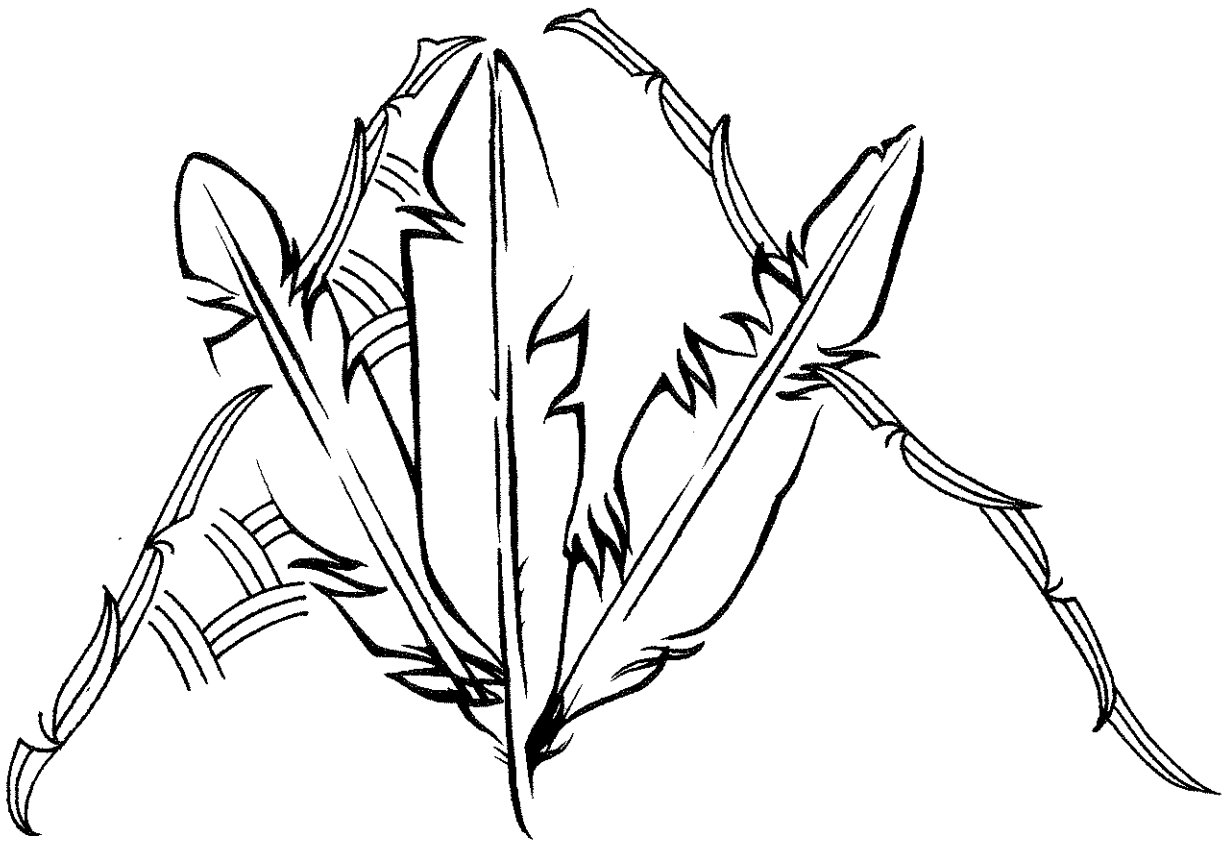


**TĪHEI MAURI ORA
HONOURING OUR VOICES**

**MANA WAHINE AS A KAUPAPA MĀORI
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

LEONIE E. PIHAMA

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**KARANGA WAIRUA MAI I RARO I TE PARIRAU O TE
RAUKURA E I E**

**KUA HARI, KUA KOA, KUA TŪ TE TIKANGA
KA HAURANGI TĀTAU O TE AO NEI**

MOURI WAHINE

I noho waenga potangotango
Puritia mai te mouri, te rongo.
Na Tikitiki o rangi tona noho
Te Apa mareikura te awhi.
Tirohia ki Matariki e rehu mai ana
Kei te taumata o tipua Taranaki
Karihi mai te marama whakatau.
Na te kopu whakaeke o nehe
Te uwaha rongohia mai e te taiao.

I matua-te-kore whakapiri mai
Te aka matua i whangaihia
Na te ukai whakahouora
Na te ukai whakamaru
Arotia atu ki te kauwae-runga, ki te
kauwae-raro
Hei aratakinga
Te mataora whakaaria atu
I tama-o-te-ao-marama
E te ataamai o te mana wahine.

I te atawhai tama-tu, tama-ora
Whakakohatia atu te aroha mahaki
Na te hunga whai-muri
I pupuke whakaora ai !
I tiputipu whakaora ai !
O te matua manawa whenua, o te matua
manawa tangata.

Tihei mouri ora !

She sits within a dense dark
Grasping that essence of balance
The highest heaven is her resting place
And she is guided by female element
Gazing at the rise of **Matariki**
At the summit of ancestral **Taranaki**
Greeting the new beginnings.
From within womb descended from original time
The female essence balancing the world.

Joined by **Matua-te-kore**
The vital origin is sustained
By the rejuvenating breast
By the protective breast
Dependant upon celestial and terrestrial
knowledge.
To guide
The live representation
Of humanity
To the beauty beheld in female.

The nurture of humanity
Present gifts of humble love
Within the following generations
Life determination !
Growth determination !
Of indigenous land and people.

Elements of life

FOR OUR TAMARIKI/MOKOPUNA

Shaun, Joshua, Jana, Joeliee, Nataliee, Janet-Liee, Jaylene, Andre, Neitana,
Kieran, **Wiremu**, Colleen, **Kumeroa**, **Teahooterangi**, Lillian, Jimi, Cassidy,
Hana, Bethany, Matthew and those yet to come.

**WHAIA TE ITI KAHURANGI,
KI TE TŪOHU KOE ME HE MAUNGA TEITEI**

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There have been a multitude of movements in the past 200 years that have laid foundations in this country for us to think differently, to think and act with greater forms of moral and cultural justice. Those movements of our people who have struggled to hold to our fundamental rights as **tāngata whenua** must always be acknowledged, recognised and remembered. **He mihi tēnei ki a koutou ngā tūpuna i mau ai i tou koutou mana motuhaketanga.**

Being from **Taranaki** I have been most fortunate to have always known the power of the **whakataukī**, '**whaia te iti kahurangi, ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei**'. To know a **maunga** so awe inspiring every day of my childhood has put me in good stead to recognise that it is only something of the magnitude of that **maunga** that one should bow down to. **Nō reira he mihi ki te maunga titōhea, ki ngā awa, ki ngā moana, ki te whenua o Taranaki.**

Living for sixteen years on the **whenua** of **Ngāti Whaata ki Orakei** has brought to me a political, social and cultural understanding that transformed my life. There are many individuals to acknowledge for that, too many to name, but you know who you are. There are **whānau** that must however be recognised in name terms. The Hawke **whānau** have been a moving force and a safe haven for me here in **Tāmaki Makaurau**, and I particularly thank Joe and Rene for allowing me to be one of the many 'daughters' that they have taken into their home and under their wing. To Sharon and all those that lived at Tranmere Road who opened their doors to a young (then) **Te Ātiawa/Ngāti Māhanga** woman who was struggling with what it mean to be a **Māori** lesbian. To Trish Dempsey and Greer who have always been around, and who introduced me to a political women's community. To the founding trust members of **Te Rapunga o Poutama** Work and Education Trust, especially Michelle, **Manu**, Rene, Sharon and Yvonne for the fast track lessons in **Kaupapa Māori**. To the

