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## **Reflective design practice:**

Re-thinking Pākehā participation  
in mātauranga Māori-based research  
to support positive contributions from  
a Pākehā positional context

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## Abstract

In acknowledging the historical, cultural and relational Indigenous-settler contexts of Aotearoa, it is understood that in collaborative research based in mātauranga Māori, Pākehā are outsiders. Therefore Pākehā are constantly in an open state of listening and learning tīkanga, values and placed-based cultural conventions of research. By actively participating in the research, Pākehā inherit the responsibility to critically reflect on identity, positional context, world-view and understand how this affects thinking, intentions, decisions and consequences. These orientations are necessary when making an active commitment to improving participation and contribution.

An invitation to participate in the project, *Te Muka Taura - A site-based exploration of harakeke for dye extraction and muka colouration to advance understanding of regionally specific plant dye colourants*, provided the ideal conditions for active self-reflection. The project, in partnership with Ngāti Tukorehe is a collaboration between textile researchers, Māori practitioners and scientists to advance knowledge of the colouration of muka towards sustainable textile practices (Kilford et al., 2024). Based in mātauranga Māori, the research was generated in the relationships within the group and with the natural environment, through exchanges of dialogue, knowledge and actions.

Auto-ethnographic reflective practices within textile design, following the principles of *Care Ethics*, can develop understanding of how to make positive and effective contributions from a Pākehā positional context. 'Reflectivity' and 'Deep-listening' modes of self-inquiry seek to expose what is behind, surrounding, and in-front of any expression of self. The accumulative self-awareness accelerates accountability and unlearning of counterproductive cultural habits inherent with personal positional context. Making reflections in audio captures the emotion and tensions within self-inquiry. Audio reflections are revisited, reliving emotions and tensions, to re-reflect and develop reflections into visual representations of lessons and changes in self. Textile practices of colonial weed hand-dyeing and wool felting are employed to develop the drawing reflections into physical form that communicate the lessons and changes in self. Repetitive physical making facilitates the embodying of knowledge through connected learning between mind and body. Through the making, form, and materials used, the textile outputs advocate for increased awareness and conversation around work needed within the Pākehā community of researchers participating in collaborative research based in mātauranga Māori. The time and care spent developing reflections into textile forms, whilst continually reflecting on self, practice and broader contexts, embodies personal transformation to realise *non-colonial* ways of being, researching and practising.

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*"May you be blessed with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships so you may live deep within your heart. May you be blessed with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of the earth and its people so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace. May you be blessed with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war so you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy. And may you be blessed with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world so that you can do what others claim cannot be done."*

Mitzi Nairn's 'An Uncomfortable Blessing' recited at 'the state of the Pākehā nation 2024' (Personal communication March 22, 2024)

## **Personal positional context**

Tēnā tātou

He uri tēnei nō Kōtirana me Airangi me Weiri

I tipu ahau ki Waitaha

He taura ahau ke Te kūnenga ki pūrehuroa

Ko Julia tōku ingoa

Pākehā is my culture, New Zealander is my nationality and my ethnic identity is Scottish, Welsh and Irish. My ancestors immigrated to Aotearoa in the early 1800's settling in Te Whanganui-a-tara, Pātea and Ōtautahi. I grew up on a 630 hectare sheep and beef farm on the south bank of the Hurunui River in the Waitaha rohe. In 1988 my parents purchased the farm namely 'Kānuka Hills' after the vast kānuka forest that is reclaiming the steep terrain. This block of land is within the 1,400,000 acre 'North Canterbury Block' that was purchased by the Crown in 1857 for £500 (Ward, 1989). I acknowledge that Māori never ceded sovereignty as documented and promised in He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti O Waitangi. I acknowledge that Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga are, and always will be mana whenua and the principled kaitiaki of the whenua that my family temporarily occupy. My family is actively working towards a future of 'Kānuka Hills' that upholds Te Tiriti principles and respects the rights and responsibilities of Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga.

I do not whakapapa to the whenua that has given my family life, purpose, safety, education and privilege. I am manuhiri under Te Tiriti O Waitangi and I am on a lifelong journey of reckoning my family histories, unlearning colonial ways and learning how to be tangata Tiriti. The research I have undertaken and am sharing through writing and textile practice is shaped by my worldview and personal positional context. My views and blind spots reflect my social circles, class, gender, sexuality, upbringing, education, and life experience. My position is more than who I am as an individual, I represent the history of institution, colonisation, racism, power and privilege that I am a product of and that I benefit from.

## Introduction

Te Muka Taura is a research group where the work is relational and therefore the way in which we relate together and with the environment has significant influence over the research and who it benefits.

Well-intended Pākehā participants in research similar to Te Muka Taura, are commonly misunderstanding how to make positive and effective contributions from their positional context. These misunderstandings can have consequences such as making a space culturally unsafe, breaking tikanga and preventing research outcomes from benefitting iwi. There are binaries, values, and assumptions within Pākehā culture, that continue to physically and intangibly colonise spaces, knowledge, industries, environment and power structures. Because tendencies of guilt, silence and ignorance can prevent admitting fault, mistakes are being repeated. Pākehā research practices need to be examined by Pākehā, to build collective awareness and address this issue at the core by changing our cultural habits.

This paper outlines the need for Indigenous-led environmental practices including Te Muka Taura, a research project in the textile space in which I participated. It also addresses the need for Pākehā cultural transformation in the context of Aotearoa and within mātauranga Māori-based research. I see my position in Te Muka Taura, not as a permanent position or 'my' position I am entitled to, but rather a space I am currently in to make the most of this rare opportunity to critically analyse Pākehā participation in mātauranga Māori-based research.

I employed an auto-ethnographic reflective design practice to demonstrate the importance of Pākehā self awareness and accountability to improve the way we participate and contribute in mātauranga Māori-based research. Auto-ethnographic reflective inquiry within collective research is experience-based learning through the experience of being a particular individual in a particular setting, relating and exchanging with particular people. Te Muka Taura and Ngāti Tukorehe partners are key participants and contributors to each reflection due to the nuanced cultural, political and structural dynamics of my participation. Without them, I acknowledge I would have no experience to learn from. My personal experience is unique to my personal positional contextual meaning. I cannot claim that my experience is 'the Pākehā experience' or that my research outcomes can be a prescription for anyone else, but other Pākehā viewers may find some intersectionality with my experience.

## Research Question

Can auto-ethnographic reflective design practice guided by *Care Ethics*, support positive Pākehā participation and contributions in mātauranga Māori-based research?

## Aims

- To gain self-awareness, unlearn counter-productive Pākehā cultural habits, embody *non-colonial* 'ways of being' and practising in research.
- Contribute to the conversation and community of makers that are advocating through craft for increased Pākehā accountability, collective awareness and cultural transformation in the mātauranga Māori research space.

## Objectives

- Employ self-reflective audio inquiry to critically analyse my position and participation in Te Muka Taura.
- Re-reflect, deepen understanding and process reflections into visual representations through drawing practice.
- Transform visual reflections into textile form to embody lessons and changes in self through ethically aligned hand-dye and hand-felt practice.
- To communicate process of learning with Pākehā in similar research roles

## Terms of reference

Through involvement in Te Muka Taura, it's understandable that in the context of natural dye practice, I have become used to orienting to te Āo Māori and referring to values such as mauri when evaluating and communicating the value of research decisions and outcomes. However, when communicating the values that underpin my ethnographic design practice, I will be using Pākehā values that I fully understand from my worldview. Pākehā values such as care, respect, relationality and unity, in specific contexts and combinations, can align with, but aren't equivalent to te Āo Māori values. Values such as mauri, whakapapa and kaitiakitanga, I will never fully understand as I am not of a Māori worldview nor can I speak or think in te reo Māori.

When referring to modes of being that I am aiming to realise through this design practice, I will use the term *non-colonial*. It is not possible for my mind to be decolonised as it has never been and will not ever be Indigenous. Being tangata Tīriti is understanding and actioning the responsibilities of non-Māori in upholding Te Tīriti (Ngata, 2020; The Pākehā Project, n.d.). I believe this research is helping me in that direction, but my findings are not conducive to the requirements of tangata Tīriti. Anti-colonial is almost appropriate, however the 'anti' refers to actions against the colonial powers and structures. My practice is more internal, about unlearning colonial cultural habits and realising new ways of being, cultural habits that do not perpetuate colonisation; aren't colonial; *non-colonial*.

## Background

The ecological devastation of today is intrinsically linked with colonisation (Sliwinska, 2023). The term *Colonial-capitalism* is used by Suliasi Vunibola and Matthew Scobie to encapsulate the long standing “intimate relationship between capitalist expansion and colonial dispossession” that drives colonial powers to continually prioritise capital gains and short-term profit over the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the wellbeing of the environment (Vunibola & Scobie, 2022, p. 2). To ensure the health of our environment and inherently the sustainability of our existence we need to be led by Indigenous Peoples, knowledge and practices (Nitah, 2021). It is important to understand colonisation in relation to the environment before introducing Te Muka Taura and my research practice as it gives historical and political context for both.

## Colonisation and Capitalism

Colonisation is the process of imperial powers, such as Great Britain, exploiting Indigenous land and resources for profit, forcefully reproducing their homeland in the way of ecological transformation and the imposition of colonial culture (Elkington et al., 2020; Walker, 2002). Colonisation, fuelled by capitalism, was rationalised by the assumed superiority and entitlements of Christian Europeans as laid out in the Doctrine of Discovery (DOD). The DOD developed in 1493 claims that Christian Europeans are superior to non-Europeans and therefore are entitled to “seize.. [and] exploit non-European lands, waters, and people for the purposes of profit” (Iwi Chairs Forum, 2023). The British colonial agenda in Aotearoa relied heavily on the DOD’s ‘legality’, despite occurring centuries after the “racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust doctrine” was created (*UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2007). Because He Whakaputanga, the written constitution of Aotearoa, states that the authority and power lies with Māori, the British Crown had to be granted partial or full sovereignty from Māori to legally buy and sell land for profit (O'Malley, 2018). In May 1840, while copies of the legally binding Te Tiriti O Waitangi that affirms Māori sovereignty and the mistranslated Treaty of Waitangi were still circulating, the Crown’s representative William Hobson hastily declared sovereignty over the entire country. In Ruth Ross’s Treaty Paper published in 1972, she asserts that Hobson’s proclamation over Te Ika-a-Māui (the north island) was based on the Treaty of Waitangi that is not legally binding and Te Waipounamu (the south island) on the DOD (Ross, 1972, as cited in Attwood, 2023). This information on how the British assumed sovereignty, calls into question all acts of British sovereignty that followed, including the Crown’s purchase and sale of land to European settlers (Pākehā) that enabled the occupation, exploitation and ecological transformations of unceded lands.

## Land colonisation

Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang argue that the “colonisation of land is the most significant discourse within the colonial agenda because it both allows settlers to occupy and profit from Indigenous land while inflicting epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence through disrupting Indigenous relationships to land” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.3). Ranginui Walker (2004) reports that within just over 100 years since European arrival in Aotearoa, 91% of the country was confiscated for the European colonial agenda leaving a mere remainder 2 million hectares in Māori ownership. Land grabbing methods included racist claims for the right to purchase land, forcing deals through deceit, fear-mongering fuelled land wars to confiscate and sell land and creating laws, policies and acts that ignored the rights and authority of Māori (Iwi Chairs Forum, 2023; Orange, 2023; Walker, 2004). As capital gain was core to the colonial agenda and farming was the main source of capital, farming quickly became a motivation and reason for land grabbing and clearing.

Pākehā pastoral farming has a long-standing separatism with the health of the environment, in fact, ecological harms were welcomed in the 19th century as an ideal of colonial progress (Bargh & MacArthur 2022). The government even paid farmers to clear forests and drain estuaries, but only farmers of European descent (Strack, 2004). These methods destroy habitats and ecosystems and are responsible for escalating the rate of biodiversity loss in Aotearoa (*Habitat Loss • Environment Guide*, 2018). Despite being the main reason for environmental degradation, farming was culturally and politically depicted throughout the 20th century as having no adverse environmental effects (Bargh & MacArthur, 2022). Furthermore, Aotearoa and other settler colonial states are known for and have been celebrated for ecologically transforming Indigenous landscapes, waterscapes, and seascapes to what Makey et al describes as *settlerscapes* (Makey et al., 2022). So much so that *settlerscapes* became a marketing tool for tourism and ironically, the topic of many books for Pākehā to profit from. ‘*Discover New Zealand, The Glorious Islands*’ by Ray Joyce and Bill Saunders is a collection of aerial photos and text that claims to be an accurate portrayal of Aotearoa. The foreword written by the governor General at the time David Bettie reads “We have seen how man has smoothed away the native growth to give us our agricultural prosperity. Such work has been an act of creation which is a tribute to the craftsmanship of our pioneer settlers and their successors” (Joyce & Saunders, 1985, p.1). This book is an example of Pākehā ignorance and disregard for the environment and the continuation of Pākehā gaining capital from the colonisation of land through selling glorified perspectives of colonisation and *settlerscapes*.

