

MANA WAHINE AND ATUA WĀHINE

BY

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## Abstract

The characteristics of atua wāhine provide the female elements of mana wahine for Māori women. In expressing mana wahine, Māori women draw on the attributes and narratives of the atua wāhine. The atua wāhine narratives went through a period of marginalisation after the arrival of the early settlers. During this time their stories and characteristics were omitted from written literature, and where literature did exist, new meanings were impressed upon them. In their expression of mana wahine today, Māori women are limited to the narratives of the atua wāhine that have been made available to them and the characteristics described in those accounts.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of the atua wāhine. A modern-day deconstruction and reconstruction of their stories has taken place, particularly amongst Māori women. From this an opportunity has arisen to re-present the narratives of the atua wāhine and reveal the full depths of their attributes and characteristics, an extension to uncover a deeper range of the female elements of mana wahine and their expression through Māori women.

The methodologies drawn upon for this research are Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine. A review of contemporary literature explores the atua wāhine and then examines mana wahine as a framework for Māori female expression. Following the literature review, a series of interviews with Māori women are analysed to contextualise the wāhine. Then the Mana Wahine: Characteristics of Atua Wāhine framework is unveiled. It is a framework for the conscientisation of Māori women and Māori men to the full range of female elements as are illustrated in the atua wāhine narratives.

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Mauri Ora

Nā Ataria

## Preface

This thesis contains words written in te reo Māori that will require translation for those who are not familiar with te reo. Although it is conventional practice to provide a glossary translation of non-English terms, a glossary is not included with this thesis. This follows a precedent set by Loader, Baker and Kingi (2008; 2012; 2018). For this thesis, a bilingual Māori-English reading and general knowledge of mātauranga Māori is preferable in order to be able to comprehend the concepts that are discussed. In terms of translation, translating Māori words into English is fraught with difficulty because the Māori language is both metaphorical, holistic and, I would posit, multidimensional in meaning. Attempts to provide necessary translation in the text and/or a collation of various Māori perspectives on the meaning of certain words or concepts appear in footnotes in the order that they arise. Though translation is, at this point in time, a necessary step in the research process when completing a thesis in English, the meanings of these different words vary widely across individuals, whānau, hapū and iwi. Therefore as Kingi suggests, I too do not recommend taking provided definitions as representative of how all Māori view these concepts (2018).



Figure 1. Papa Emerging From Te Kore by Izzy Joy Te Aho-White  
(Source: Izzy Joy Te Aho-White 2017)



## Chapter One: Ko wai au

Ko Whakarara me Rangiuru ōku maunga

Ko Mātaatua me Te Arawa ōku waka

Ko Matauri tōku moana i te Tai Tokerau

Ko Kaituna tōku awa i te rohe whenua o Te Arawa

Ko Te Tapui me Te Paamu ōku marae

Ko Ngāpuhi me Tapuika ōku iwi

Ko Ngāti Kura me Ngāti Marukukere ōku hapū

Ko Ataria Rangipikitia Sharman tōku ingoa

My middle name, Rangipikitia, is the name of a tīpuna wahine, my great-grandmother. I feel her presence with me every day. As a child, I was brought up in a Pākehā world with no concept of anything beyond the physical and material. My pāpā is Māori, and my māmā is Pākehā. As a Māori and Pākehā family, we were isolated in a majority Pākehā and Christian community in the suburb of Tawa twenty minutes out of Wellington. I was one of only two Māori kids in most classes throughout my school education.

My nanny, my dad's mum, passed away before my first birthday. She was the youngest of her generation. My dad has six sisters, my aunties. They and my cousins lived in Auckland so I did not grow up with them around, though we would visit them in the holidays. From the age of five, we did not return home to our whenua, the marae or to our urupā until my mid-twenties. Neither of my parents was religious; they were atheist. I did not know anything about the continued existence of tīpuna beyond death, except the confusing nightmares<sup>1</sup> that I had as a child when old-looking Māori people would visit. I continued living this way well into my mid-

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<sup>1</sup>At the time I thought they were nightmares. If I experienced dreams like that today I do not think that I would consider them in that way.

twenties when my life became so unliveable – the way that I was living it – that I needed to look at myself and decide how to continue living.

In his book *Tikanga Māori*, Moko Mead explores the concept of birthright through the following questions: ‘Where do I come from? Why am I here? What is my purpose? Who is helping me?’ (2003:39). A big part of answering those questions for myself was reconnecting, with my whānau, back to our whenua: Matauri Bay in Northland. It was around that time that I first became aware of the existence of tīpuna. While I was writing a university research project on a piece of land that had been owned by my great-great-grandmother, I was visited by her in a dream, with energy passed to me in a similar manner to a dream described by an interviewee of this thesis in Chapter 4.6: Matakite.

Beyond the concepts of birthright and whakapapa, as a Māori woman, I found that I had even more questions to answer. *Te Awekotuku* explores being female and Māori, and what it means to her.

What are we? Who defines us? How do we fit into our communities? Why are we reminded constantly that we must always be humble? Why are we told to be feminine? Does a city born Maori women have the same issues as a rural one? How do traditional protocol issues and expectations influence our behaviour and our choices? Why are we often silent, particularly in my tribal area, Te Arawa? Does being voiceless have advantages? Like if we’re not noticed we can get on with the real work? Now what exactly does that mean in the context of doing research... (1999b:1)

These are all questions I have had to ask myself. How do I fit into my communities? How have I been told to act as a Māori woman? What tikanga have been pressed upon me and perhaps shaped how I hold myself today? What do I think has been missing from my upbringing, which might have stopped me from stepping into my own expression of mana wahine? Like some Māori women of my age, the narratives I grew up with included the Ranginui and Papatūānuku creation story and the stories of Māui. I read these in books at school, where particularly in the stories of Māui, the female characters - the atua wāhine - were relegated to bit parts.

In many ways, I did not relate to the mythological figure of Māui. He was mischievous, and I was not. He was the pōtiki; I am the mātāmua. He was strong; I was of a small build. He seemed to be loud, larger than life and I could be quiet, sometimes introverted. In addition to this, the most significant difference was that Māui is a man, and I am a woman. Though I saw the strength of Māori women in my aunties and the communities around me, I was unable to find the narratives that I longed for: the ones that could provide insight and guidance to me as a young Māori woman unsure of her role in our society. A gaping hole for me was our stories of the atua wāhine. This might have been filled by the numerous and exciting tales of Hineteiwaiwa or the version of Kurangaituku and Hatupatu as is retold by Te Awekotuku (2003). Nevertheless, it would not be until 20 years later that I would begin to learn about even a small portion of the depth and breadth of the atua wāhine.

In this thesis, I am reclaiming – for myself – knowledge of the atua wāhine and mana wahine. In the act of doing so, I am not elevating the atua wāhine above the atua tāne in a recreation of the hierarchical/patriarchal construct. As Diamond states, ‘While my description of feminist theory focuses mostly on women, this theory de-emphasises separatist, anti-male politics’ (1999:314). Similarly, Eisler suggests that the emphasis ‘on the female regenerative power is not to be confused with ‘a hierarchical structure with women ruling by force in place of men’ (1996:77). The empowering of the atua wāhine is not the oppression or replacement of the atua tāne, or of any other gods of other belief systems.

Like any other piece of academic work, this thesis will be subject to the same rigorous questioning and criticism that has been directed at all research, written by both Māori and non-Māori. I acknowledge that other Māori women will have had different experiences to me. I hope that this work is challenged and critiqued, but that it also inspires others to continue writing about the atua wāhine. In the same way that the stories of the atua wāhine and Māori women’s mātauranga were ‘written out,’ so too now can they be ‘written in.’ We have the power to write *in* our atua wāhine and to write *in* our female tīpuna, the matrilineal lineage of our whakapapa.

## 1.1 Introduction

Within contemporary academic literature, it is generally agreed that in the pre-colonial Māori cosmology, the atua wāhine and atua tāne were portrayed as holding a balanced and essential role in the natural order of the universe (Gable 2013; Gemmell 2013; Murphy 2011; Hutchings 2002; Mikaere 2005; Yates-Smith 2003; Yates-Smith 1998). Atua is often translated as ‘god’, but T. Smith more definitively translates it to a potential being (a) from beyond (tua). The term atua implying the ‘potentiality of transfer between this world (te ao mārama) and the potential world that exists beyond (te pō)’ (2012:5). An atua can be both female or male and possess good or bad qualities or both, it can also be ‘a deceased person who is elevated to atua status or a stone, tree or bird imbued with supernatural powers’ (Yates-Smith 1998:7-8). Atua wāhine is employed in Yates-Smith PhD thesis as a modern use of the word to differentiate between female and male atua (1998). It is used in the same way in this thesis.

This ancestral lineage can be traced through whakapapa to Papatūānuku and Ranginui (Yates-Smith 1998), who demonstrate the balance between mana wahine and mana tāne. They are the primeval parents and had a fertile partnership that resulted in many children. Māori academics have found strong evidence to support the powerful and complementary position alongside the atua tāne that the atua wāhine held (Murphy 2011; Mikaere 2005; Yates-Smith 2003; Yates-Smith 1998) prior to the arrival of the settlers and missionaries, and the subsequent marginalisation of the mātauranga and pūrākau of atua wāhine and Māori women (Murphy 2011; Mikaere 2005; Yates-Smith 2003:10; Hutchings 2002). The lineage of Māori women begins with the creation of Hineahuone from Papatūānuku by Tāne Mahuta. She is the connection to the primeval parents, both human and divine (Szászy 1993). Her daughter Hinetītama is the mātāmua of the line of human beings; the tuākana of all Māori women.

One substantive body of research that has sought to record what is known about the atua wāhine is the seminal PhD thesis by Yates-Smith. Yates-Smith research provides a thorough and conscientious synthesis of what is known about many of the atua wāhine. In their communities, mana wahine and mana tāne are important expressions of mana from the atua by Māori men and women. Mana atua is the

power that is transferred to the person from the atua. It is their divine right, as ‘everything across the universe has mana atua’ (Pere 1991:14). Through the frameworks of Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine, this research seeks to add to her work by exploring the characteristics of the atua wāhine and the use of these in the expression of mana wahine by Māori women. This is done through a collation of the diverse experiences of some Māori women with the atua wāhine and their female elements alongside a literature review. The qualitative data collection focused on the participants’ own experiences, revealing their personal understandings and the meanings those experiences held for them. These are then used to glean the characteristics and attributes of the atua wāhine as archetypes, metaphors, repositories of mātauranga and representations of a pre-colonial belief system. In Chapter 4.8 the Mana Wahine: Characteristics of Atua Wāhine framework is unveiled as a framework for the conscientisation<sup>2</sup> of Māori women and men to the full range of female elements that are illustrated in the atua wāhine narratives.

A plethora of evidence in the literature argues access to Māori women’s mātauranga<sup>3</sup>, specifically knowledge pertaining to the atua wāhine and aspects of the where tangata has been marginalised (Yates-Smith 1998; Pihama 2001; Murphy 2011). Based on a review of the literature from pre-1880 to today, Yates-Smith concludes that ‘Māori women were generally ignored by early ethnographers, both in the interviewing and recording process, as well as in the writing, and were not accorded equal acknowledgement’ (1998:117). All three of these processes would have been necessary for the retention of knowledge regarding the atua wāhine from wāhine themselves (Yates-Smith 1998:117). For Eisler, the question is, ‘Since women are half of our species, why have their behaviours, activities and ideas been given so little sustained study?’ (1995:147). It is because of these exclusionary

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<sup>2</sup> Conscientisation originates from Latin America (Oxford University Press 2019) and is sometimes termed the critical consciousness by Freire (1970). According to Freire, conscientisation is learning to perceive and take action against the oppressive elements of reality (1970:18). For Ledwith, it is the process of unpacking dominant thoughts which result from socialisation. When individuals engage in critical thought, conscientisation is taking place; a process of dismantling previously held worldviews (Ledwith 2005). If individuals read this thesis and engage in critical thinking, it is facilitating their conscientisation.

<sup>3</sup> Pihama, Cram and Walker describe the theory of Mātauranga Māori as created by Māori to explain their experiences of the world. Mātauranga Māori was traditionally created ‘with the view that the earth was Papatūānuku, the sky was Ranginui, and the world in which we currently live is called Te Ao Mārama. This theory of Mātauranga Māori draws on traditional Māori belief systems and the atua narratives (2002:37).

practices that many of the atua wāhine have had little knowledge about them survive into the modern day (Yates-Smith 2003). Some have been luckier, with a wider range of information still available on Papatūānuku and Hinenuitepō.

Both Walker and Marsden espouse the powerful symbology of mythology. Walker describes mythology as the ‘mirror-image of a culture’ and Māori mythology as containing ‘myth-messages’ that Māori today will still respond to (1978:45). He explicitly states that Māori myth and legend are ‘neither fables embodying primitive faith in the supernatural, nor marvellous fireside stories of ancient times’ (1978:45). Rather, they are constructs employed by tīpuna to ‘encapsulate and condense into easily assimilable forms their view of the World’ (1978:45). According to this logic, the atua narratives contain the worldview of Māori (2003:56). However, it may not be just the narratives themselves that contain this power but also the characters and how they are presented and interpreted: the atua who ‘provide larger-than-life models for human behaviour’ (Walker 1978:45). From this we can conclude that the creation narratives may be powerful stories that strongly influence culture, and that the atua themselves provide role models for behaviour in Māori society.

Another tool used to undermine pre-colonial Māori ways of being was the written word. Eisler describes this as the ‘tool of the scribe and the scholar; the pen or stylus for marking tablets with words... it is instructive to know that the pen can be as mighty as the sword’ (1995:77). In a summary of literature from the time period of 1920-1940, Yates-Smith considered there to be ‘strong evidence of Eurocentric and Judaeo-Christian bias which, when discussing Māori goddesses, means that negative qualities were sometimes accorded’ (1998:90). Pagels argues that ideas that have taken definitive form as interpretations of the Genesis creation stories, ‘in particular, ideas concerning sexuality, moral freedom, and human value,’ have, and continue to affect Western culture ‘and everyone in it, Christian or not, ever since’ (Pagels 1988:xxviii). Jenkins describes the interpretation of Māori belief systems by the early settlers and ethnographers.

Western civilization when it arrived on Aotearoa’s shore, did not allow its womenfolk any power at all – they were merely chattels in some cases less worthy than the men’s horses. What the colonizer found was a land of noble

savages narrating... stories of the wonder of women. Their myths and beliefs had to be reshaped and retold. (Jenkins 1988:161, cited in Hutchings 2002:96)

Interpretations like these have ‘influenced, in a negative way, modern society’s attitude towards such entities as Hinenuitepō’ (Yates-Smith 1998:90). Yates-Smith goes further to conclude that these interventions have, by association, influenced the attitude towards Māori women in general.

It should not be hard to fathom the real power and mana that Yates-Smith, Mikaere and Murphy (1998; 2005; 2011) assert the atua wāhine held prior to colonisation. Female deities have occurred in many ancient societies, including European ones. Archeological findings across Europe have unearthed substantive evidence suggesting that between 7000 B.C. and 3000 B.C., the neolithic religion encompassed a cyclical nature of life including birth, death, growth, nurturing and regeneration, with a similar emphasis on female power to that of atua wāhine. The large numbers of Old European figurines unearthed make it impossible to tabulate them accurately, though it is estimated they may number more than one hundred thousand (Gimbultas 2001:4). Some of these artifacts take the shape of deities, priestesses, vulva, naked and pregnant women (Gimbultas 2001). A further three thousand figurines date back to 40,000 B.C. (Gimbultas 2001:4). This suggests parts of Europe had a prepatriarchal belief system, not dissimilar to the balance afforded to atua wāhine and atua tāne in pre-colonial Māori cosmology

The fear of women’s spirituality or power in Europe around the time of Captain Cook (1728-1779) is likely to have influenced the exclusion of atua wāhine in early ethnographic writings. In the context of women’s rights, from 1450 A.D. to 1750 A.D., thousands were executed across Europe for the crime of witchcraft (Levack 1995:1). Based on trial records from the time, it is not unreasonable to estimate that over a period of 300 years, 110,000 people across Europe were prosecuted and 60,000 executed for the crime of witchcraft, the vast majority of these women (Levack 1995:25).

The persecution of “witches” is only one manifestation of the prevalent belief held in English society at the time: that women are inherently inferior, as has already been mentioned is justified in the Book of Genesis. In the story of Adam and Eve

(Genesis 1:1-2:3, cited in Pagels 1988:xxi), the creation account of Christianity, Eve is created from the rib of Adam by God (Genesis 2:22, New International Version). Her purpose is to be man's helper (Genesis 2:20). When Eve eats from the fruit of the tree, God tells Adam that he will 'put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed' (Genesis 3:16-19). To Eve he says he will greatly multiply pain in childbearing and although her desire will be for her husband, he 'shall rule over you' (Genesis 3:16). This creation narrative, recorded by Hebrew tribes around three thousand years ago (Pagels 1988:xix), is considered by Pagels to wield an 'extraordinary influence upon western culture' that is both complex and extensive (1988:xix). This finding holds practical implications for European women, as from about 200 B.C.E. this creation narrative became a primary means for revealing and defending basic societal attitudes and values (Pagels 1988:i). These include the beliefs that women were created to both serve men and be ruled by men. It is not a radical leap to suggest that the entrenched misogyny of European society will have affected the recording of pre-colonial Māori narratives. It seems likely that the settlers will have wanted to maintain the social stratification of women, justified by their own belief systems. The exclusion of the atua wāhine from written accounts – female role models, with their attributes and characteristics of strength, knowledge and wisdom – would have helped to achieve that end.

Written accounts of Māori cosmology by European settlers were undoubtedly biased in how they portrayed atua wāhine, but their exclusion is also of concern. During a period of time when she was giving lectures on the atua wāhine, Yates-Smith found that Māori women who participated in her lectures were empowered by this new knowledge and keen to incorporate it into their daily lives. Prior to attending her lectures, most had principally only heard about the male side of Māori spirituality<sup>4</sup>. This observation by Yates-Smith and my own personal experiences, highlights the disproportionate weight given to the male stories in the early ethnographic writings. According to Mikaere, the removal of the female element from creation narratives had devastating consequences across whānau, hapū and iwi, particularly for Māori women (2017). Irwin laments the partnership she wishes to see reaffirmed most

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<sup>4</sup> Pere defines spirituality as a belief 'in a divine force, indeed forces that are greater than man. I cannot see these forces, but I can certainly feel their power, a power that is so strong that my whole life is governed by it' (1993:275).



urgently: the partnership between Māori women and men. Through colonisation, the partnership between men and women has been shattered (Irwin 1993:302). This is not a heterosexual agenda, but rather the way in which ‘Māori men and women relate to each other: fathers and daughters, sisters and brothers, aunts and nephews’ (Irwin 1993:302). Atua narratives provide insight into whānau relations and Māori society in general, but atua narratives that exclude the atua wāhine are by definition excluding one half of Māori society.

Māori men and women have different, but complementary roles. Kupenga et al. share the whakataukī, ‘He rerekē te mana o te wahine, he rerekē te mana o te tāne’ to emphasise that the authority of women is different to men, and, ‘Ko ētahi mahi e kore e taea e te tāne, ko ētahi mahi, e kore e taea e te wahine’ as some tasks are more appropriately performed by men and others by women (1993:307). Pere describes her role in the group where she says, ‘As a woman, I know my specific role complements that of the men, and is based on the traditions of the kinship group’ (Pere 1993:276). Like the atua wāhine and atua tāne, Māori men and women complement each other through the tasks they perform for the group. The Māori words for man and woman are derived from the first sexual partners to create human life. That is, Tāne in Tāne Mahuta and Hine in Hineahuone (Mikaere 2017:30). Metge stressed the complementarity of Māori gender relations (1967:50) and Pere the gender balance that tīpuna strived for, including the archetypal representations of it in the cosmologies (Murphy 2011:59). Irwin reflects on reading Pere’s work and taking ‘pride in a heritage in which mana tāne and mana wāhine were real’ and yet she describes how ‘mana tāne has been protected and nurtured by our culture’, whereas ‘mana wāhine has been attacked, rendered invisible in contemporary Māori society’ (1993:302). As an example to illustrate the importance of this research, Yates-Smith describes Māori women who she met, who had heard on the marae and read in books, that only the atua tāne existed (1998:4). To describe this alienation of Māori women from the atua wāhine narratives, the term the ‘dismembered feminine’<sup>5</sup> is used (Yates-Smith 1998:12).

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<sup>5</sup> Yates-Smith took this term from Rita Cross ‘Female God Language in a Jewish Context’ which discusses ‘the dismemberment and banishment of the feminine in Jewish traditions’ (1979:167, cited in Yates-Smith 1998:12).

In their poetry, Hinewirangi and Pere highlight themes of imbalance in the female and male elements and use the atua as their framework of understanding. Pere predicts a female source of energy must lead the world for a time to attain balance (1990:5), while Hinewirangi sees in a vision that the men cannot get their act together and it is time for Māori women to search their own souls to know that which ‘our kuia knew’ (1993:55-56). With the marginalisation of the atua wāhine have come changes in Māori society for Māori women. These changes are typified in the image that Māori women hold for themselves, their roles in the home and their communities (Yates-Smith 1998:40). With the marginalisation of the atua wāhine we are left with only models of men ‘from ngā tāne atua, when they meet, they clash, whawhai’ (Hinewirangi 1993:55-56). Further to this, the atua tāne Tūmatauenga is left out of balance, with no female counterpart. Because of this imbalance, Tūmatauenga ‘must give way to help his mother Papatūānuku’ (Pere 1990:5) and the mothers of our communities, Māori women.

As is argued in this thesis, the characteristics of the atua wāhine provide the female elements of mana wahine for Māori women and in the expression of mana wahine, Māori women draw on the attributes and narratives of the atua wāhine. With early examinations of Māori spirituality focussing on the atua tāne and some Māori women left unable to access pre-colonial versions of atua wāhine narratives, there has been a narrowing of the range of expression, a narrowing of the range of female elements available to them. They have been limited instead to the narratives that they have been told. Te Awēkotuku describes the dominance of Pākehā researchers and academics prior to the late 1900s and how their published works became standard texts through which Māori ‘had their history, their culture, their myth and customary concepts fed back to them – often after some questionable processing’ (1991a:11).

It is the birthright of Māori women to know the pre-colonial mātauranga pertaining to their physical and spiritual bodies. It is their birthright to know the atua wāhine and their narratives through which these elements are expressed. It is the birthright of Māori women to have absolute access to mana wahine, a knowing of their own divinity, their spiritual power. For many Māori women, access to this has been denied through the misinterpretation, mistranslation and re-writing of pre-colonial belief systems, that have altered the fabric of Māori society. The Mana Wahine:

Characteristics of Atua Wāhine is a framework for the conscientisation of Māori women<sup>6</sup> to the full range of female elements as are illustrated in the atua wāhine narratives. Placed in a wider context, this present study joins the works of other Māori women who are reclaiming mana wahine and the atua wāhine. It is a piece in a larger tapestry of work of revitalising the female energy here in Aotearoa, and worldwide.

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<sup>6</sup> And Māori men.

## 1.2 Process

I began this research project tentatively, unsure of how successful I would be. I felt unprepared and that I was not the right person. I did not know enough about the topic already; I was too young. Someone else could do it better than me. Similarly, ‘Questions of age, language proficiency and the appropriateness in receiving certain knowledges’ were a crucial methodological consideration that Murphy had to negotiate in her research on pre-colonial Māori menstruation (2011:9). Regardless of these doubts and fears, I always felt supported and protected throughout this project, both by my supervisor, colleagues, whānau and friends, but also tīpuna, kaitiaki and atua wāhine. Ultimately, these feelings lessened as the project gathered its own momentum.

Murphy describes research and the pursuit of knowledge as a sacred undertaking. In my opinion, it is not possible to spend a whole year reading texts by writers like

Patricia Grace, Rangimarie Pere, Māori Marsden, Hirini Moko Mead, Ngahuia Te Awakotuku, Kathy Irwin, Ani Mikaere, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Aroha Yates-Smith, Mira Száosz and Hinewirangi Kohu Morgan and not consider a project like this to be a sacred undertaking. I certainly feel a sense of privilege to be able to spend a whole year researching a kaupapa that is so intertwined with my whakapapa and felt a necessity for the project to be conducted in a certain way that was unhurried and cyclical.

