

**IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL**

**Wai 2700**

**Wai 1940**

**IN THE MATTER OF** the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF** the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry

**BY** a claim by Jane Mihingarangi Ruka  
Te Korako on behalf of the  
Grandmother Council of the Waitaha  
Nation, including the three hapu of  
Ngāti Kurawaka, Ngāti Rakaiwaka  
and Ngāti Pakauwaka

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF MERE SKERRETT**

**15 August 2022**

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**RECEIVED**

Waitangi Tribunal

**16 Aug 22**

Ministry of Justice  
WELLINGTON

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**Counsel Acting:** Janet Mason

I, **MERE SKERRETT**, of Ponoke, state that:

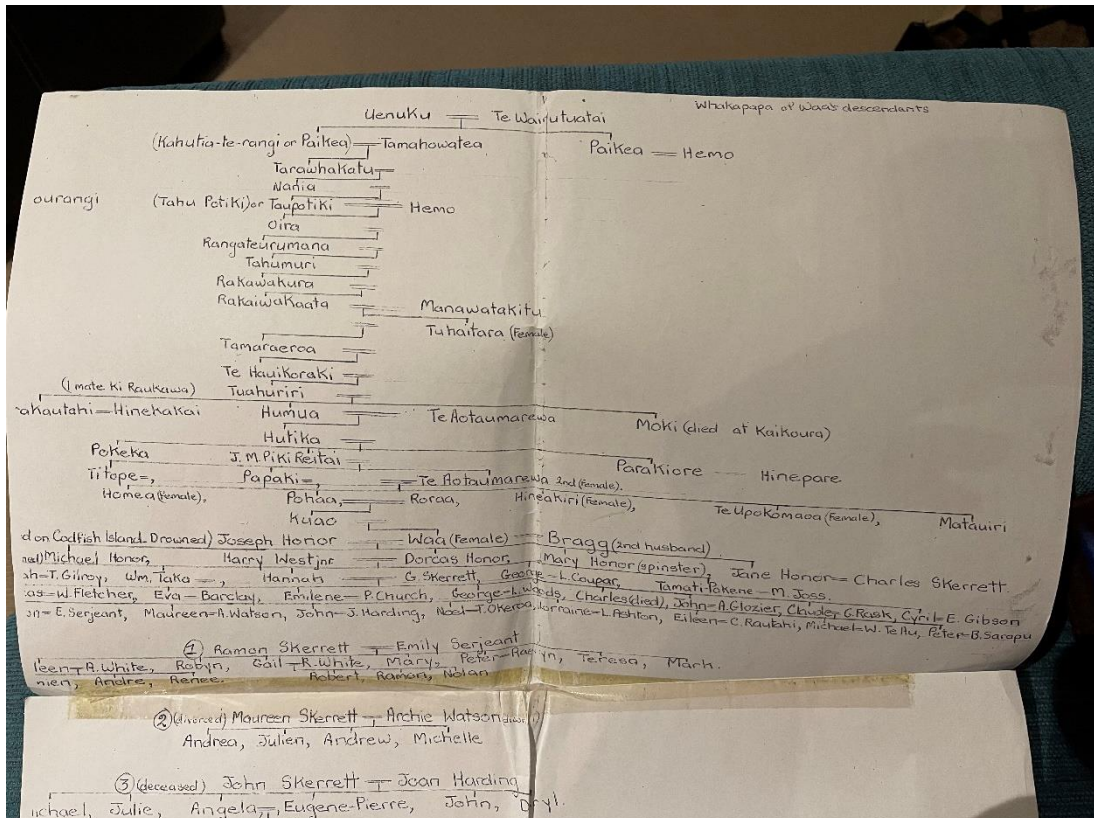
*Paiheretia te rangi*  
*Paiheretia te whenua*  
*Paiheretia ki te rangimārie*  
*Hei tāwharautanga iho mā te kīngi Māori*  
*Me tana Whare Kāhui Ariki tonu*  
*Rire rire hau, paimārire.*

**Introduction**

1. I present this Brief of Evidence (“BoE”) in support of the claim filed by Jane Ruka on behalf of the Waitaha Grandmother Council.

