

I MUA I TE AROARO O TE TARAIPUNARA O WAITANGI

WAI 2700

WAI 2872

I TE TAKE Ō

te Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
(te ture)

Ā

I TE TAKE Ō

te Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry
(Wai 2700)

Ā

I TE TAKE O

tētahi tono a **Dr Leonie Pihama,**
Angeline Greensill, Hilda
Halkyard-Harawira, Mereana
Pitman rātou ko **Te Ringahuaia**
Hata (Wai 2872)

NGĀ KŌRERO A NAOMI SIMMONDS

Ka tāpaea i te rā 15 o Akuhata 2022

RECEIVED

Waitangi Tribunal

16 Aug 22

Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTONANNETTE
SYKES & Co.
barristers & solicitors8 – Unit 1 Marguerita Street
Rotorua, 3010

Wāea o te tari: 07-460-0433

Ngā Rōia: Annette Sykes / Hinerau Rameka / Camille Houia
Imeera: asykes@annettesykes.com / hinerau@annettesykes.com /
camille@annettesykes.com

Contents

Introduction	3
Taku ara rā ko Māhinaarangi	5
Te Ara o Māhinaarangi	7
Lessons from the trail	10
Wāhine and whenua	13
Colonialism and maternities	13
Language and place names	16
Through My Feet I Come To Know You	17

E TE TARAIPUNARA

Introduction

Taku ara rā, ko Tūrongo;
I wawaea ki Te Tai Rāwhiti,
Ko Māhinaarangi! I au e!
Ko te rua rā i moe ai a Raukawa
He ara tau-tika mai ki ahau.
Ko Raukawa te iwi.
Ko Ngāti Huri rāua ko Ngāti Wehiwehi ngā hapū.
Ko Waikato rāua ko Māhinaarangi ngā awa.
Ko Wharepūhanga rāua ko Te Wera Iti ngā maunga.
Ko Pikitū rāua ko Ūkaipō ngā marae.
Ko Naomi Simmonds ahau.

1. I have a Doctorate of Philosophy completed in 2014 in the Geography Department at The University of Waikato titled “Tū te turuturu nō Hineteiwaiwa: Mana Wahine Geographies of Birth in Aotearoa” and was awarded the New Zealand Geographical Society best doctoral thesis award in 2014.
2. I have held professional positions with the Raukawa Charitable Trust in their Environmental Unit and as a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer with The University of Waikato and Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī, specialising mana wahine, kaupapa Māori, Māori environmental management, Indigenous methodologies and Māori maternities.
3. I am currently the co-director of an environmental research and management consultancy Tūānuku Ltd. And hold a part time role with the Deep South National Science Challenge as Kaitakawaenga Māori.
4. I am an advisor to the Raukawa Te Ūkaipō Hapū Ora pilot programme, I was a contributing author for the Raukawa Environmental Management Plan, the Ngāti

Huri Environmental Strategy and the Te Wāotū Cultural Impact Assessment. I have been the Environmental Co-ordinator for Ngāti Huri since 2007.

5. I am a researcher on several mana wahine and kaupapa Māori projects including the following active projects “Raranga, Raranga taku takapau: hapū ora for tamariki” with Better Start National Science Challenge; Advisor to - Tangata Whenua Tangata Ora programme places relationships between tangata and te tai ao as central to our understandings of supporting hauora, Health Research Council Programme (PI – Professor Helen Moewaka-Barnes).
6. I have published several articles and book chapters on mana wahine, whānau wellbeing and Indigenous birthing. To assist the Tribunal, I **attach herewith as Exhibit “A”** a list of references.
7. I am also the principal investigator on the Royal Society of Aotearoa Marsden Fast Start funded project – Taku Ara Ra: Retracing the footsteps of our ancestress. This was carried out from 2018-2021 and involved a hīkoi by seven Raukawa wāhine (myself included) for 23 days of a distance of 380km. This hīkoi retraced Māhinaarangi’s journey to understand her story, her mana, and also understand the changes that have occurred between her journey and ours.
8. My brief will focus on the following areas shaped by my research and experience (as detailed above):
 - i. The relationship between whenua and mana wahine through the journey of our ancestor Māhinaarangi.
 - ii. The ways in which Māori maternal knowledges and practices are embedded within the land and language.
 - iii. The impact of colonialism on Māori maternities and specifically on Māhinaarangi’s descendants.