## **Botanical colonisation**

These glorified *settlerscapes* are embellished with introduced exotic plants and crops that represent the colonial agenda of exploiting the land for profit and replicating their homeland through ecological transformations. Maria Rodgers et al defines *botanical colonisation* as “the process of replacing native species with exotic species in both urban and rural contexts” (Rodgers et al., 2023, p.5). Not only do exotic plants visually and physically represent colonial transformation and occupation of Indigenous lands, they also change the “fabric and function of local plant communities and initiate an environmental transformation of monumental proportions” (Heywood Jones, 2018, p.6). Some plants become invasive because they are in a new environment without the same ecological controls of their origin land that balance growth, such as predators or harsh environmental conditions. An invasive species is a plant that, through competing for resources and space, alters “the flow of energy, water, or nutrients through an ecosystem” (Walker & Smith, 2012, p.69). Disturbing the flow and balance of ecosystems results in decreased soil and water health, habitat loss, land degradation and displaced Indigenous species. In Aotearoa, more than 30,000 exotic plants have been introduced since the beginning of colonisation with over 2,500 naturalising and 300 becoming environmental weeds (*Exotic Plants (Weeds) • New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, 2024; Wassilieff, 2008*).

These plants have aided and continue to aid the colonial agenda of exploiting and profiting from Indigenous land through farming and reproducing colonial homelands through ecological transformation. *Botanical colonisation* has caused a multitude of environmental, economic and social issues in Aotearoa. The management of environmental issues such as invasive weeds are inherently political because it calls into question the authority to decide “which organisms need to be managed, who benefits or is affected by different management techniques” (Norgaard, 2007, p.450). Pākehā ways of managing environmental issues that have dominated the environmental activism space, not only discriminate against Indigenous peoples, knowledges, and cultural practices, but also disregard their power and authority to interact with and care for their environments (Bargh & MacArthur, 2022; Makey et al., 2022).

## **Indigenous led Ecological Decolonisation**

The reversal of land and *botanical colonisation* can be referred to as *ecological decolonisation*. Ocean Ripeka Mercier explains *ecological decolonisation* requires “reversing the damaging effects of large-scale industrial, horticultural and pastoral activities, long-term native species preservation, reforestation, and widespread weed and pest control efforts” (Elkington et al., 2020, p.52). Large scale and long term efforts such as these seem unimaginable if led by the leadership, culture and knowledge systems that underpinned land and *botanical colonisation*. Alternatively, Bargh and MacArthur (2022) argue that Māori,

through their long-standing reciprocal relationships, have the most relevant experience and knowledge of caring for and ensuring the protection of the local environment. This argument of Indigenous leadership is echoed internationally by Steve Nitah who proclaims that “the entire planet will benefit when Indigenous rights, responsibilities and relationships to the environment are respected and upheld” (Nitah, 2021, p.907). In Aotearoa, each hapū territory is managed through mana whenua of that area practising kaitiakitanga which “is the practice of caring for and having obligations to the environment” (Bargh & MacArthur, 2022, p.268). The rights and authority of mana whenua to practise kaitiakitanga were established before colonisation, then recognised by the British Crown in He Whakaputanga 1835, promised through partnership in Te Tiriti O Waitangi 1840, and legally recognised in the Resource Management Act 1991 and The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007 (UNDRIP).

The promises made by the British Crown and the New Zealand government have repeatedly been broken, transliterated, ignored, misinterpreted and weaponised up until this current day. Colonial powers have consistently inflated their authority to assume power over everyone and everything in the name of capitalism. Today’s government is accelerating these colonial practices with the ‘Fast Tracks Approval Bill’ that will allow exploitative industries to get projects approved that would normally be denied under The Resource Management Act, The Wildlife Act and The Conservation Act (Pham, 2024). Lan Pham of the Green Party explains in parliament that the Bill is “undermining the foundations of our democracy by overlooking the vital importance of te Āo Māori, the rights of Iwi Māori and Te Tiriti as the foundation of effective environmental governance and management” (Pham, 2024, 3:20-3:46). This bill is a current example of colonial powers prioritising short term capital gains over the rights of Iwi Māori and the wellbeing of the environment and our communities. To repair the environmental devastation caused by land and *botanical colonisation* under *colonial-capitalism* we need to be guided by Indigenous leadership and work across differences. In this space non-Māori can uphold Te Tiriti through respect and support for the rights, responsibilities and authority of mana whenua as kaitiaki of the local environment.

## Te Muka Taura

In the context of Aotearoa's textile industry which intrinsically relies on the natural environment, we need sustainable textile practices that regenerate local ecosystems, with respect and support for the rights, responsibilities and leadership of mana whenua. To support the harakeke industry revitalization efforts of leading Māori textile researchers such as Dr Rangi te Kanawa, *Te Muka Taura* was formed in 2021 by Angela Kilford to support the revitalisation of customary colouration methods. The project in partnership with Ngāti Tukorehe of the Horowhenua region, was a transdisciplinary collaboration between Māori practitioners, textile researchers and scientists (Kilford et al., 2024).



Fig 1. *Te muka Taura roopu*. Hope, J. 2023

My role in the group was as a textile design master student and I was responsible for assisting with activities such as the harvesting and preparation of fibre, harvesting and preparation of dye matter, carrying out fibre colouration methods and documentation. My textiles project is based on my participation in the research and is a connected output of Te Muka Taura. *'Mapping the benefits of collaborative textile research in Aotearoa New Zealand'* is an academic paper written by members of Te Muka Taura, for the Textile Intersections Conference 2023 held in London. This is also an output of Te Muka Taura and is the main source of citations for this section as it is not appropriate to define the collective research from my positional context.

Te Muka Taura, funded by Callaghan innovation through 'Science for Technology and Innovation' under 'Vision mātauranga' aimed to "advance knowledge of the colouration of muka towards sustainable textile practices" (Kilford et al., 2024, p.2). The associated Te Mara o Waitae project, funded by Massey University Research, was dedicated to contributing dye source plants to Ngāti Tukorehe's wetland restoration project Te Hākari on Tahamata Farm Trust land. All resources for the project were sourced from Te Hākari and Ngāti Tukorehe marae grounds. In respect and support for the rights, responsibilities and leadership of mana whenua in environment and resource management, the way in which we engaged with natural resources was guided by kaitiaki of Te Hākari. The collective of contributors are diverse in practice, culture, knowledge and values that all influence the research. Relationships are foundational to the research as information is shared and generated through the exchanges of dialogue, knowledge and actions.

Western science technologies were used as tools to analyse the components and function of plant dye colourants derived from Ngāti Tukorehe plants (Kilford et al., 2024). Western research institutions (including Massey University and the funders) that are founded in racist colonial values and based in the Positivistic assumptions of singular reality and truth-providing way of researching, have historically denied mātauranga Māori as a science (Park et al., 2020). This foundation has resulted in structural conventions such as language, time efficiency, budgeting and funding requirements that "have contributed to trampling on the mana of mātauranga Māori" (Kilford et al., 2024, p.10). The establishment of Vision mātauranga in these research institutions may seem like an equitable action of inclusion. However, when led by non-Māori without critical contextual and historical understanding, Vision mātauranga "can be used as a tool of colonisation where Indigenous knowledge is exploited and transformed into the dominant culture to unlock the innovative potential of Māori knowledge, resources and people" (Elkington et al., 2020, p.71). In light of these histories, the influence of western science in our research was deliberated and defined with iwi members in wānanga throughout the project.

In order to disrupt the structural conventions of western research resulting from *colonial-capitalism* we considered the way the research was centred, carried out, evaluated and protected. Mātauranga Māori is the knowledge base for harakeke harvesting and muka dyeing methods and te reo Māori terminology was favoured over English wherever possible. It was important to ensure the research was carried out under Māori leadership in accordance with iwi values, tikanga and kawa. Participating in place-based cultural conventions and protocols such as pōwhiri, pēpeha, noho marae and wānanga enabled and strengthened the relationships within the group and with the local environment (Kilford et al, 2024). The priority for budget allocation was contributing to existing ecological restoration projects such as Te Hākari. We evaluated the research based on Ngāti Tukorehe values and objectives as well as mapping the benefits of the research at each stage. Like all research with Indigenous communities, the data generated in Te Muka Taura must be protected and remain in the sovereignty of Ngati Tukorehe on Tahamata Farm Trust land (*UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2007). One of the group members, Tanya

Ruka (Personal communication March 6, 2023), explained that all the data is whakapapa of the plants and the place, therefore the data belongs to Ngāti Tukorehe.

Of these strategies listed, 'mapping the benefits' was found to be key in disrupting structural barriers and ensuring authentic research outcomes and therefore discussed at every wānanga and hui. Kilford et al (2024) explains that consistently asking who benefits enables the necessary reflexivity to protect the mana of Ngāti Tukorehe values. We all agreed that if any part of our research was not benefitting Ngāti Tukorehe then it is not benefitting the research. Ocean Ripeka Mercer reinforces the need to critically ask who benefits, she discerns "if the answer is Pākehā or the western system, colonial exploitation is probably occurring" (Elkington et al., 2020, p.25). To help determine what is of benefit or not, *Waipuna*, a value lens was developed with Ngāti Tukorehe members in which to guide decision making, analyse data and evaluate results.

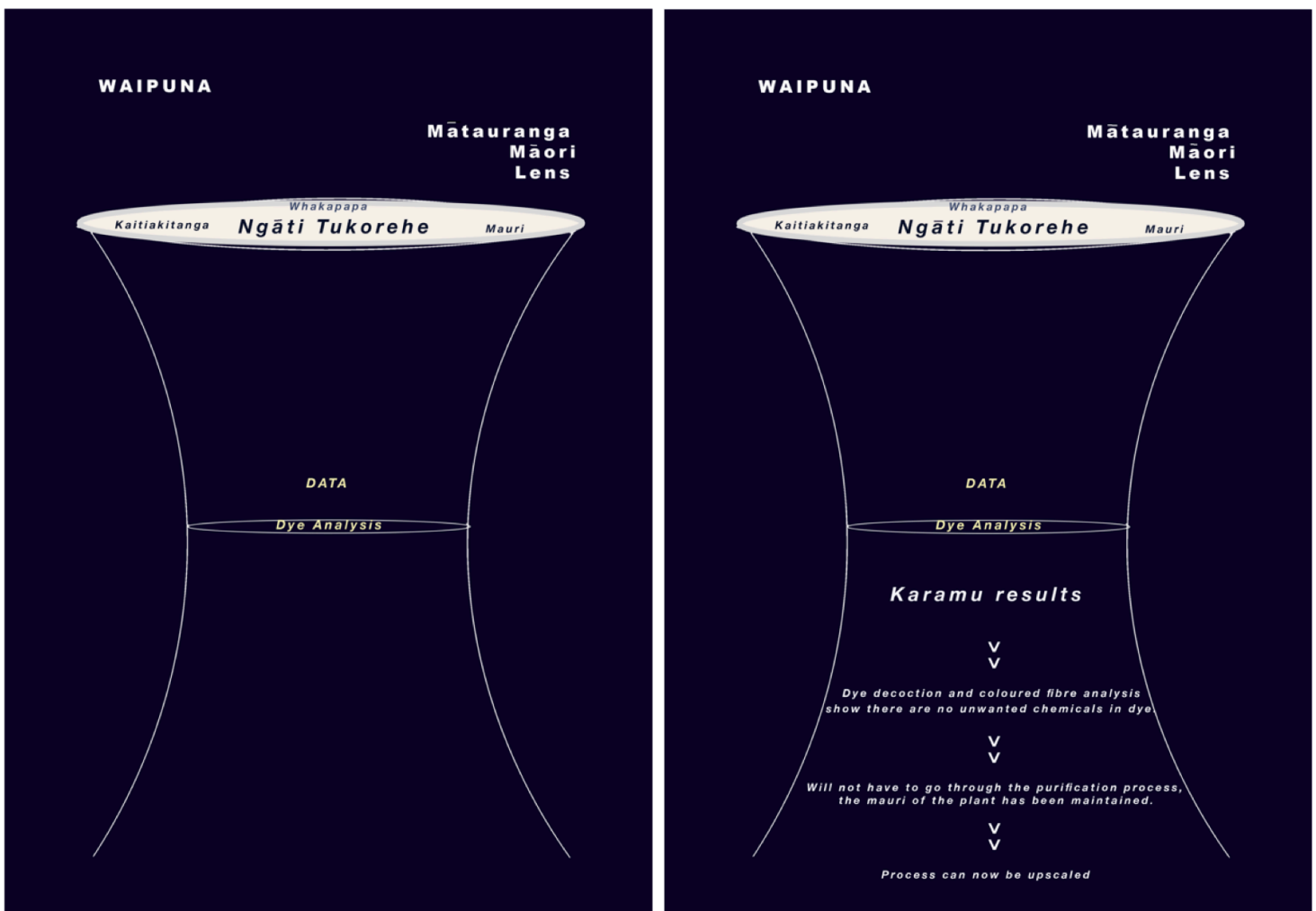


Fig 2. Visualisation of how values affect outcomes. Ruka, T. 2023

This need to be guided by or follow te Āo Māori values and concepts is becoming increasingly more important for non-Māori working and researching in Aotearoa. *Waipuna*, which is tailored specifically to Ngāti Tukorehe values, was used consistently throughout the project to orient all participants to engage authentically and produce results that inherently reflect Iwi values. Furthermore, *Waipuna* helped me, as an outsider, to understand the connectivity of our research with Ngāti Tukorehe's values, objectives and ongoing site-based ecological exploration and restoration of their local environment.