The best metaphor to describe this project is the flow of water in a stream, or the waves of the ocean. There were rocks, reefs and sometimes even storms but as always, the water continued to flow in and out. All I had to do as the researcher was surrender to this and when drowning, to keep paddling – even if for dear life. Of course, the tides of the water are cyclical in accordance with the moon and our bodies are made of water. Murphy’s thesis on pre-colonial Māori menstruation was read during Te Rākaunui; *Rediscovering the Feminine in Māori Spirituality* by Yates-Smith and *The Balance Destroyed* by Mikaere were consumed last summer during Hine Raumati. A master’s project is completed over the time-frame of a single year, a cyclical measurement of time that spans all four seasons. Similarly, I would feel drawn to certain aspects of this project at certain times. Autumn marked

the beginning of researching the literature, winter – also Matariki – was the beginning of interviews, and spring the analysis of the research. The culmination of all the preparation came to fruition at the peak of summer.

I was unable to rush the reading of literature; the literature had to be savoured in a contemplative environment. The place also mattered. Sometimes I would sit and read in the garden, whereas other times I would sit next to an isolated bend by a river. At other times, I would sit in my office surrounded by artwork, paintings and literature. It was not until the editing process that I stumbled across advice given by Te Uira Manihera that helped to explain why place matters. To a boy who had books that had belonged to his ancestors, Manihera said that they are valuable, they hold whakapapa and to learn from them, ‘Take them to somewhere surrounded by nature. When there is just you and your books and nature you can recite and learn all those things’ (cited in King 1975:7). In her description of the tribal schools of learning, Te Awekotuku describes the learning period in the Whare Wānanga, Whare Maire or Whare Kura as seasonally determined and the place could be anywhere – ‘a deserted beach, a cave, a forest clearing – not necessarily a house’ (1991a:8). Pere describes the natural place of communion with wairua as Papatūānuku (1991:16).

I was advised by my supervisor to keep a journal through which I could record and reflect on the ideas that developed throughout the research journey. I would write in this journal during or after reading literature, as well as before and after conducting interviews. After completing an interview, I would write a journal reflection on how it went, what key points were raised and what I could improve on for future interviews. The journey was written through ‘stream of consciousness’ and enabled me to see how and why certain ideas, thoughts and processes were being considered and raised in my thinking, as well as what I was being influenced by, so I could consciously consider how this might change the project and what was being written. It also provided a timeline of ‘thoughts’, the ability to review and consider how my ideas and thinking had changed throughout the project. Journaling is an important part of the research process as it allows the researcher to interrogate their research methodology, thoughts, beliefs and assumptions.

As a young Māori woman, who does not know many elders, the ‘real constraint on access to knowledge when working with elders’ as discussed by Tuhiwai Smith was a challenge (2012:137). Nevertheless, once the idea for this kaupapa was seeded, a series of ‘meaningful coincidences’ began. One of them is described here. My partner and I were asked to host Indigenous women for an event in Tai Tokerau, and during the pōwhiri process, I introduced my thesis kaupapa. A kuia in the manuhiri was knowledgeable in this area and after the pōwhiri, she took me aside. She eventually became one of the interviewees, and her insights were invaluable in helping me to understand and shape this thesis. Pinkola Estes, as a *cantadora* or keeper of the stories in the Latin tradition, describes the importance of ‘explicit permission to tell another’s tale and the proper crediting of that tale... for it maintains the genealogical umbilicus; we are on end, the life-giving placenta on the other’ (2008:469). In mātauranga Māori, this concept is whakapapa. There is no greater responsibility, honour or privilege to be witness to the experiences, accounts and stories of others, and the naming of whakapapa as it is given is of the utmost importance.

However, the collection of stories is hard work. Often the retelling of the story ‘begins with the bringing up, hauling up of psychic contents, both collective and personal. This process is a long exertion in time and energy, both intellectual and spiritual; it is in no way an idle practice’ (Pinkola Estes 2008:470). This held true for me. Every interview held its own stories of death, sadness and grief alongside those of happiness, joy and whānau. In every interview – without exception – profoundly important knowledge was imparted to me. For this reason, I would often leave an interview feeling exhausted, as though I was in need of a nap to consolidate the stories, ideas and knowledge I had been privileged to listen to. All through these experiences, it was important for me to diary about them. How had these stories changed me? How had I felt at the time? What did they mean to me? The stories challenged my own views and beliefs ‘through a passionate, inward subjective approach’ (Marsden 2003:23).

Like Murphy’s, personal narratives are woven throughout this thesis, reflecting at this moment the culmination of my multiple realities as a Māori academic, sister, daughter, writer, Tapuika and Ngāpuhi woman (2011:10). In this thesis, I honour the

stories of Māori women, and I honour the narratives of the atua wāhine. I re-tell these stories and I re-centre the voices of Māori women on a kaupapa that very much concerns them.

### 1.3 Thesis Structure

In this chapter, I have provided the rationale for this research by highlighting the marginalisation of the atua wāhine and how this has affected the accessibility of these narratives for Māori women. The aim is to develop a framework to empower Māori women by delving deeper into the narratives, characteristics and attributes of the atua wāhine. To structure the thesis, I have drawn from a chronological creation narrative shared by one of the interviewees. In this version, Wainuiātea and Ranginui come together and create the atua wāhine of water. Then Wainuiātea's daughter Hinemoana opens up her waters to reveal the land, Papatūānuku. Papatūānuku and Ranginui then go on to have their many children, the atua tāne.

Based on this narrative, Chapter Two: Exploring the Atua Wāhine begins with the waters of Te Whare Tangata. Then I move to Papatūānuku and the atua wāhine, and consider the matters that pertain to us as human beings, the descendants of Hinetītama. Chapter Three: Theoretical Frameworks explores in-depth the kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine methodological frameworks that inform this thesis. Chapter Four contextualises the experiences of the women who were interviewed, beginning with Te Whare Tangata, then Papatūānuku and the atua wāhine. At the end of Chapter Four I introduce the Mana Wahine: Characteristics of the atua Wāhine framework. This is a framework for the conscientisation of Māori women and Māori men to explore the full range of female elements as are illustrated in the atua wāhine narratives. Argued throughout this thesis is the existence of a connection between water, the atua wāhine and Māori women.



## 1.4 Aims and Objectives

I have shown how who I am and how my background has given rise to the following aims and objectives of this thesis:

### **Aim**

Explore the connection between the atua wāhine and some Māori women.

### **Objective One**

Analyse some Māori women's experiences with the atua wāhine and the meanings they have assigned to those experiences.

### **Objective Two**

Develop a framework for the conscientisation of Māori women towards a deeper range of female elements, as can be found in the atua wāhine narratives.

### **Objective Three**

Contribute to the literature on the atua wāhine.



Figure 2. Hineahuone by Izzy Joy Te Aho-White  
(Source: Izzy Joy Te Aho-White 2018)

## Chapter Two: Exploring the Atua Wāhine

Mana is a multidimensional concept that cannot be filtered into a literal translation in English (Pere 1991:14). Some interpretations of mana suggest that it is generated and bestowed upon a person by other people (Henare 1998, cited in Pihama 2001) but most consider it to be something that is transferred to the person not by other people, but by the atua themselves (Marsden 2003; Yates-Smith 1998; Pere 1997). It can be increased by strong actions and exceptional talent shown by the person (Moko Mead 2003) and is the quality of a person that others are aware of (Pere 1997:14). Mana can include prestige, control, power and influence (Te Aka 2019). As previously quoted in the introduction, mana atua is the power that is transferred to the person from the atua and is their divine right as ‘everything across the universe has mana atua’ (Pere 1997:14). As everything possesses mana atua, as such mana atua celebrates and embodies the uniqueness of every individual (Pere 1997:14). This thesis considers mana atua and its expression through Māori women as mana wahine. Except in Chapter Three: Theoretical Frameworks, mana wahine as it is referred to is not the methodological extension of Kaupapa Māori, it is the expression of mana from the atua through Māori women.

The atua of Māori cosmology can be both male or female (Yates-Smith 1998). Atua can include those who have passed and are elevated to atua status because of the mana acquired during their lifetime, though this thesis generally looks at the atua that are found in pre-colonial narratives. Atua can also be aspects of nature such as a stone, tree or bird that have been imbued with spiritual powers (Yates-Smith 1998). The word wā-hine is an intersection of two words: wā and hine, with ‘wā relating to notions of time and space’ and hine to the female essence (Pihama 2001:265). I refer to this as the Hine Element.

Drawing on these Māori concepts, mana wahine is the expression of mana from the atua – both the atua wāhine and the atua tāne – through Māori women. Mana wahine is demonstrated in the physical world through their work: the choices they make and the actions they take in their everyday lives for their iwi, hapū and whānau. It is demonstrated in the acts of the everyday Māori women. Most writers who have used the terms atua wāhine and mana wahine in previous literature have done so

interchangeably. In this thesis, I seek to separate mana wahine from the atua wāhine in order to find out how Māori woman today are channelling their mana wahine through the expression of mana from the atua.

I begin my exploration into the atua wāhine from a mana wahine perspective with Te Whare Tangata and the Māori creation stories. Then I explore the realms of Papatūānuku, and then the narratives of Hineahuone, Hinetītama, Hinenuitepō, Hineteiwaiwa and Hinemoana. There are many atua wāhine that are not contained in these pages. In many cases, not enough information was found in the literature for them to be included. Finally, I finish with those matters that affect us as descendants of the atua: mana wahine, matrilineal knowledge and Māori cosmology.

## 2.1 Te Whare Tangata

The power of the female sexual and reproductive functions as the source of Māori female strength has positioned the maternal figure as important in Māori society (Gabel 2013). The power of Māori women rests with the whare tangata, the house of humanity also encompassing the womb. Like Hinenuitepō, the whare tangata transcends beyond the physical world into the darkness of the womb and potentiality of life (Gabel 2013), into Te Kore or Te Korekore, ‘a space between non-being and being [...] the place from which all creation came from, the womb from which all things proceed’ (Marsden 2003:20). It is the gestation place of all created things, the ‘seed-stuff of the universe’ (Marsden 2003:20). It is therefore irrevocably linked with the life-giving soil of Papatūānuku and the whare tangata as the potentiality for new human life. To further highlight these similarities, the following allegories of plant-growth and human birth from Te Korekore are shared by Marsden (2003:20-21).

<i>Plant Growth</i>		<i>Human Birth</i>	
<i>te pū,</i>	<i>primary root,</i>	<i>te apunga,</i>	<i>conception,</i>
<i>te more,</i>	<i>tap root,</i>	<i>te aponga,</i>	<i>the first signs of swelling,</i>
<i>te weu,</i>	<i>fibrous roots,</i>	<i>te kune-roa,</i>	<i>the distended womb,</i>
<i>te aka,</i>	<i>trunk,</i>	<i>te popoko-nui,</i>	<i>the distended vagina,</i>
<i>te rea,</i>	<i>tendrils,</i>	<i>te popoko-roa,</i>	<i>contraction,</i>
<i>te waonui,</i>	<i>massed branches,</i>	<i>hine-awaawa,</i>	<i>membrane ruptured,</i>
<i>te kune,</i>	<i>buds,</i>	<i>tamaku,</i>	<i>first stage of delivery</i>
<i>te whē.</i>	<i>fronds.</i>	<i>rangi-nui a tamaku.</i>	<i>and final stage.</i>

Table 1. Allegories of Creation (Marsden 2003:20-21)

Shown in Table 1 are allegories of creation from Te Korekore in both the soil of Papatūānuku and the implantation in the whare tangata of Māori women. The root, the conception, the trunk, the distended womb. Described in this allegorical form the forms of creation, both plant life and human life, seem to be one and the same. The whare tangata is the ‘pathway into this world for all human life and, through Hinenuitepō, the pathway out again’ (Mikaere 2017:41). Therefore the birth canal of the whare tangata runs between te Pō and te Ao Mārama. Kahukiwa and Grace also liken te Pō to the whare tangata.

I am aged in aeons, and I am Night of many nights, Night of many darknesses – Night of great darkness, long darkness, utter darkness, birth and death darkness; of darkness unseen, darkness touchable and untouchable, and of every kind of darkness that can be.

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

Then Papatuanuku too conceived, and bore many children among the many long ages of Te Po. (Kahukiwa and Grace 1984:16)

From te Pō, the night of many nights, Papatūānuku was born. Reed also depicts a version that includes the six stages of te Pō. Notably, these stages are termed as the ‘successive nights of labour’ (2004:4). The stages of te Pō are clearly related to the stages of labour for women, as they miraculously create within and bring forth new life into the world of light. From these examples, it is clear that in mātauranga Māori, Māori women who give birth are seen to have experienced the nights of te Pō.

Remember, there is a natural time after childbearing when a woman is considered to be of the underworld. She is dusted with its dust, watered by its water, having seen into the mystery of life and death, pain and joy during her labour. So, for a time she is “not here” but rather still “there”, (Pinkola Estes 2008:441)

During childbirth, the women goes through the nights of te Pō. At this time, there is the very real threat of death to either the mother or child. She also experiences the potentiality of new life from Te Korekore. In the role of motherhood her whare tangata becomes the threshold between te Pō and te Ao just like Hinenuitepō. It is because of this vital role that it may take time for the women to re-emerge into te Ao. The first one to hold the mana of the whare tangata was Hineahuone, a role which was then passed on to Hinetītama and her female descendants through whakapapa. The role of women as the bearers of past, present and future generations is of utmost importance. The fabric that holds the knowledge of Te Ao Māori together is whakapapa (Te Maire 2001). Through whakapapa, “everything” is related and all “things” are held together by genealogical connections that lead back to the self (Te Maire 2001:137) including the iwi, hapū and whānau. Everything in Māori cosmology originates from the primal parents (Ranginui and Papatūānuku) through whakapapa (Roberts 2013).

The whānau, hapū and iwi are dependent upon the reproductive functions of women (Mikaere 2017:41) for survival. Pregnant women are therefore valued members of pre-colonial Māori society, a notion Moko Mead and Groves suggest is demonstrated by the whakataukī: ‘Ahau, a! He tamaiti kei taku aroaro’ (2001:14). Originally recorded by Te Rangikāheke in 1849, it has been translated to: ‘See me! Pregnant’ by Moko Mead and Groves who argue it shows how ‘a pregnant woman was valued for her contribution to the strength of the group’ (2001:14). On the other hand, this whakataukī could also refer to the damaging impact infertility can have on Māori women (T.Smith 2012). In Ngāti Kahungunu traditions, infertility was associated with dryness – the absence of wai. A Māori woman or man unable to conceive was sometimes termed ‘he wai pākihi’, the dried-up stream (T.Smith 2012:26). Perhaps a woman who has gone through menopause may also be associated with an absence of wai, the waters of fertility no longer flowing.

The word hapū has a dual meaning of both pregnancy and the sub-tribe (Pere 1997:22), highlighting the importance of childbirth to the sub-tribe. Similarly, whānau refers ‘to a familial group while also carrying the meaning of childbirth’ (Gabel 2013:73). In another dual meaning, whenua or land is also the placenta of the

mother (Pere 1997:22). With these dual meanings, the centrality of the whare tangata and the female reproductive functions in Te Ao Māori is made obvious.

An orally-transmitted form of whakapapa is the creation stories, which are traceable back to the individual self. All tāngata descend from Rangi and Papa. The female element, the Hine element is present at the beginning of the creation stories in Hineahuone and at the beginning of each human life. These atua narratives ‘establish a cycle that is repeated within each human birth, a cycle within which the female role remains forever central’ (Mikaere 2017:27) in Te Ao Māori. A fertile partnership between a man and a woman can create ‘tihei mauri ora,’ that is, the first breath taken by the newborn child that is independent of the womb of the mother (Moko Mead 2003:53). Wairua is usually translated as ‘soul’ or ‘spirit’ (Te Aka 2018; Moko Mead 2016) but it can also refer to the two waters, the positive and negative streams of everything, the spirit (Pere 1997:16). Wairua is implanted by the parents in the embryo and nurtured in the whare tangata (Moko Mead 2003:54). Because wairua is implanted at conception it is suggested that this is why Māori mothers sometimes talk to their yet-to-be-born babies, as the wairua of the baby can hear what they are saying (Moko Mead 2003:54). In fact, this is scientifically proven, as at 21-24 weeks gestation, babies can hear voices (Ministry of Health 2017). A child is born with its own wairua, and this wairua continues on long after their death (Moko Mead 2003).

The birth of Hinetītama is a well-known creation narrative. It was at this time that ‘te wai ora a Tāne is mixed with the wai of the whenua from Kurawaka to create the wairua of Hineahuone, the mother of human beings’ (T.Smith 2012:7). But this is not the only version. Pere’s ancestral version of the creation narratives was ‘ridiculed and scoffed at by European anthropologists and missionaries alike’ (1990:2). In her tribal narrative Hine Pūkohurangi forms Tiki, a man, from a mound of Papatūānuku and in this act is assisted by the māreikura and whatukura.<sup>7</sup> Though the creation stories vary across tribal areas, this one is a complete gender inversion of the more commonly known one. Pere’s statement suggests that tribal stories that did not align

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<sup>7</sup> The whatukura and māreikura of Māori cosmology are described by Marsden as the male and female divine assistants of Io in Te Whānau-a-Rangi or ‘the company of heaven’ (2003:18) Arguably this definition has been influenced by Christian teachings, in that they resemble the angels/archangels of the Christian god.



with the early ethnographers' beliefs were not recorded at all. Instead, those that were recorded and widely promulgated, such as the version where the first woman is formed by Tāne, more closely align to the Christian creation narrative, where Adam is created first, and one of his ribs is taken to form Eve. Even in the more widely known Māori creation narrative, however, Tāne is only able to obtain uha, the female element, from the fertile red soil of the pubic area of Papatūānuku (Kahukiwa and Grace 1984:69) called Kurawaka.

## 2.2 Papatūānuku

The whenua is the placenta of women and the land. The land is the whenua of Papatūānuku. Papatūānuku is personified as female and earth: a force which the mauri of every living thing interacts with (Pere 1993:277). In most creation narratives, Papatūānuku is the one from which all the other female gods begin – the Earth Mother (Awatere 1995). The birth right of the individual is described as kaihau-waiū or the ‘attributes gained through the mother’s milk’ (Moko Mead 2003:35). Awatere translates the proverb, ‘Ko te whenua te wai-ū mō ngā uri whakatipu,’ to, ‘The land provides the sustenance for the coming generation,’ with the meaning of wai-ū as breast milk (Awatere 1995:36). Wai are the water-based fluids of fertilisation and the medium by which all things live (T.Smith 2012:6), and ū, a women’s breasts (Te Aka 2019).

Like the placenta of the pregnant woman and the breast milk of the mother, Papatūānuku provides nourishment to her descendants just as she nurtured her own children, the atua (Gabel 2013:58) with her own wai-ū. After the birth of the Māori child, ‘The whenua (placenta) is returned to the whenua (land), thereby earthing the child’s mana tangata, or personal dignity, where it is sustained throughout life until, at death, the body is returned to Papatūānuku’ (Kupenga et al. 1993:304). Pere shares how her whenua was returned to Papatūānuku.

My ‘whenua’ was buried in a special place three days after I was born. This special place is a little hillock with an underground cavern. The area is marked by a post and carved bird. The whenua of the first-born in each generation is ceremoniously linked up to Papatūānuku in this ancestral place. As a result I identify very positively with the earth mother. (1990:3)

The Western hospital system made the traditional practice of returning the whenua to Papatūānuku impossible for Marie, one of the research interviewees. In the same way that Māori women have been denied the ability to ground the whenua of their children into Papatūānuku, Queenie Oneroa laments the suffering of Māori women as ‘they can’t teach their daughters about papatuanuku, mother earth because maoris [sic] own 3% of Aotearoa. We are landless’ (n.d: 86). In both ways, Māori women have had the whenua taken from them.

Papatūānuku is connected to kōrero whakapapa narratives relating to fertility and wai. In one atua narrative, Uepoto (a child of Rangi and Papa) escapes from the parental embrace of Ranginui and Papatūānuku through the urine of Papatūānuku. Upon escaping through the waters of Papatūānuku and seeing the world, Uepoto returns to the entrance of Papatūānuku to inform the other children of the light outside of their mother's body (T.Smith 2012:6). In this narrative we can see that even the urine of Papatūānuku is sacred, suggesting that the waters of Māori women are also sacred, whether sexual, menstrual, childbirth related, urine or breastmilk.

Papatūānuku's pubis Kurawaka is where Tāne finds the 'elusive material capable of materialising his procreative longing, ushering in humanity' (Murphy 2011:72). The elusive material in sexual reproduction must be the egg, fertilised by the male element. It is elusive because it is only available for fertilisation for 12-24 hours after being released from the ovaries (Brusie 2016). However, the pubis or kurawaka of Papatūānuku as the creative centre of all human life is 'consistently downplayed across the colonial ethnographic literature' (Murphy 2011:72). Instead, 'Tāne is singularly celebrated for his act of procreation denying the raw, and very female sexual potency imbued in the 'red soil' (Murphy 2011:72).

The dual meaning of whare tangata as the womb and the house of humanity illustrates the connection between Hineahuone and her crafting from the red soil of Papatūānuku. The fertile red soil of Māori women could be the menstruation, the red bleeding that signifies the potentiality of a new life.

Hineahuone is the representation of the female element and the mother of Hinetītama. Similarly, the spiritual homeland of Hawaiiki is also a womb metaphor in its translation 'to the living waters which overflow' (T.Smith 2012:8). Hawaiiki was not just the long-past homeland of Māori, but may also be a metaphorical reference to the mother's womb, the living waters which overflow. In other words, the spiritual homeland Hawaiiki could very well be representative of the place of creation – Te Kore – enclosed in the living waters of the amniotic sac of the whare tangata. Today, living waters flow across Papatūānuku as rivers, streams, swampland and lakes.

Papatūānuku is symbolised in the fifth leaf of Pere's Tāku Taha Māori model.

The fifth leaf symbolises Papatūānuku, the earth, and the way I relate to her. The land for me has the same significance as the placenta that surrounds the embryo and the womb – the Māori word ‘whenua’ is the term used for both the land and the placenta. Papatūānuku is personified as female, and it does not matter where I travel, I feel a strong affinity towards her. (1979:25)

The inclusion of Papatūānuku demonstrates her centrality to Pere’s Māoritanga. The dual-translation of whenua is also introduced. It is clear that Pere feels a strong sense of connectedness to Papatūānuku, no matter where in the world she finds herself.

### 2.3 Hineahuone

Hineahuone is the female element (Grace and Kahukiwa 1984:28), the connection between Papatūānuku and Ranginui and Hinetītama, the first human being. She is the uha, created from the sacred soil of Papatūānuku, the female element necessary for creation and procreation. The Hine in Hineahuone ‘provides the generative power of the Universe’ (Yates-Smith 1998:1), the creative aspect of Māori cosmology. Collectively the atua wāhine form a constellation symbolising ‘Hine,’ connecting humanity with the land and the source of life (Yates-Smith 1998:222). In the most commonly known account, Hineahuone was formed from the Kurawaka of Papatūānuku by Tāne Mahuta. She was the shape that first held human life (Grace and Kahukiwa 1984:28) in her whare tangata, the house of humanity, her womb. Ira tangata means ‘life principle’ or ‘gene’ (Moko Mead 2003:42). In Māori belief systems, genes are seen as ‘more than biological elements’ with a godlike quality to them, as the ira tangata descend from the ira atua (Moko Mead 2003:42). Hineahuone could represent the transition between ira atua and ira tangata, Hinetītama perhaps possessing the first human life principle, ira tangata. The transfer of ira tangata through whakapapa supports Szászy’s assertion of the divine origins of women. ‘The first woman was created by the Gods and the seed of human life was planted by Tāne, son of Rangi and Papa’ (Szászy’s 2003:42). Ira tangata through whakapapa as evidence of mana atua in all Māori women (and men) is an established fact in the Māori creation narratives, with Hineahuone connecting the ira atua with the ira tangata.

### 2.3.1 Hinetītama

Hinetītama is the mātāmua of the line of human beings; the tuakana of all Māori women. She is described as an extraordinary beauty which is demonstrated by the whakataukī: ‘Ko Hinetītama koe, matawai ana te whatu i te tirohanga,’ translated by Mead and Grove to: ‘You are like Hinetītama, a vision at which the eyes glisten’ (2001:229, cited in Mikaere 2017:30). Hinetītama and her father Tāne Mahuta have a daughter, Hinerauwhāangi. Hinetītama and Hinerauwhāangi are the mother and daughter model, the divine mother and child (Moko Mead 2003:290, cited in Gabel 2013:61). When Hinetītama finds out that Tāne Mahuta is her father and the father of her children, she chooses to leave him and prepare a place for their children in te ūkaipō<sup>8</sup> (Gabel 2013:61). It is at this point in her life that she makes the decision to become Hinenuitepō. She recites a karakia to stop Tāne from following her and descends to te Pō (Yates-Smith 1998). This narrative not only highlights her spiritual power through the use of karakia but demonstrates the agency she held in decision making over her life. She takes the steps required to do what she feels is necessary to look after her mokopuna, her future descendants.

