

# “NGĀ PAKIAKA A TE RĒHIA, KA TIPUNA I TE AO RANGATAHI”

An Intersectional Analysis of Kapa Haka and Healing for Rangatahi Māori



A thesis submitted to Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Māori Studies

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*Tauparapara*

*Pāpaki whakapapa*

*Pāpaki ahurea*

*Pāpaki oranga*

*Ki ngā pakiaka a te rēhia*

*Kia tipua ai i te ao Rangatahi*

## ABSTRACT

*“Pāpaki whakapapa, Pāpaki ahurea, Pāpaki oranga, Ki ngā pakiaka a te rēhia, Kia tipua ai i te ao Rangatahi.”* This thesis provides insights into the experiences of rangatahi Māori and Kapa Haka. Through an intersectional and Kaupapa Māori lens, it explores the potential of Kapa Haka in the realms of belonging, identity and healing. In doing so, it illustrates the dynamic value of Kapa Haka for alleviating cultural disconnection and facilitating healing within the context of current contemporary challenges such as the mental health crisis, climate change tensions and discrimination that rangatahi Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand face today. The aim of this work is to contribute to the wave of Kaupapa Māori research demonstrating the transformative impact of Māori tikanga, kawa, and knowledges in alleviating the impact of colonial violence on the wellbeing of our people. This thesis draws on Wānanga as a powerful method for co-constructing knowledge with rangatahi Māori. Claiming Wānanga as a method contributes to the decolonial project not by inventing something new, but by recognising the power and sophistication of Indigenous knowledge making processes. This thesis weaves together the experiences of ten Wānanga participants with autoethnographic reflections, literature, cultural theory and contemporary discussion to provide nuanced glimpses into the complex entity that is Kapa Haka today.

*Ki te taha o tōku māmā*

*Ko Takitimu, Wai te Kauri me Nukutere ngā waka*

*Ko Ngāti Kahungunu ki te Wairoa me Tuhoe ngā iwi*

*Ko Ngāi Tamaterangi me Tamaruarangi ngā hapū*

*Ko Titirangi me Te Urewera ngā maunga*

*Ko Waiau, Ōhinemataora me Waimana ngā awa*

*Ko Waikaremoana te roto*

*Ko Rangiahua, Hinemihi me Rāroa ngā marae*

*Ko Te Poho-o-Tamaterangi, Te-Poho-o-Hinemihi me Te Poho-o-Tanemoeahi ngā whare tīpuna*

*Ko Tamaterangi te tangata*

*Nānā te kōrero, "He ao te rangi, ka uhia, Mā te huruhuru te manu e rere ai"*

*Ko Tongareva te ūkaipō o tōku Pāpā*

*Ko Te-Moana-nui-a-Kiwa te moana*

*Ko Waimea te waka*

*Ko Taruia te roto*

*Ko Omoka te papakainga*

*Ko Tapuniu te hapū*

*Ko Mahuta te tangata*

*Ko Jade Marino Gifford tōku ingoa*

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*“E kore e ārikarika ngā mihi”*

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## COVER IMAGE

This illustration was gifted to me by my tuakana, Tarapuhi Vaeau. It represents the tuākana teina support I received from her, and the whanaungatanga with my whānau, and my participants throughout the process of this mahi. It depicts the cyclical process of tangi and tautoko that this journey has entailed, and exemplifies the themes of community hope and resilience which permeate this thesis.

Ngā mihi ki a koe e hoa.

*Kia tūpato – Take care*

*This thesis includes some discussion of mental illness, death, suicide and violence.*

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# KUPU WHAKATAKI

## Introduction

‘Kapa Haka’<sup>1</sup> is a phenomenon of contemporary Māori<sup>2</sup> performance that has become one of the most significant avenues through which we connect, speak and sing our language, hear stories of our ancestors, and place ourselves within the world. Kapa Haka goes beyond a performance of song and dance; it is the manifestation of Māori experience and identity which spans across time and space. Kapa Haka exposes the strong connections that rangatahi<sup>3</sup> Māori have with the whenua<sup>4</sup>, whakapapa<sup>5</sup>, whānau<sup>6</sup> and their communities and poses powerful avenues for healing and flourishing for rangatahi Māori.

In this thesis I use Kaupapa Māori methods to explore Kapa Haka as it is experienced by a group of rangatahi Māori living in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara<sup>7</sup>. I explore the stories and experiences shared in research Wānanga<sup>8</sup> with ten participants, including myself, and demonstrate the methodological potential of Wānanga for developing collaborative knowledge with young Māori people.

Through the lenses of decolonisation (Tuhiwai-Smith 2012; Tuck and Yang 2012; Mercier 2020), intersectionality (Crenshaw 2017; Hill Collins 2019) and historical trauma theory (Wirihana and Smith 2014; Brave Heart 2003), I reveal important implications considering the themes of belonging, identity, and healing. In doing so, I underline considerations for addressing the present mental health crisis affecting my generation and deepen current conceptualisations of decolonisation in Aotearoa New Zealand. This thesis weaves together the experiences of participants with literature, cultural theory and contemporary discussion to provide nuanced glimpses into the complex entity that is Kapa Haka today.

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<sup>1</sup> Māori cultural performance, performing group

<sup>2</sup> Indigenous person of Aotearoa New Zealand

<sup>3</sup> To be young, youth, younger generation

<sup>4</sup> Land, placenta, afterbirth

<sup>5</sup> Genealogy, lineage, descent

<sup>6</sup> Extended family, to be born

<sup>7</sup> Wellington, New Zealand

<sup>8</sup> To meet and discuss, deliberate, consider

## ‘Ko wai au?’ ‘Who am I?’

Māori Anthropologist Lily George asks that researchers answer the question of “ko wai au?”, meaning “who am I?” (George 2018). This question provokes the researcher to make their positionality clear and begs that we ask questions such as “What is my relationship to this research?” And “What rights do I have to conduct this research?”

My positionality is a crucial part of the processes and outcomes of this project. I am a wahine<sup>9</sup> Māori, Cook Island Māori, cis-gendered, person of colour. I whakapapa<sup>10</sup> to Wairoa and Horohoro (Ngāti Kahungunu), Waimana (Tūhoe) and the island of Tongareva in the Cook Islands. For the most part I have lived my whole life within the region of Te-Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington. I now live with my whānau in Waikanae, Kāpiti Coast in the rohe<sup>11</sup> of Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai.

Kapa Haka has played a central role in my life so far, as my memories are predominantly of fun, whānau-centred and laughter-filled times. My whānau were founding members of ‘Mana Tiaki’, a community urban and Māori Kapa Haka group based in Tawa, which is discussed in this thesis. We were members in this group through its active years from 2005 – 2017. Through whakawhanaunga<sup>12</sup> and the construction of a space for shared belonging, I forged important relationships with found whānau, and came to learn, to live and to breathe Te Ao Māori<sup>13</sup>. This roopu<sup>14</sup> was integral in my desire to continue to explore Te Ao Māori through research and continues to inspire me to design and envision positive outcomes for whānau and rangatahi Māori.

## *“Ngā pakiaka a te rēhia, ka tipua i te ao rangatahi”*

The title and tauparapara<sup>15</sup> that open this thesis were gifted to me by my brother, Matthew Gifford. The title is a metaphor which refers to the expansive roots of Te Rehia; a call back to the term “ngā mahi a te rēhia” or the forms and pursuits of pleasure, recreation and entertainment – such as Kapa Haka. These roots, which are firmly planted in Papatuānuku<sup>16</sup>, provide the foundations for ‘tipua’ or the growth of new shoots; rangatahi, or future generations. This title reflects the importance of considering the important

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<sup>9</sup> Female, woman

<sup>10</sup> Genealogy, descent

<sup>11</sup> Boundary, district, region, territory, area, border (of land)

<sup>12</sup> Process of establishing relationships, relating well to others

<sup>13</sup> The Māori world

<sup>14</sup> Group, committee, organisation

<sup>15</sup> Incantation to begin speech

<sup>16</sup> Atua of the Earth, Earth mother and wife of Ranginui - all living things originate from them

implications of “ngā mahi a te rēhia” and the value these pursuits have in the growth and flourishing of rangatahi Māori today. In the tauparapara, I frame the important components or layers of this thesis – ‘whakapapa’ (relating to belonging), ‘ahurea’ (relating to identity) and ‘oranga’ (relating to healing). This metaphor visualises the essence of this thesis in a uniquely Māori way. That is, the potential of Kapa Haka in healing and growth for rangatahi Māori, and the subsequent importance of those elements which ground us: belonging to community networks of people and land, and having a strong sense of identity.

## Research Aims

This thesis aims to contribute to the wave of Kaupapa Māori research demonstrating the transformative impact of our tikanga<sup>17</sup>, kawa<sup>18</sup>, and knowledges in alleviating the impact of colonial violence on the wellbeing of our people (Wirihana and Smith 2014; Pihama 2012; Bryers-Brown 2015). I seek to do this by illustrating the dynamic value of Kapa Haka for alleviating cultural disconnection for rangatahi Māori, particularly the ways that being rangatahi Māori and living in urban environments influence our connection to Kapa Haka and our identity as Māori. In doing so, I hope to challenge mainstream notions of healing and wellbeing, suggest Kapa Haka as a valuable technique in alleviating and healing from trauma, and expand the body of knowledge on the complex experiences of Māori young people today.

Using the framing of intersectionality and historical trauma (Crenshaw 2017; Wirihana and Smith 2014), I complicate the understandings of Māori identity and, therefore, highlight the conditions necessary for decolonisation to occur, and for services, approaches, and policies that may wish to harness the power of Kapa Haka, to enable healing and avoid harm. Particularly, this thesis outlines the ways that Kapa Haka relates to conceptions of ‘place’ and belonging through whenua and community connections. I hope to contribute to the improvement of social and health outcomes for Māori by making visible the connections between Kapa Haka and positive outcomes for rangatahi Māori.

Through a Kaupapa Māori lens, I use literature and Wānanga findings alongside personal autoethnographic reflections to provide insight and glimpses into my participants’ experiences of Kapa Haka which surfaced during our Wānanga. By demonstrating the complex interplay of oppressive colonial forces with experiences of belonging, identity, and ultimately healing, I assess these manifestations in diverse rangatahi realities.

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<sup>17</sup> Correct, right, custom

<sup>18</sup> Marae protocol, custom

This thesis does not seek to generalise the experiences of all rangatahi Māori but instead it reflects my journey as well as the journey of those whānau and rangatahi in my networks, and the experiences and stories shared through our Wānanga. This thesis reads as an ode to the variety of ways Kapa Haka can be a valuable avenue to strengthen identity, belonging and healing for rangatahi Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The research questions I seek to address throughout this thesis are:

- How might intersectionality theory contribute to a deeper understanding of decolonisation?
- What does decolonial theory reveal about the nature of Kapa Haka today?
- In what ways do historical trauma and Kapa Haka interact?
- How do diverse Māori realities experience Kapa Haka?
- How does 'flaxroots' community Kapa Haka differ from other forms of Kapa Haka?
- What are the implications for healing from historical trauma?

### Mapping Key Terms in this Research

Some key terms which underpin this research include 'rangatahi Māori', 'identity', 'place', 'healing' and 'wellbeing'. I will map these terms and their definitions in the next paragraphs and throughout this thesis.

'Rangatahi Māori' is a unique way of framing my field which is further explored in my Methods chapter. In this context, it is a loose term used to refer to young people who are Māori. 'Identity' relates to the ways we view ourselves and the groups we belong to. This thesis engages with the unique challenges associated with Māori identity as described by Tahu Kukutai and Melinda Webber, who wrote that Māori identity "emerges in institutional, cultural and familial contexts; it is neither static nor one-dimensional; and its meanings, as expressed in schools, neighbourhoods, peer groups and whānau, vary across time, space and place" (2017, 79). Relating to identity is the concept of 'place', referring to "the built environment with its connotative meanings" especially in relation to identity (Hauge 2007, 44). Of particular relevance is the importance of place in Indigenous research. That is, the way this term emphasises notions of "context, situatedness and perspective" (Johnson 2013, 10). Further, I explore the notion of 'belonging', and employ a relational approach to analyse how belonging is situated in networks of communities and land. Indigenous networks of belonging involve important negotiations about place,

people, genealogy, land and sea. As Whitt et al. have noted, belonging relates to the “intimate relationship between a people and a land” (2001, 706).

In regard to ‘healing’ and ‘wellbeing’, this thesis considers these terms largely within the context of Māori health and wellbeing established by Mason Durie. Durie’s framework of Te Whare Tapa Whā discusses the importance of ‘taha tinana’<sup>19</sup> ‘taha wairua’<sup>20</sup> ‘taha hinengaro’<sup>21</sup> and ‘taha whānau’<sup>22</sup> in our definitions and experiences of healing and wellbeing (1985). These four key dimensions of Māori health are explored and implemented within the context of rangatahi Māori experiences of Kapa Haka.

Together, these terms provide the road-map and basis for understanding how, along with my themes and frameworks, these concepts surface, converge and interact with each other throughout this thesis.

### Acknowledging the “Ngā Hua a Tāne Rore” Report

This thesis was heavily influenced by the 2014 report ‘Ngā Hua a Tāne Rore The Benefits of Kapa Haka’, prepared by Leonie Pihama, Jillian Tipene and Herearoha Skipper of Te Kotahi Research Institute for Te Manatū Taonga – Ministry for Culture and Heritage and Te Matatini Kapa Haka Aotearoa. The report aimed to scope “the research needs and options for developing a better understanding of the contribution that Kapa Haka makes to Aotearoa New Zealand society” (Pihama et al. 2014). This thesis responds to a few of the suggested future streams of research outlined in the Ngā Hua a Tāne Rore report, including:

- The place of urban/non-iwi<sup>23</sup> -based Kapa Haka groups
- Identity as the overarching question/focus and how Kapa Haka contributes to that
- Youth development: indigeneity and the contribution that cultural components add to resilience factors for young people
- The intrinsic value of Kapa Haka to our social wellbeing (Pihama et al. 2014, 71-73)

In this thesis I integrate a number of the findings identified in the Ngā Hua a Tāne Rore report, along with my own findings to further support the themes and discussions highlighted through Wānanga participants and literature research.

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<sup>19</sup> A bodily dimension

<sup>20</sup> A spiritual dimension

<sup>21</sup> A psychic dimension

<sup>22</sup> A family dimension

<sup>23</sup> Tribe, nation, extended kinship

## The Context of Rangatahi Māori Mental Health Challenges Today

A driving motivation behind this thesis is to highlight the value of Kapa Haka in addressing the issue of rangatahi Māori mental health in Aotearoa New Zealand today. This crisis is characterised by an overall lack of education, access and funding in the area of rangatahi Māori mental health, illness, trauma and distress (Paterson et al. 2018). This has led to significant impacts for rangatahi Māori, particularly those who experience multiple layers of marginalisation. The 2018 “He Ara Oranga” report notes many significant findings in this space. The report outlines the unique challenges that young Māori people face in mental health services, highlighting that “the way our health system approaches mental distress and illness reflects a colonising world view largely hostile to Māori understandings of wellbeing” (Paterson et al. 2018, 40). Further, Māori in the mental health system feel that their “mental health has suffered as a direct result of long-standing alienation from their land and the impact of colonisation and generational deprivation” (Paterson et al. 2018, 40).

Research shows that mental illness becomes more common as young people move through adolescence, with approximately one third of late adolescents having a mental illness (Ministry of Health 2002). Further, Māori adults were about 1.5 times more likely than non-Māori adults to report a high or very high probability of having an anxiety or depressive disorder (Ministry of Health 2018). In 2010-12 Māori suicide rates were near twice as high as non-Māori, with young adults 15-24 years having the highest rate (Ministry of Health 2018). Māori are also significantly more likely to be hospitalised for self-harm related injuries (Ministry of Health 2018). In Aotearoa New Zealand, one in three Māori adults meet the criteria for at least one mental health disorder and just under half of Māori experience a mental health disorder during their lifetime (Brown, Wells, Scott 2006, 163).

Rangatahi Māori have been vocal about their dissatisfaction with the current mental health system. One recent example was ‘The Wait is Over’ campaign and march on Parliament, coordinated by Victoria University of Wellington Students Association (VUWSA) in 2018. The campaign was motivated by students’ complaints about waiting weeks or months for counselling services (VUWSA 2018). The march saw “Hundreds of students marching” to Parliament “with a message of hope for their peers and a request for the government to do more” (VUWSA 2018). One of the speakers at the march, Maia Te Koha, spoke to the significant challenges the inadequate system posed for Māori students. Te Koha pleaded for a reframing of conversations surrounding youth mental health, claiming:

Mental health issues are not a weakness or personality trait, they are a medical condition which deserves to be addressed and taken care of like any other physical health condition. We aren't expected to just get over a broken bone, asthma or the flu; we shouldn't be expected to just get over our mental health issues either. (Te Koha 2018, 24)

Te Koha concluded with the following: "we deserve a health service and resources that meet our needs. We deserve to have a government that recognises the needs of its country's young people, and work with us to fulfil them. We deserve to always be in our best health" (Te Koha 2018, 24). This example speaks to the mental health service inadequacies young people face within the context of Te-Whanganui-a-Tara.

The above considerations and example reflect the mental health landscape that rangatahi Māori navigate today, and demonstrate the need for alternative methods and techniques in alleviating these impacts, illnesses and harms that whānau and rangatahi Māori face. I have identified the problem of rangatahi Māori mental health and, with respect to others currently working within this space, I propose Kapa Haka as one alternative tool which, if validated and funded, could make a difference.

## Thesis Overview

In my first chapter, I assess my use of theoretical frameworks, and how together they implement a uniquely tailored approach to my research with rangatahi Māori.

In Chapter Two, I outline the mixture of methods adopted in this research. I discuss how elements of autoethnography, ethnography and collaboration are blended together. This chapter highlights the process of Wānanga as a legitimate method for researching with rangatahi Māori. I emphasise the unique ways that Wānanga harnesses the creativity, intelligence and innovation of rangatahi Māori to produce valuable and insightful research outcomes through the co-creation of knowledge.

Following this, in Chapter Three, I trace the history of Kapa Haka from early mythology to today by analysing a selection of material pertaining to its use over time. I discuss the ways that Kapa Haka has played and continues to play important roles in Māori society.

In Chapter Four, I analyse the concept of 'Belonging' in relation to whenua and community networks evident through Kapa Haka. I highlight the ways that rangatahi Māori relationships to 'whenua' are foregrounded in their experiences of Kapa Haka, and how this relates to their constructions of place and 'Home'. I examine the case study of 'Mana Tiaki', a community based, urban and Māori Kapa Haka group in Tawa that grew from 5 kids and a guitar in a living room, to an elaborate network of hundreds of whānau



members. I look to Mana Tiaki as an example of a community based ‘flaxroots’ Kapa Haka group, and an example of whānau Māori resiliency and “carving space” for networks of shared belonging.

In Chapter Five, I explore the notion of identity through the story of Ariel, shared at our Wānanga. I discuss the experiences of those living at the intersections of identity (Ferguson 2007), and the importance of unravelling colonial notions of identity through the process of decolonisation. I consider the varying ways that Kapa Haka is experienced as identity-strengthening for rangatahi Māori, especially how Kapa Haka has valuable and unique impacts for Takatāpui<sup>24</sup> rangatahi. I discuss the importance of whakapapa as central in rangatahi Māori identity, and how Kapa Haka provides pathways of access into Te Ao Māori for rangatahi experiencing cultural disconnection. Finally, I discuss the representation of Kapa Haka in the media and popular culture and its implications for rangatahi Māori, identity and Kapa Haka.

In Chapter Six, I turn to healing and flourishing and argue that Kapa Haka is a valuable tool for holistic healing. I show how Kapa Haka provides powerful avenues for individual and whānau-led healing through historical trauma, mental illness, distress, and loss. I look at how Kapa Haka presents unique opportunities for rangatahi Māori to experience bodily autonomy and pride. In this chapter, I follow the claim made by one of my participants, Georgia, that Kapa Haka has the potential to heal Māori “ā-tinana<sup>25</sup>, ā-wairua<sup>26</sup>, ā-hinengaro<sup>27</sup> and ā-whānau”.

Finally, I conclude by discussing the key insights of this thesis and reflect on the process and knowledge created through Wānanga, and its potential implications in the Kapa Haka world and Te Ao Māori today. Finally, I offer avenues for future research within this space.

### Use of Te Reo Māori<sup>28</sup>

My use of Te Reo Māori in this thesis is evident in instances where I believe certain kupu Māori<sup>29</sup> are more suitable or where an idea is expressed more poignantly through Te Reo Māori as opposed to English. I choose to keep some kupu Māori in the writing as an attempt to act in line with calls to revitalise and normalise Te Reo Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is articulated by Rawinia Higgins, who argues that Te Reo Māori should be treated as a fundamental “means for us to communicate with one another across

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<sup>24</sup> Close friend, intimate friend (of the same gender)

<sup>25</sup> Body, torso, self

<sup>26</sup> Spirit, soul

<sup>27</sup> Mind, thought, intellect

<sup>28</sup> Māori language

<sup>29</sup> Te Reo Māori words

the whole nation...” (2015, 36). While acknowledging this, kupu Māori will be offered with a footnoted translation on their first mention, with no corresponding translation thereafter. However, a glossary is included as a reference to improve accessibility of this thesis to English speakers. In some cases, such as in the case of ‘whakapapa’ and ‘whenua’ more discussion and analysis will be dedicated to certain words’ context and use as they relate to the themes and content within the relevant chapters.

# 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One size does not fit all and we need approaches - whether we call these comprehensive, ecological, primary, public health or holistic or utilise Māori concepts such as kaupapa Māori, mana motuhake<sup>30</sup>, mauri ora<sup>31</sup> or whānau ora<sup>32</sup> - that are informed and driven by diverse rangatahi Māori understandings and aspirations. To realise this fully, rangatahi Māori need to be involved in research that builds evidence to underpin the development of initiatives. (Barnes 2010, 6)

The above quote points to the reasons behind the unique theoretical foundations of this thesis. It highlights a significant need for rangatahi-led knowledge that deeply acknowledges the diversity of rangatahi Māori experience. Reflecting this, I have used a combination of theories that complement each other in their emphasis on addressing the long-term, dynamic, and changing manifestations of colonialism on marginalised people. They each have different entry points, and reveal different aspects to my argument.

In this chapter I introduce the four main theoretical lenses that I have used in my research: Kaupapa Māori -an Indigenous methodology local to Aotearoa New Zealand; decolonisation –an approach providing pathways for the transformation of colonial structures; intersectionality –a seminal theory exploring the layered nature of oppression; and historical trauma –a framework for articulating the collective and generational impact of colonialism. I conclude by describing how they work together to provide a rangatahi-led perspective on Kapa Haka, and allow for a more comprehensive exploration of the possibilities of its use as a tool for healing historical trauma. I thereby, provide evidence of Kapa Haka as a useful option to address the mental health crisis that weighs on my people today. In the following chapters I explore the experiences of rangatahi through these theories and argue that a Kaupapa Māori approach to service provision, community building, healing, and revitalisation, foregrounds the needs of those most marginalised by the many oppressive forces of colonisation.

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<sup>30</sup> Autonomy, self-government, self-determination, independence, sovereignty, authority

<sup>31</sup> Related to the 'sneeze of life', the vital essence of life

<sup>32</sup> Family health

## Kaupapa Māori Theory

It is important to note how theory has been weaponised against Black and Brown peoples to insist that Indigenous knowledges are ‘practical’ rather than ‘theoretical’ (Kincheloe and Steinberg 2008). Instead of proposing that there is a distinct difference in the type or quality of knowledge between theory and ‘other’, I use theory here as a way to highlight particular patterns that other scholars have demonstrated are related to a particular social phenomenon, such as colonialism (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 117-144). This can help us to see how seemingly unrelated things come from the same source, and show our connection to global struggles. Similarly, in defining Kaupapa Māori theory, influential wahine Māori scholar Leonie Pihama shows that “we have always been theorists”, pointing to examples such as the complex navigational frameworks of our ancestors (Pihama 2012, 5). In doing so, she highlights the colonial roots of the assertion that Indigenous people’s knowledges are simplistic or unintellectual.

Pihama states that -

“The development of Kaupapa Māori as a foundation for theory and research has grown from Māori struggles for tino rangatiratanga<sup>33</sup> and mana motuhake<sup>34</sup>. As such there is a clear cultural and political intent” (2012, 5).

This quote demonstrates how Kaupapa Māori theory makes space for Indigenous knowledges, including their contemporary manifestations as structural critique. This thesis seeks to engage with these contemporary manifestations in Kapa Haka, especially the ways that Kapa Haka surfaces in different spaces and reveals contemporary rangatahi Māori aspirations. In this, I highlight examples of Kapa Haka that range from young climate activist groups on the steps of Parliament, to the community urban and Māori group Mana Tiaki, and, further, to the experiences of Takatāpui rangatahi within this space.

In my use of Kaupapa Māori theory I have been inspired by the work of pioneering wahine Māori anthropologists such as Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1991), Lily George (2017, 2010), Marama Muru-Lanning (2016) and Tarapuhi Vaeau (Bryers Brown 2015). Their work in this space has been instrumental in informing my knowledge of how the incorporation of Kaupapa Māori theoretical approaches can illuminate insights and provide nuanced glimpses into the diverse realities of Māori. For example, they have emphasised to me the relational nature of research with Māori and the importance of considering

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<sup>33</sup> Self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, self-government

<sup>34</sup> Separate identity, autonomy, self-government, self-determination, independence, sovereignty

Māori relationality, to personhood, whānau and wider networks of community and non-human elements in the research process.

Kaupapa Māori theory seeks to legitimise Māori ways of doing things and foregrounds the knowledge inherent in Māori forms of communication, which in this case includes things like waiata<sup>35</sup>, haka<sup>36</sup>, Wānanga and whakapapa. A Kaupapa Māori lens legitimises Kapa Haka, not just as performing arts or a form of entertainment, but also as a form of knowledge making and transmission, which will be expanded on throughout this thesis.

Another strength of a Kaupapa Māori theoretical approach is how it is implemented in research as a reaction to the fundamentally 'white' academic cannon (Jacobs-Huey 2002). By solidifying this approach as a theory that can be applied at every stage of the research process, it is an active way of foregrounding Māori perspectives about ourselves as opposed to relying on international literature or foreign knowledge systems.

## Decolonisation

Decolonisation is the struggle for Indigenous peoples to resist colonial structures of power and knowledge which have caused brutal harm to their own knowledge system and their relation to their land, kin, and ways of being. This form of decolonisation considers the nuances of oppression and the pervasive ongoing nature of colonising processes for Indigenous people. Pioneers such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) have been integral in reframing decolonisation as a way of understanding the harms of colonisation globally.