When evaluating research it is hard to define the direct benefits Iwi members received from my position therefore I reference Huhana Smith (Ngāti Tukorehe) who concluded that those who engaged have strengthened their relationship with their whenua and Iwi who are engaged in research benefit from the support this project gives their associated projects (personal communication, November 29, 2023). Kilford et al. (2024) proposes the indirect benefits may include the contribution to ecological restoration that future generations can enjoy and the possibility to expand Iwi enterprise, to include the commercialisation of sustainable coloration methods that reflect Iwi values. Despite the research outcomes directly and indirectly benefiting Ngāti Tukorehe, the participating researchers in Te Muka Taura received the most direct benefits such as “knowledge transfer, academic reputation, future possibilities for further funding and a personal sense of achievement” (Kilford et al., 2024, p.11). The benefits I received from participating in Te Muka Taura are unquantifiable. Participating in cultural conventions helped me to understand my positional context in relation to the research, the place and the intersectionality and difference with group members, Māori, and Ngāti Tukorehe. Building relationships across differences, working together and with the environment benefitted me academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Participating in this research enabled the space for personal development and understanding of identity and positional context was emotionally and socially beneficial. The funding to carry out both the collective research and my connected masters project gave me space, time and energy to participate and benefit in all activities. The common theme in all the benefits I received is the opportunity, guidance and support to be in a constant state of learning in pursuit of realising radical change within myself.

As mentioned earlier Ngāti Tukorehe have sovereignty over the data generated in Te Muka Taura, therefore it would be inappropriate for me to use any data for personal academic gain, nor would my Pākehā gaze on mātauranga Māori be an appropriate contribution. As a group we decided that the greatest opportunity for my masters would be to employ an auto-ethnographic reflective textile research practice to help navigate the research with care, and learn how to make positive and effective contributions from a Pākehā positional context. Esteemed academics Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Alison Jones and Amanda Thomas have written about nuanced cultural, political and structural issues with Pākehā participation in Indigenous research and te Āo Māori contexts. Tuhiwai Smith (2012) identifies that the recurring Pākehā assumption and performance of the outsider 'expert' role in Māori contexts is counterproductive and needs to be addressed as a redundant Pākehā cultural habit. Pākehā often have 'good' intentions when engaging in mātauranga Māori research, but 'good' intentions do not ensure

positive contributions or constitute culturally safe participation. Jones and Thomas both agree that it requires justification, respect, care and understanding of structures and systems that perpetuates colonialism (Elkington et al., 2020; Hoskins & Jones, 2017). Alison Jones (Pākehā) who has decades of experience participating in research led by Māori for Māori (Kaupapa Māori), suggests that positive engagement requires ease and alertness which she refers to as an '*alert ease*' state of being (2017). Jones (2017) has observed that the ease comes with a respectful understanding of te Āo Māori, learned through lived experience and relationships within Māori contexts. Alertness, she explains, is developed through nourishing a state of uncertainty, readiness and reflexivity underpinned with critical awareness of one's personal positional context in relation to the wider context of the research (Hoskins & Jones, 2017). The points summarised above strongly support the decision for me to employ an autoethnographic reflective textile practice throughout my participation in Te Muka Taura.

## **Pākehā positional context**

Positional context is what it means to be a particular identity in a specific context. In this case the collective identity of Pākehā in the context of Aotearoa. The community of people who identify as Pākehā is just one of the many interlinked and intersecting communities in Aotearoa and members of the Pākehā community may intersect with multiple communities. Catherine Delahunty, a Pākehā advocate for Te Tiriti-based futures explains that identity can be clarified by naming nationality, culture and ethnicity (personal communication, May 6, 2022). Typically someone who identifies as Pākehā, will be of New Zealand nationality, Pākehā culture and white European ethnicities. Within every community each individual has a unique personal positional context based on their specific identity and life experience; "education, skills, privilege, ethnic background, gender [and sexuality]" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p.138). The unique makeup of a person's identity impacts their ways of being and therefore impacts others (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Activist Tina Ngāta (2020) emphasises that it's important to understand how a person's experience of privilege and oppression inherent with their personal positional context is affected by colonisation. For example, my experience of oppression inherent with being homosexual in Aotearoa, is significantly conditioned by the fact that I'm a white woman with intergenerational wealth and privilege from colonisation.

Pakeha positional context is the result of white Europeans migrating to Aotearoa, a Māori context, and through colonisation, creating a nationality and culture. Most Pākehā have little awareness of our collective histories and how we became connected to this land, yet our connection to land seems to be the focus of Pākehā identity (Elkington et al., 2020). A strong advocate for critical Pākehā collective

awareness, Alison Jones, explains that the term Pākehā was created to “distinguish the ordinary people (the word ‘Māori’ means ‘ordinary’) from the white-skinned settlers” (Hoskins & Jones, 2017, p.149). The notion that in this Māori context, Pākehā aren't normal was reinforced by Max Harris in this year's ‘*State of the Pākehā nation*’ speech. Harris (personal communication, 2022) urges Pākehā to recognise that assuming our ‘ways of being’ are neutral and unbiased, is perpetuating colonial narratives that underpin Pākehā society. Understanding our histories can help to identify the cultural habits and where they come from so we can truly understand our personal positional context and how that in turn dictates our relationships with each other and this land we 'belong to'.

### **Understanding history of Pākehā culture community**

In *The Collective Silence: ‘German Identity and the Legacy of Shame’*, Barbara Heimannsberg asserts the work of remembering is fundamental to collective healing and realising a collective identity which is grounded in honest accountability. Much like descendants of Nazi Germany, Pākehā need to collectively remember our colonial history because “a past which is not remembered, which is denied or repressed, continues to act as an unconscious template within us” (Heimannsberg & Schmidt, 2013, p.166). As explained earlier, the history of the Pākehā culture in Aotearoa began with *colonial-capitalism* premised on racist assumptions of supremacy and entitlements (DOD). As the colonial agenda progressed, Pākehā powers enforced their ways of being by overriding Māori rights, power, authority and laws. The New Zealand Government laws and structures were built on Pākehā values, culture and knowledge and therefore favoured and benefitted Pākehā. Colonial powers were threatened by the strength of Māori nationalism and culture so they falsely assumed the power and rights to make laws that forced Māori to live by Pākehā cultural norms. This included the prohibition of te reo Māori in schools 1905, the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907, the banning of collective land ownership and of course, the integration of capitalism (Walker, 2004). These are just some of the assimilation tactics that deliberately counter the promises made in He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti. Ranginui Walker reports that since the beginning of colonisation, assimilation has been obscured by the media pushing the false ideology of *one people* and the myth of ‘the best race relations in the world’ (Walker, 2004). This self-serving propaganda was started by colonial powers and disseminated through mainstream media to shape the dominant understanding. The ideology that all New Zealanders are *one people* had repeatedly been portrayed in TVNZ 1 adverts such as the one that started in 2007. The phrase ‘*we are One*’ and emotional music are used to evoke belief that we are all the same (nztvpres & TVNZ 1, 2007). This propaganda aims to make the Pākehā community believe that colonisation and assimilation in Aotearoa isn't ‘that bad’ and ‘pretty good’ in comparison to other settler states.

Colonial powers also used the media to fool the general public into believing that the laws coming out of government and the treatment of Māori was fair and just (Walker, 2004). Starting in the 60's, Pākehā activists such as members of ACORD, CARE and HART who supported Māori activist groups were ignored by colonial powers and described as 'lunatics' in the media (Walker, 2004). Since the beginning of colonisation there has been resistance and activism from Māori advocating for the rights and wellbeing of Māori and the environment and for better relationships between Māori and Pākehā. Ranginui Walker (2004) reports that in 1979 a group of activists (He Taua) from the Waitangi Activist Group ended the 20 year long Auckland University Engineering school annual parody 'haka party'. This event is an accurate representation of how some Pākehā celebrate being culturally offensive and racist. Furthermore, the Auckland Star writers chose to headline "Gang Rampage at Varsity... Students at Haka Practice Bashed" (The Auckland Star as cited in Walker, 2004, p.222). Instead of the media holding Pākehā accountable for our communities actions, they used fear-mongering and false reporting to discredit the just actions of He Taua. Fear-mongering has consistently been used to 'justify' the colonial and racist agendas including wars to expropriate Māori lands and the recent attempts at removing Māori rights from our constitutional documents (Harris. M, personal communication, March 22, 2024). The combination of messaging in the media and uncontested intergenerationally transmitted cultural habits has resulted in collective lack of awareness and entitlement, also known as *white fragility* (DiAngelo, 2019). '*White fragility*' underpins 'Pākehā grievance' and displays of 'reverse discrimination' when asked to give up unjust privileges or in response to any reparative actions such as treaty settlements and Māori scholarships (Elkington et al., 2020). This resistance to social transformation demonstrates Pākehā ignorance constituted from intergenerational denial and silence. Ignorance of our foundational histories, the consequences of our histories, the human rights documents that prove the immorality of our histories (He Whakaputanga, Te Tiriti, UNDRIP), and the patterns of cultural habits that motivated historical events.

### **Honest accountability of Cultural habits**

Honest accountability requires understanding the consequences of our actions without defence (Heimannsberg & Schmidt, 2013). This can be historical actions, collective actions and individual actions that are underpinned by cultural habits. Tihema Baker identifies the belief that inherently good people are unable to do wrong, as being the biggest barrier to Pākehā accountability. The reality is that people of good character are able to cause harm (Baker, 2023). Cultural habits include tendencies, assumptions, thinking and behaviours that reoccur across the community and throughout time. Within Pākehā culture there is a lot of variation in identity and influence but there is still commonality through shared histories and inheritances. When we critically analyse and reflect on collective Pākehā histories we can identify where these habits come from and understand that they have been taught through culture. From the small history analysis included in this writing a list of harmful habits can be identified.

- Assuming superiority, power and entitlement
- Human vs nature binary thinking
- Threatened by Māori Nationalism, Sovereignty and Power.
- Self-Serving propaganda
- Good vs Bad binary thinking
- Intention vs Consequence binary thinking
- Deflecting/ dismissing accountability through comparison
- Denial, silence and ignorance of histories and consequences
- Fear-mongering
- Avoiding responsibility for community
- Lack of awareness
- Assumption that Pākehā are the norm
- Resistance to giving up unjust privileges
- Claims of reverse discrimination and racism
- Resistance to social transformation

Pākehā cultural habits underpin the “drivers of violence including the historic drivers (policies, knowledge, laws, and practices) that created inequitable power structures and mechanisms in the present and may contribute (unless actively challenged) to future injustices and violence in the future” (Makey et al., 2022, p.3). Understanding the consequences requires listening to the receivers of our actions. Harris (personal communication, 2024) emphasises the importance of listening to non-Pākehā, as they often have valuable insights about our cultural habits that we struggle to recognise ourselves. In Belinda Borell’s PhD thesis *‘The nature of the gaze : a conceptual discussion of societal privilege from an indigenous perspective’*, she observes that:

“Active forgetting helps the current day recipients of historical privilege assuage contemporary feelings of guilt and shame and assists them to forego significant acts of collective responsibility that may be drawn forth from reminders (often by Māori activism) of the historic pain of colonisation and the contemporary suffering that continues for those impacted by historical trauma” (Borell, 2017, p.112).

Barbara Heimannsberg reinforces the notion that taking accountability and realising the impact of individual and collective actions typically evokes feelings of guilt. To address the guilt and shame that comes with active remembering and accountability of history and actions, one has to take responsibility through individual and collective actions (Heimannsberg & Schmidt, 2013).

## **Take responsibility for community and self through individual and collective action**

As mentioned earlier, accepting that Pākehā are a community encourages collective accountability and responsibility for cultural habits. Harris explains that cultural habits have been taught and can therefore be unlearned (personal communication, 2024). The process of unlearning sometimes requires replacing harmful habits. When seeking out replacement cultural habits it's important to acknowledge that choosing to fill the void with Indigenous culture and knowledge, is a Pākehā cultural habit that perpetuates colonisation (Walker, 2021). Pākehā need to realise and embody new, *non-colonial* cultural habits and ways of being that transform Pākehā culture. *Tātoutāou hāpori* is an Indigenous community notice board about decolonisation. On Waitangi Day this year they shared a vision of what Pākehā culture may look like beyond settler colonialism:

“Imagine if we repaired our relationship to ourselves... If we designed new ways of being and loving ourselves through uncomfortable accountability... The people who repaired our relationship with the earth. Known for our rituals of accountability and restoration... who nourish a culture of justice, alignment, self expression, community and peace” (Tātoutāou hāpori, 2024).