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I have had many work spaces in the past sixteen years which have all been related in some way to education and in particular **Māori** Education. This has informed much of what appears in this thesis and therefore I acknowledge the many people that have been a part of those spaces who have given of their time, energy and political thought. I have also had many cultural, social and political experiences outside of my formal work spaces that have continually pushed the boundaries of my thought and analysis. Those too have been influenced by past movements that have sought radical change. Again, there are many individuals who have supported and moved how I think about the world and issues surrounding us. Influence has come in many forms, in the music, art, writings, carving and films of **Māori** women. Image is important to me and is key part of my life. Film in particular is a passion and I acknowledge those **Māori** women who have been key in that part of my creative expression, in particular the women of **Moko** Productions, also to Eliza, Ella, **Whetu**, **Ngahuia**, Edna, Melissa, Karen and **Mei**, who **tautoko** many of the visions I have for the future, and support an academic in the midst of your creative spirits. There are also those that challenge my thinking at a very personal and political level, who are there no matter what, who are able to move my understandings with the slightest of comments and who nurture my spirit; Cheryl, Angeline, Annette, Betty, Maxine, **Mereana T.**, **Mereana P.**, Megan, Bronwyn, Donna G., **Mere**, **Huriana**, **Matewiki**, Glenis and **Tere**. To the **wāhine** of **Ngā Manu Ngāngahu** and **Ngā Wāhine Tiaki o Te Ao** who are struggling against the threat that is genetic manipulation and to the Indigenous People Council on Biocolonialism who are active in supporting **Māori** movements, especially to Debra Harry.

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Moving closer to home, I want to acknowledge those **kaiako** and **whānau** in both **Te Kōhanga Reo** and **kura**, who have nurtured, taught, learned from and loved our **tamariki** over the past six years. Immersion language programmes take a lot of energy to maintain and the survival of **Māori Education** requires the commitment from **kaiako** and **whānau**. To the **kaiako** of **Awhireinga Te Kōhanga Reo, Ritimana Te Kōhanga Reo** and **Te Whānau Rumaki o Te Uru Karaka** who have provided our **tamariki** with a solid foundation for life. To those in the **whānau** that hold the **kaupapa** together with their time and energy. To hear **te reo Māori** daily and to see the ways in which our **tamariki** are able to negotiate **tikanga** is a joy and inspiration to be a part of. **He mihi mahāna ki a koutou katoa mō ngā mahi aroha ki te whānau nei.**

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**Nō reira ki a koutou te whānau he mihi aroha ki a koutou
mō ou koutou manaaki mai ki a au i ngā wā katoa.
Ehara te toa takitahi, ko te toa takitini
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.**

WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a theoretical journey. Its primary focus is the honouring and affirmation of the voices of **Māori** women and the assertion of **Mana Wahine** as a **Kaupapa Māori** theoretical framework. It is argued that Western theories are inadequate in understanding and explaining **Māori** experiences and in particular the experiences of **Māori** women. **Kaupapa Māori** theory provides the framework within which this thesis is located. **Kaupapa Māori** theory is conceived of as being a distinct **Māori** framework that has its foundations in **mātauranga Māori**. It is argued that **Kaupapa Māori** is of ancient origins, which derive from within the many realms of the **Māori** world. **Kaupapa Māori** theory is a framework that both draws upon, and affirms, **mātauranga Māori** as fundamental to **Māori** understandings. **Kaupapa Māori** theory is also multiple in its articulation and rather than exalt theory this thesis contends that **Kaupapa Māori** theory provides openings into analysis that can more readily explain and transform current inequities that face **Māori** people. As such there is an active proposal for the exploration and development of **Kaupapa Māori** theory in ways that expand on existing theoretical developments.

It is argued that colonial imposition of race, gender and class have culminated in the construction of the belief that **Māori** women hold an 'inferior' 'lesser' position in **Māori** society to that of **Māori** men. Through exploring the origins of the ideologies of race, gender and class it is further shown that these constructions manifested in how early ethnographers documented **Māori** society. Historical sources and Native Schools documentation are examined to provide an overview understanding of the ways in which colonial patriarchal supremacist ideas were entrenched into literature that has since provided the basis for much research related to **Māori** society. Those sources it is argued were fundamentally flawed in their approach and their disregard of the significance of the roles and status of **Māori** women. The often unproblematic use of early documentation is challenged and it is argued that the colonial constructions of **Māori** women mitigate against our interests and therefore the interests of all **Māori** people.

This thesis is an opening discussion that asserts that **Mana Wahine** theory is an essential development for **Māori** women. In doing so it argues that there are elements that are fundamental to the articulation of **Mana Wahine** theory. These elements are not exclusive or definitive, but are seen to exist within the growing body of literature regarding **Mana Wahine** theory. **Mana Wahine** theory is a **Kaupapa Māori** theory that is dedicated to the affirmation of **Māori** women within **Māori** society, within **whānau**, **hapū** and **iwi**. It is a theoretical framework that, like **Kaupapa Māori** theory, is based within **mātauranga Māori** and is committed to the articulation of **Māori** women's ways of knowing the world. It is argued that asserting **Mana Wahine** is a recognition of the current inequitable context within which **Māori** women are located and therefore there is an inherent political project of engaging oppressive relations that impact upon **Māori** women. **Mana Wahine** theory is presented as a **Māori** women's theory that remembers our **tūpuna wāhine**, our **atua wāhine** and which affirms **Māori** women as critical actors for change.

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CHAPTER ONE

I AM MY OWN CASE STUDY: PUTTING A THESIS IN CONTEXT.

*Mate atu koe i te aroha
Titiro ki Taranaki
I kite koe i te auahi
Nāku i tahu e¹*

My choice of this thesis topic is not disconnected from my own experiences as a **Māori**² woman.³ I was born in 1962, the 7th of 10 children (5 girls, 5 boys), at the **Waitara**⁴ Maternity Annex, **Taranaki** on the lands of my people, **Te Ātiawa**⁵ I remember that place clearly, as it was somewhere we seemed to visit often. We'd go in the taxi to pick up my mother and the new baby. It was an exciting place to visit because of that. That was a time when mothers could rest and be cared for, at least for the 5-7 days immediately after birthing. It was also a time when the **whenua**⁶ of **Māori** babies were removed and 'destroyed', and when the philosophies of Truby King were at their peak.⁷ Mothers were told to not feed their babies during the night, and instead nurses would remove babies to nurseries and return them only in the morning for 'a feed'. I've often wondered how they 'destroyed' the **whenua** of generations of **Te Ātiawa** descendants. Recently a **Māori** woman told me of the incinerator out the back of the Annex where the **whenua** of hundreds of babies was burnt.

¹ This is a **whakatauki** or proverbial saying from my own Tribal area of **Taranaki** that indicates for me that when feeling a sense of yearning or loneliness to look the mountain of **Taranaki**. It serves for me as a reminder of where I am from and the strength of identification with that place. It is also noted at this point that the use of bold type is to highlight **te reo Māori** as distinct from English. This is discussed in some depth in Chapter Two.

