

BEFORE THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

WAI 2700  
WAI 2872

IN THE MATTER OF

the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa  
Inquiry

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

a claim by **Dr Leonie Pihama,**  
**Ani Mikaere, Angeline**  
**Greensill, Mereana Pitman,**  
**Hilda Halkyard-Harawira and**  
**Te Ringahuaia Hata (Wai 2872)**

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF LEONIE PIHAMA**  
**Dated this 20<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021**

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Waitangi Tribunal
<b>21 Jan 2021</b>
Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

## MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL

### INTRODUCTION

**Ko Taranaki, ko Karioi ngā maunga  
Ko Waitara, ko Waikato ngā awa  
Ko Ngā Tai o Rehua, ko Whaingaroa ngā moana  
Ko Te Ātiawa, ko Waikato-Tainui, ko Ngā Māhanga a Tairi ngā iwi  
Ko Ngāti Rāhiri, ko Ngāti Māhanga ngā hapū  
Ko Waitara tōku tūrangawaewae  
He mokopuna ahau o te maunga tītohea.**

1. My name is Leonie Eileen Pihama. I am currently engaged as a Professor at Unitec in Auckland as a member of Ngā Wai a Te Tūi and the Director of Māori and Indigenous Analysis Ltd, a kaupapa Māori research company. I am also a senior researcher for Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki and have actively been engaged with a wide range of Māori and iwi organisations regarding kaupapa Māori theory, research and provision. My research interests cover whānau ora, tamariki ora, kaupapa Māori and family violence prevention and I have had extensive involvement in Māori education, including te kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori. My doctorate thesis is titled *Tīhei mauri ora: honouring our voices: mana wahine as a kaupapa Māori: theoretical framework*.

### KO ĒNEI NGĀ KUPU WHAKATAKI MŌ TĒNEI KAUPAPA

2. Just by being Maori and a woman, who thinks about her life, and her people - one is other cutting edge. That is where Maori women live - on the cutting edge.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith. L.T. cited in Te Awēkotuku, Ngahuaia 1992 'He Whiriwhiri Wahine: Framing Women's Studies for Aotearoa' in Smith, L.T. (ed) *Te Pua 1*, Te Puawaitanga, Auckland

3. The words of Hineahuone<sup>2</sup> are often used as means of opening, of beginnings. They are words that emanated from her as the first human being, formed from Papatūānuku by Tāne. *I sneezed and therefore I lived*. The sneeze, the breath, the life force. I remember the birth of my children, and it was when they took their first breath that I knew the depth of what those words meant. *Tihei Mauri Ora*. It seems a simple enough suggestion that the words of Hineahuone are words that are those of Māori women. We should expect to be able to claim the words of our tūpuna whaea<sup>3</sup> and to speak those words. However, this is not necessarily the case. I am aware of Māori woman being told women are not to say those words; they are only for men. Colonial hegemony is embedded in all aspects of our experiences as Māori women, to the extent that we are told not to speak the words of our tūpuna wahine.
4. This claim, *Mana Wahine*, is a part of a wider movement that spans generations of Māori women laying challenge to those actions that oppress Māori women. Contrary to the belief of some, that does not deny the oppression of our men. Rather, the resistance against the oppression of our women will have an outcome that brings about change for Māori more generally. Māori women have borne the brunt of white men's and white women's colonial impositions. Māori women have also borne the brunt of the internalisation of colonial hegemony that leads to some Māori men engaging in acts of collaboration with Pākehā both intentionally and non-intentionally. We have also borne the brunt of the anger, addictions and violence that are the outcome of the stripping of identity, land, alienation, denial of knowledge, language and culture. As Māori women suffer the consequences of these acts so too do Māori children and Māori men.
5. There are many dominant discourses pertaining to Māori women that have been constructed from a base that are derived from ideological beliefs that are essentially imported to Aotearoa. Kathie Irwin (1992) notes that the experiences of Māori women need to be undertaken with both a focus on

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<sup>2</sup> Hineahuone is the first human shaped from Papatūānuku, Earth mother, by Tāne, one of her male children, with guidance from a range of atua (supreme beings) including Papatūānuku herself who indicated where the essence of humanity lay in her body.

<sup>3</sup> Tūpuna whaea relates to women ancestors.

being female and being Māori. The struggles for our people, our lands, our worlds, ourselves are struggles that are a part of our daily lives as Māori women, they are never about just being Māori or just being women but are about a combination of what those things mean. What this then opens is an idea that race, gender and class are interacting in complex ways and that any form of analysis needs to incorporate these considerations.

6. What we as Māori women are having to do in our present context is reassert our positions and status within our own communities as well as wider society. The status of Māori women has been seriously misrepresented and eroded. Mana Wahine asserts that Māori women must be recognised in the many roles that are ours, and that includes our leadership, rangatira positions. Mana Wahine is an assertion of our intrinsic mana as descendants of our tūpuna, as holders and maintainers of whakapapa. An underlying tenet of Mana Wahine is that our tūpuna wāhine have always had critical roles in Māori society. Through colonisation those roles and the status of Māori women has been actively, deliberately, and intentionally undermined, marginalised and denied.
7. The silencing of Māori women's voices has meant Māori women's stories are able to then be defined as 'myths', and therefore some figment of the cultural imagination. The marginalisation of Mana Wahine has meant that Māori women are constantly having to try and 'find' ourselves within the texts of Pākehā as the colonising dominant group. We are forever trying to see ourselves in the images created by the colonisers. It is also necessary in the process to look to the work that our tūpuna wāhine have already undertaken in laying a foundation for ensuring Māori women are active in all areas that pertain to our wellbeing. It is important that we understand what we mean by Mana Wahine as we move through this claim process.

## **MANA WAHINE**

8. When I think of Mana Wahine, I think of ancestral connections. I recall my connections to the mountains, the rivers, the oceans, to our human ancestors, to our ancestral territories. When I think of Mana Wahine, I think of the strength and power of our tūpuna (ancestors) who held key roles in the

defence of our lands, language and culture. When I think of Mana Wahine, I think of those who today lead many of the grassroots developments that are central to our cultural regenerations movements. When I think of Mana Wahine, I am thankful for the deep ancestral knowledge and practices that remain intact to guide and inform us on our journeys. When I think of Mana Wahine, I think of the deep seated connections that ancestors before us and ancestors yet to come have to these places, these sacred spaces, these people. I am deeply grateful for those who have held to those sacred relationships generation after generation so that I am able to stand as their descendent and as the mother, auntie and grandmother of generations yet to come. This is the cultural matrix within which I see and position myself and that informs this work. As Kathie Irwin states,

*We need to actively honour, to celebrate the contributions, and affirm the mana of Māori women: those tūpuna wahine who have gone before us; those wahine toa who give strength to our culture and people today; and those kōtiro and mokopuna who are being born now, and who will be born in the future to fulfil our dreams. (Irwin 1992, 1)*

9. The honouring of our ancestors has, for Māori, often required us to directly challenge the many acts of erasure of our position and identity as tangata whenua (people of the land) in Aotearoa. For Māori women this has included having to engage with colonial ideologies of gender that serve to deny the centrality and importance of our roles within our own whānau, hapū and iwi.

*Me aro koe ki te hā o Hineahuone:*

*Pay heed to the dignity of Māori women.*

10. I want to begin this part of my discussion with a positional statement - that all Māori people have mana. Mana is a part of our whakapapa (ancestral lineage), it is handed through generations. The saying that opens this section ‘Me aro koe ki te hā o Hineahuone – Pay heed to the dignity of Māori women’ stems from one of the ancestral stories of our origins as Māori people. It is said that after a long and protracted search for the female essence, one of the descendants of Papatūānuku and Ranginui, Tāne, was directed by Papatūānuku to Kurawaka, where he was guided to shape a form that we now understand as a human being. Throughout the process, atua (sacred beings,

deities) gifted parts of the body as sacred offerings. Hineahuone is both atua, sacred spiritual essence and tangata, earthly essence. Each part of Hineahuone was a gift from atua and as such within her fundamental being the sacredness of Māori women is embedded. Tāne shared breath with Hineahuone through the hongī. The hongī is often referred to as ‘the pressing of noses’ however through hongī we are connecting our relationships through the sharing of breath. Rangimarie Rose Pere (n.d) describes as this as “a tradition that reminds us, that we are interrelated to all living things that exist” (2). As such it is an affirmation of ancestral connections through a sharing of the fundamental element of life, the breath. The first breath is expressed in Māori contexts through the words ‘tihei mauri ora’. In my doctoral research I referred to this as follows:

*The words of Hineahuone are often used as means of opening, of beginnings. They are words that emanated from her as the first human being, formed from Papatūānuku by Tāne. I sneezed and therefore I lived. The sneeze, the breath, the life force. I remember the birth of my children, and it was when they took their first breath that I knew the depth of what those words meant. Tihei Mauri Ora. (Pihama 2001, 18)*

11. For those that consider this pūrākau, this ancestral story, to be their creation or origin story, it is through the union of Hineahuone and Tane, human whakapapa emerges. I say ‘for those’ as there are a range of iwi stories that speak to the origins or creation of humanity. This is but one. In speaking to traditional knowledge(s) it is critical that we do not fall into the colonial, reductionist trap of assuming that there is one, singular truth or version in regards to how we understand our ways of being. Where Pākehā ethnographers have difficulty with this and are obsessed with finding the universalised ‘real’ version (Best 1924; Grey 1922), it is not an issue for Māori. Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) notes “variations to the main theme are inevitable among diverse tribal traditions” (p.131). As such, we must not allow the colonial preoccupation with finding the singular ‘truth’ deter us from seeking forms of analysis that can support the affirmation of our roles, status and positioning or that can bring a unified engagement of colonisation.
12. What we know is that within each of these traditional stories, and their iwi renditions, is the affirmation and recognition of the sacred positioning of the

female essence and the vital role of wahine in the creation of who we are now as whānau, hapū and iwi (Te Awekotuku 1991; Irwin 1992). These pūrākau also remind us of the sacred relationships that have emerged from the creation of all living things and the importance for us as ‘tangata’ (people) to always affirm our place alongside ‘atua’ (sacred deities) that gave us life. The holding and telling of our own stories as Indigenous Peoples is essential to the foundations upon which we can in a contemporary context ground our understandings and relationships both in our day to day lives and in our theoretical approaches to the issues that face us (Smith 1992; Jenkin 1992; Archibald 1998; Lee 2015; Behrendt 2016; Mikaere 2017; Pihama, Smith, Simmonds, Seed-Pihama, Gabel, 2019).

