre the colonial and masculine versions that currently dominate.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps, then, it is more useful to think about decolonisation not as a rejection of all Western theories but rather as a means to centre Māori analyses and experiences. Decolonising projects should provide space to allow for our own explanations of how we were colonised and the continued impacts of this process on Māori subjectivities today. In this sense I strongly argue that we must push forward in decolonising the minds and spaces (including the corporeal and the conceptual) of Aotearoa.<sup>19</sup> Tuhiwai Smith (1992) notes that attempts to escape marginalisation have resulted in either one of two things; the entire assimilation of one’s self into Western ideologies or the entanglement of self in a state of perpetual contradiction. In the next section I move on to discuss the strands that make up my theoretical kete.

### ***Kaupapa Māori – Laying the foundation***

Traditionally, research has misinterpreted and distorted the lives of many indigenous peoples, including Māori (Johnston 1998). One of the key projects of colonisation was to assert colonial ideologies and establish hegemony over Māori. Graham Hingangaroa Smith (2003, 3) asserts that:

[h]egemony is a way of thinking – it occurs when oppressed groups take on dominant group thinking and ideas uncritically and as ‘common-sense’, even though those ideas may in fact be contributing

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<sup>18</sup> Ani Mikaere (2003) and Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) have both dedicated their theses to re-righting cosmological narratives to identify the importance of atua wāhine that have been rendered invisible through the processes of colonisation.

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that there are numerous debates surrounding the use of the word decolonisation, which I do not have space to engage with in this thesis. For example Hingangaroa Smith (2003) promotes the use of the word conscientization over decolonisation, arguing that the latter is reactive and posits the coloniser at the centre.

to forming their own oppression. It is the ultimate way to colonise a people; you have the colonised colonising themselves!

Indigenous theories must critique the current accepted ways of knowing, doing and understanding in the academy (Hingangaroa Smith 2003). Furthermore, the internalisation of those accepted ways within Māori society must also be challenged. Several Māori scholars argue that Kaupapa Māori developed out of political movements and community developments initiated by Māori (Hingangaroa Smith 2003; Pihama 2001). Hingangaroa Smith (2003) notes that these movements were a signal that the mindset of Māori at this time (1980s) had changed; Māori were taking control and doing things for themselves. An important argument within Kaupapa Māori is that, rather than speaking from the ‘margins’, Māori-focused research is located at the ‘centre’. This allows energy to be put into re-privileging the histories and experiences of Māori rather than having to ‘research, write or talk back’ to Western dominance.

Kaupapa Māori is recognised as part of a larger indigenous research agenda. Considered a relatively recent theoretical development, the roots of Kaupapa Māori extend in to a long history and grow from cultural practices that are thousands of years old. This approach takes for granted the legitimacy of tikanga Māori, Māori subjectivities, history and experience. “Kaupapa Māori theory does not take for granted the existence of colonisation, rather it assumes the absolute validity of our world-view and from there locates the acts of colonisation as impositions” (Pihama 2001, 141). In addition, Kaupapa Māori theory is not simply a theoretical approach but is very much tied up with the practice of conducting research, which I examine in the following chapter.

Given the diversity of Māori lived realities there are many ways that the theory is articulated. It has the potential to be a versatile approach (Johnston 1998) that provides for multiple conceptualisations of the relationship between Māori and space and place. Kaupapa Māori should not attempt to be deterministic or exclusive; there exists no single form of Kaupapa Māori theorising (Takino 1998). Key proponents of Kaupapa Māori argue that the theory needs to be fluid and fully reflexive to achieve its goal of being transformative (Cram 2001; Hingangaroa Smith 2003; Lee 2005; Pihama 2001; Tuhiwai Smith 1998, 1999).

The colonial reality of Aotearoa has meant that tikanga Māori has been subverted, tainted and reinvented. Moreover, our colonised geographies make it difficult (if not impossible) to separate out coloniser from colonised and vice versa. It is of central importance, therefore, that articulations of Kaupapa Māori do not simply re-inscribe (or reverse) the binaries between self and other, coloniser and colonised. Cram (2001) argues that Kaupapa Māori does not involve the simple reversal of the binary coloniser/colonised. Rather, it is concerned with unpacking Western ideology and arguing that there are multiple frameworks and ideologies. If Kaupapa Māori is to achieve the goal of transformation then the underlying oppositional structures of all hegemonies need to be contested. The theoretical underpinning of Kaupapa Māori provides for this. As Pihama (2001, 96) so rightly states:

Kaupapa Māori theory ... is not dualistic or constructed within simplistic binaries. It is not about asserting the superiority of one set of knowledge over another or one worldview over another. It is not about denying the rights of any peoples to their philosophical traditions, culture or language. It is an assertion of the right for Māori to be Māori on our own terms and to draw from our own base to provide understandings and explanations of the world.

By adopting a Kaupapa Māori approach the research process is transformed. Those who take part, both the researcher and participants, participate on different terms and approach the research process from a Māori centred framework.

Although Kaupapa Māori as a theoretical approach has developed over the last 10-15 years, the importance of indigenous and local approaches to research and academic enquiry has been previously recognised within geography. Dame Evelyn Stokes was truly a pioneer in geography at Waikato University and across the discipline as a whole. In 1987 she wrote a landmark paper called "*Māori Geography or Geography of Māoris*". In this paper she promotes the need for a local and place specific approach to research concerning Māori. It is this piece of work that enabled Māori geography to emerge which, in my opinion, can now fall under the umbrella of Kaupapa Māori. It is my hope that this thesis will continue the work of a pioneer of New Zealand geography by contributing to the discipline of Māori geography. Dame Evelyn Stokes was visionary in her approach to Māori geography. She defines Māori geography as:

another way of viewing the world, another dimension, and another perspective on New Zealand geography ... Māori geography is not something that is learned only from the written word. It is also something that is felt from the heart of the tangata whenua, the people of the land, the taha wairua of Māori places (Stokes 1987, 121).

Traditionally, research has marginalised Māori knowledge resulting in a disconnection between our oral traditions and our lived realities (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). One of the most important features of Kaupapa Māori, for this research, is the space to legitimise spirituality, mythology, oral traditions, tikanga and lived experiences in shaping Māori women's understandings and relationships to space and place. I contest the notion that legitimate knowledge can only be derived from 'rational' sources. The so called 'irrational' (spiritual, mythological, tikanga, embodied) experiences of everyday geographies are important and necessary to further understandings of space and place (see Aspin and Hutchings 2007a for further discussions).

It has been convincingly argued that power is imbued in the politics of knowledge production (Longhurst 2001; 2005; 2008; Mutu 1998; Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Following this argument Johnston (1998, 353) asserts that indigenous knowledges are often taken as stories "mere divisions along the pathways to real worlds". Kaupapa Māori is concerned with the relationships, the negotiations and the contestations related to material and symbolic spaces in Aotearoa. It is from here that I argue for the validity of Māori women's material and symbolic experiences of Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa.

Kaupapa Māori, therefore, provides a space for Māori geographies to be located and Western colonial and masculine hegemonies to be challenged. Pihama (2001, 300) notes that "one of the areas that Kaupapa Māori theory requires expansion is in its engagement of issues of gender and the intersection of race, class and gender". The intersections of race, gender, sexuality and class need to be further investigated if we are to make sense of the complexities of our lived and embodied subjectivities as Māori and as women.

## ***Mana Wahine – Past and present***

*“If you’re a Māori woman and that’s all you are, that alone will put you on a collision course with the rest of society and its expectations” (Mita 1993a, 278).*

During the political movements<sup>20</sup> of the late 1970s and 1980s Māori women such as Kathy Irwin, Donna Awatere, Mira Szasy, Ngahua Te Awekotuku, Rangimarie Rose Pere, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, to name a few, began to expose gender inequalities. At this time, these women began to discuss the interconnectedness of racist and sexist oppressions. They also identified an urgent need for gender relations to be addressed in indigenous communities (Szasy 1993). For many Māori, and other minority groups, the ‘race’ issue took priority. Therefore, to be involved in feminist activities was often considered anti-Māori, or more specifically anti-Māori men (Irwin 1992a, 1993; Jenkins 1992). It is argued that mana tāne has been supported and protected by dominant society but mana wahine has been attacked and rendered invisible (Irwin 1992a). Irwin (1992a) goes on to argue that, in order to fully achieve the goals of self determination, the mana of Māori women needs to be re-established so that we can stand alongside our men. The sexism of society, including that of Māori society, needs to be contested.

Following the lead of other indigenous women and women of colour (see bell hooks 1982, 1995, 1997, 2000 and Angela Davis 1982, 1990) a handful of Māori women were criticising ‘Western’ feminism as exclusive of women of colour. Dissatisfied with ‘Western’ feminism, writers such as those mentioned above promoted the need for Māori feminism. In reference to Western feminism, Leah Whiu (1994, 164) makes the important point that “it seems to me that my struggle necessarily takes account of your struggle. I can’t ignore patriarchy in my struggle. Yet you can and do ignore the ‘colour’ of patriarchy, the cultural specificity of patriarchy. And in doing so you ignore me”. The supposedly racially homogenous women’s rights movement was questioned and challenges to the ‘sisterhood’ of ‘Western’ feminism were made. bell hooks is recognised as one of the forerunners of ‘black feminism’. She makes the point that “utopian visions of sisterhood based solely on the awareness of the reality

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<sup>20</sup> This was a time when many Māori were bringing to light land issues and the survival of Māori language and culture. Protests such as the 1975 land march led by Dame Whina Cooper and the 1978 occupation of Bastion Point by Ngati Whatua, and the raglan golf course protest headed by Eva Rickard (to name a few) were important in asserting the rangatiratanga of Māori. Political groups such as Ngā Tamatoa were also being formed at this time.

that all women were in some way victimized by male domination were disrupted by discussions of class and race” (hooks 2000, 3).

Māori feminism sought to make space for Māori women’s experiences in order to re-privilege Māori women’s voices, stories and creations (for more on the origins of Māori feminism see Evans 1994a, 1994b; Irwin 1992a, 1993, 1995; Jenkins 1992; Johnston 1998; Nepe 1992; and Te Awekotuku 1991a, 1992a, 1992b). The revolutionary Māori women who wrote in the ’80s and ’90s about the need to re-privilege Māori women’s *herstories* and experiences provide inspiration for this thesis. I see the challenges for Māori women as twofold: firstly to develop the theoretical tools to be able to articulate our own experiences of place (Irwin 1992a), secondly, we must reconstruct and challenge existing knowledges about our place in the world which are ideological or false (Tuhivai Smith 1999).

Despite the assertions of Māori feminism nearly three decades ago there are few theorists, and as a result theories, that are able to grapple with the intersections of gender, race, sexuality and class (Pihama 2001). In 1995 geographer Wendy Larner recognised the importance of Māori feminisms as a challenge to Pākehā feminisms. In addition, she asserted that academic enquiry into Māori women’s geographies by Māori women is necessary. Yet, there has been very little geographic work in the last decade dedicated to *mana wahine* (with the exception of August 2004, 2005). In this thesis I am therefore devoted to contributing towards filling this unacceptable gap.

Despite the huge gaps in theorising about Māori women’s experiences the most recent development of *mana wahine* as a theoretical and methodological approach offers some hope. As I have shown, *mana wahine* is not a new phenomenon; it has just not been talked about (Te Awekotuku 1991a). *Mana wahine* falls under the broad umbrella of *Kaupapa Māori* and is consistent in its goals of privileging Māori voices, experiences and histories. Huia Jahnke (1998) asserts that the power to challenge, change and transform alienating spaces is vital to this theory. “*Mana wahine* ... challenges the hegemonic colonial masculinist ideologies and makes visible issues and analysis pertinent to Māori women” (Hutchings 2002, 11). *Mana wahine* discourse(s) is inclusive in its approach and it provides for differing experiences based on gender, sexuality, urban or rural realities and differing *iwi*, *hapū* and *whānau* realities (Hutchings 2002). This thesis builds upon the work of a handful of Māori



women scholars that have started to engage with mana wahine epistemologies. I attempt to rupture the hegemony of those actions, knowledges and practices that seek to marginalise and oppress Māori women.

Leonie Pihama (2001) and Jessica Hutchings (2002) have dedicated their PhD theses to the development of mana wahine theory. In her thesis, Pihama engages with the colonial processes that have resulted in the marginalisation of Māori women. She asserts that the colonial impositions of race, gender and class ideologies posit Māori women in an inferior position, not only to non-Māori but also in relation to Māori men. Pihama uses historical documentation to demonstrate the way that colonial and patriarchal ideas that marginalised and ignored the role of Māori women. Moreover, she acknowledges that one of the key features of mana wahine epistemology is to make sense of the ongoing contradictions that Māori women face in their everyday geographies. Her thesis argues for mana wahine as a transformative theoretical perspective in its own right. Pihama's conceptualisation of mana wahine as an epistemology provides an important inroad into understanding relationships between Māori women and space and place. In turn, mana wahine (coupled with feminist geographies) provides me with the space to examine the complex, hybrid and in-between localities occupied by the Māori women in this research and their relationships with Papatūānuku.

Hutchings (2002) engages with the groundbreaking work that Pihama began and develops mana wahine further. Her mana wahine framework is used to contest the hegemony of science, more specifically the imposition of genetic engineering technologies in Aotearoa. Hutchings develops mana wahine as a conceptual framework visually represented in Figure 1.

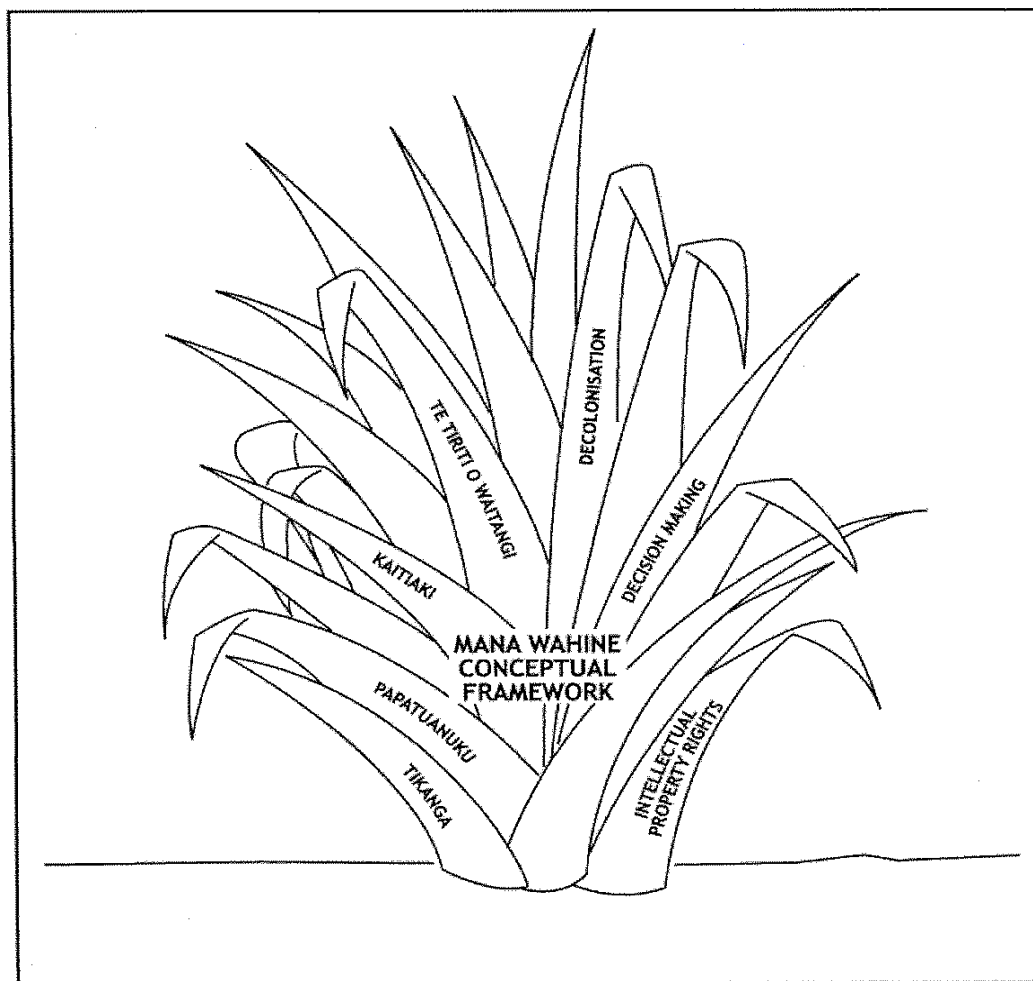


Figure 1: Mana wahine conceptual framework<sup>21</sup>

Here mana wahine is conceptualised as a harakeke plant with the leaves being critical focus areas. These areas align with, and develop further, some of the key themes identified by Pihama. The roots of the plant are Māori women, whānau, and tikanga Māori. An important point to note is that the harakeke is grounded in Papatūānuku, and interacts with Te Taiao, making this framework all the more pertinent to this thesis. One of the strengths of this framework is that it provides for additions to the critical focus areas. Thus, Hutchings' work is particularly relevant for my research.

Without being deterministic or exclusive both Hutchings and Pihama identify key elements that they consider important to a mana wahine approach. These approaches are: decolonisation; Te Tiriti o Waitangi; whakapapa; whānau; te reo Māori me ona

<sup>21</sup> Reproduced with permission (Hutchings 2002, 151).

tikanga and wairua.<sup>22</sup> While all of these elements inform this thesis, to some degree or another, it is the last theme wairua that I want to pick up on here because it is most pertinent to the aims of my research.

Previous research on Māori spirituality has been biased (Yates-Smith 1998). Early discussions of Māori spirituality were undertaken, more often than not, by white middle-class men. These men had their own cultural understandings of spirituality and ideologies regarding gender, race and class. The negative effects for Māori women of these accounts of Māori spirituality are explored further in this thesis. Mikaere (2003) and Yates-Smith (1998) convincingly argue that Māori spirituality, specifically Māori cosmogony has been colonised. The results for Māori women have been a marginalisation of atua wāhine and the denial of wairua discourse as a legitimate avenue for understanding relationships to space and place.

Wairua discourse is an important element of mana wahine and it recognises that for many Māori women (and Māori men) their lived realities are linked to spiritual geographies (Hutchings 2002; Pihama 2001). Western feminism has been slow to take up spirituality discourses and often spirituality is relegated to the realm of religion (Pihama 2001). Mana wahine provides the space to legitimise spiritual (as well as material, emotional and cultural) understandings of Māori women's relationships to Papatūānuku.

Perhaps the reluctance of academics to undertake research pertaining to the spiritual is due to caution. Ngahua Te Awekotuku (1990, 1991a) notes that taha wairua permeates our worldview profoundly. She issues a word of caution that to isolate and analyse aspects of wairua could threaten its very fabric. With this in mind, I tread carefully. I do, however, assert the importance of legitimising wairua as a platform through which many Māori women experience and make sense of their lived, embodied and symbolic realities. Therefore, wairua discourses are relevant to the understandings of participants' relationships to Papatūānuku. Mana wahine provides a culturally appropriate and hopefully safe space to examine wairua discourses.

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<sup>22</sup> This thesis does not allow me the space to be exhaustive in my description and analysis of these themes; in addition this has been done elsewhere. For more refer to Leonie Pihama (2001) and Jessica Hutchings (2002) theses as they devote the bulk of a chapter, if not their theses, to these themes.

To sum up this section, mana wahine is a fluid framework through which Māori women's knowledge can be examined in two ways. The first is concerned with re-privileging Māori women's lived and embodied experiences of space and place. The second is to contest the dominance of Western colonial patriarchy (in fact all systems of patriarchy) that have for so long defined and shaped our everyday realities. It is my hope that using this theoretical approach, coupled with other critical theories that this thesis works in some small way towards these two goals.

### ***Hoa mahi - Working friends***

Up to this point in the chapter I have laid the foundations of my theoretical kete. Kaupapa Māori and mana wahine form the basis of my theoretical framework. The distinguishing feature of these two approaches is that they have been developed by Māori from a point of reference embedded in tikanga Māori. They provide the space for Māori to conceptualise our own lived realities. There are other theories that are also useful. Elements of feminist geography may be utilised, as what Taina Pohatu (1996) calls 'hoa mahi' (a friend that works alongside).<sup>23</sup> Matahaere (1995, 19) argues further that "simply refusing to pick up 'western' defined tools of critical analyses will not serve as insulation against neo-colonialism; instead it secures us in a position of vulnerability unable to influence the particular forms of discourse that are being privileged". Weaving elements of feminist geography are useful and congruent with emancipatory and transformative goals of mana wahine.

It is not my intention here to outline the historical development of feminist geography as this has been done elsewhere (see England 2006; Johnston and Longhurst 2005; McDowell 1997a; Moss 2002; Nelson and Seager 2005). Rather, I discuss those elements of feminist geography that can add to my theoretical kete, namely embodiment and hybridity. McDowell (1997a, 382) provides a good précis of feminist geography:

[d]oing feminist geography means looking at the actions and meanings of gendered people, at their histories, personalities and biographies, at the meaning of places to them, at the different ways in which spaces are gendered and how this affects people's understandings of themselves as women or men.

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<sup>23</sup> This is developed further by Leonie Pihama (2001).

Over time, feminist geography has shifted and developed and will continue to do so. Today, feminist geography can be understood as a space within which identity politics, the politics of difference, knowledge construction, power relations and contemporary constructions of gender can be explored (England 2006). Important to feminist geography is that “asking *where* is not a secondary question, an afterthought, but instead represents a crucial entree into understanding the world in which we live, particularly a world marked by difference including but not limited to gender” (Nelson and Seager 2005, 7, emphasis in the original). Far from ‘corrective feminist research’ (Gibson-Graham 1994) feminist geography today is premised on exposing the power relations of hegemonic discourses. In addition, the recognition and celebration of difference is now integral to feminist geographer’s understandings of place, space and embodiment. Feminist geographers have led critiques and challenges to dualistic thinking (Cloke and Johnston 2005), which makes it particularly useful to this research.

### **Embodied geographies**

It is widely accepted that the body has become an important focus for feminist geographers over the last two decades (see Ekinsmyth 2002; Grosz 1994; Longhurst 2001, 2005, 2008; Nelson and Seager 2005). Robyn Longhurst has written extensively on the body (2001, 2005, 2008). She argues that bodies have been constructed as ‘other’ within geography and that the dualism between body and mind permeates the discipline. Grosz (1994) argues that there is a gulf that has been established between the mind and the body. Bringing the corporeal into academic focus promotes a messing up of the boundaries between dualistic concepts. Furthermore, Longhurst (2001, 2005, 2008) along with others (Ekinsmyth 2002; Grosz 1994; Moss 2005; Teather 1999) argues that by examining our embodied geographies we can challenge the hegemony of rational, objective and masculine knowledges.