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<sup>8</sup> Ūkaipō is the ‘origin, real home’ the ‘mother, source of sustenance’ (Te Aka 2018).

### 2.3.2 Hinenuitepō

Hinenuitepō is the ‘kuia to whom all her mokopuna go upon death’ (Mikaere 2017:30). She receives these spirits into a realm that exists alongside ‘the World of Men’ (Metge 1967:55), into te Pō. Te Pō is ‘a beautiful place where there is no evil, no violence and no abuse. It is a world of light and peace’ (Moko Mead 2003:147). Because of this, at tangihanga an orator might say, ‘Haere, haere ki tō tipuna ki a Hinenuitepō. Depart and journey to your ancestor Hinenuitepō’ (Moko Mead 2003:146). Hinenuitepō is ‘the protecting mother of the souls that took that journey’ (Moko Mead 2003:147), and ‘the great mother who awaits us in the next world’ (Awatere 1995:36). She is the archetypal grandmother, mother, maternal figure who receives her descendants as a force of unconditional love. Kahukiwa and Grace describe Hinetītama’s descent to te Pō.

So I left the world of light, telling Tane not to follow me. I told him to remain with our children and to care for them in the world of light. “I will go on to the dark world,” I said, “where I will welcome our children when their earthly life is ended. I will do so in order to prepare an afterlife for them, where once again I can be a loving mother. I will be known from now on as Hinenuitepō.” (1984:43)

Upon her descent to te Pō, Hinenuitepō becomes a ruahine, an elderly Māori woman. The word rua-hine perhaps refers to those women who have gone through menopause, the drying of the waters of fertility; the second stage of womanhood. As a ruahine she gifts her moko Māui not with ‘the gift he seeks, not the gift that he thinks he wants – but the gift that she knows he needs’ (Mikaere 2017:34). The crushing of Māui by Hinenuitepō means that her descendants will always know the deep pain of losing loved ones to death. She crushed Māui, and as a result of this, all human beings inevitably die (Moko Mead 2003). It also recognises ‘the mana and tapu, the sacred authority, of women’ (Kupenga et al. 1993:304). Like the creation narratives, there are different versions of this account. Pere shares another variation in Murphy’s Masters thesis.

Māui, a demi-god, observed that Hina-te-iwa-iwa the moon god could make her world wax and wane every month. Māui decided that he too wanted

continuity like the moon, so he decided to return to the womb of the god Hinenuitepō-te-ao to receive immortality. Māui went to Hinenuitepō-te-ao and climbed up to her thighs. [...] The Tiwaiwaka warned Māui about cutting across the natural laws, but Māui continued on his journey. The Tiwaiwaka woke the sleeping Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao up. Hinenuitepō-te-ao asked Māui what he was doing heading up to her groin and Māui told her about wanting to be like the Moon. Hinenuitepō-te-ao said she could grant Māui his wish but he was not to return to the womb; she then crushed him and made him the first menstruation to come into the world (Murphy 2011:49).

In this version, Māui is jealous of Hineteiwaiwa and decides to search for the immortality of the moon, the waxing and waning of the lunar cycles. At the end of his quest he is crushed, becoming a symbolic representation of the monthly bleeding called *te awa o te atua* (Murphy 2011). This introduces the *tāne* element into menstruation, which has long been referred to as separate, an exclusively female domain. Again, this is an example of the co-existence of the Hine and Tāne elements.

In this account she is not called Hinenuitepō, but Hinenuitepō-te-ao. Hinenuitepō's connection to Te Ao<sup>9</sup> is less commonly known. However, the literature supports her as the mother of wairua who descend to te Pō as well as the new wairua coming through who emerge into te Ao in the *whare tangata*. Therefore, as Hinenuitepō-te-ao she is an important *atua* of conception and childbirth (Metge 1967:55).

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<sup>9</sup> Meaning 'day, daytime – as opposed to night' (Te Aka Dictionary 2019)



### 2.3.3 Hineteiwaiwa

There is markedly less written on Hineteiwaiwa than Papatūānuku and Hinenuitēpō. However, Yates-Smith asserts that Hineteiwaiwa was a prominent atua wāhine in pre-colonial Māori society. In fact, she was the prototype for Māori women and ‘some of our roles in society can be found in connection’ with her – the first child of Hinetītama and Tāne – and ‘her actions as a woman’ (Yates-Smith 1998:145). Within her name Hineteiwaiwa can be found references to wai (water) and wā (time/space), providing perhaps further evidence of an affinity between the Hine element and water. It links in with her connection to the cycles of women’s reproductive bodies (made up mostly of water) and the lunar cycle (time/space). She is also known by Hinateiwaiwa (Yates-Smith 1998) or perhaps Hina-te-i-wai-wā. This version highlights Hina: the personification of the moon (Te Aka 2019).

Hineteiwaiwa provides authority for those things pertaining to women. She exists ‘in a complementary role to her father Tāne, in providing the ultimate archetype for us as woman to follow’ (Gabel 2013:62). Her role is one of utmost importance for Māori women. For this reason, it is intriguing as to why Hineteiwaiwa and her stories have been so comprehensively excluded from ethnographic writings. This still continues, with the exception of a group of Māori women who are steadily ‘writing’ her back into the collective Māori consciousness (Murphy 2011; Yates-Smith 1998; Kahukiwa and Grace 1991).

Hineteiwaiwa has various special powers which she uses to overcome many challenges. In one version, Hineteiwaiwa sets off for Motutapu, the home of Tinirau the ruler of fish (Yates-Smith 1998). She uses various fish to transport her there and can speak to the fish. On receiving rather ‘rude answers from the fish’ she strikes them and ‘they assume certain appearances e.g. on the front of the pakea (the humpback whale) there is evidence of it being scratched by Hineteiwaiwa’ (Yates-Smith 1998:145). From this narrative it is clear that Hineteiwaiwa can shape the physical bodies of living animals by symbolically striking them, the scratch on the humpback whale evidence of her powers.

When she is badly treated by the other wives of her husband Tinirau, she uses powerful karakia to defeat them (Grey 1971:24, cited in Yates-Smith 1998:145).

From this, we can ascertain she was highly skilled at karakia and knew how to use them, in this case to subvert the wrongdoings of others. During the difficult childbirth of her son, she recites a karakia that has been in use by Māori in childbirth practices for centuries (Yates-Smith 1998:145). This particular karakia is called ‘Ko te Tuku O Hine-te-iwaiwa’ (Makereti 1938). Thus, the birthing process of her son Tūhuru created tikanga pertaining to Māori women’s experience of pregnancy (Gabel 2013:63), demonstrating that Hineteiwaiwa not only recited karakia, but created them. This is an example of the life experiences of a Māori woman – her difficult birth – and her personal innovation shaping tikanga going into the future. This power is available to Māori women today.

When her husband’s whale Tutunui is eaten by a visiting Tohunga named Kae, Hineteiwaiwa and Raukatauri, Raukatamea, Itiiti, Rekareka, Tua-haua-tangaroa and other unnamed women travel to find him (Mikaere 2017). In order to ‘shorten the distance between Motutapu and Kae’s island the women use karakia’ (Yates-Smith 1998:146). Once arriving, they use the ‘ruse of entertainment’ to identify Kae by his overlapping/missing tooth (Yates-Smith 1998:146) by performing dances of a ‘sexually explicit and humorous nature’ including the haka below performed by Hineteiwaiwa, Raukatauri, Raukatamea, Itiiti, Rekareka, Tua-haua-tangaroa and other women (Mikaere 2017:46-49).

<i>E ako au ki te haka</i>	<i>I learn to haka</i>
<i>E ako au ki te ringaringa</i>	<i>I learn to explore with my hands</i>
<i>E ako au ki te whewhera</i>	<i>I learn to open wide</i>
<i>E kāore te whewhera</i>	<i>Not to open wide</i>
<i>E ako au ki te kōwhiti</i>	<i>I learn to twitch</i>
<i>E kāore au te kōwhiti</i>	<i>Not to twitch</i>
<i>E kōwhiti nuku, e kōwhiti rangi</i>	<i>Pulsating upwards, pulsating downwards</i>

*E kōwhiti puapua, e kōwhiti werewere*

*My vagina throbs, my vagina  
fibrillates*

*E hanahana a tinaki ...e!*

*A haven of lingering warmth*

Kae is seen laughing in the audience at the haka in Table 2, easily identifiable by his overlapping/missing tooth. When the people of the village go to sleep, Hineteiwaiwa and the women recite karakia to ensure it is a deep sleep and then carry ‘the unconscious and unsuspecting Kae to their own village’ where he ‘meets the same fate that greeted Tutunui’ (Yates-Smith 1998:145-146). From this, we can derive that Hineteiwaiwa is the penultimate performer and a skilled leader of women, particularly when it comes to advancing the aims of the group, including her husband and village. She could be the kaea of the kapa haka group; the leader of the Māori women’s community group.

In a re-telling of Māui and Hinenuitepō, Hineteiwaiwa emerges. In this version, Māui observes Hineteiwaiwa and her connection with the cycles of women’s reproductive bodies and the lunar cycle. She is deified as the moon (Murphy 2008) and presides over the reproductive cycles of women (Gabel 2013). Best observed Māori women gathering to greet the new moon (1955). It is suggested that these observations refer to the existence of ceremony and ritual by Māori women in relation to the cycles of the moon (Murphy 2011) and perhaps to Hineteiwaiwa herself. Throughout Polynesia, Hineteiwaiwa and Māui are closely linked. In some versions, they are lovers, in others they are siblings or mother and child (Murphy 2011). This suggests a link between Māui and the lunar cycles of the moon including the atua Hineteiwaiwa (Murphy 2011); however, ‘the connection between the lunar almanac and Hineteiwaiwa as an atua of women’s reproductivity needs further research to explore its more profound significance’ (Murphy 2011:66).

Hineteiwaiwa is the atua of raranga and the whare pora<sup>10</sup>. The whare pora was not a physical building, but rather the name for the collective of weavers who protected the tikanga of the house and facilitated the induction of younger women (Moko

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<sup>10</sup> House of weaving.

Mead 2003). In addition, she is attributed to the establishment of tikanga pertaining to weaving (Gabel 2013).

From these narratives, the characteristics of Hineteiwaiwa can be unearthed: her strength, determination, endurance through childbirth, her ability to trick, her resourcefulness, talent for entertainment, the strength of her haka and her knowledge of powerful karakia. These are karakia which are used for childbirth, to lull other people to sleep and change the time-space reality of her world. As the atua of raranga and her ability to create karakia, it is posited that in the context of today, she could also be the atua of writing, the layering of narratives, viewpoints and stories.

Her attributes as a performer suggest that she could represent mana wahine forms of creativity, such as kapahaka, raranga, writing and other art forms. Her successful leadership of the women provides a role model for community leaders. The stories of Hineteiwaiwa in their deep fullness provide for a powerful role model and set of attributes for Māori women to draw on. They are exciting stories and could easily sit on bookshelves, next to the Māui narratives. Because of colonisation, they do not.

#### 2.3.4 Hinemoana

There is very little in contemporary literature on Hinemoana. Though the stories of the female atua were usually left out of ethnographic accounts, evidence suggests that in pre-colonial Māori cosmology there was an atua wahine for each atua tāne (Gabel 2013; Yates-Smith 1998) which may be a reflection of the need of tāne and wāhine to procreate. Rangi and Papa are an example of this and Hinerauwhāangi is also said to work in partnership with Tāne Mahuta to care for the growth of living things, the forest and the trees (Gabel 2013).

Likewise, the atua of the sea, Tangaroa, exists alongside the atua wahine Hinemoana. 'Hinemoana is credited with the creation of all the species of the sea, while Tangaroa is said to be the agitator of the seas, while Hinemoa provides the softer calming influence' (Gabel 2013). One version of Hinemoana's whakapapa is shared by Moko Mead. From Tāne and Hinetītama was born Hinerauwhāangi, who with Te Kawekairanga had Hinemoana. Hinemoana and Kiwa birthed Rakahore (rocks), Taumata (stones) and eight other children (Moko Mead 2003). This whakapapa lineage clearly shows the transference of divinity through the matrilineal line; from Hineahuone to Hinetītama, to her daughter Hinerauwhāangi and her daughter Hinemoana. Moko Mead considers Hinemoana to be the critical ancestor from which many oceanic lifeforms were born, including cockles, eels, lamprey, mullet, sea urchins, snapper, gurnard, groper, kingfish, moko, kahawai, tarakihi and the octopus (2003:344).

### 2.3.5 Mahuika

Mahuika gifts her fire to Māui which is then shared with the people (Kupenga et al. 1993:305). But his mischievousness in taking nine of her fingernails results in her anger. ‘You ask too much’ she says, and throws her last fire-nail at him, the burning flames lighting up the forest and nearly taking his life (Kahukiwa and Grace 1984:46). We can see that the mokopuna Māui asked for too much from his kuia, demonstrating the ‘limits to what the precocious mokopuna can do, and it is often the kuia who have the task of prescribing those limits’ (Mikaere 2017:33). Because of his actions, Māui has to call upon Tāwhirimātea to send rain as Mahuika sends her seeds of fire into the trees.

It was rain, the drenching rain, that saved Maui – and almost destroyed me.  
Fire was almost lost to the world. But as the flood waters rose about me I sent  
the last seeds of fire into the earthy trees – the kaikomako, mahoe, totara,  
patete and pukatea – and asked those trees to be the guardians of fire forever.  
(Kahukiwa and Grace 1984:46)

Māui’s mischievous actions and his kuia’s retribution result in the seed of fire being placed into the trees. Fire is now available forevermore, a positive result to what could have been seen as a negative exchange. Fire is like that; what can be seen as destructive is an important aspect of the natural life cycle of a forest and even assists some plant species with the releasing of their seeds. Natural fires can be started by lightning strikes and the subsequent fire clears dead materials, opens seedbanks, and releases nutrients back into the environment (Ainsworth and Doss 1995). The atua wahine of thunder is Whaitiri (Yates-Smith 1998). The similarities of Mahuika and the attributes of her persona, suggest a connection to ahikā, or the ‘burning fires of occupation’ (Te Aka 2019) illustrated by her personification as the atua of fire. Takirangi Smith considers pre-colonial Māori women to have been responsible for the maintaining of ahikā in their role as protectors of tribal whakapapa through the whare tangata (2012:8).

### 2.3.6 Murirangawhenua

Murirangawhenua is old, blind and dependent on her relatives to bring her food. Her moko Māui tells the whānau he will take food to her but instead he throws it away until she nears starvation. Only then does he approach her. Before he reveals himself, she knows that it is him, revealing her abilities as matakite<sup>11</sup>. Māui asks her for her jawbone because of its magical powers, knowing that it will help him achieve his goals. In spite of his behaviour, she gives it to him as a gift for her descendants as her body is decaying and she will no longer need it (Kahukiwa and Grace 1984). Māui uses this jawbone to fashion a hook, which is used to fish up Te Ika-a-Māui, and later as a patu to slow the sun.

Kauae means jawbone in Māori, and also means knowledge (Ka'ai 2005:5). Te kauae runga means esoteric knowledge and te kauae raro means practical knowledge (Ka'ai 2005:5). According to Marsden, pre-colonial Ngāpuhi wānanga were called Te Kauae-runga (The Upper Jaw) and the other institutions of learning such as the Whare Maire<sup>12</sup> were termed Te Kauae-raro (The Lower Jaw) (2003:58). These examples highlight the significance of the jawbone as a metaphor for knowledge. Today, we use our jawbone and the mouth to talk, to share information with others. In this narrative the knowledge is transferred to Māui from his kuia, a ruahine, in the tangible form of her jawbone.

The word iwi can also be taken to mean strength or bone (Te Aka 2019). The relatives of a Māori person can be described as 'bones,' emphasising the strength of shared whakapapa (Moko Mead 2003:232). In this narrative, Murirangawhenua gives her descendant Māui the strength of her whakapapa, through whanaungatanga and the gifting of her jawbone, her bones.

I removed the bone from my decaying jaw – the bone of enchantment and knowledge – and gave it to Maui. “Take it,” I said. “It will assist you in the earthly tasks you undertake. Take it with you when you go to seek out the

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<sup>11</sup> Matakite as someone with the ability to see into the future, to prophesy. A seer or someone with special intuitive skills (Te Aka 2019).

<sup>12</sup> Te Whare Maire were concerned with lore and certain forms of karakia and other matters (Marsden 2003:58).

ancestor of eels. Take it with you when you seek new land. Take it on your journey to the sun.” (Kahukiwa and Grace 1984:53)

This narrative positions Murirangawhenua as a repository of knowledge, including whakapapa knowledge. Similarly, at least one of the research interviewees is seen by her whānau as holding the knowledge of their whakapapa. When transferred to Māui, he uses it to shape the physical world, not unlike any mokopuna who is taught by their elders and in adulthood becomes a successful leader of their communities. Just as Māui ‘was chosen by powerful spell-crafting women, elemental women, women versed in ritual lore and wisdom traditions, to be taught specialised, and sacred knowledges’ (Murphy 2011:76), so are the mokopuna of today who are lucky enough to grow up in close proximity to their elders.

There are three ruahine in the Māui narratives: Mahuika as fire, Murirangawhenua as the bones of the land and Hinenuitēpō as the never-ending cycles of life and death. All three represent important aspects of Māori life that Māui has to learn about, and he is not just given this knowledge – he has to earn it. Mikaere elaborates:

The Māui stories tell us a great deal about the role of kuia as repositories of knowledge, and the conditions under which they are prepared to share it.

Mahuika, Murirangawhenua and Hinenuitēpō are all women possessing vast amounts of knowledge and supernatural powers. Māui needs each of them in order to attain the many gifts that he wishes to acquire for humankind.

Safeguarding the knowledge that he seeks from each of these kuia is a serious responsibility, so none of them give it lightly (2017:34).

In these narratives, Māui is presented as the protagonist, possibly because he is the most well-known. But in this take on the retelling of these narratives we bring the knowledge holders, the ruahine, centre stage to highlight their attributes. Though Mahuika and Murirangawhenua give out of aroha to their mokopuna, they show ‘no qualms about disciplining him harshly for his disrespect’ (Mikaere 2017:33). As well as guiding their male descendants, the kuia has the particularly important role of guiding younger Māori women. This is discussed further in Chapter 2.5 Matrilineal Knowledge.



## 2.4 Mana Wahine

Mana is the quality of a person that others are aware of, a multidimensional concept that includes psychic influence, control, prestige, vested and acquired authority and influence (Pere 1997:14). Mana is transferred to the person by the atua (Marsden 2003; Yates-Smith 1998; Pere 1997). Mana atua is the right of all things in the universe, with an inherent recognition of the uniqueness of the individual (Pere 1997), who has both strengths and weaknesses. Like wairua, mana can extend beyond death and may even be enhanced by it. One example of this is the stories told by Māori descendants of illustrious ancestors that continue to demonstrate their mana years after their passing.

As it is defined in this thesis, mana wahine is the expression of mana from the atua through Māori women, the expression of mana through the hine element, the female essence and time and space. As previously mentioned, the term wāhine is the intersection of wā and hine, with 'wā relating to notions of time and space' (Pihama 2001:265). It can be demonstrated through the work of Māori women, their art, writing, homemaking, weaving, sewing, healing; in the choices they make everyday, the action they take in their lives for the wellbeing of their iwi, hapū and whānau. Mana wahine is the shaping and changing of the physical world by a Māori woman as she expresses her mana atua, the mana of the atua in everyday life.

Throughout Māori history are examples of women who held significant mana in their lifetimes, expressing this as mana wahine, for the benefit of their people. There are far too many to many to tell in this thesis. However, notable examples after the signing of the 1840 Treaty include Dame Te Atairangikaahu, Te Puea Hērangi, Dame Whina Cooper and those who are still with us today, including Robyn Kahukiwa and Patricia Grace. Not only are these women powerful forces in Te Ao Māori, but they have also left a legacy that is the expression of their mana wahine. For Kahukiwa and Grace, it is not just their creative work which empowers through the act of being read and seen, but their presence and the way they conduct themselves in Māori communities.

Te Puea Herangi was the granddaughter of King Tāwhiao, a member of the kāhui ariki. During the smallpox epidemic in the early 1900s she established open-air

hospitals within Māori settlements to treat her people and mothered orphaned children (King 2003). She led the opposition of the Tainui people against the conscription of their men by the New Zealand government in World War I, saying, 'These people are mine. My voice is their voice... I will not agree to my children going to shed blood.... The young men who have been balloted will not go... You can fight your own fight until the end' (King 2003:89). As a leader she focused her energy on te reo Māori, music and oral traditions of her people, even speaking Māori to her own children at a time when it was being actively discouraged by education policy. Another priority for her was the feeding, clothing and sheltering of her people (King 2003:198). In her later years, Te Puea Herangi was elected Patroness of the Māori Women's Welfare League. Dame Whina Cooper was elected as the first president (King 1983:172).

Dame Te Atairangikaahu was the first Māori Queen of the Kingitanga movement. She reigned for 40 years from 1966 to 2006 (Papa and Meredith 2012). Also known as Te Arikinui, Te Atairangikaahu and her stepbrother Robert Mahuta led her people to the settlement of their Waitangi Tribunal claims, including raupatu. Upon her death, many thousands of people attended her tangihanga, including foreign dignitaries (Papa and Meredith 2012).

Through the will of her mana, Dame Whina Cooper led the 1975 political movement that marched from Cape Reinga to parliament in Wellington (King 1983:221). As they came into Wellington, the movement was joined by 5000 protestors and a petition that had been signed by 60,000 supporters of the land march objectives, which protested the loss of Māori land. Her influence came from her reputation as an urban and national leader. She was the first President of the Māori Women's Welfare League, where she focused on the issues that were affecting Māori women and their families such as housing, health, education and food, based on her own belief that 'a mother's job is so important' (King 1983:174). Dame Whina Cooper came to be known as the Mother of the Nation (Pfeifer 2005). According to King, Whina defined mana as the power of God working through men and women and her mana even kept her up at night: 'I can't sleep at night... I'm worrying about things and planning things. It's the mana you see. If you've got it, it never lets you alone. You have to be thinking about the people and working for them, all the time' (King

1983:8). Sitting alongside Cooper at that time is mana tāne, through individuals like Sir Apirana Ngata, whose efforts focused on enabling Māori farmers to borrow public funds for land development (King 1983:110). It is not one or the other, but both the female and male expression of mana from the atua that will facilitate long-lasting change for Māori. Te Puea Herangi, Te Atairangikaahu and Whina Cooper are Māori women who used their inherited mana through whakapapa and mana wahine to bring about substantive and long-lasting change for their people.

In contrast to these examples of female Māori leadership and following on from the literature of the early ethnographers (Gudgeon 1907; Best 1924), writers on traditional Māori leadership have generally agreed that leadership at home and overseas was exercised primarily by males (Buck 1949; Winiata 1956). For Kawharu (cited in, Mahuika 1975), a criterion for leadership was the primogeniture of the first-born male in any generation, which by definition would have always placed a male ariki/rangatira at the apex of a hierarchical leadership structure (Mahuika 1975). However, there have been many exceptions to this prevailing view: Tamairangi, the high chieftainess of Ngāti-Ira and Wairaki, Muriwai of Mātaatua, Ruapūtahanga of Taranaki and Mahinaarangi of Ngāti Kahungunu a few examples of women who led their communities. These Māori women with mana are included by Winiata in a footnote, although he still believed that Māori women were inferior to men in traditional Māori communities, and that political leadership passed to the next oldest male (Winiata 1956:226). Mahuika contests this view of leadership on the basis of the traditional leadership shown within his own tribe, Ngāti Porou, where more of the senior sub-tribes are named after women than men. In these hapū, one would have to trace descent from the founding ancestress, Māori women, not the men as would be expected based on the work of the early writers on traditional Māori leadership. It seems unlikely that traditional Māori leadership was solely regarded as a male preserve in the face of iwi and hapū who are named after female ancestors, and the flourishing of Māori women leaders in the years following the signing of the Treaty.

