Making worlds together —
a relational and restorative rangahau journey

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Contents

Glossary

hapori Māori	Māori communities
hapū	a sub-tribe, or clan, a term used to describe someone who is pregnant
hapū ora	a term to describe a healthy pregnancy
kawa	a set of protocols or principles
kaupapa	a set of values, principles, ideas which act as a base or foundation
māmā	a term to describe a mother
mana whenua	the local Indigenous Māori people who have historic and territorial rights over the land
manaakitanga	a demonstration of kindness, respect and generosity
mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge
Papatūānuku	the earth mother, a female principal deity
pēpi	baby
rangahau	ranga (to bring about) and hau (vital essence, vitality — of a person, place or object) is a process of seeking out, of pursuing the learning in a self reflective way
Tangata Tiriti	people of the Treaty of Waitangi, includes everyone who does not have whakapapa to a Māori ancestor
tangata whenua	people of the land
tautoko	support
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	please see page 56 for extended definition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
te ao Māori	Māori world view or perspective
tino rangatiratanga	self determination
wāhine whakawhānau	midwives
whai whakaaro	reflective process
whakapapa	ways by which people connect and have a relationship with the world, with people, and with life
whānau	a term used to describe immediate family or an extended family grouping
whanaungatanga	relationship, kinship, sense of family connection — a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging. It develops as a result of kinship rights and obligations, which also serve to strengthen each member of the kin group. It also extends to others to whom one develops a close familial, friendship or reciprocal relationship

Acknowledgements

Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua

I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past

Introduction

As this whakatauki offers, our story is for researchers in the past, present and the future. It is a story of what happens when a funded and time-bound project derails. Our story brings unexpected insights and becomes more significant with each retelling. In this document, we explore and unpack a rangahau journey that was unexpected, even unwelcome. What unfolds are ruptures and cracks in the research system that leave a gap in research as a topic in itself. We uncover what happened and try to make sense of this, offering questions and prompts for other ways of working in systems of power. We have attempted to describe what we wished we knew, or paid attention to, at the start. We hope this offering can contribute to decolonising rangahau in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The rangahau lenses we — as four wāhine academics and practitioners — bring, are diverse. The 'we' in this story come from: mātauranga Māori; critical public health; health promotion; and creative arts research areas. The journey has been long, and we've had to reflect often and be alert to what the next steps needed to be. We came together to push boundaries. We're interested in disrupting and challenging the status quo in the Aotearoa New Zealand research system and problematise how power is distributed.

We set out to explore hapori Māori experiences of conforming to health maternity's policies on wellbeing and idealised versions of health to support hapū aspirations. However, the colonisation of birthing knowledge and maternity care in Aotearoa New Zealand requires much more in depth exploration and sits firmly as a political issue.

In the telling of our story, our hope is to contribute to restoring and healing the tears in the research system. Our story is about things seldom talked about. We are inviting others to come on a journey to heal and bridge the ruptures — and perhaps see them as the start of a path to a fairer research system. We hint towards a better world that prioritises slow scholarship and balance, and a more hopeful future that nurtures multitudes and plural worlds.

This document offers voices from a transdisciplinary research team and multiple meanings are always in motion. There is no final interpretation of our insights: our individual narratives are considered partial and incomplete to leave room for alternative understandings.

Journey of the research
An attempt at a timeline

Funding award received — August 2021

Funding was obtained from the Kate Edgar Charitable Trust. This funding was time-limited and designated for an independent project with a defined duration of six months.

Engaging iwi/Tiriti partner — August 2021

A scoping hui was held with service providers, during which ethical considerations were developed and an agreement to partner was established. The project concept—intergenerational wānanga—was determined by kuia. However, the emergence of COVID-19 constraints, alongside historical issues such as a lack of trust in universities and low confidence that research, including this project, can influence the system and lead to meaningful change, presented significant challenges.

Building a team — January 2022

A student project idea was developed in collaboration with Auckland University of Technology and Victoria University of Wellington, involving the School of Health and the School of Design and Innovation (MUXD). However, student involvement was withdrawn in response to community concerns regarding the students' lack of cultural capability. A Māori co-investigator then joined the research team.

Obtaining ethics — May 2022

Initial challenges were encountered in obtaining ethical approval, primarily due to COVID-19-related constraints affecting the ethics committee's processes. Additionally, issues related to the study design began to emerge. Although concerns were raised by peer reviewers, final approval was granted in June 2022.

Engagement challenges — May 2022

The key contact at the Iwi resigned, leading to difficulties in engaging alternative Iwi kaimahi. To address challenges to engagement, The Workshop was commissioned to develop a creation story. A wahine whakawhānau with links to the iwi was identified to join the team; however, she later withdrew due to study pressures and whānau commitments.

Learning with Toi Āria — June 2022

Engagement was established with Toi Āria at Massey University to learn from co-production practitioners and inform the next steps of the project. A member of the Toi Āria team joined the project to facilitate stronger connections between the two research teams. Both teams committed to exploring opportunities for collaboration.

Decision to change research setting — June 2022

COVID-19 pressures significantly impacted Iwi providers, who were unable to facilitate introductions to māmā and whānau for the research team. To safeguard participants, the decision was made not to proceed with the research in this setting. Subsequently, the project team explored collaboration with a new group focused on Rongoā Māori. Initial kōrero and information were shared regarding potential partnerships, however, the Rongoā group ultimately decided not to proceed.

Problem solving with IDIA — February 2023

Collaboration with Indigenous Design and Innovation Aotearoa (IDIA) to support debriefing and to carefully plan the next steps of the project.

Report writing — March to November 2024

A workshop was held to develop the process for writing and completing this document, which outlines the challenges encountered in conducting this research.

Origins of our rangahau

E hoki mai nei ki te ūkaipō — return to the source of sustenance

Becoming a māmā and mothering pēpi is a life-changing journey. And when our māmā experience wellbeing — pēpi, whānau and hapori thrive.

However, current maternal health services are not meeting the needs of māmā and whānau. This is because the health system has been designed and funded by decision makers, policy creators and clinicians to deliver generalised services to prevent or manage ill health during pregnancy. Mainstream services often do not embody te ao Māori understanding of whānau wellbeing during the entire mothering journey.

Maternity care contexts privilege western culture and health beliefs above Indigenous ones. The marginalisation of cultural knowledge within health policy and maternity care creates significant challenges. We need to reimagine more equitable, responsive health promotion that realigns care to focus on Indigenous perspectives, models, and actions. We need to create equitable and culturally competent approaches and responses to the diverse contexts in which wāhine live.

Māmā and whānau have told us they don't always feel safe or comfortable in care settings. We need new ways of prioritising and providing care (not just services) that consider spiritual, cultural, physical, mental and whānau wellbeing, beyond the physical health of māmā and pēpi.

This rangahau started out as The Hapū Ora Experience Research Project.

The project sought to join with māmā and whānau to find ways to restore maternal health and wellbeing. The project began, and held at its heart, the desire for the research to be a collaboration between mātauranga Māori and tauiwi researchers.

What mattered to the community was the behaviours and practices of maternity care providers and the need to redress these issues in ways that recognised negative whānau experiences with maternity care providers, restored trust, prevented repetition of harm, and promoted repair.

The current transformation of the health sector is creating opportunities for change. Decision makers, policy creators, clinicians and service designers are tasked with shifting towards more hopeful and humanised solutions founded on our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. They need to know what māmā and whānau want and need on their mothering journey.

Through the Hapū Ora Experience Project we wanted to join with māmā and whānau to co-create their aspirations for care. Our original rangahau intended to uncover invisible narratives of wāhine Māori experiences of the maternity care system.

The moemoeā (dreams) and aspirations of hapori Māori will be fulfilled when the journey of mothering feels like e hoki mai nei ki te ūkaipō — coming home to be nurtured. Māmā often feel vulnerable and need time and space for restoration and recovery. Aotearoa can be a place where māmā and whānau on this journey experience support in a way that creates a feeling of safety. Mothers and mothering can be visible, valued and nurtured physically, emotionally and spiritually in our community.