Bodies occupy space but they are also conceptualised as spaces in their own right (Teather 1999) and it is generally recognised that we speak from embodied positions. Furthermore, the mind and body are intricately folded into one another rather than being distinct and separate. Each cannot exist without the other. Bodies then disrupt the separation of binaries as they exist in multiple and sometimes simultaneous

localities (Grosz 1994). This is reflected by Longhurst (2005) in her description of bodies.

Bodies are conundrums, paradoxes, riddles that are impossible to solve. They are deeply embedded in psychoanalytic, symbolic and social processes yet at the same time they are undoubtedly biological, material and “real”. Bodies are an effect of discourse but they are also foundational. They are referential and material, natural and cultural, universal and unique. Everyone has a body (indeed, *is* a body) but bodies are differentiated through age, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, size, health and so on. Bodies exist *in* place; at the same time they *are* places (Longhurst 2005, 337 emphasizes in the original).

In this description, bodies are discursively produced but are also material and real. By considering the corporeal in geography another debate becomes apparent and that is the binary of social construction and essentialism. This is a debate that is difficult to grapple with. The body is a site where the binary between constructionism and essentialism can and must be disrupted.

Many geographers have engaged with the body at the level where bodies are seen as socially and culturally produced and understood: an important concept. Yet, there has been a tendency, in some of the work on embodiment, to promote the socially constructed nature of the body over its materiality (Birke 2000; Little 2007; Longhurst 2001, 2005, 2008). In leaving behind the material body, scholars may reassert a social constructionist/ essentialist binary. Perhaps there is fear of being labelled ‘essentialist’. In the past this label has been used to discriminate against particular bodies (for example black, women, disabled or homosexual bodies). An important point to consider is that by solely focusing on the social constructed nature of bodies the binary between the biological and the social is reinforced (Moss 2005). With this in mind, recent work by Longhurst (2001, 2005, 2008) on bodies (in particular maternal bodies) provides an exciting contribution to feminist geography. She argues that the binary between the social and the biological is disrupted when discussing maternal bodies. Longhurst (2008) notes pregnant bodies can only be understood and experienced within the context which they are located, yet, there is no denying the materiality of these bodies.

Embodiment is important to this research. Māori women’s embodied experiences are inextricably woven with the body and the spaces of Papatūānuku. Understandings of

our own bodies are informed simultaneously by the material, symbolic, and spiritual. Feminist geographers have picked up on the importance of the body and there is a wide range of research on various bodies (see August 2004 on Māori women's bodies; Johnston 1996 on female bodybuilders and 2005a on tanned bodies; Longhurst 2005; 2008 on maternal bodies; Morrison 2007 on clothed bodies). The body is an important site through which place is experienced and constructed and vice versa.

As noted above, Cartesian dualisms establish a gap between mind and body privileging the former. Black bodies, disabled bodies, and sexed and gendered bodies are constructed as 'other' to the body which is assumed 'normal'; that is a white, heterosexual, able-bodied male body (Duncan 1996). Women's bodies disrupt the securing of bodily boundaries. Grosz (1994) notes women's bodies are conceptualised as incapable and prone to unpredictabilities. Longhurst (2001; 2005; 2008) expresses similar sentiment with a particular focus on maternal bodies. She argues that these bodies and research on them "threaten to spill, soil and mess up, clean, hard and masculinist geography" (Longhurst 2001, 25). This is exactly what I intend to do in this thesis through looking at Māori women's bodies in their relationships to the spaces of Papatūānuku.

### **Hybridity**

As I have demonstrated throughout this chapter, boundaries (theoretical, disciplinary, binary and bodily) are fluid, flexible and open to constant negotiation. Kaupapa Māori, mana wahine and feminist geographies share a common goal in that they all seek to disrupt the hegemonic understandings of self and other as distinct and impermeable entities. They all challenge further enforcement of oppositional ideologies. I have alluded to the contradictions, tensions and inconsistencies that Māori women face on a daily basis. Indeed participants in this research have reflected on these. But how do we make sense of these tensions?

Post colonialism is a hotly contested term, particularly within indigenous communities (Hutchings 2001; Pihama 2002; Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Debates are continuous about the use of the term 'post' as it eludes to the idea that colonisation has ended, when it is undeniable that the effects of colonisation are ongoing. Another contentious issue is the prevalence of colonisation as a defining factor in the

subjectivities of those in a so called postcolonial period. I do not have the space to enter fully into these debates in this thesis. What I will say is that I agree with Paul Meredith (1999, 14 emphasis in the original) in his assertion (used for the purpose of his (and my) work) “*postcolonial* does not mean that ‘they’ have gone home. Instead, ‘they’ are here to stay, indeed some of ‘us’ are them, and therefore the consequential imperative of *relationship negotiation*”. Used in this way then, postcolonial notions of hybridity and relationship negotiation are useful to my research.<sup>24</sup>

Many Māori women (in fact I would argue many New Zealanders) occupy spaces of in-betweenness. I think the notion of cultural hybridity is useful in understanding the embodied space of liminality that many Māori women occupy. Meredith (1999) and Melinda Webber (2008) both discuss the notion of hybridity in a New Zealand context. They draw from Homi Bhabha’s (1994) work on hybridity and third space<sup>25</sup>. In *The location of culture* (1994) Bhabha notes that there has been a shift from thinking of singular subjectivities such as gender or race and that there is a need to think beyond isolated subjectivities. He argues that the focus should be on “those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences” (Bhabha 1994, 1). In doing so, in-between spaces are occupied providing potential for new and exciting understandings of space and place. It is this idea of in-betweenness and hybridity that, has been taken up by many feminist geographers, and is useful to furthering understandings of Māori women’s relationships to Papatūānuku.

Questions about ‘authentic’ or ‘pure’ identities are raised by both indigenous theorists and feminist geographers alike (Gibson-Graham 1994; England 2006; Matahaere 1995; Meredith 1999; Webber 2008). Meredith (1999, 13) points out that “new hybrid identities or subject-positions emerges from the interweaving of elements of the coloniser and colonised challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity”. Furthermore, Meredith (1999) makes the important point that there are multiple and diverse realities in Aotearoa that are influenced by

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<sup>24</sup> I am not the first feminist geographer to engage with notions of hybridity and in-betweenness. See August 2005 and Brown 2008 for more.

<sup>25</sup> I do not engage with the idea of third space in this thesis, rather I take the position that Māori women must negotiate within and between spaces and subjectivities.



numerous, overlapping and entangled considerations including race, gender, class, political and sexual orientation. Hybridity enables us to negotiate through and between these subjectivities. In taking up a hybrid understanding of Māori women's geographies I hope to avoid the perpetuation of those antagonistic binaries that have shaped our realities for so long.

### ***Conclusions***

I began this chapter by outlining the dominance of colonial masculine dualistic ideologies and the impact of this ideology on Māori women. What is evident is that the spaces that Māori women occupy material, symbolic and conceptual have been rendered invisible and marginalised by the pervasiveness of Western discourses.

In order to challenge the powerful ideologies of colonialism and patriarchy I engage with a number of theoretical tools. Kaupapa Māori and mana wahine are two epistemologies that enable me to position Māori understandings of place and space at the centre rather than the periphery. Important contributions have been made by Māori scholars who promote the development of theoretical tools to aid in the decolonisation of the spaces (physical and conceptual) of Aotearoa. One of the most exciting possibilities of these theories is that we can draw from a blend of lived experiences, mythologies, and spirituality in order to further understandings of Māori women's relationships to Papatūānuku.

Hoa mahi are working friends which I have woven into this chapter to add diversity and complexity to my theoretical kete. Drawing connections and recognising contradictions between and across other critical theories can strengthen my theoretical framework. Elements of feminist geography, specifically embodiment and postcolonial notions of hybridity, provide an important platform from which to contest the dominance of binaries.

The aim of this chapter has been to weave together a theoretical kete from which I could draw multiple tools to further theoretical understandings of Māori women's relationships to space and place. I argue that each conceptual strand woven into my kete is important for this research. Weaving this kete has not been an easy task. The complimentary and coinciding goals of each epistemology allow me to be eclectic in my use of theory. This eclecticism filters through from my theoretical framework to the methods used to carry out this research, as I discuss in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology: research design and reflection

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The overall purpose of my research design, and this thesis, is to challenge the pervasiveness of colonial hegemonic masculine research practices, ideologies and methodologies. McDowell (1997a, 390) so rightly states that:

[n]ot only ... are the dominant theoretical paradigms and methodological assumptions of a great deal of geographic scholarship based on masculine experiences, on the disembodied, non-gendered 'public' life of an independent individual, who is in reality a man, but many of the social practices of fieldwork are also masculinist, as, of course, are the societies or circumstances that are the subjects of investigation.

Theory and practice are not secure entities with impermeable boundaries. Each informs and is informed by the other. Each has inextricable connections with the other (Moss 2002; Pihama 2001). How we ask questions, how those questions are framed and how we elicit answers to those questions are bound to our view of the world (McDowell 1997a). Consequently, the mana wahine epistemologies of this thesis inform the research design and methodologies that I detail in this chapter. Furthermore, the theoretical considerations of this thesis mean that my choice of methods continues with the primary goal to contest colonial and patriarchal hegemonies, particularly in relation to the production, collection and analysis of knowledge.

Winchester (2005, 3) acknowledges that "the research questions of today's human geographers require a multiplicity of conceptual approaches and methods of enquiry". I agree, and argue that this is particularly true for mana wahine research. Combining mana wahine, Kaupapa Māori and feminist geography provides a unique and dynamic platform from which to disrupt the privileging of supposedly rational, objective and scientific research. Therefore, I continue my eclecticism in my choice of methodologies. In doing so, it is possible to tease out some of the multiplicities, complexities and contradictions of Māori women's relationships to Papatūānuku.

In what follows, I review the key elements of Kaupapa Māori (and subsequently mana wahine) methodologies. Importantly, this approach provides the tools which enabled me to gather and analyse information in a culturally appropriate and safe manner. The underlying ethical principals informed by Kaupapa Māori are then discussed. My methodological approach in this thesis is distinct from other feminist geographers in that it weaves together qualitative research methods and Kaupapa Māori/mana wahine principles.<sup>26</sup> I discuss the use of qualitative research methods, namely semi-structured interviews and autobiographical methods. This approach enables participants a space to engage with their relationships to Papatūānuku. Following this, I examine how my physical, social, cultural and spiritual subjectivities affect the research interactions. Drawing on the work of both feminist geographers and mana wahine scholars (Dowling 2005; England 2006; Hutchings 2002; Johnston 1998; Moss 2001; McDowell 1997a, 1997b; Mutu 1998; Pihama 2001; Tuhiwai Smith 1998, 1999) I continue the argument that research should not appear to be neutral. Therefore, my positionality is explicitly stated.

### ***Kaupapa Māori/mana wahine methodology***

“Every day, every year, some aspect of the Māori world is being researched” (Te Awēkotuku 1991b, 13). Power is implied with the attainment and possession of knowledge. Therefore, it is vital that any research concerning Māori is culturally safe and relevant (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Pihama (2001) argues that Māori have not had the luxury of theorising for the sake of it and our research is informed by the political and social realities within which our practice is located. Mana wahine research is concerned with rangatiratanga over our knowledges and lived realities. Theorising in the words of the coloniser may be relatively new for Kaupapa Māori, yet the tools for searching for and accessing knowledge are founded in tikanga Māori that are hundreds of years old (Te Awēkotuku 1991b; Tuhiwai Smith 1999). In other words, research is not a new initiative for Māori. Kaupapa Māori and mana wahine are contemporary theoretical and methodological spaces, whereby, the silencing of Māori voices and experiences, specifically Māori women’s, can be addressed and the dominance of Western masculine scientific knowledge can be unpacked.

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<sup>26</sup> August (2004; 2005) and Brown (2008) have done this also.

As a methodology Kaupapa Māori/mana wahine allows Māori to recognise our different epistemological and metaphysical foundations (Cram 2001). In her seminal book *Decolonising Methodologies*, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) outlines an indigenous research agenda with the primary goal being self determination. She argues that decolonisation, healing, transformation and mobilisation are processes which can be incorporated into research practices and methodologies. Hutchings (2002) has incorporated gender issues into this research agenda (as shown in figure 2) thus making it more pertinent to a mana wahine framework.

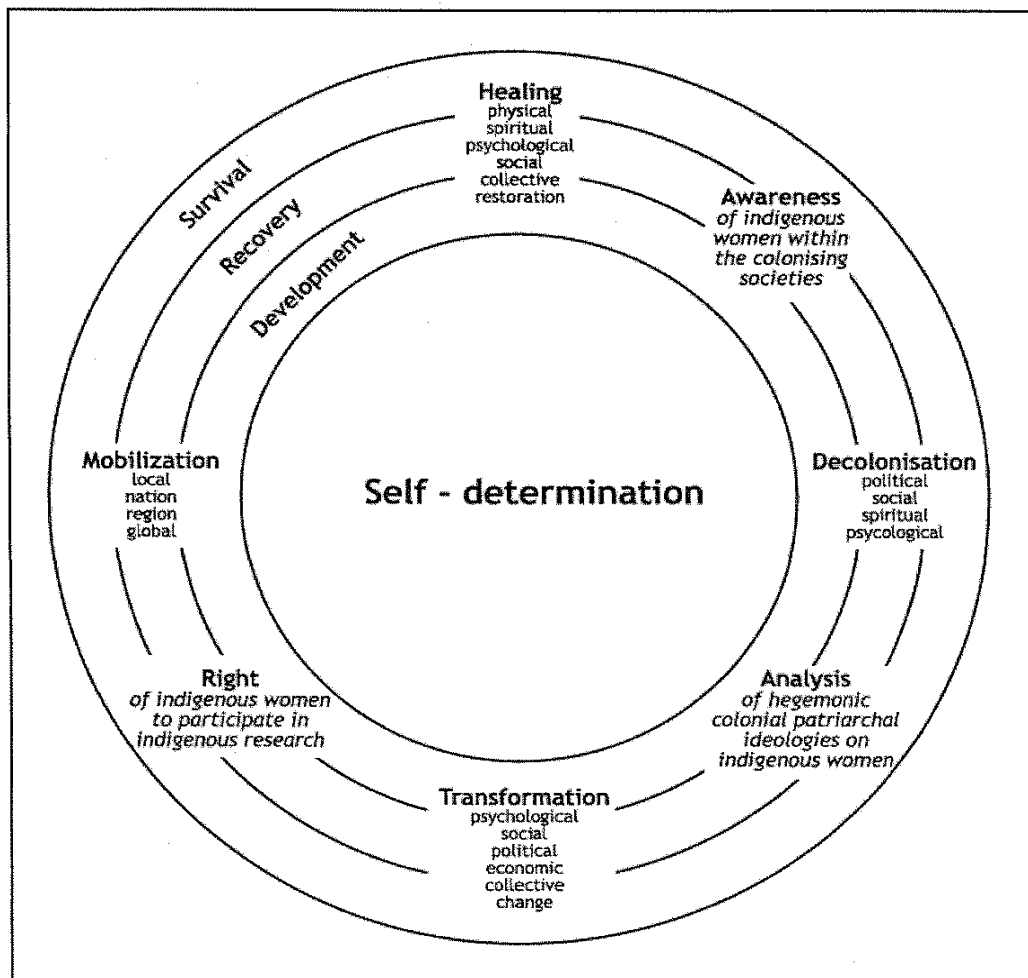


Figure 2: Indigenous women's research agenda.<sup>27</sup>

In this research agenda, Hutchings (2002) promotes awareness and recognition of indigenous women's rights. In addition, she argues that an analysis of the impact of colonial hegemonic masculinities on indigenous women is important to any mana

<sup>27</sup> Reproduced with permission from Hutchings 2003, 63.

wahine methodology, because of the way these ideologies silence indigenous women's voices. This indigenous women's research agenda informs my research design, and this entire thesis.

The basis of my methodological approach to this research is embedded in mana wahine. Mana wahine, coupled with qualitative methods, helps to validate and legitimate the experiences and understandings that participants have of Papatūānuku. As Jahnke (1998, 121) argues "mana wahine Māori is essentially about the power of Māori women to resist, challenge, change or transform alienating spaces within systems of domination". This includes the spaces of research. Central to Kaupapa Māori and mana wahine epistemologies is the ability to regain control of our knowledges (Cram 2001; Hutchings 2002; Pihama 2001). Consequently, it is vital that, as a mana wahine researcher, I do not perpetuate the colonial tradition of misrepresentation and exploitation which continues to reinforce asymmetrical power relations.

### ***Ethical concerns***

Power is imbued in the research process and at times research can be an ambivalent space:

holding the potential for misrepresentation and the inappropriate performance of colonizing power relations, while at the same time presenting the possibility of meeting and opening a true dialogue with those so often marginalized and silenced by dominant discourses and representations (Sharp 2005, 306).

It is my goal to represent participants' voices and make their understandings of Papatūānuku visible. In order to do this, I use a set of seven ethical guidelines for Māori research developed by Fiona Cram (2001), shown in table 1. This is by no means a definitive or fixed set of principles. These principles are over and above the standard concerns of University ethical committees and are woven into the ethical fabric of this research.

**Table 1: Suggested guidelines for undertaking Māori research<sup>28</sup>**

<b>Guideline</b>	<b>Description</b>
A respect for all people	Allowing people to define their own space and to meet their own terms.
He kanoahi kitea	The importance of meeting with people face to face.
Titiro, whakaronga...korero	The importance of looking and listening so that one develops understandings and finds a place from which to speak.
Manaaki ki te tangata	Collaborative approach to research, research training and reciprocity.
Kia tupato	Politically astute, culturally safe and reflective about our insider/outsider status.
Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata	Not trampling on the mana of the people. It is about sounding out ideas with people, about disseminating research findings, about community feedback that keeps people informed about the research process and the findings.
Kaua e mahaki	Not flaunting your knowledge and it is about sharing knowledge and using our qualifications to benefit our community.

Durie (1998, 257) argues that “if effective ethical guidelines for research conducted within Māori contexts are to be realised; Māori concepts of ethicality must be taken into account, a stronger obligation than social or cultural sensitivity”. It is widely acknowledged in Kaupapa Māori literature that Māori researchers have obligations which supersede that of non-Māori and that, as Māori researchers, we need to meet these obligations as well as fulfill the requirements of a University thesis (Cram 2001; Durie 1998; Hutchings 2002; Pihama 2001; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Yates-Smith 1998).

Conducting research that is culturally appropriate has gained significant attention within Kaupapa Māori scholarship. Thus, prompting several discussions about how to approach research so as to maintain the cultural integrity of the researcher and the participants (see Cram 2001; Durie 1998; Bishop 1998; Pihama 2001; Tuhiwai Smith

<sup>28</sup> Table 1 has been taken from Hutchings (2002, 71) and summarises the ethical principles developed by Cram (2001). Reproduced with permission.

1998; 1999). Whakapapa and whakawhānaungatanga are two specifically Kaupapa Māori concepts that are useful for maintaining ethical research practices (and that are useful in negotiating the complexities of this research). Woven together with qualitative methods, they provide me with a distinctive methodology.

### ***Weaving qualitative and Kaupapa Māori methods***

Qualitative methods coupled with the Kaupapa Māori concept of whakawhānaungatanga provide the focus for this section. Whakawhānaungatanga is a key research strategy in Kaupapa Māori (Bishop 1998). Bishop describes whakawhānaungatanga as establishing and recognizing the interconnectedness of people. According to him the importance of whakawhānaungatanga is threefold. Firstly, it is about establishing and maintaining relationships. Secondly, it is about establishing these relationships in a context that addresses power relations. Finally, it is ensuring that participatory research practices are engaged, to provide for a higher level of participant input (Bishop 1996, 1998). Each of these interconnected aspects of whakawhānaungatanga challenges the geographic tradition of neutral, objective and disembodied research methodologies.

Translated literally, Moana Jackson (1998) argued that qualitative research is about finding qualities and being able to search again. He urges that:

in our research we find the qualities which made us strong and which made us unique. That we search again for the faith in ourselves so that we are no longer trapped in the box which first put us in the category of a ‘primitive inferior’” (Jackson 1998, 77).

To meet the aims of this research I have engaged the qualitative methods of semi-structured in-depth interviews and auto-biography. I assert that the examination of research interactions can in itself yield considerable insight into the relationships between Māori women and place. I follow Moss’s (2005, 50) argument that:

[i]nstead of talking in conventional terms like validity, accuracy, and triangulation, it might make sense to think about, for example, the momentaryness of how and when information gets collected, the intention of participants in being part of a project, or the fleeting moments of negotiating meaning in any research interaction.



## **Whakapapa and research relationships**

The ability to establish and maintain research relationships has been aided by adopting the concept of whakapapa into the research design of this thesis. Charles Royal (1998) argues that whakapapa is an analytical tool traditionally employed by Māori to understand phenomenon. The importance of whakapapa, to this research, is that it provides an avenue for participant recruitment that explicitly addresses power. Pihama (2001, 133) states that “whakapapa as a key element in Kaupapa Māori theory requires us to explore relationships, how they are played out, how power is constructed within those relationships, and the layers of knowledge that are part of those relationships”. Whakapapa is useful as it assists in teasing out the multiple and diverse relationships inherent in this research.

Establishing and maintaining relationships that were not simply researcher/researched is an important consideration of this research. I provided information sheets<sup>29</sup> to wāhine Māori that I knew (through university, previous employment, friends and family). These initial contacts also passed on information sheets to other wāhine they thought may be interested. Participants were recruited from existing networks that I had in Te Ao Māori in a fashion similar to snowball sampling. This was useful as relationships and trust were already established with participants through non-research encounters. Nine wāhine agreed to participate by way of individual or joint interviews. Three individual interviews and three joint interviews were carried out. It was my intention to run a focus group, however, potential participants indicated that they would prefer either a one on one interview or a smaller group interview with two or three people. Flexibility is an important part of mana wahine methodology; therefore my research methodology was adapted to ensure the women felt comfortable in their participation. In interview feedback forms<sup>30</sup> I provided to participants (discussed in more detail further in this chapter) Moana notes:

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<sup>29</sup> See appendix one for information sheet.

<sup>30</sup> See appendix two for interview feedback forms returned.

I felt quite relaxed with you and opened up with you perhaps more than I would have with someone that I didn't know and trust.

(Moana, Interview feedback form)

As it turned out all of the participants are tertiary educated; all, except one participant, were under the age of thirty; all were heterosexual; all but three were mothers or about to become mothers and one was a grandmother. Participants came from a range of occupations. All of the women lived and worked in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions. Seven of the women were based in Hamilton. All of the women came from various north island iwi. The whakapapa between me and participants, in all but one case, was already established prior to undertaking this thesis. I share a whakapapa of friendship with them. In addition, two of the joint interviews were with two best friends and the other joint interview was with two sisters. Therefore, the whakapapa relationship between participants provided another dynamic to the interviews. This was also reflected by Mihi in her interview feedback form, she notes:

[t]he joint interview format worked really well for me as I knew going into the interview that many ideas I would have would be bounced off what Hera would discuss. I fed off her comments quite a lot.