In their lifetimes, Dame Whina Cooper and Te Puea Herangi focused on quality housing, health, education and food for their communities. It is at this whānau/micro-level that the workings of the everyday Māori woman and her

expressions of mana wahine are often overlooked. For example, Ria, an interviewee who has two kids, works tirelessly for her whānau. As a young woman, she may not have the time, energy or intention to be a community leader. Right now, however, she is providing nourishment for the descendants of the iwi, the hapū and the whānau and therefore expressing mana wahine. This is the expression of mana wahine through the nourishment of the kāinga, the whānau home. In addition, breastfeeding is a role gifted to Māori women through the whare tangata demonstrated by both Hineahuone and Hinetītama. The breastfeeding mother is aptly expressed in the artwork *Te Whare Tangata* by Kahukiwa. Within the wider whānau, kuia like Hinewirangi help raise their mokopuna and are always ready to chastise them when they need it, like Whaitiri with her lightning strikes and Mahuika as she alights the forest around Māui.

Another way that mana wahine is expressed domestically is through the creative arts. Women comprise the majority of expert weavers, including Dr Aroha Yates. Other women who excel in creative pursuits include female kapahaka performers, writers like Ngahua Te Awekotuku, poets like Hinewirangi and artists like Robyn Kahukiwa. We know from the Hinetiwhai narratives that she was the atua wāhine who excelled in the creative arts. The mana wahine of Māori women does not rest only at the top, including only the most visible leaders, like the hierarchical construction of traditional Māori society as has been espoused by early ethnographers (Gudgeon 1907; Best 1924). Rather, it is posited that mana wahine is expressed horizontally, through the actions and choices of all Māori women for the wellbeing of iwi, hapū and whānau: the descendants of atua.

Today, the question is whether young Māori women are able to access the knowledge they need, to embrace their inherent mana and mana wahine abilities. This will depend on the circumstances of the individual and their whānau, hapū and iwi. However, the knowledge gathering has been interrupted by colonial-based education systems and structures that feed into the self beliefs of rangatahi and their abilities to be ‘good learner’. If colonial structures tell you that you are not a ‘good learner’, these views inform knowledge seeking behaviours. Furthermore, the marginalisation of the atua wāhine and the pre-colonial belief systems of Māori through colonisation have made it harder for women to access these types of

knowledge. Traditionally, we might have seen younger women learning about their mana wahine through the atua narratives and the transfer of knowledge by the older Māori women: mothers, aunties/whaea or kuia/ruahine in the whānau, hapū and iwi and/or pre-colonial whare wānanga.

## 2.5 Matrilineal Knowledge

The power of narrative is captured by Pere in her hope that as a direct descendant of Papatūānuku and Hine Pūkohurangi, she will be able to recapture and share some of the magic from her childhood.

As a child and grandchild of many parents and grandparents I listened to fantastic stories that captured my imagination. These wonderful vibrant people could sandal the feet of their thoughts and walk the ancient paths of wisdom and knowledge. They knew how to take us, their proteges, along those paths with them.’ (1990:2)

Her experience points to the importance of the story-telling traditions and how they were used to transmit wisdom and knowledge from Māori elders to the young ones. Storytelling within a culture is a powerful guide for social order, as it provides answers to the way things are in the world of a culture. From the early narratives of a culture can be derived echoes ‘of the innate patterns of women’s most integral psychological processes’ (Pinkola Estes 1992:263). Transferred knowledge held in these forms of storytelling can initiate women, the wise ones teaching the women who come after (Pinkola Estes 1992). These stories ‘provide answers in human terms to the way things are in our world... an important guide to philosophy, values and social behaviour... pointers towards social order’ (Kahukiwa 1984:10), the myth-messaging of culture providing prescriptions and models for human behaviour (Walker 1978:19).

The transfer of traditional knowledge is the inheritance of knowledge where ‘traditional’ means inherited from Māori predecessors but not necessarily pre-European (Metge 1967). Matrilineal lines of initiation are framed as ‘older women teaching younger women certain psychic facts and procedures’ (Pinkola Estes 1992:263), with the older women of the tribe or village valued in this role. According to Pinkola Estes, a woman ‘needs the mothering of an older woman or women who essentially prompt, encourage and support her’ (1992:263). These women who support the younger women constitute an ‘essential female-to-female nutritional system that nourished the young mothers, in particular, teaching them

how to nourish the psyches and souls of their young in return’ (Pinkola Estes 1992:177).

In Te Ao Māori, female-to-female transmission of knowledge can be described as tuakana/teina. This relationship is gender specific because the word tungāne is excluded from the name of the model. Therefore, a tuakana/teina relationship for a Māori woman most commonly refers to the relationship between the older woman and the younger woman. The mothering or teaching of the younger Māori woman by the whaea/kuia is a demonstration of tuakana/teina. This traditional form of knowledge transmission is shown in stories of the kuia Hīria Te Rangihaeata giving Mihi Kōtukutuku advice as to where to birth her babies, based on the tides and whereabouts of the stars. These illustrate ‘a degree of knowledge possessed well beyond the ordinary’ (Stirling and Salmond 2005:81-83, cited in Mikaere 2017:63). The expertise held by these kuia was then passed on to the younger women who assisted them (Mikaere 2017). In the traditions of Ngāti Kahungunu, there is evidence that the beginning of the matrilineal lines of knowledge is Papatūānuku, as the knowledge of Papatūānuku was given to Hinerauwhārangī and her offspring – Māori women (T.Smith 2012:4).

Young Māori women today are in need of tuākana. These could be older Māori women from their whānau, hapū, iwi and perhaps in a modern context their school, whare wānanga, university, urban marae and local community group who can transmit the knowledge younger women need in order to know their inherent mana as Māori women. Older women are the

arks of instinctual knowing and behaviour that could invest the young mothers with the same. Women give this knowing to each other through words, but also by other means. Complicated messages about what and how to be are simply sent through a look, a touch with the palm of the hand, a murmur, or a special kind of “I cherish you” hug. (Pinkola Estes 2008:177)

It is the birth right of all Māori women to have access to these maternal ways of teaching.

In Māori society, one important piece of matrilineal knowledge for many whānau is matakite. In Awatere's family, her grandmother was a matakite and this was passed down through a matrilineal lineage (1995:35). Three participants in this research also identify a matrilineal matakite line in their whānau, which is discussed in Chapter Four: Matakite. Another well-established piece of matrilineal knowledge is weaving. In the wharepora o Hineteiwaiwa, 'older weavers watched the young girls for the signs of a potential weaver' (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:283) and the teaching of new weavers was undertaken by a senior woman of the family. Tuition took place over a number of years in a very relaxed and natural way with no financial payment (Puketapu-Hetet 1993). In more recent times, this method of knowledge transfer has been supplanted by training programmes.

There are tribal variations in the 'teaching techniques, designs, patterns, customs and terminology' of Māori weaving (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:286). For example, the first piece completed by a new weaver is given away. However, in tribes, the first piece of weaving is given to a senior member of the whānau, whereas others return it to Papatūānuku as an offering. By knowing right from the beginning to whom the piece is destined to go, the tauira can weave into it the 'time, energy, thought and feeling that has gone into the piece' (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:286). Through the act of caring for the harakeke, the woven article and the person of whom it is going to, 'the wairua (spirit of the weaving) is being acknowledged' (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:286). Not only is the first piece of weaving sometimes offered to Papatūānuku but also on completion of each woven article, Tāne Mahuta is thanked for the material that was used, and through life-force has been transferred into another dimension, as it now lives again in another form (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:286). That both Papatūānuku and Tāne are acknowledged during the process of weaving further demonstrates the necessity of the male and female elements for creation.

Like Muriranga-whenua, Puketapu-Hetet refers to herself 'as a repository, linking the knowledge of the past with that of the future' and uses the phrase 'i ngā rā o mua' to illustrate this concept (1993:286). She relates this to a traditional Māori understanding in which 'our past is our future and is also our present, like the eternal circle' (1993:286). For this reason, great pleasure can be derived from sharing knowledge as in some ways it transcends the fabric of time – through the teaching of



ancient knowledge (from the past), in the present (now) to the future generations (the future) (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:287).

There is little information in the literature regarding the transfer of knowledge among Māori women. This is because past researchers did not study the traditional teaching institutions for Māori women (Yates-Smith 1998:159). On the other hand, we do know that young women attended whare wānanga in Ngāti Kahungunu (T.Smith 2012:4) and that several whare wānanga sites in Taranaki were started by women, specifically for women and girls (Murphy 2011:97). We also know that today, many Māori women are thriving in their local communities as teachers, academics, educators and leaders.

## 2.6 Pollution of the Cosmology

The atua wāhine have been marginalised by the accounts of the early ethnographers first published in the 1850s. Their interpretations formed the orthodox view of the atua narratives until the 1980s, when a challenge to the dominant narrative arose in the form of *Wahine Toa* by Grace and Kahukiwa (1984). Prior to this, the writings of White (1826-91), Shortland (1812-93), Grey (1812-98) and Polynesian Society members Tregear (1846-1931), Percy Smith (1840-1922), Best (1856-1931), Anderson (1873-1962) and Gudgeon (1841-1920) dominated the literature on pre-colonial Māori cosmological belief systems. In the case of Best, his opinion as a European male is described as ‘obvious in some places while in others it is more subtly woven into the accounts’ (Yates-Smith 1998:78). In later years, some of these accounts were regurgitated by male Māori academics, including patriarchal understandings of traditional Māori leadership (Buck 1949; Winiata 1956) and Māori women’s reproductive functions (Buck 1949; Biggs 1960). This recycling of early ethnographic discourse can also be found in later writings, with Pihama citing Witi Ihimaera’s *The Matriach* (1986) and Ranginui Walker’s *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou* (1990) as examples of this (Pihama 2011, cited in Murphy 2011:56).

Yates-Smith describes the blatantly obvious displacement of the feminine in the early ethnographic works which led to a diminished awareness and knowledge of the atua wāhine (1998:1). Where the atua tāne were the ones who were most frequently referred to over time, the impression of the atua wāhine in the literature became one in which they held insignificant positions – if they existed at all. Consequently, Yates-Smith argues that ‘gross misconceptions about the value of Māori women also developed’ as a ‘reconstructed history from a predominantly Pākehā male (Victorian) viewpoint’ filtered through to Māori over the years (1998:117). This has increasingly impacted on the status of Māori women. Colonialism through the written word was ‘about re-arrangement, re-presentation and re-distribution’ (Tuhiwai Smith 2012:65), including the re-distribution of the standardised ‘one true version’. Derived from many of these early writings are the ‘foundations of what many Māori assume are traditional values and beliefs, perpetuated in contemporary literature’ (Murphy 2011:57). Ramsden considers ‘the selective co-option of Māori ideas and rituals by the current education system’ to remain romance-based, with

Māori children being offered the ‘soft options of sanitised mythology’, concluding that ‘we too have been fed milksop mythology about ourselves’ (1995:110).

The central importance of the female element in creation was also marginalised by these accounts. Takirangi Smith examines the literature surrounding pre-colonial views of fertility, alongside evidence in kōrero whakapapa accounts of fertility. From his perspective, ‘the literature surrounding pre-colonial views of Māori and fertility is predominantly sourced in accounts by colonial ethnographers such as Elsdon Best’ (T. Smith 2012:3). Mikaere describes how several karakia referring to the female anatomy and reproductive powers were excluded from an English translation of the creation of Hineahuone by Tāne<sup>13</sup> by ethnographer Percy Smith in 1913 (2017:28), when he removed a paragraph describing the act of reproduction between Karihi (the female) and Tiki (the male). Since then, various translations of this paragraph have been made, by men. Mikaere summarises below:

Tiki attacks bravely, but Karihi draws him further and further into herself until, spent, he succumbs. Best also refers to this first act of sexual intercourse as the “slaying or overcoming of Tiki.” This view carried over into daily life, Te Rangi Hīroa making the general observation that “[i]n sex matters, it is the female organ which figuratively kills its male antagonist” and Biggs describing sexual intercourse, from the male viewpoint, as “a pleasure fraught with danger”. (2017:28)

In this account, the *whare tangata* has had meaning assigned to it. This is done through the description of the reproductive functions of Māori women. These words have strong connotations of being either passive or aggressive, including ‘succumbs’, ‘slaying’, ‘overcome’, ‘kills’ and ‘danger’. These types of descriptors can be found in modern biological textbooks where in some instances, the egg is described as feminine and “passive”. ‘It does not move or journey but is swept passively along the fallopian tube (Eisler 1996:289). Conversely the sperm is “active” and “strong” in the act of delivering their genes to the egg. When new research uncovered the finding that the egg played a much more active role,

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<sup>13</sup> Specifically, this refers to the Mātorohanga/Pōhūhū account by Whatahoro.

researchers reframed their role into yet another gender stereotype. This time, the egg was described as an ‘aggressive sperm catcher.’ Eisler summarises:

... still using the same military sexual language, they simply reversed the two roles with the ova now, as Martin writes, cast as the “dangerous” sexual vampire, capturing and entrapping hapless male sperm – when in fact what the new research suggests is an interactive process between egg and sperm. (1996:290)

In the interpretation of Karihi and Tiki, rather than casting Māori women’s reproductive organs in a passive stereotype, they have been reframed to fit that of the man-destroying killer, a slayer of men. This is similar to the ethnographic reframing of Hinenuitepō.

Whereas Hineteiwaiwa was largely excluded from early ethnographic literature, Hinenuitepō was made into a ‘man-slicing she-monster’ (Perris 2018:2). Her presentation as an old kuia or ruahine at the edge of the world with eyes of pounamu, hair of kelp, a mouth like that of a barracouta and labia ridged with sharp obsidian is referred to by Perris as the ‘standard formula for descriptions of Hinenuitepō worldwide’ (2018:2). A lament muttered by Hulme, ‘she is a fearsome lady, her private parts bladed with flakes of obsidian, her eyes of dark green jade, her hair the long black tendrils of kelp’ (1993:25). This ‘four-pronged formula’ is derived from the English-translation of Te Rangikāheke’s text GNZMMSS 43, which was used as source material by Governor George Grey in two of his books, *Ko Nga Mahinga a Nga Tupuna Maori* (1854) and *Polynesian Mythology* (1855) (Perris 2018:2). In retrospect, the *Nga Mahi A Nga Tupuna* text does not meet the criteria of reliability, expertise and internal and external consistency of information. This is on the basis that Grey often interwove different sources from different tribal areas into a single account (Simmons 1966). This has not stopped interpretations of the English translation from circulating – for well over a hundred years. Yates-Smith warns non-Māori speakers who read the English text, stating that ‘some of the English material is interpretative, rather than a direct translation’ (1998:78).

The ‘conversion of Māori to Christianity and its accompanying repudiation of culture’ also influenced the loss of tikanga Māori (Moko Mead 2003:2). At the time,

Christianity as the new and emergent religion challenged traditional Māori belief systems. In the early ethnographic work, Yates-Smith found it difficult to determine how much is 'Christian conjecture on the part of the collector' and how much the 'Christian faith had influenced the informants' viewpoints' (1998:116). Taonui, a contributor for White, shared his concerns 'that Māori people would be turned away from God if writings about traditional Māori religious practices and beliefs were published' (Reilly 1990:49, cited in Yates-Smith 1998:115). On this basis, it is impossible to ascertain how much of what was written by the early ethnographers is a 'true record of what Māori people of that time relayed to the writer' (Yates-Smith 1998:116). What we see evidence of, time and time again, are examples of misinterpretation: first in constructing, and then in perpetuating a distorted view of the atua wāhine and Māori women when they did appear in the creation narratives. That, of course, is if the atua wāhine narratives were not completely excluded.

## 2.7 Chapter Summary

The literature provides a range of narratives, characteristics and attributes that can be applied to the various atua wāhine. All of the atua wāhine have a connection with Te Whare Tangata, starting with Hinetītama, the first human being. The power of Māori women rests with the whare tangata, the house of humanity, a physical space connecting te Pō to te Ao. The Kurawaka of Papatūānuku, the red clay from which Hineahuone was formed, could represent the inside of the whare tangata. The colour kura is also the colour of wharenuī on tribal marae, connecting the whare tangata and the kurawaka of Papatūānuku with the marae. Hineahuone is the whakapapa connection between the primeval parents, Rangi and Papa and all of Hinetītama's descendants. The two atua wāhine who have had the most written about them are Papatūānuku and Hinenuitēpō. Although Hinetēiwaiwa has been surmised to have been important for the formation of the identities of Māori women before colonisation, she has been largely excluded from the literature, with the exception of some Māori women who are now writing her back into the collective consciousness.

Mana wahine is the expression of mana from the atua through Māori women. Many examples of Māori women with mana abound in our history. These include Dame Te Atairangikaahu, Te Puea Herangi, Dame Whina Cooper, Robyn Kahukiwa and Patricia Grace. In pre-colonial times, narratives imparting knowledge about atua may have been transferred to the mokopuna by the grandparents. For young Māori women, an important source of knowledge is older women (whaea, auntie, mother, kuia) through the tuakana/teina Māori concept. However, colonisation has made it harder for young Māori women to be able to access this mātauranga. The accounts of the early ethnographers and influence of Christianity resulted in the loss of atua wāhine narratives, but the ones that have been remembered can still be reclaimed. In the following chapter, the theoretical frameworks that inform this research project are explored. These are Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine.

## Chapter Three: Theoretical Frameworks

The methodological frameworks that inform this research project are Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine. Mana Wahine itself is an extension of Kaupapa Māori (Pihama 2001). Kaupapa Māori provides the cultural framework for researching in Māori communities and Mana Wahine the theory behind the embodied perspectives of Māori women. This chapter is a synthesis of the literature for each methodological framework, which foregrounds the discussion in Chapter Five. An overview of these frameworks is provided, explaining why they have been selected for this project and how they were used. These frameworks are combined for the purpose of telling a collective story, consistent with the interwoven experiences of the women who took part in this research. As has already been explained, the methods and theoretical frameworks used were chosen because they have been proven to work within a Māori women's context.

The characteristics of the atua wāhine provide the female elements of mana wahine for Māori women. In expressing mana wahine, Māori women draw on the attributes and narratives of the atua wāhine. This research investigates the atua wāhine attributes and narratives shared by a diverse group of Māori women and brings new insights to the interrelatedness between Māori women and the pre-colonial cosmology. The purpose of creating a framework is for the conscientisation of Māori women and Māori men to the full range of atua wāhine female elements. It provides an opportunity for Māori women to add their voices to what has already been written about the atua wāhine. Early ethnographic studies on the Māori cosmology focused on the knowledge shared by Māori men which was reframed through the lens of Pākehā male ethnographers and other commentators, including some Pākehā women ethnographers (Heuer 1969). This research introduces the perspectives of everyday Māori women, all of whom shared important experiences and information on this kaupapa.

### 3.1 Kaupapa Māori

A precedent has been set by Māori academics researching similar topics. When conducting research on the decolonisation of aspects of Te Ao Māori in relation to Māori women, a number of academics have employed Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine together as theoretical frameworks to inform their work (Graham 2018; Cull 2015; Hutchings 2002; Murphy 2011; Turner 2007; Pihama 2001). Pihama positions Mana Wahine as a Kaupapa Māori theoretical framework in and of itself (2001), an observation that is supported by Murphy (2011), and highlights the interconnectedness of these two frameworks. The necessity of the Mana Wahine framework was highlighted in academic work by several Māori researchers before it became well-established, such as Tangohau who used kaupapa Māori alongside feminist research methodologies (2003), Yates-Smith who employed a Māori cultural framework and Māori women's ethnographic approach (1998) and Rangiheuea who created a Kaupapa Wāhine Māori framework (2002). An interweaving of both Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine frameworks is used for this project, an approach that has been proven to work in the key texts cited above.

Kaupapa Māori provides the cultural framework for this research. It takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori and emphasises the struggle for autonomy over our own cultural well-being and over our own lives as key to Māori survival (G.Smith 1990). It legitimises and makes explicitly necessary the conducting of research in a way that fits within certain ethical paradigms and is culturally appropriate, safe and empowering for the Māori researcher and participants. This is of particular importance for this research because it explores the colonisation of the Māori belief system – a sensitive topic – as well as the personal experiences of Māori women in their personal spiritual worlds. The issues explored by this research project are complex. Because of this, it is necessary to be guided by a set of ethical principles which can be called upon when issues inevitably arise.

The definition of Kaupapa Māori has not always been agreed upon within academia. Hall utilises a kaupapa Māori approach in her thesis; however, 'that conclusion was not reached without careful consideration of the history of kaupapa Māori and its varied and sometimes contradictory, explanations and definitions' (2014:27). She argues that there is no 'absolute consensus about what kaupapa Māori is or should



be’ (Hall 2014:27). Te Punga Somerville describes a ‘little magical continuum with “kaupapa Māori” research at one end and “research not involving Maori and not relevant for Māori” at the other’ (2011:65). On the other hand, there are aspects of Kaupapa Māori methodology that Māori academics across the board agree on. One example of this is the need for a high degree of Māori autonomy (Hall 2014:27). Māori autonomy, or the autonomy of the Māori researcher is necessary for this project which in many ways operates outside of the parameters of “university research”, because it explores other worlds than the physical one within which we live.

In the context of this project, Kaupapa Māori was selected by a need for a strong and informed cultural framework to provide parameters for the researcher to conduct the research safely for the interviewees. Kaupapa Māori as a framework can be useful to clear up any confusion in research process decision making, as it is quite explicit in what can and cannot be done. In addition, the selection of Kaupapa Māori as a theoretical framework does not exclude it from criticism and critique where it is necessary, as questioning can open space where learning can happen.

Though it is a cultural framework useful for the gathering of research data, Kaupapa Māori does not prescribe process or protocols for quantitative or qualitative data analysis. ‘As Indigenous researchers, we do not have the clear-cut lines that are assumed in so many books on qualitative and quantitative research methods’ or the objectivity that is also assumed in other research (C.Smith 2013:95). This gives Māori researchers the flexibility to create their own frameworks for data analysis and without the prescription of ‘one correct way’ for data analysis. On the other hand, this may highlight a gap in the literature on kaupapa Māori. More guidance on the analysis of research data from within Kaupapa Māori could be useful alongside the focus on methods of data collection.

### 3.2 Mana Wahine

Mana Wahine addresses colonisation as a vehicle for the imposition of misogynist practises upon Māori culture. Mana Wahine creates space for the deconstruction and reconstruction of discourses pertaining to Māori women (Johnson and Pihama 1995). Through colonisation, changes have been made to the values and belief systems of Māori that have affected Māori women differently to Māori men. Māori women are continuing to draw on mana wahine for their research, solidifying its place in Māori women-focused research. Mana wahine has been used by many Māori women in their academic research and writing, including Cull (2015), Hutchings (2002), Murphy (2011), Simmonds (2011), Turner (2007), Pihama (2001), Irwin (1995), and Te Awekotuku (1991b)<sup>14</sup>. It is informed by the experiences of Māori women (Hutchings 2002:64) and, like this research project, places Māori women at the centre, alongside their connection with the land found in the womb of te Pō during the conceiving of Papatūānuku. It recognises that ‘Māori women hold unique positions as kaitiaki, nurturers and re-builders of indigenous knowledge’ and their right ‘to create and develop new knowledge based on cultural traditions.’ (Hutchings 2002:65)

Whether Māori women are *more* on the margins than Māori men may be irrelevant, as the degree of ‘othering’ that occurs in New Zealand depends on the contextual background and environment of each Māori individual. On the other hand, it is clear that colonisation has affected Māori women differently to Māori men. Johnson and Pihama share an example. Māori women in the Educational practices of the early 1900s were trained at school to become ‘nurses for work amongst the Māoris’ and to gain ‘practical instruction in all of these arts which make up the qualities of good wives and mothers’ (Johnson and Pihama 1995:83). Clearly, this educational practice was both racially prescriptive – Māori women who are trained to be nurses *should* work amongst Māori – and sexist, stating that Māori women *should* be trained to be good mothers and wives rather than pursue their dreams and careers, and still retain a sense of agency (Johnson and Pihama 1995:83). The use of a kaupapa Māori framework may well have deconstructed the racism of these educational practices of

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<sup>14</sup> This is not an exhaustive list.

oppression but it does not explicitly provide for a deconstruction of the multi-faceted sides of oppression, which includes sexism. Mana Wahine on the other hand forces the researcher to consider inherent sexism in practices of oppression and colonisation that also involve race. It 'extends Kaupapa Māori theory by explicitly exploring the intersection of being Māori and female and all of the diverse and complex things that being located in this space can mean' (Simmonds 2011:11). Colonial governmental practices such as the one described above create an inter-generational intersection of race and gender that for Māori women 'culminated in dominant oppressive ideologies providing complex assertions of inferiority' (Johnson and Pihama 1995:83).