**Whakapapa**

2. The following charts show my Whakapapa.



**Figure One:** Whakapapa of Waa’s descendants.

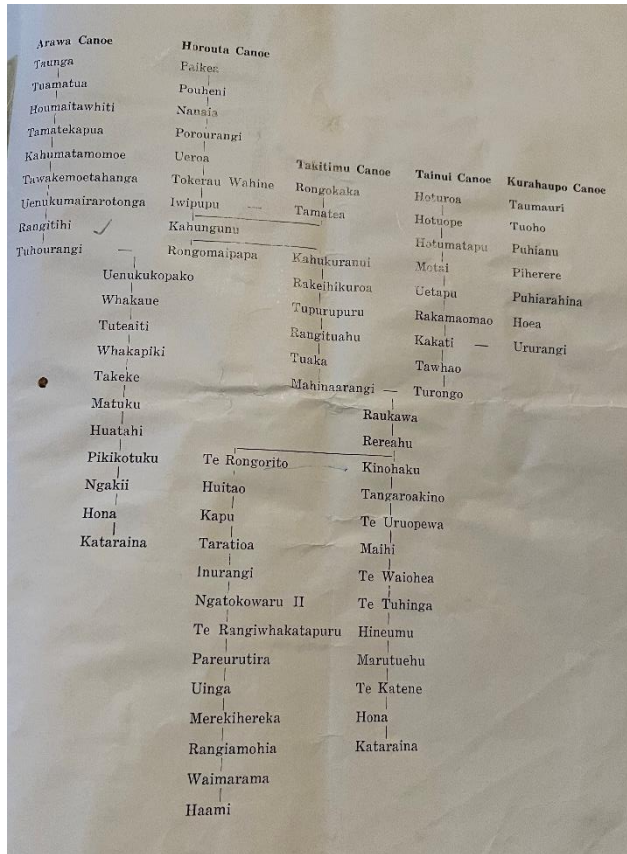


Figure Two: Whakapapa of Arawa Canoe and Horouta Canoe

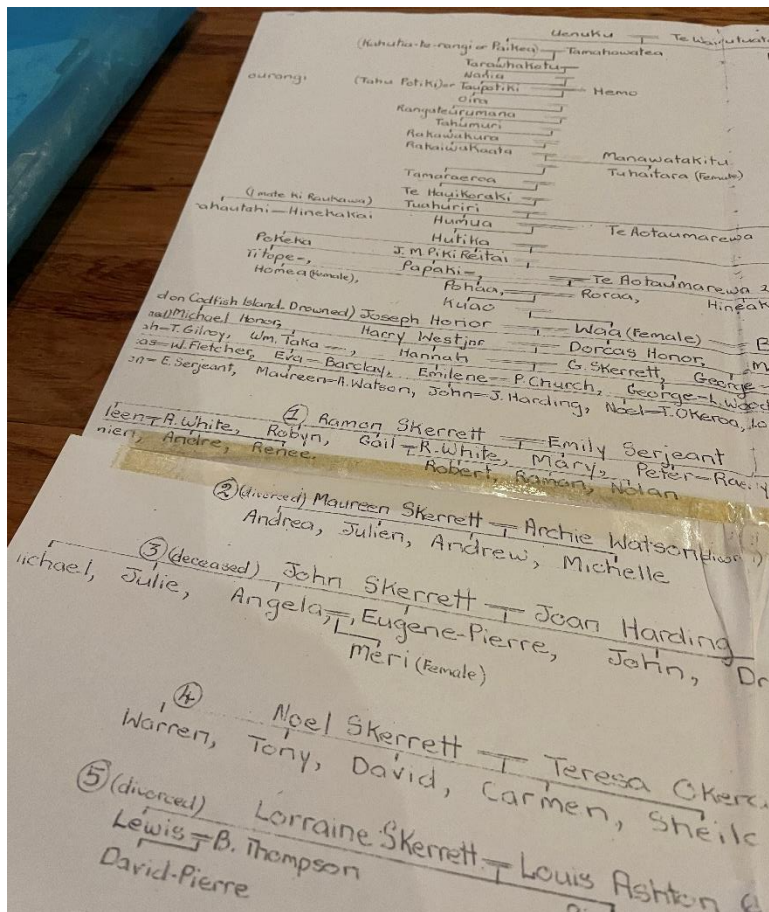
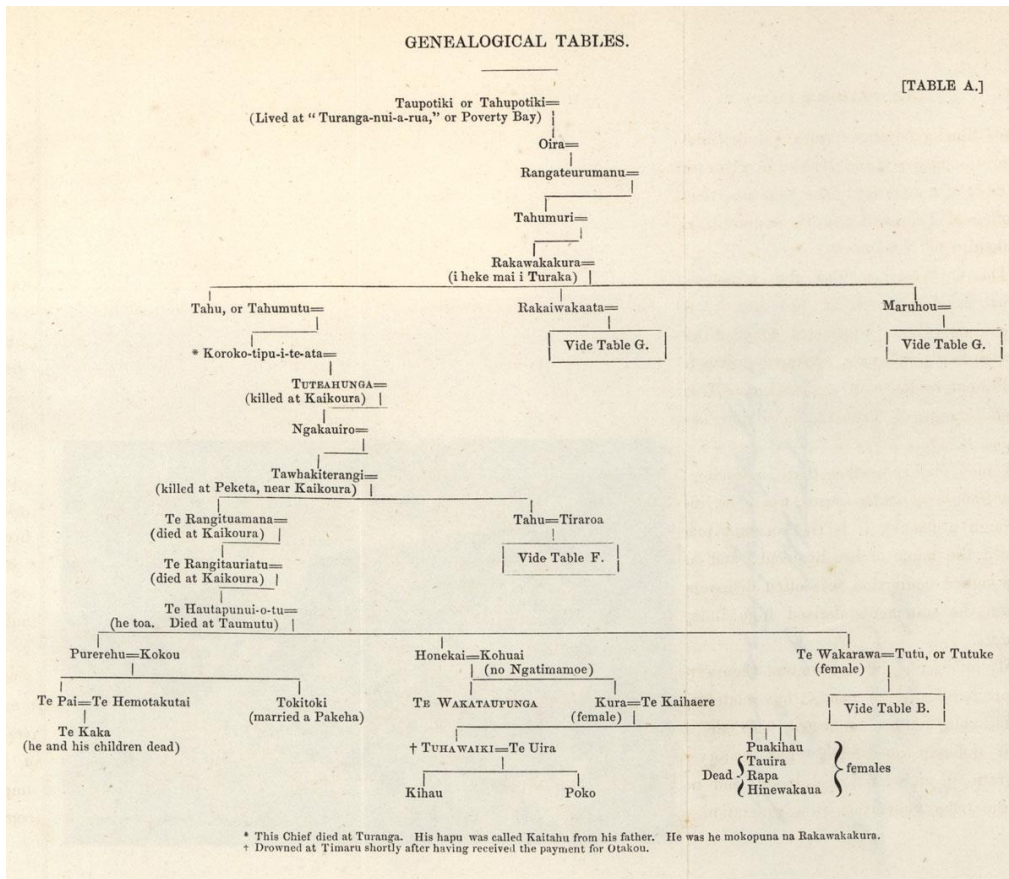
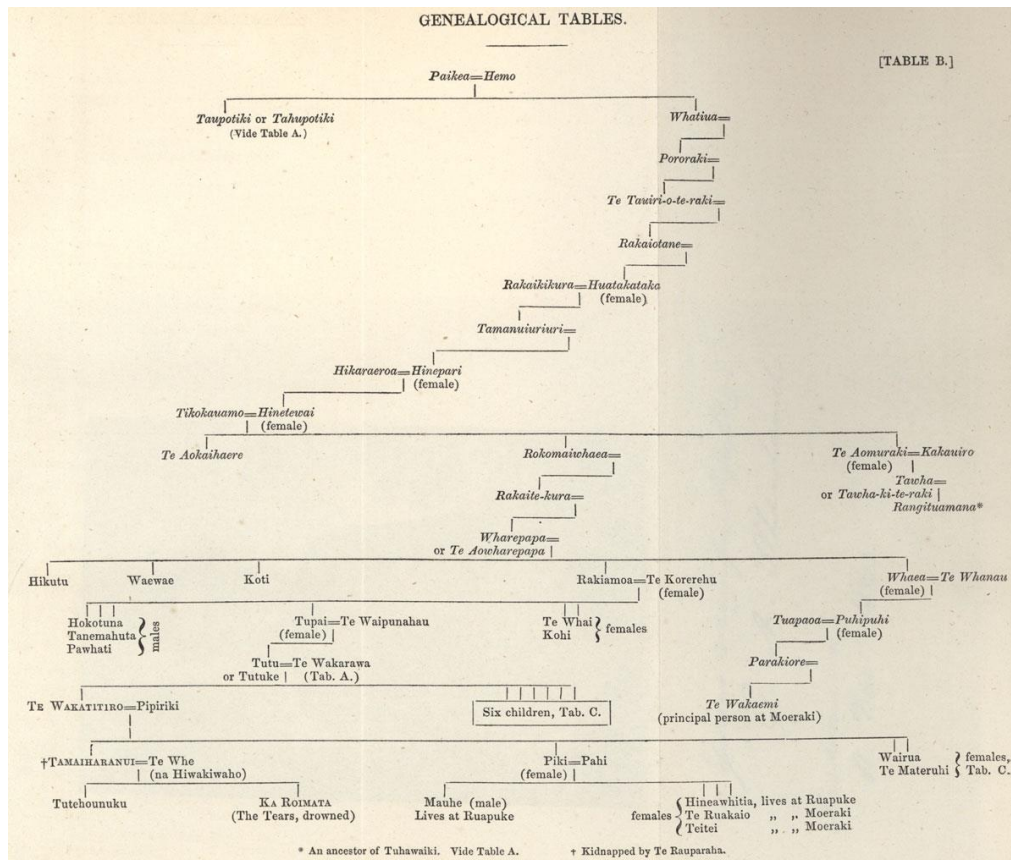