## **MANA**

13. Central to Mana Wahine is the concept and practice of ‘mana’. The meaning of ‘mana’ is one that engages us conceptually, culturally, spiritually, emotionally and in material ways of being, and encompasses an essence and power of being that we have been reminded is beyond any singular translation (Henare, 1988; Pere 1991, Pihama 2001, 2005). Mana is multi-dimensional and requires an understanding of wider tikanga Māori and the relationships within which we locate ourselves. Mana is connected to every form of activity within Māori society and is generated through collective relationships. Mana is also enhanced by the collective in order to support peoples role in fulfilling particular obligations, social and political functions, as such it is a significant contributing factor to the how we present ourselves and are seen by others (Marsden 1988).
14. In the context of discussing Māori women’s theories, mana relates to notions of power, status and collective affirmation of our place within our communities (Smith 1992). Mana is both inherent to our being as Māori and can be enhanced or diminished through the ways in which we enact ourselves within the collectives that we affiliate to and with. Mana is therefore connected to both spiritual and earthly sources. Rangimarie Rose Pere reminds us that the origins of mana is firstly that of our connections to atua. This affirms the sacredness of all people. She writes:

*Mana as a concept is beyond translation from the Māori language. Its meaning is multi-form and includes psychic influence, control, prestige, power, vested and acquired authority and influence, being influential or binding over others, and that quality of the person that others know she or he has! The most important mana however is mana atua – divine right from Io Matua. Every person has mana atua – no more, no less. This form of mana recognises the absolute uniqueness of the individual. Everything across the universe has mana atua, in that everything was created by Io Matua within the ancient teachings of Hawaiki, a leaf, a blade of grass, a spider, a bird, a fish, a crustacean, all have the same divine right as a person. The challenge is to feel for what this really means. (Pere 1991,14)*

15. Within this understanding of mana as originating within the spiritual realm, alongside our belief that humanity was formed through the power of atua, we are then able to more deeply connect that we are all both atua and tangata simultaneously. This is encapsulated in the phrase, ‘he atua, he tangata’ which Rangimarie Rose Pere relates to as; “I am both Celestial and Terrestrial, we all are, and we resonate in a way that is appropriate for each one of us” (Pere n.d,3). Mana is therefore integral to all aspects of Te Ao Māori, including the ways in which we engage with tikanga in a broad range of contexts, practices, protocols, rituals and relationships. Where it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss tikanga in depth it is important to note that all practices are relational and have often been noted as ensuring balance (Jackson 1988, Mikaere 2017).
16. Early descriptions of Māori society by Pākehā ethnographers and anthropologists have been particularly influential in the construction of Māori women within the ideological frame of colonial gendered relations (Grey 1922; Best 1924; Heuer 1972) and the mana of Māori women began to be redefined (Yates-Smith 1998; Murphy 2011; Mikaere 2017). Throughout these writings we see example after example of the disparaging and depreciating colonial views that underpin current understandings of the role, position and status of Māori women. In this we see a clear example of the repositioning of Hineahuone from a place of being sacred and holding mana in her own right to being merely a “receptacle” and passive receiver of the “male seed”.



*Thus Woman came into the world, and it is from this maid, named Hineahu-one on account of the manner in which she had been created, that man derives his earthly nature. For she was half of the earth and half supernatural, and she was the first being of the race of man. Here began the blending of the spirit of supernatural beings with that of man, which has continued until the present time. The seed of life is with Tane, and with man, with woman is the receptacle that shelters and nourishes it. The seed of the spiritual god is with the male, for he is a descendant of gods. Woman emanates from Papa, the Earth, and with her is the conserved water (that protects the embryo); she is the shelterer and nurturer, by whom all creatures acquire growth. Woman is a copy of the male, and the seed of life. (Best 1924, 112)*

17. Colonial literature related to Māori is framed in such a way to embed dominant western misogynistic constructions of gender as a means by which to continue an intentional assault on the roles and status of Māori women which disrupts the balance that Ani Mikaere (2017) states is critical to the wellbeing of Māori people (Smith 1992; Pihama 2001; Simmonds 2014). These colonising discourses have had a significant impact on the ways in which Māori women are regarded and how our place within society continues to be marginalised as a direct result. The articulation of Mana Wahine theory then is essential in countering the impact of over 170 years of colonial gendered practices.
18. Through pepeha, such as that which opens this article, we share a distinctly Māori process by which we affirm these relationships. In doing so we introduce the significant relationships to our lands, our mountains, our rivers, our seas, our people. Whakapapa, the cultural template through which we understand our descent and ancestral relationships, refers to a process of placing in layers, which reminds us that relationships between and amongst us as individuals and social groupings, are layered upon each other and extend as wide as our whānau and intergenerational connections reach. We are intrinsically interconnected in relational ways of being. It is within these relationships that mana is embedded, and it is through our relational being with each other that mana is enhanced or diminished. This includes how we operate and move within these cultural relationships. Mana is both tangible and intangible. It is both internal and external. It is both relationships with others and being in relation with ourselves, our fundamental ways of being in

the world and our treatment of others. Mana can be understood in both its simplicity and its complexity. Simply put, all Māori people have mana, however with the impact of colonial invasion and on-going structural oppression on Māori lands we know we must engage more deeply when we speak or write of mana, and in particular of Mana Wahine.

## WHAKAPAPA & WHĀNAUNGATANGA

19. Whakapapa provides us with an understanding of who we are, where we are from, and how our many roles and responsibilities are grounded upon a relational worldview. This means that there are many times, phases, spaces and roles that we, as Māori, move through in our lives each of which position us in specific roles or phases each of which is in relation to the context (Pihama 2001). Within Māori understandings we need to speak back to any attempt to reduce our relationships to dualistic constructed dualisms or binaries that do not serve the interests of the many expressions of our roles within our communities. We need to be equally vigilant when notions of ‘diversity’ are expressed in ways that position Indigenous Peoples within a construct of pluralism where we are considered as just one group amongst many. Such positioning denies our specific place as tangata whenua. As such I use the term diversity with caution as another tendency is that there is a quick leap to apply theories of anti-essentialism when speaking to the idea of diversity. The obsession in much postmodern and postcolonial framing of essentialism, that reduces discussions to one of a liberal individual self disconnected from collectives or cultural relationships, is not one that serves the interests of Indigenous Peoples. Diversity is, within the context of Mana Wahine, is articulated clearly by Kathie Irwin,

*In our work with Māori women we need to recognize that they, like any other community of women, are not a homogenous group. A number of other factors influence Māori women’s development: tribal affiliation, social class, sexual preference, knowledge of traditional Māori tikanga, knowledge of the Māori language, rural or urban location, identification on the political spectrum from radical to traditional, place in the family, the level of formal schooling and educational attainments to name but a few. (Irwin 1992, 3)*

20. Where there is a political and cultural intention to ensure we are cognisant of the many experiences of Māori women, and the range of gender identities that we claim, diversity in this context also remains defined alongside the wider construct of whakapapa relationships. Within whakapapa there are multiple ways in which we relate to each other and to our world around us. There are also varied ways in which roles and relationships are negotiated. Diversity then represents the multiple ways we, as Māori women, express ourselves. From birth we begin a journey through many phases, roles, spaces and identities. To acknowledge the many ways in which Māori talk about various stages of life is to recognise the complex ways that our people have always viewed roles and relationships. As Margie Hohepa states

*Who I am is inextricably bound within my roles and relationships with others, including my father and grandfathers, my bothers, my sons, my husband. I am wahine Māori, I am mokopuna, I am tamahine, tuakana, teina, whaea, hoa, wahine. And I look forward ... to being karani. We draw our descent from both male and female ancestors, through the way they connected to and from each other. (Hohepa 1993, 24).*

21. These relationships are grounded within whānaungatanga, the fundamental essential component to the maintaining of healthy relationships within and amongst whānau. In contemporary Māori experiences whānau is understood both in terms of whakapapa that includes the endless matrix of ancestral relationships, and in terms of what is referred to as ‘kaupapa’ whānau, those groupings that are based on common interest and collective responsibilities. For Māori women we can include within the construct of ‘kaupapa whānau’ the range of Māori women’s groups that connect across whakapapa lines to voice and enact solidarity.
22. The formation of Māori women’s groups and organisations as a means by which to voice and challenge dominant colonial patriarchal systems is not new. In the 1890s’ this was expressed through the establishment of in 1893 of ‘Ngā Kōmiti Wāhine’ (Māori women’s committees) within the political movement of Te Kotahitanga (Māori Parliament) as a means by which Māori women could deal with issues confronting Māori women at the time. As with their contemporary equal, ‘The Māori Women’s Welfare League’, Ngā Kōmiti Wāhine dealt with key issues related to the well-being of Māori

women and spoke freely about these issues whenever possible (Rei 1993). More contemporary expressions include Māori women's involvement in Te Amorangi; the Black Womens Movement; Māori Women's movement; Wahine Mō Ngā Wāhine o Te Moana Nui a Kiwa (Māori and Pacific Lesbians) (Pihama 2001) and even more recently the formation of Māori women's collectives that have been active in challenging sexism, homophobia, transphobia, cultural appropriation and racism including Ngā Wāhine Tiaki o Te Ao (Māori Women Against Genetic Engineering); Te Wharepora Hou (Māori Women's Network) and the Taranaki Māori Women's Network (Taranaki Women seeking the return of stolen lands), to name just a few examples.

23. The point I am emphasising here is that there are varying ways in which roles and relationships are negotiated, and the assertion by Māori women that we are connected in multiple and powerful ways all of which are embodied within us and within our understanding of Mana Wahine. Clear ways of understanding these relationships is within whakapapa and whanaungatanga. This means that any analysis that is grounded upon Mana Wahine needs to be grounded upon these fundamental cultural templates upon which we position ourselves. This requires us to move away from the imposed colonial templates of genealogy that are based within notions of male superiority and the reduction of the position of women that is grounded upon western colonial gendered patriarchy. It has been highlighted that western notions of patriarchal genealogy and leadership have severely impacted upon Te Ao Māori and in particular on the place and status of wahine Māori.
24. What is clear in Te Ao Māori is that wahine not only hold multiple roles but we seek ways through which to bring these together in ways that will benefit those around us and which uphold and enhance the aspirations of our people past, present and future. A clear example is seen within the saying of Te Whiti o Rongomai following his arrest at Parihaka - 'Tū Tama Wahine i te wā o te kore' which calls upon all wāhine within Taranaki to take over all aspects of tikanga and living within Parihaka after the tāne of the Pā were removed.

