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# **Ahakoā He Kiri Mā : A Fire in Our Blood**

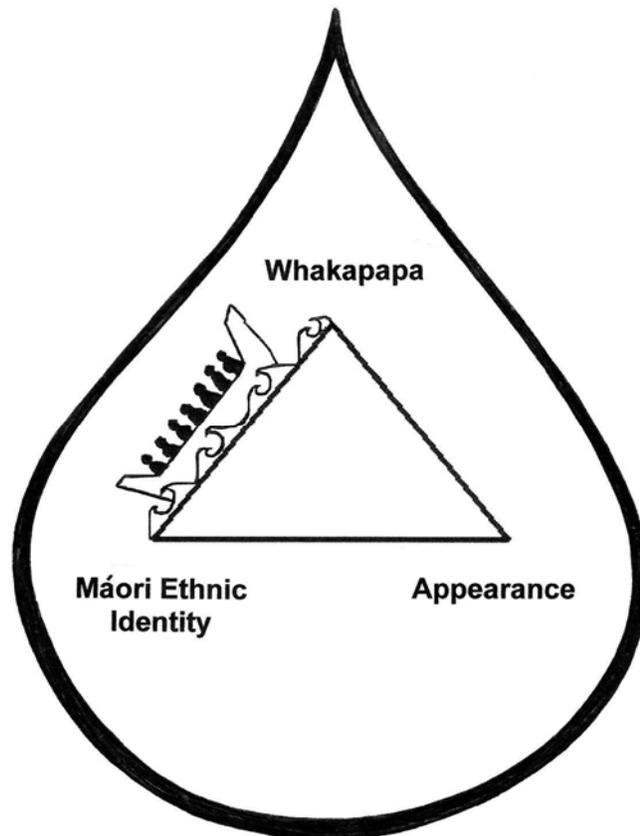
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# Ahakoā He Kiri Mā: A Fire In Our Blood



**Michelle Waireti Roestenburg**

Ora Wairua  
Ora Tinana  
Ka Ora Tangata!

## **Abstract:**

This study approaches the nexus of whakapapa, Māori ethnic identity and non-conventional presentations of Māoriness. The factors and forces that enable or disable positive Māori identity development are examined through the experiences and meanings of six Māori women who are strongly and positively identified as Māori yet unidentifiable as Māori in appearance. By privileging kaupapa Māori research methodology, Māori participants and researcher, within mātauranga and tikanga Māori, a research paradigm capable of congruent cultural interpretation of Māori identity was developed.

After the conversations were transcribed, close reading of the transcript identified and critiqued factors and forces that indicated either 'tangibly sheltering' identity development environments of mana Māori that were incongruent with wider societal positioning of Māori, or 'tangibly traumatising' environments that denigrated Māori and mirrored societal attitudes to Māori. Contemporary and historical socio-political colonial influences articulated with Māori-centric forces. Whānaungātanga or collectivity as an outcome of tikanga or the tipuna inspired desire to seek what is right and good at the intra-personal and inter-subjective levels was revealed as the indomitable heart force of Māori identity. A felt and embodied connection to ancestors led the participants deeper into who they were as Māori women, this presence and pulse was either enhanced by, or continued in spite of socio-political forces.

A comparative focus on 'Māori dignity' revealed a rigid incapacity in New Zealand society generally and the 'helping professions' particularly, to move beyond an artificially entrenched 'Māori deficit' position. What is powerful and distinct about Māori is ignored when history and holism are disallowed. Holistic and historical reconnection are indicated for Māori and Non-Māori to make existential sense of current day Māori and Non-Māori realities and to move out of a fixation on the outcomes of colonisation without attention to cause.

Implications for the re-emergence of collaboratively intelligent ways to critique the existing and imminent flows of power within and without Te Ao Māori are discussed for the restoration of dignity to Māori and Non-Māori identities.

**Keywords:** Tipuna, Māori identity, mātauranga Māori, kaupapa Māori, white domination, hegemony, tino rangatiratanga, Indigenous sovereignty.

## He Mihi

E Te Kaiwhakaora kia whakawhetai. E ngā mātua tipuna tēna koutou. Ko tōku Whaea Atua Aunty Maria he pai tōu māhi kia maumahara, kia tuhonotia mātou ki ngā mātua tipuna, te whenua tūturu, te whānau whānui, kia pai tōu haerenga, tēna koe. Ki ngā hoa haere i tēnei kaupapa 'He tuakiri Māori', he taonga ōu kōrero, ōu whakaaro, he hākari mō mātou, he koha ki ngā tamariki, mokopuna onāianei, me inanahi rā, tēna koutou. Ki Te Rau Puawai nga mihi mo ou tautoko. Ki Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga teno koe mo awhi ki te kaupapa nei. Ki te Kaitohutohu e Mandy Morgan he mihi nui ki a koe, he pai te hikoi ki tō taha, he kaha, he ngāwari ki te mauri, he pai tōu manaaki ki tēnei kaupapa me ahau, tēna koe. Ki te Kaitohutohu o te pepa tuatahi e Leigh Coombes, tēna koe, i whangai pai ki ahau koe. Ki te whānau o Tuia Te Mana Māori, me tāku hoa, he pai te tautoko ki te hui kōrero, ki te panui, ki te whakawhiriwhiri kōrero, tēna kōutou. Ki te Patupaiarehe e Felicity Ware tēna koe mo ōu pāwera koura me tōu tautoko. Ko te taongā me te whānau o Ti Hauora o te Aroha te mātāpuna o te korowai i rungā i tēnei kaupapa, tena Koe, tena koutou. He mihi hoki ki ngā kaumātua kia whakaruruhau i tēnei hīkoi, tēna koutou. Ki tāku whānau e koha tēnei ki a mātou, e Uncle Jimmy/Gary/...tēna koe, ko tētahi tohutohu kia ārahi ki te ao Māori, hei whakahokia i a mātou ki te kotahitanga.

I te taha o tōku māmā Ko Ruataniwha, Ko Waipapa-a-Iwi, Ko Māngā Taipa ngā marae. Ko Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Ko Ngā Puhī ngā iwi. I te taha o tōku pāpā, He Dutch ahau. He Nana, he Whaea, he Kaimahi, he Academic activist, he Researcher, he Tauira hoki ahau. BA Psychology 2007, Massey University Turitea, Palmerston North, Aotearoa New Zealand.

To the source of all being and our ancestors I give thanks. To my aunt and God mother who passed while this work was in progress, and who reached through the years between our current generation, our papa kainga and our tipuna and pulled us all back together again, 'you're smart and beautiful my aunty'. To the participants I honour your generosity of spirit, heart and mind. Many thanks to Te Rau Puawai and also to Nga Pae o te Māramatanga for your support. To my academic supervisor Mandy Morgan you have been a clear and strong source of light and true sight for this waka as it journeys into today and tomorrow, thank you. To Leigh Coombes who supervised the Ahakoa He Kiri Mā pilot, you looked after the work and me well and laid strong foundations for what followed, thank you. To the whānau of Tuia Te Mana Māori and 'you know who' thank-you for supporting the kōrero hui, proof reading and providing a reliably truthful and challenging source of support

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On my mothers side I am of Māori ancestry and affiliate to Ngāti kahungunu and Ngā Puhī. On my fathers side I am Dutch. My main roles in life are Nana, Mother, Kaimahi, Academic activist, Researcher and Student. I completed a BA Psychology in 2007 with Massey Universtiy, Turitea, Palmerston North, Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract:</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>He Mihi</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Figures and Tables</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Tino Rangatiratanga .....	1
Liminal edgewalkers .....	2
Naming the world – naming realities .....	5
Naming Indigenous .....	6
Naming Māori .....	7
Perceiving Māoriness: Disturbances .....	8
Māori definitions .....	8
Doing white Māori .....	9
The cost of secure Māori identities .....	9
<b>Chapter Two: Māori Identity Development</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Fragmented skin bags or re-membered collectivity .....	11
Ancestor - Affiliation - Action .....	12
The āhua (form) of identity emergence and embodiment .....	13
Māori ecology - Pākeha ecology and whānau .....	16
Whānau development – Māori development .....	17
Approaching Māori identity: Personal experiences .....	20
Māori identity overview .....	22
Re-dignifying the de-dignified .....	22
A profound presence in the absence .....	23
Shaping minds, shaping identities, shaping reality .....	24
Questioning the unquestionable .....	25

Not one more tupuna .....	25
<b>Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Methodology .....	31
Why Kaupapa Māori? .....	31
What is Kaupapa Māori Research? .....	33
Target Audience .....	34
White Māori generally .....	35
All Māori in general .....	35
Academy of knowledge generation .....	36
Repositioning .....	36
Māori in academy .....	37
Academy and protection .....	37
Colonising Language .....	38
<b>Chapter Four: Pilot Fruits .....</b>	<b>42</b>
Manaaki .....	43
Insider status .....	44
Researcher development .....	46
Dilemmas of contrast .....	46
Māori exclusion of Māori .....	47
Perceiving Māoriness .....	49
Socio-Political Environment .....	49
Speech .....	49
Intelligence .....	50
Non-Māori selection and cultural no-sense .....	50
Lines in the Shifting Sands .....	50
“Did Māori tell you, you are pretty?” .....	51
Politics of the Māori Imāge .....	51
Non-Māori perspective .....	52
From disaster to damage control? .....	53
Participants .....	54
Data Collection .....	54
Data Analysis .....	55
Naming .....	56

Poroporoaki - closure .....	56
Chapter Five: Analysis – Whiriwhiri Kōrero .....	57
Winds of Change and Social Force Fields .....	57
Māori worth .....	58
Realms of influence .....	59
Whānau and Fields of Social Influence .....	61
Tangibly Sheltering .....	61
Keepers of culture .....	62
Challenging, resisting and transforming - Without .....	63
Challenging, resisting and transforming - Within .....	63
Inoculation from self-subjectification .....	64
Ethnic coding and signification .....	65
Whānaungatanga .....	66
Reciprocity .....	67
Community as cultural destruction immunity .....	69
Knowable communities .....	72
Intersubjective, intra-personal and tipuna .....	72
Tangible and intangible guidance .....	73
Choice or chosen .....	74
Tangible birthright .....	75
Being Māori, a World Apart .....	76
Exclusively inclusive to excluding .....	76
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata – It is people, it is people, it is people .....	77
Fathers fostering Māori culture .....	78
Parenting alone .....	79
Tangibly Traumatizing .....	79
Cultural parentage .....	80
Whakapapa and legacies of dispossession .....	81
Dispossession: A collective phenomenon .....	83
Narrative creations of creatures .....	84
Parents - Creatures of Their Time .....	86
Divergent dispossessions .....	87
From painful to positive and political .....	88
Systemic destruction, denigration and denial .....	89

Identity very political, public and intensely personal .....	90
Awatea Tākiri – The re-emergence of Te Ao Māori .....	92
Whānau whānui .....	93
Inconceivably positively Māori .....	94
Undercover counterforce .....	95
Fair-faced warriors .....	97
Political positions .....	99
Inescapably Māori values .....	100
Manaaki and Wairua .....	101
Tikanga within .....	102
Critique and collective consciousness .....	104
Slipping into ‘whiteness’ .....	105
Intentionally Māori unintentional activists .....	106
Avoidance of soul shrinkage .....	109
Imposed choice and denial of the chosen – Half people .....	110
Colonisation the disease of cultural destruction .....	111
<b>Ngā taonga tuku iho – Ancestral gifts .....</b>	<b>113</b>
Te reo Māori anake .....	113
Te reo Māori .....	114
‘Our Place’ .....	114
Connecting back .....	115
Adaptation convenience and disappearing .....	116
<b>Chapter Six: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>118</b>
Tikanga the heart of it .....	121
Māori dignity Māori deficit .....	124
Titiro ki muri kia whakatika a mua - Look back to walk with integrity .....	126
Power, safety and being positively Māori .....	128
Private Māori-centric islands .....	129
Socio-political environments .....	129
Power shift and sea changes .....	130
National Identity - Representative orientations .....	131
Power and identity .....	131
Immigration and the changing complexion of society .....	132

From blaming and shaming to naming and responsibility .....	132
Kinds of power .....	134
Disconnected and doing connection .....	135
Inoculation from cultural dissolution .....	137
Summary .....	139
No matter what, you are Māori .....	141
<b>Epilogue.....</b>	<b>143</b>
A final narrative – Mokopuna Kōrero .....	143
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>145</b>
Appendix A: Information Sheet .....	146
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form .....	150
Appendix C: Authority for the Release of Tape Transcripts .....	151
Appendix D: Interview Schedule Prompts.....	152
<b>References .....</b>	<b>153</b>

## List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1. The seven realms of social influence are from the centre, the inter-subjective and intra-personal, the immediate whānau, the extended whānau whānui, the local socio-cultural, the regional, and the global. ....	60
Figure 2. Bold lines represent a mana Māori orientation within the Inner four realms of the inter-subjective and intra-personal, the immediate whānau, the extended whānui whānui, and the local socio-cultural. ....	62
Figure 3. Derogation to Māori was evident through all realms of social influence except the intra-personal or intersubjective where a mana Māori orientation was maintained. ..	92
Figure 4. Mana Māori characterised the inter-subjective or intra-personal, the local socio-cultural, and regional. Māori derogation characterised the immediate whānau, the extended whānau whānui, the societal, and the global. ....	94
Figure 5. Denigration of Māori pervaded all levels of social influence. ....	111
Figure 6. Pre-colonisation tikanga and mana Māori pervaded all realms of being. ....	122
Figure 7. All levels of New Zealand society except for the private Māori domains of the intra-personal of intersubjective, immediate whānau, and the whānau whānui were characterised by derogation of Māori. ....	123
Figure 8. Mana Māori can again be represented at the inter-subjective and intra-personal, the immediate whānau, the extended Whānau whānui, the local socio-cultural, the regional, and the societal, and the global. ....	135
Table 1. Ancestor, Affiliation and Action Compilation .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>