Figure Three: Partial Whakapapa chart



**Figure Four: Whakapapa Chart**



**Figure Five: Whakapapa Chart**

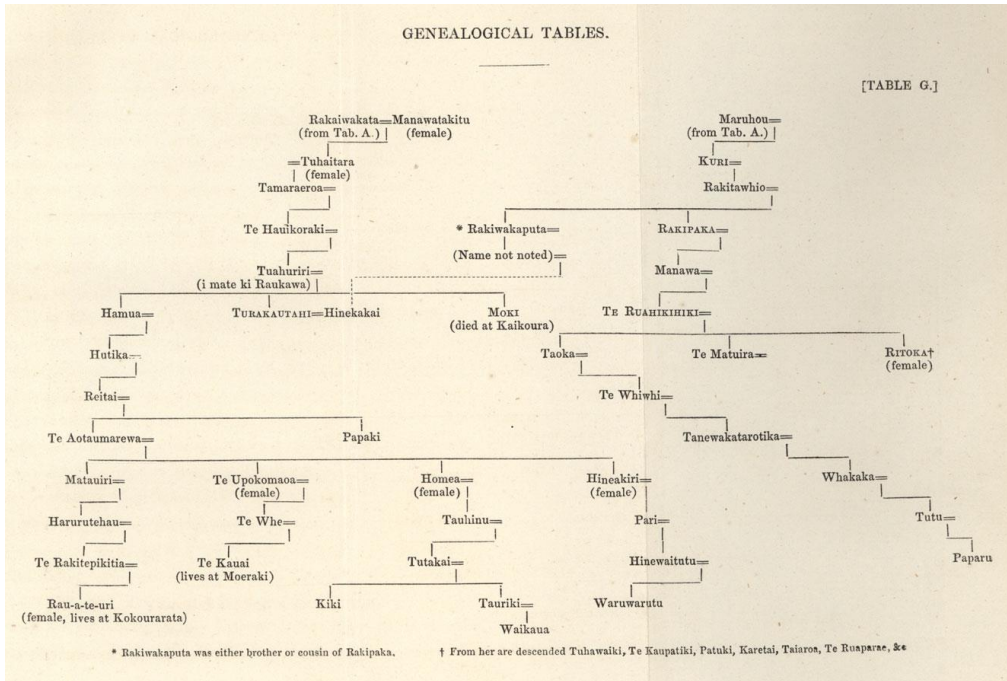


Figure Six: Whakapapa Chart

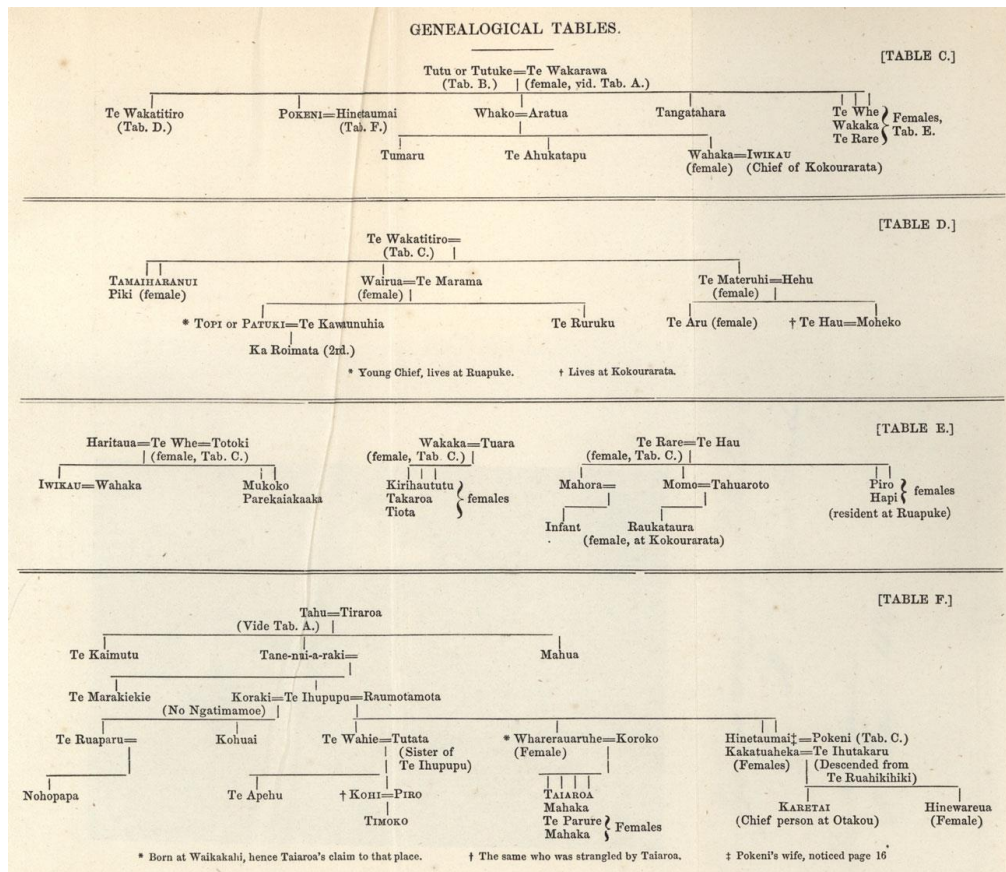
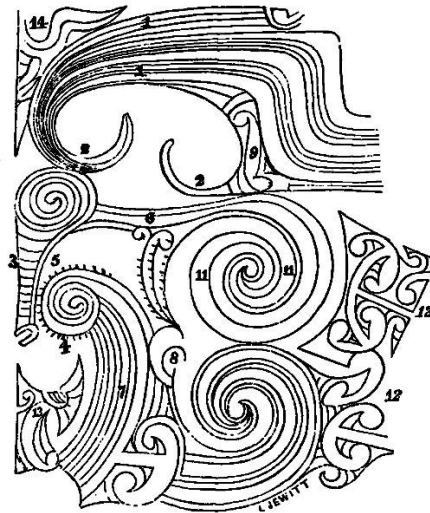