Decolonisation involves a re-centring of Indigenous ideologies that were deliberately harmed through colonisation. As Jessica Hutchings and Jenny Lee-Morgan note, decolonisation allows "Indigenous peoples around the world to share in their struggles of survival and commitment to leading positive, self-determining lives in their homelands" (2013, 3). Decolonisation involves a re-engagement of the teachings of our ancestors and how they might give meaning in a contemporary world. It is about considering the ways colonisation continues to be ever-present and all-encompassing in the experiences of being Indigenous today (Hutchings and Lee-Morgan 2013, vii). These Indigenous knowledge systems, Hutchings and Lee-Morgan argue, encourage us "to have faith that our own knowledge systems continue to provide guidance, wisdom and the solution to many of the challenges we face today" (2016, vii). Decolonisation

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<sup>35</sup> Song, chant, psalm, to sing

<sup>36</sup> To dance, perform

also means remembering that traditional knowledges, traditions, beliefs and practices are not “a romanticised past, but continue to be a valid source for sustainability and regeneration as a people” (Hutchings and Lee-Morgan 2016, 4).

One strength of decolonisation theory is that it helps us as Māori to place our struggle within the wider struggle for Black and Indigenous liberation. As it has been noted, “decolonisation reminds us that we as Māori are not alone in our struggle” (Hutchings and Lee-Morgan 2016, 3). Decolonisation provides a potential lens through which we can see our struggle, and unite against the myriad forces of white supremacy at play in the lives of Black and Indigenous People of Colour (BIPOC). Importantly, unmasking white supremacy, and challenging the normalisation of whiteness as a prevalent force, is articulated as a key part of decolonisation. This is particularly important with the prevailing impacts of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and, locally, with the repercussions of the Christchurch Terror Attack in 2002 still at the forefront of discussions regarding BIPOC pervasive experiences of racism.

Decolonisation provides a useful framework for addressing the impact of colonisation for Indigenous people. In this thesis, it is implemented in analysing the experiences of Kapa Haka for rangatahi. The process of decolonisation asks the question “How has colonisation shaped this experience?” In my writing and methods, I make significant space for unravelling decolonial discussions to further emphasise this commitment to decolonisation and Kaupapa Māori. Examples of this can be found in my discussions around decolonising understandings of identity, sexuality, whenua and healing in the following chapters.

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a framework coined by Kimberlè Crenshaw (2017). The term was created as a response to the marginalisation of Black women and it is a theory rooted in Black feminism and Critical race theory (Carbado et al. 2013). Intersectionality is a tool I have used to articulate the unique violence that exists at the intersection of oppressions. It helps to identify how white supremacy has shaped us, and to articulate our own experiences because it outlines how whiteness or white culture has influenced how we think about class, body size, sexuality, gender, and race.

Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang have spoken to the value of intersectionality as an approach in studies with Indigenous communities (2012). They argue that when intersectional approaches are linked with Indigenous frameworks, they highlight significant principles including relationality, reciprocity, reflexivity, respect, reverence, responsivity and responsibility (Tuck and Yang 2012, 13). Further, they argue that research conducted in this way should “further social justice and holistic wellbeing” (Tuck and Yang 2012,

13). Intersectionality asks researchers to acknowledge diversity within Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (e.g. age, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, ability), with special focus on those groups who are commonly excluded from these discussions (Tuck and Yang 2012, 15).

Intersectionality highlights the structural power at play in the experiences of marginalised people (Crenshaw 2017; Hill Collins 2019, 170). Particularly, this approach reveals the ways in which ‘matrixes of domination’ and intersecting systems of oppression – such as heteropatriarchy, neo-colonialism, capitalism, racism, and imperialism – play out and influence every aspect of social life (Hill Collins 2019, 171). This theory not only acknowledges these layers but urges us to pay attention to those that experience them, and to trust their experience about themselves.

Intersectionality theory is a tool that allows me to fulfil the obligations set out by Kaupapa Māori. That is the task of producing knowledge “by, with and for Māori” (Cram 2001, 37). Accordingly, I take seriously the diverse realities of Māori as they relate to Māori identity. These are considered by Mason Durie:

Contemporary expressions of Māori identity are diverse and generally fall into the following categories: “Māori who are strongly linked with traditional Māori networks (kohanga reo, kura kaupapa, marae<sup>37</sup>); Māori who have a limited association with Māori society but are primarily integrated into mainstream New Zealand; and Māori who are isolated from both Māori and mainstream society”. (Durie 1994, 10)

Considering the intersectional identities of rangatahi Māori involves a critical and nuanced understanding of the levels of connectedness rangatahi have with their identities as Māori, and how these have been influenced by wider structures of race, white supremacy, colonialism, patriarchy and class. Further, we must consider how aspects of gender, language, sexuality and education might also come into play in the lived experiences of rangatahi Māori. This thesis explores how Kapa Haka surfaces different tensions relating to this. Some ways I have done this is in my discussion of urban Māori experiences in my ‘belonging’ and ‘identity’ chapters, here I consider the intersectional experiences of takatāpui rangatahi. In my ‘healing’ chapter, I propose the value of Kapa Haka in alleviating cultural disconnection and facilitating healing for rangatahi Māori.

The field of rangatahi Māori on which this study focuses, is an intersection of identity in itself. An important context to this is the ways in which ‘whiteness’ have influenced modern conceptualisations of

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<sup>37</sup> Meeting house

young Māori people. Research points to the ways in which colonialism has destroyed some integral traditional “rites of passage” which functioned to “develop and prepare young members of Indigenous societies for their roles in the wider collective” (Ware and Walsh-Tapiata 2010, 19). In essence, Western categories of age and their connotations are challenged by Māori notions which emphasise a more diverse, dynamic and contextual understanding of age. As Tahu Kukutai and Melinda Webber have noted: “Māori identity therefore emerges in institutional, cultural and familial contexts; it is neither static nor one-dimensional; and its meanings, as expressed in schools, neighbourhoods, peer groups and whānau, vary across time, space and place” (2016, 79).

## Historical Trauma

This theory helps to demonstrate different forms of violence and how they are experienced across generations. It also shows how this manifests in people’s wellbeing today, and therefore, how we might heal from it.

The concept of historical trauma is helpful when exploring the effects of colonialism on Indigenous societies with regard to health and wellbeing. Historical trauma theory first emerged from the field of psychoanalysis when describing the experiences of children of Holocaust survivors (Mohatt et al. 2014). In the past two decades, this theory has been applied to various experiences of colonisation for Indigenous groups around the world (Mohatt et al. 2014, 128). Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart describes historical trauma as the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences” (2003, 7). These traumatic experiences, she argues, can result in serious health conditions, both mental and physical. The concept of historical trauma can be related to Māori experiences of colonisation. In my application of this theory, I was strongly influenced by Tarapuhi Bryers-Brown’s Master’s thesis which looked at whānau Māori state engagements as sites of re-traumatisation and violence (2015). Specifically, she described how historical trauma has shaped the unique forms of oppression Māori face today (Bryers-Brown 2015). Māori notions of health, along with language, spirituality, and conceptions of the world as a whole were severely disrupted with the arrival of European settlers. Many of the Māori health disparities we see in Aotearoa New Zealand today can be attributed to this notion of historical trauma. According to Brave Heart, historical trauma responses can often surface in “depression, self-destructive behaviour, suicidal thoughts and gestures, anxiety, low self-esteem, anger, and difficulty recognising and expressing emotions” as well as abuse and tendencies towards self-medication (2003, 7). Not only this, but Brave Heart argues that risk factors for



substance abuse, violence and mental illness can be exacerbated by Indigenous historical trauma responses (2003, 7).

This thesis utilises historical trauma theory to complement the frameworks of Kaupapa Māori and decolonisation theories as a way to further assess the impacts of colonisation in the experiences of rangatahi Māori. In doing so, it provides a framework for understanding the 'why' in the discussion of health and wellbeing. Further, this thesis proposes that the responsibility of these outcomes lies not only with the individual but with the system which perpetuates intergenerational Indigenous trauma. This theory contextualises the outcomes for rangatahi Māori in the health system today, and this thesis seeks to suggest Kapa Haka as one valuable avenue to achieve healing and flourishing in this space.

## Chapter Summary

This section has outlined the theoretical frameworks employed in this thesis. I have called for a multi-faceted approach, through incorporating the theories of Kaupapa Māori, decolonisation, intersectionality and historical trauma. These theoretical frameworks provide a tailored approach to the topic of rangatahi Māori experiences of Kapa Haka today. Through these lenses, I explore the experiences highlighted in this thesis using a multitude of contextual and societal considerations which help to better frame the healing potential of Kapa Haka.

## 2. METHODS

Every issue has been approached by Indigenous peoples with a view to re writing and re righting our position in history. Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes. (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 71-72)

I use this quote from Linda Tuhiwai Smith's seminal work *Decolonising Methodologies*, to foreground my methods chapter, as it highlights the unique tensions that shape the context in which my research is situated as a Māori researcher. Tuhiwai Smith's work has led the exploration of these tensions and urges researchers to consider the histories that have caused Indigenous people to see 'research' as a "dirty word" (2012, 1). She demonstrates how social science research was founded on Eurocentric assumptions of truth and objectivity and was used by imperialists as a tool to control and 'civilise' Indigenous people (Tuhiwai Smith 2012). Specifically, in early research it was assumed that the Pākehā<sup>38</sup> 'outsider' researcher was in the best position to judge and describe a culture. This resulted in Māori being portrayed to the world and recorded in histories predominantly through the eyes of white people. Accordingly, researching with Māori involves careful consideration of the inherent power imbalance between 'researcher' and 'researched', resulting in the necessity to focus on my processes and ensure the project I produce is collaborative.

In this chapter, I further explore Kaupapa Māori as a reaction to these histories, and a step towards addressing these power imbalances by reclaiming our own stories with a deeply relational, culturally-grounded set of ethical considerations and methods. I explain my use of a Kaupapa Māori approach as a decolonial method. I explore how this influenced the selection of methods I used to explore my research questions, including autoethnography. More significantly, I discuss Wānanga, a Māori process of knowledge formation, as a distinct research method. I explain its practice in this thesis and demonstrate why it is a valuable way to co-create knowledge with rangatahi Māori. Finally, I consider how these approaches and methods shaped the data analysis, theming and writing process of this work.

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<sup>38</sup> New Zealander of European descent, foreigner

## Situating my Work within Kaupapa Māori Methodological Principles

In line with the theoretical foundations discussed in the previous chapter, Kaupapa Māori methods resist dominant, Western colonial methods by asserting the legitimacy of Indigenous ways of being and knowing (Pihama 2012). Fiona Cram has argued that Kaupapa Māori research can be defined as “Māori research by, with and for Māori [that] is about regaining control over Māori knowledge and Māori resources” (2001, 37). Importantly, it is grounded in mātauranga Māori which is defined as knowledge “created by Māori humans according to a worldview entitled ‘Te Ao Mārama’ and by the employment of methodologies derived from this worldview to explain the Māori experience of the world” (Royal 1998, 26). In this section, I outline my Kaupapa Māori methodological grounding and reflect on its use in this research.

The articulation of Kaupapa Māori methods that has been foundational for me comes from the ‘Kaupapa Rangahau’ online resource, which lists key principles and their importance in Kaupapa Māori research (Rangahau Website 2020). Throughout this chapter I mention how a number of these principles have manifested in my approach.

Kaupapa Māori principles have been critical in developing my understanding of Kaupapa Māori within this research. Furthermore, I will build upon how they influenced the main method of data collection that I used - Wānanga.

## Wānanga as a Method

In this section I will discuss the method of Wānanga that I utilised in my fieldwork and my process of facilitating Wānanga with my participants. I will also discuss the incorporation of important concepts such as collaboration and whakawhanaungatanga<sup>39</sup> in the design of the Wānanga. Along with this, I detail the various ethical considerations that were made throughout the process of designing and implementing this method.

## Defining Wānanga

Gary Raumati Hook has written of the function of Wānanga in the transmission of Māori knowledge – of spiritual concepts and information relating to the practice of healing (2007, 5). According to Hook,

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<sup>39</sup> process of establishing relationships, relating well to others

Wānanga have been practised by Māori since prior to colonisation and were conducted regularly by hapū (2007). Wānanga have been referred to as the ‘receptacles of wisdom’ brought with our ancestors from Hawaiki<sup>40</sup>, comprising of the three baskets of knowledge categorised into ritual, occult (spiritual) and secular (worldly) (Barlow 1991, 158). The kupu ‘Wānanga’ has many varying meanings - it can mean knowledge itself; it can also be a verb meaning to have deep kōrero about a specific kaupapa. More recently, the common usage of the term is used in reference to ‘whare Wānanga’ or schools of learning. Whare Wānanga is a translation for traditional Pākehā learning institutions such as universities, but also points to the Wānanga movement and the establishment of kaupapa Māori tertiary institutes around Aotearoa New Zealand, beginning in the 1980s with the establishment of Te Wānanga o Raukawa in Ōtaki. The purpose of tertiary Wānanga was largely as part of the revitalisation movement of Te Reo Māori and mātauranga<sup>41</sup> Māori (Walker 2004). The wider turn towards revitalising Māori culture - *te reo me ona tikanga* - was a major influence in the revival of Wānanga as a term, event, and verb.

Naomi Simmonds has pointed to Wānanga as a valuable tool in Māori research, but admits that it is an area that lacks sufficient literature (2014, 87). In my preparations, I was heavily influenced by Simmonds’ use of Wānanga as a method in her PhD thesis (2014). Along with the obvious requirements of bringing together a group of people to discuss at length their experiences and stories, Simmonds utilises Wānanga as a means of “collective knowledge construction, teaching and learning” (2014, 93). Simmonds emphasises her inclusion of ‘hands on’ activities during the Wānanga, where creation is central (2014, 89).

For the purpose of this thesis, Wānanga can be seen as an intensified period of time where elements of Kaupapa Māori are put into practice. The Kaupapa Māori principles described play out in often invisible, nuanced, unspoken ways in the design and experience of Wānanga. In November 2019 I presented a conference paper alongside Kaupapa Māori anthropologist Tarapuhi Vaeau (nee Bryers-Brown). In it, we unpacked the key elements of Wānanga, and what differentiates it from other ‘workshops’ or focus groups that researchers might undertake. Here are some elements of Wānanga that we outlined as important, especially when conducted intersectionally:

Wānanga are **transformative**, meaning the Kaupapa is defined by the importance of bringing about change or solutions for Māori communities. It’s about ensuring the process is healing and not harmful for participants. Part of this is persisting with a kaupapa until everyone is satisfied

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<sup>40</sup> Ancient Māori homeland

<sup>41</sup> Knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill

with the outcome. Spaces reserved for Indigenous thinking and collaboration are a rarity in settler-colonial Aotearoa, so the knowledge shared and created in these spaces is valuable and exemplifies Māori resilience, reclamation and resistance. Additionally, this element highlights how essential bringing an intersectional lens to the design and delivery of Wānanga is.

**Creation** is an essential part of Wānanga when participants can engage in imaginative design work. Giving participants the opportunity to imagine outcomes to the kaupapa at hand, or encompass their experiences through creation, can produce impactful and powerful research outcomes. An intersectional lens demands that the facilitator make it accessible for all to partake in this creative expression.

**Āta** relates to the Māori notions or unspoken tikanga of time and discipline. A defining feature of Wānanga in comparison to a more conventional ‘hui’, interviews, or focus groups is that Wānanga last for a long period of time (one day to a week or more), and they are usually held to address a certain kaupapa or issue. This means participants must be disciplined and stay on topic, with the mutual understanding that it takes time, patience, and in depth kōrero. Wānanga should also have time - for kai<sup>42</sup>, whakawhanaungatanga, breaks, and various dynamic sessions.

(Gifford and Vaeau 2019)

## Overview of the Research Process

In November 2019, I gathered ten rangatahi Māori in a seminar room at Victoria University of Wellington to participate in my research Wānanga. It ran from 10am to 4pm and I designed it to include a series of sessions focusing on different themes and activities to provoke kōrero, sharing and creation.

### Gathering my Participants – Constructing my Field

Kaupapa Māori approaches emphasise that relationships do not end when the project ends, and the commitments made at the beginning must be carried beyond the project. It is for this reason that I chose to include my own experiences – to begin to break down the traditional researcher/participant relationship and to allow myself to share and participate in the co-construction of knowledge ‘alongside’,

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<sup>42</sup> Food

rather than ‘above’ my participants. I used existing connections, relationships and social media to engage and invite my participants into this research<sup>43</sup>. When gathering prospective Wānanga participants, I reached out to my whānau and friends who I had engaged with in various Kapa Haka spaces including community Kapa Haka groups, whānau occasions, primary and secondary schooling, as well as through the Students Association networks at Victoria University of Wellington. I did so through social media and followed through via email where I negotiated dates and times and sent an invite for the Wānanga, which included a request for them to bring an object or a photo about an experience of Kapa Haka to share with the group.

In my finalised list of participants, I ensured that rangatahi from varying backgrounds were included. I considered factors such as varying education levels, genders, sexualities, Te Reo Māori fluency, Kapa Haka competency (that is a mixture of experienced competitive performers and non-competitive to little experience), as well as age within the parameters of the rangatahi/youth demographic. This is in line with the principle of ‘Ata’ - the important process of “building and nurturing of relationships” with participants (Rangahau Website 2020). My decision to utilise my existing networks to construct my ‘field’ was an intentional choice to increase the level of accountability, transparency and communication between myself and my participants. I had encountered all of these individuals in various Te Ao Māori spaces and, consequently, there was a level of trust involved in terms of how they expected to be treated and respected as participants, whānau, and friends. The Wānanga became my field: an intentional space for Māori to come together and illuminate shared experiences and values.

## Collaboration in Practice – a Detailed Overview of the Wānanga

Wānanga involves a careful moving in and out of diverging and converging knowledge - going wide and going tight. In my design of this Wānanga, I considered how to enable this process for the diverse needs of the participants involved. Campbell and Lassiter argue that “the obligations and responsibilities of collaboration can animate the entire process of an ethnography, from its conceptualization, to its design, to its inscription” (Campbell and Lassiter 2014, 6). This was certainly the case for my research; for me, collaboration began long before the Wānanga itself. I consulted with tuākana<sup>44</sup> (Tarapuhi Vaeau, Hollie Russell, and George Vaeau) and kaumātua before and during the Wānanga on what activities would be

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<sup>43</sup> This research was approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee, ResearchMaster application reference number 0000027528

<sup>44</sup> Older mentors

appropriate. This section provides a reconstruction of the events of the day, based on my fieldnotes, headnotes and scratchnotes (Ottenberg 1990; Sanjek 1990; Kelly 2015); photographs; and the writing exercises we collaboratively created during the Wānanga. In line with the intersectional focus of this thesis, I also consider the limitations and accessibility requirements of some activities. Throughout this thesis, I use italicised text (in the form of autoethnographic passages and excerpts from my fieldnotes) to represent my reflections on this collaborative process and the sharing of space and kōrero that occurred during the Wānanga day.

### Activity One: 'Aro ki te hā o te tāngata' Ice breaker

This activity was shared with me by Māori anthropologist Hollie Russell. In this activity we skipped all of the 'small talk' and went straight to deep analytical thinking. This activity was facilitated by the tuakana of the group and involved relating to pieces of 'whenua' such as branches and leaves (described further on page 52). This activity was highlighted in my fieldnotes<sup>45</sup> where I state – *"rangatahi are really creative and like a chance to be a bit silly and creative in a way, where we are surrounded by like-minded people for a kaupapa that we care about. This activity signalled that discussions about wairuatanga<sup>46</sup> were safe and welcome. The act of asking people to 'breathe' into an object shows we want to hear about what you have to offer. We acknowledge that you are here"*. This activity allowed people to make personal connections with each other and consider the 'wairua' of the person, mediated through their connection to each other through Papatūānuku<sup>47</sup>. This ice breaker considered the importance of 'breath' in Te Ao Māori. The te reo word 'aroha' is often translated to mean 'love', but when broken down it can refer to 'aro' (to heed or pay attention to), and 'ha' (meaning breath). The word 'aroha' signifies one of the most essential concepts in Te Ao Māori, which is 'to pay attention to the breath of others'. The phrase "Aro ki te hā o te tāngata", refers to this and specifically to the following whakatauki<sup>48</sup> as it pertains to the importance of women: "aro ki te ha o hineahuone" or "pay heed to the mana of women".

This activity prioritised making space for imagination. A limitation of this activity is that it required a certain level of comfort to talk in front of a group and would not work well for people with severe social anxiety or other disabilities related to verbal group communication.

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<sup>45</sup> Personal handwritten notes written both during and immediately after the Wānanga

<sup>46</sup> Spirituality

<sup>47</sup> Atua of the Earth, Earth mother and wife of Ranginui - all living things originate from them

<sup>48</sup> Proverb

## Activity Two: Establishing Tikanga Together

The Kaupapa Māori principle of 'Ata' means focusing "on our relationships, negotiating boundaries" and "working to create and hold safe space with corresponding behaviours" (Rangahau website, 2020). Consequently, I thought carefully about how to design the day in a way that would enable participants to feel safe, and to ensure that the space was underpinned by whanaungatanga and manaakitanga. For this reason, one of the first sessions involved everyone coming together to plan and design our 'tikanga' or 'guiding principles' for the day. What follows are the tikanga we (the Wānanga participants) developed and agreed upon together:

- Participants have the opportunity to revoke anything they say from being included in the study
- Assume goodwill in each other
- Have respect for each other
- Always have karakia before kai and after the day is over
- Don't speak over each other
- Stay on the kaupapa - don't digress far from the topic of the day and stay committed to participating
- Respect the privacy of others
- It's okay to have different ideas and opinions about things
- It's okay to leave, breathe, be

I decided to establish the 'tikanga' in this way because I believed it was important that everyone in the Wānanga felt comfortable to share and contribute to the mauri<sup>49</sup> of the space. It was important that my participants felt empowered and in control of the day and what we were discussing. Although I was the key facilitator, I committed to contributing as a participant also. Collaboration in this way was in line with my aspirations to challenge the 'researcher' and 'participant' power dynamic. It is not unusual to have 'unwritten' tikanga, for instance, typical marae tikanga varies depending on iwi/hapū/whānau. This collaborative exercise was a way that we, rangatahi Māori, had authority over and dictated our Wānanga space. Below is an excerpt from my fieldnotes which reflects on this process:

*"It was less that there was anything unique about the tikanga, and more the act of defining it together. It ended up with similar rules that most people would find. But it was about the process, and practising the*

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<sup>49</sup> Life principle, life force, vital essence



*act of creating together before it was about the subject matter, trying to show that each person's needs are valid".*

### Activity Three: Visualising Kapa Haka

In this activity, I encouraged the creativity of my rangatahi participants by prompting them to draw what Kapa Haka represents to them. This activity involved asking "Who or what represents Kapa Haka to you?"; utilising the "Think, pair, share" method with some time for silent reflections; and creating more knowledge through sharing, with Whaea Karen as notetaker. These discussions formed the basis of the themes we explored next.

This activity was a good opportunity to establish the tone that 'it was all valid', and that everyone's diverse realities of Kapa Haka were accepted in the space. This activity began the work of facilitating relationships and sharing or co-creating a bigger story.

### Activity Four: Photo/Object Elicitation

For this activity, I asked participants to bring an object or a photo that they could share with the group about an experience of Kapa Haka. This activity helped to generate significant insights as the rangatahi shared and engaged with each other's stories. I have privileged this knowledge in references and quotes throughout this thesis. Below is a reflection from my Wānanga fieldnotes:

*This activity took up a whole bulk of the wānanga in which I didn't anticipate. People brought things that related to their identity, many shared lots of details about their lives. The tuakana there safely set the tone for being vulnerable and helped people think about wider influences on their experiences. The tuakana shared first and they really set the tone. And everyone followed.*

### Lunch

During lunch, myself and a tuakana looked at the knowledge that had been created and considered the gaps from an intersectional lens. From there, we developed a set of questions that would form the final activities. This relied on me and my tuakana having a well-practised relationship, a high sense of trust, and a deep knowledge of the research aims.

Further, the food acted as a ‘whakanoa’<sup>50</sup> and an act of restoring the balance from the heavy conversations shared during the ‘photo/object elicitation’ session. This should be considered an important part of creating a space which is spiritually safe for rangatahi Māori.

### Activity Five: Whaea Karen’s Talk

During this session, we changed positions to form a circle and listened to Whaea Karen share the story of Mana Tiaki. This activity introduced an increased sense of formality, but it gave people the chance to listen for a while, which was a welcome break. People reflected that it was a nice thing to have the ‘Whaea’ presence there, that is, an older figure in the space. This is important because intergenerational knowledge transmission is considered to be central to Indigenous communication (Argenti and Schramm 2009). At the beginning of the talk, Whaea did a mihi acknowledging the previous speakers which was probably validating for people who had expressed vulnerability.

Following this talk, we accessed the Mana Tiaki Facebook page via the computers and large screens in the room. It felt exciting for everyone to be able to engage with what Whaea Karen had talked about.

### Activity Six: Revealing Assumptions and Reactions through Photos of Kapa Haka

This activity enacted the interpretive skills of rangatahi. It involved them looking at a photo and thinking from their own experiences what the photo says about Kapa Haka. Around the room, I had placed A3-sized poster images of Kapa Haka in different places, including pictures of the All Blacks haka, the Māori battalion Haka and Kapa Haka on the national stage. I asked, “What is the first thing that comes to mind when you see these photos?”

This activity gave my participants the opportunity to take our discussions and place our experiences in the wider context of what Kapa Haka looks like today. It enabled them to think about and articulate the boundaries of their understanding. This helped us paint a collective picture of the ‘world of Kapa Haka’ and, together, start converging on issues and themes that were relevant. People wrote on post-it notes (see Appendix item 1) which they put on the walls next to the photos, and we referred to them in the next exercise.

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<sup>50</sup> To remove tapu

## Activity Seven: Converging on Ideas

For this activity, we wrote the questions we had synthesised during the lunch break on large sheets of paper which we scattered around the room. We formed two groups of 3-4 people and, in our groups, moved from question to question, writing our responses on the sheets of paper. This was the first writing exercise; it prompted more focused discussions aimed at summarising and theming. In this activity people could reflect on the knowledge on the walls, tables, boards, and in the discussions we had shared up until this point. The small group nature of this activity allowed for some more in-depth conversations compared to when we worked as a single large group. One limitation of this activity was that we had limited time of less than an hour. This activity would have benefited from having more time to fully realise ideas as groups and have a sharing session based on the prompts. The resulting questions and brainstorm from this activity are included in the Appendix (Appendix item 2).