## **TE REO & TIKANGA**

25. Another way by which to gain more depth insights into Mana Wahine is in framing our analysis with a te reo and tikanga Māori lens. As a part of reclaiming te reo and tikanga that is inclusive and affirming of all Māori, is that te reo Māori is not gendered in the way that the colonising language of English is. Within te reo Māori we have the single pronoun 'ia' and pronoun possessives tāna/tōna for hers/his, neither of which are gender bound (Pere 1991; Pihama 2001). The key to identifying who is being spoken about or who is in possession of something is reliant on a knowledge of the context. This alone brings to the fore cultural understandings that are imperative to both an awareness of the roles and place of Māori women and in the assertion of analysis that inspires decolonial thinking and practices.
26. 'Wahine' is most often translated or defined as 'woman' or 'women', however this is but one way in which we may understand what wahine means. Wahine also designates a particular phase within our lifespan as Māori women. 'Wahine' can also be understood through its component parts, wā and hine. Wā relates to both time and space, hine is female essence or femininity. It is important to understand place and space within which to understand Mana wahine and Māori analysis of gender as it fundamentally disrupts the ways in which colonial hegemony expects us to understand these roles. Conceptually 'wahine' should not be seen or regarded in the same ways that we are presented with constructed binaries of female and male that exist in dominant colonial gender ideologies and which are defined within reductionist biological terms. Translation and interpretation of our languages and practices have been particularly problematic for Māori and Indigenous nations (Pere 1982; Kame'eleihiwa 1996). This requires us to see that many English translations of key Māori ways of being and practices create simplistic and palatable definition that sits most comfortably with colonial ways of thinking and being. As Diane Mara and I have stated elsewhere,

*The dominance of English in this country, coupled with the marginalisation of Te Reo Māori and Pacific languages, has contributed significantly to the imposition of dominant beliefs and practices pertaining to Māori and Pacific Islands women. One means of imposing dominant gender expectations on indigenous people operates through the undermining of existing gender norms. For this to be successful there*

*must be either an undermining of the indigenous language or the imposing of dominant discourses on the indigenous language through processes such as interpretation or translations. (Pihama & Mara 1994, 217)*

27. As such, generalised and simplistic translation not only align to western reductionist approaches to gender identities but also contributes to the ensconcing of such beliefs within Māori ways of seeing ourselves. We have plenty of evidence that we should not trust the distorted definitions of colonial ethnographers or anthropologists and their ways of defining the place, roles or status of wahine Māori (Irwin 1992; Smith 1992; Yates-Smith 1998; Mikaere 2017). Rather, a focus on Māori women reclaiming the spaces to voice what Mana Wahine means to us is equally as crucial to resurgence and resistance movements just as it is to a process of decolonising the hegemonic impact upon our people.
28. A major thrust in the wider kaupapa Māori movement has been the reassertion of being Māori and the validity and affirmation of our language, cultural ways, practices, protocols, ceremonies, knowledge, in ways that do not reproduce colonial systems of thought, power, social hierarchies and structures (Smith 1997; Pihama 2001; Pihama, Tiakiwai, Southey 2015). The assertion of Mana Wahine is a part of that (Simmonds 2014; Murphy 2011; Mikaere 2017). Mana Wahine provides us with a culturally defined basis from which to not only reclaim our place as Māori women within Te Ao Māori, but it also provides grounding for distinctively Indigenous women's theory and analysis of the impact of colonisation and the structures that reproduce colonising practices within Aotearoa (Awatere 1984; Irwin 1992; Smith 1992; Simmonds 2014). In the past 20 years there has been a significant increase in the expression of Mana Wahine and Indigenous Women's Feminisms that are grounded within our distinctive cultural contexts but which also provide spaces for Indigenous women to speak across our experiences back to colonisation and the imposition of dominant ideologies of race, class, and gender (Te Awekotuku 1991, 1992; Irwin 1992; Smith 1992; Trask 1986, 1993; Pihama 2001; Moreton-Robinson 2000; Green 2007; Valaskakis, Stout and Guimond 2009; Bear 2016; Hunt and Holmes 2015; Mikaere 2017).

## **TINO RANGATIRATANGA & DECOLONISATION**

29. Mana wahine is informed by tikanga, mātauranga and te reo Māori and it is through this lens that we are able more deeply come to understand issues faced by Māori women and in doing so to reclaim and reassert our place on our own lands. This is both a movement and a theory that has at its centre the resurgence and reaffirmation of the mana of Māori women, past, present and future. This is particularly critical in a context where as Indigenous women we live with the impacts of imposed colonial heteronormative gender ideologies that seek to deny the sacred standing that is inherently ours (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983; Anzaldúa 1990; Irwin 1992; Jenkins 1992; Smith 1993; Maracle 1996; Moreton-Robinson 2013).
30. Decolonising gender in Aotearoa requires bringing to the fore the notion of tino rangatiratanga. This is part and parcel of a wider Māori decolonisation movement and is a key focus of Mana Wahine theory. Māori women's involvement in decolonisation projects is essential to its success. Decolonisation and the assertion of tino rangatiratanga within a Mana Wahine framework brings with it both external and internal complexities in terms of the relational work that we are doing. External in the direct challenge to colonialism and its embedded systems of protecting structures of white, class and heteropatriarchal privilege and internal in terms of the direct challenge to racism within white feminist and LGBTIQ movements, classism within systems that affirm capitalist relations and class privilege and gender, heteronormative, homophobic and transphobic ideologies that have embedded themselves within many of our own communities.
31. Mana Wahine asserts the critical position of wahine Māori, ensuring analysis that provides for a clarity of thought in regards to the intersection of oppressions and placing that within the context of the collective responsibility and wellbeing of our people. This is essential to an engagement that seeks decolonisation. It affirms the mana that Māori women hold both individually and collectively, irrespective of the insidious ways in which colonial and colonising writers have undermined the position of our tūpuna wāhine (female ancestors). It affirms also a movement of uplifting the position of wahine Māori in a context where our roles and status have been systematically

diminished (Awatere 1984; Te Awekotuku 1991; Simmonds 2014). Mana Wahine is a direct challenge to colonialism in all of its many forms. As we live within an occupied land, we live daily with the impact of the intersections of racism, sexism and classism combined with the agendas of neo-liberal capitalist imperialism on our land. Wahine Māori and tamariki experience the brunt of those forces (Mikaere 2017; Pihama 2017).

32. Mana Wahine is the articulation of wahine Māori thought and analysis and the regeneration of that knowledge from its origins, its source that is deep within Papatūānuku to us as wahine who originate from these lands. This is critical to tino rangatiratanga, the assertion of our tangatawhenuatanga, our indigeneity, our place on this whenua. It also means the power of the resistance that past, present and future wahine have to colonisation as a means by which to defend, protect, reclaim and assert Mana Wahine. This includes a focus on the analysis and deconstruction of colonial discourses (Smith 1992, 1993; Yates-Smith 1998; Simmonds 2014; Mikaere 2017). This is a complex process as we are constantly confronted with the need to decolonise that which we have internalised about ourselves. However for Indigenous women a commitment to this process is a commitment to both exploding the colonial myths that have been constructed, and being a part of a wider resurgence process (Pihama, Smith, Simmonds, Seed-Pihama, Gabel, 2019). Increasingly Māori women are challenging the dominant cultural terrain, questioning imposed colonial gendered understandings that reproduce systems of marginalisation and oppression. Mana Wahine sits at the centre of that and emphasises our views of the world, which are located with Māori women's understandings of the world and sourced within Aotearoa. Mana Wahine is embedded in how we see, feel and come to know the world and all of our relationships – past, present and future, that are a part of that.
33. In asserting tino rangatiratanga, we as wahine Māori assert our place within the rangatira collectivity of our people. Colonisation has worked to deny the rangatira status of wahine Maori in both historical and contemporary contexts. The colonial obsession with 'men' and in particular white men as leaders has consistently marginalised Māori women and denied the rangatira status that



is inherently ours. There are many legislative and policy examples of this that will be provided within the wider claim evidence. I will discuss in a later section the impact of colonial ethnography on the position of wāhine Māori and provide an historical example that has become embedded within our education system and which continues to reduce life choices, opportunities and the affirmation of the rangatira status of wāhine Māori.

34. This claim speaks directly to that impact, to the role of colonial structures that reproduce the underpinning discourses and practices that perpetuate ongoing oppressive systems on our lands. This also requires revealing the ways in which those who we would expect to be allies can be and have been co-opted in ways that work against the interests of Māori women. In particular the spaces where both white women and Māori men are complicit in validating such systems. For example, had existing western feminist and class analyses been adequate in, or even open to, the incorporation of Indigenous voices we may have seen more active involvement of Māori women in those movements (Te Awekotuku 1991; Smith 1992; Maracle 1996; Moreton-Robinson 2013). However, where such analyses are able to engage with the cultural, social and political context of patriarchy, capitalism and positivist constructions of racial hierarchies, the lens through which they see and reflect upon these issues remains western and often colonising. A central critique of the failing of western feminism to provide analysis for Indigenous women as been its role in the continued reproduction of the broader colonial and colonising agenda, and the mono-focus on gender as manifestly inadequate. The power of colonial hegemony is not to be understated, nor is the power of co-option within movements such as feminism.
35. Similarly, Māori men have been actively challenged on the ease with which many align to the interests of Pākehā men over the wellbeing of Māori women. Issues such as the denial of Māori women key roles within Iwi (tribal) organisations has been on the agenda for Māori women since 1893 when a number of Māori men within Te Kotahitanga spoke against Women's Suffrage based on what were clearly white patriarchal colonial Christian position (Rei 1993). The insidious nature of colonial patriarchal discourse is

such that it becomes internalised intergenerationally to the extent that some Māori men participate in the dominant representations of Māori women as the ‘inferior other’ (Smith 1992; Pihama 2001). The impact, and privileging, of heteronormative ideologies within Māori communities continue to have damaging consequences for many Takatāpui (Māori LGBTIQ) whānau members (Pihama, Green, Mika, Simmonds, Nopera, Roskruge, Skipper, 2020)