We sought to use Indigenous ways of thinking and being, mātauranga Māori, knowledge and wisdom, and lived experiences from within our communities to identify ways of caring that best serve māmā and whānau. We set out to co-create solutions that make caring for māmā and whānau feel as nurturing and at home as in the safety and awhi of whānau. Ultimately, our rangahau wanted to explore what e hoki mai nei ki te ūkaipō, coming home to be nurtured, feels like, and means for wāhine and whānau.

Part two
The unravelling

Trying to start

Our narrative is one of trying to start a time-bound project in a complex context. The questions we asked ourselves as we engaged in rangahau to improve the wellbeing of postpartum hapū māmā included: How do we start rangahau when those we hope to design with are not at the table yet? How do we start a project, as Pākehā, wanting to meaningfully include or centre Māori? What do we expect of each other as Te Tiriti partners? How do we distinguish the work we need to do as Pākehā and the work that needs to be led by Māori? How do we navigate the murky waters of orienting towards a more just world?

Our original rangahau received iwi approval and Health and Disability Ethics Committee approval. How does HDEC enact care and caring for Māori? Is a new ethical review framework needed? While we had these agreements to proceed, and an evidence-based research framework for our rangahau, we perhaps lacked an ethics based framework. Considering the previous harms from colonisation we needed to bring our own ethics to this kaupapa (G. Aye, personal communication, 7 September, 2023).

Our journey into, and through, this project was not neat and linear, nor without mistakes or lessons. In sharing our collective reflection on shared and divergent assumptions we made in this journey, we also share the pervasive ambiguity we felt as we tip-toed through this process and how, in the end, this document became the core focus of our work together. We hope that in documenting the uncertain steps we have taken we can lay bare some of the vulnerability and discomfort we have felt. We came to understand the need to halt the proposed research and to uphold an ethics of care. This stopping was formulated as in-the-moment recognition of the productive potential to do differently (Gibson et al., 2021).

Together we supported each other to deconstruct the unknown and scrutinise our process openly, re-positioning power and practicing and potential of the research. We opened up our problems to others by engaging with, and drawing from, other bodies of knowledge, including co-production, Indigenous designers, change makers and innovators. We critically reflected and re-imagine new possibilities for more authentic engagement with hapori. We hope that in sharing this story it is useful for others researching in colonised ecosystems, and has lessons for honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In this process of real-life encounters, we uncovered messiness and uncertainties as we navigated research in complex social and political contexts.

As we connected with others and different knowledge systems, we expanded possibilities for doing more meaningful research with hapori. These connections also held us to a higher standard and ultimately meant we did not proceed with the project as expected. This led to a deep uncovering of how we navigated the murky waters of starting something, yet did not get past the messy first stage.

At the beginning, we sat together to articulate the vision, values and principles of the work, and the things we needed to communicate with participants. Our end goal was that as collaborators we would all have a clear understanding of what we were trying to achieve, and we would not predefine the outcomes. We were intentional about allowing space for the community to shape and evolve the project, yet our rangahau failed at the concept phase and didn't reach implementation. We didn't reach the community and never got to have our first cup of tea, let alone 1000 cups of tea[1] that can represent meaningful engagement.

We have shared our experiences, reflections, and takeaways to provide the broader research community with actionable insights and an understanding about why we discontinued the research.

There are different ways in which we can heal ruptures that can occur in Tiriti-based relationships. We invite dialogue on this as experiences of ruptures can often go untold and because it's hard to tell these stories. As we withdraw, we practise saving-face— strategies which are pervasive in western cultures to cope with embarrassment (Dong, Huang & Wyer, 2013). Writing about failures and unfinished projects simply doesn't feel good and doesn't seem to offer a lot. Because of this, failed research (outputs are not reached, the community is not engaged, deadlines are missed, money is spent differently etc) projects go largely unpublished.

Research enters into complex social and cultural issues of engaging with hapori Māori. We were external people coming into the community to try and solve a problem. We didn't pay deep enough attention to the political and social context and history of the community. We began the journey in good faith and did everything we could to make it work. Yet we found that *starting a project* doesn't mean just *pursuing* research, but giving communities the capacity to unpack what's happening themselves, to understand what the research involves and how they can contribute (G. Aye, personal communication).

There were many occasions we should have created an off-ramp, yet we kept using sticking plaster solutions (L. Marra & T Ohia, personal communication, 1 February 2024). For example, we connected with change narrative researchers to develop a creation story to more effectively engage the community.

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[1] Atawhai Tibble, 'Engaging with Māori — it's about the Who, the What's, Why's and How to's?' Linkedin, 21 June 2019.

We also attempted to engage wāhine whakawhānau on the project team to help us navigate complexities. Again, we observed rhetorical support, but we were not able to engage wāhine whakawhānau who were connected to the iwi and community. We also extended the time frame. While we changed our stance, and were open to iteratively reframing the problem and asking 'what can we do together that is helpful?', it was too late and challenging to do so without trust being established from the beginning. The work was relational and more time was needed. More time was given by our funder, given the ambiguities and complexities of progressing research in a COVID-19 context but that extra time didn't help.

The COVID-19 context was challenging for the community, and iwi leaders and kaimahi priorities were busy managing the impacts of the pandemic. The impacts of COVID-19 were felt more acutely by Māori (McLeod, Gurney, Harris, Cormack, & King, 2020). Māori are also likely to face an increased burden of worsening outcomes from both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 health conditions. Māori have fared worst in every pandemic Aotearoa New Zealand has seen (Jones, 2020) and since the emergence of COVID-19, health impacts have been felt more intensely by Māori (Davies et al., 2022). Even without a pandemic, Māori already experience significant inequities in accessing healthcare (Ellison-Loschmann, Firestone, Aquilina, McKenzie, Gray, Jeffreys, 2015).

The timing of research is really important, and just coming out of peak COVID-19, everyone was exhausted and communities were still pretty shy and reluctant to engage outside of their own whānau (K. Twist, personal communication, 2 March, 2023). While communities were still responding to the pandemic and collaborating on research was a low priority, boundaries, sometimes silent, and sometimes spoken, were laid down, as hapori exercised tino rangatiratanga to ensure a successful response to the pandemic.

A final band-aid approach saw us go elsewhere with our own questions. We engaged a different provider in whakaaro, and again we felt the resistance. Coming to see that our seeking and searching might be exploitative we paused and reflected. How can we be flexible and reflexive enough to address upfront concerns that Māori have?

We were seeking to use creative participatory methods, yet bringing our idea to fruition was not possible without a deeper relationship, social connection and trust among researchers, iwi leaders, kaimahi and māmā and whānau. Building the conditions for genuine and safe involvement of people with lived experience was needed, but this was not possible with short timeframes. We had no map for where we were going and were running the risk of making things worse as we were pushing towards an outcome and being complicit in the continued colonisation of research. We pulled back as we felt the approach was becoming obtrusive and creating discomfort with our tangata whenua partner. While

iwi expressed support for intergenerational wānanga, We couldn't translate this into action. We experienced silence, stepped back and adopted helpful practices to deal with ambiguity and reflect on the possible meanings of silence.

What were the metaphorical connotations of silence? We read the room. Silence was a space of transition for us. Silence represented an unspoken resistance. Deep hesitancy? Unauthentic partnership? Not the right thing? Business with their priorities relating to protecting Māori through the pandemic? We know that when there is a power imbalance, participants will often nod and agree even when they are uneasy or confused (McKercher, 2020). What, then, was the meaning of silence for us? Experiencing awkwardness at first, we waited, deliberating on how much we push toward an outcome. Silence produced a moment of reckoning and we came to a point where we identified the project had been misframed. We stepped back and listened, as it was not the right time or place.