## Activity Eight: Theming the Knowledge from the Day – Finding Contentedness

*“The goal of this Wānanga isn’t to come up with one conclusion, one thing. Don’t feel like you have to keep pushing to find one answer. It’s more about being open and finding a whole range of experiences” – Jade*

Although our Wānanga was purposely designed and scheduled, there were some aspects of it that changed as we collaborated on the day. Towards the end of the Wānanga, after everyone had opportunities to share and respond to a range of questions and prompts, we decided to come together and analyse the major themes that arose in our kōrero. We did this theming exercise through group discussion and capturing via post-it notes (Appendix item 3). Thus, the themes that are addressed in the following chapters are drawn directly from the conclusions we collaboratively developed during the Wānanga. What this session looked like is summarised in my fieldnotes:

*Because everyone was a bit tired, this felt a bit more tense, and like we were pushing towards decisions, but in a good way. This really was where the discipline comes into play, and it can be hard if you aren’t skilled to understand the mauri of Wānanga spaces; people can try to move ‘it’ along instead of sitting in ‘it’. This activity required the ‘cultural nous’ to read the mauri and know how to gently nudge it. A part of maintaining the safety of the environment is to come to natural conclusions about things; you can’t really just ask people to share experiences and then leave. It is important to find a point of shared conclusion which you have to make compromises to get to and*

*allow the time and space for consensus to be built through whakawhiti kōrero<sup>51</sup>. This is different than Pākehā spaces where there is no room for finding conclusion, or it's reached through democracy rather than consensus. It's important to come to a 'contentedness' rather than a conclusion. This means it feels resolved, and people leave feeling like what they shared was seen, and seen alongside other people's experiences and validated through the analysis. This is the bit where you create knowledge because it's bringing together experience, wider context and visual elements into something new.*

### Activity Nine: Mihi, Koha

After the theming was complete, we did karakia and I acknowledged everyone with a koha. Some people stayed for quite a while after; through this we debriefed and tidied the room. Something to consider when holding Wānanga is providing space for people to be in a condition where it is okay to leave.

### Examples of Nurturing Kaupapa Māori-based Roles and Responsibilities:

Two important roles and responsibilities that were evident in our Wānanga were 'tuakana teina'<sup>52</sup> and 'kaumatua<sup>53</sup>/mokopuna<sup>54</sup>' relationships. Because all of the Wānanga participants were people I had relationships with and had encountered in the Kapa Haka/urban Māori spaces, the dynamics between myself and them, and the participants with each other were underpinned by aspects of tuakana teina. This is the reciprocal relationship between extended whānau and rangatahi Māori which is grounded in guidance, mentorship, learning and teaching. The role of tuakana was evident in the way the older members set the tone for activities, supported tēina to lead but gave advice in the background; held space; checked in on people in a gentle way; and did menial tasks so that the others could be centred. The tuakana and teina comforted each other while they shared vulnerable experiences. Some rangatahi laughed and joked, making light of the space. This is part of the importance of the teina role, of being light-hearted and bringing a youthful energy to the Wānanga space.

Kaumatua and Mokopuna are two of the main groups in Te Ao Māori in the transmission of knowledge and storytelling. The presence and involvement of kaumatua and mokopuna is important in Kaupapa

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<sup>51</sup> The act of discussion and negation, to cross, exchange dialogue

<sup>52</sup> Culturally defined mentorship

<sup>53</sup> Elderly, old, aged

<sup>54</sup> Grandchild or descendant

Māori research and an essential element of the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. Whaea Karen's presence was an important part of keeping people spiritually safe because of her ability to connect with rangatahi through a caretaker role.

## Ethnography and Autoethnography

Ethnography provides me with valuable tools and potential, particularly in my inclusion of autoethnography. Ethnography allows me to practise research in a way that seeks to “generate, interpret, and transform thoughts and ideas; those thoughts and ideas, in turn, have the potential to change the way we think about things, and thus how we navigate the world in which we live” (Campbell and Lassiter 2014, 7). This aligns with the wider objective of Kaupapa Māori to be “by Māori, for Māori” and address the needs and concerns of Māori (Reilly 2011, 346). Specifically, I resonate with the researcher positionality that Naomi Simmonds mentions in her thesis - “There were other moments when my role as ‘researcher’ was forgotten or was less important than my role of mother, sister, niece, aunty and dishwasher” (Simmonds 2014, 92). For this reason, I decided to centre myself alongside my participants in these discussions, through the inclusion of autoethnographic passages.

Ethnography, an important methodology for cultural anthropologists, is a qualitative technique that is fundamentally about *relationships*; relationships between people (including researcher and researched), places, material objects, and ideas. As Campbell and Lassiter explain, “doing and writing ethnography is about engaging in, wrestling with, and being committed to the human relationships around which ethnography ultimately revolves” (2014, 4). This clearly resonates with the deeply relational ethics of Kaupapa Māori, and Kaupapa Māori in turn allows me to think beyond the human relationships that Campbell and Lassiter discuss to encompass the human and more-than-human relationships that characterise Te Ao Māori. Autoethnography is a more recent methodological innovation with roots in ethnography that involves reflexive storytelling and retelling. Ellis describes autoethnography as a “situated story, constructed from my own current position, one that is always partial, incomplete, and full of silences, and told at a particular time, for a particular purpose, to a particular audience” (Ellis 2009, 13). This quote demonstrates the commitment to representing a truth, the things that shape it, and not ‘the objective truth’. This recognition of stories and experience is a reflection of the aspirations of Kaupapa Māori applied in this research.

Paul Whitinui explores Indigenous autoethnography, and how this approach encourages researchers to discover their own voices as “culturally liberating human beings” (2013, 456). Whitinui highlights the value of storytelling as a mode of writing, and how autoethnography asks that the researcher consider their “own level of connectedness to space, place, time, and culture as a way of (re)claiming, (re)storing, (re)writing, and (re)patriating our own lived realities as Indigenous people” (2013, 467). Whitinui describes Indigenous autoethnography as being counter-hegemonic as it resists colonial and Eurocentric ways of knowing, and introduces new, more emic, and Indigenous forms of validation. The Indigenous autoethnographic approach works to protect who we are as Māori; it goes about solving problems we experience as Māori by providing stories of lived experiences by Māori; and it also attempts to heal trauma of the past (2013, 479). In this thesis, I utilise the method of autoethnography to increase transparency in research; as a step towards peeling back the layers of authority between ‘researcher’ and ‘participant’; and to do more to hand over the power to participants to retain autonomy over their own stories and experiences as subjective and nuanced.

As an extension on Lily George’s call for researchers to ask, ‘Ko wai au? Who am I?’ (2018, 7), I include autoethnography in my research in the form of three autoethnographic passages introducing each chapter, detailing the stories and experiences of my participants shared at our Wānanga. In doing so, I attempt to unravel and make visible the relationships between myself and my participants.

## The Writing Process

Kaupapa Māori approaches urge the researcher to consider its key principles at every stage of the research, including the writing stage. In this process, steps were taken to encourage collaboration, including allowing participant feedback on drafts, especially those whose stories have heavily influenced certain chapters. I sought feedback from Wānanga participants specifically to ensure they were happy with their representation in this thesis and the overall portrayal of our Wānanga and its overarching themes. Further, this thesis is based on extensive thinking, research, analysis and reflection that was inspired by and also extended beyond the Wānanga itself.

As I have noted above, my participants played a role in the analysis and central themes explored in this thesis. This was done through our final brainstorm session around the question “What are the central themes that have surfaced today?” This activity shaped the themes and order of the chapters in this thesis. Participants were also asked about their preferred names or pseudonyms in the writing of this thesis.

Beyond interactions with the participants themselves, other actions that have been taken during the writing process include: a privileging of non-white scholars and references where possible, an overall strength-based approach to the value of Te Ao Māori and Kapa Haka and exercised sensitivity and discretion in the inclusion of vulnerable or potentially triggering content. Overall, I have taken various steps to ensure that my writing, as much as possible, is ethical and in line with Kaupapa Māori research frameworks within the scope of a Master's thesis.

## Framing this Thesis

### Placing my Research in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara

Our research Wānanga took place at Victoria University of Wellington and all of my participants live in the region of Te-Whanganui-a-Tara, and most for the majority of their lives. Therefore, this thesis primarily discusses the experiences of rangatahi Māori who live in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara.

According to the 2018 Census, Wellington City has a population of 202,737 people, with 17,409 of them being Māori, an increase on the 13,335 figure in the 2006 Census (Statistics NZ 2018a). This is compared to the national proportion of 16% of the total population being Māori (Statistics NZ 2018b). The Census also stated the overall median age of Māori people living in Wellington to be 26.1 years, compared to the median age of 34.1 overall (Statistics NZ 2018). Māori people in Wellington also tend to be young. Despite being a young community with diverse and relevant experiences within the social and cultural landscape of the city, little modern research exists that focuses on the experiences of rangatahi who are urban and Māori living in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara<sup>55</sup>. As noted by Manuhuia Barcham – “Māori have shifted in increasing numbers into the urban environment, and in doing so they have created new forms of social networks and institutions in order to fulfil their new social needs” (1998, 303). This thesis will draw specifically from the experiences of Māori within this community, and are uniquely shaped by this “place” and the tensions that exist between rangatahi Māori identity and urban life.

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<sup>55</sup> Impactful work exists discussing what it means to be Urban and Māori (Gagné 2013; George 2010, Kutia 2020). This thesis looks at these tensions specifically for rangatahi Māori in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara and as they relate to Kapa Haka.

## Chapter Summary

Our Wānanga was similar to any other Wānanga practiced today, it involved – karakia, kōrero, resolving disputes, getting real, sharing, building community, and talking about important issues that we face as Māori.

By claiming Wānanga as a method - not inventing something new - we contribute to the project of decolonising by recognising the power and sophistication of Indigenous knowledge making processes, and we recognise our tupuna as our first and most authoritative teachers. We do this even though colonisation has shaken our confidence about the validity and clarity of our understanding of what our tupuna have said and the application of Wānanga today. Relationality and accountability are two of the main reasons why I believe that Kaupapa Māori research, and specifically Wānanga as method, cannot be practised by non-Māori researchers. Although some principles of this approach might be viewed as ‘universal’, non-Māori researchers have a different positionality of colonial history, experiences, privileges and values which makes it difficult for them to understand and practise this method effectively. The relationality of Indigenous people, being the network of relationships that we have with the world - extended kin (whānau), hapū, iwi, communities, whenua, tīpuna and te taiao<sup>56</sup> - makes this method uniquely suited for Kaupapa Māori research conducted for, with and by Māori.

This thesis takes a multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary approach to social-cultural research. This chapter has outlined how and why I have merged autoethnographic, decolonising and Kaupapa Māori approaches to create a responsive and specialised methodology suited to addressing my research questions. This chapter details the potential of Wānanga for building a collaborative research process, offering the Wānanga that sits at the heart of this thesis as one possible model. It also explains how my entire research process, from data generation to analysis and writing, are uniquely shaped by my approach, positionality and relationships. In exploring the experiences of Kapa Haka for rangatahi who are urban and Māori, this thesis speaks to the inherent value of Kapa Haka as an impactful tool in overcoming the obstacles that rangatahi Māori experience today: my methods and approach are what made this process possible and safe and tika<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> The world, or earth

<sup>57</sup> To be correct, true, fair



### 3. TRACING THE HISTORY OF KAPA HAKA

Kapa Haka as an experience and form of performance has morphed and changed over time. As Piri Sciascia simply put it “Kapa Haka has been known by many other titles and phrases in the history of Māori people. Today the term refers to the traditional performing arts and is a term recently coined. Kapa means a group, and haka means to dance” (2013, 26). This section will draw upon a selection of materials to trace the history and origins of Kapa Haka and to demonstrate its origins and its use over time.

#### Kapa Haka in Māori Mythology (pre-14<sup>th</sup> Century)

Several scholars have discussed the mythological origins of Māori performance. Some early accounts can be found in the work of Wira Gardiner, Charles Royal, Timoti Karetu, A.W Reed, George Grey and Elsdon Best. Gardiner and Karetu have both described the first appearances of early versions of Kapa Haka in Polynesian mythology, and both point to the significance of the atua<sup>58</sup> Tanerore:

Ra and Hine-raumati lay together and gave birth to a son named Tanerore. On hot summer days it is possible to see the light dancing. Legend has it that this is Hine-raumati’s son, Tanerore, performing for his mother, and the wiriwiri or trembling shimmer is today reflected in the trembling of the haka performers hands. The haka is often referred to as “the dance of Tanerore: the quivering of the air on a hot day”. (Gardiner 2007, 17)

In Māori understandings of the world, Rā represents the Sun and is said to have two wives – Hineraumati, the summer maiden, and Hinetakurua, the winter maiden (Best 1899, 98). Tanerore can be considered the personification of the “quivering heat rays observed on hot summer days” (Best 1899, 98). Such kōrero are integral in the ideologies of Māori maramataka<sup>59</sup>, creation stories and understandings of time and seasons. Tanerore’s name was linked to early understandings of Māori dance, or what is now known as Kapa Haka. As Elsdon Best has pointed out, the mythology of Tanerore is not dissimilar to the symbols and stories relating to dance from around Te-Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa and Asia (1923, 117). Thus, Indigenous performances such as Kapa Haka are a significant aspect of Pacific and Māori identities in early stories.

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<sup>58</sup> Ancestor, god, supernatural being, deity

<sup>59</sup> Māori lunar calendar

The second appearance of Kapa Haka in early Polynesian mythology comes from the story of Tinirau and Kae. The story begins with Tinirau and his partner Hina-uri calling upon a famous tohunga<sup>60</sup>, Kae, to perform the baptism of their newborn baby (Reed 1999, 91). When the time came for Kae to return home, he requested to return on the back of Tinirau's pet whale, Tutunui, instead of in a canoe (Reed 1999, 92). Kae wronged Tinirau by killing the whale when he arrived home, and allowing the people of his village to indulge in Tutunui's flesh:

There was great rejoicing in Kae's pa that night. The people were all there, and steam rose from the ovens where the flesh of Tutunui was cooking. Far away on the Sacred Isle, Tinirau looked in vain for his whale to return. Always in the past his cry of "Tutunui!" had brought his pet to him. Tonight his voice boomed out over the water and was lost in the distance. Suddenly he raised his head, his nostrils distended in the evening breeze. From far-off Tihi-o-Manono where Kae and his people lived, there came the delicious odour of cooked food. Tinirau addressed his people . . . "Kae has stolen my whale. Who will go with me to avenge this insult?" (Reed 1999, 93)

Tinirau sent women to avenge Kae's actions, describing Kae as having crooked teeth. Among the women who were sent to Kae's village was Raukatauri, the atua of music (Royal 2015). The wāhine realised in order to figure out which one was Kae they would have to make all the men laugh and show their teeth. So Raukatauri led them in tricks, games, singing and dancing with many motions being made with fingers and hands. Following this "they all began to sing together, at the same time making most curious faces, and shaking their hands and arms in time to the tune" (Grey 1885, 58). They eventually make Kae laugh and he revealed himself. He was enchanted by the women and sent back to where he was killed. The story of Tinirau and Kae is noted as being one of the first stories where Māori waiata and actions were put together and performed in unison.

Another prominent early appearance of Haka is in the story of Te Arawa<sup>61</sup> tīpuna, Tama Te Kapua and his brother Whakaturia. In Hawaiki, the brothers' father Houmaitawhiti had a dog. The dog ate the discarded bandage of chief Uenuku, who was suffering from a boil. Uenuku was insulted by this and killed and ate the dog. In retribution, the brothers stole fruit from Uenuku's tree. Whakaturia was captured by Uenuku's people and was anticipating being put to death. He was hung up in the roof of Uenuku's house so that he would die by the smoke of the kindled fire of that evening (Grey 1885, 77-78). Together, Tama Te Kapua

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<sup>60</sup> Skilled person, priest, healer

<sup>61</sup> Property, goods, possession

and Whakaturia escaped the house through mocking the dancing and singing of Uenuku's people. They used Haka to distract and ultimately escape capture. George Grey wrote:

Then Whakaturia, as is the custom in the dance, turned round to his right hand, stuck out his tongue, and made hideous faces on that side; again he turned round to the left hand, and made hideous faces on that side; his eyes glared, and his sword and red apron looked splendid; then he sprung about, and appeared hardly to stand for a moment at the end of the house near the door, before he had sprung back to the other end, and standing just a moment there, he made a spring from the inside of the house, and immediately he was beyond the door (Grey 1885, 80).

It is clear from these early accounts of Kapa Haka in Māori mythology that the essence of Māori performance included the significance of Atua Māori, particularly of Tānerore. Additionally, these stories highlight the themes of trickery, distraction and mischievous situations where performance, movement and action come into play. Particularly, these early depictions emphasise the ways that Kapa Haka was sometimes used as a political tool to navigate tricky situations and relationships relating to retribution, honour and social order.

### The Fundamentals of Kapa Haka (14<sup>th</sup>– 17<sup>th</sup> Century)

The distinct characteristics of the Māori culture in Aotearoa New Zealand can be said to have been established largely within a period of around 350 years: from the arrival of our tīpuna<sup>62</sup> from Hawaiki until the arrival of the first European settlers in the seventeenth Century (Walker 2004). As noted by prominent Māori anthropologist Te Rangi Hiroa (also known as Sir Peter Buck), the major fleet of waka dubbed 'The Great Migration' arrived in Aotearoa in around 1350 A.D (Hiroa 1949, 36). Hiroa notes that although there were arrivals from Hawaiki before this, the Great Migration is the most significant because "all the tribes trace their aristocratic lineages back to the chiefs of the voyaging canoes..." (Hiroa 1949, 36). Hawaiki is known as the illusive ancestral home of the Polynesian people and is referred to extensively in mythology, pūrākau<sup>63</sup>, waiata and haka.

One of the fundamental features of the learning and performing of Kapa Haka during this time was that it was passed down from generation to generation as a mode of storytelling and expression. This was how children received a lot of their learning and education. Hiroa wrote that "Much, if not most, of the

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<sup>62</sup> Ancestors, grandparents (plural)

<sup>63</sup> Myth, ancient legend, story

personal instruction in early years, was received from grandparents as a convenient result of three generations of family living together in a common household” (Hiroa 1949, 357). Kapa Haka during this period was enacted and experienced intergenerationally, largely due to the traditional communal life of Māori who were organised into whānau, hapū and iwi groups.

Ethnological descriptions from the early twentieth century often curate a timeless and romanticised snapshot of the way Kapa Haka was enacted and integrated into the daily life of Māori and their whānau. The following description by Best illustrates this well:

Among a people possessing no form of written language, the arts of story-telling, singing, and dancing are likely to be carefully conserved, and all games and pastimes are treasured by such a folk... as they not only serve as pleasing pastimes during long evenings and other periods, but were also the cause of much social enjoyment. At night the folk of a hamlet would assemble in the most commodious house, and there would spend the evening in these light and cheerful pleasures. (1934, 128)

During this period, Kapa Haka or performance, waiata, haka and dance thrived. Each iwi and hapū often developed their own distinctive style and content pertaining to the regions where they lived. Kapa Haka carried stories and themes of relevance to the lives of Māori. Waiata and haka spoke of social norms, expectations, values with relevance to whānau, the environment, practices and politics of communities. Te Rangi Hiroa found that some of the central characteristics of Kapa Haka that were passed down from elders included poi<sup>64</sup>, where young girls would learn “to copy the twirl of the poi ball, the timing of various movements, and the swaying of the hips in accompaniment” (Hiroa 1949, 357). There was also haka, where “boys learned to stamp in unison, quiver the fingers, and protrude the tongue and eyeballs in juvenile imitation of the posture dances (haka) of their elders” (Hiroa 1949, 357). Kapa Haka and waiata compositions, or what is now commonly referred to as a ‘bracket’ were rehearsed and performed by tribal teams for special occasions (Hiroa 1949, 357-358). It is evident from this literature that the practice of Kapa Haka prior to European contact was a fundamental form of expression, knowledge transmission, storytelling and engaging in whakapapa for Māori communities.

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<sup>64</sup> To swing a light ball on a string

## Colonisation and Kapa Haka Through the 1800s to Early 1900s

Māori Scholars have conceptualised the event and process of colonisation in Aotearoa New Zealand in varying ways. Moana Jackson has simply defined colonisation as the process by which Indigenous peoples face a “denial of the right” to “continue governing themselves in their own lands” (Jackson 2020, 133). Mike Ross has compared it to ‘te waha o parata’ or ‘the throat of parata’<sup>65</sup>, in that the notion of colonisation reflects “a person or people unexpectedly falling into a perilous position” (2020, 21). Further, Ocean Ripeka Mercier has defined the ways in which colonisation has had “profound impacts on Māori land and society” (Mercier 2020, 40), showing that it is not *just* a process of settling land. In line with this, Ross shows that colonisation represents a complex “social and historical story” which has “continuously attacked and destroyed many of the foundations of Māori society” (Ross 2020, 22-38). This project forms the foundation for contemporary racism, as “racism as an ideology and practice was invented and refined in colonisation” (Jackson 2020, 134). Within this process of complex social and material violence, Māori resistance has always been present, despite “battling from an impoverished and fragmented position” (Ross 2020, 38-39).

Throughout the early settlement period in Aotearoa New Zealand, Kapa Haka began to be expressed in different ways throughout Māori society. Christopher B. Balme discusses the characteristics of Kapa Haka during this period and draws parallels between Hula and Haka as colonial tools. Like Haka, prior to European contact in Hawai’i, Hula was “an integral part of the religious and cultural fabric of Hawaiian society” (Balme 1999, 43). However, the overwhelming impact of European missionaries in Hawaii resulted in the practice of Hula being targeted as ‘sinful’ (Balme 1999, 43). In New Zealand, the widespread belief that Māori were a stereotypically ‘uncivilised’, ‘savage’, and ‘dying’ race was perpetuated by the romanticisation and fascination with Māori performance. As argued by Balme, “Dance is perhaps the form of expression the West most often used and adapted for the purpose of theatricalizing other cultures” (1999, 43). This is significant because Kapa Haka, and Indigenous art more generally, was one of the first targets of the colonial project. The colonial gaze through which Kapa Haka began to be viewed, set the tone for its representation and practice in the years to come.

In 1897, one of the first recorded performances of haka outside of New Zealand occurred. The haka was performed by Māori soldiers in “traditional attire at the Holborn Restaurant in London, watched on by the

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<sup>65</sup> A taniwha living in mid-ocean which swallows vessels but can be controlled by tohunga

New Zealand Premier Richard Seddon, the former New Zealand Minister of Labour and ardent imperialist William Pember Reeves and assorted British guests” (Balme 1999, 50). It was clear that the imperialist New Zealand leaders of the time wanted to showcase the ‘Native talent’ from New Zealand in London and have them perform for this “imperial gaze” (Balme 1999, 50). Following this, in 1901, New Zealand held a three day carnival of Māori performance culture in Rotorua (Balme 1999, 51). During this event, over 6,000 Māori representatives from every major iwi attended and provided “the royal party and each other with an unprecedented display of Indigenous performance” (Balme 1999, 51). Balme noted that the Rotorua event set the tone for a “new configuration of performative and cultural codes catering for the European gaze” (1999, 55). Thus, this period denoted a pinnacle turning point in the history of Kapa Haka in New Zealand, as summarised by Balme:

Māori were called upon to present themselves to European guests in a theatrical mode. Dancing and singing and brandishing weapons of pre-European origin, they were induced to present a staged version of an earlier period of ancient vigour untainted by European influence. (1999, 56)

The British imperial gaze thrust upon Māori in the late 1800s resulted in Kapa Haka becoming entrenched as the ‘snapshot’ of the Māori culture, an image that was presented to the rest of the world as representing all of ‘Māoridom’ through ‘performed primitivism’. During the years that followed, Kapa Haka was expressed in varying ways. It was integral in building New Zealand’s tourism industry, through the commodification of Māori cultural performance and archetypes. Due to the continuous land, language and culture losses from 1900 to the 1940s, it is safe to presume that the practice of Kapa Haka felt the impact as more Māori urbanised and moved away from the intergenerational and hapū-based whānau structure and towards a more nuclear, individualistic and capitalism-driven life, which was further pronounced after World War II.

Many written records tend to highlight Kapa Haka as performed to Pākehā audiences, yet this does not provide a complete picture of how Māori engaged with Kapa Haka at the time. Parallel to these experiences, Kapa Haka was still performed by Māori, for Māori and within Māori communities. Early exponents such as Apirana Ngata (Ngāti Porou), Paraire Tomoana (Ngāti Kahungunu), Kingi Tahiwī (Ngāti Raukawa) and Te Puea Hērangi (Waikato) served as prominent figures in establishing modern performance styles and techniques that dominated the era (Sciascia 2014, 26).

Kapa Haka was practised and performed during political moments and movements to make statements. Waiata played an essential role in the iconic expression of the peaceful protest at Parihaka. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1881, the Taranaki settlement of Parihaka saw 1500 invading police troops, who were welcomed by “singing and dancing children” and leaders who “offered no resistance and were arrested and taken away” (O’Brien and Strongman 2006, 114). Waiata played an important role in the provocation of Te Kooti’s spiritual leadership of the Ringatū movement. Te Kooti’s birth was prophesied by the matakite<sup>66</sup> Toiroa through the following waiata: “Tiwha tiwha te pō, Ko te pakarewhā, Ko arikirangi tenei ra te haere nei”, “Dark is the night, There is Pakarewhā, There is Arikirangi to come” (Te Kooti in Rangiwai 2018, 605). Kapa Haka has been and is an integral feature of the Kīngitanga<sup>67</sup> annual festival, the ‘Koroneihana’. Since the crowning of Kingi Pōtatau Te Wherowhero on 2 May 1858 “many people continue to celebrate the Kingitanga by gathering at Ngāruawāhia every year to acknowledge the Māori monarch, and to participate in a musical, cultural and sporting festival” (Rollo 2014, 1). These protest songs are powerful agents for healing, though they can be associated with terrible events. Voicing them in song, and as a collective can remind whānau Māori not to give up, to remember sacrifices made, to stand for justice and to connect with our past. These elements are further explored in the following chapters.

During this era, there was a clear division in the characteristics of Kapa Haka enacted at the time. On the one hand, there was increasing pressure from Pākehā settlers for Māori to perform for the ‘colonial gaze’ and, on the other, Māori were still practising and cultivating their skills in musical composition, movement and solidifying distinctive styles of performance within hapū and iwi groups. Kapa Haka surfaced in important political movements to depict Māori aspirations and celebrations.

### Māori Renaissance and the Polynesian Festival

The Māori Renaissance of the 1960s and 70s was spearheaded by important wāhine Māori leaders like Dame Whina Cooper and Eva Rickard in their fight for Māori land reclamation. Organisations like the Māori Women’s Welfare League, the New Zealand Māori Council and Ngā Tamatoa were critical in building momentum in Māori communities for sovereignty and working towards Mana Motuhake<sup>68</sup>. The police Dawn Raids on Pacific Island communities, and the founding of the Polynesian Panthers was also a

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<sup>66</sup> Prophet, seer, clairvoyant

<sup>67</sup> King Movement - a movement which developed in the 1850s, culminating in the anointing of Pōtatau Te Wherowhero as King

<sup>68</sup> Māori autonomy, self-government, self-determination, independence, sovereignty, authority

pinnacle moment in starting the discussion around systemic racism against brown people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Simultaneously, the first movements were being made towards critical Te Reo policies which led to the establishment of the first Kohanga Reo in 1982 and the Māori Language Act being passed in 1987 (Benton 2015, 99).

The first Polynesian Festival, held in 1972, was an iteration of what is now known as 'Te Matatini'. The festival was the beginning of a movement towards competitive Kapa Haka as a hobby for both performers and spectators to enjoy and celebrate Māori performance and excellence.

This period was indicative of the rising up of Māori and our general desire to reclaim aspects of their culture, knowledge and ways of being. This included Kapa Haka, with song and haka often playing a major role in expressing grievances and concerns in political movements – as it has always done.