This remaking of Pākehā cultural habits is individual and collective responsibility that is one of the many necessary contributions to the social transformation needed to address the consequences of Pākehā colonial histories and culture. Matike Mai Aotearoa, led by Moana Jackson and Margaret Mutu, is a working group that since 2010 has developed an inclusive constitutional framework that is reflective of the promises made in He Whakaputanga, Te Tiriti and UNDRIP. The vision is that “by 2040, we should have a new political system in which Māori and the government share power, resources and responsibility for the care of this land and all of the people in it” (O'Connell & Casey, 2020). Pākehā assisting social transformation is fundamental but also requires critical awareness and care to ensure appropriate actions of responsibility (Walker, 2004). In *'Imagining Decolonisation'* Amanda Thomas writes “this work needs to be carried out in constant conversation with our Māori colleagues and mentors. We shouldn't expect thanks or reward. This work has been carried out by Māori since European arrival. The reward comes through a fairer, more equitable society” (Elkington et al., 2020, p.122). The work of remembering our histories and unlearning the cultural habits that underpin them are necessary to realising a Pākehā culture that supports the vision of a fair and just society.

## Precedents

### Reflectivity

To develop my own method of self reflection, I looked at practitioners that employ various reflection methods. In Luigina Mortari's article *Reflectivity in Research Practice: An Overview of Different Perspectives*, she outlines two modes of reflection, *radical* and *phenomenological*. Mortari (2015) regards *radical* reflection as the process of identifying dominant societal assumptions through critical reflection. She argues that understanding where assumptions come from, how they affect research and how to rectify misplaced assumptions is "one of the most important tasks we should face not only in research but also for everyday life" (Mortari, 2015, p.7). Mortari (2015) explains *phenomenological* reflection to be the process of gaining self-awareness on one's mental experience. In research this means instead of just reflecting on the research, one needs to reflect on their mental experience of carrying out the research; how the mental state is affected and affects the research. Both modes of reflection are relevant for recognising tendencies, assumptions, bias etc but to unlearn these cultural habits and realise new ways of being, deeper understanding is required.

Dr. Emily Beausoleil (Pākehā -Canadian and French descent) is a political theorist who is passionate about researching how and why the way we interact and relate to each other can shape the society we live in. Beausoleil's research '*Deep Listening*' is the practice of carefully listening to ourselves, to hear the history and structure that informs cultural habits, as well as personal history and values that orientates and commits individuals to a particular set of habits (Business Lab (Host) & Beausoleil, 2023). She claims that if you aren't challenged or disadvantaged much because of your positional context, you are less likely to notice the systematic issues that serve you and you're more likely to have thin-skinned reactions to being challenged and privileges being removed (Business Lab (Host) & Beausoleil, 2023). Thin-skinned reactions do not make good conditions for listening and the responsiveness that we need for structural change. Deep listening as a reflection method makes the space to learn, be affected, take accountability and actively decide to change your mind and behaviour. This heightened understanding of self, in historical, structural and personal contexts and active participation in self transformation helps to relate and connect across difference in a way that uplifts those around and contributes to a collective consciousness that is reflective of a just society.

The Pākehā Project was founded by Louise Marra (Ngāi Tūhoe and Ngati Pākehā) and Rebecca Sinclair (Pākehā- Scottish and English descent). In partnership they designed a practice of individual and collective reflection to fully understand ourselves and our responsibilities in a society that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Honest understanding and accountability of self "gives us the ground from which to develop

much better relationships with Māori and other tauīwi, ways of engaging with te Āo Māori respectfully and authentically and some clarity about working within the complex and entangled systems of which we are a part” (The Pākehā Project, n.d.). Much like Emily Beausoleil’s practice, *The Pākehā Project* reinforces the need for individual and collective reflection to dismantle the barriers to critical contextual understanding (eg. skinned reactions or *white fragility*) that’s required for social transformation. Rebecca’s personal practice, through creativity and care, is situated where decolonisation, creativity and complexity meet to break out of colonial normativity (The Pākehā Project, n.d.). A theory of change central to her practice is ‘asking beautiful questions’. She dives deep into a complex issue and asks a series of questions around behind and in front of the issue. In personal communication with Rebecca, she shared her theory behind ‘asking better questions’ when addressing topics that can be confronting for Pākehā. When asked a question we get under the surface to find the answer within us, making space to come to terms with our position in-relation to the issue, and be open to new possibilities (personal communication, date 2021). Rebecca claims through experience that *asking questions* instead of direct or prescriptive teaching has been more effective and empowering for participants to understand and address complex whiteness issues that typically evoke *white fragility*. She shares her personal individual reflections with the collective through social media, her blog on Medium and the Pākehā project website.

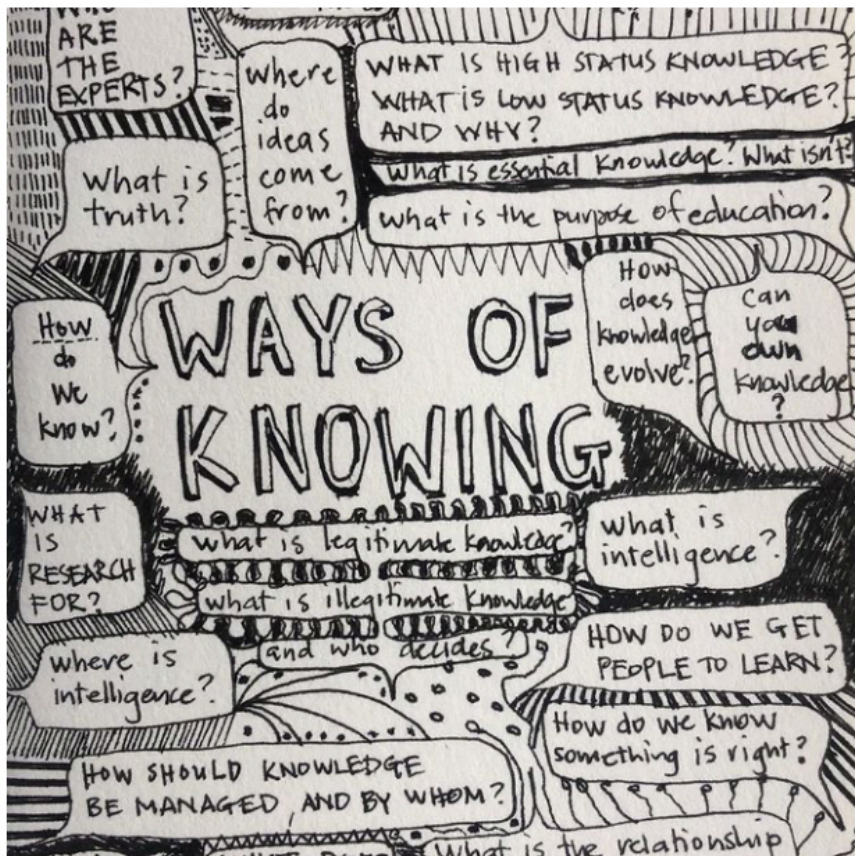


Fig 3. *Ways of knowing*. Sinclair, R. 2023

Employing drawing practice transforms thought into a visual space of contemplation, collectiveness and potential. The expressive drawing surrounding the questions visualises the time and care spent reflecting and the emotional responses to reflections. Sharing her reflections is contributing to the conversation and community of makers that are advocating through craft for increased settler accountability and action for social transformation. Sinclair's drawing practice has been hugely inspiring as a mode of processing the reflections with care and engaging her audience through asking questions. My reflections have not been shared on social media, instead they will be shared in exhibition alongside their material manifestations.

## Care Ethics

Practising ethics of care through creative practice can be a way of connecting and contributing to broader collective transformations that are required in these times of exponential inequalities and environmental devastation. Jacqueline Millner is a well-recognised writer and advocate of *Care Ethics* as a mode of researching and practice. In Millner's article 'Caring through art: Reimagining value as a political practice', she refers to *Care Ethics* as way of practising that upholds values such as "heightened attention, spending time, deep-listening, community, resourcefulness, self-reflection and generosity" (Millner, 2019, p.172). Millner claims that centering *Care Ethics* could dismantle the values of neoliberalism and capitalism that are the root of environmental, social and political devastation in settler states (Millner, 2019). This is especially relevant for descendants of colonisers in settler colonial states who care for the environment and seek to transform the culture they belong to.

Sera Waters, a white settler Australian artist who lives and works upon Kurna Country, is an inspiring example of *Care Ethics*-based textile practice. Waters unpicks decorative threads on settler colonial home-making textiles, to disrupt the transmission of lies and harmful traditions. Waters explained in an email that she carefully repurposes the thread, "once destined for other outcomes, to tell these truths about how colonisation still operates today" (personal communication, April 13, 2024). Her collection of works is vast and includes both individual and collectively constructed pieces. The example below *sampler for a colonised land* was a sampler used in early settler society to teach Indigenous and settler girls how to be obedient and follow the colonial ideals of language and morals (Gay 2019; Waters, 2017).



Fig 4. *Sampler for a Colonised Land*. Waters, S. 2018-19.

Now it speaks to the “types of boundaries which arise from fear-based and possessive ways of occupying land. These boundaries are inheritances from colonisation which continue on in many different forms today” (Waters, 2017). Choosing heirloom textiles from her community is taking care to recognise her positioning as a white settler woman and the need to disrupt harmful traditions. Truth-telling of harmful and violent settler colonial acts in her works is caring to witness what’s traditionally silenced in settler communities. Repetitive slow-craft such as stitching requires heightened attention and spending time that enables self-reflection and deep-listening. Waters’ textile practice evidently follows the values of *Care Ethics* to address the source of environmental, political and social devastation in her community. Waters’ practice of taking typically colonial materials and using them to communicate anti-colonial messaging is similar to how I am employing materials that were historic tools of colonisation to envision *non-colonial* ways of being. I admire Waters’ slow stitch practice that embodies the values of *Care Ethics* and relate it to my own method of slow craft such as hand dyeing and hand felting.

## Site-specific enviro-centred practice

Anna Heywood-Jones (2020) is a textile artist, settler Canadian based in  $x^w m \theta k^w \acute{a} y \acute{a} m$ ,  $S k w \acute{x} w \acute{u} 7$  mesh, and  $s \acute{a} l i l w \acute{e} t \acute{a} \acute{t}$ , the unceded lands known as Vancouver. Jones's artistic practice involves site-specific plant dye to produce 'lexions' of colour that are representative of the location. Through spending time with the plants in the local ecosystem Heywood-Jones explains that you can learn about the narratives and context of that place through time.

“As in visual culture, plant life possesses signifiers and coded meanings in their contextual configurations. Subsequently, botanical literacy offers insight into environmental, sociocultural and historical narratives of place. The forests and herbaceous margins of our communities speak of a complex past, a parallel history of migration, colonisation and adaptation. They also reflect the present—the current state of the world and the evolving nature of local and global systems” (Heywood-Jones, 2018, p.5).

Heywood-Jones enviro-centred practise has allowed me to recognise the role that plants play in the representation of place. *Spending time* at Kanuka Hills within the natural environment has enabled me to notice the plants that represent the colonial occupation of the land. Heywood-Jones's 2016 project *Tinctorial Cartographies* in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) was a 12-month engagement with the site. She used invasive, naturalised and indigenous species to colour woven swatches constructed of various pre-mordanted natural fibres to present an array of colours from each plant dye.



Fig 5 & 6. *Tinctorial Cartographies*. Heywood-Jones, A. 2016.

Choosing to only use plant dyes with no harsh mordants to colour natural fibre swatches results in fully biodegradable research outcomes. This way she “views herself, the making process and the resulting dyed swatches as being as much a part of nature as the plant bodies they represent. From this

perspective, the plant, the textile object and myself are all equal partners in an ongoing dialogue” (Heywood-Jones, 2018, p.8). This is a meaningful approach to dismantling the binary of assumed European superiority over plants that’s led to environmental destruction over thousands of years. Anna is a white settler who feels her presence in this place is as an interloper, which is a relatable feeling for a lot of settlers who have learnt the history and contexts of place (Heywood Jones, 2018). Her site-based practice enables her to learn about place from the environment and also practise the dismantling colonial habits that she has inherited with her positional context as a white settler.

### **Ethically aligned material and design decisions**

When the materials and design decisions align with and address ethics, the work’s credibility and messaging is enhanced. In Fernando’s recent work at the NGV triennial Melbourne, he shows the potential for design to address ethics as well as aesthetics. *Conflict avocados* is a multidisciplinary account of the damage that’s being inflicted from the avocado trade, upon the culture and environment in Mexico. “The textile piece pictured below presents a narrative of destruction and repair created through patchwork avocado and marigold dyed cotton” (Laposse, 2023). Laposse directs his audience to place themselves as the drivers of avocado trade that lead to this violence.



Fig 7. *Conflict Avocados* project. Laposse, F. 2023 photographed by Sean Fennessy.