(Mihi, Interview feedback form)

Hine also reflected on the joint interview dynamic, making the point that she was less nervous about the interview by doing it this way.

I found our joint interview to be really enjoyable ... I found that the joint interview worked well because me and Mere are such good friends, we consider each other whānau. So it was nice to be able to talk about our feelings, experiences, thoughts etc together. To be honest, having her there was kind of a relief; I was a bit nervous about what I would say.

(Hine, Interview feedback form)

It is important to note that whakapapa does not rid research interactions of power completely. There are inevitable power relations that came through in joint interview situations. This is reflected by Aroha:

[b]eing in a three person interview was fun as it allowed us to ‘feed’ off of each other. Good or bad though? Maybe because there was another person being interviewed at the same time I felt as though I had to share the time with her and allow her to give opinions. On a couple of occasions I would think of a point to say but when it was my turn to talk, I forgot what I was going to say, or forgot the question because I was listening to the second person.

(Aroha, Interview feedback form)

It was important to provide participants with the opportunity to determine if they wanted to be identified in the thesis or remain anonymous. I provided the opportunity on the consent form<sup>31</sup> (and explained it to participants prior to the interviews) that they could either choose to remain anonymous or be identifiable in this thesis. Participants have all (with the exception of the two below) been provided with pseudonyms.<sup>32</sup>

Two participants share my actual whakapapa. My sister (Hannah) and my auntie (Okeroa) are participants in this research. Consequently, I have had to negotiate familiar and familial terrain in the research process. Some of the people and events they spoke about, in their interviews, were directly connected to me or my family. For example, my aunty spoke about her mother and father, my Koro and Nan. This raised the question of how and if I should write about these people? I do not want to separate myself from my aunty, or my grandparents, by writing about them as ‘other’. Locating the information in the interviews (with my sister and my aunty) as intimately tied to my own subjectivity and whakapapa necessarily means negotiating issues of anonymity. In both instances, Hannah and Okeroa agreed to being identified within this thesis. Consequently, I have been able to acknowledge the whakapapa (in a very real sense) I have with them and with the people referred to in their interviews. It is commonly accepted, by Māori researchers, that “in Māori terms the individual never moves alone, we are always surrounded and guided by generations past” (Pihama 2001, 26). I move through this research with a whakapapa that links me right back to the atua wahine being studied; back to Papatūānuku.

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<sup>31</sup> See appendix three for consent form.

Whakapapa and whakawhānaungatanga provide a platform to enable participants and me to claim points of sameness without marginalizing or excluding those points of difference that arose during interviews. Valentine (2002) recognizes power relations when negotiating sameness and difference in interview interactions. My research did not have the traditional power relation between researcher and researched. Notwithstanding, moving between the space of being a friend and family member to being a researcher as well, means I am aware of the power that participants have vested with me to hold on to and represent their knowledges.

### **Whakawhānaungatanga and power**

A primary concern of this research has been to ensure that research encounters are culturally appropriate, comfortable and safe. I argue here, that whakawhānaungatanga disrupts traditional researcher/researched binaries by establishing more respectful research relationships. That is not to say that research interactions are void of power. I recognise the inevitable power that I hold as the author of this thesis. Ultimately, I choose what to include and exclude. England (1994) promotes the need to accept responsibility for our research and be aware of the inevitable tension that can result in the asymmetrical nature of the research relationship. Kaupapa Māori coupled with qualitative methods assists me to be able to receive and share knowledge with participants about Papatūānuku in a fitting manner.

One of the key projects of feminist geography is to disrupt the notion of ‘objective neutrality’. The promotion of knowledge as multiple and situated is well documented within feminist geography (England 1994; Moss 2002; Valentine 2002). England (1994, 81) contends that “part of the feminist project has been to dismantle the smokescreen surrounding the canons of neopositivist research - impartiality and objectivist neutrality - which supposedly prevent the researcher from contaminating the data”. Feminist geographers have reflected heavily on the methods used to gather information. It is generally recognized that the tools for data collection should be appropriate to the research question (Nelson and Seager 2005). In saying that, there are some methods that are recognised as more suited to feminist research; one of these being semi-structured in-depth interviews.

## Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews complement the mana wahine epistemologies of this thesis. The flexibility that semi-structured interviews afford enabled me to approach the research in a manner that holds fiercely to the lived and embodied experiences of participants. Semi-structured interviews “take a conversational, fluid form, each interview varying according to the interests, experiences and views of the interviewees” (Valentine 1997, 111). Consistent with the concept of whakawhānaungatanga I tried to ensure that the interviews were conducted in a space that was comfortable for participants; two interviews took place in participant’s homes, two were in offices at the university and one was held in iwi offices. Consistent with feminist geographer’s insistence that asking ‘where’ is important, where an interview is held is also important (Valentine 1997).<sup>33</sup> Hēni notes:

[be]ing in an informal setting environment allowed us, the participants, to voice our opinions and at times contradictory views better as we felt comfortable in our surroundings.

(Hēni, Interview feedback form)

I took food or drink to share at each of the interviews. This was important for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to establish an informal tone for the interviews, to make it more like coffee with friends. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, sharing food is an important part of whakawhānaungatanga. As Winitana (1990, 108) points out “there is no mana in flash words and no kai”.

In fact, sharing in general is an important part of research encounters. The interviews were tape recorded with the consent of participants. One participant requested a copy of the tape recording in order to keep it as a resource for her mokopuna. She wanted to share the knowledge that she shared with me with her children and grandchildren. The interviews lasted anywhere from thirty minutes up to two hours in length. On reflection my interest in the kōrero being shared by participants led

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<sup>33</sup> The ‘where’ was also an important consideration for an older wahine who was interested in taking part in this research (for various logistical reasons the interview wasn’t able to be conducted). When talking to her about this kaupapa she asserted that it was important for her that the interview be held at her marae. She noted that she would not have felt comfortable talking about this kind of topic in any other space.

some of the interviews to be drawn out and quite lengthy. This left both myself and the participants somewhat drained, not to mention it meant a lot of transcribing!

The weaving together of qualitative interview methods and Kaupapa Māori concepts has provided a space that enabled sharing. Rather than ask set questions, I acted as facilitator (at times as a participant) and allowed the conversation to develop. I had an interview schedule<sup>34</sup> with questions which I referred to when necessary. Flexibility on my part was crucial in allowing the conversation to flow. The interviews provided a multidirectional flow of information and knowledge. Participants shared knowledge with each other, prompting new ways to conceptualize their relationships with Papa. For example:

Hera: I see her more as, I guess, a role model and kind of everything goes back to her. So we kind of are all born from her and you know, when we die we go back to her. So that is probably, yeah, where I see my main relationship with Papa at the moment.

Mihi: I've never thought of it like that.

(Joint interview, 21/07/08)

I also acted as a participant at times during the interview by sharing some of my own knowledge about particular topics. I felt it was important to share my own experiences. In saying that, I was careful not to assert my own understandings and opinions onto participants. Feminist geographers stress the importance of interacting and sharing your own experiences with research participants (Valentine 1997). In all of the joint interviews the women acted as participants but they also questioned each other's responses and probed each other about topics that I might not have necessarily followed through on.

During all of the interviews, participants and I shared a lot of laughter. I feel that whakawhānaungatanga provided the wāhine permission to enjoy sharing their kōrero, to have fun with it. Although hesitant about what they could contribute at the beginning of the interview, participants became more comfortable during the course of the interview. Some participants were initially reluctant to take part as they

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<sup>34</sup> See appendix four for interview schedule.

assumed what they knew was not what I wanted to know. For some, they felt they were not 'Māori' enough, for others they felt they were not 'academic' enough. Māori women's knowledges have been marginalised and excluded to such a degree that participants feel they are not 'knowledgeable' enough to talk about their own relationships with Papatūānuku.

I am not the only one to experience this reluctance. In their research on women and mining Gibson-Graham (1994) note the same doubt reflected by their participants. In reference to one of their participant's self doubt, they note that "of course she did know, and she knew a lot, although what she knew was not what she initially thought I wanted to know" (Gibson-Graham 1994, 1). Similar sentiment was reflected by Hine she states:

[t]he interview, I feel, sort of forced (in a good way) us to think about our relationship with Papa, the (current state of the) environment, our whānau, our future and our past in order to describe what Papa meant to us ... my anxiety about 'not having enough to say' was made redundant as I found myself excited and enthusiastic to share my own stories and hear from the others.

(Hine, Interview feedback form)

Whakapapa and whakawhānaungatanga meant that quite intimate knowledge was shared during the interviews. One participant shared that she was hapū (pregnant) during the interview. My aunty also shared new knowledge with me about my Koro (who passed away before I was born). She discusses his work within the local Council:

Okeroa: ... he wanted to be able to put his name up because he wanted to be able to do what was best for Māori. They were not sensitive enough at the time ... so time and time again, I used to see your grandfather coming home and being flattened by things happening out there.

(Individual interview, 30/07/08)

This knowledge had a profound effect on my understandings of my own subjectivity and I felt a connectedness with my Koro, given my own experiences, during this interview. For me, this kōrero highlighted that the interview was not simply between my aunty and I; we both came to the interview with our whakapapa surrounding us.

Tuhiwai Smith (1998, 21) notes that “the story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story”.

I discuss these moments to demonstrate that the interviews were not merely a means of gathering information on my part but they were about sharing. Sharing mediated the understandings of our (participants and my own) subjectivities and relationships to place, space and embodiment, but also to each other. I agree with Tuhiwai Smith (1998, 19) that:

[s]haring is a good thing to do; it is a very human quality. To be able to share, to have something worth sharing, gives dignity to the giver. To accept a gift and to reciprocate gives dignity to the receiver. To create something new through that process of sharing is to recreate the old, to reconnect relationships and to recreate our humanness.

I take issue with the hegemony of scientific, rational and supposedly objective methodologies as the only means to produce legitimate and robust knowledge. I argue that more embodied and complex understandings of participants’ relationships with Papatūānuku can be examined by recognising the power, connections and differences inherent in research encounters. Through this process of sharing we (participants and I) open up a space to re-privilege Māori women’s understandings of their everyday realities. In doing so, we are able to challenge the privileging of colonial patriarchal knowledges. I believe that this process of sharing has resulted in an important and original contribution to feminist geography and mana wahine.

### **Rangatiratanga over knowledge**

Whakawhānaungatanga has been important to this research to ensure that the process is open and transparent. Mana wahine is about regaining and maintaining rangatiratanga over our own knowledges. Consequently, it was important to me that participants were provided with the ability to have as much input to the construction and development of this thesis as possible. Therefore, my methodology incorporated a number of elements to enable participants to review, reflect on and hopefully have a degree of rangatiratanga over their knowledge.

Participants had the ability to withdraw all or part of their contribution at any stage up until the analysis stage of my thesis. I transcribed all of the interviews as soon as I



could after the interview, to keep the interview fresh in my mind. Once the interviews had been transcribed, I sent the transcripts back to the participants to review. For the joint interviews the transcript of the whole interview was given to both participants. This meant that there has to be a level of trust, with regards to confidentiality, between the participants involved in the joint interviews; this was discussed prior to the interview. The wāhine were able to make changes, additions or deletions in the transcripts and I incorporated their revisions. In addition, once the main findings were written up, I sent participants copies of the chapters and signposted where their interview material was used.<sup>35</sup> These were sent to those who wanted to review them and changes to the sections were incorporated where possible. This is important to ensure as much as possible that I represent their kōrero in an appropriate way.

One of the important aspects of whānaungatanga for me in this research was being aware of the time that my participants took out of their busy schedules, not only for the interview, but also to review the information that I sent back to them. For this reason it was important that I gave participants as much input into the research as I could without making it a full time job for them to do so. Participants gave me positive feedback about the drafts and I am humbled by their continuous support and enthusiasm for this research. The use of email or simply having a kōrero over coffee proved useful to gain their feedback.

Another mechanism to provide participants with further space to reflect on the interview process and to provide more comments about their relationship with Papatūānuku was the use of interview feedback forms. This form was very generic and asked for the thoughts and feelings of my participants on the interview, it was important to me that the interview feedback did not feel like another interview or complicated questionnaire as participants had already devoted a lot of time to my research. Valentine (2002, 125) points out that “while we, as researchers have devoted considerable time to attempting the impossible task of reflecting on our own role in the research process we know little about how our informants experience, feel

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<sup>35</sup> See appendix five for letter sent with draft chapters.

about, or reflect upon their own participation.” The interview feedback form is my attempt to remedy this.

The interview feedback form also provided another means to examine participants’ understandings of Papatūānuku. During the interviews I felt a degree of caution by participants to contain their relationship with Papatūānuku to words. In addition, the momentaryness of the research interactions is also acknowledged; the kōrero that took place during these interviews is imbued in a particular time and situation. Participants may have had other things on their minds, been sick, or simply not been able to articulate their thoughts at that moment. As Longhurst (2003, 128) notes qualitative “methods do not offer researchers a route to ‘the truth’ but they do offer a route to partial insights into what people do and think”. Therefore the momentaryness of each interview has produced a certain set of responses and interactions. For this reason I wanted to give participants the chance to reflect on and represent their relationship with Papatūānuku in other ways and outside of an interview situation. On the interview feedback form I provided the wāhine with space to represent their relationship with Papa using whatever method they felt appropriate. Participants were able to write ten words that were important to them in this relationship or draw a picture, present an image, write a poem, song or whakataukī. They had rangatiratanga over if, and how, they used that space.

Whakawhānaungatanga coupled with feminist qualitative methodologies enabled me to establish and maintain relationships that explicitly engaged with the power inherent in research interactions. Furthermore, providing space for participants to have some degree of control over how their knowledge was used was important, therefore I engaged with methods that involved constant review and reflection by participants and by me.

### ***Autobiography***

*Struggling to survive the devastating political effects of identity politics, it seems appropriate to turn our attention toward the construction of “I” rather than toward the perpetuation of the falsely constructed omniscient “eye”. Critical geographical analysis is now three decades old and has reached a stage where analysts need to place themselves critically in the research process and the construction of geographical knowledge. Self-scrutiny, individual and collective, can contribute to a better understanding of and provide clearer insight into who we are and where our world has come from (Moss 2001, 9).*

I have alluded to the point that my own understandings of Papatūānuku are shaped by my embodied position, experiences, and upbringing. Therefore, I include my own voice in this thesis. I use autobiography as a method to recognize the web of power relations that are produced through my research and also to mediate the interpretation of the information that has been shared with me. The use of autobiographical methods is deliberate as I cannot disconnect myself from this research kaupapa. Tuhiwai Smith (1994, 168) makes the important point that “in some ways the individual ‘I’ for Māori can only make sense within a landscape of whakapapa and whenua relationship”. My story is therefore woven through this thesis, not to elevate myself as an individual or to claim authority or mana. Rather, I seek to make visible my own spatial and embodied understandings of Papatūānuku that have been shaped by my whānau and whakapapa.

Bishop (1998) argues that Kaupapa Māori researchers are involved in the research process physically, ethically, morally and spiritually and not just as a researcher concerned with methodology. I challenge the notion that ‘good’ research is equated with a disembodied, rational and objective author, whose presence in the text remains unseen. Autobiographical material is used in this thesis to displace the dominance of positivist masculine methodologies. I agree with Waitere-Ang (1998, 225) that

[t]he majority of research continues to leave the author out of the text. This omission is not the result of forgetfulness, but rather a form of selective amnesia, reflecting the assumption that to present a report that will be deemed convincing and legitimate, the subjective must be subjugated.

I have kept a research diary in which I have reflected on the research process and on my own understandings of Papatūānuku, my embodiment and spirituality. The writing style in this diary is stream of consciousness yet it has been useful in working through some of the complexities and contradictions of this research. Al-Hindi and Kawabata (2002) note that researchers must be willing to write themselves into the research. I write myself into this research by way of reflection on my own understandings of Papatūānuku. By including my own autobiographical experiences in this thesis the binaries between the personal and the social, private and public, and the everyday and the literary are blurred (Cosslett *et al* 2000). I use autobiography as it “introduces the heterogeneity of the researcher’s [my] life in the same way that many

feminists want to represent the lives of their research participants: complicated, compromise-ridden and sometimes contradictory” (Al-Hindi and Kawabata 2002, 108).

### ***Taku Turanga - My position***

My methodology, and indeed this thesis, is deliberately subjective so as to accommodate and represent the multiple, complex and sometimes contradictory experiences of Papatūānuku expressed by participants. Mana wahine does not seek to appear neutral (Hutchings 2002; Pihama 2001; Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Similarly, it is widely accepted that feminist geographers are centrally concerned with sensitivity to power relations, including those inherent in research interactions (Al-Hindi and Kawabata 2005; England 1994, 2006). England (1994) argues that as a researcher we are a very visible and integral part of the research setting. Furthermore, she notes that “the research, researched *and* researcher might be transformed by the fieldwork experience” (England 1994, 86, emphasis in the original). In this section I will examine my positionality; I understand positionality as “more than simply the space that one occupies; it implies recognition that such occupation is active, engaged and contested” (Kobayashi 2005, 36).

Mana wahine epistemologies provide a particular time and space for Māori women to engage with their understandings of their lived and embodied geographies, whatever they may be. Wahine, while often translated as woman, for me embodies the interconnectedness of identity, time and space. The term Wā can be seen as a temporal and spatial concept. Hine is conceptualised as a female essence. Therefore, as Pihama (2001, 261) points out “the term Wāhine designates a certain time and space for Māori women but is by no means a universal term like the term woman in English. There are many times and spaces Māori women move through, in our lives, Wāhine is one of those. There are others”. I come to this research not only as a wahine but also as a friend, sister, daughter, researcher, student, aunty and partner. I am a 23 year old, able bodied, heterosexual woman of both Māori and Pākehā descent. Furthermore, my body is physically inscribed by way of ta moko which visually (re)presents my identity as Māori. The entanglement of all of these subjectivities constitutes my position in this research and influences the research interactions (and my understanding of them).

It is widely recognised by Māori women academics that our embodied subjectivities are not disconnected from our research and research practices (Hutchings 2001; Pihama 2002; Tuhiwai Smith 1992). I occupy a space of in-betweenness as both Māori and non-Māori. In this research I position myself as a Māori woman. Consequently, I claim a set of genealogical, cultural and political experiences (Hutchings 2002). These experiences are at times complicit with dominant representations of being Māori. For example, I feel a relatively strong connection to the whenua and to Papatūānuku. At other times my embodied experiences contradict and contest these representations. Being able to draw connections between my own subjectivities and participants is important while recognising our differences is equally so.

One of the tensions that I face in this research is my inability to speak fluent te reo Māori. I share this anxiety with August (2004) and Brown (2008) and it is not something that is easily resolved. Pihama (2001) states that just because you cannot speak te reo Māori does not mean that you do not understand the concepts. What is important is that the shortcomings of the English language in relation to Māori concepts are made explicit. “To assume that all Māori are linguistically and culturally able is to ignore the past (and continued) invasion of colonization of our land and people, and the subsequent fragmentation of our social, economic, political lives and cultural identity” (Lee 2005, 5). Participants also expressed their concerns with the limitations of the English language in being able to grapple with a different level of spirituality that was elicited by te reo Māori (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). Three participants could converse in Māori.

August (2004) states that colonisation denied her father and subsequently herself of te reo Māori. This is the case for many Māori. My father’s [Okeroa’s brother] generation were not taught te reo Māori. Okeroa explains:

Okeroa: We weren’t bought up with the reo and Koro was adamant that he would not teach us kids, because of the

effects that had been bestowed upon him when he was  
a kid<sup>36</sup>

(Individual interview 30/07/08).

The lack of te reo has filtered through to me. The impacts of colonisation are very much still being felt, generations later. Okeroa and my father and their parents are part of a generation of Māori who were:

physically, emotionally and psychologically denied te reo Māori through the formal system of education and the strength of ideological assertions that marginalised and devalued te reo Māori. Those who were constantly fed the ideology that in order for their children to survive in the world all they needed was English (Pihama 2001, 115).

I am both an insider and outsider. I have had to negotiate my already-established relationships with participants, as friends and family (being insider), with my role as researcher (to many, seen as outsider). I move in-between complicity and contradiction. The spaces I occupy (and constitute) during this research are at times comfortable and familiar. At other times they engender anxiety and fear. My everyday geographies are hybrid, complex and often full of inconsistencies.

### ***Analysis***

Immersion in the interview material was my preliminary form of analysis (Dunn 2005). Detailed and repeated readings of the transcripts allowed me to identify themes, commonalities and inconsistencies in the experiences of participants. Textual analysis was used to analyze transcribed interviews. Transcripts were coded to organize information into themes and to tease out the consistencies but also the tensions between and within interviews. For example, in chapter four I identified the common theme of ubiquity in participant's relationships with Papatūānuku. For the purposes of chapter five I noted that in nearly every interview some discussion emerged about pregnancy, birth and being a mother. Therefore I grouped these discussions under maternal bodies.

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<sup>36</sup> In a family manuscript (1958-1977, held in private possession) by my Koro Piripi Simmonds he notes that "Most of our children cannot speak their own tongue/language, or understand only an occasional word or two ... Speaking on my own behalf when we were attending school we were not permitted to speak Māori at school. If we did we were given 3-6 of the best in each hand so we made sure that our parents did not speak Māori at home, in which I refrain from teaching my children to learn the Māori language".

Once I was familiar with the transcripts they were coded into thematic files. I copied and pasted sections of transcripts into these thematic files. Continual reading and reflection on the transcripts provided me with some direction as to the development of themes. My aim in selecting themes was to illuminate previously unexamined experiences in order to challenge the privilege of colonial and masculinist understandings. Quotations that represented these themes, commonalities and inconsistencies were identified. In my analysis of the information I include my own reflections on the themes.

As well as becoming intimately entangled in participants' kōrero through the interviews, I also wanted to examine if their understandings and experiences were complicit or contradictory to the dominant representations of Papatūānuku by Māori women. Therefore, I collected literary and artistic representations of Papa in a folder and drew out commonalities as presented by authors and artists. Some of these representations are included in chapters four and five to support my analysis. These have been reproduced with copyright permission. The images used are subject to my own interpretation of them and therefore also to the cultural meaning and power associated with my positionality (Rose 2001).

### ***Conclusions***

In this chapter I have discussed the research design and methodology used in this thesis. I use multiple methods with the primary goal being to enable a safe space for the wāhine participating in this research to engage with their lived, embodied and spatial understandings of Papatūānuku.