The historical construction of pre-colonial belief systems including the atua wāhine narratives have served to "other" Māori women from their own cosmology. Awatere describes the searching for other spiritual essences by young Māori and how in her opinion we 'have become no more than grovellers among the sects and cults of the rest of the world, while our own goddesses and gods, our own spiritual reality is infused in the very earth around us' (1975:98). Mana Wahine assists the researcher with navigating these complex truths and untruths in order to deconstruct and then reconstruct Māori spirituality.

Mana Wahine as a methodological framework is not without critique as some see it as deriving from Western feminism. Western feminism has been challenged by women of colour worldwide 'for conforming to some very fundamental Western European worldviews, value systems and attitudes towards the Other' (Tuhiwai Smith 2012:45). However, the similarities between Western feminism and Mana Wahine are sparse. Mana Wahine as a framework was created by Māori women for Māori women, leaving little room for the othering of Māori women. In fact, Mana Wahine is described as a framework through which 'Māori women can explore the complexities of our lives, so that our differences are viewed not in terms of negative dualisms, but as part of the wider societal and cultural constructions which are among our everyday realities' (Johnson and Pihama 1995:85). Implicit in 'complexities' and 'differences' is the idea that Māori women are not a homogenous group and that there is no model of a 'real' or 'acceptable' Māori woman.

Mana Wahine is an exploration of the diversity of narratives and experiences of Māori women (Simmonds 2011) that leaves little room for the homogenisation of Māori women in research. For this reason, Mana Wahine as a theoretical framework does not other Māori women like Western feminism may do for women of colour; instead it seeks to accept and explore the complexities of their differences. Te Awēkotuku disagrees with the idea of feminism as an imported Pākehā idea because

feminism is what we make it; it's the matter of how we define it for ourselves, in terms of our own oppression as women. And no one can deny that in the last two centuries Māori women have lost, or been deprived of, economic, social, political and spiritual power; and this loss, this erosion of power – or mana – or authority, invites a feminist analysis, or feminist view, of what has happened. (1991:10)

This research project encompasses the narratives and characteristics of the atua wāhine with a diverse grouping of Māori women. In line with the idea that Māori women are diverse is the acknowledgement that not all Māori women will feel comfortable acknowledging the atua wāhine; some may not want to. In a critique of Kahukiwa artwork, Diamond acknowledges that there will be women who identify as Māori but may feel alienated 'by Kahukiwa and Awatere's portrayals of Māori women' (1999:310). She describes the use of essentialist notions of Māori women and female Māori deities as alienating in this instance. Māori women who are not comfortable acknowledging atua wāhine narratives are entitled to their views in a Mana Wāhine framework, which allows for a complexity of diverse belief systems. Regardless, this thesis facilitates the conscientisation of atua wāhine narratives so that Māori women can create their own belief systems or multiple modes of thinking, if that is what resonates with them.

### 3.3 The Oral Interviews

This research focuses on the diverse views of a small group of Māori women who have a connection with the atua wāhine. The canon of academics who write about mana wahine and the atua wāhine is not large, and their words in the literature have been drawn on for a large part of this project. On account of this, for the interviews, women outside of this sphere of academia were sought, with one notable exception. Most of the interviewees were found from within my existing social networks, with a few suggestions from other women who knew the research kaupapa, through the Snowball selection method. The ethicality of this research from a kaupapa Māori perspective was demonstrated through the principles of koha in terms of a voucher given to each woman after the interview, manaaki through the sharing of tea and kai and kanohi ki te kanohi wherever possible to establish a physical connection with the participants. These are discussed in further detail below.

While drafting the research proposal for this thesis, eight participants were established to constrain the scope. At the end of data collation, nine semi-structured interviews had been completed with nine women, ranging from 45 minutes to two and a half hours. Drawing from a Mana Wahine theoretical framework, the interviewees were not to be representative of all Māori women, therefore there was no need to gather data from a larger sample size to support a claim of representation.

Ethics approval was granted by the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee in May 2018 (HEC0000025851). The women who had been identified as possible interviewees were sent an email inviting them to participate in this project. They were under no obligation to participate and were provided with the option for a phone call to discuss the project and answer any questions. All participants were emailed an information sheet and participant consent form and given time to withdraw from the project after the interview. The consent form allowed interviewees to be named or assigned a pseudonym. For the participant list, all interviewees chose to be named. Interviews were semi-structured and as already mentioned, were done kanohi ki te kanohi, except for one, which was conducted over the phone as requested by the interviewee. This was because this was most convenient for the participant. Sometimes I travelled to the women so as to interview them in a place that felt safe for them, which included travelling outside of Te

Whanganui-a-Tara. If interviewing off-campus, at all times, my supervisor was made aware.

A difference was noted between the interviews that took place *kanohi ki te kanohi*, and the phone interview. For example, the experience of not being able to look the participant in the eyes and gauge their body language in response to a question. It also seemed easier to miscommunicate over the phone. However, the phone interview was successful in that important information relevant to the kaupapa was discussed. Based on the circumstances of this participant, a phone interview was more than justified.

At the beginning of the interview, the women were asked if they would like to begin with a *karakia*. The *karakia* was a commonly used traditional one shared with the researcher by a Māori woman in the years prior to beginning this project. Then the participant was given a copy of the semi-structured interview schedule and asked the opening question, 'Where are you from?' From then onwards, the questioning was intuitive and flexible. Many of the participants expressed satisfaction in coming together to discuss the *atua wāhine*, a kaupapa that is not often talked about.

Refreshments were brought to each interview in the form of savouries, cakes and herbal tea, though often these were consumed after the completion of the interview. Most of the time, after the completion of the interview and without any prior arrangement, we as two women would share a tea together and eat the *kai*. Though not done purposefully, in hindsight, this may have served to *whakanoa* any *tapu* that had arisen during the interview and strengthened the relationship. A \$20 *koha* in the form of a voucher was offered to each participant.

In the body of the text, referring to participants by their surname is considered common academic protocol. However, in a Māori context the use of surnames can be considered disrespectful, particularly when referring to elders (Yates-Smith 1998:19). As there are no double-ups in first names, it was decided that first names would be preferable to surnames only and if a surname was required, the participant list could be referred to. Participants were advised of this and given the option to change; one chose a pseudonym instead.

### 3.4 Methodology

Interview recordings were left for at least a week before transcribing took place, allowing the kōrero to be processed by the researcher. Interviews were transcribed in a private office with headphones. Transcription assisted with the development of an indepth knowledge of the interviews. Transcriptions were sent to the interviewee for review, with interviewees advised they could make changes and remove text from the transcript. At least one interviewee removed some sentences. For the first read-through, I read each transcript, highlighting sections of interest and making notes. In the second read-through, quotes were highlighted for their potential inclusion under a series of themes. This is called Thematic Analysis, a flexible ‘method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (Braun and Clarke 2006). Also highlighted were contradictions. NVivo as tool for qualitative data analysis was considered, but in the end a more intuitive approach was chosen, one that relied on the researcher as a Māori woman to make connections within the data. Thirty-four themes were originally identified in the data. A full list of themes are shown in the appendices. It was interesting to see what had arisen from the kōrero, but it was clear there would need to be a narrowing of themes. These are explored in Chapter Four: Contextualising the Wāhine.

### 3.5 Chapter Summary

The Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theoretical frameworks have been used by Māori women seeking to deconstruct and then reconstruct pre-colonial ways of being that have been used through colonisation to marginalise Māori women. Kaupapa Māori gives Māori researchers sovereignty over the process and allows Māori-focused research to be centred rather than othered, relegated to the margins of the academic institute. In addition to the strong cultural framework provided in Kaupapa Māori for data collection, it is suggested that guidance on data analysis utilising a Kaupapa Māori framework could be beneficial for Māori researchers. Mana Wahine is an extension of the Kaupapa Māori framework that allows the researcher to delve into the intersectionality of being Māori and female. As a framework it acknowledges the diversity and complexity of experiences that Māori women face in their everyday lives. There is no one-size-fits-all under Mana Wahine, only the idea that Māori women are not a homogenous group and there is no model of a ‘real’ or ‘acceptable’ Māori woman. The oral interview process for this thesis is described under a Kaupapa Māori framework. The methodology of data analysis was thematic. In Chapter Four: Contextualising the Wāhine, an analysis of participant interviews is introduced, as is the Mana Wahine Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine Framework.





Figure 3. Papa by Izzy Joy Te Aho-White  
(Source: Izzy Joy Te Aho-White n.d.)

## Chapter Four: Contextualising the Wāhine

Presented here is an analysis of interviews with nine Māori women on the atua wāhine. This chapter argues that there is a correlation between wai and wāhine. In this chapter we begin with Te Whare Tangata and then Papatūānuku. An alternative creation story is shared by one of the interviewees, Hinewirangi, which introduces the vast expanse of water that is Wainuiātea. The ones who follow Papatūānuku in the layers of whakapapa, the atua wāhine, are considered next.

The atua wāhine that were discussed in the interviews included Papatūānuku, Hinetītama, Hinenuitepō, Hinepūkohurangi, Ānianiwā, Hinemoana, Hine Raumati, Hine Takurua, Hinepūtehue, Hineraukatauri, Te Whe and Hau-Mapuhia. The ones whose names occurred more frequently are separated into their own theme. Towards the end, several themes are explored that relate to us as the descendants of Hinetītama, matakite and colonisation.

In the list below, participants are named in full with their iwi affiliations. Names are presented in alphabetical order and the interviewees range in age from 20s to 70s. It was important for the interviewees to encompass a full spectrum of the stages of life development to be able to contrast the experiences and meanings that are attributed to the atua wāhine.

### Interviewees

Anahera Gildea	Ngāti Rāukawa ki te Tonga, Ngāti Tūkorehe
Ariana Tikao	Kāi Tahu
Aroha Yates-Smith	Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Maniapoto, Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Rongowhakaata
Hinewirangi Kohu Morgan	Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Ranginui
Kahu Kutia	Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Porou
Marie Cocker	Te Āti Awa

Ria Wineera-Hodges	Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Kāi Tahu
Sian Montgomery-Neutz	Ngāi Tara, Muaūpoko
Te Ataahou Mataamua	Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa, Te Arawa, Ngāti Ruapani

## 4.1 Te Whare Tangata

Wairua or wai e rua is described by Ria as the two waters within the whare tangata. The whare tangata as a physical manifestation is an example of wai e rua, because it has access to the spiritual realm or the nights of te Pō during the creation of the child. The whare tangata is intimately connected with water, as amniotic fluid in the uterus made of 99% water and electrolytes (Institut de pathologie n.d.).

Also containing water is the menstrual bleeding of women. Blood consists of two main components, plasma and formed elements (Virtual Medical Centre 2008) with plasma made up of around 90% water (DonatingPlasma n.d.). All of the menstrual practices that were shared by the interviewees involved the submerging of menstrual rags in water. At Anahera's grandmother's, they used rags that would go into a bucket:

[...] out at the wash house outside of the house, and all the women's period gear would go into the bucket in the freezing cold water that would get rinsed in a new fresh bucket, until all of the blood had come out ... [...]. And it was such a thing to be introduced into your period that way and it wasn't a negative, it wasn't gross, you were quite proud to have your rag in the bucket. [...] I love the notion that we don't have now of all these women's, intergenerational women in the one house, all of their period blood together and given back to Papatūānuku.

The rinsing of the menstrual rags in the water is described almost as a ritualistic act that enabled Anahera to feel a sense of pride in her monthly bleeding. She talks about how this monthly bleeding connects her to all the other women in the house, her intergenerational relatives. The monthly bleeding connects all Māori women through whakapapa right back to Papatūānuku, and if we consider the alternative creation narrative as is described in Chapter 4.3 Alternative Creation Narrative, then it may also connect them to Wainuiātea as the vast expanse of water.

Similarly, Hinewirangi's girls were given a little rubbish bin with their names written on it. These were filled with water, lined up along the toilet wall and in these the girls put their blood-filled pads. She referred to this time as "moontime," a clear

reference to Hineteiwaiwa and the connection between the menstrual cycles of women and the lunar cycle. This is explained further in Chapter 2.33: Hineteiwaiwa and Chapter 4.54: Hineteiwaiwa. Then, with a karakia for Papatūānuku, she would guide them to take out the water and squeeze out the blood.

We would squeeze out all of their... own toto, their own specialty... and I would talk story around the whare tangata and how this was about the dying away of those prunes, that seed mai Rangiātea couldn't cling to the wall eh. Because it wasn't their time, so they would die away, and the body would cleanse in this way. [...] then we would whakahokia te toto kei roto i a Papatūānuku and have a karakia around Papa and about this menstrual flow and the lunar month.

It is not known if these were disposable or reusable menstrual pads. If disposable, the extra act of squeezing out the blood indicates more than just the practical need to re-use the pads. Hinewirangi describes the seed of Rangiātea as the menstruation that has come away from the lining of the uterus. Rangiātea is both a place in Hawaiiki and point of final dispersal of some waka, as well as the house of the atua tāne (Te Aka 2019). Rangiātea is also named in the waiata He Kākano Ahau, where the seed born of greatness is scattered from Rangiātea and the line of rangatira.

Anahera mourned the loss of the traditional practice she shared with her grandmother: 'I mourn something that is lost in that. I mourn something about that.' Ariana had her own practices for her menstrual cycle that are based on 'certain things I know and do that are associated to my own cycle as well'. She preferred not to share as 'it's not so much a public thing - more personal'. It is clear that these menstrual practices have deep rooted meaning for the women who talked about them, so much so that their loss with the passing generation left a feeling of sadness with Anahera.

Hinewirangi shared a waiata that was written by John Rangihau and some of the Ataarangi people in the early days. The waiata refers to kawē uri, the sacred waka on the river of the awa o te tangata, the awa o te atua, the sacred bleeding of women. In it is also a reference to Hinetītama.

*Kōtiro he mokopuna koe*

*Nā Hineītama waiwai ana*

*Nā karu titiro hangatu*

*Ki te whakaira tangata*

*He whakatōngia*

*Nō atua whakarere te mana*

*O te tāne o te wāhine*

*Wāhine ko tō mana he waka*

*Kawe uri ka ranga mai o āna te ā wairua*

*Pūpū ake tō aroha koe*

*He tino roimata koe*

*He mātāpuna o te tangata*

*Puna o te mata huranga*

*Mana a wāhine*

*Mana a wāhine*

*Mana a wāhine*

*He mana wāhine*

Water features in this waiata. We have the sacred waka on the menstrual bleeding of Māori women, the source of the people. This waiata ‘puts a whole new life, a whole new reason that we as women bleed’ (Hinewirangi). As the woman becomes older, the menstruating waters dry up as she goes through menopause. Hinewirangi introduces the term the rūruhi, ‘the old woman that has to take care of almost everything. Most care of the feminine aspect of the whare tangata and keeping it sacred’ (Hinewirangi). Perhaps she is referring to the drying of the Māori women’s menstrual waters. Menopause may be the threshold, when this important stage of life is opened up to the older Māori women.

Referring back to the participants, Hineteiwaiwa is described as commanding the flow and the ebb of the menstrual river, the lunar and menstrual cycle. The tides are also affected by the moon, with Kahu noting that ‘I feel like going back to the moon. I think that water is really connected to that as well’. The influence of the moon on the tides of water is also connected by Sian to the narrative of Rona and the moon. Although she heard this story as a child, it was not until later in life that Sian understood a deeper meaning to the story.

... later on I started to realise the depth of it [...] when you look a bit deeper you realise that what she was doing she was doing for her kids. She was going out at night all of the things that mothers do and so I started to sort of see it in a different way. And of course, her connection with the tides and her femininity and all of that.

Thus, Sian’s reflection on Rona’s story as a mother with children allows her to unearth deeper meaning, and release Rona from her confinement as the angry woman who cursed the moon. Instead she becomes a mother getting water for her kids, someone to be empathised with, the story taking on an added dimension of symbolising the connection between Māori women and the moon.

One of the earliest waiata Ariana wrote was ‘about the moon and the effects that the moon had on me and it was about uha, [...] celebrating Papatūānuku and our moon and how she relates to wāhine.’ She remembered being ‘drawn out to the moon’ one night and being inspired to write that waiata in acknowledgement of the moon’s beauty. Similarly, as a child Hinewirangi was mesmerised by the moon.

I would be out there dancing my eyes off when I was young, the moons full. And I didn’t even have to see the moon, it could be clouded over but I would be out there dancing. [...] I had a relationship with the lunar. With the moon. With te marama. With whoever people want to call her you know. Whatever that aristocratic Hineteiwaiwa eh.

These experiences highlight the connection between Māori women and the moon, the lunar and menstrual cycles. They also talk to the importance of acknowledging the presence of the moon and the moon’s beauty. It leads to the question as to

whether pre-colonial Māori women had their own traditional rituals, ceremonies or practices related to the moon.

Anecdotally, I was told by a colleague in Māori Studies (personal communication) that some midwives claim more babies are born at the time of the full moon.

According to Murphy, Hineteiwaiwa was deified as the moon (2008) and the atua wāhine to be called on during childbirth is also Hineteiwaiwa. ‘Kōrero atu ki a Hineteiwaiwa. To make that passageway clear. To shine her light clearly on this child. To give us that directness’ (Hinewirangi). Hineteiwaiwa was also the first woman to recite a karakia during the difficult birth of her son (Yates-Smith 1998).

Ria talked about her experience reading the Kahukiwa and Grace book *Wahine Toa*, referring to it as re-awakening in her the idea of becoming a mother. ‘There were images of women breastfeeding their children and how Ukaipō and I don't know, they just made me feel really blessed to be able to have a child and they fitted my image, so I could see myself doing that, I could see myself nurturing a child’. The stages of labour are again described as the nights of te Pō, a reference also made by Kahukiwa and Grace (1984) and Reed (2004).

Te Pō, well hell. We've been to Te Pō those of us who have given birth. There's the whole nights of, Pō, te Pō. Te Pō nui, te Pō uriuri, te Pō tangotango and you come all the way into the eighth month of the whare tangata being housed, filled and you are in the night of te Po tahuri atu, and then the ninth month te Pō tahuri atu ki te taiao that means the turning and the birthing into the world eh. So, we are in te Pō when we are in pregnancy because those are the nights of Pō.

(Hinewirangi)

The stages of labour are divided up into the nights of te Pō, one night for each month. In reference to childbirth, the nights of te Pō represent one month of the nine-month gestation period.

At the time of her children's birth, the medical community did not allow Marie to follow the pre-colonial traditions of her tīpuna, the returning of the whenua to Papatūānuku. ‘You didn't question what was happening to the placenta or anything like that. There was just no question.’ Though this tradition had not been available to



her as a mother, she reclaimed this tradition for her whānau by assisting her brother and his wife to bury the placenta of their children. 'I brought my brother and his wife two trees and then I talked to them about bringing their placentas home' (Marie). Similarly, Hinewirangi reclaimed the tradition for her mokopuna. His whenua was buried under the trees in her pā rongoa forest at home.

His placenta was placed under the first kauri tree I planted, then his sisters under the other kauri tree, and all the other children under rimu, kahikatea, karaka berry, rewa, and all the mamaku and ferns that I have. I put into this space beautiful carvings of stones, clay, representing all the spirits of my forest and it this space that is so special how I choose it was simple, this is my house I am paying a mortgage. We have three babies' foetus' in there as well and they have ferns and things that are beautiful around them, and I am here to look after them. I believe those living in suburban spaces can buy big beautiful pots that are just beautiful and moveable and place the pito whenua in them with low growing rongoa like runa. The alternative is to take them home to the urupā and bury them beside tīpuna. (Hinewirangi)



Figure 4. Hinewirangi's Māra (Source: Hinewirangi 2018)

Although her home is suburban, this beautiful account of her pā rongoa forest as seen in Figure 4 shows that Māori women's childbirth practices can still be maintained. The burying of the whenua in urupā today may be unrealistic for some Māori women. This could be for any number of reasons, including relocation and dislocation from their rohe. Other Māori women may not know the tikanga around this process and/or have connections to those that need be asked for permission. Hinewirangi's example presents an alternative.

In her garden, Hinewirangi also has stones representative of the spirits of the forest. Makereti refers to 'mauri' which was a sort of stone, stone image or carved stick that was placed in the ground to give life to the garden (1986:180). Best called these stones taunga atua (1982:80). An alternative to mauri stones are pou atua. Hutchings describes these as pou that are placed in the māra to connect it to the atua. One of the examples provided is Pou atua Papatūānuku, a totem to connect and honour the energies of Papatūānuku (2015).

## 4.2 Papatūānuku

Papatūānuku and Ranginui are the primeval parents. She represents the crust of the land, the earth. From Papatūānuku was formed Hineahuone, the connection between the divine parents and the first human being, Hinetītama. Papatūānuku is ‘everything. Everything to me. That brown. The brown, the red clay. [...] I don’t imagine her as a person. She is definitely the concept of land in the form of women’ (Ria). Ria’s description of the brown and red clay of Papatūānuku refers to the uha which was found at Kurawaka, and conjures up images of the browning-red menstrual clumps of women: the sloughed uterine lining, which has the potentiality to be the seed from which human life comes forth. Another image arising from Ria’s description is the brown and red clumps of Papatūānuku from which Hineahuone was formed with the help of the male element. This narrative is an mirror-image of the human reproductive process.

For Kahu, Papatūānuku is more than an atua: ‘She is just everything. She is more than that...’ There’s a sense of mana imbued in the symbolism of Papatūānuku, a ‘sense of wāhine and a sense of bossness. Yeah, she the boss (laughs)’ (Anahera). For these women, Papatūānuku is the overarching concept of atua wāhine. She is someone they identify with on all levels, her influence completely encompassing all aspects of their lives. She represents the pinnacle of mana wāhine as shown through her strength and overarching status that encompasses everything on Planet Earth.

Hinewirangi cultivates her relationship with Papatūānuku through her suburban garden. She describes Papatūānuku’s wisdom as she provides the foods necessary for a healthy body during the different seasons.

My beautiful garden out of the side of my house, where I feed myself, I only eat what comes in the winter. So, I grow kale, spinach, silverbeet. I’ve got out there and I eat kūmara and potato and I grow, also cabbage is growing out there and that’s it. I don’t have salads in the winter because they are not in the whenua. Papa she puts out oranges you know? Oranges, lemons, mandarins, grapefruit, that’s what the fruit is of the winter. Why? Because they’ve got calcium, they’ve got vitamin C that we so need for now.

In this statement, she is acknowledging the wisdom of Papatūānuku as shown by the cyclical fruiting that according to her, balances the nutritional requirements of the people. If Papatūānuku is cared for properly, she can provide nourishment for the people through her abundance. However, if she is not cared for then her ability to grow food is hindered, linking Papatūānuku with kaitiakitanga, the need for guardianship and care. Hinewirangi's garden is cared for, thus it provides for her abundantly. We can see the opposite in land that has been cleared of all vegetation, or drenched in pesticides that permeate the soil until it can no longer sustain growth. Kahu talks about the arrogance of those who think they are greater than Papatūānuku, 'even translating that into modern day thought like as sustainability and that kind of stuff. Why we should look after the whenua because she is actually greater than us and it's arrogant to think any differently. Like literally our food comes from her.'

Ariana shares her experience of listening to Katerina Mataira talk about Papatūānuku, a message she was sharing to all of Māoridom. In this message Mataira shares the indigenous knowledge that everyone on this planet needs to raise up to another level of awareness, awareness that likely includes the need to nourish Papatūānuku instead of continuing to take from her.

I met Katerina Mataira in Christchurch not long before she passed away and she was delivering these kinds of messages. She was going all around the country talking about what was happening to the world and it was a really strong message about Papatūānuku... in Māori [...] she said that Papatūānuku wanted to raise up to another level. Spiritually. And that in order for that to happen people had to rise up as well to another level of awareness. [...] ... she also had spoken a lot to other indigenous people around the world and they were all saying the same thing, and it was her job to kind of let Te Iwi Māori know. Not long after she passed away the Christchurch earthquake happened, and I was thinking that maybe it that was connected to that as well - a big massive shake-up. And there has been a lot of unrest I suppose physically in the world, earthquakes and volcanoes...

Ariana hints at the physical movements of the earth's crust, suggesting that this could be a physical manifestation of a spiritual shift being undergone by Papatūānuku which perhaps also could be linked to the systemic abuse of Papatūānuku by her many descendants. Many Māori communities have been working to heal Papatūānuku through kaitiakitanga, the guardianship of Papatūānuku (Te Aka 2019). This narrative also reflects the status of the Indigenous peoples as the holders and sharers of these types of knowledge. An example of these types of knowledges is the hua parakore framework, developed by Te Waka Kai Ora to grow kai in the māra. It draws on mātauranga and the wisdom of whānau and hapū to culminate in six kaupapa. These are whakapapa, wairua, mana, māramatanga, mauri and te ao tūroa (Hutchings 2015).