## COLONISATION AND THE IMPORTATION OF IDEOLOGIES

*Colonisation has had, and continues to have, a major impact on the ways in which Māori women's realities are constructed. Colonial discourses based within ideological constructions of race and gender [and class] have served to define Māori women in line with particular roles, expectations and practices.<sup>4</sup>*

36. Within Aotearoa, pre-colonisation, whānau, hapū, iwi had developed and interrelated in complex ways. This included forms of relationships that existed between women and men. These relationships have however been interrupted through our experiences of colonisation. This section explores ideological importations that have contributed to those interruptions; the ideologies of race, gender and class. Identifying the construction of race, gender, and class ideologies through colonial discourses is a means of understanding underpinning ideologies that exist in the maintenance of unequal power relationships. The importation of these ideologies that are based within Western colonial paradigms has meant the disruption of some fundamental beliefs.<sup>5</sup>
37. The concept of race is a colonial importation. Prior to contact between Māori and Pākehā race did not exist for Māori. Within Te Ao Māori social organisation was mediated through whakapapa and the complex ways in which relationships were determined amongst whānau, hapū and iwi. Those constructions were based within culturally defined structures. The Western notion of race is also constructed within culturally defined notions however this is rarely made explicit, nor is the means by which racialisation of peoples served the interests of some groups over others. Racially based hierarchies, as they exist in present day Aotearoa, are a historical consequence of colonisation. Colonisation as a process has been significantly influenced by the ways in which race has been constructed. Race and the development of racial hierarchies has been both the justification for, and maintenance of, imperialism around the world. As both the reasoning for and the means by which colonisation is perpetuated the construct of race requires careful

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<sup>4</sup> Johnston, P. & Pihama, L 1995 'What Counts as Difference and What Differences Count: Gender, Race and the Politics of Difference' in Irwin, K., Ramsden, I. & Kahukiwa, R. (eds), 1995 *Toi Wāhine: The Worlds of Māori Women*, Penguin Books, Auckland:82

<sup>5</sup> Mikaere, A. 1996 op.cit.

consideration in this thesis. What is considered here is the way in which race is constructed both historically and in current day usage. The importance of this is located in the need to identify those multiple discourses and ideologies that impact upon Māori women. Race is one of those ideologies.

## **GENDER**

38. Gender as a concept is used generally to refer to being either female or male, however in sociological terms gender is defined more specifically as being those beliefs and understandings about what it means to be either female or male.<sup>6</sup> Gender in this sense is considered both socially and culturally constructed. Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith note the following definition of gender as a social construction;

*The concept of gender refers to qualities, traits and activities collectively deemed to be masculine or feminine in any given society. Although 'things feminine' are associated with females, and 'things masculine' are associated with males, sex and gender are quite distinct. The content of masculinity and femininity does not have an immediate biological foundation, despite the fact that gender defines what it means to be a male or female in a social sense. Gender is a categorization based not on physiological but on social attributes. Sex, that is the categories of 'female' and 'male' is purely physiological.<sup>7</sup>*

39. Not only is the categorisation of gender not physiological it is also important to note that biological arguments are used purely as a justification for the maintenance of unequal power relations which privilege the controlling group. Gender is socially constructed. That social construction is undertaken within political and cultural boundaries as I have noted elsewhere

*Gender is therefore a social construction, which may be viewed in general terms as the social overlay of beliefs, values and practices that are attached to our biological sex.<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> Jaggar, A.M. & Rothenberg, P.S., 1984 *Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts Of The Relations Between Women And Men*, Second Edition; Jones A. et.al, 1990 *Myths And Realities: Schooling In New Zealand*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North; Pihama, L. & Mara, D. 1994 *Gender Relations In Education*, in Coxon, E. et.al., (eds) 1994., *The Politics of Learning and Teaching in Aotearoa - New Zealand*, The Dunmore Press: Palmerston North

<sup>7</sup> James Bev & Saville-Smith, Kay 1989 *Gender, Culture and Power*, Oxford University Press, Auckland:10

<sup>8</sup> Pihama, L. & Mara, D., 1994 op.cit.:215

40. Such definitions directly challenge the notion that gender roles are natural or derive from biological and physical makeup and in doing so provide a critique of the construction of roles and beliefs as 'natural', relocating them as social and cultural. Gender relationships are not 'natural' and neither are any unequal power relations within society. Gender roles are socially constructed as opposed to being biologically determined and therefore are able to be transformed. Gendered beliefs are produced and reproduced within the context of particular societal and cultural structures.<sup>9</sup> As a social construction gender then may be located within the beliefs, understandings and values of a society.
41. The entrenched notion of male as superior and, in particular, the conceptualisation of God as male (and therefore male as God) within Judeo-Christian beliefs is highlighted by the resistance of any attempt to shift that paradigm. In a system of male monotheism there is an established hierarchical order through which women relate to men as men relate to God (Ruether 1983). The hierarchical God-man-woman ordering then serves to ensure the maintenance and reproduction of processes that subordinate women (Ruether 1983). Gender relations as determined through Christian ideologies provide the justification for the creation of dualisms that reinforce women as inferior to men.
42. Furthermore, male monotheism serves to reinforce patriarchal rule and that women are connected to God not directly but only through men. This order is further intensified with the notion of 'evil'. Evil is spoken of as 'sin'. Sin "*implies a perversion or corruption of human nature*" (Ruether 1986, p.160). The oppositional arrangement of good - evil is directly related to notions of inferior-superior. The notion of 'sin' mediates these dualisms in that it provides mechanisms for recognising 'perversion' and imposing judgement. The hierarchical ordering of gender in Judeo-Christianity leads to notions of evil and sin being more directly related to women. This is not to ignore the belief that 'sin' is expressed as being a part of 'human nature' but recognises that the patriarchal hierarchy of Christianity has directly associated origins of

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

sin with women. This reinforces the idea that the oppression of women is an outcome of 'primordial sin' (Ruether 1986, p.169).

43. What becomes clear in the period of first colonial interaction with Māori, the Victorian era, is that it was an age of transition in material and economic structures, is that the definitions of what constituted appropriate positioning of British women did not necessarily equate to the realities of their actual experience. What is significant in the defining of the Victorian-defined woman is that those ideologies were not limited to expression within that era but extended beyond to reach into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, creating major changes in the roles of women both in Britain and in the lands colonised by the British. These shifts are a consequence of patriarchy and capitalism adjusting to each other in the creation of sets of hierarchy that enables the domination of women. For this discussion the notion of patriarchy in collusion with capitalism, in a British/Victorian context, is the key focus. What is needed is an analysis that incorporates the many faces of oppression for women, there is worth in exploring the patriarchy/capitalism alliance as it was played out in the Victorian era, as it enables us to recognise some of the colonial/male dynamics that have taken precedence through colonisation.
44. It may be argued that the influence of the economic shifts through Industrialisation, combined with Christian discourses became a potent force in the oppression of women. It is evident that it was not one ideology alone that brought change for women but the interdependency of both Christianity and the economic situation. In order to ensure societies adherence to the dependency of women in the home the Christian ethic, which was previously marginal because of the economic need for women to produce, gained favour. This was supported by the notions of privatisation and domestication. The idea of privatisation grew as the separation between work and family increased. Work became identified with the public sphere and home as the private sphere. Because of its separation from the public sphere and the realm of 'work', the home became a site within which the various ideologies could be reproduced. As Sandra Coney notes the ideal Victorian woman was deemed a self-less woman. Her role as 'the angel of the house' was

maintained through the Christian ethic of woman as virtuous. To be virtuous was to be a 'good' wife and to be following the 'naturally ordained' order.<sup>10</sup> These combined ideologies were soon to be imported Aotearoa as the colonisation of this country began to take full force in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as colonising countries were seeking expansion to both release their own internal pressures and also to facilitate the expansion of capitalist intentions into the colonies.

45. Colonial ideologies located women as chattels, the property of men and therefore inferior to them. The espousal of Christian doctrine and biological theories, rather than debunking each other, became a combined force. Women were considered both spiritual and biologically devoid. All that remained was the positioning of women as intellectually devoid in order to ensure an holistic argument for the continued subjugation of women. This is further expanded by Ruth Fry who highlights the debate surrounding what was considered as different levels of intelligence of women and men.<sup>11</sup> This development was connected directly to the biological assertions of Darwinism through a range of mechanism where the argument for the intellectual inferiority of women was grounded firmly in a mind-body relationship. That is biological arguments became the foundation for ideals of intellectual inferiority.

*For many years, there had been fascination with theories concerning the different mental capacities of men and women. The 'cranium theory' which had, through elaborate measurements, set out to prove that women's brains were smaller, lighter and less convoluted than men's were now [1880s] out of date. More fashionable were the gynaecological theories which dwelt on the dangers of upsetting bodily functions in adolescence.<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Coney, S. 1993 *Standing In The Sunshine: A History Of New Zealand Women Since They Won The Vote*, Penguin Books, Auckland: 14

<sup>11</sup> Fry, Ruth 1985 *It's Different For Daughters*, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*:33

## RACE

46. Race as a social phenomenon cannot be separated from issues of gender, class or indigenous struggles. This paper is designed to begin the discussion on the ideologies that fundamentally underpin wider discourses pertaining to Māori women in order that we more fully understand their origins. There is little talk in wider society about race, even though racial ideologies are a part of the structural arrangements of this country. An avoidance of racial issues is a part of maintaining the dominant myth that Aotearoa has 'good race relations'. There are many organisations that work to maintain a 'we are one people' mythology in order to continue the marginalisation of Māori.<sup>13</sup> This idea is not new to Aotearoa. It is in fact a mythology that is perpetuated daily through a colonially imposed system.
47. Critical race discussion is imperative in any analysis of Māori issues in Aotearoa as race has been a defining notion since early contact.<sup>14</sup> This involves engagement with and critique of the myths that found notions of racial superiority and contribute to the promotion of white supremacist practices.
48. David Goldberg<sup>15</sup> notes that although the term race has become a contestable notion most still agree that it continues to impact upon contemporary society. For Angela Davis race is a key defining element in the stratification of societal hierarchies.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, Floya Anthias and Mira Yuval-Davis note that where race as criteria for designation has been widely discredited it remains and continues to impact and therefore cannot be denied.<sup>17</sup> As such the term race cannot be dismissed, as it has a particular place in the way that differences and inequalities have been constructed. Added to this is the recognition that racism exists and is experienced by many people daily.