I outlined the important elements of Kaupapa Māori/mana wahine methodologies. Following this, I examine my positionality and some of the key ethical considerations of this research. My objective here was to demonstrate that research of this nature requires a multiplicity of ethical and personal considerations and negotiations.

Continuing with the metaphor of weaving the second half of this chapter is concerned with weaving together Kaupapa Māori methods, such as whakawhānaungatanga and whakapapa and the qualitative methods employed. Semi-structured interviews conducted within a framework of whakawhānaungatanga have

provided me with the necessary tools to make visible the experiences of participants in a manner that is culturally congruent with mana wahine.

Larner (1995) identifies the need for empirical material that considers the diversity of women's experiences across time and space. In the following chapters I draw on interviews and my own experiences to discuss the connections and the contradictions of Māori women's spiritual, embodied and spatial understandings of Papatūānuku.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Entanglements of wairua, Christianity and atua wāhine

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*“Frequently, the contradictions of my life are harrowing, but I refuse to reject any one facet of myself: I claim all my cultures, all my conflicts. They make me what I am; they shape what I am becoming” (Te Awekotuku 1991a, 21 emphasis in the original).*

Māori women are faced with inconsistencies, ambiguities and contradictions on a daily basis. Living in a ‘colonised reality’ (Tuhiwai Smith 1999) makes it difficult to reconcile facets of our multiple and complex subjectivities. For some women, living with complex and often contradictory subjectivities requires constant negotiation. Te Awekotuku is not alone in her assertion that Māori women are faced with these inconsistencies (see Johnston 1998; Mikaere 1994; 1999; Pihama 2001; Tuhiwai Smith 1992). These tensions are certainly a part of my everyday geography. There is a general fear (both within and outside the academy) of contradiction, inconsistency and heterogeneity. If we are explicit in our recognition of the multiple and contradictory nature of subjectivity how do we engage in political struggles? What I argue in this thesis echoes the arguments of Larner (1995) that contradictions and tensions need to be explicitly integrated into research. In doing so, the oppositional frameworks that dominate Western thought can be challenged.

This chapter unravels some of the inconsistencies and contradictions experienced by participants. Some of the wāhine acknowledge that there are disjunctures between what they know, what they think they should know, and how they perform their subjectivities. I assert that this is a result of the colonisation (past and present) of Māori women’s lived, embodied and spiritual experiences of space. This chapter is premised around my second research objective; to provide comment on the colonisation of Māori women’s relationships to Papatūānuku. Wairua, Christianity and Māori women’s subjectivities are entangled in a complex web. I present a space of in-betweenness that is reflected by participants and argue that the boundaries between self and Papa are fluid, malleable and complex. I seek to dismantle dominant dualistic thinking by examining importance of the ‘irrational’ and abstract to Māori women’s conceptualisations of Papatūānuku. In doing so, I continue with

one of the main threads of this thesis to challenge the hegemony of colonial and masculine articulations of identity, space and place.

This chapter is premised around three themes, each pertaining to the colonisation of Papatūānuku. The first discusses the importance of wairua in shaping Māori women's lived and embodied geographies. The argument here is that spirituality discourses are important and cannot be separated from understandings of place and space. The symbolic, physical and spatial ubiquity of Papa reflected by participants is demonstrative of their entangled spiritual and physical realities. The second theme is concerned with the influence of Christianity in conceptualisations of Papatūānuku. The pervasiveness of Christian beliefs is undeniable in contemporary Aotearoa. As I demonstrate it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate out articulations of Māori spirituality, and therefore understandings of Papa, from Christianity. The final theme I discuss concerns contemporary understandings and articulations of mythology and tikanga. The colonisation of Māori mythology and subsequently tikanga is evident in the representation (or lack of) of atua wāhine in dominant discourse. Drawing from the work of other Māori women the argument is made, and supported by participants' understandings, that Papatūānuku and conceptualisations of atua wāhine have been marginalised while male atua dominate.

### ***Wairua discourses***

If geographers are to understand further the relationships between people and place, then incorporation geographies of spirituality are crucially important. Spiritual matters form an important context through which many people live their lives (Holloway and Valins 2002). As mentioned previously, dichotomies between mind/body, rational/irrational and science/spirituality dominate Western knowledge. These binaries are gendered. They discriminate against and push wairua to the periphery (Tuhiwai-Smith 1992). Holloway and Valins (2002, 6) ask the question “do current theoretical concepts really make sense of who we are when engaging with the non-rational (in the sense of rarely being scientifically provable or, for the most part, disprovable)?” In my opinion current geographical frameworks do not adequately provide for considerations of wairua. I offer mana wahine as a theoretical framework that disrupts the dualistic divisions between ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’. Spirituality

constitutes legitimate and important knowledges in Māori women's relationships to space and place.

There is a strong connection between the physical and spiritual geographies of Māori women. Hutchings (2002, 51) argues:

[f]or some women the relationship that some Māori women have with wairua and their belief in it, governs everything they do, especially their relationship with the environment. The spiritual reality of Māori women cannot be separated from the physical reality.

This is supported by the majority of mana wahine theorists (Evans 1994a; Hutchings 2002; Irwin 1995; Pihama 2001; Smith 1992; and Te Awekotuku 1991a, 1992a). But I am careful to point out that this does not homogenise Māori women's experiences of wairua, place and space. The point here is that wairua is an important concept to consider when locating Māori women's relationship to Papatūānuku. Wairua discourses are a distinguishing and necessary feature of mana wahine, making it unique from other feminisms and critical theories (Evans 1994a; Hutchings 2002; Pihama 2001). "Recognition of wairua within Mana Wahine is also about the reassertion of the place of atua wāhine and the stories that give us more indication as to the roles of Māori women within whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori" (Pihama 2001, 281). Furthermore (and as argued in Chapter 2), wairua mediates understandings of space and place for many Māori women, yet remains peripheral in most geographic (and wider academic) scholarship.

Participants shared with me their spiritual and embodied experiences. Wairua, for these women, seems to provide an important and unique platform through which they make sense of their lives. Aroha and Hēni told me about a time when they went to their maunga with their family and were introduced to a spiritual body which was one of their tupuna wahine. After expressing fear and scepticism they soon embraced her and wove their understandings of this spiritual being into the fabric of their subjectivities. They reflect on the importance of wairua to their identities.

Naomi: For you in your own identities and your own connectedness to your whānau and whakapapa is that spiritual side important?

Hēni: Very much.

Aroha:            Yep, and it's always developing. You know, we're always doing our own things to develop that spiritual side.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

Spirituality is important in Hēni and Aroha's day to day lives. They make the point that it is always developing and that it is neither fixed nor static. This is supported by Tuhiwai Smith (1992, 43) when she argues, that "spirituality is dynamic – it waxes and wanes, ebbs and flows, and transforms itself". Aroha's subjectivity is constituted by and constitutes her wairua. For these women their embodied experience of their taha wairua informs their lived realities.

Okeroa shared a story with me about an embodied, cultural and spiritual experience that she had. When a carved taonga was found in our hapū area she had the responsibility to ensure that the correct thing was done with it. Following the uplifting and relocation of the taonga Okeroa woke one morning to find that half of her face was paralysed. The doctor diagnosed it as Bell's Palsy.<sup>37</sup> Okeroa's understanding of the cause of her facial paralysis is different, as she explains:

Okeroa:            It wasn't until afterwards, that I got home and I thought over the day's events and I realized that we hadn't done a karakia for the taonga. At the time, I had thought because there was a man from the museum, Māori, that I had naturally assumed he would do it and of course he didn't. So for me, I felt that I had failed. That I had failed the taonga, I had failed the spirit world for not acknowledging them; for revealing something that was so precious to us and for letting people other than iwi handle it. When I told the tohunga that he said 'you did hopo yourself' ... in other words I had given myself a huge fright because I hadn't done these things ... and he said 'that is what it is. You were meant to look like a tekoteko with a big Pūkana eye and the same with the mouth'.

(Individual interview 30/07/08)

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<sup>37</sup> Bell's Palsy is the sudden onset of paralysis of one of the facial nerves. The main symptom is muscle weakness on one side of the face, causing the face to droop (Southern Cross. Retrieved 02 February 2008 from <http://www.southerncross.co.nz>).

This kōrero demonstrates the importance of wairua to Okeroa but it also disintegrates the boundaries between the corporeal and the spiritual. The doctor's cultural and social understanding of Okeroa's situation was that she had a condition called Bell's palsy. Okeroa understands the facial paralysis as something that was put upon her by the spirit world for not following certain tikanga. Whatever understanding is adopted, the corporeality of Okeroa's body cannot be denied. Her facial paralysis was real. This is an important consideration.

It is argued that solely engaging with social and cultural constructions of embodiment can render the body incorporeal (Birke 2000; Johnston and Longhurst 1998; Longhurst 2001). In doing so, "the body thus becomes a surface on which culture is inscribed; its biological processes rarely then become theorized but remain taken-for-granted, assumed constant" (Birke 2000, 596). Furthermore, failure to recognise the materiality of the body only serves to reinforce the binary division between essentialism and constructionism (Longhurst 2005). What Okeroa's kōrero demonstrates is that this binary distinction does not hold. Wairua mediates Okeroa's corporeal experiences and understandings of space. Her body is located in a specific cultural and spiritual context which enables her to make sense of the biological changes she experiences.

The kōrero about the importance of wairua for the participants' lived geographies points to an important gap in current geographical theorising. Holloway and Valins (2002) assert that religion<sup>38</sup> and spirituality are of central importance and significance to people's lives and that exploring this can further our understandings of space and place. I argue further that wairua discourses are important when considering the context of our embodied experiences. The mutually constituted nature of bodies and space extends to those spiritual spaces discussed by participants. By engaging with wairua discourse it is possible to disrupt the binary between rationality/irrationality and to blur the boundaries between essentialism and constructionism. In doing so, 'rational' disembodied knowledges are subverted and space is made for the 'irrational'

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<sup>38</sup> Holloway and Valins (2002) appear to couple religion and spirituality as one in the same, however, there are important differences between them, which I will not enter into here. I choose to discuss spirituality at the scale of the individual, at this point, rather than engaging with institutions of religion.

and intangible in relation to Māori women's experiences of space, embodiment and of Papatūānuku.

Papatūānuku does not have a single location or spatial scale. Her location is fluid, multiple and malleable. Consequently, her influence on the geographies of Māori women is varied. Papa is located at multiple scales, both material and symbolic. Each scale can provide a different platform from which the relationships between Māori women and Papatūānuku are experienced. The spiritual nature of Papatūānuku is important to the subjectivities of some wāhine Māori, as expressed by Hera.

Naomi: Are there any spaces that you don't associate with Papa?

Hera: Yeah, I think physically. Like sometimes you can't feel that connection with her but I think she is always there spiritually.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

The ubiquitous nature of Papatūānuku as a symbolic and spiritual space is important for Hera. Papatūānuku is not confined to a bounded space. Similarly, for others Papa is located everywhere as reflected in the following comments:

Aroha: Yeah I don't see any boundaries on her. I think that any earth, ground is Papatūānuku.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

Mihi: When you think of Papatūānuku I think of everything, the whole earth.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

Mere: I think Papatūānuku is whenua, soil is her, she's everywhere. I'd say she's everywhere and I have a feeling for her no matter where you go.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

Hine: Everywhere, spiritual a sense of something bigger, everlasting.

(Interview feedback form)

For these women, Papatūānuku is simultaneously tied to physical space (the earth, land, and soil) and is ubiquitous and symbolic. Rangimarie Rose Pere (1993) expresses a similar feeling that no matter where she is, so too is Papatūānuku. The boundless nature of Papatūānuku, described by participants, invites the holism attributed to traditional Māori understandings of her (Kupenga *et al* 1993). This is also reflected in dominant artistic and literary representations of Papa as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Papatūānuku, oil on hardboard, by Robyn Kahukiwa.<sup>39</sup>**

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<sup>39</sup> This image is reproduced with permission from Robyn Kahukiwa. In this image the body of Papatūānuku is shown as the soil, the hills and the earth. The artist's own interpretation is instructive. The wooden pegs are symbolic of the nature of various atua such as Tāwhiri-mātea, Tūmatauenga, Tānemahuta, Tangaroa, Rongomatāne, and Haumia-tiketike. The toko hold Papa and Ranginui apart. See *Wabine Toa: Women of Māori Myth* (2000, 66-67).

A more symbiotic relationship with the environment is promoted by these representations (Kupenga *et al* 1993). Western masculinist ideologies such as individualisation and Western ideas of ownership deny the ubiquitous, spiritual and intangible nature of Papatūānuku. Henare Tate (1990, 89) makes the point that dominant society:

favours material over spiritual values [and] has systematically violated and belittled these beliefs [spiritual], labelling them as superstitious and relics of paganism and declaring them to be of no importance in the modern world.

A number of participants touched on the fact that because Western ideologies rely on tangible, rational and scientific proof to legitimate what they know, conceptualisations of Papatūānuku that are less tangible and ambiguous (in a material sense) are difficult to grapple with and therefore reduced to stories and tales. This is further supported by Tuhiwai-Smith (1999, 74) who states that:

[t]he arguments of different indigenous peoples based on spiritual relationships to the universe, to the landscape and to stones, rocks, insects and other things, seen and unseen, have been difficult arguments for Western systems of knowledge to deal with or accept.

When questioned further on the spaces of Papatūānuku, participants articulate that certain spaces produce stronger feelings of connectedness with Papa. These spaces tend to be the more ‘natural’ spaces, such as rural and coastal landscapes.

Aroha:           The image in my head [of Papatūānuku] would be land.  
It wouldn’t be the yucky built up area land. [It] would  
be the landscape sort of land //<sup>40</sup>

Hēni:             // Yeah ’cause if I go into town, I wouldn’t think about  
Papatūānuku or just looking at the cement.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

For many of the women there was a tendency to associate Papatūānuku with ‘natural’ ‘untouched’ spaces. These spaces appear to evoke a stronger sense of connection with Papatūānuku than urban or city spaces.

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<sup>40</sup> // denotes participants speaking over each other or interrupting.



When asked about her relationship with Papa, Hannah makes a distinction between Papatūānuku and the environment that at first appears inconsistent with dominant understandings of the materiality of Papa as the physical environment. Moana also expresses a similar opinion about the split between Papatūānuku and the environment.

Hannah: I guess there's something about, I don't know if I envisage so much as being Papatūānuku, more just that link with nature and the real basic of what we are stripping away all the modernistic things that we need around.

(Individual interview 27/04/08)

Naomi: And do you feel connected to Papatūānuku?

Moana: I wouldn't say connected to Papatūānuku, but definitely connected to the land, like I don't think, like that doesn't form the way I think about the land, I don't think about the land as Papatūānuku.

(Individual interview 23/05/08)

Although Hannah and Moana do not expressly recognise their relationship with the environment as a relationship with Papatūānuku, the spirituality and emotion they associate with their connectedness to the environment align with the feelings of wairua expressed by other participants' about their relationship with Papa. In her interview feedback form Hannah makes a connection between the environment and Papa.

If I think again about my personal relationship with Papatūānuku the image that is forefront in my mind is one of being at peace in a natural setting. When I am somewhere beautiful and natural, usually by myself, I have time to reflect on the wonder of our environment and how lucky we are to be a part of that.

(Hannah, Interview feedback form)

Colonisation has disconnected many Māori from landscapes of spirituality and language. Given the dualistic frameworks of colonial and Western ideologies it is no surprise that Papa (particularly her spirituality) has been set up as 'other' to scientific and 'rational' conceptualisations of the environment. Despite this, for many Māori

women the environment (whether explicitly described as Papa or not) provides an important source of emotional, spiritual and physical sustenance, identification and strength.

Many of the women think of Papatūānuku as everywhere. She is ubiquitous symbolically and to some extent physically. 'Natural' spaces, however, are more strongly constructed as embodying Papa. Jo Little (2007) examines the way in which understandings of 'nature' can influence gendered and sexualised identity. She maintains that the separation of city space from 'nature' is important in maintaining boundaries. Western dualistic thinking is preoccupied with securing boundaries for fear of contamination of the 'self' by movement through boundaries of the 'other' (Longhurst 2001, 2008). The construction and securing of boundaries enables normalising practices to be established. What Longhurst (2008) argues is the impossibility of ever securing boundaries. The boundaries melt down, are contested and are reconstituted over time and space. Consequently, participants are concerned with securing the 'natural' as this engenders a stronger relationship with Papatūānuku. The constitutive relationship between their identity and Papatūānuku is maintained by the 'natural'.

The 'limitless' nature of Papatūānuku may be linked to symbolic understandings of her. When questioned further by another participant Hine identifies Aotearoa as a space where her feeling of connectedness to Papa is stronger.

Mere: So can I just add a question in here, so what about say you're on the other side of the world, how would your opinion change then?

Hine: Yeah exactly, I was thinking about that, cause I only ever had thought about Papatūānuku as//

Mere: // as here //

Hine: // as Aotearoa, but I think if I did go overseas I'd feel the same about people disrespecting the land.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

Similarly, Hannah felt that Papatūānuku is a concept defined by her location in New Zealand.

Hannah: ... Actually I was thinking about it yesterday ... I guess Papatūānuku is a real New Zealand concept, well the Papatūānuku but being overseas and still feeling that same connection to nature and the land and beautiful scenes, of you know the world.

(Individual interview 27/14/08, emphasis in the original)

The physical space of Aotearoa prompts a stronger feeling of connectedness to Papa. Despite this, the spiritual and emotional understandings of Papatūānuku seem to transcend physical boundaries.

Te reo Māori provides another platform for participants to conceptualise their understandings of Papatūānuku. Yet as Hera and Mihi point out te reo is not necessary to establish a meaningful spiritual and emotional connection with Papatūānuku but that it could provide another level of understanding.

Mihi: I think it depends, 'cause I don't speak Māori, not like how Hera does. Like I can speak kind of pre-school Māori but I still feel a connectedness. I imagine that if I spoke more Māori then the concepts, that it would be more intense because that is the language.

Hera: I think it [te reo] can connect you on another level. I don't think you need to have the reo to feel that connection because I think that you are born with it, because Papa is in essence our tupuna so we descended from her. Descended from the atua, so we do have that automatic connection with her but in terms, if you are kind of trying to theorise about her place in your life then the reo is probably important in that respect.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

Te reo Māori is deeply embedded with the spiritual (Tuhiwai Smith 1994). Furthermore, the spiritual essence of te reo is derived from our tupuna and provides an important connection with our taha wairua (Pihama 2001). Our language embodies important spiritual and cultural potentialities and can provide important insights into conceptualisations of space and place that are distinctly Māori. It is important to recover the knowledges and wairua inherent in te reo Māori that can enable more critical reflection on our lived and embodied geographies. For Hannah

te reo Māori prompted her to think about Papatūānuku in a way that the English language could not. At the beginning of our interview Hannah explains:

Hannah: For me I think she's [Papatūānuku] just a [long pause], this sounds funny; I think she's just a Māori label. Oh hang on; I don't know if I do. I see her as quite separate from the actual reality. I see her as part of a myth and a legend and something that is mihied to in the whaikōrero and stuff like that. It's that kind of whole tradition type thing. I don't know if I go to the beach and I think walking along the sand 'oh this is Papatūānuku' you know? Whereas, it's funny, because whenever I go in the ocean I always think of Tangaroa, it doesn't matter where I am that's Tangaroa.

(Individual interview 27/04/08)

When questioned further about the 'label' Papatūānuku Hannah responds:

Hannah: Maybe, it's kind of because, oh this sounds really bad. 'Cause it's [Papatūānuku] is a Māori word, and my lived reality is in English. This sounds 'oh I'm a plastic Maari [sic] (laughs), but you know when I'm, you're talking in Māori or you hear people talking in Māori they talk about Papatūānuku and Papa and I'm like 'oh yeah that's Papatūānuku'. But in my everydayness it's not Papatūānuku, it's just outside.

Naomi: So do you think that te reo is an important link to Papatūānuku?

Hannah: For me it is. For me that's what brings into my mind, that what's transforms the space into Papatūānuku, is the reo and I've only just come to that realisation during this interview.

(Individual interview 27/04/08)

Hannah's lived reality is in English and thus for her the concept of Papatūānuku is difficult to conceptualise without te reo Māori. Access to te reo has been denied to generations of Māori and it is important to recognise the shortcoming of the English language in trying to convey spiritual elements (Pihama 2001). Yet, to assume all Māori are fluent speakers is to deny our colonial realities. I believe that depth and wairua of our language can still be understood without complete fluency of te reo. Furthermore, the wairua embodied in te reo Māori can enhance our understandings

of Papa and can provide avenues for understanding further Māori women's relationships to place and space.

The values, attitudes and language of wairua discourses highlight one of the central differences between Māori spirituality and Western ideologies. The sense of wairua surrounding Papa is ubiquitous. For some, this is a global feeling, for others it remains closer to Aotearoa. For some, this ubiquity is symbolic, for others it is physical, and for some it is both. The mutually constitutive nature of the symbolic and the material spaces is evident, as is the co-constitution of Māori women's lived, spiritual and embodied experiences of the spaces of Papatūānuku. The mutually constituted nature of the material, embodied, cultural and spiritual described above blurs the boundaries between symbolic/material, private/public, feminine/masculine and abstract/reality.

### ***Christianity and Papatūānuku***

*I like to think that at the time of contact Māori society was relatively complementary ... with the arrival of Christianity and the Victorian perspective, the whole thing turned around and the damage started. There was a tremendous spiritual revolution in which so much of our mana wahine, our being as Māori women, was undermined or somehow reinterpreted. That has to end. We have to reclaim those energies and that knowledge, those deeper wisdoms (Te Awēkotuku 1994, 31).*

Integral to the success of colonisation was Christianity (Evans 1994b). The imposition of Christian ideologies has had a profound impact on Māori subjectivities and relationships to space and place. Almost without exception, participants have been unable to deny the impact of Christianity on their understandings of spirituality and Papatūānuku. Moana identified herself as Christian during the interview. She said that she did not conform to conventional Christian practices as she does not attend church regularly, but that this aspect of her identity was important to her understandings of Papatūānuku. I was interested to know how she reconciles her Christian beliefs with her strong spiritual relationship with Papatūānuku.

Naomi: So how do you tie in God and Christ with Papatūānuku? For you personally how does that relationship work?

Moana: ... It is mostly about kind of creation. I believe that god created the universe, the earth and us and everything on

the earth. I believe that day to day, if we let him, he enriches our lives and nurtures us and helps us to grow as people and I kind of link that in as being the same kind of beliefs that tie in.

Naomi: So do you see God as having created Papatūānuku?

Moana: I kind of see God and Papa as one.

(Individual interview 23/05/08)

For Moana she manages to work the two belief systems in together to create a spiritual reality that works for her. Moana engages with a hybrid version of Christianity and Māori spirituality, blurring and transcending the boundaries between the two. Initially Moana's conceptualisation of Papa and God as one took me by surprise. On further consideration, the pervasive nature of Christianity and the colonised reality of Aotearoa makes hybridity commonplace for many Māori women (see August 2004; Brown 2008).