### 4.3 Alternate Creation Narrative

One of the interviewees, Hinewirangi, shared an alternative creation story. Her narrative begins with the partnership between Wainuiātea and Ranginui, who had only women as children, the atua wāhine pertaining to water. Like all variations of the creation narratives, this version is likely to have been derived from certain tribal areas and is not necessarily found across all iwi and hapū, and yet if it was included before the Rangi and Papa narrative, it may be closer to scientific origination theories of earth.

Hinewirangi prefaces this narrative with an explanation of the first three months of pregnancy. ‘For the three months in the growth of that childhood, for three months the child is female. The world is female. All female. Eh. They have the androgen bath and the X Y chromosomes kick in and next minute your sexuality and your gender is announced. But our tūpuna knew that.’

And those women were Hinemoana, Hinepūkohurangi, Parawhenuamea all the atua wāhine that are of water. Hinekorako, Hinepipiwai, Hinepapawai. Ngā atua o ngā... and for Kahungunu was Hinekorako. Because she is the prism that comes over the spraying of a waterfall. And it is just so utterly beautiful eh in that knowing. But then Wainuiātea, and typical wāhine, knew that she needed the male aspect. So, she said to Hinemoana, open your waters so that Father will look upon Papatūānuku. Now, in some stories they say that Tangaroa was her husband first. And some stories, our stories say that Tangaroa was one of her sons. [...]. So, Hinemoana is asked to open her waters. And she hates the fact that she has to open her waters, she hates it because she knows that her father is going to look at Papatūānuku and lift her out of the waters. And between them two [Ranginui and Papatūānuku] they gave birth to seventy-one sons.

This could be a uniquely Ngāti Kahungunu account due to their coastal location. Tina Ngata describes a similar narrative (2018) from Ngāti Porou, also along the East Coast. This version provides for cosmological balance among the atua, agreeing that in Māori narratives where there is an atua tāne, there is often an atua wahine. Rangiātea is the house of the male atua (Te Aka 2019) so it would seem to make

sense if Wainuiātea was the birthplace of the female atua, nevertheless, only Rangiātea is included in the Te Aka dictionary.

According to this narrative, after the partnership of Wainuiātea and Ranginui, Papatūānuku is lifted up from the water and also enters into a partnership with Ranginui, resulting in her children, the seventy-one atua tāne. A recent study utilising primitive meteorite sample analysis (Sarafian et al. 2014) suggests that during the formation of our planet, water most likely formed at the same time as rock. The findings from this study suggest that Planet Earth formed as a wet planet, with water on the surface. An Australian National University study that analysed mineral grains from Western Australia came to a similar conclusion. It is their hypothesis that 4.4 billion years ago, the earth was flat, with no mountains and almost entirely covered in water (Burnham and Berry 2017). It is possible that a partnership between Wainuiātea and Ranginui could be a cosmological account of the early Earth which was covered in a surface layer of water, with few or no mountains emerging above the surface, the different aspects of these waters personified as the female children of Wainuiātea and Ranginui. Therein, Hinewirangi's creation narrative could exist alongside the formation of the earth as suggested by the Western scientific studies above. Wainui-atea is mentioned by Best in Māori Religion and Mythology Part 2 as the vast water expanse and second wife of Rangi who produced Moana-nui or the Great Ocean, according to the narratives of the Turanga tribal peoples (1982).

Hinewirangi describes Wainuiātea not just as the expanse of water covering the earth but also as the *whare tangata*, emphasising the connection between women and water.

... us as *wāhine* will go, 'Ko Wainuiātea *rāua ko Ranginui tēnā kōrua, tēnā kōrua.*' Because we are acknowledging the water flows, that go in every one of us 85% water, the water of the *whare tangata* to keep the babies safe and floating and clean. The waters of our tears. And so, we greet Wainuiātea. But not too many people know that.

She says that she experienced Wainuiātea in her first three months in her mother's *whare tangata*. As already described in 4.1 Te Whare Tangata, water and electrolytes

make up 99% of amniotic fluid in the mothers womb. At this time, the baby is surrounded by water, like scientists suggest the early Earth was. Hinewirangi's suggestion that at the beginning of gestation, all babies are female has been proven by science. For approximately the first 6-7 weeks after gestation, all human individuals develop from a phenotypically female starting point (Institute of Medicine 2001). The Y chromosome induces changes that result in the development of the testes after this time period (Institute of Medicine 2001). If the water covering the surface of the earth is personified as female and the earth was originally covered in water then this cosmological reality mirrors the femaleness of new human life before the expression of the Y chromosome at 6-7 weeks.

Hinewirangi believes that she can revisit Wainuiātea depending on the work she is doing '... like that is the way I was taught, that was my Wainuiātea in my first three months of my being, as well as I am very much Wainuiātea right now. And I'm not working with it, I'm working in a women's world, so I know I work with Wainuiātea. Or whether I work with Papatūānuku or not.' In this she is saying that although she is no longer physically in the whare tangata, she can access that form of energy, that of being surrounded by the waters of Wainuiātea at any time, particularly when she is working in the women's world.



#### 4.4 Atua Wāhine

Grouped together collectively the atua wāhine were described as the embodiment of maternal love. Aroha saw them ‘as whaea and you know kuia. That incredibly eternal embodiment of the feminine and the maternal aroha.’ A collective of whaea and kuia, mothers, aunties and nannies, they are also considered to be a symbol and source of the female strength. Marie describes the female in te ao Māori as ‘...strength, right? That real wahine toa, real strength. And I see it as the wāhine having the knowledge, right? So, for me there’s been lots of examples in my life – you know – with my nans and my aunties [...] I feel like the strength is in the women.’ Again, we have the reference to the nans and the aunties, the embodied strength found within a collective of Māori women who are older and considered therefore to be wiser than the individual self.

Some of the atua wāhine, particularly Papatūānuku as has already been described in Chapter 4.2 Papatūānuku, were seen as a personification, a divine being as representing an abstraction (Merriam Webster 2019, personification entry). If we look at the macro and micro levels, the whenua of Papatūānuku is also the placenta of Māori women. She is also the individual land block, the eye-full of nature as is glimpsed by the individual person, the mountain or mountain range of Māori whānau, hapū and iwi. She is Aotearoa, Hawaiiki and all of the land of Planet Earth in its entirety as seen from space. ‘The whenua is Papatūānuku, whenua is where tangata, whenua is you know your placenta. This is whenua, this is atua wāhine’ (Anahera).

Anianiwā was called the rainbow goddess by Hinewirangi. She described Anianiwā in contrast with the atua tāne, Uenuku.

... the small one and then you see Uenuku over the top of her like that. There’s two, you know when there’s a twin rainbow? Anianiwā. She only comes up in special times, she doesn’t pack a sad like those emotional atua, you know gods that just want to put up their things like that.

In this construction we can see that there are two personifications of the same natural phenomenon, the rainbow. There is both an atua tāne and atua wahine

personification, a male and female side. The different ways in which the rainbow was seen, perceived or expressed by nature defined whether or not it was an ‘Anianiwā’ rainbow or an ‘Uenuku’ rainbow. The rainbow is only seen when the light reflects off the rain, perhaps another connection to the watery nature of many of the atua wāhine.

A characteristic perhaps particular to the atua wāhine is their descriptions which describe immense beauty. Hinetītama is described as a beauty that makes the eyes glisten in the well-known whakataukī: ‘Ko Hinetītama koe, matawai ana te whatu i te tirohanga’ (Mead and Grove 2001:229, cited in Mikaere 2017:30). Hinewirangi describes Hinenuitepō as the most beautiful, tall and slender with long, dark hair. For Hinewirangi, living the ways of the atua wāhine includes choosing to live a life of earthly beauty.

So what relationship do we have? Eh. My whare. I live in beauty. In the beauty, a rēhia. The goddesses and the gods of beauty... [...]. I mean our atua are so evident in this house, in this whenua. They are just there.

The beautiful objects, things and perhaps at a deeper level the beauty of the mauri or life force in Hinewirangi’s house may be what enables her to connect with the atua wāhine, to dial in to their ‘frequency’.

The different women often had a particular atua wāhine, or grouping of atua wāhine that they felt they connected with more strongly. Ariana, a taonga pūoro artist, spoke of the atua wāhine relating to musical instruments, Hineraukatauri and Hinepūtehue. Hineraukatauri was described as ‘the atua relating to flutes and there is really beautiful kōrero around her and the shape of the pūtōrino being the shape of the case moth, her whare that she lives in’. Hinepūtehue was acknowledged as ‘the atua associated with gourds and gourd instruments’. Although there are many atua for Ariana, ‘those are the two that kind of resonate mostly for me,’ suggesting that perhaps a creative passion and/or profession can determine the atua called on by the individual: the ones whom the individual will choose or be guided to “tune” into. However, one day on a rongoā course, the tutor told her that the atua Te Whē, an atua associated with sound, was aligned with her. She was really interested by this

because ‘that is the world I am exploring at the moment through sound healing and bringing taonga pūoro back into that space’.

From a young age Anahera felt a strong connection to the atua tāne, Tāwhirimātea. Her mother would say to her that she was:

... roiling and storm bringing like that [laughs] that I am the elements, you know? Like that I have the energy of the elements in that sense. You know like this kind of [storm noise] and fighty behaviour but not like war. Not like Tūmataunga, not that kind of feeling, more wild than that actually... less directed.

From both Ariana and Anahera’s examples we can see that a connection to a particular atua can be ‘assigned’ by those around the individual. In Ariana’s example it was her rongoā tutor, for Anahera it was her mother. However, in both cases there was felt to be a deep meaning and attachment to that particular atua as a way in which to navigate the world around them.

Hinenuitepō is referred to by Marama as ‘my most prominent,’ ‘the strongest presence and she is also the one that taught me the most in terms of lessons’. This suggests that the atua who is most prominent for each individual is the one whom lessons are learned from, which is why Māui may be so prominent for Māori men, as there are many lessons from his narratives that can be unpacked to provide guidance and meaning.

Hinewirangi noted the similarities between her name and Hinepūkohurangi, even sharing the story of how her whānau got the last name Kohu. ‘My name is Hinewirangi Kohu. Only a pū. I have grown up in the mist. That is where Kohu comes from, our name Kohu comes from...’ This suggests that a name can also provide a link to a particular atua wahine, and may be evidence of a strong connection to a particular place.

Certain places in nature were associated with the atua wāhine more than others. For Sian the beach was ‘a prime example of the immensity and the power of the environment’ and enabled her to tap into the atua and in particular, Hinemoana. She shared the whakataukī: ‘Te ngaunga o Hinemoana’, the ‘gnawing away of

Hinemoana', describing it as a reminder of 'how small we really are [...]... Hinemoana just doesn't stop, is ongoing forever and ever and ever, until further notice' (Sian).

Marama also talked about Hau-Mapuhia, an atua wahine associated with her tribal rohe and an ancestor of her people (Ngāi Tūhoe). Although she had a 'staunchly ringatū' upbringing with its own faith and atua, she referred to Hau-Mapuhia as being 'of atua status' and shared a version of Hau-Mapuhia's narrative:

He sent her off to go get wai. [...]. And she went to a reservoir – of sorts – but a tapu one for convenience and brought it back to her dad. By her doing that, he lashed out and turned her into a taniwha. But she needed to get out to sea. So, she went east towards. So, here's Waikaremoana right, here's Gisborne and here's the sea. Here's Wairoa, here's the sea. She had to go east. So, she took off through the valleys trying to get out to sea. And she took all her inlets until she got there, but she didn't really get there, and then the sun came up and she was turned to stone.

In this case, the particular valleys and inlets in the tribal rohe are personified as Hau-Mapuhia. The narrative provides a history of the creation of that part of the land according to the tangata whenua. It is not known how those particular valleys and inlets were formed, whether by earthquake or some other geological transformation. However, it is possible that in some cases taniwha have been used to represent geological upheavals such as the one described in this narrative. In this narrative Hau-Mapuhia is out collecting water for her people, like Rona and the moon, yet again symbolising the affinity Māori women have with water.

In the Māori creation narratives, every individual can trace their whakapapa back to the primeval pair, Rangi and Papa. This is the inherent mana atua of the person, their divine right. Hineahuone is the connection between the atua and the first human being, Hinetītama, and we are all descendants of Hinetītama through whakapapa. Hinewirangi talks to the inherent mana atua of each and every individual Māori person.

[...] we have a whakapapa that says that. You see Hinetītama, Hinetītama. Well we've got Tāne, and he marries Hineahuone. Hineahuone and they have Hinetītama. Now most of us can whakapapa back to Hinetītama right? Well Hinetītama is partially divine because of her father and partially earth. So that makes us our full divinity. (Hinewirangi)

Through this whakapapa, Māori can connect with the atua through mana atua and the expression of mana wahine/mana tāne. Because there are both male and female elements in the Māori creation narratives, a Māori woman who draws from her full whakapapa is not confined by gender stereotypes in her desire to act. She can be both Hinetiwaia and Māui, though she may feel her connection to the female element, the atua wāhine as stronger.

The atua were considered by the interviewees to be a form of energy and/or strength that could be called on at different times. The atua wāhine were seen to hold a different kind of energy to the atua tāne, one that is more suitable at certain times and contexts dependent on the needs of the individual. Together, both the male and female elements of Māori narratives provide balance and complementarity to Māori individuals, whānau, hapū and iwi.

The atua wāhine were described as a form of energy to be called on when needed. According to Sian, 'I believe our atua are energies, different types of energy. So, I think if we enable ourselves to sort of move freely between them to channel those energies.' This was supported by Ria who believed that 'with the spirit of our wāhine atua, it just depends on what one you want to tap into... because they are always there for us.' All of the atua wāhine were considered to be important because each one of them, and their stories, represent aspects of the self. Hinewirangi called this expression of atua energy, which for Māori women is the expression of mana wāhine, as 'functioning in the ways of ngā atua.' In the two examples below, she switches from Hinenuitapo to Te Kore as she navigates the void, and then to Whaitiri as she strikes at the ones she loves to test them, to teach them necessary lessons.

... like I said I can be Hinenuitapo, next minute I can be Te Kore because I am in a world out there like, 'Don't bother me, I'm travelling, I'm seeing you and I'm up here in that void.' (Hinewirangi)

I am like a thunder, Whaitiri. Sometimes I am like the bloody, lightning eh at you. I come at your fast, be prepared. Because I function in the ways of ngā atua. (Hinewirangi)

Sian called the drawing of strength from the atua as channelling and believed that it was possible to channel different atua at different times as they are needed.

For me we probably all channel different atua [...] there might come a time when we have to channel a different one, or a different sort of energy. You know if you need a different type of strength or something [...]. I feel like we can kind of move between them like that. (Sian)

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, the word channel has a variety of meanings that include a 'natural stream of water,' 'a means of communication or expressions,' 'a way, a course, a direction of thought or action' and 'a band of frequencies of sufficient width for a single radio or television communication' (2019, channel entry). Yet again, we have a reference to water, a stream of water as though each atua wahine is her own stream within which her descendants can draw strength and energy from her. We also see communication and expression, a direction, thought or action in the definition of channel. This suggests the drawing of energy from the atua can also be a form of communication and expression, the sharing of thoughts. This connects with what is known of pre-colonial Māori creativity as it was believed that the source of the arts leads to the Gods, to the children of Rangi and Papa and to members of divine families (Moko Mead 2003:259-290). In other words, the energy, thoughts and actions taken to create Māori artwork came from the atua. Finally, there is the reference to a band of frequency. In a similar way to the stream metaphor, each of the atua could be seen as each holding their own frequency that can be tapped into when the individual or collective matches with it, which allows for the transfer of energy and thoughts in the same way you can hear the radio when you set it to the correct frequency.

According to Hinewirangi, we can also be told off by the atua wāhine when we shirk what they consider to be our important responsibility. She describes this as what happens to her when she tries to avoid important mahi because she is physically tired. It is as though she gets 'slapped. I get slapped by them too, I tell you.' She

describes it as a sense of being told off by them, as knowing that she needs to do something even though at a physical and mental level she does not want to. Dame Whina Cooper also referred to the mana of atua working through her. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2.4 Mana Wahine, she would find herself up all night, worrying and planning things, describing it as the mana: ‘Once you’ve got it, it never lets you alone’ (King 1983:8). This could be seen as the atua wanting Hinewirangi to express her mana wahine – through certain actions they believe are necessary for the empowerment of their descendants. When their will is pushed back against, the “slapping” is an expression of their desire for her to realign. Hinewirangi was jovial in her description about the “slapping”; it was not seen as a form of domination or power over her. It is something that is good for the person, even though it might not be what they want to hear or experience at that time. Similarly, the burning of the forest around Māui by Mahuika was good for him in the long run even though it must have been inconvenient at the time. This could be similar to the Māori individual who is asked by the leaders of their iwi, hapū or whānau to step into a role where they can express their mana and are expected to do so, even if it goes against their individual wishes because it is for the benefit of the collective. Hinewirangi remembered receiving an email inviting her to teach a workshop. At first, she read the email and thought: ‘Nah I’m just too lazy. [...]. I’m old. I can’t run around the country like you fellas can. Belt. Oh, I can feel it eh, I get whacked. All right, all right I’m coming.’ In the end, she gives in to their request to take the workshop, an expression of her mana through a position of leadership and education.

It is important to note that in today’s context we are living in ever changing circumstances. The world is changing so rapidly that it is necessary to have an array of atua to draw strength from. Māori women can draw from the characteristics, attributes and narratives of the atua wāhine to transform the challenges they face, just like Hinetītama and her transformation into Hinenuitepō. Anahera talks about this transition: ‘She had terrible circumstances occur and she discovered something that she couldn’t accept. But she wasn’t crushed by that. She had a new role and a really important one.’ It was also a role she chose for herself, it was not a role that was dictated to her. She stood in her mana and chose to become Hinenuitepō as a response to the challenges she was facing.

Māori women ‘don’t have to just be mums, we can be whatever we want. We can be multiple things. You can be a mum, sister, a kaikaranga’ (Ria). The karanga, an act only performed by Māori women, is the opening or the joining of two worlds, the spiritual and the physical (Ria). In a framework used by Hinewirangi to uncover the atuātanga within a person through her healing work, one of the key steps is the identification of the many different selves within the ‘me’ which is also shown by Ria above.

... this is me Hine. Me. [...]. I’m a mother, I’m a sister, I’m a daughter, I’m a granddaughter, mokopuna, I’m a great-great-great-great as many greats as you can go granddaughter. Eh? I am an artist, a carver. I’m a poet. See have a look at all the things you are. I’m a short-story teller. I’m a cook. I’m a good cook too. I’m a gardener. I’m an orchardist. [...]. And I could go on and on and on and on. [...]. I’m an atua. I’m an atua in the making. You’ve got to be able to tell yourself that. That we are atua. Doesn’t matter how young we are. We are in our early stages of atuātanga.

Hinewirangi’s explanation is a powerful example of the many different roles Māori women can and do play in their lives. Right at the centre of all these different selves is the being. It also demonstrates an intergenerational connection to tīpuna through whakapapa: ‘I’m a great-great-great... granddaughter’ (Hinewirangi). The breadth of roles played by the atua wāhine, for example Hinetītama, Hineteiwaiwa, Mahuika and Muriranga-whenua, support this viewpoint. But how do we go about applying the female elements to the self? One suggestion is to go inwards.

There are a whole number of women writing about atuātanga, but don’t know actually yet how to apply that atuātanga kei roto i ā rātou. You know? Inside. What does that mean? It’s okay to know it here, but what about here [the heart]? And how do you transpose that into the being eh? Because we are each one of those atua at any given time. (Hinewirangi)

It is this going inwards, to the chest, the birthplace of the aro-ha, the sacred breath (Hinewirangi), that is rooted in whakapapa. In the same way that ‘our past is our future and also our present’ (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:286), the atua who are in the



narratives of the past are also in our future, and part of our present, like an eternal circle and centred perhaps in the space of aroha, the ngākau, the heart.

#### 4.4.1 Hinetītama

Hinetītama is the daughter of Tāne and Hineahuone and the story of her descent to the spiritual realm is considered an important narrative by the participants. She is the kōtiro, the young girl. She is the rising sun in the morning, the sunset in the evening and the representation of the stunning young Māori woman. When Hinewirangi draws on Hinetītama, she is brightening up people's lives and 'singing their soul back into being.'

I can be Hinetītama, she is that morning one, you know that child of Tāne and Hineahuone, you know the first mother being born. I am Hineahuone too. And I can be Hinetītama, many a times, you know the bright sparkle, you have a brilliant idea, next minute. And you know if you are watching the sunset you can be looking at the sunset and one minute it's pink. And then the very next minute it's orange and where the hell? How did it change right there when you were watching? You've got to be really akin to the moment. Because it's like women's thinking, can change just like that. Ko Hinetītama koe. So, when my kids change their minds, 'Oh ko koe ko Hinetītama.' And that's okay. That makes it easy to know. Just because they don't want to think the way I do. They want to change their minds and flick over there you know.

We see the reference to Hinetītama, as the fleeting beauty of the sunset. It can change so quickly, like the fading beauty of a beautiful woman as the years spill past. Hinetītama is the changing in the moment, only visible to those who are really watching the sunset and are aware of what is going on around them. She refers to the changing minds of women and sometimes children as well as the ever-changing nature of Hinetītama, the flicking from here to there. In te reo, ... te tī, ... te tā translates into English to mean: 'all directions, all over the place, hither and thither' (Te Aka 2019). The tī-tā of Hinetītama is perhaps the changing of directions, the ability to change directions, flexibility in decision making.

Later on, Hinetītama becomes the Māori mother, with many children to Tāne, the male element. Her relationship with her daughter Hinerauwhārangi is seen to be the first mother-daughter model in the creation narratives. Hinetītama is a woman who has the ability to stand strong in her beliefs, and make firm decisions, symbolised

perhaps in ‘tū ā Hinetītama,’ an upright haka stance with both feet together (Te Aka 2019). Anahera found the story of Hinetītama and her choice to become Hinenuitepō to be ‘an important and awesome story for me and it became much more important later in my life [...] probably much stronger than any of the other stories, their story’. It was a time of grief for Anahera, around the passing of a child, and she was able to draw on the strength of Hinetītama at a moment of intense distress – her discovery of Tāne as her father – to assist her to navigate the level of grief that she now associates with Hinenuitepō. It was with the loss of her child, that Anahera entered the grieving nights of te Pō.

#### 4.4.2 Hinenuitepō

Hinenuitepō is a fundamental atua wāhine for the Hine element. Within the literature she is described as the archetypal grandmother, which is shown in her many manifestations such as the kuia, the wahine tipuna. Through these representations the unconditional love of the maternal side is shared to her descendants. She is a source of strength and healing, especially during times of intense stress, the enclosing arms of the women around the child, the safety and darkness of the womb and perhaps also the dark caves of Papatūānuku. She embodies unconditional love accessible even within the depths of despair, grief and pain. The ‘fundamental response of (the maternal side) is to love and protect and that is what [...] Hinenuitepō encapsulates I think’ (Aroha). For Marama, Hinenuitepō strongly represents unconditional love. She says, ‘... She (Hinenuitepō) is the keeper of that profound love.’

... If I was to give one word everyone would say unconditional love. [...] my grandmother talks about how it goes back to Hinenuitepō and the depth of your pain. He tino taonga te mate. So, you wouldn’t know what love is without death. Without Hinenuitepō. She is the epitome of love. It begins with her and ends with her. (Marama)

Marama’s grandmother is the one who teaches her about Hinenuitepō. Ria considers Hinenuitepō to be the archetypal grandmother, the older Māori woman. ‘They are not related to any specific living character but at the same time Hinenuitepō, she’s our grandmother. You know in a sense’ (Ria). As a child, Hinewirangi was given a song by her nan that contains a reference to Hinenuitepō. Her nan told her to sing this song throughout her life and that ‘if I ever needed her [nan] she would be across the river’. She ‘never really knew what this song was about, only that it pacified me when my heart was heavy, and my mind was clouded’. This song saved Hinewirangi’s life.