² The term '**Māori**' is viewed by some as problematic. Recent 'postcolonial' writers have positioned the term '**Māori**' as a colonial construction. The homogenising of all **Māori** people has also been challenged by many **Māori** people. I use the term **Māori** not as a generalisation or homogenising term but as a political concept that identifies collectively the Indigenous Peoples of this land. The term **Māori** relates to notions such as; 'normal'; 'fresh' (as in **wai Māori** or fresh water); 'original' and therefore its essence is one of recognising our Indigenous status. Using the term **Māori** throughout this thesis does not detract from the centrality of **whānau**, **hapū** and **iwi**.

³ I acknowledge the absolute subjectivity in writing about ones life experiences and the contexts within which those experiences are located. This is my version of those experiences. However, I have sought feedback on events and understandings from my own **whānau**.

⁴ **Waitara** is a shortened version of '**Te Whaitara nui ā Wharematangi ki te kimi tana matua a Ngāruē**'. This relates to the story of **Wharematangi**, son of **Ngarue** and **Urutekakara**. **Wharematangi**, in seeking his father **Ngarue**, who had returned to **Taranaki** before his son was born, followed a 'magic' dart until he reached **Waitara**. This naming of the area is reflected in the naming of the oldest standing **whare** at **Owae** '**Whaitara nui a Ngāruē**'. **Waitara** is located on the west coast of the north island of **Aotearoa** (New Zealand).

⁵ **Te Ātiawa** one of my own tribal groups in **Taranaki**. The maternity annex sits within **Te Ātiawa** boundaries

⁶ **Whenua** relates to both the land and the placenta.

⁷ Truby King was the founder of the Royal Plunket Society, which works now to support women and babies. King was however a proponent of eugenics and racial purity for white races.

My mother is **Pākehā**,⁸ my father **Māori**. They were married in 1954 by a **Māori** Methodist minister, and as a result, my mother was excommunicated from the Catholic Church, although her struggle to retain that link was very much played out through her children. They were married in a time that assimilation was deemed a necessary pathway for **Māori**. My father, Jimmy, worked in the freezing works (Borthwicks) for nearly 40 years, in the Casings Department. The key employment, in **Waitara**, was linked to farming and farming-related industries. I recall him having breakfast at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, when the season was in full swing, and leaving home on his bike in the dark. For us, as children, there was a constant challenge to try and wake ourselves so that we could join him for breakfast. There was often a statement like 'go back to bed', but if we strategically ignored that we would soon be sitting and enjoying being up in the 'middle of the night'.

What was a fun event for us was definitely not fun for either him or my mother. It was purely hard work and was primarily about survival. Feeding, housing, clothing and schooling nine children (Graham, the second eldest, died of bronchial pneumonia at 4 months) is hard work. My father left the Works with little more than a 'flash' watch that he was presented with by Mr Borthwicks himself. The photo taken of that event seemed to give my father a sense of pride. That was in spite of the fact that they 'demoted' him from Leading Hand because he attended his Stepmother's **tangi**.⁹ My father applied for a Foreman's position but in his 40 years was never offered it. He was at one time asked to move to Ocean Beach in Otago, an ironic offer given the imprisonment of many **Taranaki** men there after the colonial invasion of **Parihaka**.¹⁰

My mother, Colleen, worked at raising healthy children. Not only her own but also many children of friends who due to circumstances had no choice but to work long hours. **Māori** children and **Pākehā** children. She is one of the most organised women I know. There was a clear routine and we each knew from a young age our roles and what was expected of us. As a mother of three now I have been able to reflect more fully on the ways in which our lives were structured and the reasons why certain

⁸ The term **Pākehā** relates to white people who have emigrated to this country and their descendants. The term **Pākehā** is often misinterpreted and as a consequence there is often a resistance to its use. Many of those that reject the term **Pākehā** instead use the terms European or New Zealander to describe themselves. Given we are located in the Pacific and that many **Pākehā** families are generations removed from Europe, the term European is questionable. The irony about the use of the term New Zealander is that in early writings this term was used to refer specifically to **Māori** people.

⁹ A **Tangi** is a process of mourning the dead.

¹⁰ **Parihaka** is a settlement in **Taranaki** that was established along the lines of passive resistance with two key leaders, **Te Whiti o Rongomai** and **Tohu Kakahi**. The village was sacked by the colonial militia in 1881 and the men of the village were imprisoned, the majority having been transported and imprisoned in caves in Otago. Refer **Waitangi Tribunal** 1996 *The Taranaki Report: Kaupapa Tuatahi, Muru Me Te Raupatu: The Muru and Raupatu of the Taranaki Land and People*. Wai 143 Government Printer, Wellington Publications, Wellington, also Scott, Dick 1975 *Ask That Mountain*, Heinemann Publishers, Auckland also Riseborough, Hazel 1989 *Days of Darkness Taranaki 1878-1884*, Allen & Unwin, Wellington

routines were in place, or why we were or were not permitted to do things. I can only imagine what it means to get seven children ready for school while catering for the needs of two preschoolers and in the midst of that have someone arrive to drop off their one year old!

The formal schooling experiences for both my parents were limited. My father was born in **Puniho**, a small **Taranaki** town, and was a **whāngai**¹¹ to his maternal auntie. He spent some of his early life in **Whatawhata**¹², amongst his **whānau** there.¹³ He returned to **Taranaki** when he was around 10 years old. We had little contact with our **Ngāti Māhanga**¹⁴ **whanaunga**¹⁵ throughout our growing up, the focus was always with **Te Ātiawa**. My father's schooling was in many ways a reflection of the times, in particular in regard to how **Māori** people were being positioned. It is not something he ever really shared with us. In fact, it took one of my **tuakana**,¹⁶ doing an assignment for her B.Ed, to virtually drag it out of him. The difficulty that he finds to talk about these events and his experiences as a **Māori** boy of the 1940's highlights the ways in which colonisation has impacted intensely on many of those of my fathers generation. For those of us who were not raised speaking **te reo Māori**¹⁷, even though members of our **whānau** still 'had' **te reo**, reflecting on the experiences of his generation provides us with some insight as to the impact of colonial discourses pertaining to being **Māori**.

Schooling was not a priority for my Great Grandmother, **Kumeroa**. My father recalls her trying to keep them home,

before we went to school each day we had to do the housework, the dishes, scrub the floors and sometimes even weed the garden. Grandmother was strict in her ways and often we'd be late for school because of it. It was her way of rebelling against the school board. She didn't want us to go to school and even tried to keep us home once, but the School Inspector came and told her we had to go to school or she would get into trouble.¹⁸

Early movement between **Waikato** and **Taranaki** exposed my father to two distinctly different belief systems about **te reo Māori**. In **Waikato** his **koro**¹⁹ and **kuia**²⁰ spoke only **Māori** in the home, in **Taranaki** his Grandmother enforced the notion that they were to learn English and no **Māori** was

¹¹ **Whāngai** refers to a process of 'feeding' and in this context is the process of being raised by someone other than the birth parents.

¹² **Whatawhata** is a small town in the **Waikato** area, which is in the north island.