Moana's comments prompted me to think about my own experiences of Papatūānuku and Christianity. I cannot deny that my upbringing was informed heavily by Christianity. My father was a minister until I was 11 years of age. Attending church on Sundays was much more a regular and familiar occurrence than being at my marae. For my father reconciling tikanga Māori with Christianity was difficult. He chose to immerse himself in Christianity over maintaining his relationship with his marae and identity as Māori. I find it interesting (and somewhat sad) that when I was growing up Christian teachings and knowledges were more readily available to me than those of my Māori tupuna. Perhaps this is not surprising, as often much more is known about one side of a binary than the other (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). The separation of my parents prompted our departure from the church and the beginning of our journey to reconnect with our Māori heritage. Therefore, while I do not identify as Christian, I cannot deny the influence of Christianity in my own understandings of Papatūānuku. I choose to privilege Papatūānuku in shaping my spiritual and embodied subjectivity. Notwithstanding, I occupy a hybrid space whereby my understandings of Papatūānuku are influenced by a multiplicity of factors, both Māori and non-Māori.

It is important to point out, and I think is reflected in Moana's discussion, that colonisation did not simply mean the arrival of Christianity and the abandonment of Māori belief systems. This may have been the goal, however, Māori culture and beliefs were (and still are) deeply ingrained and extremely resilient. "To suggest that conversion to Christianity simply entailed the cancelling out of one belief system and its replacement with a new one is too simplistic" (Mikaere 2003, 70). Furthermore, aspects of Māori spirituality have filtered back to Western knowledge. Hera's kōrero is a good example of the resiliency of Māori values and beliefs, but also of the influence of Christianity on her lived reality.

Hera: Hard case thing, when I was doing [something] that I hadn't planned to, was that I was saying karakia, which I had composed myself [for the birth of her child], and they were to Hine-te-iwaiwa [goddess of birth and fertility] and to Papa mainly. But I also felt a need to say Hail Mary as well. When I thought about it afterwards I was saying a karakia to Papa and my hononga [connection/relationship] was with my tupuna wāhine but then I also needed that hononga with my mum as well and that was the Hail Mary ... I have always tried to come to terms with my spirituality and my religion and going back to te reo. I try to have my Māori spirituality in the reo and my Catholicism in English ... It is interesting because I think Māori spirituality is a lot more open to Christianity than Christianity is to Māori spirituality.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

For Hera, atua wāhine play an important role and have survived the impacts of colonisation and she actively engages with them through karakia. Yet she also felt the need to engage with her Catholic side in order to feel connected to her non-Māori mother. She claims her spiritual influences are both non-Māori and Māori. In doing so, she performs a kind of hybrid karakia. Moana, Hera and I occupy spaces of in-betweenness in our spiritual relationships to Papatūānuku. In doing so, the boundaries between Christianity and Māori spirituality are blurred.

Māori spirituality and Christianity are inextricably linked. Even those participants that do not identify themselves as religious find Christian beliefs creeping into their understandings.

- Hēni: You [Aroha] don't believe in Tāne or Tangaroa? You don't believe every element has its little essence?
- Aroha: I think it's all gone, because, I don't know. When it comes to like demi god worshiping, in the bible it says that it is a sin.
- Hēni: Who cares about the bible? When do we read the bible?  
(Laughter)
- Aroha: I don't know. Anyway it's not about religion.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

While this is a somewhat light-hearted conversation between two sisters, it also demonstrates the fluidity of belief systems. The boundaries of Māori spirituality are not closed nor fixed and this exchange demonstrates one way that Christianity can filter through. Hera and Mihi also assert the inextricable links between Christianity and spirituality.

- Hera: I think our spirituality is so tied up in Christianity now, you know, and it is very hard to separate it, sometimes.
- Mihi: It's funny you say that because I don't think of myself as religious at all, at all. Give or take God, don't really believe in God. Yet we will go to the marae and I will quite happily sit through the church service in Māori and I will sing the hymns. Whereas I would never, I would never go to a Pākehā church service and you know. It's weird because it's just exactly the same but it's just in Māori. //
- Hera: // but it's quite important that those prayers are to God not to Papa, which they would have been [to Papa] in the past. That is that missing kind of a link. Where as we would have heard Papa's name being said all of the time, instead we have Jesus and all of that.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

Mihi and Hera draw out some interesting points. They point to the mutually constituted nature of Māori spirituality and Christianity that has already been discussed. This kōrero also draws out the point that at their marae, and many others around Aotearoa, karakia, and many other forms of expression refer to Jesus or to God, not Papa. The practice of having church services on marae is not uncommon.



At my marae during tangi and other hui every night a church service is held in the wharenuī. At tangi ministers pray to God to look after the body of the person who has passed on. I cannot help but wonder where Papatūānuku is in all of this? Where are ngā atua wāhine, such as Hine-nui-te-pō? I assume that Papatūānuku has been colonised out of these expressions of Māori spirituality.

One of the most devastating effects of colonisation has been the internalisation of Christian beliefs and teachings by Māori as representing our own traditions (Evans 1994b; Mikaere 1999; 2001; 2003). This is an area where further research would be useful. Research to locate where our atua wāhine are in various forms of expression on marae (supposedly the cultural bastions of Māori culture) is necessary. Knowledges about Papatūānuku and other atua wāhine need to be investigated further so that we are not simply presented with a masculinised Māori version of the Christian creation myth. Re-privileging, re-telling and (re)presenting atua wāhine in mythology is important. The point here is not to romanticise the past nor to return to it; but to make sense of our present and future (Mikaere 2003).

### ***Mythology - Atua wāhine***

*Myths provide answers in human terms to the way things are in our world. The characters act as we do but on a grand scale. They can be an important guide to philosophy, values and social behaviour; to correct procedures for certain acts. They can show us the results of certain acts, and provide pointers towards social order (Grace and Kabukima 2000, 10).*

The importance of mythology to cultural understandings of space contests the dominance of Western, masculinist spaces, knowledges and practices. The colonisation of space has marginalised Māori mythology as it mediates understandings of space and place. The internalisation of Western ideologies concerning 'rational' knowledge is evident in participants' experiences and understandings of the role of mythology in their everyday geographies. Colonial discourse constructs Māori as primitive, in opposition to Western 'modern' cultures (Hokowhitu 2008). In this section, I argue that mythologies, and the spirituality inherent in them, are important to the everyday geographies of Māori women. Furthermore, they can provide insight into the roles of Māori women in traditional Māori society.

Hēni and Aroha talk about mythology and bodily tikanga. They are unfamiliar with the reasons behind these tikanga and therefore choose not to practice them. When asked if there was anything that they do in their day to day life that was informed by mythology, they responded:

Aroha: Yeah. My partner doesn't cut his hair or nails at night. But I told him 'no I don't do that because I wasn't brought up with that and you can't tell me the reasoning behind why you do that. Why?'

Hēni: Because they were taught that and that is the only reason why.

Aroha: He was like 'you can't pick and choose what parts of your culture you want'. But I was just like 'why?'

Naomi: So are there bits that you guys choose to do?

Hēni: We don't actually live by any of that stuff.

Aroha: No, I wouldn't say that we do live by those legends.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

Hēni and Aroha note that they don't live by certain tikanga because they do not know the meanings behind them. Despite this they have a very strong concern for looking after Papatūānuku so they plant trees for her (this is discussed further in chapter 5). The underlying theme that came through from many participants was that they did practice bodily tikanga but did not connect these with histories and myths.

Mihi: There are probably things that I do that I don't necessarily identify with. 'Oh yeah aunty taught me that' and this is why she probably did it. You know? Stuff like that, it's interesting.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

Hannah: Yeah see, I do things. I do, like I don't cut my nails at night, but I don't know why I do that. And I don't know if that's related to Papatūānuku.

(Individual interview 27/04/08)

In her research August (2004; 2005) expressed similar findings. Her participants (including herself) practiced some tikanga yet there were others that they choose not

to. She notes that it is possibly easier to dismiss tikanga when there is little understanding as to why it is in place or what its purpose is.

August (2004) makes the point that colonisers prioritised which knowledge was important and they did not consider Māori women's knowledge valid. The colonisation of tikanga has rendered invisible the underlying knowledge why particular corporeal practices are important. Okeroa offers her understandings of why this could be.

Okeroa: I think one of the things that happens is, when you're immersed in a culture that is a very oral culture, it's not easy to be able to conceptualize it [tikanga] as being exactly that until later on. It was through reading, through listening to other forms, of listening to other people talking about their experiences. So, really the key to it is over time, relating my individual experiences of the world out there with what my grandmother had talked about.

(Individual interview 30/07/08)

This is an important point. Mana wahine provides for wairua discourse. A main strand of wairua discourse is providing the space for Māori women to connect what we know (explicitly or implicitly) about our past and how we live in the present (Tuhiwai Smith 1992). Kōhanga reo and Kura Kaupapa are starting the work of recovering some of the knowledge about tikanga (August 2004). Mana wahine is another important avenue where this can occur.

Okeroa goes on further to talk about the role her parents played in the transference of knowledge:

Okeroa: Both your [my] grandmother and grandfather had great difficulty trying to explain why they do things and why it is. This is how it is done and that generation, from what I could perceive, was all like that. They did not have the mechanism to be able to translate it or to put what they knew about how it should be and to put it into the translation side of it for us kids to be able to understand.

(Individual interview 30/07/08)

The underlying assumption made by Okeroa is that for one reason or another the knowledges informing tikanga were not expressly taught to her. She notes that this was because her parents didn't have the necessary tools to do this. I argue further that they were preoccupied with survival in a colonised world. Hokowhitu (2008) makes the important point that for our ancestors survival necessarily meant complicity with Pākehā systems. Okeroa reflects that often knowledge was not passed onto them because often her parents were just too busy.

Okeroa: I think my mother was a key, she played a key role in my, in setting the terms of reference for where I wanted to go as an individual Māori woman and it wasn't as though she sat down and talked to me about it. She never had the time, bringing up, having fifteen children and having to try and raise them and feed them and all that. It was just the role model that she did and you become instinctively aware that there was this element out there that had a profound effect on us as Māori women.

(Individual interview 30/07/08)

The colonised reality of Okeroa's mother [my grandmother] meant that to survive she had to be complicit in her role as mother and as wife. Consequently, important knowledge was not explicitly passed on to her children, although implicitly tikanga and the elements of wairua were. Several Māori women writers (Johnston and Pihama 1995; Mikaere 2003; Tuhiwai Smith 1992) note that colonial discourses served to domesticate Māori women into roles such as wives and mothers. These gendered roles have spatial corollaries with private and domestic spaces. Māori women were disjoined from the traditional whānau structure that had shaped their lives (Tuhiwai Smith 1992). Complicity with these new roles meant the loss of a body of knowledge concerning Māori women's bodily tikanga because colonisation did not permit the use of those tikanga.

Participants in Hutchings' thesis (2002) noted that they were not taught about 'Papatūānuku responsibilities' they were just intrinsically aware of them. Colonisation has meant that certain knowledges are rendered invisible, including knowledge about mana wahine. My grandparents were trying to live in a world that reduced Māori knowledge to 'myths' and stories. Hybridity is a familiar concept to our ancestors, as Hokowhitu (2008, 120) notes:

[t]he world they [Māori] faced was a hybrid one and, accordingly, Māori culture had to rapidly transform to survive, sometimes replicating Pākehā culture, sometimes forging hybrid compromises, sometimes creating cultural bastions (such as the marae) and deploying subversive methods to keep their culture alive.

My goal in this thesis is to re-privilege Māori women's knowledges as legitimate. As I have demonstrated the elements of spirituality and mythology are important to the lived, embodied and symbolic geographies of Māori women. The colonial retellings of Māori myths and histories have been particular devastating for mana wahine. In these retellings atua wāhine are practically invisible.

### **Kei hea ngā atua wāhine? – Where are the female goddesses?**

Participants promoted the spiritual as informing their lived realities however, the spiritual aspects of ngā atua wāhine did not always invoke a positive association for them. The colonised versions of Māori cosmology have been reinvented by colonial processes. One area of Māori society that has been reinterpreted during colonisation is our cosmological narratives. These narratives were misinterpreted and then taught back to Māori over the years resulting in a vital element being lost. The female element has been rendered invisible in many myths or if included has been marginalised and pacified. As mentioned previously, Mikaere (2003) and Yates-Smith (1998) have started the important work of reclaiming those energies and knowledges about atua wāhine but a big gap still exists prompting the question where are all our atua wāhine? This question was mirrored to me when I asked participants about the atua wāhine that they knew; quite a few participants found it difficult remember the names of the female goddesses.

Mihi: 'Cause the atua were always the men ... 'cause I didn't even know that there were women atua until Hera started doing her doctorate and then that makes you think 'oh ok' there is women. I don't know their names.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

Most participants brought up several of the male atua (Tāne, Tangaroa and Māui) without hesitation. Johnston (1998) notes that in their documentation of Māori stories the colonisers have written out Māori women. They made the assumption that the leading characters were men. It is not surprising then that participants were more aware of atua tāne.

Perhaps what is more interesting is how the women feel atua wāhine are represented in the myths. Referring to the Māui stories participants noted the following:

Hannah: Those particular stories made me think that they were quite negative ... women, like kind of evil, mean, hags.

(Individual interview 27/04/08)

Hera: [They were] characters in a story. Um, often the villains in the story, the bad people ... the actual sexual power of the women were left out of it.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

The powers, particularly the reproductive power, of these atua wāhine were retold in a way that rendered that power as negative (Mikaere 2003). August (2005) expands on this point and argues that when viewed through Western lenses tikanga governing women's bodies is considered restrictive. She argues that women's tapu is linked to mythical accounts. Mikaere (2003) supports this and argues that women's sexual power was an important and necessary spiritual force. Colonisation recast the concepts of tapu and noa (Mikaere 2003). The oppositional framework of Western ideology has been readily applied to tapu and noa. Māori women's bodies are in a state of tapu at certain times, and this means that they must be protected. Furthermore, women have the power to make things noa. They have the power to transverse the spiritual boundaries between tapu and noa (Mikaere 2003). This power (to whakanoa but also the sexual power) of women has been recast in a negative light (August 2004; Mikaere 2003).

Tuhiwai Smith (1992) argues that Māori women's power to change the state of tapu to noa is conceptualised through western frameworks as indicative of passivity. Mikaere (2003, 89) echoes this, she argues "their [Māori women's] once revered role as facilitators of the movement between tapu and noa states has been characterised in purely negative terms". Using a mana wahine framework the complex concepts of tapu and noa can be conceptualised as complementary rather than opposing polarities. Rather than insisting that women's sexual power and ability to whakanoa is a sign of passivity it can be seen as power that is active and dynamic. Johnston (1998) notes that Māori women need to challenge dominant discourses that define our differences negatively. The entanglement of traditional tikanga and colonised

understandings of them produce particular hybridized colonial inventions (Hokowhita 2008).

Most of the participants in this research learnt about Māori cosmology through mainstream schooling. Two participants, however, were immersed in the Māori culture during their upbringing. For these participants their understanding of mythology was very much tied to their everyday geographies. When asked how she learnt about atua and cosmology Mere responds:

Mere: I don't know if it was the same for everyone else. Everyone else might have just learnt at school, but for us it was at home ... but our mythology and stories of our ancestors got mixed in all together, they weren't separated. So when we learnt about Hine-nui-te-pō and Papatūānuku and all of her children and stuff, we learnt them along with the stories of our ancestors, real things that did happen. So it was all mixed in, the same, you know.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

Despite myth and legends being woven into landmarks and histories of her ancestors Mere also recognises the influence that colonial mainstream education has had on Māori mythology. Tuhiwai Smith (1992, 34) argues:

[t]his process [colonised schooling] has turned Māori history into mythology and the Māori women within those histories into distant and passive old crones whose presence in the 'story' was to add interest to an otherwise male adventure.

This is echoed by participants when asked about Papatūānuku and her role in myths as they had learnt them.

Moana: ... I kind of think of her in a stationary way.

Naomi: As passive?

Moana: Yeah ... I mean she did kind of have a productive role initially but after that things got done to her.

(Individual interview 23/05/08)

Moana refers to the productive role of Papatūānuku (this is discussed further in chapter 5), I assume she is referring to the association of Papatūānuku with birthing processes, but then she notes that she understood Papa as stationary. Hera has a similar understanding.

Hera: ... a lot of those stories kind of pacify her, she has a lot of things done to her, being separated from Rangi and again not kind of telling her story.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

Hannah also experiences Papa in this way and she also notes the focus of these myths on the masculine. Schooling has reified the colonisers' perspective. Hybridized patriarchal and colonial retellings of Māori mythology appear to have established themselves as authentic to the detriment of Māori women. When asked about Papatūānuku and Hine-ahu-one in myths she replies:

Hannah: I've got this thought in my head and I'm trying to verbalise, so bear with me. The stories are told again as the male is like the hero, because Tāne separates them [Ranginui and Papatūānuku]. Tāne makes the woman [Hine-ahu-one]. He's the [main one], you know, and the women are more this kind of, in the background, supporting kind of a role. And yet from my perspective they are actually quite important.

(Individual interview 27/04/08)

For Hannah, it is evident that she is trying to reconcile what she has been taught (hybridized version of mythology) with her readings of the importance of wāhine Māori. She is trying to grapple with the inevitable contradictions that come with living in contemporary Aotearoa.

Hokowhitu (2008) makes the important point that recognising the patriarchy imposed through colonisation is not to say that modes of Māori patriarchy did not exist. Notwithstanding, colonial patriarchal conceptualisations of Māori culture are pervasive and are assumed authentic. Mikaere (2003) notes that these colonised versions of Māori histories posited Papatūānuku as being taken as Ranginui's wife and that Hine-ahu-one was just the receptacle for Tāne's seed. One of the most devastating effects of colonisation has been the appropriation of these retellings



(often (mis)interpreted by Pākehā males gazing in from the outside)<sup>41</sup> as our own histories.

Generations of Māori have accepted as normal the biblical characterisation of the females in the Māori creation stories. To cast doubt on the authenticity of the widely accepted version of Māori cosmogony by claiming that it has been colonised is, therefore, to enter into perilous territory. But enter it we must, if we are to be sure that the concepts we embrace so wholeheartedly as embodying Māori spirituality are in fact our own and not some distorted version of what was once ours, remoulded in the image of the colonisers beliefs (Mikaere 2003, 78-79).

Trying to disentangle Western and masculinist discourses from Māori histories and mythology seems, to me, to be an impossible task. It is a task that has been taken up by the likes of August (2004, 2005) Mikaere (1999, 2003) and Yates-Smith (1998) and their theses are dedicated to the goal of re-privileging the feminine in Māori histories. They have managed to find our atua wāhine entangled in web of colonial, masculine and Christian discourses. Making sense of these intertwined realities requires constant and sometimes frustrating negotiation. Participants have to negotiate this entangled web on a daily basis.

### ***Conclusion***

I began this chapter by discussing wairua and its importance in shaping the lived and embodied geographies of participants. I argue that mana wahine provides the space to privilege so called 'non-rational' understandings of space and place. The abstract and symbolic nature of Papa is reflected in the ubiquity of participants' understandings of her. Drawing from interviews, participants' understandings of space, symbolic and physical, was examined. The entanglement of Christianity and Māori spirituality was then examined. Colonisation and Christianity have transformed Māori mythology, cosmology and spirituality. Consequently they are folded into participants' understandings of Papatūānuku.

Mythology mediates participants' relationships with Papa. My main argument here is that mythology has been colonised and relegated to peripheral spaces. Atua wāhine

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<sup>41</sup> Elsdon Best and Percy Smith are two Pākehā males whose work has been referred to in the retelling of Māori histories. For more see Mikaere 1999 and 2003; Hutchings 2002; Smith 1992 and 1999; Yates-Smith 1998.

have been marginalised and the important knowledges derived from mythology about the role of women have been recast in a negative way.

In this chapter I demonstrate that participants occupy hybrid and in-between spaces in their relationships to Papatūānuku. They are bound up in complex webs of contradiction, tensions and inconsistencies that require constant negotiation. In this chapter (and this thesis) I expose the entanglements of wairua, Christianity and mythology to demonstrate the marginalisation of Māori women knowledges. In the following chapter I seek to re-configure Māori women's relationships to Papatūānuku.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Reconfiguring Papatūānuku: bodies, home, and environmental responsibilities

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The impacts of colonisation and dominance of Western knowledge, described in the previous chapter, have marginalised Māori women's knowledges and the spiritual spaces associated with this knowledge. Yet, despite this 'othering' of Māori women's knowledge, Papatūānuku can be located in the everyday geographies of Māori women. Themes from the interviews such as embodiment, home spaces and environmentalism as they relate to Papatūānuku are examined in this chapter. The mutually constitutive relationship between bodies and spaces is now widely accepted within feminist geography (Grosz 1994; Longhurst 2001; McDowell 1997b). The spaces of Papatūānuku and the bodies of Māori women are no exception. In keeping with my research aims and with mana wahine epistemologies this chapter makes visible the *herstories* of Māori women.

Longhurst (2008) rightly points out that we inhabit different subjectivities at different times and different locations. Therefore the spatiality of participants' understandings of Papatūānuku at different spatial scales is examined. Participants focus on their understandings of what, who and where they conceptualise Papatūānuku. In turn, the co-constitution of participants' bodies and subjectivities are examined. These understandings are by no means straightforward as participants occupy multiple subjectivities and often cross through hybrid and in-between spaces. Regardless, there are similarities in experience, feeling, and understanding that are reflected by the participants' *kōrero*.

This chapter is framed around three motifs. The first focuses into the closest of geographical scales, that of the body. Specifically pregnant, birthing and lactating bodies are discussed as they inform and are informed by the body and space of Papatūānuku. Drawing from a mixture of participants' *kōrero*, feminist geographies and mana wahine literature I engage with the co-constitution of participants bodies with the body/space of Papa. My aim is to blur the boundaries between binaries that are usually associated with maternal bodies. Moving outwards to the scale of home I

discuss the influence of home space on participants' understandings of Papatūānuku. The space of home is multiple and fluid, consequently so too are participants relationships with Papa. Finally, participants reflect on the responsibility to look after Papatūānuku as conceptualised as an emotional and physical connection to her. The commodification of Papatūānuku is discussed. This chapter aligns most closely with my third research objective, to examine the ways in which Māori women interact with and relate to Papa today. I engage in a politics of knowledge production and challenge hegemonic understandings that legitimate knowledge is somehow confined to that which is 'rational', 'objective', and 'masculine'.