Figure Seven: Whakapapa Chart

3. I am a direct descendant of Tahu Pōtiki – tracking back 19 generations on my father’s side through his grandmother, Hana West (who married her cousin George Skerrett – common practice) both being the descendants of Wā. Wā is one of the pou wāhine whakairo or pillars standing in the meeting house at Bluff – Te Rau Aroha. All those pou wāhine in that wharenuī represent my female ancestresses – i.e., Kāti Māmoe, and Ngāi Tahu women from the South. Te Rau Aroha is testament to mana wāhine and Ngāi Tahu women’s rightful place in the whakapapa lines. My great-grandmother, Hana West, is the granddaughter of Wā through her mother, Kurukuru (Dorcas) Honor.
4. Through her father, Te Here West, Hana West is the granddaughter of Tītapu, whose parents were Hinetaumai and Pōkene (sometimes spelt Pōkeni). Hinetaumai came from Te Ihupupu and Raumotamota. She married Pōkene whose mother was Te Whakarawa. Te Whakarawa had seven children in toto. She had two siblings, Purerehu and Honekai. Her brother, Honekai, had two children, a son Te Whakataupunga, and a daughter, Kura. They were Pōkene’s cousins. They held the chieftainship in the South. What is interesting is that when Te Whakataupunga died, the mantle of chieftainship in the whole of the South went to his sister Kura’s son, Tūhawaiki, Pōkene’s nephew.
5. Te Whakarawa and Hinetaumai were closely related. They have a common ancestor where their lines merge at Tawha-ki-te-rangi (often referred to as Tawha, who was killed at Paketa near Kaikoura. Through that lineage I can track back 20 generations to Tahu Pōtiki, the younger brother of Porourangi. It was particularly important to be able to trace one’s whakapapa for fifteen or sixteen generations back in the day (as it is today) so that kinship relationships to each other may be seen at a glance and because of the land ties to the whenua.
6. We quite often hear stories about Pōkene because of his lineage, and his siblings - having three sisters (Te Whe, Wakaka and Te Rare), and three brothers (Te Whakatitiro, Whako and Tangatahara) – and their entanglements with Te Rauparaha. Te Whakatitiro was the eldest brother in that line, and the father of Tamaiharanui. Pōkene’s brother, Tangatahara, was responsible for killing the Ngāti Mutunga/Ngāti Tama/Ngāti Toa Chief, Te Pēhi Kupe (Te Rauparaha’s uncle) at Kaiapoi.

7. But it is to Pōkene’s wife Hinetaumai that I turn to because she is my great-grandmother’s great-grandmother and because Hinetaumai is interesting in that she had the whole of the left side of her face in moko, as described by Shortland.<sup>1</sup>



1. Tiwhana. 4. Pongiangia. 7. Erepshi. 10. Koroaha. 13. Kauwas.  
2. Bepha. 5. Wakatara. 8. Wero. 11. Paepae. 14. Titi.  
3. Nga. 6. Kumikumi. 9. Pukaru. 12. Putaringa.

*Figure eight:* The moko of Hinetaumai.

8. Shortland wrote of Hinetaumai and Pōkene who he knew as “an old chief, uncle of Tamaiharanui, who had come to a tragical end at the hands of Te Rauparaha and who had lost many other members of his family in wars with that chief”.<sup>2</sup> Of Hinetaumai he wrote thus:

The old man had the oddest looking being for a wife I had ever seen. One half of her face was tattooed in every respect like that of a man, while the other had no more marks than her sex entitled her to; so that two persons, who stood opposite each other, each viewing a different side of the face in profile, while she, perhaps, sat wrapped in her blanket, with a pipe in her mouth, would have pronounced the object to be a man, or a woman, according to the circumstance of his position. I afterwards met with several other old women of this tribe, who had similarly engraved on their

<sup>1</sup> Shortland, E. (1851). *The Southern Districts of New Zealand: A Journal, with Passing Notices of the Customs of the Aborigines.*

<sup>2</sup> Shortland, E. (1851). *The Southern Districts of New Zealand: A Journal, with Passing Notices of the Customs of the Aborigines.*

faces many of the marks, which in the north island I had never seen but on males.

It may not be out of place here to observe, that the tattoo or "moko," as it is termed in native language, is neither intended to constitute a distinctive mark between different tribes, nor to denote rank, as has been variously stated. It is, in fact, only a mark of manhood, and a fashionable mode of adornment, by which the young men seek to gain the good graces of the young women. It only so far denotes rank, that the poor man may not have the means of paying the artist, whose skill is necessary.<sup>3</sup>

9. What is significant, and fairly telling, about this is that the discourses prevalent by such ethnographers of that era were not only derogatory towards women and therefore harmful, but it is clear to see they were full of assumptions and flawed logic. Reference to Hinetaumai as “the object” is not only offensive, but the fact that all the other wāhine Māori were totally invisibilised in this storying is testament to the patriarchal invisibilising of wāhine Māori.
10. Hinetaumai was indeed a Chieftainess and her moko denoted her whakapapa of rank. But the colonised thinking is that on women the moko made them ‘look odd’, but on men their looks were enhanced. In the eyes of many to this day, the same logic applies. Wāhine Māori of that time, if lucky enough to survive all the diseases deliberately introduced, musket wars, and land alienations leading to impoverishment, were also subject to the objectification that underpins western thinking, evident in the notion of ‘sex entitlements’ referred to by Shortland.

### *Tainui/Te Arawa*

11. Whilst I am aware that this aspect of the claim is delving into the South, it would be remiss of me to continue without reference to my mother, a staunch supporter of the Kīngitanga, through her mother, Raiha Serjeant (nee Emery), and because of her whakapapa connections to the Kīngitanga. I am the direct

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<sup>3</sup> At p15 - 18.



descendant of the first Māori King, Pōtatau Te Wherowhero of Ngāti Māhuta, and Hinepau from Ngati Pūkeko. Their daughter is known as Te Paea.

12. Te Paea lived at Port Waikato and Raglan where she married a Pākehā builder called Sam Joyce and had a son, Sam Hoera Joyce (born approximately 1862), and who finished up running a billiard saloon at Taupiri. Sam Hoera Joyce married Waimārama Joy Analoch Emery of Ngāti Unu, Ngāwaeroa, Ngāti Maniapoto whānui, and had two children, Samuel Horouta Emery, who was born in 1885, at the foot of Kakepuku near Te Awamutu and Waitauhi Hera Emery born in 1888. At age 18 Samuel Horouta Emery married Kataraina Te Urumahue Kātene, the daughter of Hona Whakataki Kātene of Ngāti Rongomai and Aneta Irihana Rēwiri of Ngāti Te Rangiuuora, Ngāti Pikiāo whānui.
13. His mother, Waimarama Joy Analoch Joyce (nee Emery) went North with her brothers to the Kauri fields and remarried Ratima Netana Nathan, from Kaihu, Kaipara, Northland, and had a further 12 children in that second marriage. Samuel Horouta Emery was instrumental in building Te Kōpua Marae on his ancestral land at Kakepuku. His son, my grandmother's younger brother, George Emery, was the master carver of that marae, as he was of the marae at Te Rotoiti, Taurua Pā.

### **Te ira wāhine and te ira tāne = te ira tangata**

(Relationality and balance of wāhine and tāne for the good of all)

### **Institution of Marriage and the Relationality of Roles**

14. Whilst I refer to the concept of 'marriage' it must be noted that Māori did not marry in the Western sense and there was much more fluidity to moving in and out of 'whakapapa' relationships, depending on the contexts (which lands you were living on or moving to and what was happening). Whakapapa was the organising principle because of the relationships to the lands, not genders or patriarchal hierarchies. Rangatiratanga over land was held with both wāhine Māori and tāne Māori.
15. When studying whakapapa lines, without scrutiny, it is easy to get genders confused because the language is non-gendered and difficult to know whether

the names are male or female, unlike western naming which operates along different lines. Western genealogical records invariably invisibilise and silence women (undertaken as a norm in Western history) and that practice of invisibilising through silencing has culminated in women's exclusion from power. But roles were much more fluid and less gendered in Māori societies.