Fernando has transformed culturally significant natural materials of avocado and marigolds into coloured fabric that not only contributes colour to the narrative but also aligns with his ethics of environmental care. Colouring the fabric with avocado itself imbues the historical and cultural significance of the avocado into the piece (Laposse, 2023). All design decisions and resulting elements in Fernando's work lead the audience to understand the intended message. *Heightened attention* and *resourcefulness* are values of Care Ethics clearly demonstrated as important in political textile work such as *Conflict Avocados*. The materials and design decisions need to align and uplift the political messaging. Similarly, my intention behind using colonially introduced weeds to colour wool, both significant to Pākehā culture, history of land and *botanical colonisation* in Aotearoa contribute to the political messaging of my work.

### **Theory of change / Communication**

Communication of practice and community engagement is crucial in affecting change. Choosing typical academic activism such as direct or forceful messages and prescriptive instructions aren't going to inspire self-reflection and change within the Pākehā audience. Beausoleil (Business Lab (Host) & Beausoleil, 2023) argues that provoking counter-intuitive insights through creative practice can be an effective theory of change. An artist who employs this theory of change is Holly Walker (Pākehā - Welsh descent). Her work is an emotional exploration of her identity and belonging in Aotearoa as a Pākehā woman. Through self-reflection, Walker gains understanding of how political and cultural nuances keep in motion the way she connects and disconnects with those around her. Walker's performative practice creates distance between and challenges the colonial binaries of Pākehā ideologies. Walker achieves this through experiencing with and building a relationship with the environment, outside of binary restrictions.



Fig 8. *A body in between the absence*. Site: Rangipo, Ngāti Tūwharetoa whenua. Walker, H. 2020.

Walker's practice has given her space to become more resolved in her Pākehā identity, her body and her sense of belonging in Aotearoa. Her work holds tensions which evokes a need to engage and understand. "I hope to encourage other Pākehā to self-reflect and locate their position in the political and historical context of their Pākehā identities, in support of decolonial movements for Aotearoa" (Walker, 2021, p.13). Holly's practice, despite evoking discomfort, has a strong thread of optimism through the demonstration of alternative, *non-colonial* relationships with herself and the environment in the context of Aotearoa. Unlike Walker's practice, my work is not performance based although the theme of discomfort is prevalent in the display of personal vulnerability. I hope to create a space of discomfort and optimistic contemplation through exhibiting textile outputs and their respective questions.

## Methodology

Auto-ethnography is a subjective method of research, where the researcher researches themselves to understand their experience in relation to the cultural, political, historical and social contexts in which they exist and operate (Ufuk, 2022). Auto-ethnographic research can be transformative for the researcher as it requires the researcher to be connected to the research and therefore realise and adapt our ways of being within the research (Paudel et al., 2023). In S. K. W. Lang's PhD, *Bicultural Responsiveness in Aotearoa New Zealand: an immigrant counsellor's perspective*, he explains how a reflective approach to autoethnographic research was very effective in understanding themselves in relation to the context they live and work, which in turn, transformed the way they carry out their practice (Lang, 2011). Lang's research is particularly interesting to me as he uses multiple modes of reflection, including creative writing to document the struggle in shifting his ways of being to be more bi-culturally responsive. He explains that creative reflection enabled him to imagine and realise the 'decolonised self' that he desires to be (Lang, 2011).

In pursuit of learning to rethink Pākehā participation to make effective contributions to mātauranga Māori-based research, it was important for me to critically analyse my experience in Te Muka Taura. I needed to understand who I am and how I relate to the research context, and how I relate to this whenua in comparison to the ways that tangata whenua and iwi relate to whenua. It is important for me to:

- Understand who I am and what that means.
- Acknowledge the relationship between my identity, culture and the history of my community.
- Recognise how colonisation significantly contributes to my cultural habits and the ways in which I am received in various contexts.
- Be aware of what I inherit with my personal positional context and where my personal habits come from.

- Take accountability for my habits and take responsibility for community and self through individual and collective action.
- Understand that being white, Pākehā, tall, middle-class, identifying as gay and female, educated at western knowledge institutions, and growing up on a farm, in a predominantly white small town, inherits particular cognitive vices (e.g. entitlement and ignorance).

These cognitive vices not only affect the way I relate to others but may also be barriers to being self aware of those affects (Business Lab (Host) & Beausoleil, 2023). This is why it is particularly important to undertake an auto-ethnographic methodology, as being aware of myself in relation to social, political, cultural and historical contexts is crucial in supporting positive contributions in mātauranga Māori-based research, from my positional context.

The way I am approaching this research is reflective and follows *Care Ethics*. As explained earlier in the precedents sections, reflectivity can be carried out in multiple modes. I have used Motari, Beausoleil and Sinclair's modes of reflection throughout this project. Continued reflective practice is an active commitment to realising personal transformation and improving the way I contribute to Te Muka Taura and similar contexts. Also defined in the precedents section is *Care Ethics*. Following the values of *Care Ethics*, as defined by Millner, guides the way in which I research and carry out textile practice to be led with care and respect. The design process outlined below is connected through self-reflection, deep-listening, heightened attention, time spent, community, generosity and resourcefulness. Every design and process decision was considered in relation to these values; whether my decisions in alignment with or facilitating me carrying out the values. Keeping these values in mind while carrying out the project helped me transform my ways of being and the ways in which I engage with those and the environment around me. *Care Ethics* helped me make considered decisions which supported the realising and practising of *non-colonial* habits.

## Design Process

Below is a diagram illustrating the design process I have developed through this study. Information is generated through audio documented reflections of my participation and contribution in Te Muka Taura research engagements. The knowledge is analysed and developed through re-reflecting the audio reflections into visual representations. This body of primary visual research is summarised into key findings that become the content for material explorations carried out through hand dye and felt practices. The key findings are reframed into questions that prompt self-reflection. The textile outputs represent *non-colonial* ways of being that I believe would help me address the issues presented in the questions. They advocate for increased awareness and conversation around work needed within the Pākehā community of researchers participating in collaborative research based in mātauranga Māori.

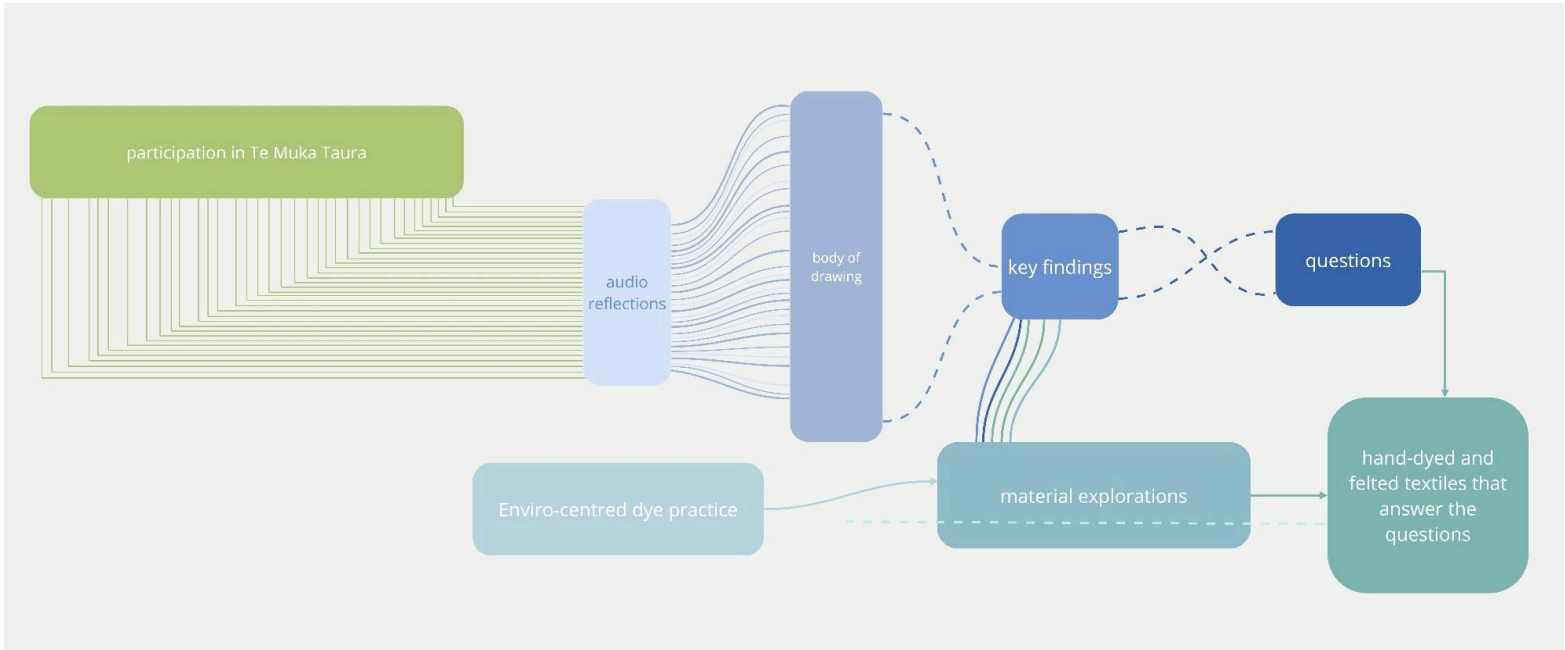


Fig 9. *Reflective Design Process*. Hope, J. 2024.

## Audio reflections

(Self-reflection, deep-listening, heightened attention & spending time)

Following the *Care Ethics* values; Self-reflection, deep-listening, heightened attention and spending time, I employed self-reflective inquiry to document and critically analyse my position and participation in Te Muka Taura. After every research engagement I recorded myself reflecting on our recent activities, how I participated and how I felt about it. The reflections are my honest (or immediate) thoughts and feelings and have not been shaped into a particular structure. The reflections often included questions or feedback from Te Muka Taura members and Pākehā with experience in te Āo Māori spaces.

Radical reflection, phenomenological reflection and asking questions were the techniques I used to identify personal and cultural habits that are counterproductive. Deep-listening to self and broader context to understand where the habit comes from and /or what it represents (eg. cultural habits that underpin colonisation). Taking the time to notice and take accountability allowed me to make sense of and analyse associated emotions and reactions to my experience. I would often find myself having realisations whilst reflecting that brought up feelings of shame, guilt, denial, deflections but if I kept talking through it I would have the space to change my mind, see it from another perspective, admit fault and realise I had to own up to my actions. After a research engagement where I felt shame, embarrassment and confusion for the way I participated, I would sometimes avoid talking about the thing I'm embarrassed about. I resolved this

by adding one compulsory question to each recording; 'how do I think I participated today in relation to collaborators and the broader context?' The heightened self awareness, accountability and understanding encouraged the unlearning of counterproductive cultural habits and therefore rethinking of future participation. Making audio reflections was an effective way to take responsibility for my own learning and remember valuable advice from people whom I respect.

A limitation of this reflective process is that I, as the auto-ethnographer, can not claim to know the impact of my participation on the relationships within the research context or on the research itself. As mentioned earlier, non-Pākehā often have valuable insights on Pākehā culture that Pākehā can not see themselves. Which is not dissimilar to how I can only analyse my own cultural habits and thinking that is brought to my attention from collaborators and/or obviously counterproductive. Furthermore, the findings as shown below in the drawings are not conducive to all my habits, as there will be many that I'm not aware of yet that may require further study and/or collective reflection.

## **Drawing reflections**

(Self-reflection, deep-listening, heightened attention & spending time)

After the final wānanga I started listening to the audio reflections to analyse the data. During participation in Te Muka Taura I learnt more about the context of the research which has allowed me to better analyse my participation in relation to the context. Asking questions and deep listening are the techniques I used to analyse the data generated through audio reflections. Re-reflecting on the audio reflections helped deepen understanding of my habits and process reflections into visual representations through drawing practice. Making drawing reflections is intentional reliving of emotions and tensions to develop the reflections into lessons and changes in self. Spending time and heightened attention to draw out the reflections allowed me to process and reduce the emotions and tensions that come with remembering mistakes I made. Likewise, when I listened to a positive reflection I felt excitement, ease and pride in seeing the change in my habits. I noticed that after a positive reflection my inflated ego would often result in careless participation the next time and old mistakes being repeated. This is a humbling reminder to stay alert and that unlearning habits takes a lot of practice.

Re-reflecting on audio reflections has enabled me to see that how I felt and what I believed to be true is not necessarily true now. The audio reflection may be self-deprecating with anxiety clouding my ability to analyse my own behaviour. I learnt that in an effort to desperately understand, I often get stuck on an idea, go off on a tangent and lose perspective. But when re-reflecting, it is easier to analyse myself, identify the habit and be honest with myself. Often I wanted to visualise the ways in which I engaged with or am positioned in relation to mātauranga Māori as that is the knowledge base of Te Muka Taura. I am

aware that it is inappropriate for me as a Pākehā to define mātauranga Māori. Therefore I have chosen to visualise my ways of engagement instead of specific mātauranga Māori.

After making all the drawings I analysed them to summarise the key findings; modes of reflecting, identified counterproductive habits, identified *non-colonial* ways of being that constituted positive contributions from my position and the state of being that comes with practising *non-colonial* ways of being, as illustrated in Fig 10.