### The 'Face' of Kapa Haka Today

Kapa Haka today is experienced in a variety of different forms - from Kapa Haka in schools, within iwi, in community groups, on mainstream and Māori television, at pōwhiri<sup>69</sup>, whānau events, birthdays, weddings and more. Kapa Haka for Māori saturates many aspects of daily life and, for some, it constitutes a large part of modern Māori identity. Possibly the most recognisable aspect of Kapa Haka is in its competitive form at Te Matatini Festival. Author Bradford Haami's 2013 biography of prominent Kapa Haka figures Ngāpō and Pīmia Wehi gives meaningful insights into the world of competitive Kapa Haka. Ngāpō said

I observe the beauty of our young people as they express their identity through Kapa Haka. Māori performing arts was our life, it was the only way Nen and I knew how to pass on the tenets of strong whānau (family) values, tikanga Māori, te reo Māori, Māori pride, and the desire to take hold of everything the world has to offer. (Haami 2013, 11)

Te Matatini Festival gives Kapa Haka enthusiasts the opportunity to perform in front of thousands with the aim being to "foster, develop and protect traditional Māori performing arts in the pursuit of excellence" (Te Matatini 2020). The name of the festival in itself, Te Matatini, references to the many faces that represent Kapa Haka today. As Wharehuia Milroy has stated, "Māori Performing Arts brings

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<sup>69</sup> To welcome, invite, beckon, wave



together people of all ages, all backgrounds, all beliefs, Māori and non-Māori alike, participants and observers. When I look I see many faces, young and old” (Te Matatini 2020).

It would be remiss of me not to also mention the role that Haka has played in New Zealand’s national sport, Rugby, where it has been adopted as a form of challenge or intimidation by the national rugby team ‘The All Blacks’. Murray has stated that “for many New Zealanders, as well as for many non-New Zealanders, it would appear that the haka is associated with a national rugby team known as the ‘All Blacks’” (Murray 2000, 346). Today, the All Blacks’ performance of haka is probably the most recognisable representation of Kapa Haka and of Māori culture to the world.

Another prominent place where Kapa Haka plays out today is in schools. An increased desire to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogies within the Aotearoa New Zealand Education System has resulted in curriculum changes so that avenues to access cultural, and specifically Māori, knowledge have been implemented. Further, Paul Whitinui has noted the overwhelming benefits of Kapa Haka in educational spaces (2020). Whitinui wrote:

kapa haka provides the opportunity for students to celebrate who they are as Māori and as ‘culturally connected’ learners in mainstream schooling contexts... Māori students through the kapa haka experience learn to ‘protect’, ‘problem-solve’, ‘provide’, and ‘heal’ their inner self-worth, essence and wellbeing as Māori. Similarly, most teachers agreed that kapa haka provides Māori students with a creative, dynamic and powerful way to access their learning potential as cultural human beings. (2008, ii)

Kapa Haka plays out and occupies many different spaces today and this thesis will look into the diverse realities that rangatahi Māori experience in relation to the themes of belonging, identity and healing.

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have traced the history of the practice of Kapa Haka from early mythology to today. This history informs and shapes the unique experiences that rangatahi Māori have within the Kapa Haka space today. I have discussed the ways in which Kapa Haka is multifaceted and diverse and how the art form has had its legacy in political action, intergenerational knowledge transmission and expression of identity.

## 4. BELONGING

*We pulled up to the Te-Toki-a-Rata building on a calm Sunday, picked up our boxes of kai and stationery from the car and headed towards the door in anticipation for a day of kōrero and sharing. Of course, the door was locked. It was lucky that one of my participants had arrived early and I enlisted her help in calling around to find someone who can unlock the door. Together we sorted it almost immediately and she put my mind at ease - “It’s going to be a great day”.*

*We headed into the room and immediately rearranged all the tables and chairs to leave lots of open space, with small tables around the sides, one table for kai, and a long table in the middle for everyone to sit at, all of which faced a wide TV screen showcasing my PowerPoint entitled “Kapa Haka, Identity and Well-being Wānanga”. Shoes and bags were left at the door, and the space was transformed from a clinical modern tech-forward classroom into an open, light and engaging space for our day of Wānanga.*

*“Back in the day, our people would Wānanga for days on end” I said proudly. I have always believed in the power of Wānanga, the magic that happens when our people come together to discuss the issues we face and action solutions, together. Slowly the familiar faces of my participants, friends, whānau started rolling in and I felt relaxed.*

*I quickly introduced myself and we got into our ice breaker for the day. I knew everybody who was there, but some of them still had to meet each other. The ice -breaker I chose was based around exploring our relationships with land and each other. We placed a basket and several different pieces of ‘whenua’, including different small sticks, flowers, grass and rocks at the back of the room. The instructions were to go to the back, one at a time, and choose a piece of whenua that we were drawn to. I asked participants to blow their mauri into the item and place it in the kete<sup>70</sup>. When we started, we sat in a circle and I asked everyone to pick an item out of the basket at random. We then had to share and interpret what the piece of whenua reflected about its ‘owner’. Participants took the opportunity to make light-hearted guesses about the mystery person’s ‘mauri’. Some people said things like “the pink flowers may represent innocence, but it also has thorns so this person has a dark side” or “the leaves seem aged so I think this*

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<sup>70</sup> Basket, kit

person is wise and an old soul". We were able to share laughs together, and each owner was exposed and shared whether they thought the interpretation was accurate or not.

We started our first session, which I had designed to focus around the question of 'What is Kapa Haka?' I encouraged the roopu to draw a picture that represented their answer. Some people shared their illustrations and the room was warmed by the presence of connections that were being revealed. Amokura shared this- "My journey of Kapa Haka is visible in this room, from Whaea Karen who taught me from a young age, to Hinerehia who actually tutored my High School roopu. I did Kapa Haka with Mana Tiaki with Jade, Georgia and Te Māpihi".

I had asked my roopu in advance to bring something along; a picture, object or song that they could get up and talk about. Many spoke for up to twenty minutes about their memories and experiences. Many of us expanded on our relationship to Te Ao Māori and specifically to Kapa Haka.

Amokura was up first. She shared this - "When I came to university and did the Tohu Māoritanga I actually learned a haka from my iwi, 'Te Puru' from Tūhoe; before that, I had never learned it. I still remember going to Parliament when we had an iwi settlement and everyone was getting up to do 'Te Puru'. My mum and I were just sitting there feeling whakamā<sup>71</sup> because we didn't know it. I remember wanting to be able to stand up and show the mana that we have as an iwi. I'm still waiting for the day that I can do that, and I'm just really grateful to know that haka now and do it with confidence".

Gabrielle followed and echoed similar sentiments to Amokura's kōrero - "I did Kapa Haka when I was very little but I stopped very early, when I was about 8. I grew up not having very much knowledge around my Māoritanga<sup>72</sup> or anything at all. There were a lot of factors; for myself I assimilated quite a lot into my environment. I thought "What's the point of kapas?" I didn't find a value in it", she continued "My sister loves kapas. She's also part of the Pasifika group at her college, so I go to a lot of the performances that she does. She loves making poi so this was one way that she was able to share her knowledge with me. My experience of Kapa Haka now is actually through my younger sister, which is quite ironic because I've never really thought of her in that way, of her being my teacher."

The roopu all shared their objects and stories and it was clear that we all had quite different stories when it came to the presence of Kapa Haka in our lives. Then, Hinerehia shared a photo of a wharenui<sup>73</sup>, with

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<sup>71</sup> Shy

<sup>72</sup> Māori culture, Māori practices

<sup>73</sup> Marae meeting house

figures scattered around. She shared eagerly - “This is us on a typical noho at the marae; all the family playing touch, the babies running around, and the koro sitting on the atea, home. **Reconnecting me to my kāinga<sup>74</sup>**”. Hinerehia’s story reflected a lot of the kōrero of the day; that to rangatahi Māori, Kapa Haka was synonymous with whānau, whenua, and “Home”.

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<sup>74</sup> Home

## Introduction - Kapa Haka, Belonging, and Constructing “Home”

*“Thinking about it now, Kapa Haka has been a part of every big event in my life, and that’s so normal and when I look at that I just think “that’s home”. Even off the stage.” – Hinerehia*

One of the most pertinent themes that arose through Wānanga with my participants was the idea that Kapa Haka brings belonging, and for some, it is ‘home’. We related home to whenua, and tūrangawaewae<sup>75</sup>, which extended outwards and intertwined with our networks of whānau and community. Most rangatahi Māori are impacted in some way by the legacies of colonialism and in turn the urbanisation and dislocation of iwi and whānau Māori. With these impacts in mind, Māori connection to whenua, particularly their tūrangawaewae, are even more crucial in constructing belonging.

In Te Reo Māori, ‘whenua’ translates to ‘land’, but it is also the word referring to ‘placenta’ or ‘afterbirth’. Therefore, Māori traditional understandings of whenua as reflecting people and life are evident in the word itself. As Le Grice and Braun have noted, “whenua has important meanings in Māori birth practices, corresponding to a value system that sees human experience as interrelated with the natural world” (2016, 154). Te Ao Māori understandings of whenua as life surface in the ritual tradition of ‘whenua ki te whenua’ or the burying of the placenta in the earth post-birth. The practice “inscribes the links between people, their whānau and the natural environment in a tangible way” (Le Grice and Braun 2016, 155).

The destruction and alienation of Indigenous lands from tangata whenua<sup>76</sup> is a pressing issue, now more than ever, especially with the world climate crisis threatening large scale violence on the environment and people, with Indigenous people said to suffer the most from its consequences (Whyte 2017; Te Ara Whatu 2020).

Indigenous scholars have established that Māori relationship with whenua is central to the health and wellbeing of the individual and the community (Durie 1999). Sir Mason Durie has noted:

Health promotion must take into account the nature and quality of the interaction between people and the surrounding environment. It is not simply a call for a return to nature, but an attempt to strike balance between development and environmental protection and recognition of the fact that the human condition is intimately connected to the wider domains of Rangi and Papa (Durie 1999, 49).

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<sup>75</sup> Standing, place where one has the right to stand

<sup>76</sup> People born of the land, Indigenous people

In his work, Durie has pointed to 'environmental protection' as one of the integral characteristics of Māori health as well as the protection of 'Te Ao Turoa' or the Māori estate (Durie 1999). This emphasises the importance of "Waiora", water free from pollutants, clean air and earth abundant in vegetation for collective Māori wellbeing (Durie 1999, 49).

Relating to the importance of whenua, this chapter will extend the discussion of 'Home' and belonging for rangatahi Māori, as interconnected with community networks forged through Kapa Haka. I will discuss the ways Kapa Haka is experienced intergenerationally by rangatahi, and how whānau experience flourishing through its practice. I will detail the case study of a community-based, urban, Māori Kapa Haka group, which was active from 2005 to 2015 in Tawa, Wellington. I will argue that the roopu is an example of flaxroots Indigenous resiliency, where urban whānau Māori carved crucial space for belonging and celebration of identity. This chapter will argue that 'home' and 'place' constructs for rangatahi Māori are reinforced through their links to land, whānau and community, and can all culminate in their experiences of Kapa Haka (Jahnke 2002, 511).

Within the theme of belonging, my participants noted relationships to whenua and community as a priority. However, it should be noted that although this thesis describes access to belonging through Kapa Haka, there are many other avenues that can be considered in similar ways, including engagement with whānau, Marae life, te reo Māori, archives, Māori pedagogy, arts (carving, weaving), and many other instances where Māori communities are forged and maintained.

## Contemporary Conceptions of Whenua - Decolonising our Understanding of the Environment

The essential harm of colonization is that the living relationship between our people and our land has been severed. By fraud, abuse, violence and sheer force of numbers, white society has forced us into the situation of being refugees and trespassers in our own homelands and we are prevented from maintaining the physical, spiritual and cultural relationships necessary for our continuation as nations. Taiaiake Alfred (2017, 11)

The above quote from Indigenous scholar Taiaiake Alfred exemplifies the way that many Indigenous people conceptualise our relationships to the land, or whenua. It is sometimes difficult to remove our understandings of the environment from the colonial conceptions of land ownership and productivity. However, when we do we come to understand the deeply rooted connections of the "physical, spiritual

and cultural”, we come to understand why this relationship is integral to our wellbeing and, in this case, how it manifests in rangatahi Māori experiences of Kapa Haka. Further, Kapa Haka captures and mimics the land and the ‘voice’ of the land. Kapa Haka is commonly inspired by the sound of water, birds, winds and mist, which are reoccurring metaphors in waiata and haka. One example of this can be found in the work of Māori composer Hirini Melbourne (Melbourne 1991; Flintoff et al. 2004; Sherwood O’Regan 2019).

Māori relationship with whenua is understood through a system of values known as ‘Kaitiakitanga’. Kaitiakitanga revolves around living with and being connected to the land in a guardianship type role, although such a holistic concept is hard to describe in English. Māori relationship to the land is “one of kinship and connection” (Roberts et al. 1995, 10). This relationship is underpinned by reciprocity on the part of humans, to maintain sustainability. In this sense, environmental resources are considered gifts rather than “passively awaiting human exploitation” as development discourse might suggest (Roberts et al. 1995, 14). As Naomi Simmons suggests, “spaces of Papatūānuku are simultaneously material, discursive, symbolic and spiritual” (2009, iv). Te Ao Māori contextualisations of Papatūānuku are dynamic and manifest in important physical and intangible ways. Māori understandings of the environment are intertwined with the way that we view our personhood, our heritage and our place in the world. For Māori, whenua, comprised of the land, water, mountains, islands and lakes that were significant to our tīpuna, ground us and are central to our ability to find belonging.

### Whenua and Whakapapa through the Lens of Indigenous Relationality

The concept of whakapapa goes beyond human actors, and includes Indigenous understandings of relationality, integral to Māori ways of being, and grounded in a deep comprehension of our sense of place. This is conceptualised by Te Rito.

As tangata whenua we are people of the land – who have grown out of the land, Papatūānuku, our Earth Mother. Having knowledge of whakapapa helps ground us to the earth. We have a sense of belonging here, a sense of purpose, a raison d’être which extends beyond the sense of merely existing on this planet. (Te Rito 2007, 4)

Te Rito explains whakapapa as “innumerable networks” to people and places, from papakāinga, to our links to wider Polynesia (Te Rito 2007, 4-5). This is exemplified by Waikato-Tainui Māori anthropologist

Marama Muru-Lanning, who suggests the river “has agency, the river is humanised” and Waikato Māori have the obligation to care for the Waikato river (Muru-Lanning 2016, 161).

This notion of networks of relations is not exclusive to Te Ao Māori but can also be seen in other Indigenous knowledge systems around the world. Anishinaabekwe scholar, Winona Laduke, has discussed the concept of Indigenous relationality as it is understood in Native American teachings, as ‘all our relations’. She wrote:

The relations all around – animals, fish, trees, and rocks – as our brothers, sisters, uncles, and grandpas. Our relations to each other, our prayers whispered across generations to our relatives, are what bind our cultures together. The protection, teachings and gifts of our relatives have for generations preserved our families. These relations are honored in ceremony, song, story and life that keep relations close . . . (Laduke 2017, 2)

Laduke emphasises the way that these relations surface through ritual, ceremony, and song in the same way, I argue, that it does for rangatahi Māori through Kapa Haka.

Our whakapapa to the whenua, to our tribal homelands and to Aotearoa and the Pacific are essential in understanding our place in the world as Māori. Walker has described whakapapa as “embodied in the sequence of myths, traditions, and tribal histories. They trace the genesis of human beings from the creation of the universe” (Walker 1993, 1). When we consider the whenua as a part of our whānau and whakapapa, which is integral to our wellbeing as Māori, the way that Kapa Haka is experienced relationally brings a deeper sense of meaning to these experiences. Relationality and whakapapa help to articulate the intersectional ways Kapa Haka spans time and place and increases feelings of connection, strength of identity and wellness for rangatahi Māori.

## Kapa Haka in the Era of Land Dispossession and Climate Change

*“It talks about who we are as rangatahi from Waikanae, from Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai. And this line here says, “This is our Waikanaetanga, and this is our rangatiratanga”; it talks about following the words and the teachings of our ancestors on our whenua and also listening to these signs” - Wiremu*

In the quote above, one of my participants, Wiremu, recalls a waiata he wrote with his cousins. The song emphasises the importance of place – with the identifier ‘Waikanaetanga’, meaning to be Māori from Waikanae, as an expression of ‘rangatiratanga’ (autonomy, agency, self-determination). For Wiremu and his cousins, waiata was one way that they expressed their immense connection to their whenua and their



tīpuna, as rangatahi Māori from Waikanae. Whenua is inextricably linked with iwitanga and kōrero tuku iho<sup>77</sup>. As noted in Wiremu’s story, all of these factors played a role in the way rangatahi Māori navigate life through “listening to the signs” or listening to and gaining guidance from tikanga, mātauranga, whenua and tīpuna Māori. I believe that these relations are even more crucial when contextualised within the current era of land dispossession and climate change. Concern for the health of whenua was a theme that arose through Wānanga with my participants, with the current crisis of climate change, particularly, expressed as being of significant importance. Alongside our conversations relating to whenua, Wānanga participants noted the unique positionality of being Māori and living in the city, and how it often felt like being “*part of something, a movement*”, especially in activism spaces. Climate disaster threatens these crucial relations with whenua, which are central to our identity as rangatahi Māori. This also jeopardises our belonging, or tūrangawaewae, an important whakaaro<sup>78</sup> Māori meaning “a place of strength and belonging, a place to stand” (Groot et al. 2010, 125).

### Land Dispossession and Climate Change for Rangatahi Māori

Rangatahi Māori conceptualisations of whenua, as experienced through Kapa Haka today, are underpinned by the intergenerational impacts of land dispossession impacting their relationship to their tūrangawaewae, their whenua and homeland. The legacy of these processes emphasises the need for avenues of connection to Te Ao Māori for rangatahi. Land dispossession, when considered alongside the current discourse regarding climate change, further intensifies these discussions about whenua and belonging.

From the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, to the Native Lands Act of 1862 and onwards to the early 1900s, Māori saw a unprecedented increase in land dispossession, where Māori opposition to further land purchases intensified and “a deliberate attempt was made to break down the tribal organisation of Māori society” (Sorrenson, 1956, 92). Bureaucratic processes targeted Māori land across Aotearoa, which was subsequently stolen and exploited. Particularly, the years 1885-1911 saw a slew of violent government bureaucratic processes targeted at Māori land dispossession from iwi:

...the government compulsorily acquired land from Māori and resold it at considerable profit, thus supplying a means of increasing state revenues. Supplementing these revenues were exorbitant survey fees, government commissions from Native Reserves and local government rates in which

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<sup>77</sup> History, stories of the past, traditions, oral tradition

<sup>78</sup> thought, opinion

accounting expertise made it possible to enclose, price and levy charges. The calculative process enabled parliamentarians to argue that given the poor returns to Māori, their assets should be put into the hands of land-selling councils... Māori were largely dispossessed of their land by the end of this period—a period of relative calm where public appeasement and niceties presented a more benign façade to the disproportionately heavy taxation burden on, and ultimate pillage of Māori. (Hooper and Kearins 2008, 1239)

With these histories in mind, it is easy to see the implications of climate crisis on rangatahi Māori. Scientists believe climate change to be the “biggest global health threat of the 21st century” (Costello et al. 2009, 373). Climate change and climate crisis threatens worldwide disruption and unprecedented social, economic and environmental damage. The climate crisis “disrupts basic requirements for health—clean water, clean air, and adequate food—and exacerbates underlying social, economic, and ecological factors that cause illness and premature death at all ages. However, children and youth are most vulnerable to its impacts” (Sanson et al. 2019, 202). In their 2019 study, entitled ‘Responding to the Impacts of the Climate Crisis on Children and Youth’, Sanson et al. discuss the predicted overwhelming impact of climate crisis for young people, as children are disproportionately vulnerable to suffering from the effects of the climate crisis as they are exposed to more risk factors and fewer protective factors (Sanson et al. 2019, 202-3).

On top of this, Indigenous people are also disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change and the climate crisis makes “Indigenous peoples more vulnerable to harm” (Whyte 2017, 157). Potawatomi scholar Kyle Whyte has argued that “Indigenous peoples often understand their vulnerability to climate change as an intensification of colonially-induced environmental changes” (2017, 154). Indigenous peoples continue to suffer through the legacy of colonialism – capitalism, industrialisation and militarisation, which are also the key causes of the climate crisis. Whyte also argues that “shifting habitats and climate-induced displacement have implications for Indigenous self-determination” (2017, 155). As the climate crisis now threatens even more widespread dispossession and climate refugees, with Indigenous people suffering the most, Whyte likens it to an “intensified déjà vu experience of climate change” which “engages some of the most critical issues Indigenous peoples face today” (2017, 156). This research supports the fact that climate change is one of the most pressing issues for rangatahi Māori today, as young Indigenous people. Along with land dispossession, these climate change discussions surface important tensions in the relationship between rangatahi Māori and whenua.

## The Role of Rangatahi in the Reclamation and Protection of Whenua Māori

Whenua and tūrangawaewae are engrained in wellbeing, not only for the survival and wellness of the individual but for wider whānau, community and future generations. Durie has identified the importance of current generations being “trustees for future generations, especially in connection with land and the environment” (Durie 2006, 7-8). This reinforces the concept of Indigenous relationality outlined earlier, and the ways that these networks of relations come with obligation and responsibility for protection and nourishment. Further, Muru Lanning has claimed that “Māori understand themselves as kaitiaki . . . taking part in a duty of care that is passed down from ancestors to descendants, to nurture and protect places, natural resources and taonga in their territories” (2016, 144). Rangatahi Māori have deep feelings of protection and nurturing for the Whenua, which have surfaced through rangatahi activism in land reclamation, protection and climate change.

### Case Study: Ihumātao

Recent years have seen rangatahi Māori take on leadership roles within political movements for Māori land reclamation. In 2019, tensions arose regarding the ownership and preservation of land at Ihumātao in Auckland, with the key stakeholders being Mana Whenua and Fletchers Building Limited. The Mana Whenua group, SOUL – Save Our Unique Landscape’s aim was to “protect and conserve the whenua (land) at Ihumātao from Fletcher Building Limited’s plans to build a high-cost housing development there” (SOUL 2019). SOUL claimed that the whenua at Ihumātao was wāhi tapu (sacred land), and should be returned to mana whenua. Te Ao Māori news interviewed rangatahi Rush Wepiha during the protests at Ihumātao. He had this to say on the place of rangatahi in the movement:

Some of us have kind of seen how our kaumātua are tied down because of kawa because of certain things that have happened so, therefore, they are like, “yeah, we may not be able to go there, but you fellas go, this is your pakanga<sup>79</sup>”. It’s run by rangatahi and a lot of rangatahi are here... My nieces and nephews, they came up seeing a lot of injustice and not with our whenua, but with everything. Now, the veil has been lifted and they’ve seen how things really are and we want to fight. (Martin 2019)

Ihumātao is just one recent example of the role of rangatahi in whenua Māori reclamation and protection. Ihumātao exemplifies the notion that rangatahi take seriously the obligations they have to the whenua

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<sup>79</sup> Battle, conflict

and its preservation for future generations. This highlights the steps that rangatahi are willing to take to secure environmental wellbeing. Indicators of Māori wellbeing such as environmental access and quality, and, especially, the abundance of native flora and fauna are all important to Māori individual and community health (Durie 2006, 11-12). These are visible outcomes of the returning of whenua to iwi Māori as opposed to the exploitation of whenua and the building of housing developments proposed for Ihumātao.

Central to the movement at Ihumātao, especially in its social media presence, were the waiata and haka performed by the various roopu of protectors on the 'front lines'. The groups that came through Ihumātao from July to September 2019 included established iwi Kapa Haka roopu, schools, political parties and university students' associations from around the country. One way that this was visible was through the 'Protect Ihumātao' Facebook page, where the leaders shared various livestreams. One example of this was "karakia and waiata on the whenua by the ahi", which pictured a group of whānau around a fire with instruments, singing classic waiata Māori such as Ngāpuhi<sup>80</sup> waiata 'Rerenga Wairua' (Ihumātao Facebook page). These videos emphasise the important role of Kapa Haka, waiata and haka in political movements for whenua reclamation. Kapa Haka is evident in situations where Māori come together for a common cause; it reminds us of our shared values of manaakitanga and whakawhanaungatanga and the unique ways we as Māori engage with these networks of people and whenua and express our identities as Māori and tangata whenua.

### Case Study: Climate Action Activism

Another recent movement which has exemplified rangatahi Māori leadership towards change is in the area of climate change activism. Sanson et al. noted that although young people are set to suffer the consequences of climate crisis the most, positive results came with their participation in activism. He notes that "youth's activism has helped them manage their anxiety about the future and channel it into determination, courage, and optimism" (Sanson et al. 2019, 205). This feature can be clearly seen in rangatahi Māori participation in climate change activism. The 'Conscious Climate Mana Rangatahi Summit 2019' saw over 100 rangatahi from Auckland participate in discussions exploring climate change from a Te Ao Māori perspective (Auckland Council 2019). The rangatahi Māori and Pasifika-led climate action group 'Te Ara Whatu', attended COP (Conference of the Parties Worldwide Climate Change Conference) from 2017 – 2019. The group was committed to discussing the issues and solutions for climate change

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<sup>80</sup> Northland tribal group

with world leaders, and to “bringing the wealth and learnings from this experience back to Aotearoa” (Te Ara Whatu Website 2020). The motivations of the roopu were grounded in solutions- based innovative decolonial thinking. They claim, “as rangatahi we have to face these challenges head on and hold those responsible to account. We do this to ensure that our culture, grounded in our whenua, our whakapapa and our whānau is protected in global solutions to climate change” (Te Ara Whatu Website 2020).

Kahu Kutia, a member of Te Ara Whatu, has spoken to me about the empowering experience of attending the COP24 conference discussions with Indigenous people from around the world. He “shared a waiata in front of government representatives from every country in the world” (Kutia, Kahu. 2019. Personal Communications, October 13). Kutia’s comment exemplifies the role that waiata can play in showcasing our unique Māori culture to the world, and makes political statements towards change. The Te Ara Whatu roopu represent rangatahi Indigenous voices in the climate change discussion and have exercised Kapa Haka as a way to express those voices. This roopu has been included in important strategic decisions, including shaping the outcomes of the 2015 Paris Agreement. This agreement was signed by members of the United Nations and outlines global intentions towards decreasing global carbon emissions (Te Ara Whatu Website 2020). Te Ara Whatu exemplifies the ways that rangatahi employ kaitiakitanga and Indigenous sovereignty through their activism, working towards better outcomes for te Taiao and whenua Māori. This is evident in the following quote from Te Ara Whatu member, Kera Sherwood-O’Regan:

Our people are seeing te taiao changing with their own eyes, noticing differences in growing kai in our papa kāika, feeling the temperature changes and sea level rise at home. In the event of disasters, we’re the most likely to be left behind, and the least likely to have the resources to get through – yet our stories still struggle to get the mainstream recognition afforded of many other activists, or when they do our identities and the communities to which we belong are a mere footnote. (Sherwood O’Regan 2019)

Rangatahi are on the front lines of change when it comes to kaupapa for whenua. Two examples of this are land reclamation at Ihumātao and the climate action group Te Ara Whatu. Both examples see rangatahi Māori leading the way. They are grounded and guided by tikanga such as Kaitiakitanga and Whakawhanaungatanga, and expressing their voices through Kapa Haka as political action. These examples highlight the important role that conceptions of whenua play in the lives of rangatahi Māori and their experiences of Kapa Haka: one which has the potential to ground them in purpose and belonging through communities of resilience towards positive change. This concept was echoed in the experiences of my participants who felt whenua as it pertained to their identity as Māori was an integral aspect of

their constructions of 'Home' and belonging within the world. The relationship between whenua, activism and belonging showcases the importance of whenua preservation in the overall wellness of rangatahi Māori today, and suggests Kapa Haka as one way to express these challenges, tensions and aspirations.