We realised we needed a more caring and careful approach. Distrust in research institutions surfaced during our early kōrero with iwi service providers. Kaimahi shared experiences of community fatigue with researchers who come and take, and, universities who come and ask iwi for funding. Kaimahi also provided feedback that our rangahau questions were not meaningful, nor timely. Our questions did not warrant an exploration because the need was not ground-up. The community gave us a sense of the many things that get thrown upon them. This required us to reflect on where the impetus for the research came from. Was it truly grounded in community need and moemoeā or rather a project dreamed up in a research context for a funding bid?

We heard 'Māori are our own storytellers'. While our early view was that our original rangahau would be helpful for Māori and make an important contribution to research, it was not useful, nor wanted by hapori Māori. We also heard that the community had been involved in recent co-design, in partnership with the local district health board that sought to explore similar issues. We built in whai whakaaro and we began a careful unpacking of the ways the community was involved in the inception of this project. We were secure enough in our understanding and in our organisations to be reflective. We can't change without looking at ourselves and how our work is showing in the community.

At the heart of co-design is collaboration and shared decision-making. Translating this into practice in a world of research grants and outcome-oriented processes is less straightforward. The system often rewards transactional methods for researching and collaborating. In our coming together with Toi Āria, we shared our experiences of big and small co-design and co-production projects having similar challenges. The issues we faced

included: that the system is not responsive to Indigenous values, particularly with timeframes, budgets and output requirements. The current state privileges western knowledge production and fast scholarship, "The traditional frameworks of our universities and national research institutes fail to describe how people, the economy, and the environment can, do and must relate to each other".[2]

We saw how the structural environment impedes balance and connection and how slow scholarship is under-valued. Having few Māori researchers, the system has no capacity to work differently. What if we tackled societal problems differently? How must universities, research institutions and the research system reimagine and rebuild the connections in complex contexts? Doing work to decolonise the research environment is work to disrupt the power for the future. We are interested in conversations that will help us shift to a better world.

We began with a complex health and social problem that we believed needed to be resolved. But the problem was not defined from the outset by the community. So we reflected on the importance of being able to listen, learn, put the community in the centre and truly understand. We wanted to avoid compounding the problem of researchers coming and taking from communities to fulfil a research need that was disconnected from the community.

In the following four stories, we interrogate academic hegemony, and reflect on issues of power in our own project. We explore our status as academics and community leaders, and develop an awareness of what we embody, who we are, and how we present as researchers, including institutional affiliation and prestige, political capital and power (Alang et. al., 2020).

We open the problems we faced and draw from other bodies of knowledge, including co-production, Indigenous designers, change makers and innovators, to critically reflect and re-imagine new possibilities for more authentic engagement with hapori.

[2] https://www.tepunahamatatini.ac.nz/

Four narratives

To do the reflective work of understanding and unpacking what had happened when trying to do this rangahau, we spent time together with IDIA to understand the complex social dynamic between research institutions and hapori Māori. We came together in IDIA's Indigenous space, and using the process of wānanga, we began to reflect-in-action.[3] We wrote together in a public process and in an Indigenous space, which was an opportunity for increased accountability. With IDIA we navigated the ambiguities and contradictions we were grappling with until our own reflections and insights emerged. With IDIA's cultural support, we unpacked our collective experiences. Together, we explored what happened in this project and others, uncovered the meanings of our rangahau and the shape it took.

We told our story, and thought more deeply about the beginnings of our journey, the options that were open for us, why we chose one option and not the other, and what led to us discontinuing the project. We explored our differing understandings of the moments, situations and contexts, as well as the different ways we saw the world. Producing these reflections was made possible through writing in a reflective and Indigenous space.

We crafted individual narratives, interspersed with concepts from relevant literature. Poetry is included as an additional textual form, to evoke new possibilities, showing the important productions and provocations at work. These narratives represent each of our awareness of the dynamics of operating in rangahau spaces, what role we take and what gifts each of us brings. We invite you to see this attempted rangahau process through our different eyes and world views.

We have grown up and learned the processes of research in different cultures and we see the world differently. Parker Palmer likens this to a community of truth, where we try on each other's perspectives and take journeys into each other's minds. Here we are generating a kind of knowledge that is subtle and important — knowledge about what it means to see things with another person's eyes. As you read these stories, enter with us in to our process of making meaning.

Carmen

A stripping of values: experiences of moving between two research worlds

My narrative reflects the phenomena of moving between two different research worlds. They show the ways in which a stripping away manifests in a traditional/western research system and reveal the complexity of my caughtness between these worlds. Contextual factors in research environments exert powerful forces which, in turn, shape, produce, and provoke meaning.

My stories uncover the phenomena of caughtness and reveal how I am, at times, unable to live my values in a western research system. I draw on mātauranga Māori to find meaning in systems that can provoke disconnection. I return to te ao Māori ways of seeing, and being in the world to harmonise my life in these contexts. My stories point to the need for restorative action, based on restoring a kawa that allows for balanced relationships in science contexts.

In my first story, experiences of disconnection and dis-ease are a close reality as I reflect on the harms of practising in ways not aligned with te ao Māori. Here, my feelings of melancholy can be understood as a response to loss as I understand how tikanga customary values and mātauranga knowledge don't seem to be valued by the system:

> *Being in a university system I'm expected to behave in a certain way and know the standard ways of doing things. We come to know what's expected of us in the system. You get into the mode of practising like this because that is who we are expected to be. Working for an institution is very methodical — even a certain language is used, and things are done in a certain way. It's an environment that we must be quiet in. Institutions are open plan so there's no laughing as it disturbs! You don't talk to people. There's not any whanaungatanga. It lacks joy. It's more difficult to be innovative in these places because of the lack of feeling. You become devoid of any kind of feelings. It can make me feel depressed. There's a difficulty with being inside the space and a difficulty in making the change. We give something of ourselves when we walk in two worlds — we move in and out of these worlds, but we still need to feel okay about ourselves and keep whole. Going from kaupapa Māori to western creates a sense of guilt for me.*

[3] https://marcr.net/marcr-for-career-professionals/career-theory/career-theories-and-theorists/schon-reflection-in-action-on-action-1983/

Dis-ease and disconnection can be produced in mechanised university contexts. The feeling of needing to change is a stark reality for me. I'm not able to simply be, as there is the expectation of being quiet and needing to conform.

Since 'dis', meaning apart, away from, suggests the privative of what is being modified, words like dis-ease confer the absence of ease (Leder, 2016). Being pulled away from my usual place in the world; and in-dis-ease, I can feel separate from others. My experiences of feeling silenced heighten my sense of unease when te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori goes almost always unnoticed. In the manifestation of unsafeness, I feel silenced and separated from my surroundings which bring about a profound experience of unhomelike being-in-the-world (Svenaeus, 2011).

My story illuminates the meanings of mātauranga Māori going unnoticed, of being barely there, pointing to the politics of in/visibility (Woodward, 2015). Reflecting on issues of power, as I encounter others in academic contexts, there are inherent power differential between western research and mātauranga Māori researchers—academic hegemony limiting my level of influence over rangahau kaupapa (Alang, 2020) as I experience unequal power relationships.

In an unbalanced system, I experience discontinuous unity with my surroundings which provokes an experience of being othered as others look at me with their fixed eurocentric gaze, triggering feelings of needing to behave and needing to know the standard way of doing things. 'Behaving' is a label or a metaphor for me to make sense of the world and the phrase 'needing to behave' conveys certain lived aspects of my experience. It's as if sharing my mātauranga Māori would be to demonstrate misbehaviour and a deviation from the expected way of doing things.

Cheng (2019) reminds us that we often uncover a multitude of things that are more complex than we will ever really know. Just being alive means acknowledging the seen and at times having to trust in the unseen: what is visible is not always the full picture, and what is beneath the surface can speak volumes.

In a western research world, there is often no nurturing of ngā kaupapa Māori. nor are there spaces where I can share my deep understanding of mātauranga Māori. In these dehumanised spaces (spaces where you need to leave your values behind or where values are invisible) connection can be inhibited and relationships with others in academic settings can lack authenticity and care.