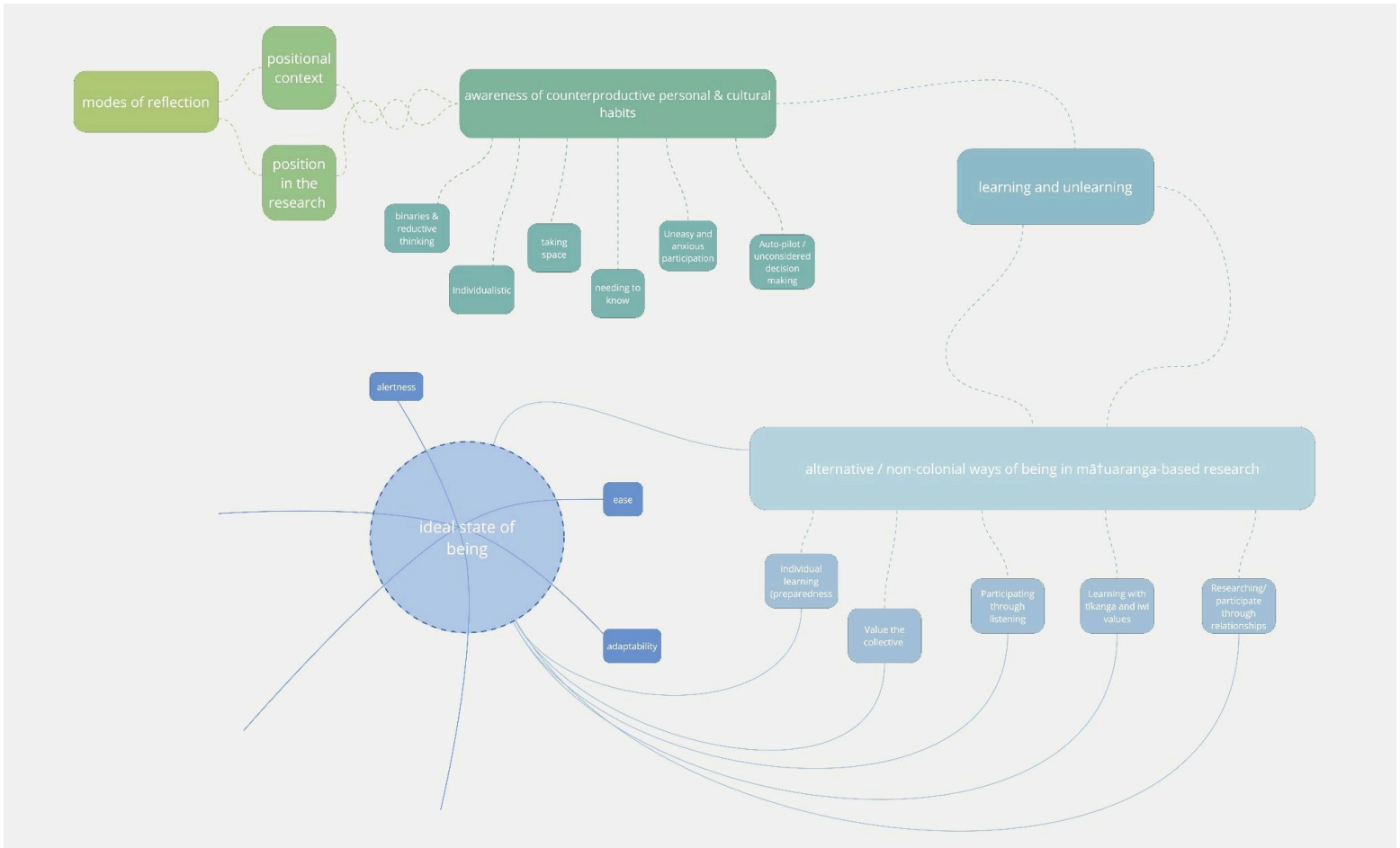


Fig 10. Summary of key findings. Hope, J. 2024.

### Identified counterproductive personal and cultural habits.

These are interconnected as 'ways of being' that I determined are counterproductive because they don't match my intention to participate with care and respect. They consequate actions that do not align with the collective goals and values of the research exchange. These habits are a result of culture, personality

and upbringing. They were either taught to me, or developed by me in response to interactions in my personal life.

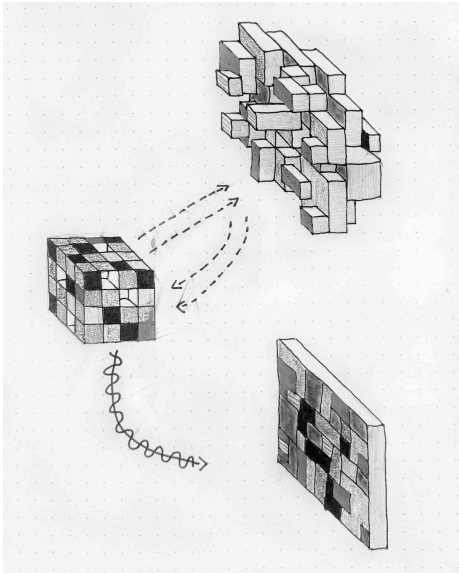


Fig 11. *Needing to 'know'*. Hope, J. 2023.

Being accustomed to learning and researching within western knowledge systems means I have the assumption that I can and should understand. But in mātauranga Māori research contexts Pākehā cannot be knowledge holders as we cannot ever fully understand knowledge outside our world view. We only have various depths of perception based on personal experience and learning.

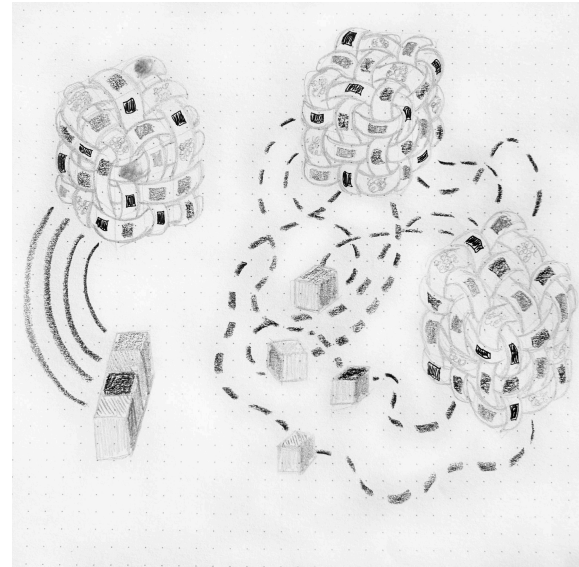


Fig 12. *Individualistic*. Hope, J. 2023.

Choosing to do things alone with the excuse of time, efficiency and not burdening others when in reality it is just easier for me to do things alone than valuing collective input. Because that is the way I have been raised to think and be in Pākehā culture.

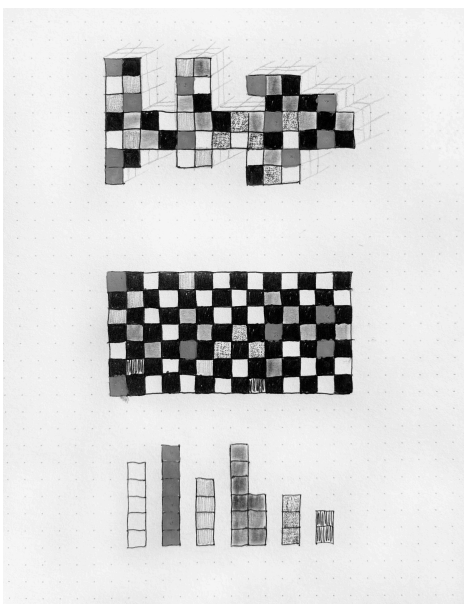


Fig 13. *Binary and reductive thinking*. Hope, J. 2024.

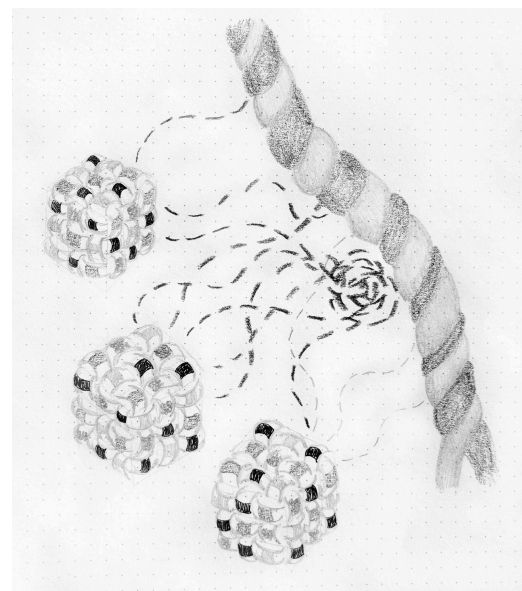


Fig 14. *Taking up space*. Hope, J. 2024.

Holding binaries such as good versus bad means I determine things to be good or bad, this OR that. Binaries create separation and erase everything that exists between opposites. Reductive thinking is when I try to simplify things I do not understand in order to try and understand them.

Participating through talking and asking questions that dictate or cloud the conversations within a research exchange. It is a personal habit of mine to externally process and assume that verbal contribution is necessary, which more often than not, is unnecessary.

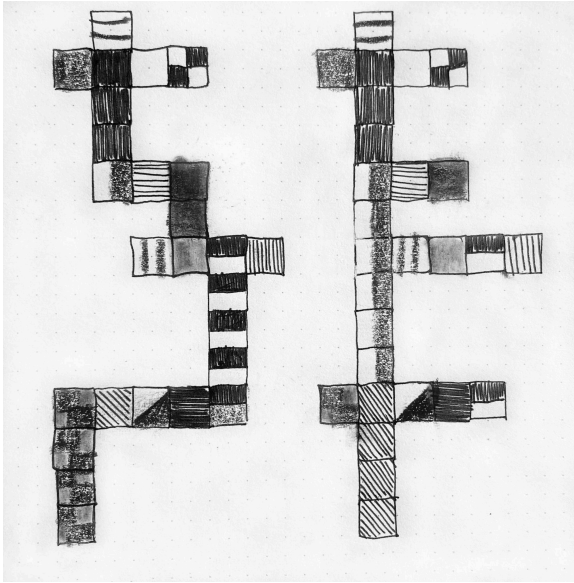


Fig 15. *Auto-pilot decision making*. Hope, J. 2023.

Being conscious of decisions but not considering the consequences of those decisions. Assuming the decisions I make are 'normal' in all contexts. Not considering alternative decisions. Assuming the consequences of my decisions are benign or not as important as my 'good' intentions.

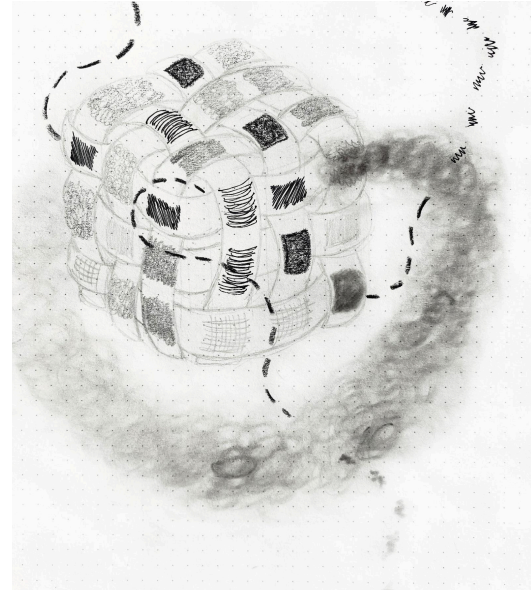


Fig 16. *Being uneasy and anxious in participation*. Hope, J. 2024.

Over analysing self in space, without the grounding of accepting my position in relation to the context of the research. Anxiety, over analysing and apprehension clouds my ability to notice and respect the histories, politics and structures that are present in the space. This can amplify cultural nuances and differences that affect ways of connecting and relating across difference.

### Identified *non-colonial* ways of being

The second category of findings are ways of engaging and contributing that I have learnt are appropriate from my positional context through guidance of group members and self reflection. *Non-colonial* habits are ways of being I have found to help contribute to positive participation and contributions. They address and supplement my personal and cultural habits identified above. But obviously this is all subjective. There is much more to learn. A different context with different people may have resulted in different findings. This is not a conducive list, it is just the most recurring of my reflections. I am still practising consistency, as cultural and personal habits can be barriers to embodying these learnings.