¹³ **Whānau** refers to both birth and the extended family structure. In this context **whānau** refers to my fathers extended family.

¹⁴ **Ngāti Māhanga** is a tribal group of the **Waikato** area.

¹⁵ **Whanaunga** refers to all our relations

¹⁶ **Tuakana** relates to the older sister of a female or the older brother of a male.

¹⁷ **Te Reo Māori** is the term utilised when referring to **Māori language**. **Reo** also refers to voice.

¹⁸ This quote came from my **tuakana**, Vicki Stevens, who interviewed my father for a Stage III course.

¹⁹ **Koro** relates to my father's grandfather, it is a term that can also be used for elder men generally.

²⁰ **Kuia** relates to my father's grandmother, it is a term that can also be used for elder women generally.

spoken in the home.²¹ He and his cousins would ‘practice’, attempting to keep some fluency and to imitate what they saw on the **marae**.²² Between the age of five and fourteen my father attended seven schools. One New Plymouth primary school they attended had a roll of around 400 children, of which only 4 were **Māori**; my father, his brother and two cousins. They sat at the back of the room, often feeling confused about what was happening. The literature that surrounded them bore little resemblance to their realities. Books focused on **Pākehā** children, often who had a car, garden and a big house, and those children lived with only their mother and father.²³ Quite a removed reality for someone who lived with his **kuia**, **koro**, brother, an uncle and auntie and two cousins.

‘Practicing’ **te reo Māori** in the school grounds, was in itself a dangerous pastime. Being caught (often by senior students) meant immediate punishment. In one school he attended they were ‘warned’ on their first day that no **Māori** would be spoken in the school, and so were careful to not be caught. However, being ‘caught’ was inevitable and so too was the punishment that was meted out. For a time they continued to be ‘caught’ and punished even though they hadn’t in actuality been speaking **Māori**.²⁴ My father happily left school at fourteen before the leaving age was raised. He saw that as a lucky escape.

My mother’s schooling was strictly Catholic, and located in the South Island. She spent most of her teenage years at Nazareth House, a catholic orphanage. Her parents had separated and because my grandmother needed to work the younger children were placed in the orphanage. My mother lived for some time with her maternal grandmother and later was also placed at the orphanage. There is no doubt that they were ‘cared’ for and that the Sisters sought to provide for their needs, however in my mother’s reflections, the older children were also ‘cheap labour’. My mother left school at the age of fourteen and worked initially cooking for Priests in a local presbytery, before moving to Wellington.

Given that the schooling experiences of both my parents was relatively brief and, on the whole not particularly positive, I have always been intrigued by their absolute belief in the doctrine that we

²¹ For further insight into experiences of **Māori** people in schooling refer to Simons, J. (ed) *Ngā Kura Māori: The Native Schools System 1867-1969*, Auckland University Press, Auckland; also see Jenkins, Kuni & Morris Matthews, Kay 1995 *Hukarere and The Politics of Māori Girls Schooling 1875-1995*, Hukarere Board of Trustees and Dunmore Press Ltd. Palmerston North

²² The **marae** is a cultural gathering place.

²³ This was also the case in my own schooling experience where school publications focused on **Pākehā** families and **Pākehā** views of the world. In an early **Māori** language series ‘**Ngā Pukapuka Iti**’ much of the content was focused on images of integration that were particularly domesticating. See Price Milburn & Co. Ltd, *Ngā Pukapuka Iti* Wellington

²⁴ Physical punishment for speaking **Māori** was experienced by large numbers of my fathers generation and contributed to the decline in speakers of the language. Many did not speak **Māori** in their own homes in the

needed a 'good education' to 'make it in the world'. What I know now is that the sacrifice for 'making it in the world' meant, for our **whānau**, a loss of **te reo Māori me ōna tikanga**.²⁵ The world we were to make it in was not a **Māori** world, it was a **Pākehā** world, and to do that successfully we were denied access to the fullness of what it meant to be **Māori**. I am not certain how my identity as **Māori** was firmly established, as in the context of our day to day living we were not actively involved in what was happening within the **Māori** community. What I know is that **Waitara** is a very **Māori** community. I say that not as a statement related to cultural renaissance or political positionings, but as a statement related to **whenua**²⁶ and **wairua**.²⁷

I was raised in **Waitara**, a rural **Taranaki** town. **Waitara** has always felt for me to be very full of history that is sourced very much in dimensions that move beyond physical expressions. It is also a place steeped in knowledge, and pain. It is often the pain that I initially feel when I 'go home'. It is a pain that one feels in the air, if you are open to that or if you are able to recognise that there are other ways of being. It is a pain that is a direct outcome of the ongoing oppression of our people and it weighs heavily over the land. As I enter into the town I feel both an incredible sense of being on familiar land, of being near **whānau** (which are both exciting and warming feelings) and a heaviness of the generations of suppressed stories, feelings and knowledge.

The land struggles in **Taranaki** and the ultimate loss of land and marginalisation of **Māori** control and autonomy was extensive. Resistance too was extensive and strategic. The lands at **Waitara**, for example The **Pekapeka** block,²⁸ were illegally and immorally removed from **Māori** hands not once but twice. The initial removal of the **Pekapeka** Block from **Māori** hands resulted in armed struggle and our people suffered considerably. Then to add insult the colonial government returned the lands in 1863 only to be confiscated again in 1865 under 'The Suppression of Rebellion Act 1893'.²⁹ This was the experience of many **hapū** and **iwi** within **Taranaki** and across the country. Many of us who were born and bred in **Waitara** had little knowledge of these events. My **whānau** have lived for over forty years on the **Pekapeka** Block, the lands of **Te Ātiawa**, it is now considered 'council land' and under the current Treaty Settlement Process remains alienated. There are many examples of this in

hope that their children would not have to experience the same indignities or because the belief that assimilation was the key way to survive.

²⁵ **Te reo Māori me ōna tikanga** refers to the relationship of **Māori** language and culture.

²⁶ **Whenua** in this context refers to land, or **Papatūānuku** the earth.

²⁷ **Wairua** refers to the spiritual essences that are a part of us and our world.

²⁸ The **Pekapeka** block is land in **Waitara** that was wrongfully acquired by the colonial government. Refer The **Waitangi** Tribunal Report 1996, op.cit.

²⁹ The **Waitangi** Tribunal Report 1996, **WAI** 143 states "*The retraction, it seems to us, was simply play-acting; the fabrication of a scene to place blame on the former Governor, so that the new Governor might restart the war with a clean slate*", op.cit.: 91

our history. The **hapū** of **Ngāti Rāhiri**³⁰ remains alienated from much of what was tribal lands.³¹ The individualisation of land title through the Native Lands Acts of 1862 and 1865 effectively removed the lands from collective control. A large block of land was sold by individuals for a Methanol plant that stands as an abomination just a small distance from our **urupā**.³²

Waitara's history can still be felt in the land and air, and which has been carried by generations of **Māori**. The pain and struggle of a colonial past, of war and **raupatu**³³ can be felt, if you are conscious of it, and the consequences of the colonial invasion of **Taranaki** is borne daily by many. Colonisation has not only meant the alienation of our lands, people, language and culture but the processes of colonisation have meant an active disruption of our landscapes, our **whānau**, **hapū** and **iwi**³⁴ structures, our-selves. Much of the knowledge of these acts have been kept out of the hands of the majority of people in this country. The violence of colonisation has been largely invisibilised. One way of doing that is the renaming of the land to render its history invisible. In a catalogue for an exhibition titled 'The Nervous System' I wrote the following reflection;

I was born and raised in **Taranaki**.³⁵

I have lived under the **korowai**³⁶ of the **Maunga**³⁷ and have experienced the awe of seeing **Taranaki** stand firmly on the landscape, defining the geography in a way that we who live under his shadow may never achieve.