### ***Maternal bodies***

*All of us have occupied interuterine space (it is perhaps the closest of all spaces) and yet it is seldom discussed in geographical discourse (it has long been closeted). It has been closeted because the maternal, fluid, indeterminate geography of the uterus is likely to mess up masculinist knowledge based on claims to truth, objectivity and rationality (Longhurst 2001, 128).*

The spaces of Papatūānuku have been likened to that interuterine space that we occupy before entering this world (Grace and Kahukiwa 2000; Mikaere 2003; Te Awekotuku 1994). Longhurst (2008, 2, emphasis in the original) notes that, even though geographers have been quick to take up interest in bodies, little has been published about "what surely must be one of, if not *the*, most important of all bodies – bodies that conceive, give birth, and nurture other bodies – that is, maternal bodies". In literary and artistic representations of Papatūānuku dominant discourses reflect the importance of her role as nurturer and mother and highlight the parallels between her and the womb (see figure 4 and figure 5). Therefore, it is not surprising that participants made similar comments. The maternal body of Papatūānuku (in fact all spaces of Papatūānuku) and of wāhine Māori are virtually invisible within geography.

## ***Te Pō***

*... I am aged in aeons, being Te Pō, the night, that came from Te Kore, the nothing.*

*First there was Te Kore that could neither be felt nor sensed. This was the void, the silence, where there was no movement and none to move, no sound and none to hear, no shape and none to see.*

*I was born out of this nothingness that Increase and Consciousness, and I, Te Pō, were born. I am aged in aeons, and I am Night of many nights, Night of many Darknesses – Night of great darkness, long darkness, utter darkness, birth and death darkness; of darkness unseen, darkness touchable and untouchable, and of every kind of darkness that can be.*

*In my womb lay Papatūānuku who was conceived in Darkness, born into Darkness – and who matured in Darkness, and in Darkness became mated with the Sky.*

*Then Papatūānuku too conceived, and bore many children among the many long ages of Te Pō.*

### **Figure 4: Te Pō by Patricia Grace<sup>42</sup>**

Papatūānuku is conceptualised as the space and embodiment of mother by many participants and they discuss the influence of her on their own embodiment, pregnant or not (five participants are mothers, one participant was pregnant at the time of the interview, three participants have since found out they are hapū). During the data gathering period I was forced to reflect quite intimately on my own embodiment and my relationship to Papatūānuku as mother and as whare tangata. I recently had surgery which potentially could have left me infertile. This experience transformed my relationship with and conceptualisations of Papatūānuku. I reflect on this in my research diary.

I am finding it quite difficult to write and talk about Papatūānuku as so involved in women's experiences of childbirth and pregnancy at the moment. Timing is an interesting thing. Whare tangata and ūkaipō are not really things I have thought of until they came up in the interviews. I guess because I am not at that time where having children is a priority. Now I am forced to think about it not only in relation to my research but I have to confront this in a really personal way. My surgery is next week and it is a scary thought that I may not be able to experience having children. My relationship with Papa has taken on a new dimension since finding out I need surgery. I have even emailed a friend to ask if there is a karakia I can do to Papa or Hine-te-iwaiwa to help me through the surgery. I never would have thought of doing this

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<sup>42</sup> Extract reproduced with permission from *Wahine Toa: Women of Maori Myth* (2000, 16).

if it wasn't for my masters research. It is uncanny how the two seem to have come about at the same time.

(Research Diary entry 18/09/08)

The academic process that I was going through, during this experience, exposed me to cultural and spiritual contexts which transformed my embodied understandings of Papa. Longhurst (2005) makes the important point that context constructs the way the materiality of bodies is understood and experienced.

In this section, I examine the context of Papatūānuku as she is shaped and understood by participants. In doing so, it is possible to challenge the binary between biology and social inscription (Longhurst 2005). Māori women's bodies cannot be understood out of the cultural practices and spaces that they are located (Longhurst 2008). Therefore it is timely and necessary to examine Papatūānuku as she constructs and in turn is constructed by the maternal bodies of Māori women.

### **Te Kore, Te Pō, Te Ao Mārama**

An overwhelming commonality between participants is their relationship to the maternal body/space of Papatūānuku. This is evident when discussing the spaces of Te Kore, Te Pō and Te Ao Mārama – it is in Te Pō that Papatūānuku is said to have been born. Te Pō symbolises the womb in many representations, and as shown in figure 4. Mana wahine is premised on this symbolic representation of the womb. As Hutchings (2002, 64) notes:

a mana wahine epistemology places the connection between Māori women and the land originally found in the womb of Te Pō and the origins of Te Ao Māori at the centre. It is in the womb of Te Pō where Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother was conceived.

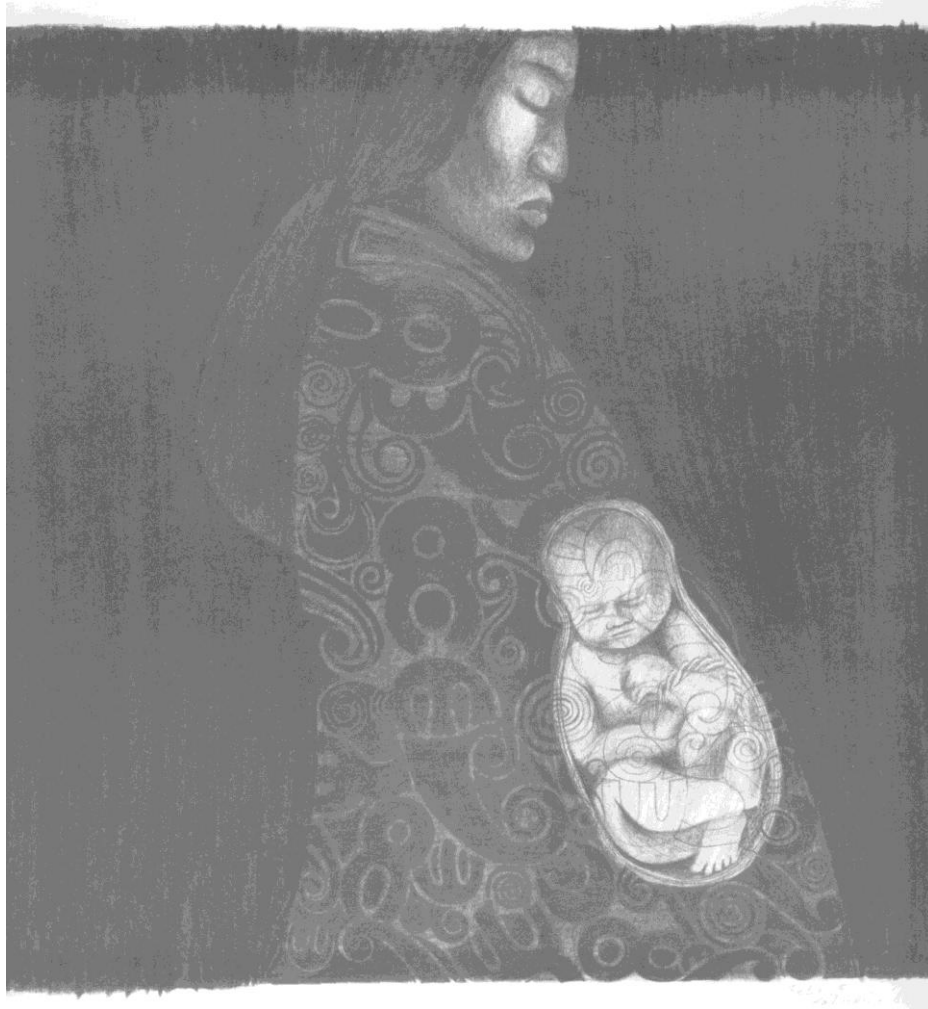


Figure 5: Te Pō and Papatūānuku, pencil on paper, by Robyn Kahukiwa<sup>43</sup>

The spaces of Te Kore, Te Pō and Te Ao Mārama are seen as symbolic of the birthing process as mirrored in the following exchange.

Okeroa: So when you look at the life form and I maintain, and this is just me, that when a baby is created within the womb that that baby is in a state of Te Kore, protected from all the elements nurtured by Papatūānuku and its mother, same process. When it comes to the birthing side of it, as it [the baby] moves down the birth canal it gets into the state of Te Pō. It's doing something, it's not Te Kore [which] is interpreted as there is nothing there, absolutely nothing, it is the nothingness. But when it gets to the birthing process as it moves down the birth canal it is in the state of Te Pō. It has the choice, the baby has the choice of going back to the

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<sup>43</sup> Reproduced with permission from Robyn Kahukiwa from *Wahine Toa: Women of Maori Myth* (2000, 19). Kahukiwa describes Te Pō as a phase of the creation preceding the birth of Papatūānuku.

state of Te Kore, then you've [the baby] died. Our babies do that for whatever reason. But we expect them to move through that process Te Kore, Te Pō out into the light. When you relate it to the tupuna whare, the tupuna whare inside, I believe, is in a similar realm as Te Kore. We are all in there, we are safe. We should be able to debate issues, we are protected from the outside elements and where the whānautanga that goes on we help to nurture and feed each other when you get to the doorway, the threshold Te Pō you have the choice of going back in and going out. Once you step out of it you are in to Te Mārama.

(Individual interview 30/07/08)

While this is a slight variation from Te Pō being considered the womb, it demonstrates the importance of these culturally constructed spaces of Te Kore, Te Pō and Te Ao Mārama to participants understanding of the biological processes of women's bodies. Okeroa notes that although you move from one space to another they are intricately interwoven. She makes the point that these concepts are used as a means of relating spiritual concepts with the physical by using the parts of the body as the different 'states' and spaces of Te Kore, Te Pō and Te Ao Mārama. In addition, these spaces mediate Okeroa's understandings of death, the return of the deceased to Papatūānuku and the practices of tapu and noa during this period. The body of Papatūānuku and also Māori women's bodies are intricately woven with these spaces.

Johnston and Longhurst (1998) highlight the complexity of bodies, arguing that they are both socially constructed and represented through language and culture but they are also real, material and undeniably biological. Furthermore, Longhurst (2008) makes that point that by looking at maternities through cultural lenses by no means escapes the materiality of these bodies. These culturally mediated spaces construct and are constructed by women's bodies. For Okeroa these spaces represent life (and death) and establish an important link to Papatūānuku. This symbolism is important to mana wahine and to spatial and spiritual understandings of Māori women's maternal bodies.



## Representation of maternal bodies

Whenua is an important concept in relation to the maternal body of Papatūānuku and of Māori women. “Whenua, the land, is the body of Papatūānuku, the mother of humanity. The land nourishes us and gives us life. Whenua, the placenta, within the womb of woman nourishes the foetus, allowing it to develop and be born” (Mikaere 2003, 33). Pere (1993) also expresses the interconnections between land and body. She notes that the land has the same significance as the placenta that nurtures the embryo in the womb. For Moana, the ability to experience similar embodied processes as Papatūānuku is an important parallel:

Naomi: You said before that your ideas about motherhood and that kind of stuff is shaped by how you think of Papatūānuku. Can you elaborate?

Moana: Um, that I think like the idea of carrying a child in your womb and you know birthing it and then raising it and nurturing and simple basic things like feeding and keeping it sheltered and you know basic survival stuff. I definitely, definitely link that in my mind to Papatūānuku.

(Individual interview 23/05/08)

August (2004) expresses similar findings in her research about the importance of Papatūānuku to the process of birth and mothering. Importantly, although she does not find it negative to be connected to Papatūānuku August (2004) heeds a word of caution that there is a risk of limiting Māori women to one essential being. Longhurst (2008) also makes the point that within dominant Western thought mothering is considered natural and connected to an essential femininity. I do not seek to naturalise motherhood. Rather, I seek to re-privilege conceptualisations of motherhood which do not reinforce simplistic and oppositional binaries. Giving space to the diversity of Māori women’s experiences is central to the mana wahine epistemologies of this thesis. While this is true, the commonalities reflected in participants’ kōrero and dominant representations demonstrate the importance of Papa to understandings of maternities.

As I have argued previously it is important to consider the materiality of the body. I agree with Birke (2000, 597) when she argues that “feminist theorising about, say, the body limits itself if it ignores the inner processes of that body; we *are* embodied, in

messy and material ways and we must find ways of incorporating that understanding into theory”. Bodies that conceive, give birth, and menstruate provide a platform to bridge the binary between the material and the social and cultural.

Whenua can mean both land and placenta. Consequently this word connects the bodies of women with the body of Papatūānuku [the whenua] (Mikaere 2003). Dual meanings are common in te reo Māori, specifically in relation to reproduction, birth and lactation. Vapi Kupenga *et al* (1993) discuss how Māori women’s relationship with the earth, with Papatūānuku and the importance of this relationship was evident in te reo Māori. Mikaere (2003) reinforces this claim. For example, hapū can mean being pregnant and also small tribal groupings; whānau means to give birth but it also means family; mate can mean menstrual cycle or death; and atua means menstrual blood and god/goddess. Furthermore, it has been argued that language can be indicative of a culture’s values and the role of Māori women (Kupenga *et al* 1993; Tuhiwai Smith 1994, 1998). The pronouns ia and tona/tana are not gendered (Tuhiwai Smith 1994). The former can mean either he or she and the latter can mean his or hers.<sup>44</sup> It is not my intention to provide a detailed translation or history behind these kupu. The point here is that te reo Māori signals the connection between the material, the maternal (pregnancy, birth, menstrual blood, placenta) and the cultural and spiritual (sub-tribe, family, god/goddess, land).

Another important example of the duality of Māori words is whare tangata. This word refers to the womb but also translates directly into English as the house of humanity. Papa is often conceptualised as the house of humanity (Mikaere 2003). Hera discusses the importance of whare tangata.

Hera: I also think whare tangata and I think growing up you weren’t kind of taught that kind of thing. That a woman’s mana was very tied up in her ability to have children, to produce the next generation. I see that as a huge part of it, you know to have children is a very empowering experience.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

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<sup>44</sup> The reo is important in establishing the link between Papa and Māori women, so when discussing these concepts I am aware that to reduce Te Pō, whenua, and whare tangata into ideas that can be understood without te reo is a risky task.

Similarly, Mikaere (2003, 90) argues:

that the role of women as *whare tangata* was highly valued according to *tikanga Māori* is evidenced by the centrality of the female reproductive functions to *Māori* cosmogony and the powers attributed to the female organs in mediating the boundaries between *tapu* and *noa*. It is also apparent from the pivotal role that women played in preserving the lines of descent, from the gods to present and future generations.

August (2004) has made important contributions to disentangling and reconfiguring *tikanga* surrounding *Māori* women's bodies. She discusses their menstruating and pregnant bodies and notes that here are certain spaces, such as the *urupa*, the sea, and other food gathering sites, that for some *hapū* and *iwi* these bodies should not enter. Through Western understandings this is seen as a restriction, a disability and menstruating bodies are thought of as unclean. August (2004; 2005) argues that this particular *tikanga* is less about restriction than it is about the special and *tapu* state that is accorded *Māori* women's bodies at this time. *Tapu* is more than prohibition (Tate 1990). This example demonstrates the way that Western understandings of women's bodily processes transform how *tikanga* is understood by non-*Māori* but also these understandings have been internalised by *Māori* themselves. The value of the role of *Māori* women, the importance of the role of *Papatūānuku*, and the birthing process is reflected not only in the *Māori* language but also in *Māori* cosmogony, establishing those *whakapapa* links for *Māori* women back to *Papatūānuku*.

When asked if there is anything else they felt strengthens their embodied relationship with *Papa*, *Hera* expresses the way in which her understandings of *Papatūānuku* have influenced and shaped her own embodiment and subjectivity through breastfeeding.

Hera: I think breastfeeding is one ... that was real empowering thing because you talk about *Papatūānuku* as *Te Ūkaipō* [mother, origin, source of sustenance] and all the kind of connotations that go with that *kupu*. So she is our, she is *Te Ūkaipō* and that kind of name for her went right through from when she was, from when her children were in between her and *Rangi* and feeding from her breast then, to when they came out to the world of light and again feeding from her breast. You know she sustained, she nurtures and sustains us all through our lives and then we can go back '*kia hoki ki te ūkaipō*- go back to her when you die'. That whole

process of ūkaipō and the feeling that you have when you are breastfeeding your baby is quite an empowering feeling and I felt that connection that, kind of on a spiritual level.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

The body of Papatūānuku in this instance is implicated in Hera's own embodied understandings of breastfeeding. As argued earlier, feminist geographers have given much attention to the mutually constituted nature of bodies and spaces, arguing that neither exists in isolation. Longhurst (2008, 1) states "bodies and space rub against, fold, and sometimes disintegrate into each other". For Hera, it was not only the space of Papa but the body of Papa that seems to have disintegrated into her own, and vice versa. Similar sentiments are expressed by Hutchings in her thesis. The participants in her research describe two relationships with Papatūānuku. The first is that humans, wāhine Māori are the children of Papa and the second is a sense of oneness with her "we are Papatūānuku" (Hutchings 2002, 139).

The interwoven subjectivities of Māori women and Papatūānuku are also reflected by Okeroa.

Okeroa: She [Papatūānuku] is there, she is who we are and when you look at us as a cultural being we can't go past the whenua. Otherwise we wouldn't be here without the whenua.

(Individual interview 30/07/08)

Pregnant and lactating bodies challenge the notion of a stable and autonomous, self contained body (Longhurst 2008). The bodies of women and Papatūānuku are inextricably intertwined. It should be stressed that these understandings of reproduction, birth and breastfeeding are spatially and culturally constructed and contextual. Longhurst (2008) makes the point that bodies can never be fully extracted from culture. I do not set out to romanticise pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding as I understand that it may not always be a source of enjoyment or empowerment for all women. What interests me, is the way in which dominant discourse has marginalised these experiences and processes and subsequently devalued those bodies that carry them out. As discussed previously, August (2004) has written about the cultural context of the role of Māori women and argues that we

need to be aware of cultural specificities and understandings of bodily processes and tikanga. Similarly, Mikaere (1999, 46) discusses the idea of restriction.

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

Kupenga *et al* (1993, 304) note that “Papatūānuku, the Great Earth Mother, gifted to iwi the power of birth and rebirth, and her existence remains of great significance”. In Māori culture the value that is traditionally associated with women’s ability to bear children is reflected in several comments made by participants, when asked about their views on the roles of women.

Mere: The biggest value that a woman had to offer to the culture or just to offer is her ability to bear children and to give birth and children play a huge, huge part in the survival of your tikanga and your kōrero, everything in your culture.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

Moana: I think it’s [being able to have children] just such an important part of being a woman, whether you choose to have children or not, you have the ability to. Um and I see that whole time as really special and sacred and quite a spiritual time as well, um, so that definitely informs the way I think about my relationship to Papa.

(Individual interview 23/05/08)

These wāhine see power and mana in the reproductive abilities of wāhine Māori and women in general. In contrast, the role of women as child bearer, as mother, and commonly associated notions of irrationality, public, and embodiment are posited on the marginalised side of a set of binaries that pervade dominant Western society (Longhurst 2001; Young 2005). The pervasiveness of dualistic thinking has had severe consequences for the disciplining of women’s bodies.

## **Colonisation of birthing practices**

The value of a woman's reproductive abilities has been and continues to be marginalised within hegemonic discourse (Grosz 1994; Longhurst 2001; Young 2005). Grosz (1994, 13-14) expresses similar sentiment arguing that:

female sexuality and women's powers of reproduction are defining (cultural) characteristics of women, and, at the same time, these very functions render women vulnerable, in need of protection, or special treatment, as variously prescribed by patriarchy.

That is not to deny the importance of men's reproductive capabilities. Birke (2000) has demonstrated male fertility has been given priority over female reproductive issues in dominant medical discourse. For women reproduction is seen as a 'disease' and is marginalised by dominant medical practices. The control, manipulation and disciplining of women's bodies is not a new phenomena.

For Māori women colonisation resulted in a disciplining of their maternal bodies and practices which has denied the value of these bodies known through culturally mediated mythologies and practices (Mikaere 2003; Te Awekotuku 1991a). Some attention has been given to the colonisation of birthing practices here in Aotearoa (see Abel and Kearns 1991; Longhurst 2008; and Mikaere 2003) but for the most part the places and spaces of birth remain largely unexamined. Up until about the 1930s Māori women retained control over their birthing practices (Abel and Kearns 1991;<sup>45</sup> Mikaere 2003). From this time the medicalisation of childbirth took hold and Māori birthing practices were transformed. In hospital spaces there was increased control over Māori women's bodies and bodily tikanga. Mikaere (2003) points out that in this space there was no *karakia* to Hine-te-iwaiwai and the tapu of women's bodies was denigrated as it was available for all to see. Women were unable to be surrounded by whānau during their labours. In research by Longhurst (2008) on home birth Angeline (interviewee) notes that birthing at home was outlawed during her grandmother's time and that they were expected to "birth like Pākehā women so there was a taking away of control, that whānau [family] way of giving birth on your own land" (cited in Longhurst 2008, 86).

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<sup>45</sup> Abel and Kearns (1990) indicate that by 1935 78% of births occurred within maternity hospitals suggesting that Māori birthing practices were predominantly transformed.

Establishing a physical and symbolic connection to Papatūānuku has been colonised by disallowing certain practices. Māori were denied the chance to return ‘whenua ki te whenua’, to return the placenta of a newborn child to the land. All of the participants, with the exception of two, did not have their whenua buried and most of them cited that the hospitals wouldn’t allow the whenua to be released.

Okeroa: One of the things that happened when I had my three kids, the placenta, the whenua, we were told by the hospital authorities that ... you had nothing to do with it. Now we are allowed to take it and own it, like we should do and it’s not called the whenua for no reason. So I make the point with my kids, that when baby is born get the whenua and take the whenua home and it must be put back into Papatūānuku.

(Individual interview 30/07/08)

Hera: Yeah ... when Mihi and I were growing up our whenua didn’t. Mine got incinerated in the hospital, so you know it wasn’t until my little sister came along that that kind of practice came back into, but when I was born there was no, no kind of option to have the whenua returned to her [Papatūānuku].

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

Aroha: We don’t have it [the whenua], none of us. We were all in the hospital and they all got thrown out.

(Joint interview 20/06/08)

My experience mirrors the kōrero above. My whenua was not returned to Papatūānuku. When I have children I feel strongly that the whenua will be returned to Papa, thus following a tikanga that has been denied to many Māori in the past. Aroha expressed similar sentiment when asked if having a child changed her relationship with Papatūānuku, she responded:

Aroha: I think it makes me become more aware, like when I was going through the whole placenta thing and when I was carrying and making my decision to actually bring it home, I actually had to stop and think about what it actually meant to me. I didn’t want to be one of these ones that just do it ’cause that was what was done. Or in my mum’s era they didn’t bury the placentas then. You know mum and them didn’t know anything about

it then. So it had sort of been lost but when it came back to me I had to make a conscious decision why was I doing it. I like the whole reasoning that it would go back to the mother earth and that would be its place and maybe a like bonding between the spiritual and the physical.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

The example of *whenua ki te whenua* is an important one regarding the colonisation of Māori women's bodies and also of the body of Papatūānuku. As discussed in chapter four, the knowledge behind particular *tikanga* practiced by participants has been mystified and obscured through colonising processes. The denial of returning the *whenua* of newborn children to Papatūānuku is no exception. Te Awekotuku (1991a, 68) makes the important point that “much of the mystification comes from the colonising health system which has effectively disallowed one traditional – and essential – link of the Māori woman with the earth”. Colonial and neo-colonial health systems denied generations of Māori this practice. It is necessary, therefore, to consider further not only the places and spaces of birth but also to examine the places and spaces of ‘afterbirth’.