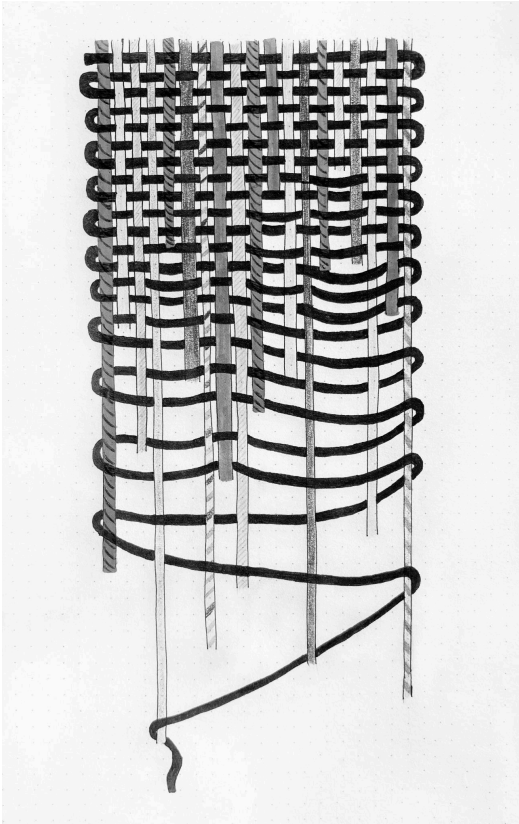


Fig 17. *Threads of learning*. Hope, J. 2024.

Taking responsibility for my own learning of broader context, politics and history. Putting myself in situations where I can gain experience eg. taking courses that are available. I cannot be prepared for ever-changing relational dynamics, however, I can put in the work in order to be more at ease in Māori conventions by learning waiata, kupu and karakia.

The drawing visualises threads of learning and understanding (understanding that is possible from a pākehā positional context). More threads of learning equals more personal integrity.

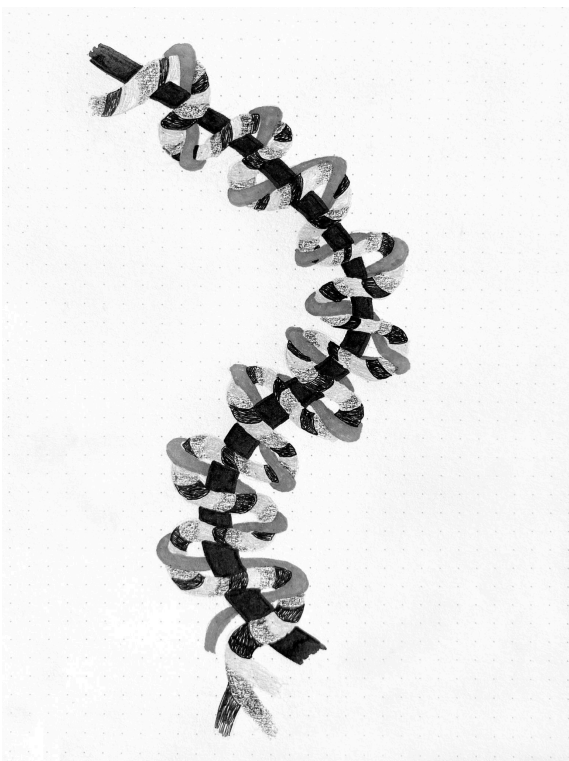


Fig 17. *Value the collective*. Hope, J. 2024.

Valuing collective wellbeing, values, goals and contributions over individual gain and individual achievement. Continuously decentering self in research engagements disrupts individualistic tendencies. The drawing visualises the repeated centering of myself to self-reflect followed by reorienting to prioritise the collective.

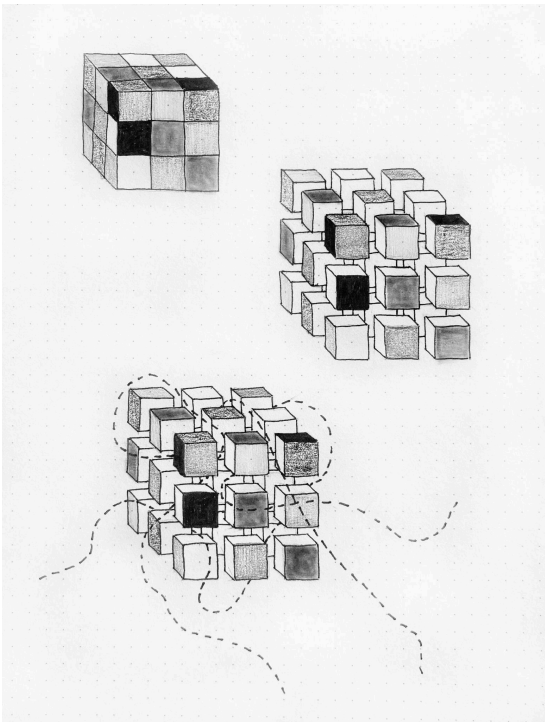


Fig 18. *Open listening*. Hope, J. 2024.

Understanding the value of listening as a contribution to research, specifically open listening. Listening with head, heart and body. Listening is appropriate for myself as I am in a constant state of learning and I am not a knowledge holder or expert. The drawing visualises the feeling of opening up to listen with my whole self.

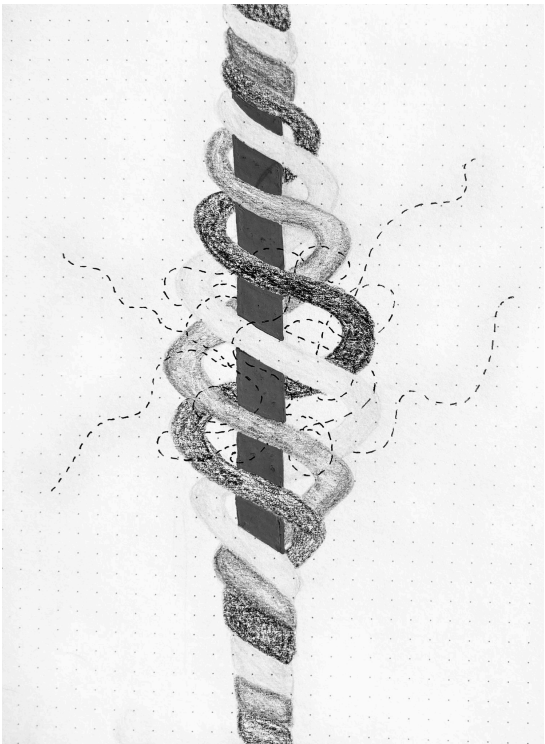


Fig 19. *Learning in context*. Hope, J. 2024.

When learning cultural practices it is important to do so with care and respect. For example, to learn in context, being led by Māori, learning through experience and learning the surrounding tikanga and connected knowledge. The drawing visualises a collective and expansive learning experience in context.

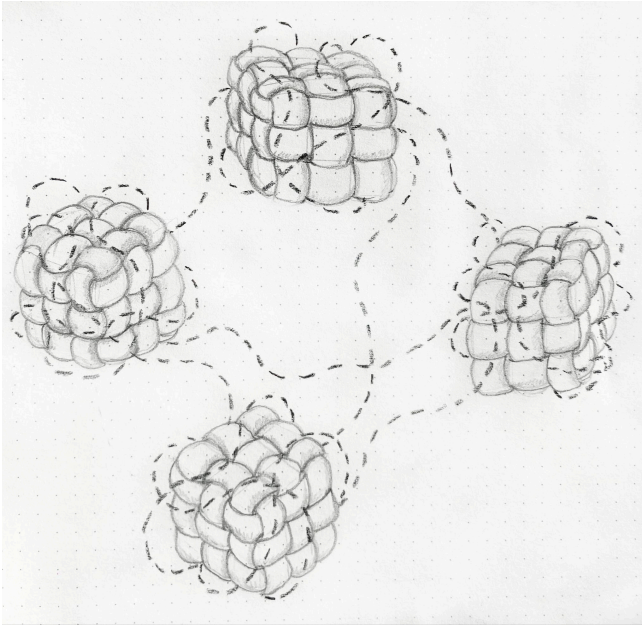


Fig 20. *Valuing relationships*. Hope, J. 2024.

Valuing and respecting relationships with collaborators. Being aware of how positional context influences the ways in which we relate to each other and research together. Focusing on connecting and relating with care and respect underpins researching across difference.

## Ideal state of being

The third category of findings is categorised by an imagined state of being. The state of being that comes with practising *non-colonial* ways of being while researching. The ideal state of being is a constantly shifting balance of alertness, being at ease and adaptability in accordance with the ever-changing relational dynamics and contexts of collective research.

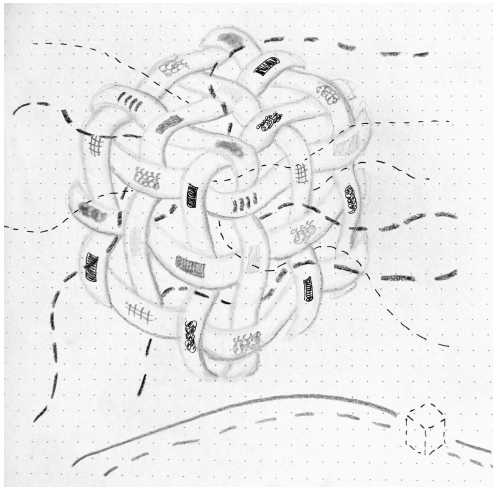


Fig 21. *Alertness*. Hope, J. 2024.

Alertness is the feeling of being aware of self in relation to collaborators in the context of research, history and politics and what that means. Aware of my own privileges and their connection with colonisation. Understanding what contributions are appropriate or counterproductive from my position through tikanga, kawa and experience of cultural conventions. Knowing when to accept or pass on responsibility. When to step back and step forward. Being aware and respectful of personal boundaries.

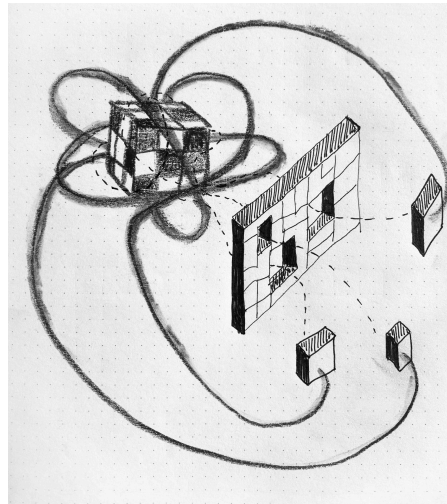


Fig 22. *Being at ease*. Hope, J. 2023.

Being at ease with my positional context and what that means. Ease from experience in participating in cultural conventions (singing waiata Māori). Being okay with not knowing or fully understanding. Feeling a sense of belonging and connection through relationships and making positive contributions to the collective.

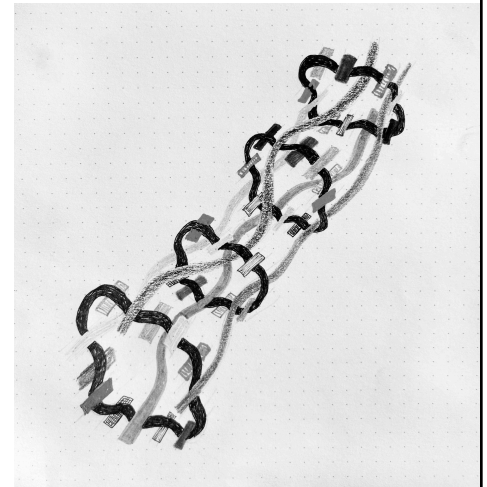


Fig 23. *Adaptability*. Hope, J. 2024.

The ability to respectfully adapt, pivot, take accountability and responsibility in the moment. Practising open minded and considered decision making. Being ready to respond to conflicts or tensions that arise because of my own counterproductive habits.

## **Textile Reflections**

To materialise the reflections and actually embody the changes in self, I employed a textile practice that follows the values of *Care Ethics*. The *non-colonial* ways of being have re-reflected into physical form through weed-dye and hand-felt practice that are reflective of my positional context. The site I am working with is the farm I grew up on, that as mentioned earlier is part of Ngāi Tūāhuriri whenua. Besides textile design methods being used to continue my reflective practice to embody the lessons and changes in self, I want my design decisions and materials to be reflective of what is appropriate from my positional context. In respect for the rights and responsibilities of Ngāi Tūāhuriri runanga, I chose not to remove or use any taonga species.

I have used strong wool and colonially introduced weeds that communicate the connection between Pākehā and land and botanical colonisation as explained in the background section. Using materials of my culture, but more specifically my family history of farming and colonial occupation of Kānuka hills helps to deepen understanding of my positional context. The resulting textile outputs bring together my identity and culture through time and space with reflections of my experience in Te Muka Taura.

### **Site specific dye practice**

(self reflection, deep-listening, heightened attention, spending time, community (family))

Through engaging in a site specific dye practice on the land I grew up on, I am seeking to learn about colonial occupation of the site and reimagine the ways I engage with the natural environment through the plants. This dye process follows *Care Ethics* through caring for the environment with a critical understanding of my position in relation to the environment, colonial occupation of the site, my culture and family history.

Heightened attention and spending time in the environment means following the same routes through the trees and up the stream as I did as a child which brought back memories of how I once perceived the land and plants. This self-reflection allowed me to notice change in the way I relate and interact with the environment now and how I used to have awe and wonder for the way the self-seeded willows create a mat of roots that encroaches on the stream edge. Now I see a plant out of its natural context, without desire to live in harmony with the plants surrounding it. Rather, the plant seems to be focused on consuming as many resources as possible and is unwilling to give up those resources.



My imagination superimposes my colonial ancestors and their descendants (including me) onto these plants and their seedlings. Through desperation and obsession with capitalist success, my family through 6 generations of farming have shown a lack of care for the consequences of land and botanical colonisation.