## The Story of Mana Tiaki Kapa Haka as whakawhanaungatanga and community building

*"Kapa Haka is more than just performance. It is a unique part of our identity as New Zealanders and helps facilitate meaningful connections. . ." (Pihama et al. 2014, 2).*

This section will discuss Kapa Haka and whakawhanaungatanga. I will explore these notions in relation to the case study of the community-based Kapa Haka group Mana Tiaki. I will look at how whakawhanaungatanga through Kapa Haka enables whānau Māori to carve space and to build empowering communities of shared belonging, as Kapa Haka increases feelings of connection, strength of identity and wellness for rangatahi Māori. My participants noted that their conceptions of home and belonging were interconnected with their whānau and community networks, which I argue are made visible in their experiences of Kapa Haka.

The story of Mana Tiaki was recalled during a session of our research Wānanga by Whaea Karen, who was a founding member and long-time Kaiwhakahaere of the organisation. *Mana Tiaki Society Incorporated*<sup>81</sup> was a community group of urban Māori initiated by whānau in Tawa, Wellington in 2003 (MT Website). Whaea Karen, along with a small group of fellow parents and friends, connected through the Tawa Primary School whānau group. The parents came together to discuss the problem of Māori achievement at the school and, in response, they started the school Kapa Haka group. This opened up many opportunities, including wider discussion regarding the need for more avenues for Māori children to participate in Māori performing arts, and the establishment of a community roopu which met after school. The roopu was led by Whaea Karen. On the organisation's website, she wrote the following about the establishment and overall purpose of the roopu:

MT began in 2003 when a small group of Tawa parents wanted their children to learn Kapa Haka. As their tutor I started the group with a handful of tamariki<sup>82</sup> and with their parents we formed a small whanau group originally attached to Tawa School. The organisation has grown to include

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<sup>81</sup> Group name will be abbreviated to "MT" for the rest of this thesis

<sup>82</sup> Children (plural)

over 60 families now but the kaupapa remains the same - to reconnect our families with tikanga Māori... It remains a privilege, after all these years, to be a part of a wonderful whanau caring for one another and providing opportunities for their tamariki to learn more about what it is to be Māori. (MT website)

After many years of operating, in 2017, MT's activity dwindled, as the original members were now young adults and the loyal kaiako<sup>83</sup> and kaimahi<sup>84</sup> became increasingly preoccupied with other commitments and mahi<sup>85</sup>. Members of the roopu who attended the research Wānanga spoke about the opportunity that MT gave them to access mātauranga Māori and to begin to navigate what it means to be Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand today. The rest of this chapter will include insights into this group and the perceived value of its activities for some of my participants. MT is a powerful example of the potential for whakawhanaungatanga and avenues for flourishing through Kapa Haka, for carving spaces of belonging and, I argue, is an example of flax-roots Indigenous resiliency.

### The Unique Historical Context of “Urban” and “Māori” Whānau

Since the Second World War, demographic trends in the Māori population have been defined by a massive rural-urban shift (Barcham 1998, 303). Particularly, our experiences relate to the diasporic migration of Māori from rural areas to urban areas in the 1940s and 1950s. In the early years of settlement, there was a widespread understanding of the “idealised stereotype of Māori rural life”, compared to the assumption that “the city was synonymous with a Pākehā way of life” (Metge 1964, 3). Barcham wrote the following relating to the subsequent dilemma of Māori, in the eyes of the state:

Recent battles over the allocation of pre-settlement Treaty assets have brought this issue to the fore, acting as catalysts in the struggle for recognition between evolutionary social change (represented by urban Māori) and the perceived static boundaries of Indigenous culture (as represented by modern Iwi) (1998, 303).

Barcham also argued that, prior to major urbanisation, Māori tended to continue to live within traditional social structures “in order to give meaning to their day-to-day social interaction” (Barcham 1998, 303). This was all challenged when many Māori heeded the call of the bright lights and opportunities living in the city presented to them (1998, 304). This sentiment was echoed by Durie in a 1997 keynote address:

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<sup>83</sup> Teacher, instructor

<sup>84</sup> Worker

<sup>85</sup> Work

“Up until then [WWII] Māori and Pakeha were living largely separate lives and for most Aotearoa New Zealanders the Māori reality was masked” (Durie 1997, 33). The factors that contributed to Māori urbanisation at the time included the enticing city lifestyle – opportunities for work and excitement – but, more so, there was a significant push away from rural life, signified by a lack of resourcing and the effects of widespread land dispossession that impacted many whānau in the quickly growing Māori population (Hill 2009, 11).

The above forces represent some of the unique challenges urban, Māori whānau face today. Particularly, they contextualise the desire for community’ and belonging highlighted in the story of MT.

### The Motivations behind MT

*“The parents wanted their kids to learn Kapa Haka in Tawa. At the time (2002-2003), it was a very monocultural community - there was very little spoken about Māori. The families were having some trouble up at the college too. The community were quite resistant to things Māori. They didn’t have Kapa Haka at the school and none of the schools in Tawa did at the time, so there was nowhere for the kids to learn. So, they said to me well “you’re a teacher so you must know something” – Whaea Karen*

From the start, Whaea Karen and the other parents who formed MT were cognisant of the need for more opportunities to engage whānau Māori in the community of Tawa. These parents took it upon themselves to address this need and to give their children and whānau the opportunity to participate in Te Ao Māori. Not only this, but there was a recognition that this was a need that the school was not fulfilling. This aligns with the structural violence whānau and rangatahi Māori experience in the New Zealand education system, with one of the main concerns being there are limited opportunities for Māori cultural activity and celebration within mainstream schooling. As noted in the ‘UN UNDESA Division for inclusive social development of Indigenous peoples’, “Indigenous students frequently find that the education they are offered by the state promotes individualism and a competitive atmosphere, rather than communal ways of life and cooperation” (UN Website 2018). There was a clear desire from the parents who founded MT to facilitate whakawhanaungatanga and make connections and relationships with other whānau Māori in their community, perhaps to counteract the individualistic competitive notions perpetuated in mainstream schooling.

*“We encouraged the whanau to learn their pepeha so the members could create connections with each other and learn. I remember one of the other mothers came up to say that she learned what her pepeha*



*was from Te Papa; she learned through the game at Te Papa. My heart just sunk and I thought you should never have to learn who you are through something like that. It became really strong in me that our job was to reconnect whānau back to who they were in a safe place, and lots of these people couldn't just go back home. There's quite a lot of whakamā in that" - Whaea Karen*

Above, Whaea Karen recalled a moment of realisation of the depth of disconnection felt by some of the whānau involved in MT. That is, there are layers of 'whakamā', or shame, often felt by whānau who are urban and Māori, relating to the complex histories and traumas that can often prevent access to an individual's whakapapa. Pihama et al. have noted that Kapa Haka for some "had provided a gateway into the culture for Māori who were not connected to their marae/hapū/iwi, or who lived away from their home areas, as well as for New Zealanders who came to experience Kapa Haka as a safe, inclusive activity through which to engage with Māori culture" (Pihama et al. 2014, 19). For the whānau at MT, this was particularly true. This was a driving force to create a space free of judgement and expectations, where mistakes were normalised, with inclusivity at the centre. MT aimed to be "an inclusive whānau that welcomes and values all those who uphold and support the kaupapa of our roopu" (MT Website).

### **Community Kapa Haka, Belonging and Whakawhanaungatanga**

Community-run Kapa Haka groups like MT provide opportunities for whānau Māori to practise whakawhanaungatanga and to forge relationships based on shared values and aspirations for their tamariki and rangatahi. According to Whaea Karen, at its height, MT included 130 tamariki and rangatahi ranging from pre-school to university age. There was an emphasis on the group as a 'community network' and a place of shared belonging for whānau Māori and non-Māori families who wanted to participate. Beyond the Kapa Haka practices and performances, MT provided pastoral care to whānau who were members. This included supporting parents in their engagements with their children's schools, coming together to interpret information and implications for learning, and supporting families "with any educational, behavioural issues that may arise with their child and the school" (MT Website). Some of the other services that the organisation provided included school care and transport assistance; "utilising each other's professional and technical strengths to teach and grow other members"; "providing whānau support groups in times of need"; and "seeking out funding that will enable MT to provide assistance with furthering educational opportunities for our tamariki who need financial assistance" (MT Website). MT was intersectional in their approach to ensuring whānau in vulnerable financial and educational circumstances could get access to the things they needed.

MT was a mostly non-competitive social group, having performed at local events, road shows, and festivals over its almost 14-year life-span, with the most notable event being the Kapo Kapo Festival (MT Website). The Kapo Kapo Festival was a Matariki (Māori New Year) event held at the Te Rauparaha Arena in Porirua from 2013 to 2015. The festival showcased performances from the various MT Kapa roopu, as well as Kapa Haka and Pasifika cultural groups from schools in the Porirua/Tawa Region (Whaea Karen Wānanga). The festival grew each year, with the first iteration spanning three evenings of performances. The 2015 festival, which occurred across five nights, had a Market Day on the Sunday and saw 2500 performers cross the stage and 10,000 audience members fill the arena. Each evening, the festival closed with all of the Kapa Haka roopu coming together to sing a waiata which, in the case of the 2014 festival, was the song 'Matariki', composed by Morvin Simon (YouTube 2014). In a 2013 Stuff.co.nz article entitled 'Porirua prepares for Matariki', an excited ten-year-old Glenview School student said to the reporter "Our Kapa Haka group is really strong and fierce... We're trying to make it as loud and proud as possible. We're small but we're awesome. We want to teach everyone about the culture. We want our community to meld together and have a really good time - food, singing and dancing" (O'Neil 2013). The Kapo Kapo festival is an example of the ways that MT expanded their networks and worked to provide a platform for Māori and Pasifika children and rangatahi of Tawa and Porirua to showcase and flourish within their culture.

Amokura, one of the rangatahi involved in MT who attended my research Wānanga, reflected on the important relationships she had made through the group during our 'show and tell' activity:

*"We became more of a whanau, not just people I saw at practice once a week, from the age of seven and through High School. Even at school, we were only hanging out with the MT kids at school. People who understood who you were, that made school life a bit easier. Whaea Karina, who was my first primary school teacher, my Aunty Pania, my MT whānau from Tawa. I'm still so connected to these people to this day. [Holds up picture of herself and fellow MT members at Te Matatini]. This picture shows the strong bond that Kapa Haka gives you. It's not just a performance group." - Amokura*

Rangatahi members of MT who attended the Wānanga were cognisant of the important relationships and community that the group fostered. For Amokura, these friendships formed into whānau bonds which were sustained from a young age up until now, as a university student. Amokura spoke about the ways that these whānau bonds "made school life easier" and went beyond just the performance aspect.

MT is an example of the multifaceted ways that Kapa Haka can provide a sense of ‘home’ and belonging for whānau and rangatahi Māori. Through whakawhanaungatanga, and shared networks of support and education, whānau and rangatahi Māori are provided with opportunities to flourish through inclusivity, acceptance and performance. This notion is summarised and supported by a participant in the Ngā Hua ā Tāne Rore report in the following excerpt.

For me it’s a way of me connecting with my Māoritanga, connecting with iwi, especially Ngāi Tahu, and just whanaungatanga . . . making those connections within haka and just a place of belonging, a place where I can go . . . ‘cause I work in quite an institutional mainstream-type environment, so [it is] a place that I can go and be Māori within a Māori environment. (Pihama et al. 2014, 17)

MT exemplifies the potential for Kapa Haka in empowering whānau Māori through community support networks and whakawhanaungatanga. The values of the organisation, as outlined by Whaea Karen, reinforce the intentional decisions made by the founding members and parents to create avenues of wellbeing for their children. The reflections of Amokura highlight the potential for impactful life-long friendship created through the roopu. Further, MT perpetuated networks of shared belonging for the whānau and rangatahi involved and reinforced a network of ‘whānau’ who they could rely on for support and friendship.

### Mana Tiaki and Carving Space for Whānau Māori in an Urban Pākehā World

MT is an example of how whānau Māori may carve space for themselves, their identities and culture within a Pākehā-dominated space. I refer to MT as an ‘urban Māori’ group, as that is how they have referred to themselves in their own correspondence, as a group of Māori whānau based in the Northern Wellington suburb of Tawa (MT Website).

As explored above, the community Kapa Haka group MT provided the rangatahi Māori involved with the opportunity to create networks of support and shared belonging through whakawhanaungatanga. One way this was done, I argue, was through the intentional ‘carving’ of space for whānau Māori to be Māori, within an urban, Pākehā-dominated world. When framing MT through the theoretical lens of ‘space and place’, understandings of the political nature of space, that is, the “racialized articulations of space and place” are unravelled (Brown 1998, 291). Thus, this theory evaluates the ways that space is “socially constructed and reproduced” (Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith 1991; Kiddle 2020). The story of MT epitomises the ways that whānau Māori have intentionally sought to take up space and collectively come

together to demand better solutions and outcomes for their whānau and community. The quote below summarises the central ethos of MT, as explained by Whaea Karen. She notes:

*“It became more of a community hub - and it became more about what was happening on the periphery of those Kapa Haka sessions than anything. Kapa Haka was just the tool to bring the families in. There was quite a lot of korero going around about Māori families feeling disconnected and isolated, and **at risk**. So, it became a way of me being able to have this group where we would draw in the kids and their families. We could link up the parents and create this tightness of whanau on the outer.” - Whaea Karen*

Whaea Karen’s perspective highlights the importance of bringing whānau together as central to the model of MT. She claims that Kapa Haka, in this case, “was just the tool”. It is clear that there was a recognised need and intentional choice behind the motivations for starting the group. The perceived risk factors may have included the notion that Māori are overwhelmingly represented in most negative health and educational outcomes compared to non-Māori. A few examples from recent statistics include the fact that Māori experience higher rates of physiological distress, hazardous drinking and racial discrimination than non-Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand (Statistics NZ 2019, 323, 30, 22). The creation of MT was therefore a way of counteracting these risk factors, or a way to “provide a source of inspiration, to build self-esteem and confidence, and to keep rangatahi engaged in positive rather than risky or negative activities” (Pihama et al. 2014, 38).

As Whaea Karen explained, many of the whānau Māori who became involved in MT may have experienced disconnection and isolation, especially being located in the predominantly Pākehā suburb of Tawa. One of the ways that MT epitomises the act of ‘carving space’ is through this imagined reconstruction of traditional whānau, hapū and iwi support networks. As stated on their website, MT “seeks to fill the role that whanau would normally play in our own tribal areas” (MT Website). This notion is in line with the following excerpt from the Ngā Hua a Tāne Rore report:

Kapa Haka meant not only whānau, but it also meant a tūrangawaewae for them, because we then brought them into our whānau . . . and this became their whare and their marae. And when we needed help out there, these were the people that would come and help us to work our marae and to look after our tangi and things like that. So it becomes a lifestyle, it becomes your whānau. (Pihama et al. 2014, 17-18)

## Kapa Haka as a Response to Structural Violence

MT is one example of how whānau Māori create spaces for shared belonging and flourishing within an overwhelmingly Pākehā world. Briefly, I will explore the factors of oppression and harm that inform the need for communities such as these, and the ways that Kapa Haka is an important potential avenue for addressing the impacts of structural violence and shame that rangatahi Māori may experience.

‘Structural Violence’ is a theory that in this context can be seen as linked to historical trauma and colonisation. Structural violence is violence which is “exerted systematically” (Farmer et al. 2004, 307). It is violence which is embedded in social systems and is exerted over time, it is often invisible, and it is difficult to locate a single perpetrator. Farmer et al. write that the concept of structural violence is important in informing the study of “the social machinery of oppression” (Farmer et al. 2004, 307). This entails exploring the extent to which people’s agency can be restricted by institutions within the social system. Structural violence in Aotearoa New Zealand has resulted in overwhelming amounts of inequality, poor outcomes and marginalisation experienced by Māori in mainstream education, health, justice, employment and other diverse social systems. Kapa Haka gives rangatahi Māori the opportunity to confront their identities in valuable ways, where their Māori identities are normal and celebrated, as opposed to being treated as inferior, unimportant or strange.

One obvious example of when rangatahi Māori encounter structural violence is within the New Zealand education system. Many rangatahi find themselves not thriving in mainstream schools and are disproportionately disciplined. According to New Zealand’s 2017 Stand Downs, Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions Indicator Report, schools are standing down Māori more than any other ethnic group, with Māori children over twice as likely as Pākehā students to be stood down from school (Education Counts 2019). Such instances have resulted in poor educational outcomes for Māori, with racism in the classroom being a contributing factor. These experiences are reflected in Carlos Carter’s piece in the 2018 issue of Te Ao Mārama, ‘A Letter to my Former Educators’. Carter wrote:

I remember being ignored when asking about the assigned work. I guess my friends and I just laughed it off... Instead of helping the Māori kids you neglected them, because you probably thought “he’s just going to end up in jail or on the benefit”. Unfortunately, it was a thought shared by far too many people. (Te Ao Mārama 2018)

Comparatively, Māori in Māori medium schools were more likely to meet the University Entrance requirements and meet both literacy and numeracy requirements than Māori at English-medium schools

(Wang and Harkess 2007, 2). This evidence shows that kaupapa Māori schools (that is, schools that apply decolonising, Indigenous approaches to education) afford better educational outcomes for Māori than mainstream schooling does (Hingangaroa Smith 2000; 1992). Central to a Kura Kaupapa Māori curriculum is Te Reo Māori me ona tikanga, and most practise Kapa Haka. MT is a direct response to these impacts of structural violence experienced by whānau Māori, particularly within the mainstream education system. MT is an example of a community group that has come together to share resources to minimise harm within mainstream schooling through sharing space. MT has blended that aim with the practice and performance of Kapa Haka for whānau. Most importantly, the shared network of support and education designed through MT resulted in more competent whānau Māori who were empowered and adequately supported to demand better outcomes for their tamariki and rangatahi within the mainstream schooling system. These networks therefore minimised the potential for harm and mistreatment within the system, as whānau were able to support each other and draw on the expertise of other whānau members in their engagements with their schools.

### Mana Tiaki as 'Flaxroots' Indigenous Resiliency

MT can be framed as an example of 'flaxroots' Indigenous resiliency. 'Flaxroots' refers to what is commonly known as 'grassroots' or bottom-up, lower level movements, usually towards community-based change. In MT, Māori resiliency is showcased through the innovation and intention to create change and seek better outcomes for whānau Māori in Tawa. MT was a space where marginalised rangatahi and whānau Māori could experience and celebrate Māori culture and identity. This was reflected below by Georgia:

*"Little to none of us could speak te reo Māori, but together we learned, practised and lived the values that Kapa Haka and this roopu provided us with." - Georgia*

If it is true that "Kapa Haka has a dynamic role as a vehicle for the revitalisation and retention of te reo, tikanga, ritual processes and histories", then MT was an example of a space where these functions surfaced (Pihama et al. 2014, 6). Through support networks and pastoral care, the group aimed to empower whānau Māori through knowledge and collective care.

The act of 'carving space' as MT, involved networks of support which spanned out into the world, and helped rangatahi cope with daily life. This is highlighted in the quote from Amokura:

*“MT taught me to be confident in myself. Because of the schools I went to, there wasn’t much support there for Māori students . . . Being able to come back to this roopu and knowing that everyone’s got your back.” - Amokura*

For Amokura, MT provided the culturally responsive support that she was not getting from her schooling environments. The networks created in these carved spaces defied and worked against wider oppressive and unresponsive structures and gave whānau and rangatahi Māori a collective voice and sense of empowerment. Through claiming space for Māori flourishing, whānau saw the potential of coming together and creating shared place for belonging.

There was an assumption that the whānau networks forged through Kapa Haka allowed shared responsibilities for care and support where other institutions and schools tended to fail.

*“It became an absolutely valuable place and we all had an understanding that if any of our whānau or kids were on the street, we would stop and take them home or to school or wherever they were supposed to be. It truly was a village that was raising the kids.” - Whaea Karen*

*“The MT whanau are still part of our family. I’ll always be grateful for that. You think you know what the outcomes will be and it’s not until the kids articulate or demonstrate that that you realise.” - Whaea Karen*

Whaea Karen highlighted the assumption that although the roopu doesn’t exist anymore, the relationships made were sustained and lifelong. MT exemplifies the resiliency of whānau Māori and our ability to ‘take matters into our own hands’, to realise solutions and to create powerful avenues for whanaungatanga and spaces of shared belonging.

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have pulled apart the theme of belonging as it relates to rangatahi Māori experiences of Kapa Haka, surfaced at the Wānanga. Together, through our Wānanga, we found that having a sense of belonging was heavily dictated by our relationships to whenua and community.

By decolonising understandings of the environment, one can understand the unique relationship Māori rangatahi have for the whenua. I have also highlighted the unique value of rangatahi engagement with whenua activism through Kapa Haka, particularly in the case studies of Ihumātao and Te Ara Whatu. Thus, engagement with whenua through Kapa Haka poses powerful potential for an increased sense of

belonging for rangatahi as it engages traditional notions of land importance and Kaitiakitanga, integral to Māori identities and thus to our ability to 'belong' in the world.

I have examined the example of MT as an urban and Māori Kapa Haka group who used Kapa Haka to bring together vulnerable whānau Māori to envision and create better outcomes for themselves and their whānau. Through cultivating a community of shared belonging, MT carved space and a platform for themselves, and are an example of Indigenous flaxroots resiliency.



## 5. IDENTITY

*“This is a taonga<sup>86</sup> that I made with my dad when I was in primary school.” Ariel held up a white-bone tāonga and showcased it to our Wānanga group. Ariel was brought up in Gisborne and her kōrero reflected on her upbringing. “For me, Kapa Haka has been one of the main ways I connect to my Māoritanga. Because my dad is a carver and he did his degree in Māori when I was growing up, we didn’t really have that much connection to our iwi. There was kind of a cut off because of a land dispute.”*

*Like Ariel and many other rangatahi who are urban and Māori, my own relationship with my whānau Māori and my own iwitanga is tinged with the subtle hue of unworthiness and disconnection. Even with deep whakapapa roots that span all across Aotearoa New Zealand and Te-Moana-Nui-ā-Kiwa, it is easy to feel severed in a world where te ao Pākehā presides. I come from a long line of staunch matriarchs, educators, leaders and artists. For me, Kapa Haka was a critical step into that knowledge of my own whakapapa and finding my footing within Te Ao Māori. These nuances and sense of disconnection can be layered, complicated and difficult to navigate. For Ariel, despite growing up in Gisborne, it was a land dispute that severed her father and her from their whānau. For me, it is a mixture of important figures in my life who were influenced by the notion of the worthlessness of Māori knowledge and the superiority of Pākehā indicators of success, especially the value of Western education. Ariel continued to discuss the white-bone tāonga she held in her hands:*

*“We made this in my last year of primary school. There isn’t a lot of whanau connection there - my relationship with Kapa Haka mirrors my relationship with my own identity in that its quite tumultuous. I did Kapa Haka all through primary school and that time was when I felt the least questioning about it all. Obviously, I’m a white Māori. There were the starts of that “oh you don’t look Māori”, “you’re only Māori if your mum’s Māori” and I often got that from other Māori and other POC<sup>87</sup> in Gisborne. I think a lot of people had that **mamae**<sup>88</sup> that they feel they had to solidify their Māoritanga by projecting and telling other people that they aren’t. And so that was kind of like the least questioning I felt in my life. This taonga is representative to me of that time.”*

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<sup>86</sup> Treasure

<sup>87</sup> People of Colour

<sup>88</sup> Hurt, pain, injury, wound

*Ariel was blunt and honest in the reflections of her childhood experiences of Kapa Haka:*

*“... also I did hakas in intermediate but not the full time I was at intermediate. Just some kind of nonsense with that, kind of moving away from it. I didn’t do Kapa Haka in High School because apparently Hakas was ‘invite only’. And apparently I wasn’t Māori enough for the high school so I didn’t get the invite. I went a little bit and I did the Māori language in year ten where they encouraged us to go to Kapa Haka, but it was kind of like by then the shame had already set in. It was kind of like “ooooh, no, this feels bad”. That was kind of the baseline of my relationship with my Māoritanga.”*

*Ariel’s background contextualised her ongoing relationship with her Māori identity. Following on from this, she continues to kōrero about how this dynamic intersects with her queer identity:*

*“Over time, I’ve kind of tried to build that up and be more confident with myself. So I’m a queer woman, and I grew up with my dad [saying] “Oh yeah, it’s fine to be gay” but he also would say “**Māori can’t be gay**”. So I kind of had to choose. One pivotal moment for me was my first Pride I went to, which was in my second year of uni. I saw this group performing in the parade, which is Tīwhanawhana, they are an all-queer Kapa Haka group, and I bawled my eyes out. I didn’t see it coming at all, and I was just standing in the street crying. And all my white friends were like “you alright?” and I was like, “yup”. And it was just non-stop from then, we went to ‘Out In the Park’ and they did the pōwhiri<sup>89</sup> and I was like cry noises. I found out that Elizabeth Kerekere, who is the founder of Tīwhanawhana, is from the same iwi as me?? Cool, great, thanks dad. In my research about Takatāpui, I found out that quite a few predominant queer Māori women are also from my iwi. So it’s like, cool. I actually went to Tīwhanawhana once and it was really lovely, and it was my first time doing Kapa Haka probably almost in 10 years and everyone was so lovely and there were these trans kuia<sup>90</sup>. I didn’t end up going back because I think it was just a little bit too much emotionally for me right then. But it just felt so warm and welcoming.”*

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<sup>89</sup> To welcome, invite, beckon, wave

<sup>90</sup> Elderly woman, grandmother

## Introduction - Kapa Haka and Navigating Identity as Rangatahi Māori

Kapa Haka links to Identity, and Te Ao Māori, in important ways (Pihama et al. 2014). Central to the experience of Kapa Haka is the acknowledgement and presence of whakapapa. This is highlighted by a participant in Pihama et al.'s report:

Whakapapa, whakapapa is the important ingredient . . . the emotional wellbeing of people . . . the importance of retaining history, the importance of creating information around current affairs, and the importance of sheer entertainment, that's the way I see Kapa Haka. (Pihama et al. 2014, 42)

Adding to this, Joseph Selwyn Te Rito explores whakapapa “as a genealogical narrative, a story told layer upon layer, ancestor upon ancestor up to the present day. There are parallel lineages of characters which run vertically side by side, era by era, and incident by incident” (Te Rito 2007, 1).