I have lived alongside the **awa**³⁸ and the **Moana**.³⁹ Known them in their strength and beauty. Known them in their provision of **kai**,⁴⁰ before they were poisoned.

I have lived on land that was taken from my people and watched as my parents struggled to 'pay the rent' on land that was rightfully ours.

I was schooled alongside **Owae Waitara**, the **marae** that stands above the township. We walked through and around that space every day and were never schooled within its bounds. It was an 'out of bounds' area.

I learnt of a history of this land that told us of Cook and Tasman and Browne. And I knew these names because they named the streets upon which I walked. They named my world.

Waitara.

I was told we were all the same. New Zealanders/National identity/**Kiwi**/Egalitarian/National identity/One New Zealand/One identity.

³⁰ **Ngāti Rāhiri** is a subtribal group of **Te Ātiawa**.

³¹ **Waitangi** Tribunal Report 1996, op.cit.

³² **Urupā** refers to the burial place of our people.

³³ **Raupatu** is to be 'overcome' and here I refer to the processes of alienation or loss as an outcome of colonisation

³⁴ **Hapū** refers to pregnancy and sub-tribal groupings, **iwi** refers to bones and tribal groupings. The terms **whānau**, **hapū** and **iwi** are related in this way to highlight the interconnectedness between them.

³⁵ **Taranaki** refers to both the region on the west coast of the northern island and the name of the mountain that stands there.

³⁶ **Korowai** refers to a woven cloak.

³⁷ **Maunga** refers to mountain, here it is **Taranaki maunga**.

³⁸ **Awa** refers to river and in this context is the **Waitara** river.

³⁹ **Moana** is sea, ocean.

⁴⁰ **Kai** in this context is food

But I knew that to be **Maori** wasn't the same. And I see now why we were never to know who we were. Identity had to be controlled. So the system could be maintained. As without the system the "Nation" would be fragmented.

And we would be left with a Nervous System.⁴¹

As a part of the re-naming process we (my **whānau**) were each given **Pākehā** first names; Dennis, Graham, Malcolm, Owen, Lorraine, Vicki, Leonie, Brian, Sandra, Judith. All but one were given **Pākehā** middle names. I was named 'Leonie' by the family doctor of the time, a direct consequence of being born a 'Leo', and was given my maternal grandmothers name, Eileen. My **tuakana**⁴², Vicki was given her middle name **Aroha**⁴³ by one of our aunties and she is the only one to have a **Māori** first or second name. Names and naming are important. The loss of our **tūpuna**⁴⁴ names in my generation was a part of the overall selection process that is a part of assimilation. The impact of that continues, of all my nieces and nephews only two carry **Māori** first names. It has been for me, a conscious choice that my two sons carry the names of their direct **tūpuna**, as reclaiming our names is a part of reclaiming control of our lives. **Kumeroa Tauruoterangi** and **Teahooterangi Manukonga** carry the names of **tūpuna** who are important in our **whānau** and invite stories about those people. Those stories are a part of our process of reclaiming who we are.

Being a child of a **Māori** – **Pākehā** 'mixed-marriage' often meant being referred to, by others, as 'half caste'. It meant being seen as **Māori** when it was deemed appropriate, and being defined as 'half-caste' at other times. What is important for me is that I never saw myself as any thing other than being **Māori**. I remember being asked at **Manukorihi** Intermediate who identified as **Māori** and was shocked when one girl, who I knew to be **Māori**, never identified herself. It became clear that to be **Māori** was not something she wanted to be associated with. That was a disturbing realisation. Sadly, the denial of being **Māori** is not uncommon. It can be viewed within the context of a history of colonial oppression and racial ideologies that have located **Māori** as inferior. The impact of colonialism, in particular the greed of settler immigrants and the settler governments denial of the sovereign rights of **Māori**, has had major implications for **whānau**, **hapū** and **iwi**. Wars, disease, lies, theft, rape, imprisonment were all strategies utilised by the settler forces in the suppression of our people. In **Taranaki**, **whānau hapū** and **iwi** have continued to experience the devastating effects of

⁴¹ **Pihama**, Leonie 1995 'Identity: Moving Beyond Colonial Impositions' in *The Nervous System: Twelve Artists Explore Images and Identities in Crisis*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery New Plymouth & City Art Gallery Wellington, pp20-27

⁴² **Tuakana** refers to older sister of a female or the older brother of a male.

⁴³ The name/word **aroa** relates to notions of compassion, love, caring.

⁴⁴ **Tūpuna** are our collective ancestors, which can also include grandparent and great-grandparent generations. They are the people that we grow from and that we are reflections of.

those, and ongoing, acts of colonial violence. As the **Waitangi** Tribunal⁴⁵ report states '*If peace is more than the absence of war*', **Taranaki** has never been at peace.⁴⁶

The psychological, emotional, physical, social effects were more than evident throughout my growing up. The freezing works provided the centre in terms of employment. Reflecting on that time it seems that economically **Waitara** was in a much healthier state than is the case now in the late 1990s. There was employment, albeit mainly located in manual and factory-type labour. There was also **kaimoana**,⁴⁷ lots of it. We would all go 'to the beach' to get **kūtai** and **pāua**,⁴⁸ or spend time whitebaiting (which was a favourite past time and remains a favourite food!). Lying on the riverbank waiting for half an hour after sunrise was a regular activity during 'the season'. Then, it was all regulated by the State. We were 'allowed' fifty **kūtai** each and ten **pāua**. We could only whitebait in the State-defined season and only during certain hours. Given that access to **kaimoana** was limited by the State it was little wonder that all the children had to be available at low tide, to ensure numbers or act as lookouts for the inspectors, who were seen by some as 'worse than cops'.

The **kaimoana** around the **Waitara** coast is no longer edible. Reefs were destroyed by the constant release of effluent into the river and sea. During my childhood the gathering of **kaimoana** along the **Waitara** coast was a taken-for-granted. This is not the case for our **tamariki**.⁴⁹ The damage has been done by effluent released untreated through the **Waitara** Borough Council outlet and from the major industries in the area, in particular Borthwicks, Petralgas and Syngas⁵⁰. **Kaimoana** reefs were noticeably affected after 1978, however there was discussion that discharges into the **Waitara** river had affected some reefs prior to this. In essence a key food source has been denied to many, who would have utilised that source as a means of **manaakitanga**.⁵¹

When the claim to the **Waitangi** Tribunal was taken I had left **Waitara**. At eighteen I moved to live with my sisters in Palmerston North. Both were at the Palmerston North Teachers College. There was little else for me to do. That seems such an unusual statement, now, but at that time it was the only 'truth' that I knew. In fact, most of my own schooling experiences carry little significance for me. There are events and people that stand out as particular influences. There were teachers who

⁴⁵ The **Waitangi** Tribunal was established to establish a forum where breaches of **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** (The Treaty of **Waitangi**) could be engaged by **Māori** and the Crown. A more depth discussion of **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** is provided in Chapter Five.