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<sup>13</sup> Bell, A. 1996 'We're Just New Zealanders: Pākehā Identity Politics' in Spoonley, P., Pearson, D. MacPherson, C. (eds), 1996 *Ngā Patai: Racism and Ethnic Relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, The Dunmore Press Ltd., Palmerston North

<sup>14</sup> Johnston, P.M. 1998 op.cit.

<sup>15</sup> Goldberg, David Theo 1990 (ed) *Anatomy of Racism*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

<sup>16</sup> Davis, Angela 1991 *Women, Race and Class*, Random House, New York

<sup>17</sup> Anthias, Floya and Yuval-Davis, Mira 1992 *Racialized Boundaries: race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-racist struggle*, Routledge, London



49. The western notion of race is constructed to ensure colonial interests are served and presented as a taken for granted way of being or considered as a part of a 'natural' order. The means by which racialisation of peoples serves the interests of dominant groups is not only concealed but is validated through colonial research and science machinations that provide the rationale for colonial dominance (Gould 1981). Racially based hierarchies, as they exist in present day Aotearoa, are a historical outcome of colonisation. Colonisation as a process has been significantly influenced by the ways in which race has been constructed and the embedding of racial discrimination and it's contrasting system of white privilege. Race and the development of racial hierarchies has been the justification for, and maintenance of, colonial imperialism around the world (Gould 1981). As Harris (1993) states:

*“the racialization of identity and the racial subordination of Blacks and Native Americans provided the ideological basis for slavery and conquest”* (p.1715).

50. Barnes et.al (2013) highlight that the colonising agenda is reproduced in Aotearoa through the *“normalisation of racialised framing and negative stereotypes”* (p.65). Johnston (1998) states that critical colonial race discussion is imperative in any analysis of Māori issues as race has been a defining notion since early contact. This involves engagement with and critique of the myths that found notions of racial superiority that contribute to the promotion of white supremacist practices. As Ranginui Walker (2016) wrote,

*Like its Greek and Roman predecessors, the British Empire portrayed itself as civilised and painted the people it encountered in the New World as savage, uncivilised and inferior. The British racial hierarchy placed Europeans at the top and 'natives' at the bottom. Although the culture of New Zealand's tangata whenua, with its hunting, fishing, gathering and gardening economy, was a sustainable design for living, it was almost destroyed by the colonial enterprise of converting the natives from barbarism to Christianity and civilisation. British colonisers saw Māori tribalism and communal ownership of land as a mark of primitive and barbaric people. (p.19). The impact of such is seen in the many ways through which colonialism has sought to fragment and individualise Māori people as a means by which to eradicate collective and communal ways of being.*

## CLASS

51. Class structures, like the ordering of race and gender, came to Aotearoa as yet another unwelcomed element of Western ideology. Like other coloniser beliefs the notion of class and the Western organisation of capitalism has assumed a universality that is reflective of the fundamental imperialist belief espoused by colonising nations that they exist as a superior form. The term 'class' gains its contemporary usage from the writings of Karl Marx. Social class is related to the economic and social relationships that exists for differing groups in relation to the economic system, the mode of production. The mechanisms of capitalistic manipulation have been, as a part of the colonial process, an imposition on Indigenous Peoples.
52. The colonisation of Aotearoa was conducive to the universal expansion of the capitalist mode of production in an attempt, by colonising forces, to provide new sources of land, raw materials and labour power. According to Cherryl Smith<sup>18</sup> it was clear that colonisation was driven by a desire for profit. It is equally clear that imperative to the accumulation of profit was the subjugation of the indigenous population. The realisation of the empire required the rendering as inferior indigenous peoples.<sup>19</sup>
53. The colonisation of Aotearoa, a conscious attempt was made to create a 'little england' through the transplanting of key elements of British society: economics, politics and ideologies<sup>20</sup>. There is little doubt that capitalism may be directly implicated in the use of racial justifications for the colonisation of our lands. The imposition of class was necessary for constituting a 'little england'. Colonial imperialism has been a flagship for capitalist exploitation around the world. The theft of Indigenous lands and subsequently the theft of natural resources through to the commodification of our language, culture and genetic makeup, has all been reasoned and justified through capitalist growth and expansion. Embedded within capitalism is the need for labour

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<sup>18</sup> Smith, C.W. 1994 *Kimihia Te Maramatanga: Colonisation and Iwi Development*, Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Auckland, Auckland.:18

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Bedggood, D., 1980 *Rich and Poor in New Zealand*, George Allen and Unwin, Auckland

exploitation and economic hierarchy which includes the ways in which race and gender are intersect with class.

54. Examining colonial-settler relationships, Coulthard (2014) provides a definition that is of particular relevance to this chapter in that it highlights the centrality, and intersection, of dominant power relations which are central to the colonising agenda and process.

*A settler-colonial relationship is one characterized by a particular form of domination; that is, it is a relationship where power – in this case interrelated discursive and non-discursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power – has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority.(p.7)*

## **ETHNOGRAPHIC MANIPULATION**

55. The marginalisation of Māori women in accounts by anthropologists and historians has been a critical element in our representation of Māori women. Aroha Yates-Smith has provided depth discussion in regard to the ways in which early ethnographers marginalised Māori women's position and status.<sup>21</sup> Aroha argues that this can in part be attributed to the ignorance of early writers to the ways in which Māori society was structured and therefore who did not have a basis from which to comprehend Māori social relations. Furthermore, not only were Pākehā ethnographers ill equipped to compare Māori society but they created their own mythologies by making assertions from their own frameworks. Ethnographers were operating within their own cultural and gender frameworks.<sup>22</sup> Aroha continues throughout her doctoral thesis to raise key issues in regard to the influence of Pākehā ethnography on the ways in which Māori history has been constructed. It is her contention that although original informants were Māori and some original material was written in Māori by Māori, the publication of that material was done by Pākehā men which raised two key major problems, that of interpretation and censorship. She argues that both the processes of interpretation and censorship severely

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<sup>21</sup> Yates-Smith, A. 1998 op.cit.:pp 44-45

<sup>22</sup> ibid:45

distorted the picture presented of Māori women and atua wāhine in particular. For example, aspects of kōrero that were viewed as extravagant by those recording were altered so that different stories resulted which are now considered authentic.<sup>23</sup> The Preface of George Grey's 'Polynesian Mythology' gives an indication of the deceptive ways through which documentation took place. Grey notes that in collecting writings for this publication he undertook a range of processes that were problematic but which served to provide a collection conducive to the 'European reader'. Commenting on the particular needs of Pākehā readers Grey noted:

*It is almost impossible closely and faithfully to translate a very difficult language without almost insensibly falling somewhat into the idiom and form of construction of that language, which, perhaps, from its unusualness may prove unpleasant to the European ear and mind, and this must be essentially the case in a work like the present, no considerable continuous portion of the original whereof was derived from one person, but which is compiled from the written or orally delivered narratives of many, each differing from the others in style, and some even materially from the rest in dialect.*<sup>24</sup>

56. A critique of such manipulation of kōrero Māori is essential in a process of seeking to identify historical sources of mis-representations of Māori women. The cultural and ethnocentric focus of the early recorders of Māori history operated against the interests of Māori women in the expression of our status and in the maintenance of knowledge about our atua wāhine.
57. This is seen within a range of early writings included that of Elsdon Best. Throughout his texts we are continually exposed to statements that are based within oppositional constructions. This then creates a situation whereby Māori women's roles are viewed in opposition to those of Māori men, and where assertions are made based upon the construction of dualisms that in fact have little relevance to tikanga Māori. This is further highlighted in the ways in which Best discusses the events that took place between Hine-nui-te-pō and Maui, when Maui sought immortality. Best expresses that as being a "*contest*

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid*:27

<sup>24</sup> Grey, G. 1922 *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the New Zealanders*, George Routledge and Sons Ltd., New York:xii

*between light and darkness, but the darkness of death triumphed".*<sup>25</sup> Hence, Hine-nui-te-pō is constructed as the 'darkness of death' which is further related to the notions of good and evil, with darkness located alongside the realm of evil.

58. What it says about Māori women is disturbing in that it locates Māori women in the realm of evil. This construction fits neatly in the context of western notions of gender and women as immoral. Māori women are repositioned into the colonisers' conceptualisation of women as evil. The assertion of the underground as essentially evil is noted by Best,<sup>26</sup> however this is contradicted in his recitation of the kōrero regarding Mataora. According to Best, Mataora meets Niwareka, described as a Turehu from Rarohenga<sup>27</sup>, but he beats her and she leaves him. Mataora follows Niwareka to Rarohenga to ask her to return to him, however he encounters Uetonga who is engaged in Tā Moko. The people of Rarohenga object to the treatment of Niwareka by Mataora and question the beating of women. Best goes on to quote the 'native informant' as saying

*Observe well the words of Uetonga . Here in the upper world alone are evil deeds known; this is truly the realm of darkness. As to the underworld, no evil is there known, nor darkness; it is a realm of light and rectitude. And this is the reason why, all of the spirits of the dead, from the time of Hine-ahu-one even unto ourselves, no single one has ever returned hither to dwell in this world.*<sup>28</sup>

59. This raises two critical points, firstly that the underworld was not considered 'evil' and that in fact it was the 'upper world' within which 'evil deeds' were considered located and secondly that the beating of women was seen as unacceptable. The underworld realm of Hine-nui-te-pō is regarded here as the realm of rectitude not a realm of evil as is the dominant representation. The dominant colonial representation of Rarohenga is one that assumes a comparative with the western notion of 'hell' and as a consequence early writers construct Māori concepts in line with their own beliefs in 'hell' as 'evil'.

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<sup>25</sup> Best, Elsdon 1924(b) *The Maori*, Volume One, Memoirs of the Polynesian Society Volume V., Published by the Board of Maori Ethnological Research, Wellington:43

<sup>26</sup> Best, E 1924 (a) op.cit.:63

<sup>27</sup> Rarohenga refers to the underworld.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*:48

Best outlines the obsession with identifying two realms with the following statement;

*Maori religion, again, was in a very interesting stage of development in relation to the concept of a Supreme Being, the initial step taken toward monotheism, and the expressed and half-developed faith in two distinct spirit-worlds. The graded group series of gods, as suited to different mentalities, and the peculiar control of the cult of the Supreme Being, by means of which the purity of the concept was conserved, are matters of deep interest to anthropologists, and throw light on the evolution of religions.<sup>29</sup>*

60. Alongside the assertion that Māori were moving to a two tiered spirit world, Best also emphasises the existence of a singular supreme being and within his writings that being is clearly defined as male, in line with western christian beliefs in a singular male God. Best finds the notion of a Supreme Being as a 'remarkable achievement', clearly because he is able to locate such a notion in line with his own beliefs in a patriarchal driven religion. The construction of Io as Supreme and male is identified throughout Best's writings of which the following is one example.