16. One example, when my great grandmother, was on a boat travelling to the Tītī Islands in the 1930s, and my father was a boy on board, they were in a horrific storm. The southern seas are well known for their roughness, and many names in our whakapapa have 'lost at sea', 'drowned' next to them. This night was particularly rough, with the anchor thrashing around and into the boat, threatening to put a hole in it, which would cause the boat to sink. One of Dad's relations was tied to the boat to be able to climb over and retrieve and tie the anchor.
17. While etched on my father's memory because of this fearful night, he recalls his grandmother slept. In the morning when calm set in and the men looked out, they realised they were way off course and lost. Someone said words to the effect "you had better get the old lady up". When Hana climbed up, she took one look out and said "We are at the Solanders". So indeed they had been blown way off course. What is significant is that it was the "old lady" who was knowledgeable about the lay of the Islands. She was the holder of the mātauranga Māori' in many respects, in terms of that mahinga kai – tīti gathering. She is widely remembered for her story-telling abilities, her reo Māori (one of the last generations in our line of the Southern dialect).
18. My father recalled Sir Apirana Ngata (who he said was "travelling with their relation, Eruera Tirikatene, even though they were on opposite sides of the House") staying at the farm in grandmother's house. When Ngata spoke to his grandmother in Māori he commented that she spoke an old dialect, which he had not heard in a long time. So there was some familiarity to an old Ngāti Porou dialect.
19. In 1876 Samuel Williams wrote to Sir Donald McLean to protest the injustice of what 'marriage' (European style) did in the patriarchy – where many Māori

women were invisibilised in land issues because of such imported privatising land acts for example the Land Enclosure Acts.

20. In Aotearoa 1876 Williams writes:

“We all of us know that according to Native usage and custom a Native woman can deal with her land without reference to her husband - and Native women who have had their lands brought under these acts have in very many instances dealt with them without their husbands signing the deed, they not considering that their husband had any voice in the matter and the husbands considering that they had no right to interfere. However,

[...]

Married women are now being told that according to English law they cannot deal with their own lands without their husbands being party to the deed”.

### ***The Status of Wāhine Māori to Challenge Tāne Māori***

21. The following is an example of how traditional or reconstructed stories provided a blueprint for the mana and status of wāhine Māori in pre-1840 Māori society and contemporary society. Mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori promoted the balance between men and women – the hierarchical nature of western patriarchy again has interfered with our knowledge base and tikanga, evident in my grandmother’s challenge to men at Okataina.

### **Te Mana Me Te Rangatiratanga o te Wāhine Māori**

#### ***Decolonising Whakapapa***

22. As Shortland put it - “My informants did not content themselves with a bare recollection of names; but related the most remarkable actions connected with the lives of their different ancestors. The history of the migrations, and wars, and losses, and triumphs of the tribe, generation after generation, seemed to be preserved in their retentive memories, handed down from father to son nearly in the same words as originally delivered” and it is all that that is silenced.” But the likes of Shortland, whilst some of their records are accurate, started to

influence the way whakapapa worked, because of their style of writing – “from father to son” invisibilising the role of women in the production of the whakapapa – te whare tangata. What about from grandmother to granddaughter or mother to daughter. All of a sudden, the ‘production of people’ if I may put it that way – became the domain of men – and we all know that is both mythical and mystical because it’s actually the women who know who is who.

23. My own grandmother on my mother’s side was an expert in whakapapa and many a visitor would seek her out for her knowledge in this regard. That is because she was not only steeped in her knowledge of whakapapa, but she was an expert speaker of te reo Māori, knowledgeable across mātauranga Māori domains, absolutely immersed in tikanga and a force to be reckoned with to boot. ‘Iti te kupu, nui te kōrero’ applies here. She was not verbose but what she said, you listened to. In terms of whakapapa, she could read it on your face. My recollection is that whenever she got together with her daughters, most of whom would be in their 90s currently, three of whom did live into their 90s, as did my grandmother, the discussions were dominated by whakapapa connections and relationality.

### *Psychological Harm Through Erasure*

24. Failure to locate our Indigenous lives in colonial relations in the ‘past’, and neo-colonial relations ‘now’ operationalises the status quo of white supremacy, or presumptions of power whilst simultaneously silencing Indigenous voices and erasing Indigenous histories. The loss of a past through colonialism always leads to the loss of a presence, stress, anxiety, and trauma which becomes intergenerational. Yet the dominant settler view continues to structurally mask the sometimes subtle, sometimes not, yet always harmful, ways colonialism happens in the now. That explains why racism and linguisticism are so difficult to eradicate.

### **Wāhine Rangatiratanga Over Whenua, Whakapapa/Whānau, Whai Rawa And Mātauranga**

25. An old whakataukī, and often said in different ways ‘*He wahine, he whenua mate ai te tangata*’ or another version ‘*He wahine, he whenua, e*

*ngaro ai te tangata*’ and also interpreted in different ways. My understanding is that it is akin to saying that “but for women, but for land – humankind would disappear”, and that is because as the land nurtures us, that is the whenua, and as it is our mothers who nurture us, that is also the whenua, so they are one and the same thing. To put it bluntly, not a single person on this planet has come through into this world without the placenta.

26. Not a single person could survive on this planet without the food and water which comes from our land. From a Māori world view, placenta (whenua) and land (whenua) are the same. That is why, when I took the whenua of my mokopuna Tamaihēngia back to Aoraki Maunga, I uttered the words when I was burying his afterbirth “Ka hoki te whenua ki te whenua; Kia ū ko tō whenua i te whenua, ko te whenua kia ū” in the acknowledgement of that very important point – to Papatūānuku and the part she has to play in the well-being of my grandson and in relationality with the ongoing responsibility that my grandson has to play in the well-being of Papatūānuku. This leads me to a discussion of ‘te iwi tamariki’.

### *Te Iwi Tamariki*

27. I want to discuss this section from the angle of ‘te iwi tamariki’, a term I have never heard used apart from its use by my grandmother, Raiha Serjeant, who was a founding member of the Māori Women’s Welfare League, born in 1904, which would make her 118 years old today. Recorded in the book “Te Tīmatanga Tātou, Tātou: Founding Members of the Māori Women’s Welfare League”<sup>4</sup> she discusses issues of becoming enslaved to Pākehā norms, resulting in the loss of rangatiratanga and the importance of holding on to te reo Māori and all aspects pertaining to te reo.
28. She also advocates for language regeneration which sustains ancestral ways of thinking and being when she states:

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<sup>4</sup> Mira Szaszy, “Te tīmatanga--tātau tātau: Te Rōpū Wāhine Māori Toko i te Ora - Early stories from founding members of the Māori Women's Welfare League” (1993) B. Williams Books.