⁴⁶ **Waitangi** Tribunal 1996 *The Taranaki Report: Kaupapa Tuatahi, Wai 143 Muru Me Te Raupatu: The Muru and Raupatu of the Taranaki Land and People*. Government Printer, Wellington Publications, Wellington

⁴⁷ **Kaimoana** is sea food.

⁴⁸ **Kūtai** are referred to in English as mussels, **Pāua** as abalone.

⁴⁹ **Tamariki** refers to children.

⁵⁰ **Waitangi** Tribunal Report, 1996 Wai 143 op.cit.:pp24-25

made an impact both creatively and painfully, but on the whole throughout my primary schooling I was taught to be just like everyone else, except somewhere along the way someone decided that I was 'brainy'. Being called 'brainy' meant that there were also those who were called 'dumb'. The outcome of that has had devastating effects on **Māori**, so much so that a **Māori** woman that I went to school with still, at thirty-nine, refers to herself as 'dumb'.

My Intermediate years were the most exciting of my schooling years. **Manukorihi** Intermediate had just been built and we were the foundation students. Many of the teachers were first year teachers from the Auckland Teachers College. There were **Māori** teachers (I hadn't had one **Māori** teacher throughout my primary schooling) and the **Pākehā** teachers were pro-**Māori**. Those were a stimulating and exciting two years, including trips around the East Coast and **Taupo** areas staying at numerous **Marae** along the way. It was at **Manukorihi** Intermediate that I was asked to apply for a scholarship to St Josephs Catholic Girls Boarding School. I reluctantly took the letter and application form home, only to return it to the school saying my parents wouldn't let me apply. I had never shown my parents, and nor was I going to. The thought of leaving home to travel to some unknown place, alone, was not something I intended doing. I didn't show my family because I thought there was a good chance that they would send me, and in my mind that was totally out of the question. There are times that I wonder how different my life might have been had I attended St Josephs, particularly in light of the many **Māori** women I now know were there during the 1970's who hold powerful views in terms of being **Māori**. My Intermediate years were important, and those teachers were important. Coming to teach in a small rural town like **Waitara** can not an easy decision for some of those teachers. One commented on being told not to take the job because the town was 'too rough'.

The reputation of schools in **Waitara** as being 'violent' was something that I remember clearly. It would make us laugh when we heard how 'frightening' the High School was meant to be. I think that the use of the terms 'violent' and 'frightening' was about the school being 'more **Māori**' than other schools in the area. Schools with higher numbers of **Māori** students were considered 'violent' and 'frightening'. The town's reputation was not entirely unearned. However, few knew of the wider context and the history that lead to the situation that most **whānau Māori**⁵² found themselves in. The impact of confiscations has been multi-levelled. High unemployment, the fragility of seasonal employment, an underlying racism that inferred continually the inferiority of being **Māori** provided a context within which alcoholism, gambling, and all forms of abuse were rampant. As a teenager the

⁵¹ **Manaakitanga** is the process of hosting and caring for people.

⁵² **whānau Māori** relates to **Māori** extended family groupings

only place to be was in the local pub or the many clubs in New Plymouth. There was a strained and contradictory relationship between the 'townies' (those from New Plymouth) and those from **Waitara**. Brawls between **Waitara** and the townies were common and at times extremely vicious. But, when it came to sports there was a begrudged respect. Basketball, rugby league, rugby, netball, **Waitara** sports teams made their mark across **Taranaki** and beyond. Sports was a big factor in my life and gave me an opportunity to participate in events across the country. This was made possible by the family of a close friend, who took me anywhere and everywhere with them. It was years later that I realised we were from the same **hapū**, as those **Māori** connections were not readily known by us. Sport was important in **Waitara**. Some top sports coaches and administrators came from there. The local rugby league team, whose games and socials we attended regularly, has sported top national players. These sports provided the social life for many in the town, both on and off the field. Rugby was played not far from where I lived, at the Camp Reserve, where the colonial militia set up camp during the land wars.

I have no memory of being offered any real sense of the history of **Waitara**. That is something I came to myself, through my own research after realising that a deep injustice had been done. My schooling never provided me with any understanding of the history of **Aotearoa**. My family operated on survival level; clothing, schooling and feeding nine children. We were robbed of a history and an understanding of our place in the world.

My High School years were full of 'oh so you're a **Pihama**'. Being the 7th child in a big family means following six others through schooling, that can be quite a daunting experience, particularly as each teacher that may have taught more than one older sibling then tended to pigeon-hole me quite readily. So, when I entered High School I was expected to be 'good' at accounting, maths, English and sports, just as my sisters before me had been. Plans for 'making it in the world' as designed by my parents were very much in line with dominant beliefs about schooling of **Māori** children. Each of my brothers attended **Māori** Affairs Trade Training courses, we (my sisters and I) were focused on teaching and office oriented work. On the enrolment form for High School my mother nominated commerce, typing and homecraft as the three main options preferred.

Te reo Māori was a compulsory subject in the third and fourth forms of **Waitara** High School (though this was changed later). The Principal at that time supported the **Māori** teachers, who held a belief that knowledge of **te reo Māori** was important. It must have been a struggle for them as the

dominant ideology in education at that time was one of **Taha Māori**.⁵³ With Streaming in the fifth and sixth forms I was placed in the 'academic' class. Being able to do the work was relatively easy, however wanting to do the work was quite another story. Throughout the fifth and sixth form other things took precedence, in particular sport. Many of my 'best mates' were active in sports, particularly basketball. Being in the gym for hours on end became much more important. Absences were continually noted, as were 'distractions';

Leonie has a natural aptitude for this subject which is fortunate as she has lost time through her many absences.

Leonie's absences have not helped her. Her basic understanding is satisfactory but she must keep to the topic asked in questions and write more material⁵⁴

Terms such as 'ability', 'natural', 'aptitude' appear through my own school reports, alongside terms such as 'absences', 'distractions', being 'too talkative'. It would be easy then to believe that my 'choice' to leave school in the 6th form was due to my own shortcomings, after all I was told I had the 'ability'. However, my ending up on the 'dole' and then in a local supermarket, when I had been encouraged with phrases such as 'the skies the limit', had never been my 'choice'. I left **Waitara** High School because I believed that there was nothing further I could do. Most of my friends had left, most of the 7th form were **Pākehā**. I had wanted to apply for Teachers College, following my two sisters, and had been encouraged not to but to stay at school. Staying at school was not an option for me. Instead I ended up unemployed and another **Māori** statistic. So much for successful schooling outcomes.