*Here then, among a barbaric and cannibal folk living at the ends of the earth, we encounter a remarkable concept of the Supreme Being. He is called Io the Parentless because he was never born of parents. He was Io the Parent because all things originated from him , or through him, albeit he begat no being. He was known as Io the Permanent because he is eternal and unchangeable, and as Io-te-waiora because he is the welfare of all beings and all things in all realms.<sup>30</sup>*

61. In regard to the status of Māori women, Best is explicit in his belief that Māori women have 'less mana',<sup>31</sup> that Māori women destroy tapu,<sup>32</sup> and that Māori men only are referred to as rangatira and ariki.<sup>33</sup> However, as already identified contradictions appear consistently through Best's writings. We would be hard pressed to find a more explicitly contradictory statement in regard to Māori women than that made in regard to tohi,

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid*: xiv

<sup>30</sup> Best, E., 1924(b) op.cit.:235 The italics are mine to emphasise Best's gendering of Io as male.

<sup>31</sup> Best, E., 1924(a):92

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*:182

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*:88

*As a rule such honorific treatment was not accorded to female infants, but only to the more important males. Occasionally a female child of rank was so honoured.*<sup>34</sup>

62. Best's rejection of Māori women as rangatira is also contradicted in his own writings. Examples of this being his own noting of wāhine tapairu, the first born female of high ranking families; Mareikura, women of high ranking in Ngāti Kahungunu and his own abundant references to atua wāhine. He also refers to the role of women in Tuhoe who were prominent fighters with Te Kooti.<sup>35</sup> In a more general reflection on Māori women and warfare, Best notes;

*A remarkable feature in Maori life was the fact that women accompanied warlike raids and in a few cases are said to have been energetic fighters.*<sup>36</sup>

63. In yet another context, that of the handling of a new net, he notes that a 'ceremonial feast' was held with two fires where at one fish was cooked for the 'tapu men' and at the other for 'influential women'.<sup>37</sup> The choice of language used by Best illustrates his own thinking in regard to Māori women. His descriptions of Māori women are done in such a way as to diminish the importance or position of Māori women. The example given here in regard to the new nets is indicative of this approach, Māori men are referred to as 'tapu' and Māori women as 'influential'. In regard to atua, female atua are, on the whole, described as 'assistants' to male atua. Again contradictions abound. In Volume One of 'The Māori', Best notes that the ocean is personified by Hine-moana, but is 'controlled' by Kiwa, also that Tangaroa controls the tides and is 'assisted' by Rona.<sup>38</sup> However, in the publication 'The Māori As He Was' Best associates the role of assistant to Tangaroa.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid*:101

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*:129

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*:129

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*:249 Hinemoana, Kiwa, Tangaroa and Rona are all atua associated with the oceans.

<sup>38</sup> Best, E., 1924(b) *op.cit.*

<sup>39</sup> Best, E., 1924(a) *op.cit.*:47

64. In his writings Best locates Māori women as lesser and inferior to Māori men. This, he states, is part of Māori thinking and he seeks to locate it within Māori cosmology. In 'The Māori Volume One', Best discusses a Waikato rendition in relation to the origins of people, within this discussion it is noted that Papatūānuku descends from Te Pō, and that Ranginui descends from Te Ao Mārama. Taking this kōrero, Best then places his own eurocentric dualistic reading as interpretation, he writes;

*The crediting of light to the male line, and of darkness to the female line, is quite in accordance with Maori views, forever in native myth and belief the female sex is given an inferior position. Woman is allied with misfortune and inferiority as among other barbaric races. The word Po is explained below, while ao denotes day, to dawn and as an adjective, bright.<sup>40</sup>*

65. Here light, as associated with maleness, is presented as day and bright, it infers a superior positioning to that of darkness. Darkness, as associated with femaleness, is then relegated to the inferior. These descriptions of female and male positions are more in line with dualistic western christian patriarchal beliefs, than those of Māori. In a further attempt to locate a patriarchal hierarchy within Māori cosmology, Best also argues that Māori have seen women as inferior since Hine-ahu-one, he writes;

*We are told the pagan semites identified the active force in Nature with the Sun, and the passive force with the earth. This is precisely the Maori concept, but ever he deemed the female sex somewhat inferior to the male. The male sex originated with the gods, is of supernatural origin, but the first female of the ira tangata was fashioned from a portion of the Earth mother; ever does woman bear the brand of her inferior origin.*

66. This particular statement is loaded with colonial assumptions in particular the notion that male is godly and therefore superior, and consequently dominant, and women are of inferior origin. This is based upon an assertion that the male sex originated 'with the gods', a fundamental flaw in this argument being that Best locate men with originating from the 'gods' however it is not the case as all ira tāngata originate from Hine-ahu-one and therefore males are of no more 'godly' origin than females. The view held by Best also appears to be linked to

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<sup>40</sup> ibid:93



the idea that all children of Papatūānuku and Ranginui were male, and that the extension from that in Best's writings is that all things male are more godly than female. The problem with such a position is that it disregards the existence of ātua wāhine. There is a critical question that needs to be explored more fully in future research in this area, which is; if all the children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku were male where did the atua wāhine originate?

67. In denying the existence of atua wāhine Best denies the status of Papatūānuku, instead he regards Papatūānuku as a 'passive force', not of godly status and therefore inferior. This position disregards the centrality of Papatūānuku within Māori society, not only is Papatūānuku of the atua realm, she is also simultaneously the nurturer, giver of life and the claimer of life in that all living things return to Papatūānuku. The term whenua clearly articulates the relationship of Papatūānuku to life, whenua is both land and placenta. The connection between life and land is synonymous with references to Papatūānuku. However, in these roles Best further locates Papatūānuku as passive, or in his words;

*... the whare moenga, the receptive female element acted on by the fertilizing-power represented by Tane.<sup>41</sup>*

68. The whole construction of Māori female sexuality here is disturbing, but again in line with colonial Victorian notions of the woman as sexual servant, there to be 'acted on'.<sup>42</sup> Such notions serve to place Māori women in not only passive roles but as subservient. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku argues that the impact of colonisation on the construction of sexuality has had a significant impact on how Māori perceive ourselves and highlighting the detrimental effects.

*The practice, the carrying through, the acting out of one's inner self, even the very acknowledgement of it without the acting out, has mean too often shame, condemnation, dismissal, hatred, ostracism, hopelessness, and despair. The Judaeo-Christian legacy of guilt and punishment, of judgement and mortification has flourished on these islands. Despite the indigenous traditions of the Maori, despite those old, old beliefs, despite their continual rebirthing. Over the decades of*

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<sup>41</sup> Best, E., 1924(c) op.cit.:88

<sup>42</sup> Discussion of the 'domestication' processes of colonisation is provided in the following chapter on Native Schooling.

*colonization the homosexual, and more certainly the lesbian, became invisible.*<sup>43</sup>

69. Clive Aspin, in his doctoral research, also comments on the impact of colonisation in the defining for Māori sexuality. He argues that colonisation had such a profound effect that among many Indigenous cultures the diversity of sexuality has been actively suppressed. As such Clive notes that any deviation from a colonial defined sexuality, ie. heterosexuality, was promoted as sinful and profane.<sup>44</sup> A similar contention is made by Stevan Eldred-Griggs in the publication 'Pleasures of the Flesh', who also highlights that sexuality as constructed through Victorians value systems differed significantly from that held by Māori and that through colonisation missionaries actively disrupted the 'sexual code' of Māori society in their view that Māori morality was 'devilish'.<sup>45</sup>
70. The colonisers redefining of what was deemed appropriate sexual behaviour and relationships is a part of the wider gender reorganisation that was integral to a colonising agenda to transform Māori society. It was also influenced by racial notions of sexuality where Indigenous expressions of diverse sexuality was consider uncivilised and savage.<sup>46</sup> The intersections of race and gender are visible in early descriptions of Māori women as sexually promiscuous and as objects available for the sexual gratification of white men.<sup>47</sup> A colonising drive to redefine sexuality of Indigenous Peoples is founded upon each of the oppressive ideologies of race, gender and class. The notion that capitalist expansion is reliant on labour-power means too that such expansion is reliant on the maintenance of the heterosexual, colonial nuclear family structure and any expression of sexuality that challenges that structure is actively attacked by white, colonial, supremacist, patriarchal institutions. This then adds

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<sup>43</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. 1991 op.cit.:37-38

<sup>44</sup> Aspin, Stanley Clive 2000 *Trans-Tasman Migration and Māori in the time of Aids*, Unpublished Phd Thesis, University of Otago, Dunedin: 9-10

<sup>45</sup> Eldred-Grigg, Stevan 1984 *Pleasures of the Flesh: Sex & Drugs in Colonial New Zealand 1840-1915*, A.H. & A. W. Reed Ltd., Wellington

<sup>46</sup> Aspin, C. 2000 op.cit.; see also discussions by Anne Salmond in terms of how early Pākehā arrivals to this land viewed Māori women and their expression of sexuality. Salmond, A., 1991 op.cit.

<sup>47</sup> Johnston, P. & Pihama, L 1995 'What Counts as Difference and What Differences Count: Gender, Race and the Politics of Difference' in Irwin, K., Ramsden, I. & Kahukiwa, R. (eds), 1995 *Toi Wāhine: The Worlds of Māori Women*, Penguin Books, Auckland

further context to the works of ethnographers such as Elsdon Best who were lead writers for the colonising forces. The marginalisation and attacks on the roles and positions of Māori women fit neatly into the race, gender and class agendas of the colonisers.