E mōkaingia ana hoki tātau – mā rātou e hōmai  
ngā tikanga e ora ai tātau; mā rātou te whakaaro  
hei ora mō tātau; me mau i a tātau tō rātou na reo,  
me ō rātou āhuatanga. Nā, ko taku tino hiahia kia  
hoki ngā tamariki ki te ako i te reo Māori, kia hoki  
mai ai te mana o ō rātou tupuna ki a rātou; kia  
Kotahi ai te iwi Māori<sup>5</sup>

29. She further discusses her fears of language loss to issues of identity crisis with children and the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, stating:

I tēnei wā, kāre te iwi tamariki e mōhio ana ko wai  
rātou, he aha rānei rātou ... he Māori? He aha  
rānei? Koirā aku tūmanako, kia tū tika te Tiriti ...  
Nā te me ai hūnaia mai tērā Tiriti...<sup>6</sup>

30. She has a distaste for what she refers to as the Pākehā greed which creeps into Māori society with their language and ideas of individualisation and selfish thinking when she says:

“He kore nō rātou e tū ana kia kotahi – ko te  
ngākau matapiko kei te uru mai ki ētahi i roto i te  
reo Pākehā – kua uru mai tērā whakaaro. Ki a  
rātou, ē ko rātou anō, ko rātou anake!  
Whakarangatira ana tēna i a ia, whakarangatira  
ana tēna i a ia...<sup>7</sup>

31. Further, she talks about how the government is feeding the hapū money which polarises Māori communities as they compete for money. She then claims that

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<sup>5</sup> At p195. We are being enslaved – they are directing us in what they deem correct or suitable for our wellbeing; they are thinking up frameworks for our lives and wellbeing; instead let us hold on to our reo, and amalgamate with what they have to offer. Now, my absolute desire is that our the children turn back to learn te reo Māori, so that the mana of their ancestors is returned to them.

<sup>6</sup> At p197. At this time, the people who are the descendants of the Gods (children) do not know who they are or what they are doing ... are they Māori? That is my hope, that the Tiriti [of Waitangi] is given its rightful standing ... because currently that Tiriti is obscured.

<sup>7</sup> At p195. They are not standing together - covetous ways and values are creeping into some via the English language – their thoughts are encroaching. To some of them, well – they are thinking selfishly, only of themselves! This one or that one is propping up their own sense of self-importance.

is the problem with our men and reasserts her mana wāhine, challenging the men to listen to women's voices to put them on the right path when she says:

“Mehemea rātau e whakarongo ana i etahi wā ki  
ngā kōrero a ngā wāhine, taku mōhio, ka tū rātau  
ki te wāhi tika”.<sup>8</sup>

- 32.** Her aspirations were that men would be much more vigilant to women's aspirations and whakaaro, to move forward together in an enlightened fashion, rather than rendering women to work inside the private domain of the 'household'. She noticed the unequal divisions between men and women and states the importance of working together by stating:

“Ōku wawata, kia tū ngā tāne, kia whakaaro mai  
ki ngā mahi a ngā wāhine, kia tonono mai ki ngā  
wāhine kia haere tahi atu ki te hoatu hoki i ētahi  
māramatanga ki a rātau”.<sup>9</sup>

- 33.** I recall learning of an incident at Okataina, where she held up the meeting because she perceived her mana wāhine had been transgressed by a presumptuous man who was trying to silence the voices of wāhine Māori by preventing them from speaking at the hui, and by belittling the role of women in the karanga domain, which is why she questions the difference between the two language domains of karanga and kōrero. She responded by stating that was her argument with the elders (men).
- 34.** They rely on women to karanga in the pōwhiri, by standing on the marae to karanga, but then turn around and say they cannot stand on the Marae. She challenges them to think about that, about the difference between standing in those two domains and of women giving their thoughts through their voices. She also states that there was no reply. She further recalls that when she was told to go out and karanga, and as I recall it, it was more the way she was told,

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<sup>8</sup> At p196. If they were to actively listen to what it is that women are saying, to my way of thinking, that would put them in good standing, in the rightful place.

<sup>9</sup> At p198. My aspirations, it is time men take stock and think about all the contributions that women make and be inclusive of women so that they can move forward together and they all will also be enlightened.

she said ‘No! You do it, the man who stands on the marae’. He said, ‘don’t be like that’ and she responded ‘well, you said it – what on earth would it take at this time – if I were to go out and karanga?’

35. She said she was still waiting for a response:

“Koinei taku tautohe ki ō mātou koroua. Ka tae ki ngā huihui, kua kimi wāhine hei karanga, hei pōwhiri. He aha i tukuna ai ko te reo wāhine kia rangona, ka kī koutou karekau e taea e te wāhine te tū i te marae. He aha te rerekē o tērā? O te tū, o te hoatu a ngā wāhine i ō rātau whakaaro? Nā, kāre anō ēnei kōrero kia whakautu mai e ōku koroua.<sup>10</sup>

Nā, he ope tā mātou i Ōtataina, ā, Kotahi te tangata i waenganui i a mātau. Aue, he atua! Kua rawa te wāhine hei kōrero! Ka karanga mai, ‘Ha! Haere ake rā ki te pōwhiri.’ ‘E kāo! Māu mā te tāne, mā te mea e tū ana i runga i te marae’. Ka mea mai, ‘Aue! Kua hoki hei pēnā rawa.’ Ka karanga atu au, ‘Nau anō te kōrero – he aha hoki i tika ai i tēnei wā kia haere atu au hei karanga?’ Ka whakautu mai, ‘He rerekē te karanga, he rerekē te kōrero!’ Ke te tatari tonu au kia hoki mai [he kōrero] i aku tini koroua.<sup>11</sup>

36. This is a great recollection of my grandmother exercising her mana wāhine when the complementary, or balancing roles were actually being compromised.

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<sup>10</sup> This was my debate (or argument) with our elders. On arrival at hui, they fetch a woman to karanga, as a welcome. Why is it that it is the woman’s voice sent out to be heard, but you say, ‘no the woman is not able to stand at the marae’? What is the difference between those two [the thinking underpinning karanga and kōrero]? That is standing, [of the women] and giving their views/thinking? Well, there has not been a shred of response to me by my elders [men] to these issues.

<sup>11</sup> So, with regard to our group at Okataina, there was one person amongst us, oh dear – it was as if he was God. Women don’t dare speak! Then he [disrespectfully] commanded, ‘Hā, go and welcome them in’. [I responded ‘No! You do it, let the man do it, because that would mean standing on the marae’. [He] responded to me, ‘oh dear, don’t be like that’. I called out ‘well you indeed said it – why have you deemed it right at this time that I go and karanga?’ [He] responded, ‘the calling is different, speaking is different!’ I am still waiting for a [coherent] response from all my elders [in this case elderly men relations].



### ***Rangatiratanga Over Mātauranga Māori***

37. All mātauranga Māori comes out of the lands, seas and skies and is reflected in te reo Māori. I believe it is important, in any discussion on matters of whenua, reo, wāhine and tamariki, to have a discussion about settler colonialism. Not just understanding the contemporary issues, but developing understandings of historical positionings – theft of land and how that impacts on wāhine Māori.
38. What impacts on wāhine Māori impacts on tamariki Māori. It is important for people to recognise, in my view, and understand that they are standing on stolen occupied lands – part of what everyone needs to understand, even though people may feel uncomfortable – that is an important part of education – to understand and acknowledge settler colonialism.

### ***Rangatiratanga Over Reo***

39. Stories of language regeneration – how we think about languages – the discourses around languages – what is recognised with status, what is not, how we communicate, what is happening with our children, what we are finding through research, providing counter-discourses around languages – whose languages count – reframing language use, teaching and learning away from a demographic based on dominant and subordinate languages – and therefore deciding for children what languages they must speak and learn in are important. Language is central to children’s sense of who they are in the world.
40. As an enthusiastic supporter of the regeneration of indigenous languages, I have dedicated much of my adult life to disrupting and dismantling colonial power hierarchies through establishing and working in Kōhanga Reo (early childhood Māori language nests) and Kura Kaupapa Māori (it’s Primary School extension). I am the mother of five Māori/English bilinguals (MEBs). My grandmother named our Kōhanga Reo after the great Amokura bird, prized for its red tail feathers, and she was actively involved in its progression. She was also extremely proud of her Māori speaking descendants.

### *Te Amokura Kōhanga Reo*

41. Growing up in white New Zealand in the post-war urbanisation era (where assimilation was hot on the political and educational agenda for Māori), meant that my generation grew up as brown monolingual English-speaking Māori. I was acutely aware of the alienation and trauma that accompanies forced language loss as my identity as Māori was systematically stripped away from me in the public domain. In the whānau (akin to family unit but more) domain I had another life.
42. Nonetheless I grew up with that unerring sense of being displaced, and critically aware of the assimilatory activities of early childhood education and school practices. So it was to Kōhanga Reo (TKR) (Māori language nests) and Kura Kaupapa Māori (KKM) (Māori language schooling extension of TKR) that I turned my sights for my tamariki (children, descendants of the Gods) both as an alternative to the mainstream programming that I saw happening, and as an act of resistance to the prevailing racism of the system.
43. In the 1980s and 1990s I helped to establish, and worked in, several TKR. Having spent numerous years working there, naturally we did not want to send our children to monolingual settler-colonial English-speaking schools. After much political lobbying, we (parents) stepped outside of the system in the establishment of a KKM to provide some continuity in the alternative system we were constructing for our tamariki. Most TKR were established in garages and halls and were unfunded or underfunded (still are). This was also the case with the KKM, schooling extension being in similar spaces—squatting even in a Council house as we did in the mid-90s. I was responsible for gaining entry to one Council house, and once so gained, changing the locks. Simple as that. That Kura is very successful to this day, now officially relocated to Waikato University.

### *The Descendants of the Gods: Māori Indigenous Childhoods*

44. The 1850s onwards were particularly turbulent years because Māori lands were being stolen with unprecedented rapidity and the country was heading into land wars. It was in the interests of those Pākehā (English men) ethnographers

writing in that period to discredit Māori and undermine the chieftainship whenever and wherever they could. But earlier on in the century, and in the century before (Cook's time) the records painted a different picture which I refer to here in a discussion of my writing around children in the 1800s.

### *The 'Child' Construct and Māori Children in the 1800s*

45. Recently I wrote about the shift in the understanding of what it is to be 'tamariki' and what it is to be 'children'<sup>12</sup> in a Chapter titled The Descendants of the Gods: Māori Indigenous Childhoods. It overviews the psychological harm of 'developmental psychology' which came with western constructs and is still very prevalent, and harmful to tamariki Māori, today.
46. The chapter overviewed the silencing of women and women's knowledge in the Western world and how the same attitudes were transported to New Zealand through the colonial mindset. It talked about the control and manufacture of knowledge, and the eradication of mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori through banning the language in schools, and the impact that has had through colonial violence, the language shift from Māori to English, and the deliberate dismantling of the whānau, hapū and iwi structures.
47. I also overviewed the issue of child removal and an incident that triggered a public outcry and inquiry as it is chilling. It was captured on social media.<sup>13</sup> I write:

“As Burman (2019) argues, under the developmentalist regime, the child is configured as a subject, a future citizen. Typical Western narrative is one of positioning the child as being spoilt or made rotten but once the question of the marital relationship is resolved, the child dissolves into a position of “normalised absence”.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Skerrett, M. (2021a). The Descendants of the Gods: Māori Indigenous Childhoods. In *The Sage Handbook of Global Childhoods*, Sage Publications. Eds N. Yelland, L. Peters, N. Fairchild, M. Tesar & M.S. Perez (pp 6-18).

<sup>13</sup> See Melanie Reid, “Taken by the state: Don't take my baby” (9 May 2019) *stuff.co.nz* <<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/112568714/taken-by-the-state-dont-take-my-baby>>.

<sup>14</sup> At p137.

**48.** Children, in families, become seen and not heard. Children living in the Māori social structures of ‘whānau (loosely approximating smaller family units), hapū (larger units of family groupings), and iwi (broader tribal groupings),’ occupied quite a different space.

**49.** Salmond (2017) recalls one of the very first missionaries, the Reverend Samuel Marsden from the Church Missionary Society commenting on the role of children in the early 1800s. He said

The Chiefs are in general very sensible men, and wish for information upon all subjects. They are accustomed to public discussions from their infancy. The Chiefs take their Children from their Mothers breast, to all their public Assemblies. They hear all that is said upon Politics, Religion, War &c [sic] by the oldest men. Children will frequently ask questions in public conversation, and are answered by the Chiefs. I have often been surprised, to see the Sons of the Chiefs at the age of 4 or 5 years sitting amongst the Chiefs, and paying such close attention to what was said... There can be no finer children than [those of] the New Zealanders in any part of the world. Their parents are very indulgent, and they appear always happy and playful, and very active (Salmond, 2017, cited at p. 114).

**50.** Salmond argues that Marsden “...failed to connect their happiness, however, with the absence of contemporary British child-rearing practices which included harsh physical punishment” (p. 114). The biblical notions of ‘spare the rod, spoil the child’ and ‘children are meant to be seen, not heard’ imposed through British colonialism were foreign concepts to Māori of the 1800s.

**51.** She quoted ten eye-witness accounts from Europeans spanning the years from 1817 to 1968 witnessing parental affection, love and caring for their children (cited at p. 458-460). They saw parenting styles and their children as;

expressive and “...robust, lively, and possess, in general, pleasing countenances” (John Savage, 1807);

dutiful, respectful towards their mothers, with “The tenderest parental affection (an impulse wisely ordained by nature) is remarkable

among all classes, high and low”, “The Chiefs carry their children upon their backs, taking them from their mothers at an early age, that they may not be an incumbrance to them...the men make excellent nurses, and have a peculiar art in the management of their infant offspring” (John Nicholas, 1817);

solicitous, caring parents with no partiality on account of sex, “The infant is no sooner weaned than a considerable part of its care devolves upon the father: it is taught to twine its arms round his neck, and in this posture it remains the whole day, asleep or awake...a constant companion” (Richard Cruise, 1824);

sharing parenting roles (George Craik, 1830);

kind and hospitable to strangers and committed parents “are excessively fond of their children...On a journey, it is more usual to see the father carrying his infant than the mother; and all the little offices of a nurse are performed by him with the tenderest care and good humour. In many instances (wherein they differ from most savage tribes) I have seen the wife treated as an equal and companion” (August Earle, 1832);

clinging to their fathers yet incredibly free and very intelligent. “The unbounded freedom in which the children are indulged, seems very favourable to their growth, which is much more rapid than that of European children, who are less strong and active at ten years of age than those in New Zealand are at six. The tuition of the children begins at an early period, for the development of their mental powers is as rapid as that of their physical...One effect of the excessive fondness of parents for their children is, that they are very rarely punished for any impropriety of conduct whatever” (John Walton, 1863);

affectionate expressed with the showering of presents, “...endearing affection entertained by the parent for his children, the affection also which binds the relationship together, with the gifts and presents that are continually interchanged among each other” (Joel Polack, 1840);

free from the restriction of harsh punishments, “...the parents never do anything to them. They never beat them and do not allow anyone else to beat them” (Jean-Simon Bernard, 1844);

independent thinkers and courageous, “Curbing the will of the child by harsh means was thought to tame his spirit, and to check the free development of his natural bravery. The chief aim, therefore, in the education of children being to make them bold, brave, and independent in thought and act, a parent is seldom seen to chastise his child” (Edward Shortland, 1856);

situated within wider family groupings “...not merely to their own immediate offspring. They very commonly adopted children; indeed no man having a large family was ever allowed to bring them all up himself – uncles and aunts and cousins claimed and took them, often whether the parents were willing or not. They certainly took every physical care of them...petted and spoiled them. The father, or uncle, often carried or nursed his infant on his back for hours at a time, and might often be seen quietly at work with the little one there snugly ensconced” (William Colenso, 1868).

***Resisting Eroding Realities for Māori Children Through Language Revernacularisation In Antipodean New Zealand: Shadows And Silences***

52. I also wrote the following chapter titled *The Shadows and Silences of Colonialism: Resisting Eroding Realities for Māori Children Through Language Re-Vernacularisation in Antipodean New Zealand*<sup>15</sup> about the harm done to children (and their mother tongue) through colonisation.

***Te Hua Kawariki: Māori Political Independence And Kōhanga Reo***

*Māku anō e hanga i tōku nei whare. Ko te tāhuhu he hīnau,  
ko ngā poupou he māhoe, patatē. Me whakatupu ki te hua o*

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<sup>15</sup> Skerrett, M. (2021b). In *Childhoods in More Just Worlds: An International Handbook*. Kinard, T., & Cannella, G. S. (Eds.). Stylus Publishing, LLC.

*te rengarenga, me whakapakari ki te hua o te kawariki. Nā*

*Kīngi Tāwhiao (Māhuta, 1993)*

53. The first Māori King, Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, was quickly succeeded by his son, King Tāwhiao, in 1860. As we have seen, the first years of Tāwhiao's reign were dominated by land wars.
54. King Tāwhiao and his followers were declared rebels and forced into exile and some 1.2 million acres of their fertile lands were confiscated, severely incapacitating Māori socio-political and economic advancement. But his quest for mana motuhake (Māori political independence) was ceaseless. King Tāwhiao is famous for the prophetic saying that opens this section, which speaks to Māori political independence, holding on to Māori land and ways of doing things and continuing to strengthen the people. Translated it reads 'I will build my house, its ridge pole will be made of hīnau (a native lowland forest tree), its posts will be made of māhoe (whiteywood, a tree found in abundance in coastal regions) and patatē (seven-finger, again easily utilised as a resource).
55. Raise the generations with the fruit of the rengarenga (an abundant spinach like native plant) and strengthen them with the fruit of the kawariki (coprosma)'. The kawariki is a bitter plant that was given to children to make them stronger. I have titled this section *Te Hua Kawariki* after King Tāwhiao's saying which I would argue speaks to the importance of utilising natural resources and specifically references the importance of strengthening children.
56. Over his time King Tāwhiao witnessed the increasing impoverishment among his people in the North and the impact of that on children. Similarly, in the South, Evison (1997) argued "Loss of ancestral lands brought spiritual anguish, as well as deprivation and disgrace" (p. 24). I belong to both Northern and Southern tribes, and was nurtured into the importance of fighting injustices and strengthening children.
57. In Tawhiao's proverbial saying the reference is to sustain the body through natural resources like the fruit of the kawariki. In this submission, of equal importance to the land and resources, is the sustenance of the minds and wairua of children - using words, and language. The two are intricately entangled.

## *Children of the Land*

- 58.** Prior to the impact of colonialism and the NZ land wars, many early colonial eye-witness accounts from Europeans observed shared parental roles in small family groupings. Children were cared for and treated with love and affection. Children were independent thinkers, courageous, expressive, robust, lively, and possessed, in general, pleasing countenances, incredibly free and very intelligent (Salmond, 2017). John Walton, 1863, wrote:

The unbounded freedom in which the children are indulged, seems very favourable to their growth, which is much more rapid than that of European children, who are less strong and active at ten years of age than those in New Zealand are at six. The tuition of the children begins at an early period, for the development of their mental powers is as rapid as that of their physical...One effect of the excessive fondness of parents for their children is, that they are very rarely punished for any impropriety of conduct whatever (Salmond, 2017, p. 459).

- 59.** Children were situated within wider family groupings, not merely to their own nuclear family or in the privacy of households where women were oppressed and subservient to the 'male' order of things. Māori very commonly enacted this collective system of parenting called 'whāngai' which literally means to feed or nurture.
- 60.** This customary practice meant that grandparents or closely related blood-relatives would foster child/ren, especially from large families. As William Colenso in 1868 stated,

Their love and attachment to children was very great, and that not merely to their own immediate offspring. They very commonly adopted children; indeed no man having a large family was ever allowed to bring them all up himself – uncles and aunts and cousins claimed and took them...They certainly took every physical care of them...petted and spoiled them. The father, or uncle, often carried or nursed his infant on his back for hours at a time and might often be seen quietly at work with the little one there snugly ensconced (Salmond, 2017, p. 460).



- 61.** The historic dismantling of the Māori collectives of whānau, hapū, and iwi and Māori communal ways of living came hand in hand with land loss and exacerbated language loss, which impacted the intergenerational transmission of knowledge to children. The reinstatement of these land and language structures is what underpins the political movement of the Kīngitanga and the self-help radical movement of Kōhanga Reo (Māori language nests). Kōhanga Reo is as much a political resistance movement to the prevailing racism and linguicism endemic in the colonial education system as it is a Māori language regeneration movement.
- 62.** I have been instrumental in the establishment of Kōhanga Reo and birthed my five children into the movement. The aims of the Māori language nests are to provide the hua kawariki, the fruit that cultivates our tamariki (descendants of the Gods), to strengthen them, to shape their minds, to nurture their inner beings, and to fortify their identities. Kōhanga Reo has been the marae (courtyard) of revolutionary action needed to rebuild; to revitalise the Māori language, dismantle racialized discourses, displace settler colonialism, and move children out of the silences and shadows, and into becoming more informed, more articulate, liberated children of the land”.

***Kendall and the Creation of a Māori Orthography***

- 63.** Kendall studied the language and wrote New Zealand's first book, '*A Korao No New Zealand or The New Zealander's First Book; being An Attempt to compose some Lessons for the Instruction of the Natives*' printed in 1815, and intended for Māori readers in the first Missionary school established at Rangihoua, situated on the north-west shore of the Bay of Islands in Northland, New Zealand. He also talked about the freedom of children at that time.

**Dated: 15 August 2022**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mere Skerrett', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

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***MERE SKERRETT***