In academic contexts, power plays a hidden role, working behind the scenes. Feeling silenced produces a realisation that, without power, it may be impossible to deliver meaningful outcomes for hapori Māori. There can be an unsafeness of challenging the research system's entrenched norms, of individualism,

hypercompetition and productivism. It is as though you are not being seen as a whole person, and your own mana is being diminished, as the system demands a sacrifice of Māori cultural norms. These contexts did not nurture and bring out the authenticity of who I am. There is a massive disconnect and divide between the two research worlds. "The system determines its membership to its outputs and outcomes" (Rayne, et al., 2023) and my narratives uncover how the system is failing to demonstrate a relational duty of care to all its participants (Rayne, et al., 2023). Disillusionment arises when my relational ways of being are not met. Where relationships lack care, connectedness is perhaps not always possible in procedural-driven academic contexts.

In this next story, I describe the disconnect between hapori Māori and the connotations, and complexities, of the kupu 'research':

> *There are a lot of misunderstandings in terms of what the role of an academic is in Māori communities. They know 'research' is a word to describe an institution and the people that work in it. It's a disconnection. It's not part of their world. They can't relate to the word 'research' and westernised language and conceptions of it. The feeling is of being like a salesperson — the selling of an idea. As a researcher you can feel a bit cheap selling an idea that is not right. Sometimes it's about having the maturity to accept that people might not want you involved. For communities, 'research' is a complex word and out of their reach. Our people don't see the benefit to them and often say, "these people came to talk to us and didn't come back". People see it as a transactional type of relationship, yet the institution's expectation is that we spend five minutes on a relationship. Mistrust and emptiness are the feelings created for some Māori when researchers don't come back. When going back into a te ao Māori environment, I'm reminded of the differences. You don't know who you've become until you go back. In te ao Māori, academia is like a swear word. Cheng (2019) reminds us that we often uncover a multitude of things that are more complex than we will ever really know. Just being alive means acknowledging the seen and at times having to trust in the unseen: what is visible is not always the full picture, and what is beneath the surface can speak volumes.*

Academia, being like a swear word, implies taboo and represents a violation of cultural norms. This metaphorical phrase shows us one thing as another, and, in doing so, extends the way we can see our world. My use of this metaphor for the word 'academia' reveals a deep dis-ease associated with being in the system, which shows us the disruption this word creates. The root word 'academ' means a place of instruction, a life, community and world. While this word is meaningful in a western research world, for hapori Māori

the whakapapa of 'academic' represents a system which has disregarded culture and belief systems and is associated with power asymmetry where one academic group imposes their ideas about the science world on another group (Kiddle, et. al., 2020). I point to a more hopeful world, towards a restoration of the way things ought to be.

In this story, I draw on cultural understandings and Indigenous wisdom to help restore orientation to the world. Here, I reflect on a more easeful experience of being-in-a te ao Māori world. I retell a story shared by tīpuna:

> *When I asked a tīpuna about the birth of a new pēpi from a te ao Māori perspective, they stated that this was such a significant event in the kainga. The new māmā often needed support with parenting. It was everyone's responsibility in the village to take care of the new pēpi and they often had assigned roles. It was often the role of a kaumatua to mirimiri (massage) the pēpi. This relaxed the pēpi but it was also a mechanism to explore the pēpi's physical attributes, for example through mirimiri, they might find that the male pēpi had strong legs, kaumatua would assign the pēpi's future role in this instance to be a warrior for the iwi, in other instances a pēpi with strong flexible hands could be assigned the role of a future weaver. It was within their looking (titiro) and hearing (whakarongo) and feeling/intuitive senses that kaumatua were strategically planning for this pēpi's destiny according to their physical and emotional attributes to benefit everyone in the iwi. For them, this was the right way to do things — part of tikanga, part of normal Māori processes. They didn't talk about it, they just did it. Looking, hearing, knowing. It's how Māori do research. Māori are looking at the stars, looking at nature, and making connections all the time. This is how we are making sense of the world, making connections, making relationships, and connecting to our tīpuna. Indigenous knowledge is deep.*

Differences exist between the analytic processes in these two worlds. Māori research is a process of analysis that involves using all senses in a natural environment (Dell, 2021). Deep rifts in the system reveal and re-reveal. There are factors which produce dis-ease and provoke disconnection for Māori researchers in academic institutions. Yet, there is salutary connectedness and the associated experiences of feeling renewed and empowered, when we go back to te ao Māori environments, where we are reminded again of tikanga and a values-based approach.

But what harm is created when academia fails to invest in relationships? Is the harm multi-layered, does it run deep? What does this sense of harm, look and feel like for Māori researchers and the communities being researched?

My narratives provide a basis for a careful and deep critique of the ongoing harm of colonised research environments (Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). There is a need to value and apply more mātauranga in health research to help address the inequity crisis and honour our obligations to Te Tiriti.

These insights uncover strategies for reclaiming autonomy and return to normality. Constraints are shaped by colonised ways of operating. There is a need to decolonise our systems and spaces to create a more just research world. Colonialism is unfinished business and continues to have a profound impact on Indigenous peoples (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). We need to provide space for Indigenous ways of knowing and being and challenge the western systems and frameworks that are the deep institutions of colonisation. A groundswell shift is needed that involves changes to funding, language, framing, narrative, values and mental models. It needs to be a transformative change and a social movement.

Susan

Rethinking productivity— moments of awakening

In my personal narrative, I use poetry to reflect on my experiences as a tauiwi researcher. Analysing my reflections led to the creation of a poem that unpacks my reflexive thinking and assumptions about viewing the world through a tauiwi lens.

My poem is titled "You," and I tell the story using second-person narration. In this you-narrative, I seem to exist outside of the events, as though I'm observing from a distance. This perspective reveals that I am the protagonist, a central character in the story. Perhaps my decision to write in second person is a way to distance myself from the narrative because the events I'm recalling are uncomfortable for me. However, I may also be trying to connect with you, the reader, through a conversational style, seeking a creative way to share my story. More likely, though, writing in this way helps me navigate the awkwardness of those experiences.

I reflect on my failures to engage in culturally affirming ways — venturing "out of my lane," intruding into a complex context, and looking for the red carpet into a community I didn't understand (G. Aye, personal communication, September 7, 2023). Uncertain about what it truly means to be an ally within a Tiriti context, my poem exposes my vulnerability.

In this imperfect story of sensitivity and regret, I reveal my baggage, standing transparently before you, showing both my flaws and my strengths. I write plainly, no longer hiding behind academic language in the hope of earning a respectful gaze that might foster growth (Brooks, 2023, p. 227).

You

You put on your western lens,
it fits like your favourite leggings.
Western is all you know.
Through it, seeing another world —
differences visible yet invisible.
"Let me in," you say,
fiery, bold, impulsive.
You find your 'in.'

Bumpy beginnings.
You read the room, but not seeing.
Tangata whenua arrive, they listen.
Patient with you yet —
the air hangs heavy.
You fidget, impatient,
distracted by fast scholarship's lure.
"Let me in," you say.

"Let's have intergenerational wānanga,"
kaumatua say.
On track, excitement builds.
You're producing new knowledge,
on your way.

Rhetoric only.
Support fades.
You scramble —
"Who else will let me in?"
Mistakes repeat.
"Let's get cracking!"
You galumph forward,
not at the speed of trust.
The doors shut tight.
"Let me in," you say.

You move clumsily.
Trying to make sense of things,
still testing the helpfulness of you.
"Māori are our own storytellers,"
you hear.
"Step aside," your quiet voice says.
Finally, you listen.
The things spoken & unspoken,
not yours to produce.

Letting it stop.
You stop, feeling bruises like a peach.
Cheeks blush pink.
You couldn't see —
it was ethically compromised.
Only now, deep critique of your lens beginning.
Promising a new way —
of being in two worlds.
You still feel the sting,
wondering if you can trust you.

To catch a funder's eye, proposals must demonstrate originality and impact. Having recently completed a doctorate, I was eager to chase new lines of flight and generate new knowledge. During my earlier research, wāhine Māori told stories of a maternity system that fell short of their hopes and dreams. I framed the proposal around participatory design — a novel approach — aiming to engage wāhine as both co-designers and implementers of the rangahau.