- iv. The challenges and opportunities for wāhine in the reclamation of place-based knowledges.

Taku ara rā ko Māhinaarangi

9. Māhinaarangi, descendant of Porourangi, Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Kahungunu is the mother of Raukawa, whom my iwi is named after. Her journey and her story of pregnancy and birth is a powerful example of the interconnection between whakapapa, whenua and wāhine.
10. Māhinaarangi showed great strength, courage and determination when in the latter stages of her pregnancy with Raukawa she journeyed from Kahotea pā in the Hastings region through to Te Wairua, Waikaremoana, the Huiarau ranges, Ruatāhuna, to Whakatāne, to Tauranga Moana, across the Kaimai ranges, across the Waikato river to her new home at Rangīātea on the banks of the Mangaorongo Stream near Otorohanga.
11. Māhinaarangi went into labour near the top of the Kaimai ranges, stopping to give birth to her son Raukawa at a place at the foothills of the Kaimai's called Whenua-A-Kura.
12. I learnt about her later in my life, she was not someone I hear of as a young kotiro, upon learning of her hīkoi I was fascinated with her and what lessons her journey held for me as a Raukawa woman. Māhinaarangi is entrenched in the Waikato histories as a prominent ancestress and thus there are many carvings, images and waiata around the motu that pay homage to her.
13. In 2017 I was awarded the Marsden Fast Start Grant to further research Māhinaarangi's journey and to retrace her pathway. The overarching aim of the research was to (re)story and (re)trace Māhinaarangi's trail to unlock new (yet ancient) knowledges and associated tikanga. Using a Kaupapa Māori approach and drawing from international Indigenous scholarship the research will (re)generate a land-based pedagogy that grows from the ground up and that can inform, and

potentially transform, the lives of Māhinaarangi's descendants. Methodologically this research utilises Māhinaarangi's hīkoi as both context and process by using pūrākau (storytelling) and hīkoi (walking).

14. Without repeating the entire love story of Turongo and Māhinaarangi here, Tūrongo who was 'ngakau marū' (had a bruised heart) as a result of his relationship with Ruaputahanga who moved to Kahotea to help work on a whare there. He had heard about Māhinaarangi - She was known within her tribal groups as a prominent chief as her lineage connected her directly to Paikea and Kupe.
15. Māhinaarangi would watch Tūrongo, see what he did and how he made his way home each night. Māhina-a-rangi used her knowledge of the Raukawa tree and its leaves to create a perfume to create a lasting impression on Tūrongo. I pania ia i te kakara o te hinu raukawa she would put on the Raukawa perfume at night and wait for Tūrongo to pass by and without revealing herself to him would learn more about him. He could only recognise her by the scent of the Raukawa oil.
16. When she was certain this union would be good for her and that her love would be requited, she revealed herself. Their union resulted in their pregnancy.
17. Much has been recorded about the union between Māhinaarangi and Tūrongo. Heralded as one of the great love stories of Māori history this union joined two chiefly lines – this has served as an important roadmap to iwi relations throughout history.
18. All of the accounts, except one, that I have seen have been written by men, and almost without exception all of the accounts fail to recognise the initiative, strategy and cunning of Māhinaarangi. Instead, they mostly focus on her being 'won over' by Tūrongo or that it is on the direction of her father that she seeks his companionship.
19. My research clearly positions Māhinaarangi as possessing agency and self-determination in this union and position her as the leader that she was within her

own hapū. Her discussions about establishing a relationship with Tūrongo show her understanding of hapū politics in that such a union would ultimately bring peace to her people of the East, with those on the West coast of Te Ika-a-Maui. Romanticising the unions of these two prominent chiefs can serve to take away the lived and political aspects of their unions.

20. Māhinaarangi is also acknowledged for her skills and the way in which she holds herself. She did not see herself as inferior and rather an equal to Tūrongo. When we analyse these types of narratives we can begin to understand how these ancestors thought and viewed the world around them. We can then consider Māhinaarangi in the role she held amongst her people and further, how this role potentially shaped her journey to Waikato. We see Māhinaarangi as a wahine who is skilled and deliberate in her approach, we see her as a leader and furthermore, as a strategic thinker during this time.
21. This brings me to the journey of Māhinaarangi from Ngāti Kahungunu through to Rangiātea on the banks of the Mangaorongo River near Te Awamutu.