*Rimurimu teretere e haere ana ki te pō kei  
reira i a koe e Hine e tatari ana mai e  
(Hinewirangi)*

*Seaweed to ebb and flow I go to the  
realms of darkness. There you are  
Hinenuitepō waiting*

The importance of this song for Hinewirangi throughout her lifetime shows the importance of the grandmother to the child. This song, a gift to her mokopuna, has been cherished for many years. Similar to Marama, whose grandmother taught her about Hinenuitepō, Hinewirangi as a child was introduced to Hinenuitepō through this song, gifted by her nan. Perhaps the older Māori women understand Hinenuitepō because they have experienced the many nights of te Pō in their own lives, and they may know what it means to have mokopuna to care for, like Hinenuitepō. In a strikingly similar image of Hinewirangi's visual of her nan standing across the river, Marama shared a dream she once had where she saw her grandmother standing across the other side of her ancestral lake.

A dream I had about two years after, of me and my grandmother, and my grandmother was on the other side of the lake. And she was like glowing green, and I was watching her, and I was like what are you doing?

In both examples we have the presence of water and multiple generations of whakapapa; the grandmother and the mokopuna. This is powerful imagery of intergenerational connectedness, epitomised by the photo of Dame Whina Cooper holding the hand of her mokopuna on the Māori Land March. The water could also suggest the presence of the atua wāhine, perhaps the ones associated with water according to the Wainuiātea narrative shared by Hinewirangi. It could be that the separation between the mokopuna and the grandmother on the other side of the lake is a representation of the separation between the physical and spiritual worlds.

Without the crushing of Māui between Hinenuitepō's thighs we would not know death, and therefore we may never have known the true meaning of love. In a world without death the ones who are closest to us would never leave, so the deepest longing to see our loved ones again would be forever unexplored. Seen in this way, Hinenuitepō's crushing of Māui between her thighs is a great kindness, as it teaches her descendants the importance and depths of love through a life lived with the always persistent eventuality of death.

Her transformation from Hinetītama to Hinenuitepō is the entering of the symbolic threshold te Pō by the individual. Once in te Pō, Hinenuitepō is te Pō itself, the all-encompassing darkness that eventually leads to a resurfacing in te Ao, te Ao

Marama. It is during these times of intense transformation for the individual that Hinenuitepō is an important source of healing. Times of intense grief, stress and sadness. When Hinewirangi is in Hinenuitepō, it is when she is in her ‘saddest of times, deepest, saddest’. After the death of her child, Anahera had a deepened understanding of Hinenuitepō.

I felt like I had a sudden and deepened understanding of a level of grief and distress that I attributed or made a connection with Hinenuitepō. [...] this was the power of the stories I grew up with coming to bear in a moment of intense distress. But her ability to... to take a path chosen by herself, not chosen for her, not dictated by anybody else and say this terribly shit thing that has happened, and this is what I am going to do with it.

Hinetītama’s ability to take agency in distress provided strength for Anahera in dealing with her loss. When Marama’s hapū were hit with tragedy and loss, she also asked Hinenuitepō for assistance.

I was just like I need help, I need help just to deal with the grief. The grief was too much. So, I asked her. I remember asking her and I was just in bed. Nowhere special, no spotlight. I was just in bed and I remember asking just like “please lighten up.” And it lit up.

Kahu experienced the sickness and death of her father. However, like Hinenuitepō, she acted during an intense time of grief, and at the same time experienced success with her writing. As her father was being transferred to hospital, she wrote an article that was published in a magazine.

I remember I was in the shower and my dad had just been transferred to Tauranga hospital and I was like trying to figure out what to write [...]. And I was in the shower and a paragraph just literally like came to me. In the shower [...] and I literally just typed them into a doc, reordered, tidied, boom. It sped out of me. And I’ve never ever, before or since, written a piece like that. I’ve always had to think about the words. But that... it spewed out of me.

This particular piece of writing was very successful for Kahu, who expressed how she did not feel that the words were her own.

I don't feel like I wrote that piece and that piece has given me so much. Like it gave me opportunities [...] I now get paid for my writing [...] and I'm in all these cool spaces where I get to learn more about te ao Māori because of it. [...]. I have no idea where it came from.

The range of examples shared in the interviews create the sense that for these women, Hinenuitepō provided hope and strength to them at times of great adversity. 'But I know she said, she will guide us back into the world of light. And she sacrificed herself. So, when I know I am in pōuri, I know I am going to rise again' (Hinewirangi). From the nights of te Pō comes the inevitable transition back to te Ao through Hinenuitepō's unconditional love. What can follow this period of intense grieving is a time of individual growth and transformation, as shown by the participants' experiences.

#### 4.4.3 Hineteiwaiwa

Hineteiwaiwa is the moon goddess and the atua of which the whare tangata and menstrual cycle of women come under. She commands the ‘ebb and the flow of the menstrual river’ (Hinewirangi), the menstrual river known as te awa o te tangata (Murphy 2011). Women who are premenstrual may also enter a time of darkness, a time of te Pō before their menstration. Ria believes that Hineteiwaiwa is also associated with takurua or winter, known as Hinetakurua, symbolised by the darkening of nights. In winter, she feels the presence of Hineteiwaiwa, reporting: ‘I don’t know why, but I am just walking before it gets dark you can, it smells a bit different, like the air smells.’ Hineteiwaiwa is also the atua of raranga and the whare pora. Ria describes the colour of the harakeke during winter as a beautiful green, suggesting her attraction to Hineteiwaiwa and referring to the act of creation.

...we (Hineteiwaiwa) are both attracted to each other I would say, around this time. [...] The colour of the harakeke. The way the air feels, because it feels quite thick at this time and I feel like Hineteiwaiwa that’s her, that’s how she is, all of that. So, you sit and create. (Ria)

She describes the air in winter as feeling thick and as a feeling she associates with Hineteiwaiwa. This reminds of the thick layered emotions that a woman may feel during her premenstrual cycle, which is sloughed off during the process of bleeding, leaving her feeling refreshed and renewed as she begins her menstrual cycle again, perhaps being more drawn to Hinetītama and Hine Raumati at that time.

Aroha associates weaving with her aunties, her kuia and koroua. As a child she was fortunate to go to Whakarewarewa where she was taught how to weave and taniko. It was from this that she developed ‘a love of weaving of various kinds and appreciation of work of kuia and koroua’. Ria shared her experience of weaving a wahakura with her auntie for her cousin’s baby, an act of two generations weaving together something for the third.

Creating a wahakura was an interesting journey because we had to get it done in one day. So, me and my auntie, we did it together. I weaved one half and



she weaved the other half and then we connected it together. And we gave it to my cousin who is having a baby.

In this example we see the aspects of Hineteiwaiwa, the atua of raranga and childbirth, coming together through Ria and her auntie to create a wahakura for the new life that has come from te Pō into te Ao. This is a beautiful symbolic representation of the cyclical nature of life. The auntie, the niece, and the newborn child are all woven together as one into the wahakura. I refer again to 'i ngā rā o mua' to illustrate this, a concept linked to the traditional Māori understanding in which 'our past is our future and is also our present, like the eternal circle' (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:286). It might not be too much of a stretch to suggest that Ria's auntie, Ria and the baby could serve as symbolic representations of the three Hine, Hinenuitapo (the auntie), Hineahuone (Ria the mother) and Hinetītama (the child). Through Hineteiwaiwa, the wahakura is created, a physical manifestation linking the past, the future and the present in a harakeke heirloom that can be passed down to the next generation.

#### 4.4.4 Hinepūkohurangi

Whakapapa is an important element for Hinepūkohurangi. In the interviews she was only mentioned by women who held whakapapa back to her. For example, the marriage between one of her grandmothers and Rua Kenana takes Hinewirangi ‘into the realm of Hinepūkohurangi’. The connection between the women and Hinepūkohurangi seemed to be place specific. She was felt strongly in the grass- and mist-covered lands of their tribal rohe and was less accessible in densely populated city areas. Hinepūkohurangi featured strongly in the kōrero of Kahu, who grew up with her stories. She attributed her access to the Hinepūkohurangi narrative to her whakapapa as Tūhoe, referring to her as a tīpuna and someone she ‘saw almost every morning living in the valley [back home]’ as the mist covering that valley. Growing up with the narrative of Hinepūkohurangi was important because, as Kahu explained, ‘If they are brought into your life when you are 8-years-old you are going to always notice their attributes, their āhuatanga everywhere you go. It is just a cool way of reading the world.’

Marama felt conflicted as to whether Hinepūkohurangi was an atua, initially referring to her as an atua but then later on describing her more as a kaitiaki than an atua. Because of her whakapapa back to Hinepūkohurangi, Marama sees her as someone who ‘begat us, from the land... almost like she is human form’. This is an interesting description of Hinepūkohurangi, the human form suggesting her status as a tipuna wahine but her ascription to the land more reminiscent of an atua like Papatūānuku. Before moving away from home for tertiary studies, Marama’s grandma took her to Waikaremoana where she called on the atua to protect her mokopuna. Marama shared this experience, beginning with the description of her surroundings:

... this fenced off, lake in the middle that’s papa pounamu like green. [...]  
And there was no clouds, literally it was like the finest day. [Her grandma started] calling on - I can’t really recall their names, but I know they were atua to protect me as a person. [...] And we were just coming up to āmene and like the trees had parted... and it was a spotlight like this, dark with a spotlight on us.

She continued on with the conversation later saying:

... the sun's like beaming in through the trees. But, what happened was it started raining, but not that, it was that – he aha te kupu Māori? Ua kōnehunehu. Like that spray. I'm not sure if kōnehunehu is the word but that spray you know like light, it touches your skin and it's light like cleansing. That rain. But when I walked in there was no clouds to be seen (laughs). [...] And I knew at that moment. I'm like, 'You are fucking kidding me, you are kidding me.'

Later on, as she reflected back on this experience, Marama thought that one of the atua may have been Hinepūkohurangi.

That moment – that was when I started, I realised, don't go without them. But they are telling you to go. And they were telling me to go. I knew they were like, 'Go. You need to go.' And they gave me their blessings. I'm trying not to cry. So, I'm not too sure what atua? But if it was the rain and that misty type, just it was lightly touching me and I'm just like shaking. And I'm like, 'Is that Hinepū? Ko koe tēnā?'

This is a beautiful description of her grandma calling on the atua to look after her, at the site of their ancestral lake. As her grandma comes up to āmene, the trees part and a spotlight shines down on them, on the papa pounamu coloured lake. Though she was unable to hear who, she was aware that her grandma was calling on atua to protect her. Then came the misty spray, light rain that touched her skin, cleansing, even though there were no clouds to be seen. This left her with a sense that the atua are real and knowing this, she could go forth in life with their protection. Even retelling this experience in the interview, the experience touched her so deeply that she had to try not to cry as she remembered asking if Hinepū was there with them.

For these women, it could be suggested that Hinepūkohurangi is the veil of mist, the cloak between the two worlds they live in: the 'big city world' and their ancestral homelands. As already mentioned, Hinepūkohurangi's presence is felt much more strongly when they return home to their tribal rohe. In the big city Kahu lives in, it is harder to feel Hinepūkohurangi's presence with her. She says, 'It's different, it's

only really when I go home that I feel her.’ Similarly, Marama’s ancestral lands are described as a totally different world to the big city where she lives, stating that she is living ‘in two different worlds’. What is clear is Hinepūkohurangi’s deep connection to the whenua in that particular tribal rohe rather than having a pan-tribal identity, like some of the other atua wāhine.

## 4.5 Matakite

Although there is not a lot in the literature about matakite, four of the interviewees identified matakite within their immediate whānau. Matakite, meaning those possessing the ability to see into the future (Te Aka 2019) were mothers, aunts, grandmothers. In a couple of cases, the interviewees themselves identified as matakite. There were no men who were mentioned in the interviews to be matakite, though there are tohunga who are men. Generally, matakite seems to be passed through the matrilineal line, a statement supported by Awatere (1995) but which is in need of further research. It can also be found in the atua wāhine narratives. Although Muriranga-whenua is blind, she knows it is her moko Māui who is visiting her before he tells her who he is (Kahukiwa and Grace 1984).

Marama was raised by her great-grandmother and grandmother. Both were healers and her great-grandmother was a seer renowned for her knowledge of the bush. She remembered her great-grandmother walking everywhere saying that ‘she used to take me to some place, some really weird places in the bush [laughs]’. She also had the ability to speak to Tāne and his animals.

... so I remember growing up she used to talk to the manu. So, she not only could speak Māori, she could speak to animals. [...] To Tāne. [...] Like she didn’t have to openly speak. She could connect with Tāne, Tāne Mahuta and his offspring. So, yeah that was my great-grandmother. [...] I just thought it was normal and it wasn’t until you know you start growing up and you start hearing knowledge come out at wānanga and you are like, ‘Oh yes, I remember that kuia, she used to kōrero.’

Not only did Marama remember her grandma connecting with the animals – particularly birds – in the forest, but this knowledge was later validated by her whānau at wānanga. They remembered her kuia being able to kōrero with those other beings. In Anahera’s whānau, her mum was matakite.

So, mum is the um... in her generation ... we have a feeling in our family that in each generation there is a wahine who is really deeply connected to sort of

the spiritual elements and um probably is somewhat matakite, you know all that sort of thing. I guess I've always thought of my mum like that.

Marie is the matakite in her whānau. Her relatives refer to her as 'nanu' which she describes as meaning connected to the other side. She is the auntie that her whānau come to when they need 'anything Māori' and has held the whakapapa knowledge since her father passed. In Hinewirangi's whānau, matakite comes down through her grandmother's line. As the first-born mokopuna of her grandmother, Hinewirangi follows that line. However, she does not describe herself as a matakite, preferring instead the term see-er. 'I'm a see-er. I can see things... and I am going like this, because this is the whai ā io, the third-eye, the eye of wisdom, the eye of truth' (Hinewirangi). Pere also refers to ĪŌ as in ĀĪŌ Wairua, the creators of everything in the universe (1997). Perhaps whai ā io is the human possession of the eyes of ĀĪŌ, the infinite creator who knows all, also known as the third eye. Matakite is not necessarily something that is special to just a few. It could be special to lots of us 'but we are just so distanced from it' (Hinewirangi).

In Marama's whānau it is thought that healing comes from the taha wāhine, the feminine side. They 'talk about how that is taha wāhine. A lot of healing comes from that side.' The healing strength of taha wāhine is not talked about often in the literature, but it is a key female element that seems to come from the atua wāhine, particularly Hinenuitepō.

Dreams are a means of connecting with the atua wāhine and tīpuna wāhine, a way in which some Māori women can receive messages and wisdom. Some of the women described themselves as prolific dreamers, unable to switch off their dreamtime. They can sometimes also be a form of premonition, foresight or matakite. Ria sometimes dreams about events that happen the next day and believed these phenomena to be quite common for other women as well. Ariana was co-curator for an exhibition about mana wahine that was grounded in atua wāhine kōrero. She described dreaming of Kurangaituku, which led to her decision to include her narrative in the exhibition.

I actually had a dream with Kurangaituku in it before I did the exhibition, and that was one reason why I decided that she needed to be represented in there. It

was quite an intense dream and so that was quite interesting. [...] I think that through dreaming is sometimes a way that we can receive kind of messages and wisdom.

This example shows the presence of a dream influencing the real-world outcome of a physical manifestation of mana wahine. Without the dream, Kurangaituku may never have been included in the exhibition, leaving her narratives untold in that space. The presence of the atua wāhine is felt by Hinewirangi all the time ‘from my sleeping moments to my waking moments’. As a technique for getting them out of her head, she plays solitaire at night, otherwise she cannot sleep.

Otherwise I am in dreamland, I will e hīkoi haere somewhere. [...] I used to do that all the time. And I learnt to stop. [...] Because I walk all the time. So, I play this dumb solitaire and it’s just to download, download, download. I don’t even know if I win, I just play. [...] It’s got to do with my eyes are getting heavier now and I’m getting sleepier now. [...] Because I’ve got to go to sleep. So, I had to train.

This suggests that there is a level of training required to be able to deal with the presence of the atua during sleep time. As discussed in Chapter 2.4 Mana Wahine, Whina Cooper was also unable to sleep at night, kept up by the mana of the atua working through her. Those who are expressing large amounts of mana in their day to day lives may be too energised to sleep, unable to shut down their brains. This could also mean that mana atua can provide energy, albeit at times when it is unnecessary. Marama, who describes herself as a prolific dreamer, was visited by Hinekura, one of her tīpuna wāhine. Her sister was also named after Hinekura, a name that was given by a tohunga.

... I remember having a connection with one of my tipuna. Like our old... she’s like old. Her name was Hinekura, who is the name of my sister. And she came to me and she held me on this hand and she sent energy up my arm. [...] And I dreamt that they (tīpuna) were sending me energy and strength.

This passing of energy is similar to my own experience described in Chapter One: Ko Wai Au. After experiencing this dream, Marama ran into her sister’s room, saying,

‘Oh my god, Hinekura just came to see me.’ Later on, she described the sensation of the sending of energy up the arm, repeating the importance of the giving of strength. ‘That’s them giving energy. Strength. Definitely, strength.’ This could be another example of the sending of mana through whakapapa, her tipuna wahine that went into her body, imbuing her with a feeling of strength. In another dream, Marama revisited the experience of her grandmother, reciting a karakia at their ancestral lake. It was then that she realised that at that time they had been surrounded by a strong wāhine presence.

... here’s me and there’s my grandmother. I’m watching her, and she is watching me. But we could tell that all of that... wāhine... strong wāhine presence. Strong wāhine presence. That’s all I’ve got to say. I don’t know if they’re atua. So, I can’t give names. And that was through a dream.

Clearly, the atua wāhine and tīpuna wāhine feature in the dreams of some Māori women. These dreams are often imbued with deep meaning. There is a sense of the energy that comes with the strong wāhine presence and also the sense that who they are is less important than the fact that they are there and providing strength to their descendants.



## 4.6 Colonisation

Colonisation and the influence of the Christian religion have influenced the atua narratives. Not only have these narratives been altered, but the ways in which they are now understood and perceived also appear to have been altered by colonial influences. It is suggested that underpinning these changes was the removal of the mana of Te Whare Tangata, the reframing of sex as dirty and changes in tribal tikanga for dealing with sexual abusers. It is highly likely that colonial influences run deep into the psyche of the Māori individual and the collective.

Because of the danger posed by outside influences, Ria suggests that 'Māori women folklore had to be hidden for a time, because it was in danger, so our kuia had to hide the stories and just assimilate for a couple of generations...'. However, the act of hiding and assimilating resulted in a loss of knowledge held by Māori women from earlier generations, with Kahu noting that

this would've been common knowledge 300 years ago. Like you know they did know the moon-phases for everything and we have some of that information but especially with regards to like female stuff, it's all lost. And like the atua wāhine, like we don't hear about them at all really.

In the recording of the creation narratives, Ariana believed:

I think a lot of it, [...] when they were written down - the stories - were written by these Pākehā scholars and so they brought their own bias and worldview into it so they were more interested in the male stories and the male heroes.

With the recording of these narratives by the early ethnographers, the tribal variations were amalgamated into one standardised story. Anahera suggests that it is the differences in thought between Māori and Pākehā worldviews that resulted in the standardisation of atua narratives. 'I think in the Pākehā world we are trying to get this is the true myth. That reductionist thing. This is the accurate version' (Anahera). Hinewirangi supported the mana of the tribal story, suggesting that the time has passed for the one 'true' story and we should instead be reclaiming and celebrating the many variations of the stories pertaining to our atua, 'because we are tribal peoples, don't think that there is going to be only one story. There's going to be

tonnes of stories and tonnes of stories. And they are all correct. There's not one story that is ever going to be not correct.' One of the key issues identified with George Grey's *Nga Mahi A Nga Tupuna* is that sources from different tribal areas were interwoven into a single account (Simmons 1966).

The narrative of Tāne breathing life into Hineahuone is well known and although the details of a story can remain the same, the way in which it may be interpreted can differ greatly. Using the creation of the first human being as an example, Hinewirangi asserts there are aspects of the creation stories that are now widely misunderstood. For example, people believe that Tāne had actual sex with Hineahuone. She proposes that the atua do not have sex, in the sense of what we as human beings understand the act of sex to be. She explains, '...the stories of the first wāhine eh Tāne. [...]. Did he father them in our sense? You see we've got to stop thinking like that, because we think the gods had sex. They didn't have sex! They didn't have it like we did. Fuck it's amazing.' In addition to this possible misperception, she expressed a belief that the perception of sex in Māori communities has changed from how it was perceived traditionally.

So, the idea of making love was not a thing. We didn't make love. We did what our bodies were naturally to do. And guess what? We did it anywhere! Because it was normal. It was as normalised as it was to eat, as it was to drink, as it was to have sex, as it was to play, as it was just to swim as it was to do everything else. And so, when somebody was having sex everyone just walked past, 'Oh looks like they are busy...'

Changes were also made to reframe the status of Māori women's reproductive organs, including making them and their functions "taboo."

I think it is colonisation. First of all, erasing Māori knowledge, Māori knowledge, but then as the idea of a period becomes taboo. Not tapu, taboo. Because it is a colonial idea not to talk about it and that kind of stuff, to keep it private... (Kahu)

Sian reflected on thinking of menstruation 'as an absolute pain in the arse [...]' and something to be over and done with, later on, referring to it as her colonised way of

thinking. This could be related to the time pressures created by a linear and capitalist colonial system of thinking about time, and the ‘productivity’ that is expected of the body. In a linear and capitalist colonial system, there is no time that women are allowed to rest, as rest time is also deemed ‘unproductive.’ This includes while menstruating. In other words, no value in a productivity-obsessed system is placed on the ability of women to rest and recover from their busy and ‘productive’ lives. In contrast to this, according to Puketapu-Hetet, the custom of a menstruating woman not being allowed to enter the pā harakeke was because menstruation was a time when the weaver rested (1993).

For Anahera, ‘the Pākehā version of that [menstruation] was all secret and no-one talked about their period.’ She continued with the conversation, later indicating that for her, in the Pākehā worldview, it was ‘like, “Oh my god you’re filthy” (laughs). I’m like, “I’m what now?!”’ For this group of women, colonial ideas of menstruation appear to have influenced their own understandings of menstruation that are not in alignment with the atua wāhine narratives, and the value placed on menstruation within these narratives.

Hinewirangi was enraged at the inclusion of a Māori translation of the European derived word ‘cunt’ (Merriam Webster 2019, cunt entry) in a J. C. Moorfield Māori Dictionary she had in her office during the interview.

That’s why when I hear that word ‘cunt’ I just cringe. ‘Tara,’ that just cringes. It is the whare tangata. Nothing else can absolutely suffice it. Because when you remove that and call it the ‘cunt,’ then you have no wairua stuck with it. No more sacredness is stuck with it. It is incredibly, not that way.

Cunt is a derogatory word used to put down another person that also has the dual meaning of the female genital organs. It is of Germanic origin (Collins Dictionary 2019, cunt entry), is a word stemming from the Middle Ages at the time of the European witch burnings, and is now included in some versions of the Māori dictionary.

The impact of the infiltration of these types of thinking about women and women’s sexual reproductive organs does not just affect Māori as a collective. Rather, they

alter the self-worth of individual Māori women and how they view themselves and their bodies. Colonisation affects ‘the mind, the body, the soul and the spirit of our people’ (Pittman 2012:45). Therefore, it is proposed that healing is needed to remove these introduced ways of thinking about the *whare tangata* from the collective. The result of the negativity that has been transposed onto Māori women since colonisation leaves some Māori women with a death wish.

The impact of colonisation. Oh god. [...] You want to heal me? Then I need it to be this way. Raped of my *tinana*. Raped of my stories. Raped of my traditions. So that’s a format, of how to heal me right? Don’t try and heal me one at a time. Rape of my voice, rape of my *hinengaro*. This is what I mean. So, it’s a big healing process. Rape of my ability to give birth, all of the way through. Rape of my *whānau*, because they weren’t there, rape of my mother’s *tōku whare tangata*, rape of my *wairua*, my soul [...]. This is what I walk around with, a death wish. (Hinewirangi)

As has been shown from the interviews, the impact of colonisation on Māori women and how they see themselves and their bodies is a serious matter. This does not minimise the challenges faced by Māori men; rather, it highlights the challenges faced by Māori women that differ from other members of the collective. There is healing to be done here, and it is proposed that the *atua wāhine* can help with this process. Ariana believes that there was a ‘lot that needs to be changed with people’s perceptions within Te Ao Māori...’ and that it is ‘probably important for it to happen first within our families and then it might kind of spread out from there’. Marie agreed, believing that ‘we need to change the discourse... the *kōrero* around menstruation’.