The importance of knowledge of whakapapa for Māori wellbeing and identity is well evidenced. In the previous chapter, I discussed the importance of whakapapa in relation to conceptions of place and belonging. In this chapter, I seek to employ a decolonial approach to identity by exploring the importance of whakapapa in the context of identity. I situate Kapa Haka as an avenue that can provide rangatahi with the opportunity to peel back these layers and understand and practice our identity as ‘Māori’ through performance. In line with this, this chapter explores Kapa Haka as an experience of whakapapa through forging relationships with and between tipuna (ancestors) and rangatahi Māori. I explore the specific intersection of Māoritanga, and queerness/takatāpuitanga to illustrate the importance of an intersectional analysis of this experience of whakapapa. I draw on Ariel's knowledge to explore and unravel precolonial understandings of sexuality and illuminate the ways in which experiencing Kapa Haka can be one way that Takatāpui rangatahi experience belonging in their identities in a Pākehā heteronormative world. I show how the significance of Kapa Haka experienced as intergenerational is crucial to its value and I look more broadly at the links between Indigenous identity and performativity. I identify some of the ways that Kapa Haka provides rangatahi with a space to be ‘authentically ourselves’.

## Whakapapa: Experiencing Kapa Haka as Intergenerational

Whakapapa is experienced by rangatahi and whānau Māori in different ways. Access to whakapapa can be seen as a birth right that oftentimes a single whānau member may be tasked with collating (Reihana 2014, 10). Whakapapa is often recited in whaikōrero, an important political action that lays foundations for relationships. As Te Rito has noted, “public recital was one means of transmitting knowledge on to one’s peers and ensuing generations. For those of other tribes, it was an important means of reinforcing links that would help bind the various Māori tribes together” (Te Rito 2007, 3). This form of transmission has adapted over time, especially with the formation of the Native Land Court in the 1960s, where written whakapapa records were developed and kept (Te Rito 2007, 3). Now, for many Māori, the Marae is “not necessarily the key cornerstone of Māori society” (Durie 2006, 7). Instead, whānau Māori carry their whakapapa

*There are the people you can see performing in a moment, and then there is also tupuna and future generations. Kapa Haka is something that everyone is contributing to, it’s something that you do in the present but you’re also drawing from the future and the past as well - Mahuika*

As explained by my participant Mahuika above, Kapa Haka is one of the ways we as Māori experience whakapapa, as a way of engaging with our tīpuna (ancestors) and future generations (mokopuna). This is particularly relevant to the performative nature of Kapa Haka, as both are not stagnant but living and breathing stories of our being and identity as Māori. Apirana Ngata has claimed that whakapapa is “the process of laying one thing upon another. If you visualise the foundation ancestors as the first generation, the next and succeeding ancestors are placed on them in ordered layers” (Ngata 1972, 6). Whakapapa is a way that Māori place themselves in the world, how we connect ourselves to other people, whenua, awa, moana and the deep roots of connection that characterises us as tangata whenua of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te Rita Papesch, an experienced performer, composer, spectator, tutor, judge, commentator and academic in Kapa Haka, has discussed how she found Kapa Haka to be “a way of discovering and coming to embody in action as well as rhetoric [her] identity as a Māori woman” (2015, 22). This chapter further evidences her arguments, especially that explanation of Kapa Haka as “doing” and “being” Māori (2015, 24). Papesch states that:

Although Māori still, in general, know their whakapapa, they often cannot trace that back to tūrangawaewae, hapū, iwi and marae; hence the need often arises to look for another way or

place to connect to in order to be Māori. For the purposes of this thesis I maintain it is that iwi ceases to be so much about what one is but more about what one does. This is done through Kapa Haka. (2015, 24)

Here Papesch refers to the ways that many Māori, particularly urban whānau, have become further removed from their whakapapa through the forces and processes of colonisation. Papesch proposes Kapa Haka as one potential avenue for alleviating the impacts of these processes. In this section, I seek to continue on from her work and look at the ways some rangatahi Māori conceptualise the relationship between Kapa Haka, whakapapa and identity.

## Decolonising of Gender and Sexuality through Kapa Haka

For rangatahi who live at intersections of identity, such as Māori and queerness, navigating a Pākehā-dominated world can be extra challenging. Following the lead of important takatāpui scholars and thinkers such as Ngāhuia Te Awekotuku, Jenny Lee Morgan and Elizabeth Kerekere, I explore the link between takatāpui identity and wellness by considering the ways that Kapa Haka may be central to identity building, performativity and the social worlds of queer<sup>91</sup> rangatahi Māori. This focus on takatāpui as a case study is not to centralise takatāpui identity in understanding kapa haka. Rather, by going deep into this one example of intersectionality, I compel the reader to consider the relevance of intersectional thinking in understanding Kapa Haka, and rangatahi experience more broadly.

In defining a decolonising understanding of Māori gender diversity and identity more broadly, I considered the following quote: “the alienation of people from their land and their culture subjects them to a fragmentation of identity and, along with loss of possessions, a loss of spirit” (Durie 1997, 32). This has included the violence of imposing heternormative patriarchy. Furthermore, my participant Ariel’s story exemplifies that when these identities are accepted and valued in Kapa Haka spaces, Kapa Haka provides a powerful avenue for flourishing, increased wellness and strength in sense of identity for rangatahi Māori. I demonstrate that a Kaupapa Māori approach to Kapa Haka makes clear that fostering a sense of sexual

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<sup>91</sup> In this thesis ‘queer’ is understood as “an umbrella term for a coalition of culturally marginal sexual self-identifications” (Jagose and Genschel 1996). This is inclusive to people of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex experience. It should also be noted that not all queer and trans Māori self-identify as ‘takatāpui’, opting for the English terms noted, or by making distinctions between takatāpui tāne (men), takatāpui wāhine (women) and whakawāhine or whakatāne (terms which translate roughly to “becoming” or “making” woman or man, indicating a transcendent or permeable gendered identification)” (Murray 2003, 240).

and gender identity as diverse rather than binary, and valuing takatāpui identities is an essential part of decolonisation and an important possibility for improving rangatahi wellbeing.

### Takatāpui Identity and Queerness in Te Ao Māori

Ariel's story highlights one potential harm of Kapa Haka, in which 'rejection' from Kapa Haka may be seen as a 'rejection' from Māoritanga. This is especially relevant for rangatahi Māori who hold other marginalised identities, such as queer rangatahi. While Kapa Haka poses provides powerful potential avenues for healing, as evident in Ariel's discussion of attending a Pride Parade and seeing Kapa Haka represented in that space, poor or unwelcoming experiences of Kapa Haka can result in detrimental impacts, at times further distancing rangatahi from their identity as Māori.

#### *"Māori can't be gay" - Ariel*

In this quote, Ariel identifies the way in which colonial conceptualisations of heteronormativity shape Māori identity. The colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand brought with it a storm of multifaceted violence on Māori people and practices; our natural environment, material culture and ways of being. Among these harms was the imposition of the gender binary which places people in the categories of man and woman, as determined by sex characteristics visible or assigned at birth (Hunt 2018, 24).

One story that is often recalled in discussing the existence of gender diversity in Te Ao Māori is the purākau of how Ngāti Awa came to settle at Whakatane. When the Mataatua waka had reached the shore at the Whakatāne river, the waka came from Hawaiki and was captained by Toroa, among those onboard was his daughter Wairaka (Fredericks et al. 2012, 1). Wairaka noticed the waka starting to float down the river with all of their possessions (Fredericks et al. 2012, 1). Wairaka then "dived into the water and swam out to the Mataatua Waka. This was not easy, given the currents of the Whakatāne River" (Fredericks et al. 2012, 1). When Wairaka reached the waka, despite it being forbidden at the time for women to paddle the great canoe, it is said that she stood on the bows of the Waka, raised her head and cried "Kia whakatāne au i ahau" which means, "I will become man" (Fredericks et al. 2012, 2). The story of Wairaka can also be read as a testament to Māori traditional conceptions of gender, and how tāne<sup>92</sup> and wāhine Māori can inhibit and exercise both masculinity and femininity. Despite going against tikanga, the actions of Wairaka were praised by her community so much that her story inspired the naming of the region as

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<sup>92</sup> Male, men

‘Whakatāne’, of which it is still known today. This is one of many stories that have been collated to demonstrate the fluidity of Māori conceptualisations of gender and sexuality.

The central harm of colonisation on sexual and gender diversity in Te Ao Māori stemmed from the “prevailing Victorian morality” that colonisers brought with them which imposed “a narrow view of sexual relationships... a process that was facilitated by the dominant influence of Christian missionaries” (Hutchings and Aspin 2007, 17). Western gender binary and heteronormative practices have throughout history been pervasive forces in the destruction of Indigenous identities. Similarly to Ariel’s experience, especially the understanding that “you can’t be Māori and gay”, Kerekere has written that contemporary takatāpui can feel pressure “to choose between being Māori and being queer; to marry and to have children” (2017, 19). This results in a unique divergence between the two identities, of what it means to be both Māori and queer. This is further explored by Kerekere when she reflects that “cultural affiliation was more significant for Māori than sexual orientation and culture and spirituality played a more important role in negotiating takatāpui identities. Māori sought to balance cultural and sexual identity in a ‘both/and’ way that non-Māori did not, or did not need to” (Kerekere 2017, 19). Most rangatahi are still beginning to construct and navigate their own identities, and what being Māori looks like in today’s world. These conflicts are made more complicated and nuanced for rangatahi who are takatāpui, trans, queer and/or queer-questioning.

Following the Stonewall Riots in 1969 and the worldwide AIDS/HIV crisis of the 1980s, large numbers of activist movements, popular media and academic texts have sought to challenge the overwhelming pervasiveness of heteronormativity and the gender binary (Hutchings and Aspin 2007). These global movements spoke to a need for increased understanding of the spectrum of sexual and gender identities, which also allowed room for Indigenous queer communities to restore and reclaim traditional understandings that had been erased through colonisation. Scholars such as Judith Butler have sought to challenge these heteronormative notions, especially gender roles and performance, and the ways that these categories are not necessarily biological but are culturally constructed. Butler wrote:

...gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out ‘gender’ from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained. (Butler 2011, 4-5)

When framed through the lens of decolonisation, this calls for a re-centring of Indigenous ideologies that were harmed through colonisation. As Hutchings and Lee-Morgan note, decolonisation allows “Indigenous peoples around the world to share in their struggles of survival and commitment to leading positive, self-determining lives in their homelands” (2016, 3). Recent work on Takatāpui asks communities to honour and acknowledge the existence of takatāpui identities, as this is central in the safety and wellbeing of Takatāpui. As noted by Emilie, one of Elizabeth Kerekere’s participants:

If you care about Māoritanga [Māori way of life] and you care about Te Ao Māori [the Māori world] and all of our taonga [treasures], then part of that is making sure that takatāpui are safe and nourished and have space to live and grow. (Kerekere 2017, 149)

The relationship between identity and language has been explored by many scholars. David Murray for example, has looked at the ways that the word ‘takatāpui’ provides a unique way of framing the question of how does “language figure in the negotiation of same sex desires and identities amongst an Indigenous group who live as a minority in an Anglo-European colonised society”? (Murray 2003, 233). The movement of Te Reo Māori revitalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand from the 1970-80s has given rise to such terms and allowed Māori to interpret and put these into practice. As considered by Hutchings and Aspin, “Gay people as we know them now did not exist prior to colonisation and the western influences” (2007, 17).. The constantly changing political and social landscape of Aotearoa has meant that takatāpuitanga does not exist today in the same iteration as it did prior to colonisation Takatāpui rangatahi are carving new identities for themselves through a joint process of reclamation of Māori traditional identity, whakapapa, and practices as well as being a part of a global LGBTQI+ movement working towards the recognition and rights of queer and trans people. One way that this is done is through Kapa Haka.

Kerekere has stated that “whānau is key to the survival of takatāpui rangatahi” (2017, 153). Takatāpui identity today is slowly becoming more acknowledged in whānau and iwi Māori. However, there are still many barriers that exist, especially within the heteronormative and Pākehā-dominated social landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand. This is especially heightened when whānau Māori have over time taken steps towards ‘assimilating’ into the dominant Pākehā culture, particularly for whānau who are urban and Māori. Ian Stuart has discussed how rangatahi Māori have restrictions on how they can construct their identities, “whereas Pākehā can develop unique identities relatively free from stereotyping or societal assumptions based on ethnicity” (2003, 53). Māori people and queer people face racism and homophobia respectively, while and takatāpui experience both oppressions. Kerekere has noted the following about the wellbeing of takatāpui rangatahi:



Whānau support contributed to building their confidence and resilience. Support from immediate whānau and especially kuia kaumātua (elders) helped them to stand in their own mana – to be strong in who they were and to face whatever challenges came their way. One member of the whānau who is hostile could have a disproportionate impact on takatāpui if nobody challenged their behaviour. Conversely, one strong ally who stood up to everyone helped build resilience that prepared takatāpui for the future. (Kerekere 2017, 153)

Through this intersectional analysis, I argue that a decolonised approach to understanding gender and sexuality provides whānau with the tools to perpetuate wellness for takatāpui rangatahi and therefore, wellness for whānau. When whānau Māori decolonise, they practice “a reengagement of the teachings of our ancestors and how they might give meaning in a contemporary world” (Hutchings and Lee-Morgan 2016, vii). In this case, when engaging with decolonial understandings of gender and sexuality, whānau Māori can come to understand and value takatāpui rangatahi.

### Challenging Gender Roles in Kapa Haka

*I’m from Te Arawa - Ngāti Rongomai, Ngāti Rangiwewehi are my iwi. Te Arawa is one of the few tribes that allow women to do mau rākau<sup>93</sup>. I am a descendent of Hineheru, who was a woman who had her own war party. They were all women and she was moko from head to toe. So this is my nan. This is at a wedding where she did the wero<sup>94</sup>, which might seem controversial but it’s Te Arawa so we’re allowed to. And I take pride in that - Hinerehia*

Here one of the Wānanga participants, Hinerehia, expressed her pride in knowing her tipuna wahine had been a practitioner of mau rākau and had done the ‘wero’. There is a perception that this is a role most commonly undertaken by tāne, particularly high-ranking or tāne Māori who held a lot of mana within a community. Through my research I found rangatahi Māori were generally embrace and proud of examples of challenges to perceived gender roles in their experiences of Kapa Haka. Hinerehia also referred to the expected reaction of ‘controversy’ towards this and noted her whakapapa to Te Arawa as a source of validation and determinacy in her convictions. It can be hard to decipher which parts of the ways we as Māori have come to understand gender have been influenced by colonial ideologies or not.

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<sup>93</sup> To wield weapons

<sup>94</sup> Challenge performance usually performed during pōwhiri

The colonial history and social makeup of Aotearoa New Zealand leads us to think critically about assumed social norms and decolonise our understandings, in order to realise better outcomes and a strengthened sense of identity and increased mana for rangatahi Māori. This kōrero has been reflected in a number of recent instances within the Kapa Haka world. For example, the students at Māori Boys Boarding School, Hato Pāora, have been widely applauded for their performance of Poi in regional competitions, Poi being a predominantly wāhine-dominated skill. Conversely, when trans performer Kerehitana Matua-Kora wished to perform as Tāne in the 2018 Secondary School Regionals in Tāmaki Makaurau, they were discouraged from doing so (TVNZ Marae 2018). Matua-Kora performed as the guitarist instead, in half wahine and half tāne kākahu<sup>95</sup> (TVNZ Marae 2018). Matua-Kora explained, “I really really do want to stand as a boy, but there’s some tikanga behind Kapa Haka and I don’t want to break the rules or anything... It’s not my fault that I’m in a wahine’s body, but, ōku whakaaro ā Tāne [I think like a man]” (TVNZ Marae 2018). It is clear that within the Kapa Haka world<sup>96</sup> there are still strong gender roles which exist as the ‘tikanga’ that Matua-Kora refers to. There are inconsistencies in the ways Kapa Haka leaders are willing to accept divergence from perceived gender roles in this space. It seems that it is acceptable for certain skills to be practised and performed by both tāne and wāhine in some circumstances, but this is not inclusive of trans or non-binary rangatahi who want to stand and perform in accordance with their gender.

Kapa Haka is one space where the Western gender binary has been and can be challenged. Stories such as Hinerehia’s and Kerehitana Matua-Kore’s deepen our understandings of gender roles within Te Ao Māori, not so as to replicate relations of domination, but to provide nuance to these conversations and place them in context today. These stories reinforce the need to acknowledge the lives and identities of Māori of trans experience and our takatāpui rangatahi as “part of the whānau” and are an essential step towards decolonisation (Butler 2011, 42; Kerekere 2017).

### ‘Performing ‘Māori’ and ‘Takatāpui’ in a Pākehā, Heteronormative World

Kapa Haka is a form of Indigenous performance which surfaces systems of values that are reflective of Māori culture and identity. When this concerns takatāpui identity and performance, further layers of meaning are added. As previously noted, contemporary takatāpui identity is inclusive of both sexual and gender diversity. If it is true that “the day-to-day performances” “inform and sustain our identity as

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<sup>95</sup> Garment, clothes

<sup>96</sup> In this context I am primarily referring to the ‘world’ of competitive Kapa Haka at secondary and national levels - groups who set rules and regulations around who can perform and compete. This critique is not reflective of other less formal Kapa Haka experiences, for instance, whānau- or iwi-based roopu.

tangata whenua”, then Kapa Haka provides valuable avenues for sustaining and strengthening takatāpui identity for rangatahi Māori, particularly for rangatahi who identify as transgender or gender diverse, or non-binary takatāpui (Papesch 2015, 32). Relating to gender identity and performance, Judith Butler argued that “gender reality is created through sustained social performances” and “gender isn’t something we are but something we continually do” (Butler 1988, 528; Fischer 2016). Butler’s claims relate to the ways that people are forced to assimilate and reinforce a Eurocentric gender binary and exclude the existence of gender diverse identities.

## Kapa Haka and Indigenous Performativity

Indigenous performativity relates to the notion of ‘performing’ culture. Wānanga participants spoke often about the ways that they and others interpreted performing Kapa Haka as synonymous with ‘performing Māori’. Whaea Karen reflected on this.

*It was so much more than just Kapa Haka. It was a space to generate a place of Māori pride. It took me a while to realise that for many of these families I was not just teaching them how to do Kapa Haka but how to **be** Māori - Whaea Karen*

Kapa Haka can be perceived as central to our identities as Māori. Kapa Haka is underpinned by its correlation with tikanga, te reo and Te Ao Māori; it connects and guides people in ways to navigate life in accordance with our cultural values. Kapa Haka brings Māori identity to the forefront in a conscious and visible way. This is in line with what anthropologist Victor Turner has argued, namely that “cultures are most fully expressed in and made conscious of themselves in their ritual and theatrical performances” (Turner 1990, 20). Performance is an important way to embody cultural values and project our identities as Indigenous people.

In a Pākehā-dominated society, my participants have spoken to the value of Kapa Haka as a space for carving pride in identity, and for ‘being’ Māori. This insight was made clear by Whaea Karen when she expressed the following:

*My mother was brought up in a generation where they were punished for speaking the reo. She grew up believing that te reo and anything Māori was bad, and that they were not going to give you a future. And so we were protected from Māori things by her. What I didn’t know was that my mother was actually a university lecturer in te reo, but I never once heard her speak te reo. We grew up in a home where we had our lives planned out for us, where we were expected to **perform** in a pākehā world - Whaea Karen*

It was apparent in her story that Whaea Karen was impacted by the intergenerational colonial harms that have impacted the practice of te reo Māori and mātauranga Māori in Aotearoa. The experiences of Whaea Karen and her mother exemplify the underlying notions of the wider social and cultural context, that Māori people and practices are typically marginalised and undervalued. Thus, this context emphasises the perceived value of practising and reclaiming traditional Māori performance today, especially for Māori with diverse or marginalised identities, such as whānau who are urban and Māori.

### Kapa Haka as Embodied Indigenous Revitalisation

I relate ‘embodiment’ to the internalising of cultural values and stereotypes. Philosopher Michel Foucault argued that power underpins everything in the social world. Foucault discusses the importance of locating and naming power, and how power can be used to control bodies and populations (Foucault and Rabinow 1984, 6). These concepts of governing bodies and power could be useful in exploring how cultural/ethnic stereotypes, or embodied stereotypes and cultural values affect rangatahi Māori experience of the world and their understandings of their own identities. Important work has been done in looking at embodiment in relation to performance, and dance as sites of resistance and Indigenous revitalisation (Maurer 1991, Rivera-Servera 2004, Teaiwa 2015). I argue that Kapa Haka is experienced as an embodied expression of Māori identity which, within the context of Aotearoa today, is an act of Indigenous revitalisation.

Tania Hollands et al., argue that the “social context of Kapa Haka provides a safe, supportive space, enabling participants to learn physical movements and share sensations, embodying Kapa Haka individually and collectively (2015, 6). Their findings emphasised Kapa Haka as “shared embodiment” and “togetherness”, cultivated through “the sensation of being with others, following actions and coordinating movements” (Hollands et al. 2015, 6). Collective embodiment was also mentioned by Mahuika during our Wānanga:

*Sometimes it's whakapapa, sometimes it's the knowledge that comes through grieving together or feeling joy together. The feeling of unison and everyone doing the same thing at the same time - Mahuika*

This is echoed by O'Carroll, who stated that both haka and hula “embody a knowledge system of values and beliefs”, supporting the presumption that Kapa Haka is experienced by rangatahi Māori as the embodiment of tikanga Māori (O'Carroll 2000, 43).

Kapa Haka is a significant identifier and cultural practice within Te Ao Māori, and its practice provides rangatahi with important kōrero tuku iho which guide them in their lives. One participant in the Ngā Hua

a Tāne Rore report noted the significance of Kapa Haka as a ‘driver’ for rangatahi. They claimed: “The waiata record our history, and so when we sing mōteatea<sup>97</sup>, waiata, they are about people that lived a long time ago for some compositions, and when we sing we’re reminded of them and reminded of who we are and where we’ve come from. And they give us direction for today” (Pihama et al. 2014, 24). For rangatahi, Kapa Haka is embodied, experiences of Kapa Haka can be spiritual and internalised and are deeply connected to conceptualisations and constructions of their own identities. This was supported by Wānanga participants in the following ways:

*Kapa Haka is a way of storytelling, of our ancestors sharing wairua and mauri, and us using that as a form of expression - Amokura*

*We learned waiata from all around the motu, not only was I learning about myself but also I was learning about other Māori people and their identities through their waiata - Wiremu*

Any celebration of Indigenous knowledge, art and tikanga enacted by Māori and for Māori can be considered forms of resistance and revitalisation when placed within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand today. Kapa Haka is experienced by rangatahi as an embodied act of resistance in making space for and carving identities as Māori.

## Giving Rangatahi Māori a Space to be Authentically Ourselves

One idea that was echoed during our Wānanga was that “Kapa Haka gives rangatahi Māori space to be authentically ourselves”. So far, this chapter has explored rangatahi Māori conceptions of identity and how that relates to their experiences of Kapa Haka. In the next part of the chapter, I will discuss how Kapa Haka exists in contemporary rangatahi Māori identities with the prevalence of media and social media. I will look at examples of how it surfaces in popular culture through sporting and music, and how these representations are significant in shaping how Kapa Haka is framed and experienced by rangatahi today.

### Kapa Haka and Contemporary Rangatahi Māori Identity - Māori Identity as Constructed by Media

When discussing identity, it is crucial to assess the pervasive ways our conceptions of Māori ‘identity’ are shaped by the media. Stuart has noted that besides the physical attributes – “brown skin, dark hair, facial features”, a sense of “group consciousness” has been perpetuated by largely Pākehā-defined

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<sup>97</sup> Lament, traditional chant

characteristics, as a way to “other” and further exclude Māori from mainstream Aotearoa New Zealand (2003, 50). These stereotypes, Stuart argues, range from positive “happy, jovial, hard-working, friendly, laid-back people” to negative “drug-using domestically violent welfare-dependent criminals” (Stuart 2003, 50).

Māori media, such as TV channel Māori Television, can be seen as resistant to these notions. As Stuart further noted, “by providing Māori voices nationwide, disparate and dispersed groups were able to identify with the message of these politically active, culturally aware people. This unifying force is creating a Māori identity, constructed by Māori, instead of the previous Māori identity constructed by Pākehā” (Stuart 2003, 53). Māori Television is a significant part of the current Māori media landscape and is one of the main avenues to watch and stream Kapa Haka performances from around the country and to the world. In our Wānanga, participants reinforced that they saw Kapa Haka as something that is experienced not just by the performers, but by the spectators and wider whānau and communities, who all played roles. This is exemplified in the following quote from Mahuika:

*At the konohete<sup>98</sup> - where older adults can go and perform there, watching cousins I know who I know have struggled so much and watching them I just wept. They were so masterful, and proud and they looked so beautiful - Mahuika*

Media such as Māori Television have given Māori the reigns to challenge earlier stereotypes and representations. It has expanded the audience, who can all view and engage in Kapa Haka performance in valuable and impactful ways. Māori media is important as it gives Māori the opportunity for autonomy, to share our unique culture and performance in a way that is uplifting and not diminishing. This is reflected in the following excerpt from a participant in the Pihama et al. study:

To me, Kapa Haka is a window that you look through [in order to] see these beautiful components of our Māori world. Kapa Haka is our world, and it’s part of our expressive arts and I’m just proud to be associated with . . . a part of that component that makes us unique within the world. (Pihama et al. 2014, 24)

### Kapa Haka and Popular Culture – Music and Sports

*“...my only understanding of haka at the time was when the All Blacks play. It was a real surface level understanding of what Kapa Haka was. It was just this thing that happens before rugby games” - Hori*

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<sup>98</sup> Concert

One of the prominent ways that Māori culture is often 'seen' is through the performance of the haka by the All Blacks at rugby games (Murray 2000, 346). Rugby is a central part of New Zealand culture and identity. As Paul Morris has argued, through such secular activities New Zealanders "participate in the life of the country and become part of the corporate body of the nation" (Morris 1999). The All Blacks' performance of the Haka has garnered worldwide attention and engagement, however, the value, tikanga and cultural significance and meanings of the Haka are often overlooked. As mentioned in a 2014 Te Ao Māori news story, "the haka has been made famous by the All Blacks, it's even been used as a bridge to form trade relations with international markets. However, most New Zealanders still remain ignorant to the value Kapa Haka has to offer our country" (Sherman 2014). As expressed by my Wānanga participant Hori, the 'performance' of Haka has come to be seen as synonymous with Māori identity for some people. Like many young people in Aotearoa New Zealand, Hori reflects on how his understanding of Te Ao Māori as a young tāne consisted of only what he had experienced through sports: a traditional war dance performed with the intention of intimidation of sporting competitors. Considering the limited opportunities and experiences of marginalisation many Māori and Pasifika rangatahi face, sports can be seen as one avenue for 'success' and notoriety within these communities (Hokowhitu 2004; McCreanor et al. 2010). The impacts of the All Blacks' Haka for rangatahi Māori are two-pronged. On the one hand, it provides rangatahi Māori with the opportunity to witness their sporting idols engage with and celebrate Māori culture on a global stage. Secondly, it can result in "surface level" engagement with a single performative, diluted representation of what is actually a diverse and dynamic culture.