Te Ara o Māhinaarangi

22. Māhinaarangi most famous act was to journey, whilst heavily pregnant, from the lands of her people in Kahungunu to those of her husband, Tūrongo, at Rangiātea.
23. *Leaving her home village of Kahotea (near Te Roto-a-Tara, Te Aute), Māhinaarangi purposefully made the journey across ridges and ranges, lakes and rivers. she travelled with a retinue of whānau and supporters (including Tūrongo's dog Waitete some 500km walking north-west via Wairoa, along Lake Waikaremoana, across Huiarau range to Ruatahuna, A pātere includes the words, "Tu ana ki runga a Huiarau, ka titiro whakamuri ki Nukutaurua ē ko Kahungunu."*
24. There are variations to the journey at this point with some saying she went through to Rotorua and other accounts describing her journey to Ohinemataroa in Whakatane and then back across to Tauranga.

25. From here she crossed the Kaimai ranges birthing Raukawa at the foothills before moving on through Te Poi and then along to the Waikato River where they crossed and carried onto Rangiātea, where Tūrongo made a home for them.
26. Her journey and labour over the Kaimai Mamaku ranges is marked in several place names and landscape features that signify her labour. Ngamuwāhine stream for example is often acknowledged as one of the places where she laboured (ngā amuamu o te wāhine – the place where she grumbled, complained).
27. Te Rere-I-Oturu waterfall was a place that she stopped knowing this was the last eastward flowing water she would cross before reaching Tainui territory. Tired and longing for her home, Māhinaarangi is said to have shed her tears into the pool above the falls. In one account the full name of the place is Te rere i oturu hei opuake i ngā roimata aroha o Māhinaarangi ki ngā tai o te ata ihikoia.” (Turbulent falls wherein Māhinaarangi shed her tears into the creamy ripples, to mingle with the eastern tides of home.)
28. One of the accounts of the place she birthed Raukawa is called Whenua-a-Kura, referred to as ‘the chiefly land’, because it is where Raukawa was born. What is missing in these accounts is that kura has a dual meaning - it means treasured possession and chief, but it also means ‘red ochre’ or to redden. The connections of this to the kurawaka [the fertile region] of Papatūānuku, I think, are striking. It is possible, therefore, that whenua-a-kura possesses a dual meaning which not only refers to the birth of Raukawa, a precious taonga, but also to the land that is reddened by birth.
29. It is said that the whenua of Raukawa was buried in the vicinity of Okoroire, and so his descendants have a particularly strong connection to this place and reaffirming the tikanga of ‘kia hoki te whenua ki te whenua’

30. Ūkaipō Marae commemorates the place where Māhinaarangi first breastfed Raukawa. Loosely translated as ‘the night feeding breast’ or ‘the breast that feeds in the night’, it is said this concept was born from the words given to Tāne advising him to return to his mother ‘kei wareware i a tātou te ūkaipō – lest we forget the mother who nurtured us at her breast’. It is a term used to refer to our mothers, to Papatūanuku and to those places that give us physical and spiritual sustenance.
31. Te Poipoitanga (which is now known as the township Te Poi) is where Māhina-arangi settled Raukawa using the traditional practice to poi poi, meaning to rock or gently sway a baby in one’s arms. I am told that this was often done in the direction of their homelands to orientate them and thus settle them down. The full place name is Te Poipoitanga a Raukawa.
32. Another place, no longer physically visible is Takapau. The word takapau is also seen in the karakia Te Tuku o Hineteiwaiwa “raranga, raranga taku takapau” and is in reference to the weaving of a ceremonial whāriki or mat that was used in ceremonies of high tapu and was often used as part of the pure ceremony.
33. Closer to the Waikato River where Māhinaarangi carried onto is named Horahoratanga o ngā Maro o Rauawa – the place where Raukawa’s clothes were laid out to dry.
34. When Māhinaarangi and Raukawa eventually made it to Rangiātea and were reunited with Tūrongo the tohi ceremony was performed and Raukawa was given his name.
35. I provide these examples to demonstrate that quite literally the maternal knowledges of our ancestors, and of the ancestress Māhina-a-rangi, are inscribed on and in the physical landscapes of Aotearoa. Knowledge of these names, and the events that lead to them, access to these places and the pathways between them can all transform how we understand ourselves as women, as Raukawa and inform our understanding of the relationship between wahine and whenua.