Reclaiming knowledge on the *atua wāhine* was identified as a priority. Kahu wanted to learn more about the *atua wāhine* as she did not ‘yet know enough...’ and ‘that’s the stuff I would like to learn more about. I don’t know who the specific *atua* are, but that kind of... what is the female body, what is the female power? And the idea of childbirth and being a mother?’ She felt that learning about the female elements would help her to understand herself better because *mātauranga Māori* is what grounds us. ‘So, learning about these things through our *atua wāhine* will be just so

valuable...' (Kahu). Hinewirangi agreed that there needs to be more resources on the atua wāhine but not by combining all of the tribal accounts into one narrative. Instead she suggested recording the tribal variations and displaying them in their wholeness in a book for each atua wāhine.

And go around and look at the tribal peoples and ask them their story about Hinenuitepō, what do they believe. Take that, record that. Go over to Ngāi Tūhoe about that. Ask them while you are over there about Hinepūkohurangi and how they see her. Wouldn't that be a fucking beautiful project? [...]. Pukapuka. But I will go and say pukapuka tribal. [...]. Tribal stories. To just have one story is Pākehā.

Ariana identified the recovery work that has been going into 'finding out a lot of the different threads of stories and bringing that together to what they could as a body of knowledge'. At the present time, she believed that we were at a phase of moving on from reclaiming, and into a form of recreating 'something for ourselves, where we are at now with it. Maybe what Te Ao Māori needs now. It might be quite different to what it used to be, but I think they are still relevant...' (Ariana). The place to start this recreation is through the connection of rangatahi wāhine with rangatira wāhine, the kuia and the kōtiro, Hinetītama and Hinenuitepō: joining them together to share matrilineal knowledges.

... I think we have to have a lot more rangatahi meetings with rangatira wāhine. Rangatahi with the women, just have women so it is about learning about the sacredness of the whare tangata. Learning how to heal, learning how to take it all back. And we are not doing all those anymore. And that is why it is time for you young people to call it. Yeah? Up to you to call the kuia. And I tell you what, if they turn you down then you let me know. I'll teach them. I've got to teach our kuia how to be kuia again and how to decolonise out of their hardhead brains into a traditionalism that is so beautiful, and they are letting it slip. I'm a young kuia eh. I am seventy-years-old, and I am a young kuia.  
(Hinewirangi)

This speaks to the archetypal grandmother figure. A lot of young woman may not have a female Māori elder to turn to, for reasons previously stated. However, it is not

impossible for links to be forged. In this kōrero is a challenge to both rangatahi and rangatira wāhine in the whānau, hapū, iwi and modern spaces to reach out to one another. To stand together not as adversaries representing the old or the new, but as one with the collective goal to support each other through the processes of healing ourselves. To stand together as we reclaim our own forms of pre-colonial ways of living that uplift the status of Māori women for the benefit of our tribal communities. But it will take courage to do so, which is where the atua wāhine come in, lighting the way with their inspiring narratives and uplifting energy to facilitate the process.

#### 4.7 Mana Wahine Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine Framework

The major themes that have been drawn from the participants were their connection with the atua wāhine, the importance of their narratives, and the spirituality of some women as matakite. Major revelations were that it is possible to draw on any of the atua wāhine at any time, to feel inspired by their narratives and gain strength from them. It was also revealed that it is possible to change your own 'frequency', so to speak, in order to be able to draw from a different one. This thesis argued that mana comes from the atua and when a Māori woman draws from the attributes and narratives of the atua to give her strength and act, she expresses her mana wahine. The colourful and varied narratives, attributes and characteristics of some of the most well-known atua wāhine were also explored. It is clear that a large amount of knowledge pertaining to the atua wāhine has been lost, but that what knowledge is left can still be reclaimed and new knowledge can be recreated.

The impact of the infiltration of patriarchal and misogynist thoughts into Māori communities was also considered. Negative thinking about the whare tangata and sexual reproductive organs has altered the self-worth of some Māori women. It is suggested that healing is required for these women at an individual level to remove these introduced ways of thinking about the atua wāhine and themselves. The purpose of the Mana Wahine: Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine framework is the conscientisation of Māori women to a full range of female elements as are illustrated in the atua wāhine narratives, as they are reclaimed and remembered in order to restore balance to Māori cosmology and Māori society.

This framework is an interweaving of the knowledge shared by the interviewed women and the literature on the atua wāhine. It is proposed the atua wāhine were originally derived tribally, with different narratives and even different atua wāhine. Therefore, this is not deemed to be an exhaustive list of attributes of characteristics of the atua wāhine, but rather a snapshot of the thoughts of some Māori women and some of the literature at this time.

I turn now to the attributes and characteristics of some of the atua wāhine as derived from their narratives, and then illustrate the framework through an example of circular whakapapa. As already stated, this list is not exhaustive; it can and should be

added to. There are some characteristics and attributes others may not agree on. It is their prerogative to alter the Mana Wahine Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine framework as they see fit. The meaning of an atua wāhine to the iwi, hapū, whānau and/or individual can and should be allowed to vary. The translations of the words can be found throughout Chapter Two: Exploring the Atua Wāhine and Chapter Four: Contextualising the Wāhine; in most cases they are explored further. For this reason they are not repeated here.

### **Attributes and Characteristics of some of the Atua Wāhine**

Papatūānuku: *Planet Earth, everything, all encompassing, provider of food (cyclical).*

Key terms: *whenua (placenta/land), kaihau-waiū (nourishment from the land/breastmilk/birthright of the child from the mother), wai (rivers and streams of Papa, water-based fluids of reproduction), Kurawaka (place of uha, used to create first human being), kura (colour of marae, menstruation, where tangata).*

Wainuiātea: *Vast expanse of water, fluid in the amniotic sac, femaleness of the first 6-7 weeks of gestation, mother of ngā atua wāhine of wai (opposite of Rangiātea), women's space.*

Key terms: *atea (space), wai (water).*

Hineahuone: *Source of female element, derived from the sacred soil of Papa, shape that held the first human life, connection through whakapapa to the primeval parents (ira atua and ira tangata).*

Key Terms: *Hine/uha (woman, female element), one (soil, sand) ira tangata (life principle, gene).*

Hinetītama: *Fleeting moments of beauty, extraordinary beauty, beautiful young woman, rising of the sun, the setting of the sun, flexibility of thinking, the child/tama-ariki mind, mother-daughter archetype (Hinetītama and Hinerauwhāangi), the mother.*

Key terms: *Hine (female element), Te tī... te tā... (all directions, hither and thither), where tangata (womb, house of humanity).*

Hinenuitepō: *Unconditional love of maternal side, archetypal grandmother, source of strength and healing, transformation, female agency in decision-making, the safety and the darkness of the womb, threshold between te Pō and te Ao, the imagery of the kuia standing across the lake.*



Key terms: *Te Pō* (darkness, night, setting of the sun, where wairua depart to), *te Ao* (day, dawn, bright, earth).

Hineteiwaiwa: *Archetypal Māori women, moon, lunar cycles, tides, menstruation, childbirth, karakia, creation, creator of tikanga, shapes of the physical world, performance (kapahaka), raranga/whare pora, writing, creativity.*

Key terms: *Hine* (female element), *wai* (water), *wā* (time, season, period of time, defined space).

Hinepūkohurangi: *Ngai Tūhoe, Waikaremoana, place specific, mist-covered lands, tribal rohe, papa pounamu lake, light cleansing rain (spray), veil between two worlds.*

Key terms: *Whakapapa, tipuna wahine.*

Mahuika: *Kuia, fire, burning, flames, transformation, transmutation, spreading the seeds and nutrients.*

Key terms: *Tipuna, ruahine, ahikā* (the burning fires of occupation).

Muriranga-whenua: *Kuia, foresight, bones, repository of knowledge.*

Key terms: *Tipuna, matakite* (forsee, prophesy), *kauae* (jawbone, knowledge), *iwi* (strength, bone), *whakapapa, whenua* (land, placenta).

These are the attributes and characteristics of some of the atua wāhine as have been identified from within the scope of this thesis. Now we have these to refer to, we turn to the Mana Wahine Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine Framework.



Figure 4. Mana Wahine Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine Framework for Papatūānuku Narrative: Sowing the Seeds of Mana Wahine

This framework draws from whakapapa, the layering of whakapapa as it is created within the whare tangata. As discussed in Chapter 2.1 Te Whare Tangata, whakapapa is the fabric that holds the knowledge of Te Ao Māori together and through which “everything” and all “things” are held together by genealogical connections that lead back to the self, iwi, hapū and whānau. Whakapapa is often drawn and posited as layered hierarchically. It starts at the top and then filters down to the newer generations, which also reflects a linear model of time. However, in this framework it is suggested that whakapapa through an atua wāhine lens could be circular, a reflection of ‘i ngā rā o mua’ or the idea that ‘our past is our future and is

also our present, like the eternal circle’ (Puketapu-Hetet 1993:286). In a sense, the teaching of the atua wāhine narratives transcends the fabric of time. Papatūānuku (or any of the atua) is with us as much as we are with her and we can travel right back to the beginning of the cosmos through the narratives. A circular whakapapa allows us to illustrate this concept.

In the centre of this framework is the wāhine-self for one version of tribal whakapapa. This version uses the most commonly-known narrative of Ranginui and Papatūānuku as the primeval parents. Another version based on the Ranginui and Wainuiātea narrative might have Wainuiātea in the centre with the self and then Papatūānuku in the next layer. Ideally, this framework should be altered to suit the whakapapa and tribal lineages of the individual. In a mana tāne version of this framework, it is envisioned that Ranginui could sit with the tāne-self.

This framework also draws from the interwoven theme of water throughout the thesis and is to be used in conjunction with the characteristics and attributes of the atua wāhine already shown. It is argued that Māori women have an affinity with the life-giving waters that are found in their bodies: their menstrual blood, breastmilk, whare tangata and the amniotic fluid that nurtures the future descendants of the iwi, hapū and whānau. The importance of the whare tangata in pre-colonial Māori society is evident in the way words pertaining to the whare tangata are also used to describe key aspects of Māori culture such as hapū, whānau and whenua.

In this narrative, Māori women are from Hineahuone, crafted from the soil of Papatūānuku and therefore born of Papatūānuku. Papatūānuku and the wahine/wāhine are in the centre. Then the layers of whakapapa ripple outwards like a drop of water on a lake, aligning with the argument that Māori women and the atua wāhine have an affinity with water. It also resembles the shape of the ova, the woman’s egg. Then there is Hineahuone, the connection between us and the primeval parents. Hineahuone is representative of Hine, the Wā-Hine<sup>15</sup> element, the female essence. As already mentioned in Chapter 2.3 Hineahuone, together the atua wāhine in their fullness form a constellation symbolising ‘Hine,’ connecting humanity with the land and the source of life with the universe (Yates-Smith

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<sup>15</sup> My emphasis.

1998:222). Then there is Hinetītama and Hinenuitepō, the young woman and the kuia, the rising sun and the night. Finally, there are the many manifestations of the Hine. Although Hinerauwhārangi is not explored in depth in this project, due to a lack of information in the literature, she is included here to balance out the framework. You could continue to expand this framework outwards to include the ruahine Muriranga-whenua and Mahuika. Those with whakapapa to her could also include Hinepūkohurangi.

It is from these layers of whakapapa that the self can draw mana from the atua wāhine through the centre of the framework. As the wāhine-self draws from the different atua wāhine, they can draw on the attributes and characteristics described earlier. The self is in the centre of the framework because it is a reflection of the idea that our past and our future is our present, an eternal circle like what is shown above. The self, the wāhine today are existing alongside the atua wāhine in the sense that what happened in the cosmological past, is also what is happening in the present. Just like the atua wāhine were there at the beginning, they are also here today, with us, for us: to be drawn from like our tīpuna. To demonstrate its versatility across whakapapa, another version of this framework is also presented based on the alternative creation narrative presented in this thesis.



Figure 5. Mana Wahine Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine Framework for Wainuiātea Narrative

In this version, we have the wāhine-self born of both Papatūānuku and Wainuiātea. This is the alternative creation narrative shared by Hinewirangi in Chapter 4.3. This framework has been adapted to take into account the difference in narrative and includes some of the atua wāhine of water from the partnership of Wainuiātea and Ranginui. For someone of Ngāti Kahungunu descent we can also add in Hinekōrako.

Unlike linear whakapapa models, circular whakapapa can begin anywhere; this is based on the premise that our past and our future are also our present. For example,



if we were to present the whakapapa of Hineteiwaiwa, we could begin with Papatūānuku and Ranginui and continue outwards until we reach her, or we could begin with her and continue outwards until we reach Papa and Rangi. You will also see that there are no nuclear family distinctions in this framework. Each circle represents another layer of whakapapa in terms of cosmological age but is neither more nor less than the layer that came before it, because if the past and future is our present, then they all exist at the same time.

As previously mentioned, this framework can and should be altered to fit the whakapapa and belief systems of the individual/whānau/hapū/iwi. As we continue to learn about the atua wāhine attributes, characteristics and narratives we add layers to the whakapapa of the cosmological self: the self that exists in the past, present and the future. As Māori women we can add to the characteristics and the attributes that we see in the atua wāhine and draw on these in our everyday lives as members of our whānau, hapū and iwi. The atua wāhine are cosmological role models, archetypes for Māori women and through mana atua they imbue within us the sense that we can do and be anything we need to, in order to empower our communities through mana wahine. This is the conscientisation of Māori women to the full range of female elements as are illustrated in the atua wāhine narratives.

## 4.8 Chapter Summary

Contextualising the Wāhine concentrated on defining the differences and connection between mana wahine and the atua wāhine. This included Te Whare Tangata as a physical space that is the threshold between te Pō and te Ao, an example of wai e rua or the two spiritual waters. Also containing water is the menstrual bleeding of women, the plasma in blood made up of 90% water. The partnership between Wainuiātea – the vast expanse of water - and Ranginui is shared in a chronological creation narrative. This version is in addition to the well-known narrative of Papatūānuku and Ranginui, and may be closer to what Western scientists believe was the process of formation for Planet Earth, with studies suggesting the early Earth was completely covered by a layer of surface water. The connection between this narrative and the development of the baby in the womb is also explored.

Papatūānuku as an atua wāhine had a dominant presence. She was seen as everything and all encompassing. Her ability to provide seasonal nourishment for the people was acknowledged as well as her need to be looked after through kaitiakitanga. The atua wāhine Hinenuitepō was clearly associated with grief and intense sadness. She is the one who helps those going through te Pō to emerge back into te Ao, the result of which can be a process of transformation for the individual. Hineteiwaiwa was associated with the moon, the menstrual and lunar cycles, raranga and winter. Whakapapa is required to be able to connect with Hinepūkohurangi, with only those from Ngāi Tūhoe talking about her in their interviews. Most of the women had matakite in their family; this gift was passed through matrilineal lines.

It was agreed that colonisation and Christianity had changed the way that the atua wāhine and Māori women were perceived after 1840. This extended to the removal of the mana of Te Whare Tangata and the reframing of sex as dirty. The negativity that has been transposed onto Māori women following colonisation left one of the interviewees with a death wish, highlighting its absolute seriousness. The way forward is the reclamation of these knowledges to facilitate healing through a partnership between the older and younger Māori women, in the traditions of tuakana/teina.

To conclude this chapter, some of the attributes of the atua wāhine were presented in a discussion of the Mana Wahine Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine Framework. This framework is based on the idea of whakapapa as circular instead of hierarchical and a non-linear definition of time where the past, present and the future all culminate in the now. Alongside the attributes and characteristics of some of the atua wāhine this framework can be utilised for the purpose of adding layers of mātauranga to the wāhine-self for the conscientisation of Māori women to the full range of female elements, as are illustrated in the atua wāhine narratives.



## Chapter Five: Conclusions

### 5.1 Conclusion

This thesis aims to sit alongside Yates-Smith's and Murphy's work on the atua wāhine and precolonial menstruation, as one that asks Māori women for their thoughts on their worlds. In light of the common practice of Pākehā men and Māori men to define this for Māori women, this is a radical concept grounded in mana wahine. It also highlights one of the biggest issues in early ethnographic work. Not only were these kaupapa interpreted through the lens of people outside of the culture, Pākehā men, it largely did not include the thoughts of Māori women themselves on kaupapa that sit within the realm of the whare tangata. It is no surprise then that the cosmology as it was interpreted diminished the mana of the atua wāhine, because it had already diminished the mana of Māori women in the process: in the way that the information was sought and recorded, resulting in their almost complete exclusion.

The attributes and characteristics of the atua wāhine are grounded in what was found in Chapter Two: Exploring the Atua Wāhine and Chapter Four: Contextualising the Wāhine. The discovery of the depth of terms pertaining to the whare tangata throughout Māori culture was unexpected, as was the alternative creation narrative and overarching theme of wai as important to the atua wāhine and Māori women. Kura as the colour of marae and related to the Kurawaka of Papatūānuku, the birthplace of the first human being, was another unexpected finding. There is also the introduction of Wainuiātea, the vast expanse of water. Overall, the number of themes that emerged from the interviewees was astounding, the atua wāhine clearly important in more areas than I had thought possible. The strength of conviction that the interviewees had when talking about their atua wāhine and their belief in their existence and importance in their daily lives was similarly unexpected.

The atua wāhine have often been presented as two-dimensional, bit-parts to the male focussed storytelling of the early ethnographers. It is clear that these accounts only skim the surface of the depth of mātauranga that is available to Māori through the atua narratives. It is acknowledged that as we remember and reclaim the atua, their narratives, characteristics and attributes can be expressed in our interactions with the collective. These are the female elements of the atua wāhine. This will assist in

restoring the atua wāhine to their rightful place in cosmology and restore the balance in Māori communities. This is particularly important for Māori women, who have borne the brunt of gender discrimination. The ideas that women should or should not do certain things that are not based on pre-colonial tikanga have negatively impacted Māori women for centuries. It is suggested that tikanga based on notions of female inferiority or male superiority are introduced ideas and likely came after colonisation. This does not refer to tikanga that are in place to empower women, to protect them as the whare tangata, such as the men sitting in front of women on the pae during pōwhiri. I am talking about tikanga that take the mana of Māori women, that remove their agency within their own worlds and communities. The discrediting and removal of the atua wāhine from the collective knowledge has left a dearth of archetypal role models for Māori women and resulted in an imbalance and a narrowing of the ways in which some Māori women feel that they can express themselves.

Knowledge of the atua does not rest with a spiritual few. It is not only elders or tohunga who can connect with the atua. Everyone has mana atua, and therefore everyone has access to the atua. There will be atua that resonate more, and others that resonate less. Someone may switch between them rapidly, or feel close to only one. Regardless, they are there. However, that does not override the importance of the older Māori women. In fact, Chapter 2.5 Matrilineal Knowledge, highlights the importance of the older Māori women in guiding the younger women through the concept of tuakana/teina. It is the kuia who have the responsibility of passing on this knowledge to future generations so that they can express their own sense of mana wahine.

Māori women today are connecting with the atua wāhine: not all, but some. These women see the atua wāhine as integral to the balance in our Māori communities, representative as they are of one half of Māori cosmology and one half of the Māori population. Part of the expression of mana wahine for these women is the reclamation of tikanga related to the whare tangata that had been marginalised by colonisation. The deep-seated feeling of loss and grief that has been associated with the loss of traditional practices is described in Chapter 4.7 Colonisation and it is argued that this can be transformed through mātauranga Māori. The level of hurt that

has been experienced by some Māori women because of the marginalisation of the atua wāhine and the female element is immense. Negative thought patterns that have been imparted about the whare tangata and women's sexual reproductive organs have altered the self-worth of Māori women. In Chapter 4.8 the Mana Wahine Characteristics of the Atua Wāhine framework is posited as a possible tool for healing, through the expansion of an individual's knowledge on the atua wāhine and their attributes/characteristics.

The way forward is for young women to stand with the kuia. To have their support in asserting the ways of the atua wāhine, through mana wahine. To reclaim the matrilineal knowledge transfer through tuakana/teina. To reinvigorate the traditional practices of wāhine in relation to the place of power for Māori women, the Whare Tangata. To reconnect Māori women with their mana atua and the atua wāhine as role models, archetypes and guides. Both the rangatahi wāhine and the rangatira wāhine will be necessary to stand against the imported misogynist thought patterns that have infiltrated the Māori cosmology, Māori society and the psyche of Māori individuals. Most importantly, Māori women and Māori men should stand together as the expression of mana wahine and mana tāne. Both are necessary for creation, both are complementary and both are reflected in the creation narratives.

This thesis is a first, in that it defines mana wahine as the expression of mana from the atua, through Māori women. It is also a first to suggest that the atua wāhine can be drawn from and connected with, and that their narratives can be used to empower the individual so they can further contribute to their collectives. It also focuses on the everyday lives of some Māori women, rather than compartmentalising spirituality. In a sense, the connection with the atua, Māori spirituality, is imbued in everyday life. Women across a wide age-range were interviewed. This is purposeful. It is thought that everyone holds knowledge, even if the knowledge is subconscious.

The atua wāhine and their attributes and narratives are representative of an aspect that can be expressed by Māori women as fully-functioning members of the whānau, hapū and iwi. This framework may also be transferable to the atua tāne as well. In fact, it is suggested that Māori women can draw on the atua tāne as much as the atua wāhine with the same notion applying to Māori men. The atua tāne, however, do not

fit within the scope of this thesis. Even so, it is entirely possible for a woman or a man to feel they have a stronger connection to either the atua wāhine or atua tāne, regardless of any gender and societal constructs a person is born into. A deeper exploration of this is outside of the scope of this project.

Further research would include a collation of the tribal variations of atua wāhine narratives. Bringing them all together so that the differences in narrative can be compared, contrasted and reclaimed by the descendants of those tribes would undoubtedly be valuable. This would mark the end of the standardised atua wāhine narrative and the reclamation of a tribal spirituality accessible through whakapapa, as Hinepūkohurangi and Ngāi Tūhoe demonstrate is possible. These tribal narratives could be re-written and published as a series of books accessible for both adults and children, and could be used by Māori creatives to inspire fiction-writing, documentaries and movies. At this point, we will see the atua wāhine narratives being re-written into the tribal and collective Māori consciousness. Marginalised no more, the balance is slowly restored.

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## 5.3 Appendices

### 5.31 List of Themes

1. Identity
2. Wāhine and Tāne
3. Māori Feminine
4. Aroha
5. Atua Tāne
6. Atua Wāhine
7. Atuatanga/Mana Atua
8. Aunties
9. Childbirth
10. Christianity
11. Colonisation
12. Creativity
13. Dreams
14. Future
15. Grief
16. Hinepūkohurangi
17. Hinetītama,
18. Hinenuitepō
19. Intuition
20. Journey
21. Kaitiaki
22. Kuia, Koroua
23. Māori Myths and Legends
24. Marama
25. Matakite, Healing
26. Matilineal Knowledge Transfer
27. Menstruation
28. Papatūānuku
29. Personal Connection (to atua)

- 30. Pūrakau
- 31. Ruahine
- 32. Tohu
- 33. Tīpuna
- 34. Water
- 35. Whakapapa
- 36. Wharetangata

## 5.32 Interview Schedule

### **Semi-Structured Interview Topics:**

#### Māori Women and the Atua Wāhine

- ★ Where are you from?
- ★ When did you first come across the female energy in te ao Māori?
- ★ Do you know of other women who connect with or feel a connection with the atua wāhine?
- ★ Are there any atua wāhine (in particular) that resonate with you?
  - Why?
- ★ Have you had any life experiences where you felt a strong connection with the atua wāhine?
- ★ Do you feel the influence of atua wāhine more at specific times?
  - If so, how?
  - Which atua wāhine?
- ★ Have you ever called on an atua wāhine to assist in a life situation (i.e. childbirth)? For example, this could be through karakia, waiata and prayer.
  - Would you like to share?
  - What happened?
  - Which atua wāhine?
- ★ (For Creative Artists) Do the atua wāhine help you to express yourself creatively?



- ★ Do you call on the atua wāhine to provide inspiration/assist you with your art?
  - How?
  
- ★ (For Healers) Do the atua wāhine help you with your healing work?
  - How?
  
- ★ Have you ever observed someone else receiving guidance, assistance or divine intervention from the atua wāhine?
  
- ★ Have you ever received guidance, assistance or divine intervention from the atua wāhine?
  - What happened?
  - How did you feel?
  
- ★ Do you think the atua wāhine could be a useful tool to help empower Māori women today?
  - How?
  - Who in particular?
  
- ★ Do you think there is a need for more resources on the atua wāhine and their stories?
  - If so, what type of resources?
  - What information?
  - Where?
  
- ★ Is there anything else you would like to share?