I 'escaped' **Waitara** at the age of eighteen, after nearly two years of a mixture of unemployment, shop work, sport and parties, and moved to Palmerston North. It was in Palmerston North that I decided to enrol at Massey University as an extramural student. Although not gaining particularly 'good' marks it became evident to me that I could actually do university study, however on gaining full time employment the desire to study diminished and all spare time was focused on being at the gym. Sports were a focus that stayed with me from my **Waitara** High School years. It provided friendships, opportunities to travel the country quite extensively and feelings of success and ability, something that academic pursuits never really provided. Having sisters at the Palmerston North Teachers College also meant being surrounded by college and university students, and motivated me to apply for teaching, an application that was rejected. Ironically, given my current teaching position

⁵³ **Taha Māori** was a curriculum development to introduce selected aspects of **Māori** language and culture into the school system. It was the dominant form of **Māori** curricula in the 1970s and 80's, and has been critiqued as serving the interests of the **Pākehā** system rather than **Māori**. **Taha Māori** has been referred to as a 'self-esteem model' where selected aspects of **Māori** culture are taught so that **Māori** children feel comfortable to learn the 'real' knowledge. For further discussion refer Smith, G.H. (ed) 1986 *Ngā Kete Wānanga: Māori Perspectives of Taha Māori*, Auckland College of Education, Auckland

in **Māori** Education at the University of Auckland, I was turned down in two attempts to enter Teachers College. However, I spent a good deal of time with **Māori** students at the college and many of those people are now teaching in schools and polytechnics, colleges and universities across the country. After four years of playing basketball and working in an office came a realisation that 'something' had to change in my life, that there was 'something' missing and with that realisation came a desire to move to Auckland. I'd never been to Auckland before in my life. I knew one person here, who had been my Physical Education teacher in **Waitara**. I knew that the change I needed to make was a dramatic one, so the move was necessary. I enrolled at the University of Auckland in 1985.

As a first year student at Auckland I knew almost immediately that the decision to move was right. It was a time of growth and access to knowledge of things that I had never previously had access to. It was a move that changed my entire direction. Within months I had established myself a comfortable corner in 'Women's Space', and it took some time until I realised that the **Māori** space on the floor above was available for all **Māori** students. I joined the **kapa haka**⁵⁵ group and was active with a group of **Māori** women in 'Women's Space'. Moving between these spaces I began to develop some understanding of the complexities of gender and being **Māori**. Some of the **Māori** women never ventured downstairs into 'Women's Space', and some **Pākehā** women assumed that anything to do with **Māori** women should be upstairs. Within each space there existed beliefs about the other. This was intensified with the national debate over Homosexual Law Reform. I remember a **Māori** woman and I having an hour long argument with a **Māori** male student after he offered the idea that all 'homos' should be locked away or put on an island. This was a **Māori** man who would speak strongly on the oppression of **Māori**. The contradictions that he expressed I have seen many times in the past sixteen years.

Throughout that first year at Auckland I spent a lot of my time trying to work out where I fitted. It seemed that part of me fitted in both spaces, but never really fully in either. I left at the end of 1985 and moved to be a part of the first separate **Māori** Social Work Diploma at the Auckland College of Education. The need for **Māori** students in the social work Diploma to have **Māori** focused learning had been laid down by the 1984-1985 groups. The 1986 intake was to see a totally separate pathway for **Māori** students. It was a difficult pathway in that the Institution did not in fact provide clear resource (including staff and classroom) allocations for the course. There were twenty **Māori** students at the beginning of the year. It was here that I began to see the resistance of **Pākehā** staff

⁵⁴ These comments are taken from my 6th Form report.

⁵⁵ **Kapa haka** refers to **Māori** Traditional performance

and students to any idea of **Māori** having real space. I left after six months after that time had been spent continually in struggle with the Institution and moved to take a management position with Presbyterian Support Services.

On arriving in Auckland I had been volunteering for 'Womanline' a telephone information service for women. It was a predominantly **Pākehā** women's organisation and, as is often the case, I became almost overnight a spokesperson for **Māori**. That is a scary place to be at the best of times, so I made a conscious decision to meet more **Māori** women. I went with a Samoan woman friend to a group called '**Wāhine mō ngā wāhine o Te Moana nui ā Kiwa**',⁵⁶ a political support group for **Māori** and Pacific Islands lesbian women. Having known I was a lesbian from a relatively young age I had struggled with what that meant and spent the next ten years 'proving' I was straight. The term 'coming out' barely describes the sense of affirmation that came with meeting **Māori**, Samoan, and Fijian lesbians. This group opened lots of doors in my life including a growing knowledge of politics, land struggles, racism, sexism, and gave a level of personal development that has rarely been matched.

As with many political groups of the time '**Wāhine mō ngā Wāhine**' came to an end in the late 80's, and to my knowledge there has not been any similar organisation formed. What that means is that for **Māori** and Pacific lesbians there are no organised support systems in place in **Tāmaki**. '**Wāhine mō ngā Wāhine**' introduced me to **Māori** and Pacific women who remain central to my cultural and political life. Those women provided support through what was a difficult time in my life. It was also an exciting time that saw much change happen for me that would have significant impact on my educational and political development. Many women in that group came with the stories of occupations, the women's movement, the challenges, politics and pains of the 1970s and 1980s. They also actively engaged in notions of **tino rangatiratanga**⁵⁷ and a desire for **Māori** to take control of our destinies. As a consequence of that in 1986 I was approached to apply for a management position of an employment training programme. While I would like to believe the approach was made on the basis of my own skills, it is probably more realistic to view it as part of a wider political intent on behalf of the **Māori** who were working at the programme. Their aim was to introduce a **Kaupapa Māori** philosophy to the programme and to establish **whānau** decision making within the

⁵⁶ **Wāhine mō ngā wāhine o Te Moana nui ā Kiwa** translates as Women for women of the Great Ocean of Kiwa, the Pacific Ocean. The term **wāhine mō ngā wāhine** referred specifically to lesbian women and was a term commonly used before the term **takatāpui** gained popular usage amongst **Māori** gays and lesbians. **Takatāpui** refers to an intimate friend of the same sex. For further discussion of the term refer to Aspin, Stanley Clive 2000 *Trans-Tasman Migration and Māori in the time of Aids*, Unpublished Phd Thesis, University of Otago, Dunedin

⁵⁷ **Tino rangatiratanga** is a term commonly used to refer to **Māori** control; sovereignty; independence; autonomy. A fuller discussion is provided in chapter five.

organisation. With fifteen years hindsight I can see the incredible vision that those women held at that time.

Poutama⁵⁸ training programme had been under the auspices of Presbyterian Support Services (PSS) for 5 years. One of the **Pākehā** women working in the programme had been committed to having **Māori** employed, and through active challenge to the system had been instrumental in having a **Māori** woman employed in the Life Skills programme. This opened the doors and within a few years three **Māori** women were working on the programme. The coordinator position came available in 1986 and a delegation to my student flat decided that I should apply. It wasn't an easy process but they had developed a system of **whānau** management that they wanted to try and in order for that to happen they needed someone who was equally committed to its implementation. At twenty-four, I became the youngest member of the PSS management team, and we rearranged the structure of the programme to remove the top-down manager-tutor model and instigated **whānau** decision-making within which we each had active input. In 1987 we formed the 'Te Rapunga o Poutama'⁵⁹ Work and Education Trust' and informed PSS of our intention to relocate the programme as an autonomous unit under **Māori** control. We moved to Khyber Pass in the buildings next to **Te Tātai Hono marae**⁶⁰ and the Holy Sepulchre Anglican church, having survived a major cut to employment training programmes that had seen the other larger PSS programme cut totally. The movement away from large church-group operated programmes had begun and we had moved out just in time to establish ourselves as a **Māori** community programme that had significant **Ngāti Whaatua ki Orakei** involvement. In a period of two years my experiences of life was miles away from that which I had known before. Knowledge and critical cultural analysis played a major part in that shift.