### **Reconfiguring the maternal**

Many Māori women are intent on regaining control and reconfiguring birthing practices. Participants also make active decisions to practice Māori maternal bodily *tikanga*. Many of the women were insistent about revitalising the *tikanga* of ‘*whenua ki te whenua*’ when they had/have their own children. They actively contest the marginalisation of *tikanga*. For example, Hera had composed a *karakia* to Hine-te-iwaiwai to assist her with the birth of her son. Okeroa discussed how she has made *ipu whenua* for the *whenua* of her *moko*. There has been a re-positioning of some embodied Māori practices. With institutional support (medical) it is now common place for Māori (and some non-Māori) to bury the placenta.

Longhurst (2008) has made exciting contributions to examining the spaces of birth in her research on home birth in Aotearoa. Her interviews with Angeline highlight the need to regain a degree of control over birthing processes and over her own body. Angeline made an active decision to have three of her children at home surrounded by family. This decision was personal but it is also connected to a wider struggle to



regain control over Māori women's maternal and birthing bodies. Māori women may not necessarily want to or be able to revert to traditional birthing practices but what is important is that they have the ability to make decisions about where and how they birth (and afterbirth). This can provide a degree of rangatiratanga over their bodies and tikanga. For Angeline the home space provided her with the ability to escape the hegemony of the Western health system and medical practices (Longhurst 2008). Home is an important space in her understandings and experiences of birth and family.

### ***Home - Spaces of 'nature', familiarity and refuge***

The importance of space in mediating women's relationships with Papatūānuku is reflected when participants talk about those spaces that they most strongly associate with Papatūānuku. For many of the women, tūrangawaewae or home exaggerates the feeling of connectedness to Papatūānuku. Mihi talks about the different levels of understanding she has of Papatūānuku. When asked if she feels disconnected from Papa when she is away from home, her tūrangawaewae, she responds:

Mihi: I think that is when I slip into the different levels of understanding. What Papatūānuku is and what she means to me in the more wider frame, as opposed to a more of a personal sort of way ... so it is not a disconnection but it is a different kind of a connection with Papa here [away from home].

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

The women noted that it was a combination of whakapapa, familiarity, and 'natural' landscapes which heighten the sense of connection to Papatūānuku at 'home'. Teather (1999) expresses similar sentiments and argues that home is a space that melds culture, place and beloved people. This is reflected by Hera.

Hera: I think it is because my tupuna are there and they are buried there and so that is the connection that I have with the land there //

Mihi: // and just because you have grown up with it because you know, you know what's changed over time and stuff as well.

(Joint interview, 21/07/08)

Mere: I don't know if 'cause we grew up in a smaller town and rural town where people are more connected to, you know we have more of Papatūānuku to feel connected to ... Like at home where it's everywhere you know, everything you touch, see and feel is the natural Papatūānuku.

Hine: I would be the same in that I think that she's everywhere but I, like when I go home, there's a certain, like when I'm on the beach; and I don't know if that's because its un-built sort of not all developed like the Mount or anything, because it's more sort of natural that I feel that connection more or whether because it's my beach. I don't know if there is a distinction there, I think it's probably a mixture of both.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

The notion of home varies for these women. Home being their iwi, hapū, or marae but for others it is their family homes, or it is the beach, or simply 'natural' spaces such as forests. Home space is imbued with multiple meanings. Blunt and Dowling (2006, 1) note:

some may speak of the physical structure of their house or dwelling; others may refer to relationships or connections over space and time. You might have positive or negative feelings about home, or a mixture of the two. Your sense of home might be closely shaped by your memories of childhood, alongside your present experiences and your dreams for the future.

Thinking through my own experiences of home, specifically thinking about my marae, my embodied relationship to this space is fluid. My experience of this space varies; it as a place of work, entertainment, tension, frustration, obligation, escape, sadness, security, pleasure, sustenance and peace. All of these understandings of home influence how I conceptualise my relationship with Papatūānuku.

In recent years there has been a surge of interest in emotional geographies (Davidson and Milligan 2004). Geographers are making connections between embodiment, emotion and space/place. Davidson and Milligan (2004, 523) argue that "we need to explore how we feel – as well as think – *through* the body". For the wāhine in this research the spaces of home provide a peaceful and 'natural' place where they feel more connected to Papatūānuku. Emotions mediate how Hera and Mihi experience

'home'. They discuss, for example, the way in which home space constructs emotions of sadness and the impact of this space on their own embodiment.

Hera: It's a mamae [ache, pain] when you leave; you feel that in your chest.

Mihi Yeah there's nothing like going home, there's nothing like heading into the valley and seeing the marae and thinking 'oh yeah'.

(Joint interview 21/07/08)

Home, as it relates to these women's experiences of Papatūānuku, becomes an important source of physical, emotional and spiritual sustenance. hooks (1997) describes a journey to her grandmother's house in the United States during segregation between blacks and whites where upon reaching her grandmother's home she felt relief, safety and protection. She argues that "in our young minds houses belonged to women, not as property, but as places where all that truly mattered in life took place – the warmth and comfort of shelter, the feeding of our bodies, the nurturing of our souls" (hooks 1997, 33).

There are parallels between hooks' understandings of home and those of participants; many of them discuss the journey home and express similar feelings of security, safety and peace. Home is a spatial imaginary and a material space and cultural geographies of home focus on the relationship between the two (Blunt and Dowling 2006). Participant's spatial imaginaries of home spaces are important in relation to Papatūānuku. I asked Mere why home space was important to her relationship with Papa.

Naomi: So that link back there [home] is it ... kind of just getting back to Papatūānuku, do you think there is a link to the physical space to the land? Is it emotional?

Mere: I think it's all, I think it's all of them. It's definitely more than physical, it's emotional, it's spiritual, it's all of those things.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

Mere's emotions are intricately woven with her physical and spiritual understandings of home. For these women home space is a refuge, a site of rejuvenation, yet this is

not always the case. Experiences of home are multiple and contested and many women experience home as a site of abuse, suffering and discrimination (Johnston and Valentine 1995; Mikaere 2003). As I have tried to demonstrate there are multiple understandings of home, particularly as that space relates to Papatūānuku and Māori women's embodied geographies. I think that this reiterates the argument made by Johnston and Valentine (1995, 11) that:

[w]e all have a multiplicity of subject positions and identities. 'Home' is one site where our identities are performed and come under surveillance and where we struggle to reconcile conflicting and contradictory performances of the self. 'Home' itself is also a term laden down with a baggage of multiple meanings.

Each participant has different spatial and temporal understandings of Papatūānuku mediated through their own cultural and social contexts but there are some commonalities between the experiences of the women. Popular representations and discourses of Papatūānuku centre strongly on Papatūānuku as 'earth mother', as the land and whenua and as nurturer.

In Māori cosmology Papatūānuku plays a key role in several of the myths (as noted in chapter four). She is a mother to her many children, she provides Tāne with the necessary materials to create the first woman, and she is a place of refuge for Hine-Tītama when she wants to escape Te Ao Mārama transforming into Hine-nui-te-pō. Papa's role in these kōrero informs many of the lived realities and conceptualisations of the participants' identities as mother but also as kaitiaki of this planet. The importance of the mutually constituted nature of participants' bodies and subjectivities and the spaces of Papa are reflected when participants discuss the emotional attachment and feeling of responsibility to look after Papatūānuku.

### ***Environmental responsibilities***

Bodies both produce space and are produced by space (Ekinsmyth 2002; Grosz 1994; Longhurst 2001, 2008; McDowell 1997a; Nelson and Seager 2005). This is evident when participants' discuss how they are affected by and in turn transform the spaces of Papatūānuku. It is evident from participants' experiences that emotions mediate our experiences of space. Emotional geographies are gaining currency in the discipline. "The articulation of emotion is, thus spatially mediated in a manner that is

not simply metaphorical. Our emotional relations and interactions weave through and help form the fabric of our unique personal geographies” (Davidson and Milligan 2004, 523). As previously discussed, the feeling of connectedness, whether expressly with Papatūānuku or referred to as a ‘feeling of peace’ with ‘nature’, is ubiquitous. Participants reflected on the emotional connections they have with Papa when discussions of environmental degradation arose.

Naomi: Do you think of her as an alive active being? Or do you think of her more as this kind of the earth and we’re doing what we’re doing to her?

Mere: I think of her as alive.

Hine: I think of her as alive as well.

Mere: And I think of her as you know like um, I don’t know how to explain that.

Hine: It’s hard to put into words. I do think of her as alive, because you have, I guess you could call it an emotional attachment to her. Like when you see her being damaged or something I feel that emotional, you know some emotion with that. I believe that she’s real and that’s why I’m feeling emotions for her. And I believe that if we are treating her one way then things are going to you know//

Mere: // there’s a consequence.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

When asked how they picture Papatūānuku, Hēni and Aroha express similar concern for Papatūānuku, this time attributing emotions to Papatūānuku.

Aroha: At the moment I would probably picture her crying because of the state that we’ve put her in over the last 50 years, killing her ’cause of all the pollution and just disrespect.

Naomi: So you see her very much as a physical being as well as the spiritual?

Aroha: yeah //

Hēni: // I would picture her as a living being.

Aroha: Same.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

For these participants the physical body of Papatūānuku (the earth, the land and the environment) is alive and has feelings. She experiences pain and this engenders feelings of anger and hurt in these women. For these participants, Papa is embodied and experiences emotions. When humans are harming the environment they are harming her and there is a reaction.

I have previously discussed the importance of spirituality in shaping understandings of Papatūānuku. Connected to this is the assertion that “emotions *matter*” (Davidson and Milligan 2004, 524 emphasis in the original). Emotions mediate the way that we experience our subjectivities and space and place. By discussing the emotions that participants have about Papatūānuku and the emotions attributed to her it is possible to transcend dualisms (Bennett 2004). Emotions, like spirituality, disrupt the privileging of rational and masculinist thought within academic scholarship. The understandings of the emotionality of Papa discussed by participants’ parallels much of the literary and artistic representations of Papa (see Hinewirangi 1993; Hulme 1992; Tocker 1993). Papatūānuku is portrayed as alive, as a body that feels, and also as a body that can act against what is being done to her. Participants attribute emotions to Papa particularly when talking about environmental degradation. In order to understand gender and environmental issues it is vitally important to consider the role of Papatūānuku.

Kupenga *et al* (1993) argue that to reclaim mana wahine Papa must be nurtured and her resources used and distributed in a sustainable manner. They also make the point that if we do not do this we invite the wrath of Papatūānuku. Māori women are the human manifestations of Papatūānuku, therefore it is argued by some that Māori women have a unique place from which to speak about environmental issues (Hutchings 2002). “Māori people believe they are the kaitiaki of the Earth mother – Papatūānuku and all other domains ... through whakapapa. Papatūānuku sustains the people and the people have an obligation to sustain and care for her” (August 2004, 14). This also reflected in the following whakataukī:

Ko te whenua te wai-ū mō ngā uri whakatipu – the land provides the sustenance for the coming generation [wai-ū means breast milk] (Johnston and Pihama 1995, 36).

It is this relationship that has traditionally been conceptualised as one of mutual benefit. Participants feel a sense of responsibility to look after Papa in a very material sense and they acknowledge the materiality of her body (the physical environment). Dominant understandings of Papatūānuku identify humans' relationship with her as reciprocal (Hutchings 2002). This obligation to Papatūānuku has been described as both a joy and a burden (Hutchings 2002). For Aroha and Hēni it is forms an important part of their relationship to Papa.

Naomi: is there anything else that you do to try and strengthen that connection [between spiritual and physical]?

Aroha: We plant trees on our birthdays instead of going out to//

Hēni: // Buy presents //

Aroha: // that will just end up in the rubbish and will pile up and end up going back to Papatūānuku in the end.

Hēni: We always plant native bush.

Naomi: So that's every year?

Hēni: Every year, so there is a couple of trees down there //

Aroha: // There's only a couple of us that don't have one now. And once again that's symbolic of nurturing earth and therefore if we nurture earth then it will give back to us as well, in the form of oxygen and fruit or whatever.

Naomi: So it's a reciprocal relationship?

Aroha: Yeah

Hēni: Yeah.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

Aroha and Hēni are trying to strengthen their relationship with Papatūānuku by bringing together the spiritual and physical. They plant trees and recognise their

relationship with the earth is reciprocal thus demonstrating the mutually constituted nature of space and bodies.

Hutchings (2002, 50) discusses Papatūānuku as a central basis on which mana wahine stems stating that “Papatūānuku personified the Earth Mother, and is regarded as ‘earthness, the nurturing one.’ Papatūānuku is therefore the nurturer of life and from her humankind is born, and like her Māori women also nurture life”. Hine also discusses this:

Hine: She’s like a mother to you, and I know, I appreciate her ’cause I know the things that she gives me, ’cause I’ve grown up with just, you know, knowing that she helped my ancestors survive and she gives all of us this.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

Okeroa also refers to Papatūānuku as the sustainer of life:

Okeroa: Papatūānuku nurtures us as human beings. It grows all the trees and the plants. It enables all the insects to live off, Papatūānuku does.

(Individual interview 30/07/08)

McDowell (1997b) asserts the importance of the reciprocal relationship between the constitution of places and people. This holds true for the participants’ experience of Papatūānuku. Several of the participants talked about the commodification of Papatūānuku and shared their thoughts about this with me.

Aroha: I hope that we can use the two [worlds] where ones not being, where mother earth is not being forgotten about and mistreated as much as she is. I think that there needs to be more respect for her because its, there is a sort of imbalance, where we just take, take from her. Take all the natural resources; take all the fish until they’re gone; take all the trees until they’re gone. I don’t not understand why they still cut down trees.

(Joint interview 23/06/08)

Mere: It’s easier to exploit it [the land, Papatūānuku] and make money out of it if you don’t have an emotional connection to it. That’s what I think, why we [Māori] are different. So you have to change your belief system



if you're going to, if that's what your goal is to make money then and that's what you think success is and how you live your life. Then you're going to change your belief system to cut your emotional ties to the land, if you're Māori.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

Not all Māori hold special their relationship with the land and Papatūānuku, so I am careful to point out that the relationship between Māori and the land is not natural or fixed. Furthermore, many non-Māori hold important their spiritual, emotional and embodied connection to the land. My respect for Papatūānuku, for the whenua is not simply because I am Māori. My mother (who is non-Māori) has instilled particularly strong values about environmental responsibilities. Many Māori gives feel a sense of connectedness to the land and to Papatūānuku. This does not necessarily mean that the sense of obligation expressed above is felt by everyone.

Mihi: I think some Māori are just as abusive of Papa as non-Māori are.

(Joint interview 20/05/08)

It is important to note that participants' did not feel that this sense of obligation or responsibility or in fact the ability to be connected to Papa was necessarily confined to Māori women. It is not my intention to set up Māori and Pākehā up as separate entities, as has been common in the political landscape of Aotearoa (Meredith 1999). I recognise and acknowledge, as do most of the participants, that many Pākehā feel a strong connection to the land. Hannah makes an important point:

I feel my māoritanga has helped me to appreciate this [Papa] but I do not think it's an 'exclusively Māori' concept.

(Interview Feedback Form, Hannah)

Participants felt that all humans have an obligation to look after Papatūānuku and they felt that tikanga Māori provided them with a framework to do this. My intention here is not to suggest that the relationship between Māori and Papatūānuku is more 'natural' but to assert that hegemonic, western and masculine conceptualisations of the environment have very different implications in the way that Papatūānuku is treated.

Many of the participants' reflected on the difficulty of being able to carry out what they felt were their 'Papatūānuku responsibilities' in a society dominated by patriarchal and colonial ideologies. Nepe (1992, 16) asserts that

[t]he reality for Māori women in New Zealand is that they have to survive in two worlds; the Māori world and in the Pākehā world. Each world has its own separate reality. Each has its own values, mores and beliefs and each demand conformity and allegiance. In her daily experiences a Māori woman is constantly in transition from one 'reality' to the other.

I argue further that Māori women cannot separate out these two realities but must grapple with the "baffling inconsistencies" (Te Awekotuku 1991a) that results from negotiating in and through worlds. Furthermore, "straddling both worlds is not always a comfortable position, especially if neither foot is firmly placed" (Collins 1999, 1).

The feeling of in-betweenness, hybridity and inconsistency is also felt by Hine. She reflects on her own employment which results in inevitable tensions. She asks:

Hine:                   Where do I fit in all of that? Why am I working for an organisation that is like the antithesis of what I believe?

(Joint interview, 20/05/08)

For Hine, trying to reconcile her beliefs and values as a Māori women and working for an organisation that barely recognises the importance of those values is an inevitable tension that she must grapple with everyday. She is not alone, I also find myself confronted by similar inconsistencies in the context of the University. The academy continues to be dominated by those who believe that knowledge must be demonstrable and transcendent of emotion and commitment (Alcoff 1996). This thesis takes issue with that fact and is an attempt to regain some form of mana wahine within the discipline of geography.

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter is informed largely by participants' voices and experiences of space and embodiment as they relate to Papa. The first part of this focuses on the closest of spatial scales - the body. Maternal bodies are intimately tied to the spaces of Papatūānuku. Women's bodies have been marginalized in medical discourse and

dominant practices surrounding childbirth and pregnancy. Although the colonisation of Māori women's maternal bodies is evident there is resiliency by many Māori women to reclaim the spaces of Papatūānuku to inform their lived, embodied and spiritual geographies.

Following this I discussed the entanglement of Papatūānuku with home space. The relationship between many of the women and Papatūānuku is strengthened (or there is more of a heightened awareness of her) in the spaces of home. A combination of home space being known, familiar, and more 'natural' inform women's relationship to Papa.

Finally, the responsibility that comes with a relationship with Papatūānuku is examined. What is evident is that hegemonic understandings of the environment are premised on the same Western and masculine ideologies that seek to commodify Papatūānuku. The uncritical acceptance and internalisation of these ideologies by Māori poses one of the biggest challenges if mana wahine knowledges about Papatūānuku are to be re-privileged and transformative. This chapter has offered a small insight into Māori women's understandings and experiences of the spaces of Papatūānuku.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusions

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This thesis weaves together the connections, contradictions, complexities and tensions of Māori women's embodied, material, symbolic and spiritual understandings of Papatūānuku. Weaving is a common metaphor used in mana wahine literature (Hutchings 2002; Yates-Smith 1998). In a similar way to Yates-Smith (1998), I liken the construction of this thesis to the weaving of harakeke. "The interlacing and opposing strands of flax provide symmetry and balance; were some harakeke removed, the pattern would be lost and the entire whariki would eventually fall apart" (Yates-Smith 1998, 11). All of the strands, all of the voices and stories and all of the commonalities and inconsistencies woven in to this research provide a uniquely mana wahine perspective on Māori women's relationships to space and place. This chapter weaves together the multiple strands of this thesis and highlights potentially rich avenues for further research.

I draw from semi-structured in-depth interviews with nine Māori women as well as my own autobiographical experiences to examine the entanglement of Māori women's embodied subjectivities with the spaces of Papa. The research design of this thesis combines mana wahine, Kaupapa Māori and feminist methodologies to disrupt the privileging of 'rational', disembodied, scientific ideologies and research practices. I was careful and reflexive in my consideration of methodologies, for this research, so as to provide a safe space for wāhine (including myself) to share our knowledges about Papa.

This research has three main strands (which mirror the research objectives outlined in chapter one). The first offers a mana wahine perspective to the discipline of geography. The second turns to the colonisation of Māori women's spiritual understandings of mana wahine and subsequently of Papatūānuku. The third attempts to tease out contemporary articulations of Papa as a space that is simultaneously symbolic, material and discursive. The underlying aim of this thesis is to disrupt the marginalising and discriminatory binaries that dominate Western colonial and masculine ideologies. This aim permeates (both explicitly and implicitly) the theoretical, methodological and analytical considerations of this thesis.

It is evident throughout this thesis that colonialism and patriarchy have denied, and continue to deny, the legitimacy of Māori women's knowledges, bodies and spaces. The intersections between colonial, racist and sexist oppressions, and their manifestations in Aotearoa, position many Māori women within discursive, material and conceptual spaces of liminality that remain largely unexamined in geographic research. This research, then, has emerged out of my search (both academic and personal) for a space where I can examine the subjectivities, *herstories* and embodied experiences of places/spaces of wāhine Māori (including my own).

This brings me to the first main strand of this thesis, to offer mana wahine as another perspective for geography. Being Māori and being a woman are intimately interwoven prompting the need for a framework that can grapple with the complexities of these intersecting subjectivities. As such, I have adopted a mana wahine epistemological approach as the foundations of this research. Mana wahine is a relatively recent theoretical development that extends Kaupapa Māori theory by incorporating gender issues (it has potential to provide for numerous other intersecting subjectivities to be examined such as sexuality, class, age, and upbringing). Mana wahine is not a new phenomenon (it developed from the Māori feminist writings of the '80s and '90s and is grounded in tikanga stretching right back to our atua wāhine) it is just that it hasn't been talked about. A mana wahine geographical approach centres Māori knowledges and provides space for the plurality and diversity of experience, making this theory particularly useful for this research.

One of the important contributions of this thesis is that it weaves together multiple theoretical frameworks to create a kete of conceptual tools in order to further understand Māori women's relationships to space and place. Elements of feminist geography are incorporated as 'hoa mahi'. The argument is made that it is important to incorporate those aspects of other critical theories that are useful rather than simply dismissing all 'Western' theories. Furthermore, simply dismissing these theories is to deny their importance in shaping my own academic journey and subjectivity. Therefore, I am eclectic in my use of theory.

The colonisation of Māori women's relationships to Papatūānuku has been evidenced throughout this thesis, and is the second strand woven through this research. In particular, the spiritual spaces associated with Papa have been deemed as

‘other’, ‘irrational’ and unworthy of serious consideration by dominant discourse. I assert that wairua discourses are important in shaping the geographies of many Māori women. Their physical and spiritual geographies cannot be separated. What is striking is that little attention has been given to spirituality in geographic scholarship. Mana wahine provides the space through which Māori women’s spirituality can be examined. The point here is that by providing for wairua discourse makes it possible to further understandings of place and space.