The grant had a six-month timeframe. I knew the timeline was ambitious, but I was optimistic about completing it. To find a setting for the project, I reached out to an iwi I had previously collaborated with. I had been 'invited in' by this iwi before, my tauiwi ways-of-seeing-the-world led me to equate this with a deeper sense of relationship. I jumped on the opportunity of this fledgling relationship to engage the iwi as a Tiriti partner and set out to involve iwi leaders as co-investigators.

The project was driven by my own interests, and I approached mana whenua with a fully formed idea after getting some way down the funding track. While leaders expressed interest in the project, their feedback indicated the research was mis-framed. I came to understand that as wāhine in this community faced challenges accessing culturally safe maternity care. Community experiences included mistrust in mainstream midwifery services and fear of midwifery reports to Oranga Tamariki — driven by the government's coercive practices and violence experienced by Māori. Given the historical context and trauma within this community, research must adopt a justice-focused, trauma-informed approach, led by those with expertise in this area. Bringing people together for the research may not have been appropriate at all.

While the original proposal was informed by previous research, it was not shaped by those with lived expertise in the community where the research was to take place. By not making space for people with lived expertise to participate

in shaping the grant proposal, I unintentionally reinforced a power imbalance, ethically compromising relationships from the beginning. Without proper commissioning by the iwi, the conditions for genuine co-design — such as shared power and prioritised relationships — could not be established (McKercher, 2020).

Still focused on being productive and delivering an output, I attempted to reframe the research. Yet, kōrero revealed another kind of mistrust — a mistrust of universities, rooted in past negative experiences where universities sought funding for research that didn't align with iwi interests. When iwi had engaged with universities before, they encountered researchers who 'were seen once' and never returned to share their findings with the community.

Although the Iwi endorsed a reframed approach to the rangahau, it was unsurprising that this did not translate into active participation I came to understand that leaders were showing kaitiakitanga, protecting the hapori from researchers who 'come and take.' I experienced the feeling of putting my foot in the mud and learning how that feels. My need to 'do' and deliver something overshadowed the principles of working in culturally sensitive and culturally intelligent ways. My transactional mindset was incompatible with 'being-in-two-worlds.'

Coming from a position of privilege, I did not fully consider or reflect on how my identity and power dynamics affected the communities I was working with. I threw myself into this cultural space, eager to understand the meaning of being a good Tiriti partner. Was I already this? Was I close? I made this about me.

Moving too fast, I chased the fund rather than being intentional about designing with ethics. My super-charged approach left no room for designing with care. Shaping the research proposal and applying for funding without engaging with Māori was incompatible with being a good Tiriti partner. Tauiwi researchers should work only on invitation by the iwi (McKercher, 2020).

Without an ethics of care, creating shared worlds becomes impossible.

Tauiwi —
Coming from afar requires presence,
courage to learn, reflect.
Reframing productivity as care.
To make worlds together, move aside,
showing up with an ethic of care.

Eva

Beyond reflexivity, embracing discomfort

We have to stay with the feelings that we might wish would go away (Ahmed, 2017: 28).

Reflexivity has been much recommended as a critical practice, but my suspicion is that reflexivity, like reflection, only displaces the same elsewhere, setting up worries about copy and original and the search for the authentic and really real (Haraway, 1997, p.16)

Reflexivity is an intriguing practice. Who am I? How does this affect my research practice? Which of my past experiences feed into how I am thinking about this current project? Though important, and by no means to be dismissed, I sometimes question how much of the answers to these questions I can and do already know. Shaped by my upbringing, in a Pākehā, middle-class family, the oldest of four children, raised across Aotearoa and Germany, I have been privileged to learn what it means to hold responsibilities for family members, how cultures differ and curate certain practices and ways of thinking; and I have never had to worry about fundamental conditions for living with shelter, food and safety. Though reflexivity has helped me learn more about how my own upbringing has shaped my perspectives and outlooks on life, I have still found it limiting in being transformative. Critical notions of reflexivity purport that it involves holding preconceived assumptions of binaries of a subject that is separate from the world it/they inhabit (Bozalek & Zemblyas, 2017).

Emotions feature in reflexive practice. They are often tied to certain aspects of a research process and can be ascribed to past experiences and explained through the lens of personal encounters in reflective accounts. Such an approach can privatise and individualise emotions, deeming them apolitical and somewhat justified. To avoid the reification of emotions as affectively tied to identity and personal experiences, an active embracing of discomfort, along with dis-ease, guilt, shame and fear of wrong-doing holds more promise to 'move things' even if these 'things' might feel slower and more uncertain. By turning to affect as transpersonal and relational, feelings and sensings become collective and micropolitical because they become part of the atmosphere we all inhabit. Politicising, de-privatising and embracing a more-than-human notion of emotion is a productive stance for feminist and decolonial research practice because it transgresses the cartesian domination of the rational and yields insights into the unspoken, felt and sometimes difficult dimensions in research encounters.

In participatory, decolonial and feminist research practices emotion is of course a core part of what we acknowledge and address in our work. Care, empathy, relationality and reciprocity are emphasised as important research values.

I do care for you,
I want to get to know you,
I want to make you a cup of tea,
Connect over similarities,
Hear your stories,
Share your stories,
But those stories,
Those relations
And cup of tea,
Do not make me know you,
Feel you,
Or make me an expert of your life,
Your community,
Your stories.

Though critical to the relationality of feminist and decolonial research, positive values of empathy and care can run the risk of idealising and glossing over more uncomfortable tenets of research. Hemmings (2012) warns of the flattening that empathy and care can do in the research process and inadvertently reinforce the differences between us as researchers and our participants.

It is uncomfortable to remain with feelings of uncertainty,
Always wondering if I have done the right thing
Said the right thing
But then I know,
There is not always one right thing
I am often wrong,
I am seldom certain,
And so I remain humble in my knowings,
In my claims,
Of what I can ever claim to 'know' as a researcher.

Epistemic humility is not encouraged in academia, nor in many other realms of neoliberal society. Certainty, confidence and claims are welcomed characteristics of research, and encouraged by publishers; top tier peer-reviewed journals are unlikely to publish what we deem ambiguous, uncertain and contextual. Through the growth of feminist and decolonial research, there are, increasingly, journals that attend to the marginal, ambiguous and specific. Allowing humility into my own learning, loosening the idea of reflection as a hard practice of examining my static identity and experiences, I come to a practice of becoming-with the research; flexing, changing, learning, and bouncing off different ideas and encounters in my research. A loose diffractive becoming-with the research is more malleable, and at least in intention, open to change and confusion.

Remaining in the discomfort is, I have found, not easy to begin with. Growing up in a world where I was taught I could master knowledge, get good grades and claim to know certain things, as a young adult, it was easy to assume ten years of university study and one PhD later, I could certainly call myself somewhat of an expert. Yet, I have found, the more I learn, the more research I do, the less I feel I hold anything I can call expertise. Through this growth of humility, backed by an accumulation of age and experience, I have gained confidence to remain uncertain and break moulds of what might otherwise be seen as hard rules of the research world. I still find discomfort discomforting, I don't like it, it feels icky, and results in a constant questioning of myself. However, I also now know that this feeling is ok, that I can stay in it, and learn from it. I don't think though, I have yet learnt enough from feeling dis-ease, out of place, wrong or uncertain. I am not claiming that coming to know these feelings make me any better at handling them, I just know that I do not need to shut them down, or run away, that they can 'do' something in my learning and journey. Chadwick (2021) writes that embracing discomfort can teach us to 'resist the reiteration of comfortable and normative truths, commit to intersectional modes of knowledge production and refuse ongoing epistemic colonisation and silencing' (p.559). As a white scholar living in Aotearoa, I feel discomfort has some important lessons for me.

Leaning into the politics of discomfort through engagements with feminist scholars has enabled me to embrace an alternative pathway to remaining purely engrossed with the more positive facets of 'doing feminist research'. The imperative of 'happiness' as Sara Ahmed articulates as a malady of the 21st century, can be productively undone through the active embracing of discomfort. Discomfort, as an 'embodied and affective product of sociomaterial relations, physical spaces and locations, body-to-body exchanges and power relations' (Chadwick, 2021, p.558/9) is a tool to move oneself towards different kinds of knowing and being, rather than staying with what is known and comfortable.

Opening up,
Deep listening
But not just what I want to hear
And not just what I can hear with my ears
But sense with my body
To know otherwise
To feel otherwise
To sense tensions
Silences
Hesitancy
A kind smile
That says yes
But underneath is unsure
How to tell me I have gone off track

How do I avoid
Erasure
Dismissal
And undo
Dominant ways of knowing
Power relations
To embrace myself authentically
But with humility
Towards collective solidarity.

I seek productive entry points that can indeed lead me into much more interesting and knotty places than I can reach in a reflective mode, to go beyond dwelling on static points of reflection that cannot be changed. Opening up lines of inquiry through the embracing of discomfort, then, is a promising avenue for white scholars, in particular those who live on colonised lands. Research as an affective praxis is the product of 'intertwining relational, material, embodied, discursive, intersubjective and sociomaterial dynamics' (Chadwick, 2021, p.557), allowing us as researchers to attune to and take action on a broad range of affective currents in our research process.

Engaging discomfort as an epistemic and conceptual resource to confront what is uncomfortable is a necessary step in my journey as a researcher in Aotearoa. As Tangata Tiriti, it is my work to peel more layers of my colonial onion off, for the active co-creation of a decolonised country that values diversity, equity and

the specific contexts that can enable such broad aims. Chadwick (2021) writes of a politics of discomfort as a 'sweaty concept' and 'sticky praxis' that calls for interpretive hesitancy and analytic unfinalisability. In terms of embarking on research as a Te Tiriti partner, this means for me that I approach any project always with caution, in a pace in which I can sense moments of discomfort that sit in the process. It means I am never satisfied with a repertoire of approaches and ways in which I engage with mātauranga Māori, Te Tiriti and rangahau, but that I always remind myself how little I know, and to lean into the relations, to listen, learn and feel discomfort as it arises.

I don't always know
What feels right
Or wrong
But
I can be hesitant
Slow
Relational
Sense my body
My surroundings
Own up to my mistakes
Learn
Listen
And do better the next time
I can
Embrace the discomfort.

Anna

Trustlines — working at the speed of trust

Recently a Māori colleague and I were asked to fill in a reporting framework for a research project we co-lead. The piece he had been asked to complete listed the criteria as 'building relationships with Māori' and 'connecting with iwi leaders and hapū'. The timeframe given was the last six months.

My colleague provided a high level summary of the engagements he had initiated and attended. The form was returned to us asking for more detail, and asking him to record, in detail, every person spoken to, each conversation held, and all their organisational affiliations — by Friday!

I baulked at the request, and noted my colleague's non-reply. I was ashamed. Ashamed of the government funder that required detailed spreadsheets filled with words and bureaucratic demands. It seemed to me that these success metrics — namely productivity — seemed to miss the relational work of being with people. I wished, not for the first time, that our research environment had alternate ways to understand value.

Not via timelines, but trustlines.

> *I'm told by a colleague that I told her our work 'moves at the speed of trust'. I don't remember saying these words, but when she recounts them back to me I think they are useful. Maybe even beautiful.*

The first time I met this colleague we were in a Zoom room and were asked to share some of our experiences and research expertise 'with Māori communities'. I shared with that in the last four years I (and my team) had worked with an increasing number of Māori organisations and cultural communities. There was a part of me trying to prove my worth and reputation. My colleague gently stated that in their role as mandated spokesperson for their iwi, they had been working for over 40 years in the role of Māori advocate, educator and leader. I felt the gentle reprimand.

> *Good faith and reciprocity are earned and not bestowed.*

Relationships are built, maintained, and are reciprocal. They need time and care. They thrive in space where we grow to trust each other. This colleague describes it in another way: "Put the kettle on before you need to make the cup of tea". Do the work. Build connections. Build trust.

The academic world I inhabit is less traditional than some. At Toi Rauwhārangi, the College of Creative Arts, our collegial environment is filled with artists, designers, film makers, musicians, photographers. People who create and tell stories and make worlds of wonder and beauty. It is a visual, tactile and aural world. And still it sits inside a University.

I remember a colleague and supervisor remonstrating with me once, early in my career, in being too interested and too curious about people. He saw my curiosity and inquisitiveness as a lack of focus and weakness. It took me many years to undo this narrative in my head and reframe this as a strength. My interest in people and connections and life experiences has become part of the research I do.

> *My mother asks me what I do: Why do I want to talk with all these different people? Did I write the content in the arts project on Courtney Place? Did I create the app that asks youth to engage with democracy? I try to explain that I'm one person in a bigger collective corralling and arguing for multipicities — for many voices and views to be heard.*

This desire for things to be easy to understand or my wish to be able to explain in one quick sentence what my research is, is a constant tension in my life. Sometimes the un-explainability of the work is its richness. But is this making it easier for people to understand minimising the complexity of what we're trying to do? There is a discomfort when things no longer fit into categories that can be easily identified. We're used to roles being assigned to us in research and the hierarchies and separations of these roles. And we've become used to the pressures of framing up things in models that we know and feel familiar with. Even in writing this I'm trying to fix in time something that is dynamic and complex. I'm interested in a more empathetic and descriptive practice.

It seems to me that everything is entangled. The real thing we're doing is working on the relationships between people — on active reciprocity. Working with rangatahi, iwi, social housing tenants, older people, younger people, Samoan people, women, wāhine, non-binary people. People are the only constant. Relationships are the strength of the work.

> *It happens in community rooms and on marae.*
> *In surf clubs and sometimes prisons.*
> *In schools and libraries.*
> *In cities and regional centres.*
> *It happens inside of me and changes me.*

The more work I do, and the bigger the projects I find myself in, the scarier it gets. The responsibility to do this work well, on time, within budget and to make a meaningful impact is one (western) thing. The responsibility to do justice to the experiences and voices shared and gifted is another. To be entrusted with this knowledge is exhilarating and terrifying.

I understand now that my work is often about the process of being in relation with others. The work is to build the quality of the relational space between us. Will we ever feel comfortable? Is that the point? What about embracing discomfort? What about sitting with the discomfort of not knowing and using this emotion to make us better at what we do, not more comfortable.

I understand that from every relationship comes another relationship. While we might start with 'theories' or models and write ethics applications, papers and reports, there is more to it than that. This is the 'head' work.

Then you get to the moment where you get to sit and talk with people. When you get the opportunity to hear real people express their views, their needs, their aspirations. This is the 'heart' work. [4]

The most memorable learning experiences I've had are the ones that have gone wrong. Embarrassingly wrong. How can I use that embarrassment for growth? How can I learn from it? How can I be responsible for it?

I'm interested in practicing the shift from timelines to trustlines. A practice of giving to, not taking from. I used to think and say that I like to do good. Increasingly I think it's about doing less harm.

These are the things I know and can share:
keep coming back
keep showing up
don't be afraid
be honest
listen more — not from a
place of knowledge
but from the heart

I'm building an uncertain container
trust is at the core
we've been invited
we hold each other safe

You bring your knowledge
and I'll bring mine
and we'll build new ways
together.

[4] For a more detailed exploration of these concepts, please see:
dl.designresearchsociety.org/drs-conference-papers/drs2024/researchpapers/172/

Part four
Where we arrived

Ruptures and remedies

Western framings restrict Māori ways of knowing, being and doing rangahau (Moko-Painting et al., 2023). The western world view sits as a white blanket over everything (R. Sinclair, personal communication, 7 September, 2023) and western framings can sometimes fail to engage meaningfully with local realities and disregard Indigenous knowledge systems (Gobena, Hean, Heaslip, Studsrød, 2023). When we push western framings and 'discipline' the system, ways of engaging with te ao Māori authentically and respectfully are compromised. Māori disconnect and our worlds collide.

The differences between these worlds are seemingly invisible at first. Our project was pushing up against 'academic models' and its ways of chasing research funding. We found that the trappings of an academic system built on power and maintaining the status quo caused disruption for Māori, Pākehā and tauiwi researchers. Through our collective reflections we can shift power imbalances for future projects.

We explored our actions and behaviours that were problematic, and became more aware of the power moves we used. What unrepaired damages do we leave behind? We hold ourselves rigorously accountable for the ruptures while exposing our vulnerabilities and mis-steps.

There are remedies that can restore and heal the relationship between both knowledge systems. These require a decolonising agenda before an indigenising agenda can be realised, whereby they are mutually beneficial rather than mutually exclusive (Moko-Painting et al., 2023).

Remedies are ways of being as we set out to design research. Remedies can only be accessed by deeply listening to the system and identifying the ruptures before we can change things to the ways they ought to be.

Our institutions are siloed, the rangahau community is overstretched. Despite promoting te ao Māori values such as manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, our institutions are designed to promote hyper-competitiveness, individualism and productivism — "the system isn't broken — it was built this way" (Rayne, et. al, 2023). Structural norms like these are incompatible with participatory and collaborative approaches. A research system where we care for all people can lead to better research outcomes for whānau and communities.

Ruptures

Disease of disconnection

Universities are 'centres' that are disconnected from hapori Māori and communities. The focus on productivity and competition is leading the culture and the ways in which we collectively operate in the system, creating a disease of disconnection (L. Marra & T Ohia, personal communication, 1 February, 2024). The system creates a splitting between ourselves and hapori Māori.

Power asymmetry

The equilibrium of the research ecosystem is unbalanced. Western systems are based on power hierarchy. Fissures can be traced back to when the system was built. In the system, power has been assigned to Pākehā. What is research's relationship to power and privilege? Who are we serving? Universities are at the big end of the wedge and have the weight to do the pushing. The pointed end of the wedge represents the needs of the people who are under-represented in the research system. Researchers are aligned with the most powerful. We work in the shadow of power asymmetry (G. Aye, personal communication, 7 September, 2023). A system built on power asymmetry is toxic for both researchers and the researched. What is the antidote? How do we need to work in Indigenous and ancestral spaces now and in the future? How might we make the cracks a pathway for our collective voices?

'Limiting' structures

Colonisation is not in the past. The past is still present. Research systems are deep institutions of colonisation and our environments are still characterised by budgets, timelines and outputs that preserve culturalist barriers. The 'reach' of these structures go beyond universities to funding agencies who also make up the system. Similar to the performance-based research funding (PBRF) models in place in the university system, research funders may not encourage the full diversity of epistemologies, knowledges and methodologies in Aotearoa New Zealand to promote inclusiveness. [5]

Ruptures were evident in the funding process and we experienced being constricted by time-bound funding. We weren't set up to give raw materials or resources to the community. While the funder was flexible given the contextual challenges, they still hoped for an output to be produced. We considered the notion of direct accountability to the iwi where our original rangahau was set. What's the 'product' that researchers give to the funder? We questioned how hapori whānui would benefit from the usual academic outputs, typically peer-reviewed publications, that are valued as part of proving research excellence.

[5] https://www.tec.govt.nz/assets/Forms-templates-and-guides/PBRF/Background-information-on-the-PBRF-Moderation-team.pdf

Co-design is not a good fit for all funding projects, and our co-design rangahau set in Indigenous contexts was a mismatch for this funding award. We didn't have existing trust-based relationships with the community, nor did we have Indigenous leadership (kaupapa Māori rangahau and governance) on the project at the beginning. This 6-month funding would have been better suited to projects with established relationships. Co-design can't be time constrained.

During the ethics process we questioned the ethics of procedural ethics. Undertaking rangahau requires ethical reflection. Given the historical injustices relating to Indigenous knowledge being colonised, ethics processes aim to reduce the potential harm. Do university ethics committees, and the Health and Disability Committees' (HDEC) processes go far enough? Our ethics application was reviewed by HDEC. In 2022, at the time the study was proposed, HDEC asked researchers to consider the "3 Ps", Partnership, Participation and Protection, and to consider social and cultural sensitivity (including the obligations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi). However, attention to the problem of research being colonising is not overtly discussed (Cox et al., 2024).

A scientific peer review is a requirement of HDEC ethical approval that aims to enhance scientific validity of the rangahau. It's surprising that assessing ranghau for scientific validity is required by the system, yet there are no guardrails in place to ensure a positive, ethical experience for hapori Māori. Neither is a separate Māori review of rangahau an ethical or legislative requirement. Using western philosophies to guide research in Aotearoa is dangerous (Cox et. al., 2024). While we attempted 'thoughtful' engagement with ethical issues, when ethics are viewed through mainstream philosophy and frames, biases will persist. Are ethics processes a constraint in the academic system? How can the system be more flexible and dismantle colonisation in ethics?

Remedies

What is needed to heal and restore and make better worlds together? What are the ways this situation can be addressed and redressed?

Balance is the medicine

Creating off-ramps and coming back into connectivity is needed. For us, our 'off-ramp' saw us come into connectivity with Indigenous designers and the te ao Māori view. Through telling our story, we understood that finding balance in the system would be a matter of joining up the disparate things across the system. On their own they are not working, but could work better together. We can choose how we have conversations.

Being the change we want to see

Being specific about what needs to change will lead to big-scale change in the research system. Being change agents, we can help make changes that create the biggest difference in the research system. To go against embedded ways of thinking and seeing the world, we need to illuminate the specific things that need changing.

Being change agents demands that we work on ourselves before being changemakers in the system. We have power collectively to push the boundaries of what is possible, mobilise others and challenge practices of high input and hyper-competitiveness. By being change agents, we can provide space for Indigenous ways of knowing and being, "leaving behind our blissful ignorance and willfully working on our own ignorance" (R. Black, personal communication, 19 March 2024).

We can create enabling conditions for change to show what a better world looks like in a fairer system. We think of magnitudinal change being needed to decolonise the whole research system. Yet, making small scale changes by connecting with networks of people who want to bring about a more just system will be one of the most effective ways to build a more hopeful future.

Building a series of small steps forward might see us start by identifying the upstream changes in the funding model and ethics structure that are needed and possible. These embedded ways of funding and reviewing research hold problems in place. The research system has been designed with a narrow western worldview — by and for Pākehā. Challenging the power structures at the level of ethics is one starting point. While ethics guardrails were in place for our project, it was only when we got to the community that 'ethical' dilemmas bubbled up and provoked us to think differently.

How might we have progressed our rangahau if this project was reviewed under a separate set of Māori ethics? With Māori involved in redesigning our ethics structures, not as optional but built into funding applications and research design, we can create decolonising outcomes and other changes that will introduce balance in the system. We needed to develop the experiential knowledge to fully understand the issues within the community, enhancing our awareness of what we embodied, who we are and how we present as researchers. How can institutional ethics lead to decolonising our system through reflecting on privilege and the ignorance that comes with it?

Being Tangata Tiriti is not a passive identity, rather, it's a relational orientation that invokes ethical-political responsibilities (Dam, 2022). Our place here is to do the work that flows from being Tangata Tiriti, people who are committed to a Tiriti relationship. This work involves thinking about how we came to

this kaupapa, questioning relationships of power and control and engaging in decolonisation. Elevating what Māori want and coming into relationship with tangata whenua is an act of rebalancing. Reorienting rangahau requires shifting energy to structural changes that redistribute power. Reorienting rangahau makes space for co-production of knowledge.

Dishtowel mindset

Rangahau can exacerbate aspects of colonisation. Extra care is necessary because of the history of harm for hapori Māori. An ethics of care will see us consider the larger factors in relation to the history and ongoing impacts of colonisation. Being intentional about using ethics frameworks in the design of projects can support us to define care and caring in rangahau. We needed to enact a caring process in the conceptualisation of the project.