71. Throughout Best's writings these processes of marginalisation and dismissal of Māori women are evident. In discussing the system of Whare Wānanga, Best refers to Māori men only. Rangatira are referred to as 'Chiefs' and any general reference to rangatira is male. This is done consistently even in light of evidence to the contrary. For example in asserting that men are considered superior, Best then states that the term tapairu referred to women of superior rank and that in Ngāti Kahungunu the term Mareikura also denoted women of rank.<sup>48</sup>

*As in most other barbaric lands, we find that women were looked upon here as being inferior to men. At the same time, a woman endowed with initiative could acquire influence, and some of superior families have attained commanding positions. Children possessed an interest in land derived from both parents, so that added somewhat of dignity to the position of the women. Rank also was transmitted through both parents, and consanguineous relationship counted through both. On the whole, the Maori leaned to agnatic filiation, the male he possesses greater mana that does the female, for is not man descended directly from the gods, while woman had to be created from earth!<sup>49</sup>*

72. In regard to birth Best diminishes Māori women by stating that the tapu of Māori women is somehow a negative form.

*In this connection tapu may be said to be equivalent to the condition termed 'unclean' in the Scriptures. A woman was tapu in this sense when giving birth to a child, and for some days after, hence she was segregated for a certain period.<sup>50</sup>*

73. Examples of the process of diminishing Māori women's roles pervade Best's work such as his description of Maui's attempt to claim immortality, by entering the vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō, as a 'contest' between 'Light and

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<sup>48</sup> Best, E., 1924(a) op.cit: 88-89

<sup>49</sup> The exclamation mark is from the original text indicating Best's denigration of Māori women's status. *ibid*:93

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*:93

Darkness'.<sup>51</sup> The 'Darkness' being Hine-nui-te-pō, the female element. In regard to haka,<sup>52</sup> Best notes that both women and men were involved, however he again presents Māori women in a derisive manner, stating:

*Old women were often very prominent in these performances, and few uglier sights could be imagined than these old hags when leading a haka or war-dance.*<sup>53</sup>

74. This for Best extended also to tohi ceremonies that occurred at birth, again however the contradictions are self-evident.

*As a rule such honorific treatment was not accorded to female infants, but only to the more important males. Occasionally a female child of rank was so honoured.*<sup>54</sup>

75. Given that rank was considered important in determining particular rituals and that the tohi was performed in relation to rank we could well expect that the nature of a female child being honoured in such a way was 'occasional'. It is apparent in Best's work that the way in which tapu is defined plays a key role in the positioning of Māori women within the documentation. Best regards tapu as

*Prohibition, a multiplication of 'thou shalt not'. These may be termed the laws of the gods and they must not be infringed.*<sup>55</sup>

76. Māori women he regards as being able to 'pollute' and therefore 'destroy' tapu. That becomes the basis for an argument for the 'restriction' of Māori women in certain situations. Best makes the following contentions;

In regard to waka:<sup>56</sup>

*No unauthorised person was allowed to visit the spot. Should a woman visit the place it meant a serious pollution of tapu and the gods under whose aegis the craftsmen were working, would at once abandon the place.*<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>ibid:99

<sup>52</sup> haka is referred to by Tīmoti Kāretu as "a generic name for all Māori dance". Kāretu, T. Haka: The Dance of a Noble People, Reed, Auckland:24

<sup>53</sup> ibid:134

<sup>54</sup> ibid:101

<sup>55</sup> Best, E. 1924(b) op.cit.:251

<sup>56</sup> waka refers to canoe.

<sup>57</sup> ibid:255

In regard to tapu persons;

*Persons who were heavily tapu ate their meals alone. Even ordinary persons when under special tapu, such as that pertaining to war gods, would not eat with women.<sup>58</sup>*

77. The process of whakanoa or the lifting of tapu was also regarded as Best as a negative, destructive force, which was held by women.<sup>59</sup> What is also evident is that the way in which Best regards tapu is altered when it is Māori women who hold tapu. Tapu in relation to childbirth is defined by Best as 'unclean'.<sup>60</sup> Again there are serious contradictions in the ways in which women's roles are discussed. The role of ruahine is noted as essential in many situations of lifting tapu. The rituals of which Best describes as 'elaborate' and 'spectacular'. In important ceremonies of lifting tapu Best states that the tapu is transferred to the ruahine who

*Represents the tapu spirits of ancestral beings. A woman was always the first person to cross the threshold of a new and tapu house during such a rite. The very fact of a woman passing over a tapu spot would pollute or destroy its sanctity, for such is the effect of that sex.<sup>61</sup>*

78. In this description Māori women are simultaneously regarded the embodiment of the ancestors and a form of pollutant. Tapu and noa are positioned in a negative opposition and in locating Māori women as destroyers or polluters of tapu, Best effectively places Māori women as oppositional to the notion of tapu. Manuka Henare argues against such a positioning. He states that tapu originates from the gods and that tapu is a state of 'being' not of 'having'. According to Manuka all people have their own intrinsic tapu and that in social terms tapu may be regards as follows;

*As potentiality for full realisation; to have influence, to evolve, to control, that is to be more Maori, more human.<sup>62</sup>*

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid:256

<sup>59</sup> Ibid:182

<sup>60</sup> Ibid:104

<sup>61</sup> Ibid:261

<sup>62</sup> Henare, Manuka 1988 op.cit.

79. Noa, he describes as 'freedom' from tapu and 'normality'. What Manuka provides in his discussion of noa is a definition that locates the process of whakanoa as one that works to prevent the extension of tapu to people, rather than one that opposes intrinsic tapu. This he states is a difference that has been lost in past interpretations.<sup>63</sup> It is without doubt one that is lost in Best's interpretations. Utilising the interpretation provided by Manuka, noa is viewed as a form that operates to serve the benefits of being in enabling a use of tapu objects. In this interpretation it is not the intrinsic tapu of objects that is removed but the possibility of the extension of that tapu to people. Here too, the role of women is written in a substantially different vein to that of Best.

*Women are especially powerful in making things and activities noa. Women have a particularly important task in ensuring that the extension of tapu on buildings does not apply to the users. They therefore make buildings safe for use or habitation. This is the mana and tapu of women, in that they have the ability to free areas, things and people from restrictions imposed by tapu. Women are not noa, as is often thought, but they are agents to whakanoa - to make noa. This is their tapu, and they are tohunga because of their own specific areas of activity.<sup>64</sup>*

80. Rangimarie Rose Pere presents definitions of noa that do not support such representations of Māori women. Rangimarie writes;

*The influence and power of noa is very significant to the physical well-being of people by freeing them from any quality or condition that make them subject to spiritual and/or ceremonial restriction and influences. The concept of noa is usually associated with warm, benevolent, life-giving, constructive influences including ceremonial purification.<sup>65</sup>*

81. What Rangimarie presents is a discussion of noa that is directly related to our wellbeing and that is a constructive and necessary part of Māori life. To accept such a definition is then to call into question the dominant representations of Māori women. Such a position has been taken by an increasing number of Māori women, who will no longer abide by the notion that Māori women are considered somehow inferior to all others. An example

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<sup>63</sup> ibid

<sup>64</sup> Māori, M. 1988 op.cit.

<sup>65</sup> Pere, R. 1982 op.cit.:38

of this is provided by Ani Mikaere, who argues powerfully against such constructions by deconstructing documentation that locate Māori women as 'common' 'profane' and in doing so challenges the notion that Māori women are inherently 'destructive'. To further illustrate the powerful roles of Māori women, Ani recalls the story of the actions of Te Rangikoaia.

*Being pursued by some of his Waikato enemies, Te Rauparaha sought the assistance of Te Heuheu at Taupō. On Te Heuheu's advice, he went to Rotoaira and there asked Wharerangi to help him. Wharerangi told Te Rauparaha to jump into a kūmara pit, over the mouth of which he sat his wife, Te Rangikoaia. When Te Rauparaha's pursuers arrived and asked whether their enemy had been seen, Wharerangi replied that he had been and gone. The Waikato ope nevertheless conducted a thorough search of the area, led by their tohunga who chanted karakia to assist the search. They approached the kūmara pit, but the karakia were rendered powerless by the presence of Te Rangikoaia sitting over it. Te Rauparaha therefore remained undetected, hence the composition of the haka, a celebration of his surviving an extremely close brush with certain death. There are at least two possible interpretations that can be placed on the role of the woman sitting over the pit. One is that her presence made the tohunga's karakia noa, and therefore ineffective. But another is that her presence over the pit made Te Rauparaha tapu, and therefore placed him beyond the reach of the tohunga's karakia and the keen eyes of the rest of his pursuers.<sup>66</sup>*

82. The intention of this discussion is not to entirely reject the writings of Elsdon Best, as there is much valuable information which discussions of Māori women's roles and status are framed, through influencing the creation and maintenance of discourses about Māori women. The writings of Berys Heuer provides a definite example of the influence of the types of discourses promoted by Elsdon Best, in particular her publication 'Māori Women'.<sup>67</sup> provided in the writings. Rather it is to highlight the need for critical readings of these early writings and the interpretations that are provided within. Elsdon Best has had a major influence on the ways in

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<sup>66</sup> Mikaere, Ani 1996 *The Balance Destroyed: The Consequences for Māori Women of the Colonisation of Tikanga Māori*, Unpublished Master of Juriprudence thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton:pp27-28

<sup>67</sup> Heuer, Berys 1972 *Māori Women*, Published for the Polynesian Society by A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington

83. The dominance of early ethnographic constructions of Māori women continues in the works of anthropologists and ethnographers that followed the first wave of Best, White, Smith and others. Pākehā women writer Berys Heuer provides a prime example of the unproblematic acceptance and use of those writers. Heuer opens her work 'Māori women' with the assertion that sex permeates all aspects of Māori life. Drawing on terminology in te reo Māori she seeks to demonstrate her belief in the inferiority of Māori women and superiority of Māori men within Māori society. For example, Heuer argues that the terms taitamawahine (east coast tides) and taitamatāne (west coast tides) indicate a gender inferiority of women because the east coast seas are calmer than the west coast. Heuer's approach to Māori sexuality is best noted in her response to whakairo and the representation of both Māori women and men. She describes whakairo as follows;

*Symbolic sexual representation was commonly found in carving motifs. House and fortifications were decorated with figures representing men and women with grotesquely distorted sexual organs.<sup>68</sup>*

84. The conservative nature with which Heuer views Māori society is clearly identifiable within this statement and permeates throughout her work. Heuer describes Māori women as 'subordinate'; 'defiling'; 'unclean', each of which is based upon her own cultural readings of how Māori society operates and her definitions of sexuality and what is deemed appropriate sexual expression. Heuer locates her assertion of the inferiority of Māori women within what she describes as the 'mythological origins' of Māori women. She outlines the role of Tāne in seeking the female element whilst disregarding the role of atua wāhine in particular Papatūānuku from whom Hineahuone originated. Heuer states that creation stories such as this act as indicators of male superiority. She writes;