I returned to the University in 1989, and worked also at **Te Tari Āwhina**, the Learning Support Unit at the Auckland Institute of Technology (AIT). My decision to return to University was because I wanted to complete my degree. I had a sense that I had never really completed anything. I'd been involved in a lot of issues over my time in Auckland but never felt a sense of completion. I walked down to **Waipapa**, the University **marae** and stood outside **Tane-nui-ā-rangi**. It was standing outside that **whare** that I knew I could go back there. It was about having a space that was clearly

⁵⁸ The programme name **Poutama** was given by **Paraire Huata**, the then **Māori** Advisor to Presbyterian Support Services. **Poutama** is a pattern that reflects a stairway and refers generally to a progression towards knowledge or enlightenment. **Arapera** Royal-Tangaere refers to the **poutama** as a "visual model of **Māori** human development" that symbolises **Māori** quests for knowledge and the sharing of knowledge. Royal-Tangaere, **Arapera** 'Māori Human Development Learning Theory' in **Te Whaiti**, P., McCarthy, M and Durie, A., 1997 *Mai i Rangiūtea* Auckland University Press and Bridget Williams Books, Auckland pp 46-60

⁵⁹ In following with the notion of the **poutama**, the foundation trust members chose the name **Te Rapunga o Poutama** to indicate the seeking of knowledge. This is in line with the notion that knowledge exists and that we open ourselves to that knowledge in the process of research and development.

defined **Māori** and about feeling solid enough in myself to be a **Māori** woman in that place. As a student at the University of Auckland a group of **Māori** women worked collectively to ensure our 'survival'. We arranged 'extra' tutorials throughout my Undergraduate degree and it became evident very early on that many of the **Māori** male students took and gave little in return. This was such a common occurrence that in my final year a group of **Māori** women set up a tutorial support group that was for **Māori** women. We tutored each other and held day-long exam study groups where we studied hard and ate extremely well. **Kai** played a big part in our process. I was **hapū**⁶¹ with our **māhanga**⁶² during exam time and would sleep on the couch while a group of **Māori** women would be debating the positioning of certain grammatical forms in **te reo Māori**. We would sit in the student cafe planning our Masters and PhDs. At graduation we would choose the PhD gown we wanted, not realising the significance of the different colours. All of the **Māori** women who were a part of those study groups have completed a Masters degree and at least three are heading for doctorates. That is the power of strong **Māori** support systems.

Since returning to study in 1989 I have always maintained a link with the university. I have taught at the Auckland College of Education (ACE) in the School of Early Childhood where again **Māori** women carried much of the load in terms of providing opportunities for our people. It was also in that institution that I saw the power of institutional racism to devastate **Māori** women. Since that time I have maintained an uneasy relationship with **Pākehā** institutions. I have now been with the **Māori** Education Department at the University of Auckland for seven years. Our children have grown up around the university and take for granted their right to enter study there. Few **Māori** children have such a belief. It was not one that I or anyone in my **whānau** ever held. It is not a belief held by **Māori whānau**. It is a belief that must be made available. That is a key role for **Māori** academics and it is something that I see being done, by those I work with, every day. Changes in my life have occurred not because I am 'brainy', nor because I am well assimilated, although I don't deny the colonised baggage I continue to carry, but because I have had things happen in my life that have opened doors of reflection and analysis to enable me to re-see my experiences in another way. Not an alternative way, but a **Māori** way. It is also because many people have entered into my life at key times and given me access to knowledge and ways of thinking that have broadened my world view. I count my **whānau** in this, and the many **Māori**, Indigenous and **Pākehā** radical thinkers whom I can talk with, read, watch, listen to, and am inspired by.

⁶⁰ **Te Tatai Hono** is a inner city **marae** that is operated by **Māori** in the Anglican church.

⁶¹ **hapū** in this context refers to being pregnant. As noted earlier **hapū** also translates as subtribal group and therefore the link between bearing the next generation of **Māori** people and the way in which our people name social structures is evident here.

Articulate, radical thinking **Māori** women have seen me through the changes of the past sixteen years. This continues to be my experience. I am privileged to know and continue to meet incredibly astute, political **Māori** and Indigenous women who influence my thinking and pathways significantly. That influence has taken many different shapes and forms. There are those that have made instant impact, whose influence will be lifelong and who are counted as **whānau** in that their support is constant. There are those who sweep in and out of our lives, bringing thoughts and ideas that motivate and inspire but who for whatever reason can not be there for the long term. There are **Māori** women who come into my life that bring about not only change in my thinking and analysis, but also in my life directions. Each form of connection is of immense value. Each form of influence has been instrumental in shaping how I view, theorise and engage the world. Throughout the writing of this thesis I have come to appreciate more fully those **Māori** and Indigenous women who have gifted myself and my **whānau**, their time, energy, thoughts and passionate engagement with the issues that surround us. There are also many others who bring to my thinking a clarity of engagement and support who are from a range of backgrounds and ethnicities, who in a consciousness of their own identities show us the vitality and possibility of diversity. There are those who express their sexuality in many and varied ways, who constantly remind me of the value and necessity of being fully who we are without doubt or concern for the inability of others to see who we are. All of these things contribute to thinking beyond imposed boundaries. They enable us to think with the vastness of the **Te Moana nui ā kiwa**⁶³ the stretches before us and reaches out to touch our **whanaunga** of the Pacific and beyond.

I have also been fortunate in my work, study and home environments to have access to critical **Māori** thinkers who have been active in their engagement with issues from a **Kaupapa Māori** base. I am honoured to work alongside people that I believe are cutting edge thinkers, who are constantly seeking ways of engaging issues that are based in our own knowledge bases. My home space is a haven of radical thought and my **whānau** are challenging and caring in their engagement with this **mahi**. They know it is not solely about a PhD but is about how we chose to live our lives. This has sustained me in my writing of this thesis, which put simply is a thesis about thinking critically from a **Mana Wahine, Kaupapa Māori** base.⁶⁴ It is about finding ways to think about, analyse and critique experiences that are common place for many **Māori** women.

This thesis may be viewed as a culmination of my life experiences. It allows me an opportunity to explore in some depth the underlying reasons why certain things have happened in my life and in the

⁶² **māhanga** refers to twins.

⁶³ **Te Moana nui ā Kiwa** refers to the Pacific Ocean.

⁶⁴ The terms **Kaupapa Māori** and **Mana Wahine** are discussed in depth in later chapters.

lives of many **Māori**. I have no doubt in my mind that my choice of topic is a reflection of a need to write about myself and to engage with the complexities of what I have seen around me. I have a need to know more and in that sense this thesis is about me. As a **Māori** woman lesbian mother academic who was raised under the mindful eye of **Taranaki maunga**,⁶⁵ who has known the injustices perpetuated on our people and who has struggled to hear the knowledge of **Māori** women, I can say very clearly that in this thesis 'I am my own case study'.

⁶⁵ **Taranaki Maunga** refers to a majestic mountain known as **Taranaki** that stands in our tribal area. **Te Miringa Hohaia** gives insights into the incredible history related to **Taranaki**. **Hohaia, T.M.** 2001 'The Foundation Story: An account interpreted from manuscripts held by **Taranaki Iwi**' in *Te Maunga Taranaki: Views of a mountain*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth