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**EXITING THE MATRIX:
COLONISATION, DECOLONISATION
AND SOCIAL WORK IN AOTEAROA**

**VOICES OF NGĀTI RAUKAWA KI TE
TONGA KAIMAHI WHĀNAU**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

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in
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**Hayley Susan Bell
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the potential use of a facilitated process of decolonisation, or whakawātea, amongst whānau whakapapa in Aotearoa. Ten kaimahi whānau of Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga, who have worked for many years in government, community, Māori and iwi social service agencies have shared their experiences of colonisation, racism, social work and decolonisation. Using a “from Māori, by Māori, with Māori, for Māori” research approach, their voices have been woven with the voices of other Māori and indigenous writers, to consider how a facilitated process of decolonisation, or whakawātea, could be used to assist whānau whakapapa to develop their own systems of support, based on the traditions, values, skills and beliefs of their tūpuna.

Despite the positive development and wellbeing currently enjoyed by many whānau whakapapa, this study has developed in response to the disconnection from te ao Māori observed amongst many whānau whakapapa interacting with social service agencies. Colonisation has created loss of wairuatanga, kotahitanga and manaakitanga amongst many of these whānau whakapapa, and affected their ability to lead their own positive development and wellbeing. This study promotes a facilitated process of decolonisation, or whakawātea, as a means of reclaiming those values and strengthening whanaungatanga amongst whānau whakapapa. The process envisaged would enable whānau whakapapa to learn about the history of Aotearoa; hear the stories of their tūpuna; uncover their own truths, and exit the “Matrix” created by colonisation

The Matrix, from the popular movie trilogy, is used in this study, as an analogy, and compares the computerised Matrix programme created by machines in the movies, with the “programme” created by the coloniser in Aotearoa. Within this programme, the traditions, values, skills and beliefs of the coloniser, dominate the traditions, values, skills and beliefs of tūpuna. This study argues that only through finding ways for all whānau whakapapa to exit the Matrix, will rangatiratanga be restored in Aotearoa.

HE MIHI

Ko Tararua te maunga

Ko Manawatu te awa

Ko Tainui te waka

Ko Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga te iwi

Ko Ngāti Te Au te hapū

Ko Himatangi te whenua

Tēnā koutou katoa

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.

This study would not have taken place without the guidance and protection of my tūpuna. They have guided me to be in the places that I have been and to make the choices I have made. I mihi to them for the understanding they have sought me to have in undertaking this study. They have brought many people into my life that have bestowed blessing upon me. My hope is that I have in some way bestowed blessing upon them.

This thesis is dedicated to my son Reihana, his cousins, Mitchell, Mia, Leyna and Olivia. It is for their future I have written. My parents, Peter and Lorraine, my brothers Tracy and Nathan, have allowed me the time, and supported my son and I, as we have travelled this journey together. Members of my whānau whakapapa, particularly Manurere and Ted Devonshire, and Manu Kawana I thank for standing alongside me, and strengthening my understanding.

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Many other whanaunga and friends have shared this journey with me. I would like to thank them for their support and patience. Two friends in particular, contributed to the title and framework of this study. Through Helen Davies initiating discussion around my thesis topic, Barbara Morris suggested the analogy of colonisation and the Matrix. It was an epiphany for me and I thank my tūpuna for the opportunity to have had that discussion.

My hope now is that people will read and continue to discuss the ideas that are presented in this study. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to share them and hope by doing so they will contribute to the positive wellbeing of our mokopuna.

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