36. Whilst I have presented parts of the journey here there are many other nuances and variations on the journey. My research has revealed more places and genealogical connections and rather than strive for a single truth, one clearly defined pathway I acknowledge and embrace the multiplicity of expressions of Māhinaarangi's journey that create a colourful tapestry for us in the present and in the future. The research also highlights to me that perhaps she journeyed many times and that this was not a one-off excursion.

Lessons from the trail

37. An important aspect of this research is understanding how 'walking the story' of Māhinaarangi can teach us as wahine about our ancestors, about our places and ultimately about ourselves as wahine.
38. Employing hīkoi (walking) as a specific method was purposeful and sought to make tangible the connection between wāhine and the whenua through hīkoi.
39. Hīkoi also acknowledges our sovereign right to access the trails and places of our ancestors and is an expression of rangatiratanga that is intimately connected to the land.
40. In November 2020, myself and six other Raukawa wāhine undertook a 23-day hīkoi retracing Māhinaarangi's journey. Kyea Watene-Hakaria, Klee Begbie, Tyra Begbie, Lisa Begbie, Arahia Moeke and Ngāhuia Kopa all undertook this journey supported by Paraone Gloyne, Anaru Begbie, Ahenata May-Daniels and Hannah Simmonds, and countless other marae, hapū and whānau.
41. We sought to understand more about Māhinaarangi and what she could teach us through waking the land. The land is a holder of knowledge, a conduit of memory, teacher and student and perhaps land itself remembers what we may have forgotten. The land holds who we are as wāhine, as Māhinaarangi's descendants.

42. The hīkoi taught us to look beyond romantic notions of these ancestral journeys but instead taught us that there is an active, pragmatic and material element to how our ancestors 'made place' and journeyed through space. In other words, there is labour (and in the case of Māhinaarangi this was true in a very literal sense) that went into making 'place'.
43. The hīkoi taught us that the lands and waters we walked looked vastly different from those that Māhinaarangi would have seen. Physical transformations, roadways, wineries, agriculture, cities, industrial areas were encountered along the journey but so too were ideological transformations individual land holdings, 'Crown land', permits for access, being denied access to sites, contestation over 'ownership' and settlement were all things we encountered along the way.
44. The inability to access certain sites demonstrated to us the marked shifts in power and control over our wāhi tapu. We had to seek permission to access wāhi tapu. We had to be escorted to sites by tauiwi. We had to see sites completely degraded, cows in the spring where Raukawa was once bathed. We saw the sacred place names of Māhinaarangi's journey replaced with shortened versions or erased completely. Places have been named incorrectly because of old survey maps marking a wāhi tapu as a singular point on a map and not as a landscape.
45. The reality is that today the locations of many of the places our ancestors lived, journeyed, birthed and died are no longer accessible, including many of those associated with Māhinaarangi. We only come know them through stories and not through a physical relationship. In questioning this we expose the layers of colonial inscription in the land. Laying claim to places through naming, renaming, surveying, mapping, privatising, and developing land is a key part of the colonial project, Māhinaarangi teaches us a lot about mana wahine, about colonialism and about reclamation.
46. She was brave, strong, she had diplomacy, strategic foresight and a love for her people and her lands but also love for the lands and people of Tūrongo.

47. Her ability to formulate and execute a hikoi of this nature reveals her as a woman with formidable skill and leadership.
48. This is more than an exercise of learning about but learning with the land and that we need access to the land to do this important work.
49. Whilst this research focuses on her journey – Māhinaarangi teaches us that there were many who cared and supported her along the way – she was not alone. And those charged with caring for her along the way understood their roles and responsibilities. They understood the tapu and mana of Te Whare Tangata.
50. She teaches us how we can birth, care for and raise our tamariki in unique and empowering ways.
51. She teaches us that we can make place for our children and grandchildren through our relationships with each other and with the lands and waters of our ancestors and of our descendants.
52. She provides us with physical and conceptual maps to understand our place in the world. To feel connected and purposeful and to take steps towards healing and wellness.
53. She reminds us that our education comes through the land – not simply about the land.
54. Māhinaarangi demonstrated great mana and foresight through her journey thus securing lands for her descendants. Her hikoi also offers significant conceptual and physical maps that speak to: mātauranga and tikanga pertaining to childbirth and mothering; the relationships between tribes; and between people and the land; intimate knowledges of diverse environments; and endurance and courage to move through space to new lands all done with a new-born baby. Māhinaarangi was a cartographer in her own right - mapping her story, history, language, tradition,

ceremony, knowledge and therefore herself and her descendants into the land upon which her footsteps fell.

Wāhine and whenua

55. Understanding the whakapapa of te whare tangata reveals the inextricability of women's maternal bodies from that of perhaps the ultimate maternal body, that of Papatūānuku (mother earth). Through whakapapa each of us is united in a shared experience of residing in the womb space of Te Pō, moving through the various stages of Te Pō and finally being born into the world of light.
56. The entanglement of maternal corporeality to the whenua, does not end here.
57. It is significant also that within the creation stories the first human form created is female, Hine-ahu-one. These stories serve to entangle maternal bodies with the and environment. They also solidify the relationship between the maternal body and the land, and this is reaffirmed in the concept of te ūkaipō [the night feeding breast] as discussed earlier.
58. Through Māhinaarangi's journey and our hīkoi we can see the impact on mana wahine and on maternities that things such as land confiscations, land being taken for conservation land, through the Public Works Act and Native Land Court, environmental degradation and pollution can have across generations.
59. There are parallels to be drawn between the subordination of women and the subordination of Papatūānuku and nature, with the key principle of domination underlying modern attitudes towards both women and nature.

Colonialism and maternities

60. Through Māhinaarangi's example we can see first-hand how Māori maternal knowledges are intimately tied to whakapapa and whenua. Furthermore, they are often unique to iwi and hapū and sometimes even specific to individual whānau.

61. There is compelling evidence that tribal waiata, karakia, karanga, mythology and histories are replete with examples of mana wahine and lessons pertaining to pregnancy and birth.
62. It is generally agreed that mana wahine knowledge traditionally would have been intimately intertwined in the everyday geographies of women and whānau.
63. Older women were considered gynaecological historians for whānau. Kuia, in particular, were considered experts in a number of areas including tribal histories; cosmological narratives; traditional ecological knowledges; as well as matters pertaining to pregnancy, childbirth and mothering.
64. There is compelling evidence, however, that suggests for the most part Māori maternal knowledges were learnt and understood as implicit, through the repeated and collective performances of pregnancy, childbirth and mothering within whānau, hapū and iwi.
65. I contend that reclaiming *how* mana wahine knowledges are learnt and shared is just as important and inseparable to reclaiming the knowledge itself. Coming to know about the mana and tapu of the reproductive capabilities of women was done on and with the land, not separate from it.
66. The fragmentation of traditional knowledges has seen an increasing reliance on professional or ‘expert’ advice and guidance pertaining to pregnancy and childbirth. Therefore, while there is a strong focus within midwifery that learning and understanding maternal processes is best done through story sharing with other women, by and large authority about maternal matters still sits firmly within institutions.
67. The colonial project - on numerous occasions - has attempted to erase mana wahine maternal knowledges by imposing colonial and patriarchal ideologies about where and how it was best for women to birth, as well as disenfranchising traditional birth

attendants and tohunga through the 1904 Midwifery Registration Act and 1907 Tohunga Suppression Act. Add to this physical dislocation from tribal lands, land confiscation, spiritual disempowerment through Christianity, economic hardship and poverty and the destruction of our language it is not surprising that there is a reverberating silence surrounding mana wahine maternities.

68. It was through Christianity that many Māori women were deprived of spiritual knowledge pertaining to maternities. The reproductive power of Māori women was quickly supplanted with ideologies of shame and sin.
69. The Tohunga Suppression Act 1907, which remained un-repealed until 1962, was perhaps one of the most aggressive assaults on wairua knowledges and it had a direct impact on mana wahine maternities. At its very core the Act defined what was considered important and credible knowledge. Māori spiritual knowledges were viewed as insufficient and improper and therefore our ancestors were denied the right to access their own cultural and spiritual experts. Tohunga were often birth attendants or participated, in various ways, in ceremonies pertaining to fertility, pregnancy, birth, and naming and dedication rituals for infants. As a direct result of this Act *“the active involvement of Tohunga in childbirth was undermined [and] ... resulted in the radical and permanent loss of whānau and hapū specific mātauranga (knowledges) and tikanga (cultural traditions).”*
70. Preceding this Act was the Midwives Registration Act 1904. The requirements, under the Act, were that birth attendants be registered. Traditional Māori birth attendants (kaiwhakawhānau/tāpuhi) were unable to be registered unless they were trained in the ways of Pākehā midwifery. The outlawing of a whole class of Māori intellectuals, healers and kaitiaki through the Tohunga Suppression Act and the Midwives Registration Act stripped away many of the spiritual elements, ceremony and tikanga of birth and further marginalised mana wahine maternal knowledges.
71. A number of mechanisms, through colonialism, have served to marginalise mana wahine maternities. The role of spirituality in birth has been distorted and attacked on a number of fronts by Christianity. The policies and discourses of medicalisation

in the early 20th Century has seen birth for many Māori women be relocated from home to hospital. Further, birth was moved away from the auspices of whānau, tohunga and tāpuhi to ‘registered’ midwives (most of whom were Pākehā) or doctors (most of whom were Pākehā men).

Language and place names

72. The hīkoi has also demonstrated the role of language in unlocking mana wahine land-based knowledges and facilitating learning from place, as has previously been demonstrated early in this brief.
73. The duality of a number of kupu Māori illustrates the reproductive importance of women within the wider whānau, hapū and iwi. For example, hapū can mean to be pregnant or sub-tribe. Whānau can mean to give birth or family. Whenua has a dual meaning of placenta and land. Perhaps the term that highlights this most clearly is te whare tangata, which can mean womb and house of humanity.
74. The marginalisation of te reo Māori has a direct impact on maternal bodies and women’s reproductive processes, as well as wider Māori society.
75. Further, place names that hold maternal knowledges and tikanga have been erased, renamed and shortened or been wrongly placed on locations all of which can serve to marginalise mana wahine knowledges and practices.
76. Māhinaarangi’s birth is an example of how correct naming of places, reclaiming full place names and the events that lead to them, transforms how we can understand the maternal body and birth. The significance of this for mana wahine maternities cannot be underestimated.
77. Māhinaarangi’s journey has a great deal to teach us about mana wahine, about ourselves as wāhine and about the impacts of state sanctioned colonialism on our relationship as wahine to the whenua.

78. The hīkoi reinforced the kind of education and learning that can come from land and water – and importantly the people whose lands and waters they are (this cannot be separated).
79. That knowledge, or knowing, lies beyond the pages of a book, the words on a page, and the presentations at a conference – it lies in the land and in our bodies. That our bodies are in fact an extension of the environment and therefore we feel ecologies of emotion when we place our feet on places our ancestors had once stepped.
80. This kind of journey teaches us the obligation and responsibility we have to our ancestors and generations yet to be born- you cannot walk past the puna that she bathed new-born Raukawa in and see that it has been trampled by cows and not be responsible for its protection and restoration.
81. To conclude I end with a poem that we wrote about our journey to retrace Māhinaarangi's trail:

Through My Feet I Come To Know You

Nā Naomi Simmonds (November 2019)

Māhinaarangi walked.

She simply put one step ahead of the other and walked.

Hapū with Raukawa comforted inside her Whare Tangata she walked – purposefully towards the lands and waters of Tūrongo.

The journey was long, and I can only begin to imagine what that journey entailed.

Who went with her?

Who led her?

Or who did she lead?

Why did she choose the route that she went?

Who did she meet and see along the way?

What were the stories they shared?

She walked. One step in front of the other.

Not as an exercise in research or remembrance or memorialising but as a purposeful movement or migration from her turangawaewae to create a new home for her and her son at Rangiātea.

How did she feel leaving what was her home for her entire life?

Was this the furthest she had ventured in her life?

How old was she?

Was she scared?

Tired?

One step in front of the other.

Feet moving atop the ground – no roads, no tracks.

She was the track maker, the map maker.

Her feet the makers of a journey that would be etched into the lands and the people forever more.

Did she know this would happen?

How could she not?

She walked but did she also do this strategically?

She moved over hills, across plains, over rivers and lakes.

Knowing that she was carving out the valleys of tradition and tikanga that could transform the lives of her great great great grandchildren and their great great great grandchildren.

She walked and walked and walked.

Along the way giving birth to Raukawa. In foreign lands.

Who helped her? Her labour pains felt in the name of the stream Nga amu wahine (the grumbles of a woman)

Her tears felt in the waterfall Te Rere I Oturu as she farewelled the waters that flowed to her home in the east knowing she would birth her baby in the lands to the west.

She laboured all the while still moving through space.

She birthed our ancestral knowledges onto and into the lands and waters that she moved through.

Up ahead there is a clearing – she can see for miles.

There between Maungatautari and Wharepuhunga, it is there that she can see where her new home will be. She laboured by the rivers and gave birth at the bottom of the hills.

A place we now know as Whenua-ā-kura – the land reddened by blood/the land where a treasure is born

Ūkaipō.

The place she breastfed her baby that forever has fused our identity to the land, the places we can/should be able to go to find sustenance.

And then she walked and cared for her newborn and walked and did this on repeat until she reached the banks of the Waikato River.

She walked.

One foot in front of the other until she reached Rangiātea.

A house built for her and her child by the man that she wooed with the scent of the Raukawa tree. It is here that the tohi ritual was performed and that child was taken on as the responsibility of the whole community.

Māhinaarangi was not on her own.

How did they set up a village? A whanau? A life?

Did she ever question what if it doesn't work out?'

She just did it.

She just walked.

She walked until she reached that place which would become home for her and her children. For me and my children.

Is this a love story?

Is this a story of leaving home?

Is this a birthing story?

A tribal story?

It is so many of these stories.

Māhinaarangi. I feel like I know you intimately, yet you feel like a stranger.

And so, we walk in your footsteps to come closer to knowing you and knowing ourselves.

We feel your pains, hopes, joys and struggles in our whare tangata (our womb space) and we lean on your lessons as we carry the responsibilities of te ukaipo the source of sustenance for our babies and from our whenua.

And so, one foot in front of the other we will walk your pathways, mo ake tonu.

Taku Ara Rā ... Ko Māhinaarangi Te Tapairu Tapu Nui Mana Roa Tiketike o te Tairawhiti!!

Taku Ara Rā – Nā Paraone Gloyne

Taku ara rā ko Māhinaarangi!

Taku ara rā ko Māhinaarangi!

Kauhehei kei runga

Kahotea kei raro

Noho ana mai

Ko te tapairu tapuroa

Mana nui tiketike

I piri ai ki te ngākau maru

I whakarerea ai

Te Whare o Ngarue

E hika e!

Tī!

Taku ara rā ko Māhinaarangi

Takahia atu rā i te awa ki Te Wairoa

Ka whakauta te haere ki Waikaremoana, ki Panekire

Hoea atu e whae te waka ki Hopuruahine

ka pikitia i te hiwi ki Whakatakā, ko Huiarau

Kei tua ko Te Kōhanga o Tūhoe, i te hikuhikunga o Whakatāne

taku arā rā ki Te Moana a Toi e hika e!

Taku ara rā ko Māhinaarangi

Pikitia i te hiwi ki Raukawa

Ka titiro whakamuri ki Poukawa

Ka titiro whakamua ki Te Hika a Ruarauhanga

Ko Te Awa a te Atua, e ko Heretaunga haukū nui e hika e tī!

Taku ara rā ko Māhinaarangi

Kei Kaimai ko ōku roimata ki ōu i Te Rere i Ōturu

kia huri atu ki Whenuakura, te putanga o te hinu ki te ao, ko Raukawa e tai e tī!

Kei Te Ara Pōhatu tō hekenga ki te ukaipō, ki te Te Poipoitanga, ki Tuarāpāraharaha, ki Tīrakarakatahi, ki tō puia hei oranga mō kōrua i te ara ki Te Horahoratanga o ngā kākahu o Raukawa e, tī!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Naomi Simmonds', written over a horizontal line.

Nāku nei, nā

Naomi Simmonds