The colonial reality of being located in Aotearoa has produced complex, hybrid and sometimes contradictory understandings of Papatūānuku. These differences, tensions and contradictions are explicitly integrated into this research. The pervasiveness of Christian discourses is undeniable in Aotearoa and has produced complex entanglements of Christianity and Māori spirituality in Māori women’s understandings of Papatūānuku. Christianity is folded into the very fabric of Māori spirituality and vice versa. Participants grapple with the contradictions and tensions between these ideologies and produce hybrid understandings of Papa as a result.

Participants’ kōrero highlight that colonisation has resulted in the loss of the underlying spiritual knowledges of many embodied tikanga and myths. Subsequently particular tikanga are not being practiced. Many of these tikanga and myths have been recast to fit the ideologies of the colonisers, specifically white middle class men. Colonial retellings of Māori myths have resulted in one of two things. They have either marginalised the role and importance of atua wāhine or they have simply rendered them invisible. Furthermore, the spiritual and reproductive power of the feminine in Māori mythology has been cast in a negative way. A handful of Māori women have taken up the monumental task of re-privileging the feminine in Māori mythology. Yet, the internalisation of colonial and masculine versions by some Māori makes this a difficult task. Colonialism, Christianity and wairua discourses are entangled in complex ways

The third strand of this research examines Māori women’s understandings of Papa in contemporary Aotearoa. I want to locate Papa in the everyday geographies of Māori women. Despite the ‘othering’ of mana wahine knowledges Papatūānuku still exists as a symbolic, material and discursive space and can be found at a number of spatial scales.

Starting at the closest of geographical scales, the body, Papa both informs and is informed by Māori women's maternal and embodied subjectivities in a way that challenges the oppositional distinctions between mind/body and biology/inscription. I examine maternal bodies to continue to disrupt and blur the boundaries of these oppositional constructs. Māori women's maternal bodies and Papatūānuku rub against and fold into each other causing the boundaries of each to disintegrate. "One remains densely, dearly part of the other" (Te Awekotuku 1991a, 68). This is further evidenced through the representation of maternal bodies in te reo Māori. The material and spiritual are tightly woven into words such as whenua, hapū, whānau, atua, mate and whare tangata. The representation of maternal bodies through language has very real implications on the way these bodies are talked about and treated. I argue that the medicalisation of Māori women's maternal bodies marginalises their ability to connect to Papa by disallowing important tikanga and practices surrounding birth. I also briefly present a discourse of resistance by reflecting on some of participants' practices to regain control over their maternal bodies.

Moving out to the scale of the home, women's spatial relationships to tūrangawaewae and home space demonstrate the co-constitution of subjectivities, bodies and space/place. Home is an important space that mediates women's relationships with Papa. Home is both a spatial imaginary and a material space and thus provides another platform from which to disrupt oppositional distinctions between material/inscription. I draw out participant's discussions on home to argue that Māori women's emotional, embodied, spiritual and discursive subjectivities are intimately woven to particular home spaces. Their understandings of Papa are mediated through their cultural and social contexts.

Wider environmental considerations form an important context through which participants understand Papatūānuku. Māori women feel a reciprocal relationship with Papa as she looks after and nurtures them and therefore they must look after her as a physical space. A strong sense of emotional and spiritual connection to Papa is expressed by participants in relations to environmental responsibilities. These emotions and sense of responsibility shape how they live their everyday geographies. This demonstrates further the co-constitution of embodied subjectivities and space.

The purpose of this thesis is not to seek out a singular truth about Māori women's understandings of Papatūānuku but rather to challenge those 'truths' favoured by dominant discourse and to demonstrate that the colonised reality of Aotearoa means Māori women occupy liminal, complex and hybrid spaces. My hope is that this thesis will add to geographical literature by addressing previously ignored knowledges and that it will contribute to indigenous scholarship by providing a spatial perspective.

### ***Future research***

I feel that this thesis is an original contribution to feminist geography. I have provided mana wahine as a new theoretical perspective that has the potential to further understandings between embodied subjectivities, space and place. Furthermore, I have contributed to indigenous theorising by providing a spatial perspective. The confines of a masters thesis have restricted the scope of this research and I have constantly found myself having to steer away from potentially rich and exciting material and literature.

Mana wahine as a theoretical and methodological framework is still very young. I have demonstrated in this thesis that Māori feminisms form the basis of mana wahine. Yet despite the development of Māori feminisms in the '80s and early '90s, to my knowledge, there has been very little further development of mana wahine. Hutchings (2002) and Pihama (2001) have begun the monumental task of bringing mana wahine into focus as a theoretical and methodological approach. In my opinion, what is now needed is more empirical research that engages with mana wahine epistemologies. The more research conducted from a mana wahine standpoint the better equipped we will be to continually develop and reflect on mana wahine and kaupapa Māori.

There are a plethora of research topics that could reconfigure how Māori women's knowledges are (re)presented. There are also a host of atua wāhine who are entangled in webs of colonial and masculine power and privilege. Their stories are waiting to be told; their relationships to Māori women are waiting to gain legitimacy; their roles in mythology and tikanga waiting to be re-privileged. "There are a multitude of tupuna wāhine and atua wāhine whose voices are yet to be honoured fully. Each of those wāhine deserve time and energy and it is only us, their mokopuna that can do that" (Pihama 2001, 305). Further research locating atua wāhine in the space of the marae



would also be interesting. Ongoing analysis of the impacts of colonialism from a mana wahine perspective is necessary, as is the conceptualisation and articulations of contemporary issues facing Māori women today.

Larner (1995) wrote over a decade ago that more research is required on theorising difference here in Aotearoa, despite this, little progress has been made. Mana wahine is only one way to conceptualise difference, there should and will be many other ways. Furthermore, there is still little feminist academic work that engages with intersecting subjectivities and oppressions. Theorising and empirical research is needed on the entanglement of multiple subjectivities and interlocking systems of oppression here in New Zealand. This is an area that could be potentially rich for understandings of space and place.

This thesis has provided a small insight into Māori women's maternal bodies which have previously been ignored. I agree with Longhurst (2008) and Abel and Kearns (1991) that further research is needed on those bodies that menstruate, conceive, give birth, and lactate. These bodies blur boundaries and disrupt binaries. Specifically, I think the colonisation and medicalisation of Māori tikanga and practices relating to menstruation, childbirth and afterbirth are necessary. Reconsidering and reconfiguring the accepted norms surrounding childbirth and maternal bodies has the potential to offer new and exciting ways to theorise embodiment, place and space.

I have only afforded a small space in this thesis to discussing 'environmentalism' in relation to Papatūānuku. I strongly believe that further research is needed in order to examine the colonisation of Papatūānuku in environmental discourse (both physically and conceptually). Māori women's ability to carry out environmental decision making is difficult, if not impossible, given that decision making power about much of Papatūānuku rests outside of their control. Research locating Papa in environmental legislations, policy and treaty settlements could have important implications to environmental decision making in Aotearoa. Hutchings (2002) has applied a mana wahine framework to the imposition of genetic engineering technologies in New Zealand. The application of a mana wahine framework to other environmental discourses could provide a unique insight into conceptualisations and understandings of Papa.

The application of mana wahine in this thesis has provided important and original insights into the conceptualisations of Papatūānuku by Māori women. I have only been able to draw out a small number of the connections, contradictions and complexities of this relationship, there are many more. This thesis has been an important part of both my personal and academic journey. It is my hope that it has continued the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Kathy Irwin, Mira Szasy, Kuni Jenkins, Rangimarie Rose Pere, Leonie Pihama, Jessica Hutchings, and Wikitoria August, to name a few, who have brought to light the challenges and exciting possibilities of reclaiming mana wahine. Rather than engaging with a monolithic framework I have attempted to promote the plurality and diversity of experience and understandings of Papa. I have drawn connections and recognised the contradictions between each of the women's voices, the voices of Māori women scholars, feminist geographers, and my own voice. In doing so, I have sought to disrupt the hegemony of colonial and patriarchal knowledges, practices and values. All of the connections, contradictions, commonalities and inconsistencies are important to understandings and experiences of Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa.

This thesis gives space to the voices of the wāhine that took part because, importantly, "telling our own stories gives our future generations a perspective they can be proud of" August (2005, 122). This is not the end of this journey but it is another beginning. I hope that I have been able to weave a story, a perspective that can be read, discussed, critiqued and developed. To conclude, I return to the metaphor weaving.

*The weaving has its own life course, sometimes accompanying its kaitiaki back to Papatūānuku. At other times it is held in this world as a living taonga, passed from generation to generation in the same way as an heirloom. It is used until it can no longer serve the purpose for which it was created. It is then deemed to have died a natural death and is allowed to go back to where it first began – back to Papatūānuku to begin a new life cycle (Puketapu-Hetet 1993, 283).*

## GLOSSARY

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- Aotearoa**- New Zealand
- Aroha**- love, compassion
- Atua**- God/Goddess, supernatural being, menstrual blood
- Hapū**- be pregnant, sub-tribe
- Harakeke**- New Zealand Flax
- Haumia-tiketike**- atua of fernroot and uncultivated food
- Hine**- girl, daughter, term of address to younger woman
- Hine-ahu-one**- first woman created by Tāne at Kurawaka
- Hine-nui-te-pō**- goddess of the underworld, she receives the souls of the dead
- Hine-te-iwaiwai**- goddess of birth and motherhood
- Hine-tītama**- eldest daughter of Tāne and Hine-ahu-one and became Hine-nui-te-pō
- Hoa mahi**- a friend that works alongside
- Hoa tāne**- male friend, male companion, boyfriend, husband
- Hononga**- union, connection, relationship
- Hopo**- be fearful, apprehensive, overawed
- Ia**- he/she, him/her
- Ipu Whenua**- container for the placenta
- Iwi**- tribe, human bone
- Kai**- food, to eat
- Kaitiaki**- trustee, guardian, caretaker
- Kanohi ki te kanohi**- face to face, in person
- Karakia**- prayer, chant
- Kaua**- do not, had better not
- Kaupapa**- topic, subject, theme
- Kete**- basket, kit
- Kitea**- to see
- Kōhanga Reo**- Māori language pre-school
- Kōrero**- talk, to speak, narrative
- Koro**- grandfather
- Kupu**- word(s)
- Kura Kaupapa**- school operating under Māori custom or using Māori as the method of instruction
- Māhaki**- be inoffensive, humility
- Mamae**- ache, pain
- Mana**- prestige, authority, control, power, influence
- Marae**- open area in front of meeting house, also refers to general complex of buildings and land

**Māui**- well known male character of mythology

**Maunga**- mountain

**Mokopuna**- grandchild(ren)

**Noa**- be free from the extensions of tapu, ordinary, unrestricted

**Pūkana**- stare widely, dilate the eyes

**Rangatiratanga**- self-determination, sovereignty, right to exercise authority, ownership

**Ranginui**- sky father

**Raranga**- to weave, weaving

**Rongo-mā-tāne**- atua of the kūmara and cultivated food

**Ta Moko**- Māori tattoo

**Taha**- side

**Takahia**- to trample, disobey, contravene

**Tana/Tona**- his or hers

**Tāne**- male, man

**Tāne-mahuta**- atua of forests, trees and birds, made first woman from kurawaka, father of Hine-tītama

**Tangata**- person

**Tāngata**- people

**Tangata Whenua**- people of the land

**Tangaroa**- god of the sea

**Taonga**- treasure, goods, possession

**Tapu**- be sacred, set apart, under atua protection

**Tāwhiri-mātea**- atua of the winds, clouds, rain, hail, snow and storms

**Te Ao Māori**- Māori world

**Te Ao Mārama**- The world of life and light, physical world

**Te Kore**- the nothingness, realm of potential being

**Te Pō**- the darkness, the night, place of departed spirits

**Te Reo Māori**- the Māori language

**Te Reo me ona tikanga**- the Māori language and associated customs and practices

**Te Taiao**- the environment

**Te Tiriti o Waitangi**- the Treaty of Waitangi

**Tekoteko**- carved figure on the gable of a meeting house

**Tikanga**- procedure, custom, practice, habit

**Titiro**- look

**Toa**- be brave, strong

**Tohunga**- skilled person, chosen expert, priest

**Tuakana**- elder sister of a female, or elder brother of a male

**Tūmatauenga**- atua of war

**Tungāne**- brother of a female

**Tūpato**- be cautious

**Tupuna**- ancestor

**Tūpuna**- ancestors

<b>Tupuna whare-</b> ancestral house	<b>Wahine-</b> woman
<b>Tūrangawaewae-</b> place to stand, place where one has rights of residence	<b>Wāhine-</b> women
<b>Uha-</b> female, women, femaleness	<b>Whakanoa-</b> to remove tapu
<b>Ūkaipō-</b> mother, origin, source of sustenance	<b>Whakapapa-</b> genealogy, descent lines
<b>Wā-</b> time, season	<b>Whakarongo-</b> listen
<b>Wairua-</b> spirit, soul	<b>Whakataukī-</b> proverb, saying
<b>Waiū-</b> milk	<b>Whakawhānaungatanga-</b> to make relationships
<b>Whaikōrero-</b> to make a formal speech	
<b>Whānau-</b> family, to be born, give birth	
<b>Whare tangata-</b> womb, house of humanity	
<b>Whenua-</b> land, placenta	

The translations used in this glossary were sourced from a combination of *The reed dictionary of modern Māori* (Ryan 1995) and *Te aka: Māori-English, English-Māori dictionary and index* (Moorfield 2005) or from the interviews as participants used them. It is important to note that there can and are various different meanings for these words depending on the context used or geographical locale of the speaker/ reader. I have presented the most common translation(s) of the word.

## APPENDIX ONE: Information sheet for participants

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### Information Sheet

#### **Mana wahine geographies: exploring the relationships between Māori women and Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa.**

I would like to invite you to take part in this research.

#### **Background**

Ko Wharepuhunga te maunga

Ko Waikato te awa

Ko Raukawa te iwi

Ko Naomi Simmonds ahau

I am undertaking this research as part of my Masters thesis. I am a student studying in the Geography Department at the University of Waikato and I am supervised by Associate Professor Lynda Johnston. The findings from this research will be used in my Masters thesis.

I wish to explore Māori women's relationships with Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa. Whakapapa links Māori women back to Papatūānuku. Mana wahine will provide a unique space within which this relationship can be examined. In this project I will draw on social and cultural geography, feminist studies and Kaupapa Māori approaches.

#### **Aim**

The aim of this research is to **explore how Māori women experience their lived relationships with or without Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa**. I am interested in finding out how you experience this relationship and what effect this relationship has on your everyday reality.

#### **Methods**

For this research I would hope to carry out two focus groups and several individual interviews. In these interviews I would like **to hear about your relationship with Papatūānuku, and the way that you have thought and felt about this relationship**. The focus group will be like an **informal hui where you and other participants can discuss this topic in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere**. The focus group will take approximately one and a half hours, however this can be flexible to suit the participants.

The interview will be a **kōrero between you and me at a time and place that suits you**. I intend that the interview will take between half an hour to an hour. It is hoped that the interview will give **you the opportunity to kōrero about your experiences with Papatūānuku**, therefore the questions will be as open as possible to allow you to direct the interview in a way that feels comfortable for you. These methods, hopefully, will enable me to listen to and (re)tell Māori women's stories of whakapapa, mythology, colonization and environmental values in relation to Papatūānuku.

### **Your involvement**

I would like to hear your thoughts and experiences as I believe these would be of particular value to this research. I would like to invite you to participate in the focus group and/ or individual interview. I would like to audio record the interviews so that I have an accurate record of your kōrero.

### **Participants' rights**

All participants have the right to:

- Decline to participate;
- Decline to answer any particular question;
- Withdraw from the study up until one month after the interview;
- Decline to being audio-taped;
- Ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any time;
- Ask for the erasure of any materials they do not wish to be used in any reports of this study;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;

### **Confidentiality**

I will enforce, to the best of my ability, that all discussions held within the interview or focus group will remain private and confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of that situation. Unless your permission is obtained, your name or any other identifying characteristics will not be disclosed in the final report or any other report produced in the course of this research. The recordings and written transcripts will be stored securely in my office in the Geography Department accessible only by key. Any electronic information will be accessible only by password and this will be changed regularly to ensure security of the documentation.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Waikato. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email [fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz) postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wananga o Waikato, Private bag 3105, Hamilton 3240.

### **The results**

The results of my research are to be presented as part of my Masters Thesis, as part of University guidelines, four copies must be produced, three hard copies and one online accessible copy. One hard copy of the thesis will be available through the University of Waikato Library. The research findings may also be used in conference presentations and journal publications.

The recorded interviews will be transcribed and a copy of your contribution will be sent to you to ensure accuracy of the information. You can hold shared copyright for the recordings, but the copyright of the thesis and other research beyond that will be held solely by me.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and consider this invitation. I will contact you in the next week (to two weeks) to see if you might be willing to take part in this research. If you are then we can discuss how this will be done. Please feel free to contact my supervisor or myself at any stage of the research.

## APPENDIX TWO: Interview feedback form

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### Interview Feedback form

#### **Mana wahine geographies: exploring the relationships between Māori women and Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa.**

Thank you for participating in my research so far, your contribution has provided me with some really interesting and valuable information. As part of my research I would like to reflect on the research methods that I have employed to conduct this research and I would really appreciate some feedback from you about the interview process. Please be honest and open with your comments as this will enable me to work on my interview technique and use of methods in future research.

If you have time please take a few minutes to give me some feedback on the interview. You can comment on anything from your thoughts/ feelings about the interview, anything that could be improved, the logistics of the interview, if you felt comfortable, if you were in a joint interview how did you feel that went etc.

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At this point I would also like to offer you the chance to represent your relationship with Papatūānuku using other methods. Could you write ten words that you think are important to your relationship with Papatūānuku?

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Alternatively, if you would like to draw a picture or image, write a poem, song or proverb or use it in any other way to reflect your relationship with Papatūānuku today please feel free.

Thank you again for taking the time to be a part of this research your contribution is much appreciated. I will collect the form in one week from today. Tēnei te mihi nui ki a koe.

Naomi Simmonds



## APPENDIX THREE: Consent Form

### Research Consent Form

Description of project: This research aims to explore the relationship between Māori women and Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa. I am interested in finding out how you experience this relationship and how it effects your everyday actions, spaces and values.

I have read and understand the information sheet and am willing to take part in the research project. Findings from the research will be used for your Masters thesis and may also be used for presentations, academic papers and journal articles.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this study. I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.

I understand I can refuse to answer any particular question and to terminate the interview at any time. I have the right to withdraw from the research or withdraw sections of the interview at any time up to one month after the interview. I can request that parts of my interview be left from print.

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential. In the focus group information shared with the group should remain confidential to protect people's anonymity. My identity will remain confidential and anonymity guaranteed unless I state otherwise.

**“I agree to take part in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form and the research project information sheet”**

I would like to take part in the:

Focus group	YES / NO (please circle)
and / or	
Individual interview	YES / NO (please circle)

\_\_\_\_\_ (to be signed and dated by participant)

\_\_\_\_\_ (to be signed and dated by Naomi Simmonds)

I consent to our conversation being audio-recorded. YES/NO  
(Please circle your choice)

I would like recordings of our conversation returned to me after five years YES/NO

I would like shared copyright of the recorded interview YES/NO

Please fill in the following information if you are interested in being notified of the final results from this research. You will be provided with a summary of the main findings.

Name:

Address:

Email:

Would you like your name used in the publication of the thesis or would you prefer a different name to ensure anonymity?

Contact details

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Supervisor

Lynda Johnston

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## APPENDIX FOUR: Interview Schedule

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### Kōrero on Māori women in Māori cosmology/ mythology

1. Can you tell me about Māori myths you know of that are about Māori women atua or where Māori women are prominent? What was their role in the myth?
  - a. Can you elaborate on the stories about \_\_\_\_ (specific Māori women in myths)?
  - b. Where and how did you learn about these mythologies? Whānau, school, other?
2. In your view how are Māori women represented in these myths? Based on your knowledge of these women what value do you think is given to them in the retelling of these myths today?
3. Do any myths or stories shape your lived reality? Do you perform any particular activities as a result of these kōrero?

### Māori women's relationships to Papatūānuku in Aotearoa today

4. In what ways do you feel Māori women are connected or disconnected with Papatūānuku? Spiritually, physically, emotionally?
5. What does your relationship to Papatūānuku mean for you in Aotearoa in today's society?
6. Do you associate Papatūānuku with a particular space or place? What meaning does she give and/or receive from this space/place?
  - a. In your view, are there any spaces that you do not associate with Papatūānuku? For what reasons?
7. Does this relationship affect the way in which you perform certain activities? Bodily rituals? Household activities? Marae/Hapū or Iwi activities?
  - a. What role does Papatūānuku play in reproduction processes? How important is this to you personally?
  - b. Are there any other processes which you know of or participate in that are informed by your relationship with Papatūānuku?

### The perceptions of these relationships by others

8. In your opinion, how do you feel this relationship is perceived by non-Māori?
9. In your experience, what value do you think is given to this relationship by environmental organisations and/ or local authorities?

**Environmental values and actions resulting from this relationship.**

10. Do you associate Papatūānuku with a certain type of environment? A 'natural' environment?
11. Do you feel that the connection between Māori women and Papatūānuku places more responsibility on you to take care of the environment? In what ways?
  - a. In your opinion do you think this responsibility is justified?
12. Do you participate in any environmental protection activities- home, local, national, international?
  - a. Did your relationship to Papatūānuku affect your decision to participate in these activities?
  - b. What is your role in these activities?
13. What environmental values do you take from this relationship and in your opinion how could these values assist in environmental protection?

## **APPENDIX FIVE: Letter to participants accompanying draft chapters**

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### **Mana wahine geographies: exploring the relationships between Māori women and Papatūānuku in contemporary Aotearoa.**

Thank you for taking part in this research. I was honoured to be able to talk with you and hear your stories and experiences about your relationships with Papatūānuku. I also want to thank you for the additional time that you have taken to review and reflect on the interview material.

I am coming to the end of my thesis and have put together draft chapters in which I have used parts of our interview. These are still draft so I still have quite a bit of refining to do in terms of language, grammar etc but essentially the arguments are complete.

I want to give you the opportunity at this point to review what parts of your interview I have included in this thesis and how I have analysed and discussed these contributions. If you would like to change anything, make any suggestions or delete any material that I have used let me know and I will do my best to incorporate the changes where possible. I have put post it notes where direct quotes are used from your interview so that you do not have to read through the entire chapter.

I would greatly appreciate if you could have a look through the draft chapters and make any changes or comments as soon as you can. I will be in touch in the next week or so.

Thank you again for being involved in this project. I feel privileged that you have shared such wonderful information with me and been a part of this research.

Tēnei te mihi nui ki a koe.

Naku noa, na

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