Kapa Haka and waiata Māori have had significant influence in the Māori popular music, scene particularly among rangatahi. Modern Māori music acts such as Maimoa, Te Kākano, Rob Ruha, Troy Kingi, Tama Waipara, Alien Weaponry and Ria Hall have incorporated te reo Māori and Māori waiata into their music. These elements have been integrated with the characteristics of pop and modern styles, beats, instruments and mixing. In their music video 'Wairua', the rangatahi Māori-led group 'Maimoa' puts te reo lyrics to a pop-style melody and backing track, along with studio visuals and hip-hop inspired choreography (Maimoa Music 2017). The waiata is uplifting and inspiring, encouraging rangatahi to be in-tune with their bodies and emotions and share their 'wairua' or spirit with the world (Maimoa Music 2017). This waiata encourages rangatahi Māori to hold on to their values and culture: one of the lines reads "ehara rawa i te ōkiko, ēngari rā, he hononga", which can be translated as "even if it's not tangible, it's a connection" (Maimoa Music 2017). Popular waiata Māori are important for rangatahi as they provide insight into the value and excitement of Te Ao Māori. Songs such as 'Wairua' showcase the talent of rangatahi Māori and the blending of mainstream popular culture and Te Ao Māori, which challenges the

negative stereotypes representing Māori in other media. It shows rangatahi that Māori identity is not a static, traditional, 'noble savage' trope, but is dynamic, modern and uplifting.

Similar notions can be applied to the performance of Kapa Haka itself, where innovation and influence have seen competitive Kapa Haka items change and adapt over time. As noted by Papesch, "at its most fundamental, Kapa Haka is a relatively new 'traditional' performance practice. Its repertoire is highly codified, composed from early Māori ritual (especially pōwhiri) and social practices (such as the concert party), which have been theatricalised and influenced by contemporary popular culture" (Papesch 2015, 30). The theatricality, performance, precision and skill showcased in today's top competitive Kapa Haka roopu are a testament to the ways that Māori have flourished in and committed to excellence in the field of performance. Kapa Haka at this level is an expression of immense skill and mastery of performance, noticeable by any audience. Some ways that this is evidenced is through the staging, elaborate group formations, costume, and props. Oftentimes, the most popular waiata that surface in national competition have melodies based on popular music of the time; for instance Te Waka Huia's 1997 rendition of 'The Circle of Life' from The Lion King, or the empowering renditions of pop ballads such as Sia's 'Chandelier' by Te Tairāwhiti based roopu, Waihirere, in 2017. As Papesch has noted, "such tunes are generally reworked into Māori harmonics and further transformed by the choreography" (Papesch 2015, 31). With every Te Matatini come new displays of performance spectacles, which generally solicit awe and praise from both the audience and judges, and require a delicate balance of both traditional and innovative techniques (Papesch 2015, 31).

Kapa Haka brings opportunities for Māori to escape from the often demanding experiences of everyday life, to embrace their identities through performance. These are opportunities to see Māori strength and skill challenge the negative stereotypes sometimes perpetuated about Māori in mainstream media. The diverse ways that rangatahi engage with Kapa Haka and waiata Māori are impactful and important. This is reflected in the following quote:

...it's another avenue to show Māori in a positive light, and there's not enough of that. I mean you change the channel and there's a lot of negative messages being sent, especially to rangatahi, about being Māori and what that means . . . But it just puts Kapa Haka in a more accessible format for people who may not have the reo . . . They had quite a wide forum of . . . people discussing the Matatini . . . King Kapisi, Teremoana Rapley, they're not Kapa Haka exponents but it's opening it up to a more mainstream . . . audience, and then, hopefully, it sort of normalises Kapa Haka a



lot more and normalises the positive messages that our rangatahi get out of Kapa Haka. (Pihama et al. 2014, 44)

### Case Study: Impromptu Haka at the Beyonce Concert 'Mrs Carter Show World Tour' 2013, Auckland New Zealand

Nicola Hylands (2015) has recounted the impromptu haka performed by crew members and support staff at Vector Arena to honour Beyoncé on the final night of her 2013 'Mrs Carter Show World Tour'. In this case, Beyonce responded with an imitation of the Haka being performed to her and in her honour. Hylands argued that

Beyoncé's response is a reaction unbound by cultural protocols: an organic reply to a spontaneous act. It reinforces the vital power of the performer-spectator relationship in making haka meaningful — when those being performed to partake in the performance. But it also reconfigures what Indigenous performance can be when it is not bound by the constraints of the authentic or traditional: when a response is measured by a mutual energetic flow, rather than a perceived cultural imperative. (2015, 67)

Hylands advocates for the understanding of Haka as dynamic and “culturally evolving”, yet it begs the question of how rangatahi Māori perceive the participation of non-Māori celebrities in Kapa Haka. Hylands highlights the significance and popularity of Black artists among rangatahi Māori and how this relationship has likely led to an understanding of the perceived mana of Beyoncé, leading to haka as the culturally appropriate way to acknowledge that significance. Although the nuances of this case study are complex, it exhibits the ways that rangatahi Māori are showcasing Māori performance to the world. Further, as explored above, the appreciation showed by Beyoncé, although culturally questionable, challenges the mainstream ideologies associated with Māori identity and sees it as something that deserves to be celebrated and acknowledged. Seeing mainstream pop icons such as Beyoncé engage with our culture is yet another platform for its normalisation and acceptance within Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter has assessed the ways that rangatahi Māori experiences of Kapa Haka relate to identity. Specifically, it has explored whakapapa and the importance of mātauranga and tikanga Māori; the intersections of queerness/takatapuitanga and diverse gender roles; performativity as it relates to

‘performing culture’ and ‘performing gender’; and popular culture and media representations of Kapa Haka<sup>99</sup>.

Durie has stated that:

Good health depends on many factors, but among Indigenous peoples the world over, cultural identity is considered to be a critical prerequisite. Deculturation has been associated with poor health whereas acculturation has been linked to good health. A goal of health promotion therefore is to promote security of identity. In turn that goal requires the facilitation of Māori entry into the Māori world. (1999)

Therefore, it can be argued that rangatahi Māori experience Kapa Haka as a way to connect to their identity as Māori and, in some cases, forge a gateway into the wider Māori world. Kapa Haka gives rangatahi the opportunity to engage with practice and performance which is intergenerational, and based on sharing traditional stories, knowledge and skills. Kapa Haka gives rangatahi Māori space to be ‘authentically ourselves’, so if identity is central to Māori wellbeing, then Kapa Haka is a valuable avenue to that wellness.

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<sup>99</sup> Because this research involved a small sample size of Wānanga participants, more participants, especially Takatāpui participants, would have provided a richer data set to draw from in regards to this insight.

## 6. HEALING

*While looking down at the table, I glanced over the drawings and scribbles from earlier, when we had posed the question “What is Kapa Haka?” Among the cascades of papers, I saw an outline of a stage surrounded by stick figures onlooking, hands in hands, guitars and poi. I saw the Tino Rangatiratanga flag, and underneath, the words “Mana Motuhake” and “Aroha”. “Could Kapa Haka really encapsulate that?” I thought to myself. I turned to face the front as my participants continued to share their stories, objects and photos. Mahuika stood in front as she showcased her pounamu and discussed some pivotal moments from her childhood -*

*“This is a taonga that was gifted to me when I graduated primary school. I went to a really small primary school in Otaki. When I was about seven or eight, my father left my mother. We were living in Nelson. It was quite a violent, tumultuous break, and we fled to Otaki where we lived in my tipuna whaea’s whare. We kind of came into the arms of our hapū. In our whānau still there’s a lot of violence, poverty and drug use. Our lives were quite chaotic, it felt, and there wasn’t many safe places. There was still quite a lot of ugliness, I think, that’s how I’d explain it. During this time, my mum started getting into Mau rākau and I started going too.”*

*Mahuika continued to reflect on her childhood.*

*“I think one of the things coming out of a household that had chaos, going to school, and then doing Kapa Haka felt like the first thing I could be good at - the only place with order and discipline, the only place of beauty. The beauty you don’t get from maths or sports, but the beauty of singing and of being together. How beautiful you feel when you get a glittery moko kauae<sup>100</sup> stencilled on. And actually feeling pride, when in all other spaces I just felt shame, that was probably life saving for me and for my māmā<sup>101</sup>.”*

*Mahuika’s story provoked me to think about the potential for beauty and excellence in Kapa Haka for rangatahi Māori who have faced hardships. Following on from Mahuika was Wiremu, who then took the floor to share his object.*

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<sup>100</sup> Māori chin tattoo

<sup>101</sup> Mother

*“So I brought two things today. One is a photo and another one is some kupu. How I understood this method was to bring an object to speak for you. This photo says words that I find hard to put together myself, but this is a photo in our wharekai at my marae. It was in August 2017 at my cousins tangi. So my cousin passed away at 21 years of age, and it was really unexpected and it just hit everyone really hard.”*

*At this time Wiremu’s voice started to crack. He was looking down and paused for a moment. A fellow participant, Hori, stood next to him to tautoko<sup>102</sup>. Wiremu continued:*

*“But this is a photo of us standing and singing a waiata that was composed during this time by two of my cousins. This waiata and Kapa Haka for me is just the power of healing and just dealing with shit. This is a photo of us singing a waiata and these are the kupu. I think that will just say what I want to say more accurately.”*

*“In our waiata, there is a reference to Te Puna o Te Aroha, which is the pou<sup>103</sup> that stands on our marae and looks over our wharenuī. This is a significant statue on our marae and it means ‘the spring of love’. The last line says that ‘we will remember you’. Every time I hear this song, it just makes me think of my cousin, and it was so hard dealing with the loss of a young person. And we’re all the same age, and I had never dealt with something like that before. I just really feel that this waiata puts into words for me the things that I can’t explain myself.”*

*Wiremu’s story evoked a sincere reaction from myself and the fellow participants of the Wānanga. This was not voiced, but instead met with silence, with heads bowed and quiet nodding. Wiremu’s reflections explain Kapa Haka and waiata as a form of expression for emotions that at times can be hard to explain, especially as rangatahi.*

*After this, we shared kai together and continued our day, talking, laughing and sharing with one another.*

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<sup>102</sup> Support

<sup>103</sup> Pole, pillar, post

## Introduction - “Kapa Haka Heals Māori - ā-tinana, ā-wairua, ā-hinengaro and ā-whānau”

I think sensing my despair she moves the conversation towards the forms of healing she has experienced. In my mind I note this - how important it is within the flow of our conversations to turn to healing and to hope (*Bryers-Brown 2015, 55*)

In this chapter I will heed the call of Māori anthropologist Tarapuhi Bryers-Brown and her participant Te Aho, and turn towards forms of healing and of hope (Bryers-Brown 2015, 55). I will take seriously the potential of Kapa Haka as a non-medical healing tool, for the alleviation of trauma, cultural disconnection, and experiences of grief and loss. The title for this chapter is a quote from one of my participants during the final stages of our Wānanga, as the heavy conversations of the day led us to discussing, analysing and comparing our experiences. During this moment, my participant Georgia spoke up and said, “Kapa Haka heals Māori - ā-tinana, ā-wairua, ā-hinengaro and ā-whānau”. To me, it was a perfect encapsulation and logical conclusion of the experiences and stories of Kapa Haka that were shared throughout the day. Of course, the basis of this conclusion stems from Mason Durie’s ‘Te Whare Tapa Whā’ Māori health model, discussed earlier in this thesis. In this chapter, I will utilise this framework as an approach from which I will explore the various ways that Kapa Haka heals.

### Kapa Haka Heals Māori ‘ā-tinana’

Kapa Haka is a form of performing art and movement with the potential to provide avenues for physical healing (ā-tinana). In this section, I will explore the implications of Kapa Haka in the realm of ‘tinana’ health. However, this will not concern the moral evaluations of what a ‘healthy’ body looks like, and this is not to suggest Kapa Haka as a prescriptive tool to control the dietary and lifestyle choices of Māori, but to explore its implications for bodily health in the holistic framework of ‘Te Whare Tapa Whā’. This thesis acknowledges physical wellbeing as just one aspect of overall wellness for Māori.

Recent research continues to reinforce the links between increased physical movement leading to increased health and wellbeing. Regular physical activity through movement has a multitude of benefits for the body including the potential to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke and certain cancers (World Health Organisation 2009). Further, for young people, physical activity is vital in ensuring “healthy growth and development of the body and obesity prevention, all which help protect health in adulthood” (Burkhardt 2012, 149).

One theory that has been explored in the physiotherapy space is ‘Dance Movement Theory’ as a form of therapeutic healing. As noted by Sabine Koch “Dance is one of the most ancient forms of healing” (2014, 46). As Kapa Haka requires coordination, stamina and fitness, it can be considered one of these Indigenous notions of traditional dance and song that has existed for generations (Henwood 2007, 157). Kapa Haka is an example of movement which can lead to physical bodily healing. In her 2007 study entitled ‘Māori knowledge: A key ingredient in nutrition and physical exercise health promotion programmes for Māori’, Wendy Henwood explores some of these tools for healing and proposes Kapa Haka as one form of “alternative methods of exercise” (2007, 160). Henwood wrote:

Instead of gymnasium training being recognised as the only path to sports and physical excellence, the connection was now being made between activities such as Kapa Haka and mau rākau (weapon training) as valid training and fitness regimes... For example, a two-hour Kapa Haka practice was being acknowledged as a strenuous and intense physical workout. (2007, 160)

Henwood’s work reinforces the notion of Kapa Haka as an effective form of physical activity leading to wellbeing for Māori. Through movement and dance, regular practising of Kapa Haka and its physical components provide the potential for positive physical health outcomes for rangatahi Māori.

### Kapa Haka as Bodily Reclamation and Sovereignty

One way that Kapa Haka relates to the health of Māori bodies ‘ā-tinana’ is through experiences of bodily reclamation and sovereignty. Kapa Haka is a powerful example of Māori reclamation of knowledge and tradition, as a means of reclaiming power over our “cultural and intellectual estate” (Reinfeld and Pihama 2007, 25). Further, Kapa Haka can provide a powerful platform for bodily reclamation, where ideas of bodily agency and sovereignty are foregrounded. One way that these notions are expressed in Te Ao Māori is through the experience of one’s ‘Mana’ as it relates to the body being recognised, acknowledged and celebrated (Gillon 2020). Hollands et al. suggest that the control and discipline entrenched within Kapa Haka is an expression of mana, where the whole body is “given over to cultural performance” (2015, 6). Further, Kapa Haka is bodily expression which stimulates increased attunement to one’s body, actions and voice (Hollands et al. 2015, 8). The practice and performance of Kapa Haka often involves a staunch ‘grounding’ of the body with significant “physical energy, vigour and exertion” performed through actions such as slapping, stomping and chanting (Hollands et al. 2015, 8). In this way, the practice of Kapa Haka provides potential avenues for bodily reclamation for Indigenous people.

Ashlea Gillon has recently researched the notion of body sovereignty in communities of Kapa Haka, particularly as they were surfaced at the 2019 festival of Te Matatini ki te Ao. Gillon argues that

Te Matatini centres Māori bodies and Māori sovereignty through Kapa Haka and creates a space for multiple levels of body sovereignty, for multiple genders, different able-bodiedness and different sized bodies. Te Matatini Ki Te Ao centres tāngata Māori and creates a sovereign space for Māori bodies to exist and be valued. (Gillon 2020, 173)

Gillon claimed that Te Matatini fosters a sovereign space where Māori bodies have increased agency and belonging, and where Māori are “re-centred, re-normalised and re-prioritised” (2020, 173). These effects, she argued, were not limited to the kaihaka<sup>104</sup>, but to all Māori within the space. This is particularly because this event provided the opportunity for “tens of thousands of Māori whanaunga<sup>105</sup>, living, breathing and just being Māori, however and whatever that means for us” (Gillon 2020, 173).

Gillon specifically emphasises the importance of this sovereign space for Māori bodies that diverges from Eurocentric norms. She writes that this is expressed through certain displays, such as “the unrestricted fatness and size of kaihaka, re-normalisations of various body shapes and sizes; moko kauae and mataora accepted and re-normalised; the able-bodiedness of kaihaka and the inclusiveness of those who are differently abled” (Gillon 2020, 176). The resistance of westernised bodily norms and the inclusive sovereign space at Te Matatini provide powerful expressions of bodily reclamation for Māori (Gillon 2020, 175). The many features of Te Matatini, ranging from Māori businesses to Māori-made goods, and the accessibility of te reo Māori as well as its translations facilitated a space of inclusivity “while maintaining a critical, decolonial positioning on systems of oppression that inhibit and fail to recognise (body) sovereignty” (Gillon 2020, 177). One of my participants, Hori, recalled his experience of watching his whānau performing at Te Matatini as he recognised the potential of Kapa Haka as a tool to express bodily agency.

*“I got to go to my first Te Matatini this year where I got to see my family perform at this level. It reignited those feelings that rounded out my identity, and a newfound respect for Kapa Haka not just as a performance or challenge, but as a multipurpose tool that comes out for whatever you need, whenever you need it.” - Hori*

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<sup>104</sup> Performer of kapa haka

<sup>105</sup> Extended relatives

Some of my participants reflected on their experiences of attending Te Matatini in similar ways. One instance was when Mahuika shared a photo of her cousins performing at Te Matatini.

*“This photo has less to do with Te Matatini, because I think that the professional nature of Kapa Haka hasn’t been so important to us, but being able to see my cousins [was important]. I know all their stories and have only seen them in states of despair... watching cousins who I know have struggled so much and watching them, I just wept. They were so masterful and proud, and they looked so beautiful. Just seeing them flourish, I have healing from that”. – Mahuika*

Mahuika’s reflections reinforce the notion of Te Matatini as a sovereign space where healing can take place. For Mahuika, as she and her whānau had experienced significant violence, being kaimātakitaki (spectators) of their performance at Te Matatini was in itself healing. Kapa Haka, and particularly Te Matatini, gives rangatahi and whānau Māori a platform to express their Māoritanga in an inclusive and sovereign space. Kapa Haka can provide rangatahi and whānau Māori with opportunities for reclamation ‘ā-tinana’, for experiencing bodily attunement and groundedness in their identities as Māori.

### Kapa Haka, Movement and Healing for Wāhine Māori

*“The expression in Kapa Haka is about having emotion and being in touch with yourself.” – Mahuika*

Kapa Haka as it is experienced ‘ā-tinana’, involves ‘being in touch with yourself’. As Mahuika noted, movement is an important characteristic of Kapa Haka and one I will explore in relation to its benefits, particularly for wāhine Māori. Hollands et al. noted that Kapa Haka induces a state of self-awareness; this is done through body movement, rhythm, co-ordination and synchronisation (Hollands et al. 2015, 7). The rhythm created through waewae takahia, instruments and voice facilitates coordinated movement, which “provides proprioceptive feedback in the body and in turn creates a sense of mastery and ability” (Hollands et al. 2015, 7).

Jade Whaanga (2018) has discussed the unique avenues for healing for wāhine Māori bodies. Whaanga’s research found wāhine Māori experienced healing from “colonial scarring” through movement and ceremony in ways that “celebrate and elevate” wāhine (2018, 7). For Whaanga’s participants, the dance movement they experienced through Kapa Haka facilitated their navigation of current contemporary issues faced by wāhine Māori (2018, 8). Whaanga utilised innovative methods within her research



including 'self-healing'. This involved mirimiri<sup>106</sup> as "an opportunity to explore suppressed emotions and engage in a dialogue with the body, investigating the trauma the body holds and exploring ways of releasing this" (2018, 24). Whaanga practised Kapa Haka and noted the ways that movement facilitated energy shifts and the release of tension in the wāhine body (2018, 24). Particularly, her work acknowledges 'Mana Wāhine' as an expression of reclamation over the female body and a movement towards healing, as she argues "Wāhine have become disconnected from authentic sisterhood, where celebrations and grievances are shared and felt by the group" (Whaanga 2018, 31). Whaanga's work suggests the powerful ways that Kapa Haka-inspired dance can heal wāhine Māori.

### Collective 'Flourishing' through Kapa Haka

*"Everyone in my class was the same, everyone wanted to do Kapa Haka. We weren't really that good at school, but we were really good at Kapa Haka. And we just did things that made us feel really proud to be from Ngāti Raukawa. To do mau rākau, to do patu and we would go and share it with other schools. And everyone kind of had their thing that they were good at. But really, it was more about just coming together and feeling pride for the first time in our lives. That was a really big deal for me..."- Mahuika*

'Flourishing' is a concept which refers to ideas around collective wellness. Collectiveness and togetherness, I argue, is an integral part of Kapa Haka experiences, especially in perpetuating spaces for shared belonging, healing and flourishing. Mahuika indicated that collective flourishing for her was achieved through developing skill levels within proponents of Kapa Haka such as mau rākau and patu. Further, her experiences emphasised the sharing of knowledge and performance, for her and her schoolmates Kapa Haka helped them to feel good at something, which stimulated feelings of pride. Pride, I believe, is a vital part of rangatahi experiences of collective flourishing. Mahuika's story reinforces the ways that Kapa Haka "provides a safe, supportive space, enabling participants to learn physical movements and share sensations, embodying Kapa Haka individually and collectively" (Blisset 2011, 8).

Wayne Blisset of the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand has written on Māori experiences of flourishing. Blisset has argued that "there was no point to an individual flourishing, it had to be the collective. If one of the whānau was not flourishing then the whānau as a whole could not see themselves as flourishing" (2011, 9). Blisset highlighted the importance of flourishing as intergenerational, and responsive to a "long-term vision around health and wellbeing of the land being in direct correspondence

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<sup>106</sup> Massage

to the health and wellbeing of future generations” (Blisset 2011, 8). Hollands et al. found that “collective experiences enabled participants to be more aware of themselves by requiring them to be present, focused and attentive in order to respond appropriately to others” (Hollands et al. 2015, 8). Particularly, the discipline required for acting in unison with one another provides beneficial feelings of control over one’s body, which reflects agency. This is in line with Mahuika’s reflection when she said that Kapa Haka calls upon rangatahi to be *“given leadership and authority, like when you’re asked to do karanga, and you’re trusted and given respect and control in your life”*. Opportunities for flourishing through Kapa Haka reinforce the importance of rangatahi Māori bodies engaging in Kapa Haka collectively. Particularly for rangatahi, many of the beneficial impacts of Kapa Haka come from the previously discussed notions of bodily reclamation, sovereignty and agency which can often underpin their experiences.

### Kapa Haka Heals Māori ‘ā-wairua’ and ‘ā-hinengaro’

The potential healing qualities of Kapa Haka regarding wairua (spirit) and hinengaro (mind) for rangatahi and whānau Māori are numerous and abundant. As noted in many instances, experiences of Kapa Haka for rangatahi Māori facilitated feelings of belonging, identity and pride, all of which have positive impacts on health indicators relating to wairua and hinengaro.

Durie’s model of Te Whare Tapa Whā challenges mainstream models of health and wellbeing and instead represents a perspective of wellness conducive to Te Ao Māori conceptions of personhood. In his Sixth Meditation, the Greek philosopher Descartes set forth the notion that the mind and the body are separate (Descartes and Cottingham 1996, 100). This idea has been highly influential on the development of Western health practices for a long time and is still prevalent today, and such notions are clearly in opposition to a Māori perspective.

A Māori perspective of ‘wellness’ is about balance and healthy relationships between the individual, the universe, and the gods (Reinfield and Pihama 2008, 37). For Māori, ideas of health and wellbeing are tied up intimately with conceptions of personhood, spirituality and whanau. The Western approach to health tends to be fairly individualistic, and focuses mainly on the physical body and its ailments. Descartes’ notion set up the foundations for Western medicine, which then tended to treat physical and bodily illness as completely separate from the mind or spirituality of the individual. It is evident then that Māori and Western notions of health are vastly different in their conceptions of the body and what it means to be healthy. As the Western view dominated in Aotearoa New Zealand as a result of colonisation, many Māori consequently lost touch with traditional modes of healing. The foundations of Western medicine

emphasise how this model tends to be ineffective for many Māori. According to Brave Heart, there is a clear need for “culturally congruent trauma theory and interventions” in addressing health outcomes for Indigenous populations (2003, 8). This section proposes Kapa Haka as one technique in acknowledging these important facets of Māori wellness. That is, Kapa Haka is a culturally responsive method of healing rangatahi Māori ‘ā-wairua’ and ‘ā-tinana’ in ways which recognise Māori conceptions of personhood which acknowledge “the interconnected nature of spirit, body, society and the natural environment” (Wirihana and Smith 2014, 201).

### Kapa Haka and Healing from Historical Trauma

Wirihana and Smith have spoken to the “need to embrace and utilise all methods of healing and well-being” (2014, 201). Kapa Haka provides powerful potential tools for alleviating and healing from historical trauma for rangatahi and whānau Māori. Many studies have noted the positive physiological impacts of Kapa Haka for the mind and spirit. Kapa Haka in itself is an Indigenous ritual and performance which reinforces tikanga and te reo Māori.

Whaanga noted that her participants voiced feeling “cleansed and re-energised” (2018, 32). This was articulated by one of her participants, as follows:

I felt it. Something was being cleansed. The strong gestures of pulling that which was not you from your body. Removing what was not right and good from, not only the physical, but the mental, spiritual and emotional realms too. That which was both inherited before birth like ancestral trauma, and that which was adopted during life, like scars. The motions of scrubbing and taking back command of parts of you that seemed not under your control. (Whaanga 2018, 44)

For Whaanga’s participants, movement through Kapa Haka was experienced not only physically but as mental, spiritual and emotional responses. Kapa Haka gives Māori tools to surface and work through possible traumas which exist in various ways, including trauma identity; carrying trauma; anger; impaired bonding; transposition; survivor guilt; suicidal ideation; multiple traumas; and somatic symptoms (Pihama et al. 2014, 255). Hollands et al. have identified the potential of Kapa Haka in occupational therapy, and the positive impacts of practices which are culturally meaningful. They suggest that Kapa Haka as a regular activity, and “as part of a daily sensory ‘diet’ may have real benefits in relation to grounding the body, regulating breathing, and increasing levels of arousal” (2015, 9). All of these are tools in healing through trauma, particularly when enacted in safe spaces, underpinned by a “sense of tikanga” (Hollands et al.

2015, 9). Historical trauma allows Māori to give language to the overwhelming unwellness that many of our whānau face. As Pihama et al. argue, we must “reclaim the language that enables us to talk about those events and reveal fully the impact of historical trauma events and their contribution to the health disparities experienced by Māori whānau, hapū and iwi” (2014, 259). Kapa Haka can be considered one potential pathway towards healing whānau, hapū and iwi Māori in a culturally responsive way.

### Kapa Haka and Healing from Mental Illness/Distress

As demonstrated in the introduction to this thesis, mental illness, distress and suicide are pressing issues for rangatahi Māori communities today, with many whānau greatly affected by these harms and losses. Leading on from conversations of historical trauma and structural violence, it is evident that rangatahi and whānau Māori feel the impact of these environments and processes.

When recalling her whānau experiences of Kapa Haka, Mahuika shared the following:

*...We have all experienced quite a lot of violence, trauma, sexual abuse and sexual violence. And it seems like our generation is the first to kind of be popping out above that and able to experience some healing. [We have had] extreme experiences of unwellness, including one of my cousins. He was the only Māori boy in his class in Waiouru and he was getting bullied, and he was I think 10. Everyone went outside, and his teacher came in and found him trying to hang himself in the classroom. And this was like a big kick in the ass for us, especially the older cousins. And this feeling of everyone being so unwell. And we did some research within our whānau and something like 90% of our whānau have experienced suicidal ideation. Which is really high... So we did this Wānanga, and we focused on Kapa Haka, Haka, waiata as a way to heal. A lot of us had been so traumatised that we couldn't even really sit in a room and talk to each other, or to parents. We wouldn't be able to express or understand things, we weren't really that good at things. But we can all sing. So we come together and learn these waiata and we don't have to do anything... We just sing, and sing together and then we can be around each other and we can do something beautiful... Kapa Haka lets us instead make something beautiful, and we can sing really well with the guitar. It's just the first time of being beautiful together instead of this ugliness.” - Mahuika*

Mahuika's story epitomises the potential Kapa Haka and waiata have in collective and shared experiences of healing from harm, illness and trauma. Kapa Haka can be a tool to bring people together and express emotions and shared grief. Brave Heart wrote that “native grief” can become “unresolved and impaired” in situations of colonisation (2003, 8). Kapa Haka, I propose, provides a prospective avenue for healing from mental illness and distress and for holistic healing for Māori. Many of the outcomes of Kapa Haka

outlined in this thesis can be considered indicators of wellness and healing for rangatahi Māori. This includes having shared networks of belonging, a strong connection to whenua, enhanced cultural identity and one's place in the world, and regular physical movement. Dance Movement Therapy proposes the use of dance for the treatment of health-related psychological problems, in increasing quality of life and "decreasing clinical symptoms such as depression and anxiety... Positive effects were also found on the increase of subjective well-being, positive mood, affect, and body image" (Koch et al. 2014, 46).

## Kapa Haka Heals Māori 'ā-whānau'

### Kapa Haka as Whānau and Community Healing

Another major theme that arose throughout the Wānanga was the notion that Kapa Haka was experienced not as individuals, but was viewed and experienced as a collective whānau. Linked to my previous discussions of whakapapa and relationality, rangatahi Māori experience Kapa Haka as an act that engages all whānau. Central to the practice of Kapa Haka has been the significance of it being intergenerational. That is, it is passed down, practised and performed by different generations, with knowledge and skill transference as a key characteristic. Since Kapa Haka is often a whānau experience, it has the potential for whānau collective healing. Two of my participants, Gabrielle and Hinerehia, pointed out the ways that Kapa Haka for them was a whānau experience.

*"My family and I moved to Wellington 7 years ago, and I think that was probably the best decision. It's a different culture in Wellington with a lot of creative spaces and opportunity to be who you are. I've got two younger siblings; I see the way they are able to express themselves in their culture more... It's interesting. I love seeing it, because I feel like my sister has been able to reconnect in a way that, I don't want to say that I'm jealous of, but I appreciate that she has the opportunity to do so. So I feel like I am a lot more in touch with my Māoritanga and my whānau now. But it's good to be able to see it in front of me because that wasn't always the case for our whānau...I didn't grow up with it personally but I'm being taught by my sister and her passion for sharing it with others." - Gabrielle*

*"From a young age to adulthood and both of my sisters followed me through that. We all rode that waka together. I grew with my family, and Kapa Haka is something that always kept us tight knit. We were all part of the same roopu, it kept us and our mates together" – Hinerehia*

Kapa Haka fosters a broader connection to family, memories and ancestry which supports rangatahi Māori cultural identity (Hollands et al. 2015, 6). Durie has noted the importance of community for Māori. He claimed that

while there is a link between personal well-being and community well-being, there is also evidence that community well-being may itself be a driver of personal well-being. Where community cohesion is low, personal well-being is threatened. The notion of collective Māori synergies emphasises a community dynamic; it is an outcome class that measures collective well-being. (Durie 2006, 7)

Hollands et al. have spoken of the benefits of Kapa Haka as a collective experience. They argue that the “sensation of being with others, following actions and coordinating movements created an atmosphere of ‘shared embodiment’ and ‘togetherness’” (Hollands et al. 2015, 6).

Kapa Haka gives rangatahi Māori sometimes life-changing opportunities to feel beauty and belonging in a mainstream society that so often perpetuates shame. The existence of Kura Kaupapa and other roopu Kapa Haka give rangatahi an opportunity and environment where they thrive, as Mason Durie has noted that Māori success and health are largely determined by how environments “are attuned to Māori realities and to Māori worldviews” (2006, 2-1).

### Kapa Haka in Tangihanga

*“Every time I hear this song, it just makes me think of my cousin, and it was so hard dealing with the loss of a young person. And we’re all the same age, and I had never dealt with something like that before. I just really feel that this waiata puts into words for me the things that I can’t explain myself” - Wiremu*

At the beginning of this chapter, my autoethnographic passage highlighted the story of Wiremu in his experiences of Kapa Haka and loss. For Wiremu, the rangatahi from his whānau came together to remember the life of their cousin and expressed those emotions through a waiata that they wrote and performed at the tangihanga. Nīkora et al. have claimed that “tangihanga is the ultimate form of Māori cultural expression”, where Māori systems of values are foregrounded (2010). The role of Kapa Haka in tangihanga ritual includes “the performative elements of pōwhiri”, that is, the point where elements such as “tangi, whaikōrero (oratory), haka (posture dances), waiata (song, dirge), whakapapa (genealogy), poroporoaki (farewell speech) and karakia (prayer)” are expressed and diverge together in the space (Nīkora et al. 2010, 400). This ritual order brings structure to the processes of critical “emotional upheaval, grieving and healing” for whānau Māori (Nīkora et al. 2010, 401). Kapa Haka has been associated with

having “cathartic effects” which can “elicit a calm state” (Hollands et al. 2015, 7). Kapa Haka is often noted as an important form of expression and a way to deal with grief, which is “highly therapeutic and healing processes for emotional distress” (Wirihana and Smith 2014, 202). Wiremu’s story highlights the ways that whānau use Kapa Haka for the purpose of expression, as he claims *“waiata puts into words for me the things I can’t explain myself”*. These experiences are powerful and crucial for rangatahi Māori who, as I have noted, are often predisposed to high rates of emotional and mental distress. In situations of tangihanga, waiata and whakawhanaungatanga, Kapa Haka can help whānau come together to enact healthy cycles of mourning and remembrance with the support of one another.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed healing and flourishing through a hopeful lens, to take seriously the potential for Kapa Haka to heal Māori. Taking the lead from my participant Georgia, I have analysed the healing potential Kapa Haka provides for “ā-tinana, ā-wairua, ā-hinengaro and ā-whānau”. This chapter is intersectional in its approach to dealing with these topics through the consideration of class and race. It considers how this form of healing provides potential for healing some of the myriad harms rangatahi and whānau Māori face.

Particularly, I have leant into the stories and experiences of my participants, Mahuika and Wiremu, and their stories of Kapa Haka allowing them to heal through trauma – of family violence and of loss.

I have challenged the mainstream notions of healing and wellbeing, and propose Kapa Haka as a valuable technique in alleviating and healing trauma and expanding the body of knowledge on the complex experiences of Māori young people today.

# KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA

## Conclusions and Findings

This thesis has explored the intersectional ways that Kapa Haka is experienced by rangatahi Māori, fused with the stories surfaced through Wānanga with myself and my ten rangatahi Māori participants. Through the collaborative and innovative practice of Wānanga, we created knowledge and stories through activities and sharing.

Through a Kaupapa Māori lens, I have provided insights in the form of autoethnographic passages, each framed by the key themes identified in our Wānanga. With this, I weaved together the experiences of my participants with literature, cultural theory and contemporary discussion to provide deep and nuanced glimpses into their experiences.

My key findings are that Kapa Haka provides powerful avenues for belonging for rangatahi Māori through strengthening their connection to whenua and community. Kapa Haka facilitates identity strengthening for rangatahi Māori and provides unique opportunities in this area for takatāpui rangatahi. Additionally, Kapa Haka has the potential to heal rangatahi Māori ā-tinana, ā-wairua, ā-hinengaro and ā-whānau.

Kapa Haka goes beyond a performance of song and dance; it is the manifestation of Māori experience and identity which stretches across time and space. Kapa Haka exposes the strong connections that rangatahi Māori have with whenua, whakapapa, whānau and communities and provides powerful avenues for healing and flourishing.

This thesis has engaged with contemporary manifestations of Kapa Haka, especially the ways that Kapa Haka surfaces in different spaces and reveals contemporary rangatahi Māori aspirations. Rangatahi Māori engage in Kapa Haka for myriad purposes - for activism, for expression, for healing, for relationships and for fun. Through an intersectional lens, I have foregrounded some of the diverse experiences and needs of rangatahi Māori in this space. I have highlighted the fact that Kapa Haka provides powerful avenues for healing, especially for rangatahi placed at intersections of identity, such as takatāpui, urban and Māori rangatahi.



## Potential Implications of this Research

To address Tuck and Yang's claim that Indigenous research conducted intersectionally should "further social justice and holistic wellbeing" (2012, 13), I have made a case for Kapa Haka as a legitimate pathway for rangatahi Māori to experience holistic healing and flourishing. I urge any health service providers, health professionals, social workers and those leading in the space of rangatahi mental health in Aotearoa New Zealand to consider this. I insist that a Kaupapa Māori approach to service provision, community building, healing, and revitalisation would benefit from incorporating Kapa Haka into their services for rangatahi Māori.

Further, I would encourage all leaders and professionals in the Kapa Haka community - policy advisers, Kapa Haka exponents and practitioners to:

- Decolonise the implementation of gender binaries in competitive Kapa Haka spaces to improve engagement and accessibility for takatāpui rangatahi
- Look to Mana Tiaki as a model for engaging marginalised urban whānau and rangatahi Māori and allocate funding to the organisations and initiatives that provide crucial avenues for belonging and healing for urban and Māori whānau
- Ensure practices align with the diverse realities of rangatahi Māori by considering the layers of connectedness to Te Ao Māori, by ensuring these spaces are not closed off to those who are not fluent in Te Reo and Tikanga Māori.

## Future Directions for Research

Kapa Haka research provides powerful insights into the social lives and wellbeing of Māori today. Here I will point to some potential directions for future research within this space, leading on from the discussions in this thesis and themes that emerged through my research Wānanga.

Exploring the potential for belonging in Kapa Haka spaces for other marginalised communities at intersections of identity would provide a further intersectional analysis, broadening the findings in this thesis. For example, research with people with physical and invisible disabilities, chronic illness, black Māori, Pasifika Māori, fat Māori, kaumatua, youth and tamariki. In regard to the experiences of urban and Māori whānau, it would be illuminating to explore other potential models and examples of urban community Kapa Haka groups around the country, and to compare those to the findings related to Mana Tiaki and the experiences of Kapa Haka for urban and Māori whānau in general.

Following on from my discussion of takatāpui experiences, an investigation into how to decolonise Kapa Haka spaces, especially in the competitive realm, would be beneficial. Further, interest in contemporary rangatahi identities and Kapa Haka, especially the influence of social media, was a consistent theme in my discussions with rangatahi Māori that could be further explored.

On the topic of healing, an investigation into other activities as avenues for enhanced wellbeing for rangatahi Māori would contextualise some of the themes of this paper. Potentially, the avenues of Te Reo Māori, marae activities, waka ama, sports, taonga puoro, university Māori associations and political movements could be explored. Another direction could be exploring Kapa Haka as a whānau-led intergenerational healing practice.

## Personal Reflections

### The Value of 'Living Room' Kapa Haka

Upon reflection, a further conclusion from this research relates to the value of the impromptu and casual practice and performance of Kapa Haka for rangatahi Māori today. Mythological descriptions depict early versions of Kapa Haka as an impromptu form of distraction and entertainment. For the most part, this feature still applies today. From the impromptu waiata of rangatahi climate activist groups on the steps of Parliament, to the humble beginnings of Mana Tiaki with three families and a guitar in a living room in Tawa, the Tiwhanawhana takatāpui network, the impromptu haka at the Beyoncé concert, the wāhine movement healing groups and the constant hum of waiata and mōteatea during the ritual process of tangihanga. All of these examples represent the diverse realities of rangatahi Māori lives today. Contrary to commonly recognised depictions of Kapa Haka, such as on the Te Matatini stage, or before the All Blacks games, these examples constitute the casual and mundane interactions that let Kapa Haka seep into the everyday lives of rangatahi Māori.

## Conclusion

To revisit the title of this thesis - “Ngā pakiaka a te rēhia, ka tipua i te ao rangatahi” - I have explored the ways that the foundational themes of belonging, identity and healing illuminate powerful outcomes through Kapa Haka for rangatahi Māori. When we view ‘te ao Rangatahi’ as delicate shoots and branches of a rākau who are suffering within the current climate of colonial harms and mental health inadequacies,

we are inspired to imagine innovative and effective modes for healing. Kapa Haka is one way to promote the growth, healing and flourishing of rangatahi Māori today.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Some insights from 'Reacting to Photos' session

Makes me feel  
Proud to be Ntari  
Already know there  
is a lot of mahi,  
blood, sweat and  
tears behind this  
photo (I like this photo)

Love for  
all types  
of bodies

boys can  
always have  
used poi

KH is a place  
where culture is  
created, challenged,  
re-made.  
cool!



## Appendix 2: Insights from 'Converging on Ideas' Small Group Brainstorm

What are elements of Kapa Haka you would enhance?

- Inclusiveness - how do we do this?
- Access to Māoritanga
- Availability in poorer areas, + for people who don't speak te reo
- Iwitanga
- Diversity
- Connections between Pasifika communities
- Physical Marae that are safe
- Using reo in practices, paying attention to kupu
- Physical (physically demanding)
- Encourage diversity within what Kapa haka is. (fusion, contemp.)

What are elements of Kapa haka you would reduce?

- Competitiveness
- Exploitation cultural app + tourism where the profit doesn't come back to Māori
- Gap between National level + grassroots ✓
- Elitism — being good at KH ≠ being more māori "real" "better"
- Doing what judges tell you to do
- Whakama associated with doing KH that Māori feel
- ~~Connections to~~
- the view that it's not education - raising the profile of it as a valued form of knowledge.
- less pressure, lines, internal competition.

## Appendix 2: continued

If you had a magic wand, what *one* thing would you do to shape the future of Kapa Haka?

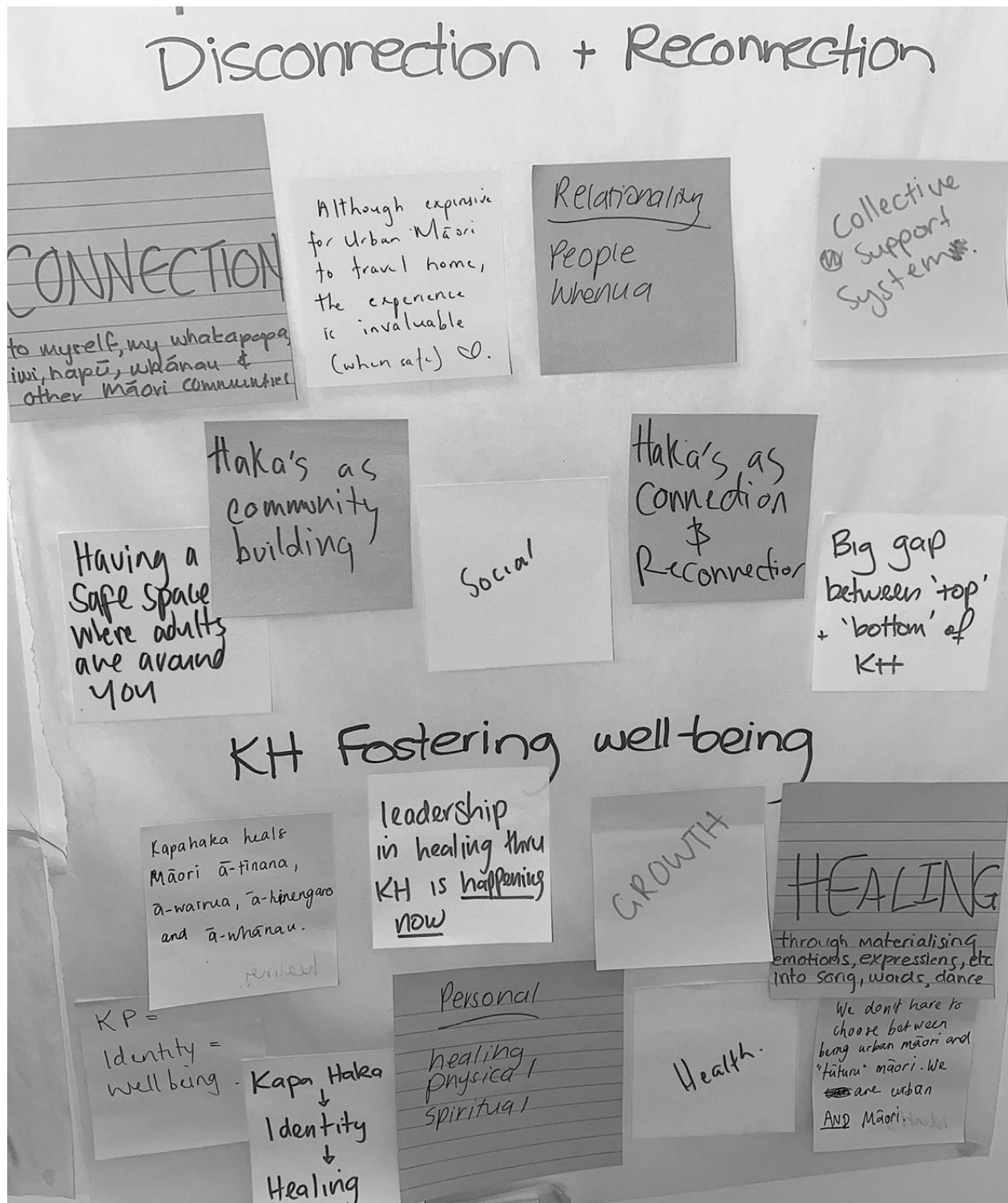
- Pay for travel to KH practices so not reliant on \$
- Mandatory for primary schools to have KH, approp resourced
- Infinite number of roopu can enter
- No need for a group like Mana Tahi because Urban Māori don't feel disconnected
- Lots of different types of roopu + camps, festivals, show cases. integrated workplace + learning.
- Govt fund (Not through Treaty settle) to rediscover + compose hapa + iwi based
  - Pre-recognised & funded as a viable wellbeing avenue in NZ.
- Open aged festivals
  - Understanding of tikanga that is shared by everyone
  - Acknowledging the diversity of KH is and can be. No shaming other Māori.
  - All KH in te reo immersion.
- Less ~~comp~~ focus on competition and more equitable funding for non-competitive groups.
- Common knowledge about aspects of KH are shared in Aotearoa.
  - more accessibility - more value in tutors, educators, practitioners.

We'd be hearing waiata everyday everywhere ...  
(for example I hear this small roopu singing on Cuba St. It was beautiful)

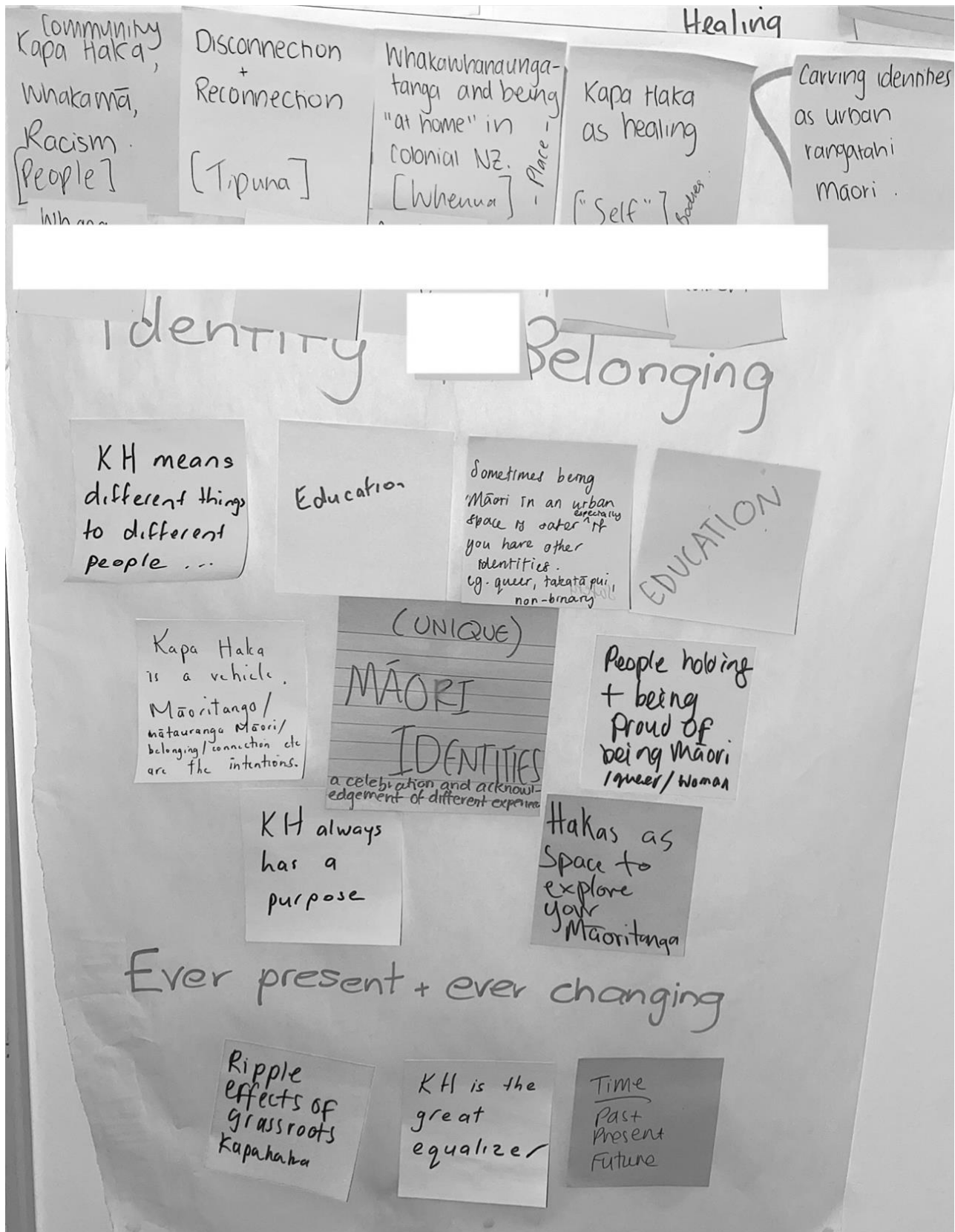
How does Kapa Haka compare to other approaches to wellbeing?

- Whare tapa wha
- Its better than the current standard for providing wellbeing (Pakehā standard)
- MCH participating in it as a gimmick now, in future this is embedded + funded
- Has a natural alignment to scaling a model of M
- Taha weira
- Address racism, has something to do with being Māori
- Holistic approach to WB
- Focusing on immersion in te ao Māori as a gateway to healing. → expression.
- Lines up with health - social determinants of health
  - Physical benefits - social, relationships. maurakau tūnauwaiwai. makes you fit, balance, discipline.
- Gives people structure which can be good for MH.
- Connects you to whānau, ancestors, whenua
- Not medicine but some growing interest in rangōi etc. Kawakana
- Shared collective identity
- community connections, made whānau.

## Appendix 3: Insights from 'Theming Knowledge Collectively'







## Te Reo Māori Glossary

Aotearoa	New Zealand, North Island
Atua	Ancestor, god, supernatural being, deity
Haka	To dance, perform
Hapū	Clan, subtribe, to be pregnant
Hawaiki	Ancient Māori homeland
Hinengaro	Mind, thought, intellect
Iwi	Tribe, nation, extended kinship
Kaiako	Teacher, instructor
Kaimahi	Worker
Kāinga	Home
Kākahu	Garments, clothes
Kapa Haka	Māori cultural performing group
Kaumatua	Elderly, old, aged
Kaupapa Māori	Māori customary practice, principles, ideology
Kawa	Marae protocol, custom
Kete	Basket, kit
Kīngitanga	King Movement - a movement which developed in the 1850s, culminating in the anointing of Pōtatau Te Wherowhero as King
Konohete	Concert
Kōrero	Say, speak, speech
Kōrero Tuku Iho	History, stories of the past, traditions, oral tradition
Kuia	Elderly woman, grandmother
Mahi	To work
Mamae	Hurt, pain, injury, wound
Mana Motuhake	Autonomy, self-government, self-determination, independence, sovereignty, authority
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support
Māori	Indigenous person of Aotearoa New Zealand
Māoritanga	Māori culture, Māori practices

Matakite	Prophet, seer, clairvoyant
Mātauranga	Knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill
Mau Rākau	To wield weapons
Mauri	Life principle, life force, vital essence
Mōteatea	Lament, chant
Ngā Puhi	Northland Māori tribe
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent, foreigner
Papatūānuku	Atua of the Earth, Earth mother and wife of Ranginui - all living things originate from them
Poi	To swing a light ball on a string
Pōwhiri	To welcome, invite, beckon, wave
Pūrākau	Myth, ancient legend, story
Rangatahi	To be young, youth, younger generation
Roopu	Group, committee, organisation
Takatāpui	Close friend, intimate friend (of the same gender)
Tamariki	Children (plural)
Tāne	Male, men
Tangata Whenua	People born of the land, Indigenous people
Taonga	Treasure
Te Ao Māori	The Māori world
Te Arawa	Canoe which brought the descendants of the Arawa and Tūwharetoa tribes to Aotearoa
Te Reo Māori	Māori language
Tikanga	Correct, right, custom
Tinana	Body, torso, self
Tino Rangatiratanga	Self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, self-government
Tīpuna	Ancestors, grandparents (plural)
Tohunga	Skilled person, priest, healer
tuakana teina	Culturally defined mentorship
Tūrangawaewae	Standing, place where one has the right to stand
Wāhine	Female, women

Waiata	Song, chant, psalm, to sing
Wairua	Spirit, soul
Wānanga	To meet and discuss, deliberate, consider
Wero	Challenge performance usually performed during pōwhiri
Whakapapa	Genealogy, lineage, descent
Whakawhanaungatanga	Process of establishing relationships, relating well to others
Whakawhiti Kōrero	To cross, exchange dialogue
Whānau	Extended family, to be born
Whenua	Land, placenta, afterbirth