*This account shows the culturally all-pervasive conception of man as provider of the creative fertilising elements, the life spirit. Concomitantly woman is seen as the passive shelterer and nurturer, the receptacle of whare moenga, of the life principle implanted by man.<sup>69</sup>*

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<sup>68</sup> *ibid*: 9

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*:10



85. Māori women are referred to as 'passive recipients', whilst simultaneously being presented as destructive forces. Heuer refers to the story of Hinenuitepō to example the destructive element.
86. In the continuation of the legend, Tane married Hine-ahu-one, the woman he had created, and later married their daughter Hine-Titama. The latter inquired one day as to the identity of her father and, on learning the truth, fled horrified to the underworld to take a position at the doorway through which all of her earthly descendants would eventually pass. In this portion of the legend come the emphasis upon woman as destructive. The concept is most clearly illustrated in the actions of the demi-god Maui who attempted to conquer Hine-titama (or Hine-nui-te-pō as she became known after her flight from her incestuous union) but who was himself defeated and killed. Thus death and destruction were brought permanently into the world. The female reproductive organs were termed whare o aitua or whare o te mate, house of misfortune and disaster.<sup>70</sup>
87. The interpretation given by Heuer again echoes the western colonial thinking of women as lesser and inferior. Furthermore, she advances women as destructive and in doing so demote women to the realm of evil and creators of misfortune. An interpretation of Māori women as powerful is beyond comprehension in such works, yet as Ani Mikaere reminds us there are interpretations that would locate the power of women's genitals as central to these stories rather than as destructive.<sup>71</sup> As with the writings of Elsdon Best, Heuer promotes contradictory example all the way through her text. In regard to Māori women and tapu, on one hand she notes Māori women stepping over a man or boy was a danger, associated with womens 'incautious' actions, whilst on the other hand she provides the example of Māori women stepping over men as a means of avoiding danger.<sup>72</sup> These contradictions then bring rise to a need for much more complex analysis to be undertaken. It can not

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<sup>70</sup> *ibid*:10

<sup>71</sup> Mikaere, A., 1996 *op.cit*

<sup>72</sup> Heuer, B., 1972 *op.cit*.

continue to be argued that Māori women are destructive when we have clear indication that being women brought a powerful force for change and transformation that is fundamentally about clearing danger.<sup>73</sup>

88. Māori women's clothing and resting places are considered by Heuer as 'unclean' and 'defiling' due to menstrual flow. Māori women's bodies and reproductive cycles are deemed destructive and unclean, all this within a culture that values whakapapa as a critical element in societal relations, which relies heavily upon the wellbeing of Māori women. Inherent in the writings of Berys Heuer is the continued defining of Māori women's roles through a Pākehā women's worldview. If we invert the meanings of menstruation to be more in line with the value of future generations as is a part of whakapapa and whanaungatanga then we do not view menstruation as some act of 'defilement'. Times of menstruation are then viewed as tapu, given the flowing of blood. There is no doubt that within creation stories Māori women's genitals are presented as powerful. This is presented in the exact stories that Heuer refers to, but which she however chooses to interpret solely in line with her own race and gender beliefs. To view menstruation as a powerful time for Māori women, because Māori women give life, is much more in line with a society that depends upon whakapapa. This is also discussed by Huia Jahnke, who argues that the writings of Berys Heuer are reliant on Victorian interpretations presented by white male ethnographers and economists.<sup>74</sup> As such she argues that Heuer maintains colonial views of Māori women. Furthermore, Heuer's work is reliant on generalisations that deny the diversity of Māori women within hapū and iwi. Those generalisations also deny the many leadership and central roles carried by Māori women, she writes;

*Generalisations by Heuer about the position of Maori women in customary society not only overlook important tribal differences but are described in gendered terms embedded in Western patriarchal assumptions. Her descriptions of Maori women as 'passive receptacles for the dominant male spirit' or as being 'responsible... for the greater*

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<sup>73</sup> Refer Mikaere, A, 1996 op.cit. and Jenkins, K., 2000 op.cit.

<sup>74</sup> Jahnke, Huia 1997 'Māori Women and Education: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives' in Te Whaiti, P., McCarthy, M., Durie, A., 1997 *Mai i Rangiatea: Māori Wellbeing and Development*, Auckland University Press & Bridget Williams Books, Auckland pp96-112

*number of Maori wars [sic]', and highborn women are 'not eligible for leadership' do not account for the life and works of women such as Hinematiaro or Ngati Porou, Makareti of Te Arawa or Te Puea Herangi of Waikato.<sup>75</sup>*

89. This statement from Huia reflects assertions made by Native woman writer Marie Anna Jaimes Guerrero, who argues that the presentation of the role of her women does not at all relate to her understandings of their roles and status.<sup>76</sup> Commenting on the representation of Native women she asserts that western paradigms have been unable to provide an understanding of Native People's histories or the roles of Native women. She argues that there has been a 'clouding' and 'erasing' of Native women's roles both inside and outside of their tribes. This in effect is what is presented by Berys Heuer, a clouding and erasing of Māori women's roles inside and outside their whānau, hapū and iwi, through a process of locating Māori women as inferior and destructive whom are positioned within subjugated roles.

90. The influence of Berys Heuer can be seen in more recent literature. In her discussion of the history of girls schooling, Ruth Fry states that in colonial times Māori girls a range of obstacles to deal with. Drawing on the writings of Heuer, she writes;

*Not only were they, together with their brothers, at least a lap behind Pakeha youths in their families' acceptance and understanding of formal education; they were also bound by long-established tribal traditions which prescribed what a woman could and could not do. In Maori attitudes towards a woman's place, there was, on the surface, little conflict with the Victorian espousal of a limited domestic sphere.<sup>77</sup>*

91. Following Heuer, Ruth Fry then makes a range of conclusions about the role of Māori women as subjugated, overworked and unable to enter whare wānanga. Here sweeping generalisations are made and presented as factual representations of Māori women's roles and status. These included the assertions that girls were not admitted to whare wānanga; that girls were to

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid*:pp97-98

<sup>76</sup> Guerrero, Marie Anna Jaimes 1997 'Civil Rights Versus Sovereignty: Native American Women in Life and Land Struggles' in Alexander, M. Jacqui and Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (eds) *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, Routledge, New York & London

<sup>77</sup> Fry, Ruth *It's different for Daughters: A History of the Curriculum for Girls in New Zealand Schools 1900-1975*, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington:156

acquire 'certain attitudes' towards childrearing, and it is implied that Māori girls and women have a domestic role in the whānau similar to that of Pākehā girls and women. Ruth Fry's opening statements regarding Māori women illustrate the ways in which dominant discourses pervade. As an academic working in the area of gender analysis she does not, in her paper regarding Māori girls schooling, provide critical reflection on earlier works. But the influence of the works of Elsdon Best and students of his work, such as Berys Heuer, is not reproduced solely by Pākehā academics, but appears also in writings by Māori. This indicates the strength of the ideologies that underpin such writings, that as Māori people we can also internalise and recycle dominant beliefs.

## **CONCLUSION**

92. This document has been shaped to provide some definitional frame for the ways in which notions of gender, race and class have intersected as a direct consequence of colonisation and as such as a consequence of Māori engagement with the crown. The imposition of such beliefs and practices were done by the Crown and its representatives and provide the historical, social, cultural and political underpinning for significant issues faced by wāhine Māori and as such is a breach of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
93. It is important for the tribunal to recognise the constructed nature of gender as such constructions are determined by the cultural, social, political and economic drivers within a society. It is clear that the notion of gender and its associated beliefs and practices that have been imported to Aotearoa have proved to be destructive and damaging for Māori, in particular for wāhine Māori.
94. The same point is made for the construct of 'race' and the institutionalisation of racism and white supremacist beliefs and actions in Aotearoa. Where it is not the intention of delve deeply into the social development of 'race' it is important to highlight that 'race' has had significant detrimental and oppressive impacts upon Māori. At the intersection of race and gender we see the magnification of oppression as experienced by wāhine Māori.

Additionally to this is the ways in which class stratification is informed by the ideologies of race and gender in Aotearoa. These three ideological systems have created multiple layers of breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi through the denial of the status, position and cultural affirmation of wāhine Māori.

95. This paper speaks broadly to the underpinning ideologies that have informed the ways in which the Crown and its agents have embedded ideologies, practices, policies and legislation to work against the interest of wāhine Māori and which are in breach of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as noted within the Claim filed. The key areas as noted below:
96. This is a new claim that has arisen as a result of several extenuating factors that have contributed to the loss of mana and dignity of wāhine. The flow on implications have been felt by Māori across the various spectrum of Māori society with extreme impacts on the institutions of whānau and hapū severing whakapapa connections of wāhine Māori from the land, water and resources and other Taonga.
97. The claimants say that that the detrimental impacts of Crown policies and practices on the mana of our wāhine Māori is an attack on their particular status as kaitiaki of Te Ao Māori and Papatūānuku who assures the future survival of all. The decimation of the relationships between wāhine Māori and Papatūānuku have wrought significant prejudice in the health; wellbeing; survival and rejuvenation of whānau, hapū and iwi and their social institutions and demands an urgent inquiry.
98. To highlight the egregious breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi that have occurred:
  - a. the imposition of colonial gender ideologies, norms and practices on wāhine Māori, their whānau, hapū and iwi;
  - b. the active moves to undermine rangatiratanga through marginalisation of tūpuna wāhine who signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the abject failure to recognise wāhine rangatira in their own right according to tikanga Māori;

- c. the confiscation of lands and tāonga removing the direct connect of whenua ki te whenua, our rights to birth on our lands, practice our own birthing rituals and return our whenua (placenta) to Papatūānuku;
- d. the assimilationist gender policies and practices in institutions such as mission and native schooling to reproduce colonial gender relationships that harm Māori women, girls and takatāpui;
- e. the ongoing enabling of misogynist and sexist processes that are informed by the intersection of sexism, racism, classism, and heternormativity;
- f. the role of colonisation, and colonial systems in the enabling of family violence and sexual violence within our whānau, hapū, iwi, communities and the removal of cultural practices to deal with these issues;
- g. the lack of active intervention in regard to the oppression and marginalisation of wāhine Māori in a system dominated by Pākehā privilege that comes as a result of failure to honour the treaty;
- h. the imposition of institutions that are underpinned by and reproduce the removal of tamariki Māori - which impacts most significantly on wāhine Māori; and
- i. the denial of wāhine Māori as guardians of Papatūānuku, papa whenua and papa moana.

**DATED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021



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Leonie Eileen Pihama