Authentic and meaningful engagement with communities will see us pick up the dishtowel. Relationships take time, and a dishtowel mindset can forge a new path for rangahau leadership built on a commitment to being Tiriti centred. Fledgling ideas need to not only be shaped with Māori, but must be continually reshaped over 1000 cups of tea and picking up the dishtowel. A dishtowel mindset is underpinned by ethics and aligns with values of manaakitanga. In a relational mindset we are intentional from the beginning. The notion of bring your own ethics (BYOE) (G. Aye, personal communication, 7, September, 2023) is important for Tangata Tiriti researchers and it can go some way to heal the ruptures and restore a kawa that can create a sense of balance again (Kiddle, et al., 2020).

It's through relational behaviours that we can heal relationships and build trust with Tangata Whenua. This essential work will transform caring in rangahau. It offers a more hopeful future for breaking down super-productivist contexts, so that our system is based on caring ontologies. The BYOE concept represents a transformational movement for researchers.

What's next?

Our narrative is intentionally unfinished. We leave room for alternative understandings and open up a space for dialogue. Our narratives support a deconstruction of events that expand, and grow and stretch our understandings of things that are seemingly invisible at first. We bring our reflections into rangahau environments, revealing our mis-steps to tell the story of work that represents a deep mistake or misframing.

Through the telling of our story, we use our agency to shift the balance and collectively shape a new way of being in the research system. Reflecting on our transdisciplinary rangahau has helped us build our integrity for going forward. We have grown individually and collectively through this project. It's enabled us to critically analyse the system we are operating in, our role in this system, and how our behaviours and actions maintain or disrupt the status quo.

As we move forward, we will start to do the critical work to reimagine a system where there is less disconnection from the researchers and the 'researched' and where we make sure those spaces centre Māori voices. This work prepares the ground for our next journeys. We have learned, shared, and grown together. We take this into our future. How we authentically enact our political responsibilities to bring about a fundamental shift in power, to lead to a post-racist way of being in the research world. Our place here is to do the work that flows from being Tangata Tiriti. It's political work. It's also caring work. It involves thinking about how we came to this kaupapa, questioning relationships of power and control and engaging in decolonisation.

If we show up with an ethics of care, this creates openings for rebellion against the patriarchal house-rules, perhaps even a politics of resistance. What kind of a resistance would this be? It could be a form of resistance against the dominant, unquestioned power within the system that excludes relational thinking (Hartung, 2017).

The act of rupture becomes a process of possibility, change and new directions for a better world. This better world, and the researchers in it, resist the pull and lure of the system and the current practices of knowledge production to create space for Indigenous ways of doing rangahau and for a creative reimagining of the values that the research system must lead with.

An inclusive research system will benefit everyone. We offer to readers an invitation to be part of the conversation around how we might move forward in ways that are just and that bring balance. Since most of our systems are made invisible within status quo thinking, our goal is to raise people's gazes to the systems, values and mindsets they exist within (Green et al., 2021).

How might we bring our worlds closer together for a better future? A future where our research system is redesigned to prioritise mātauranga Māori and other Indigenous knowledge systems, and where:

**"Māori represent themselves, have agency and tell their own stories".** [6]

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[6] J. Witihera, personal communication 7, September, 2023.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is considered Aotearoa New Zealand's founding constitutional document. It was signed in 1840 between representatives of the British Crown and various rangatira (chiefs) of Māori iwi and hapū. The original treaty was written in te reo Māori and is known as Te Tiriti o Waitangi, while an English version, referred to as the Treaty of Waitangi, was also created. However, the two texts contain significant differences in wording and interpretation, particularly around concepts of sovereignty and governance.

Te Tiriti outlines the intended relationship between the Crown and tangata whenua, establishing a framework for coexistence, partnership, and the protection of Māori rights. It is often regarded as the foundation for the recognition of indigenous rights in Aotearoa.

Although Māori chiefs did not cede full sovereignty according to the Māori text, the signing of the treaty led to British colonial authority being established, often to the detriment of Māori, resulting in land loss, political marginalisation, and breaches of the treaty. These impacts continue to be addressed through the Waitangi Tribunal and ongoing efforts to honour Te Tiriti today.
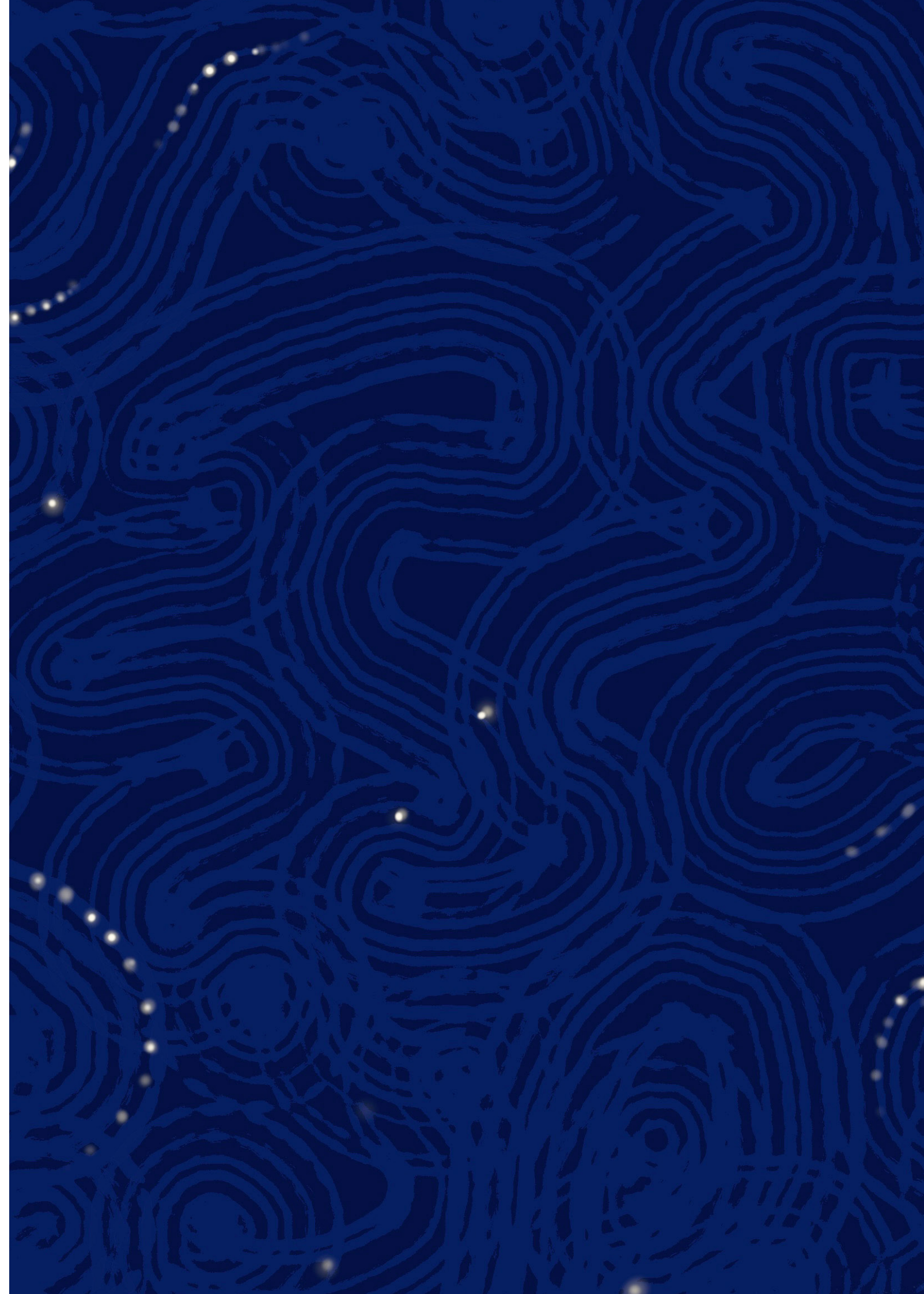
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