Fig 24. *Weeding willows on stream edge.* Hope, J. 2023.



All of the plants I have used have been introduced to the site intentionally or not, by my family or the settlers who lived there before us. The purpose of the plants range from food source, decorative, homemaking, to accidental through the use of farming equipment and supplies. All of the plants I gathered are 'weeding' meaning they are doing a combination of the following: growing uncontrollably, depleting water levels in the stream, occupying space, overgrowing native species and blocking waterways.

Fig 25. *Weeding blackberry, cherry and willow crowding stream edge.* Hope, J. 2023.



Fig 26. *Dye making process*. Hope, J. 2023.

The harvested plants were chopped, peeled and or crushed before placing in a jar with water. The water came from a stream on the property that begins at a spring on the farm and flows into the Waitohi river. The jars were placed inside Mum's chicken feeding pots filled with water and placed onto an outdoor fire pit my dad had made from an old drum and scrap metal. The wood used for the fire was wood from pine trees that were planted for fire wood and wind break by occupiers approximately 50 years ago. The parts of the plants that were not used as a colour source were dried and put on the fire to prevent any seed dispersal or accidental propagation. When the water extracted colour from the plants, a small handful of wool was placed into the jar and left for at least half a day to see if the wool absorbed any colour.

The wool is approximately 32 micron Romney-cross, ewe and lamb wool. Interestingly some colours absorb better into lambs wool and some ewe wool. Some colours were vibrant when wet but then faded when the wool dried such as the doc roots. Some colours appeared stronger when applied to a felted sheet material versus loose staples.



Fig 27. *Colour library*. Hope, J. 2024.

Using resources that are significant to my culture and colonial occupation prioritises alignment with the ethics of my project, over the aesthetics of colour that could be achieved with typical dye plants or synthetic dyes. The colour hues were not important to the dye practice however, I did want to achieve a range of tones and shades to give myself a broad colour palette to help translate my drawing reflections into textile reflections.

## Hand-felt practice

(resourceful, self reflection, heightened attention, spending time, community)

The visual research shown earlier is the content for material explorations carried out through hand-felt practice. Hand-felting practice allowed me to develop the reflections further. Using strong wool from my family's farm, I have chosen to further develop the ideas presented as *non-colonial* ways of being into three dimensional textile forms. The intention behind developing the visual reflections into physical form is to embody and communicate the lessons and changes in self. Using my body instead of equipment further connected me to the reflections. Spending time with the material has facilitated the noticing of variation in texture, thickness, colour and transparency. This heightened understanding of the wool's materiality has informed the material explorations. Because hand-felting is time intensive and repetitive physical making, it facilitates the embodying of knowledge through connected learning between mind and body. Repeatedly felting the wool to transform it into a form, is repeatedly working at something until it transforms into something new; something that I'm intentionally shaping and intentionally transforming into.



Fig 28. *Hand-felting*. Hope, J. 2023.

The design choice to use wool is mainly because of its connection to my identity but it also has useful properties such as being receptive to natural dye without mordants or additives and it can be felt into yarn, forms and sheet materials without the need for specialist tools and equipment. Furthermore wool being a natural protein fibre means it can biodegrade at the end of its life cycle. During the material exploration phase I created a yarn library of various structures, densities, textures, forms and surface designs. Using the material properties as language to represent the drawn marks and lines into physical form. This exercise informed the allocation of colours, fibres and techniques across the textile reflections to ensure each design decision was informed and considered.



Fig 29. *Material library*. Hope, J. 2024.

The different techniques and structures communicate and represent key words or feelings in the textile reflections such as: togetherness, connection, disconnect, delicate, strong, dense, fragile, receptiveness, growth, surrounding, learning, participation, engagement, perception, collective and individual. For example, a singular line shows individuality and a 3 ply yarn shows collectivity. A yarn that is densely felted represents being closed off and yarn that is slightly felted with hairy fibres represents receptive listening. Weaving and knitting techniques are included to create variation in structure and form in the yarns and in the construction of the textile reflections. In each design the colours were not selected to represent or symbolise specific things or typical colour theory associations. As mentioned earlier the colours were determined by the plants used. They are used in my textile reflections to emphasise the focal point of the design and show similarity and/or difference between the design elements.

## **Communication**

The textile reflections are developments of the drawings of *non-colonial* ways of being. I have chosen to develop only the proposed *non-colonial* habits as I intend to communicate a positive narrative of care, transformation and potential by showing my process of learning and actioning the *non-colonial* way of being within research. I am presenting questions that address issues with my own participation and the textiles propose my possible solution; a way of being that begins to address the issue. But, my answers can not be a prescription for anyone else as they are subjectively derived. My design is not solving the issues presented, rather it asks questions and expresses the critical analysis of self that is required to find the solutions.

I am proposing that the textile pieces will create a space of contemplation and self-reflection for Pākehā viewers. The reflections will be guided by questions written with the reader as the subject. The questions contain an issue in which the participant can connect with through self-reflection and come up with their own suggestions of solutions. The questions will be in a small zine for the participant to take home and share with other Pākehā.

**Q: What self-responsibilities can I engage in, outside of research engagements, to participate in mātauranga Māori-based research with more integrity?**



Fig 30. *Threads of learning*. Hope, J. 2024.

Issue: Pākehā need to take responsibility for our own learning outside of research engagements, instead of expecting Māori to educate us on demand, or pick up our slack.

Possible Solution: Build up and continue threads of learning (eg. self-awareness, positional understanding, historical and contextual research, te reo Māori lessons, cultural capability courses (ako Aotearoa), attend community talks (te Tiriti-based futures), practice waiata and karakia.

**Q: How can I shift from valuing individual gain to valuing collective wellbeing?**



Fig 30. *Decentre and self-reflect*. Hope, J. 2024.

Issue: When Pākehā value individual gain over collective wellbeing, goals and values, they are centering themselves in the research which can lead to research outcomes that do not align with the research objectives.

Possible Solution: practise conscious decentering of self in research exchanges and self-reflection outside of research exchanges.

**Q: How can I contribute in discussions with respect for the fact that Pākehā are not experts in mātauranga Māori?**

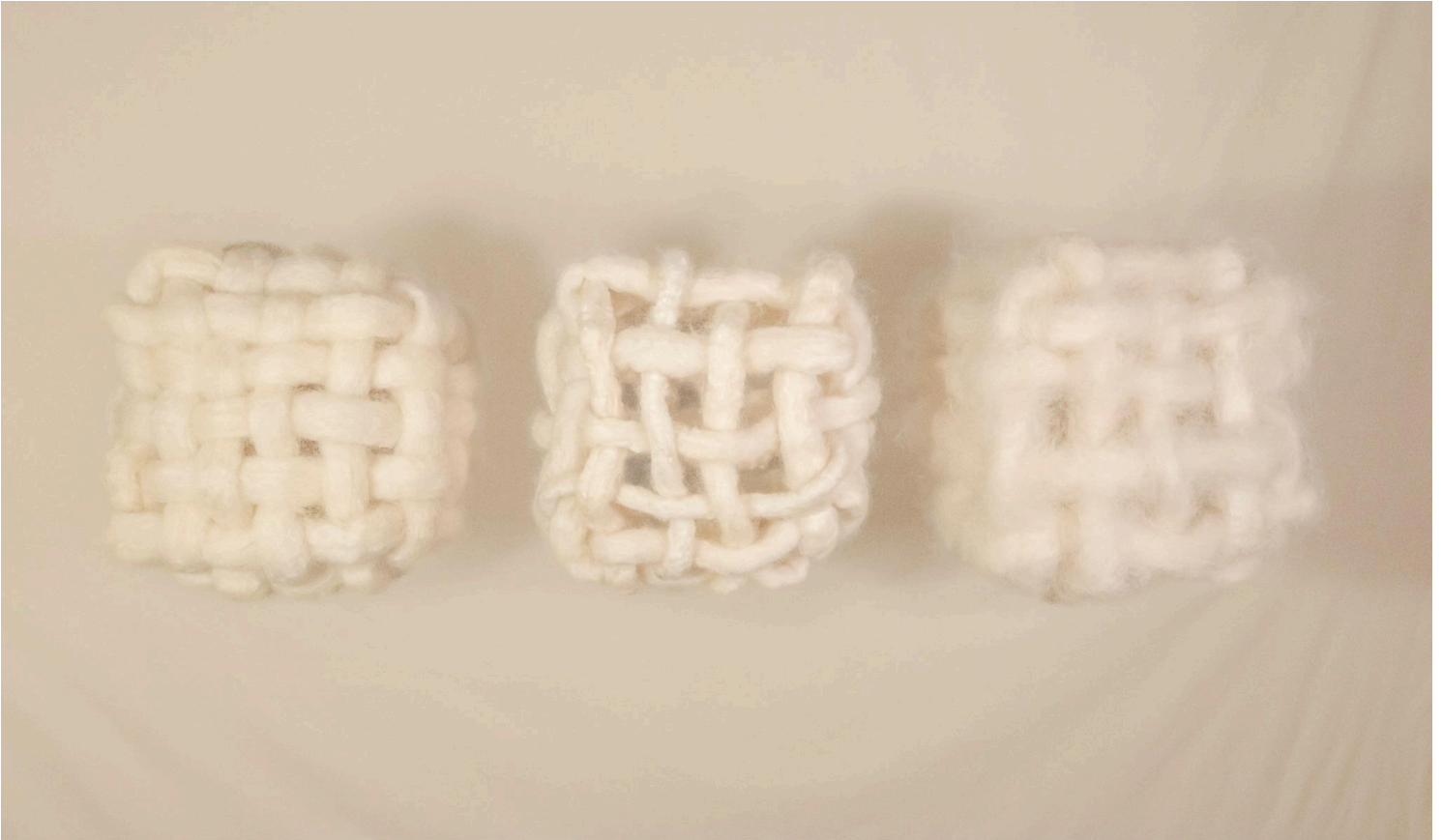


Fig 31. *Open listening*. Hope, J. 2024.

Issue: Pākehā often think they can be experts in mātauranga Māori and/ or are compelled to make verbal contributions.

Possible Solution: valuing open receptive listening as the most appropriate form of contribution and/ or mode of participation.

**Q: What conditions would result in culturally safe learning of mātauranga Māori from a Pākehā positional context?**



Fig 32. *Experience in context*. Hope, J. 2024.

Issue: Learning mātauranga Māori out of context, without Māori leadership and without tikanga and kawa can lead to appropriation and reductive understanding of mātauranga Māori.

Possible Solution: learning through experience in context; lead by Māori, guided by tikanga and kawa, inclusive of surrounding knowledge and connections.

**Q: How do I engage with te Āo Māori values and concepts in research that I can not fully understand from a Pākehā positional context?**



Fig 33. *Relationships*. Hope, J. 2024.

Issue: Pākehā can assume to fully understand mātauranga Māori values and concepts, and claim to be guided by them without respect for knowledge holders.

Possible Solution: Through respecting and being guided through relationships with Māori collaborators and knowledge holders.

## Conclusion

Participating in Te Muka Taura is an active commitment to deepening understanding of self, unlearning counterproductive, racist and colonial habits, and realising *non-colonial* ways of being. Reflective design practice guided by *Care Ethics* has enabled me to be more respectful of my surroundings and those around me through awareness of self within the context of mātauranga Māori-based research. Making audio, visual and textile reflections over two years has recorded and accelerated critical self-analysis, nonlinear self-transformation and healing. Hand-dye and hand-felt practice helped me process and embody the changes in self and produce tangible manifestations of self reflections. I look forward to the next opportunity to participate in Te Muka Taura and any cross-cultural collaborative spaces. I feel confident that continued reflective design practice will propel me to unlearn more counterproductive habits and engrain *non-colonial* ways of being as habits to make positive contributions from a Pākehā positional context.

Using resources that are representative of my positional context has enriched this autoethnographic study with the history and culture of botanical and land colonisation. My design interrogation challenges the need for specialised equipment, textile industry light-fast standards and use of metal mordants in natural dye practice. Through exhibiting the textile reflections and communicating my research findings in zine format, I am contributing to the collective of creatives who are advocating for collective awareness and accountability in settler communities. In future textile practice I will continue to be guided by *Care Ethics* and aim to participate in collective reflective practice with other Pākehā.

This journey of self-transformation has no end and will extend outwards through the ways I participate, contribute and connect in all contexts of my life. I am on a lifelong journey to disrupt colonial cultural habits and ways of being to realise a version of myself that contributes to Pākehā cultural transformation. A version of myself that belongs in a future where Pākehā do not inherit unjust privileges from colonisation, capitalism and racism. Where we are not inhabited by guilt and shame because we took accountability and responsibility for ourselves and each other through healing, giving up privileges and reparative actions. A future where Pākehā contribute to just societal structures and systems. A society that respects the rights and responsibilities of iwi Māori and upholds the promises made in He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti O Waitangi. Where Pākehā can work across difference to heal the damages of land and botanical colonisation in accordance with understanding of self in relation to the historical, cultural and political contexts of Aotearoa.

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