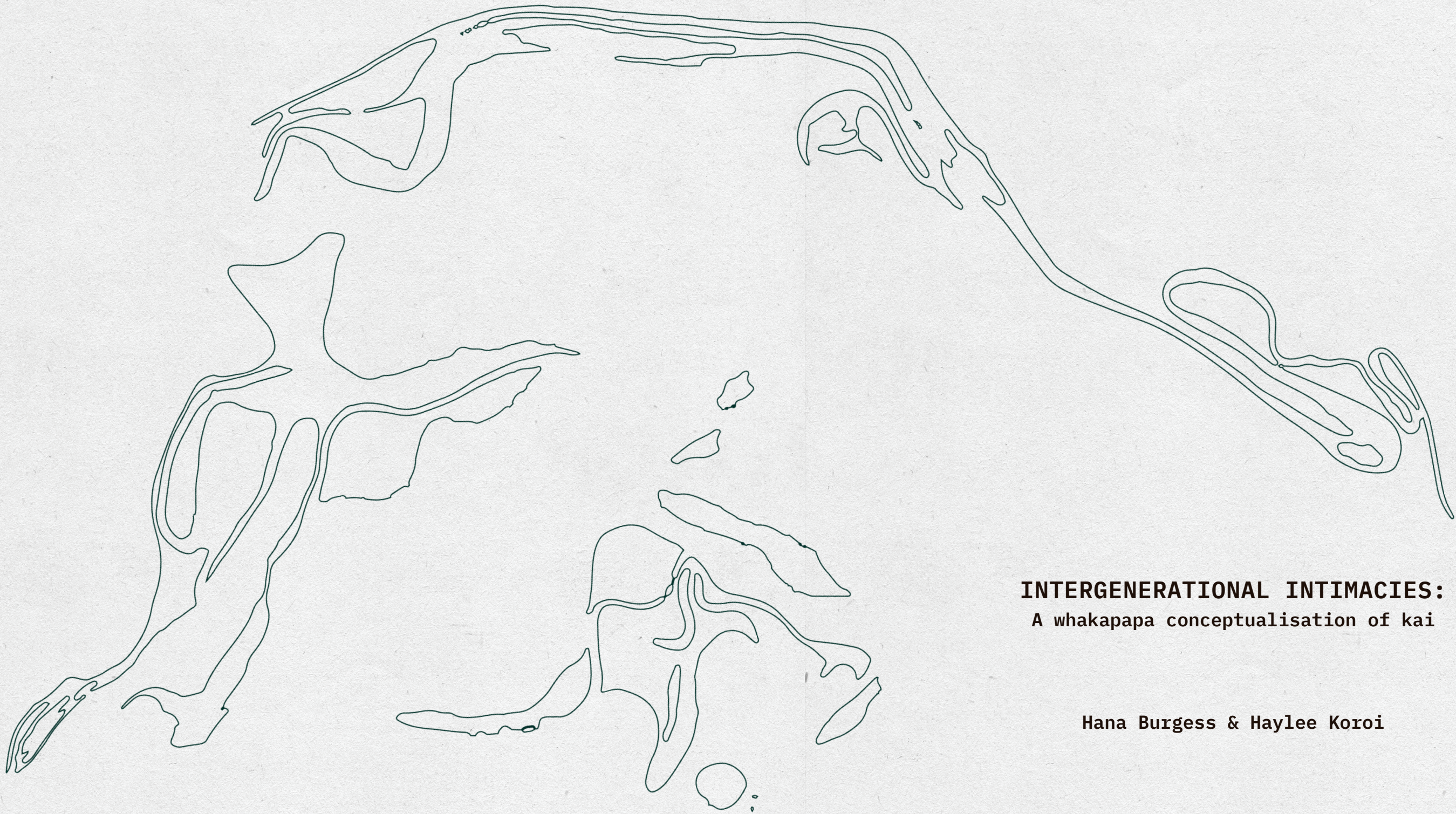




I N T E R G E N E R A T I O N A L

I N T I M A C I E S

A whakapapa conceptualisation of kai
Hana Burgess and Haylee Koroi



INTERGENERATIONAL INTIMACIES:
A whakapapa conceptualisation of kai

Hana Burgess & Haylee Koroi

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Prologue
nā Haylee Koroī

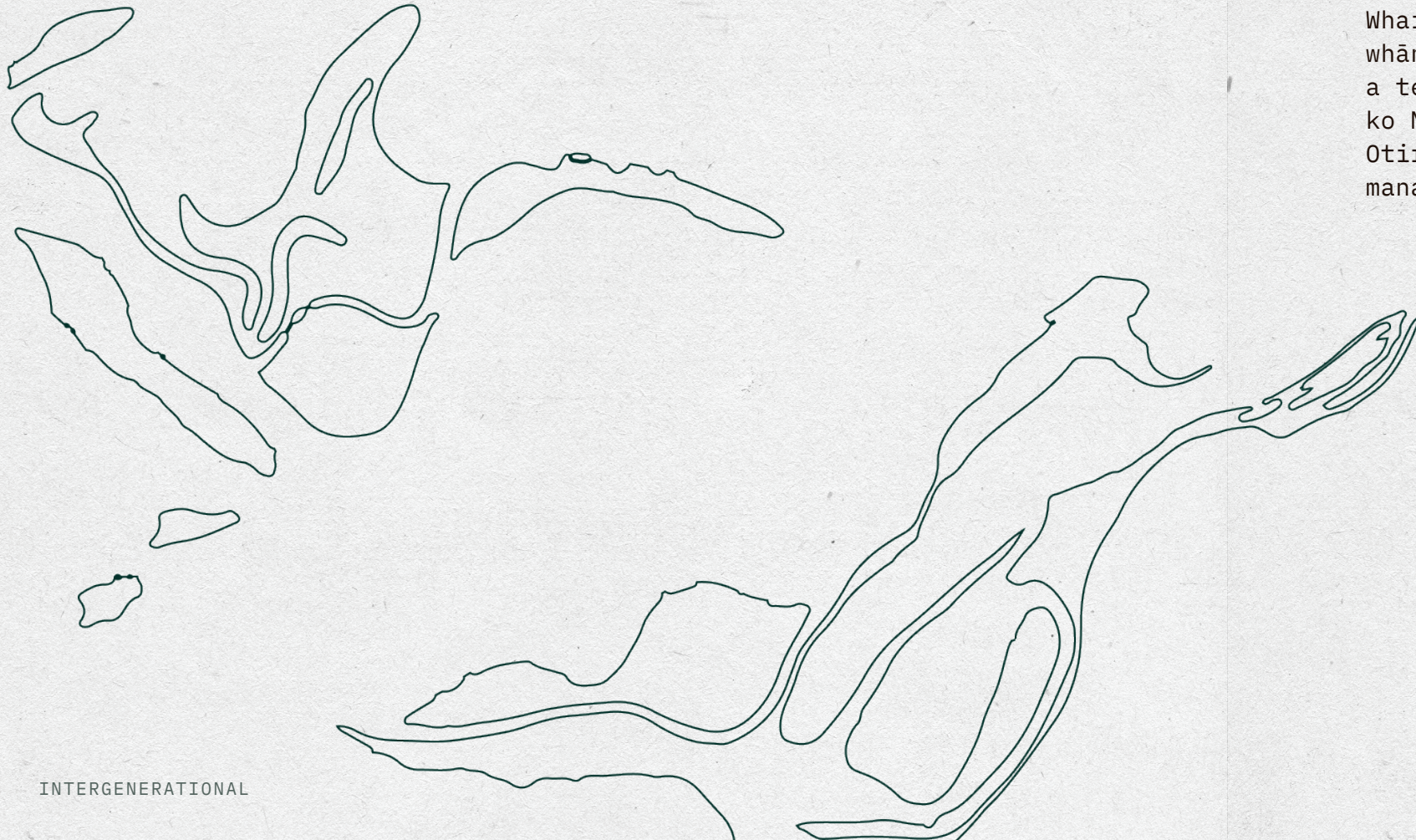
Ko te tau 2023, hei te marama o Haratua te wā i a māua ko Hana e whakatata mai ana ki te otinga o te pepa nei. I tēnei wā ka tū ki Rāwene ngā hui kaunihera mō te pūnaha e tuku ana i te wai mimi, wai tūtae ki ngā wai o te Hokianga. Kua toru tekau mā waru tau tēnei pūnaha e haere ana. Rangatahi tonu ana ētahi o ngā kaikōrero i te wā i whakatūria ai te pūnaha nei ki Hokianga.

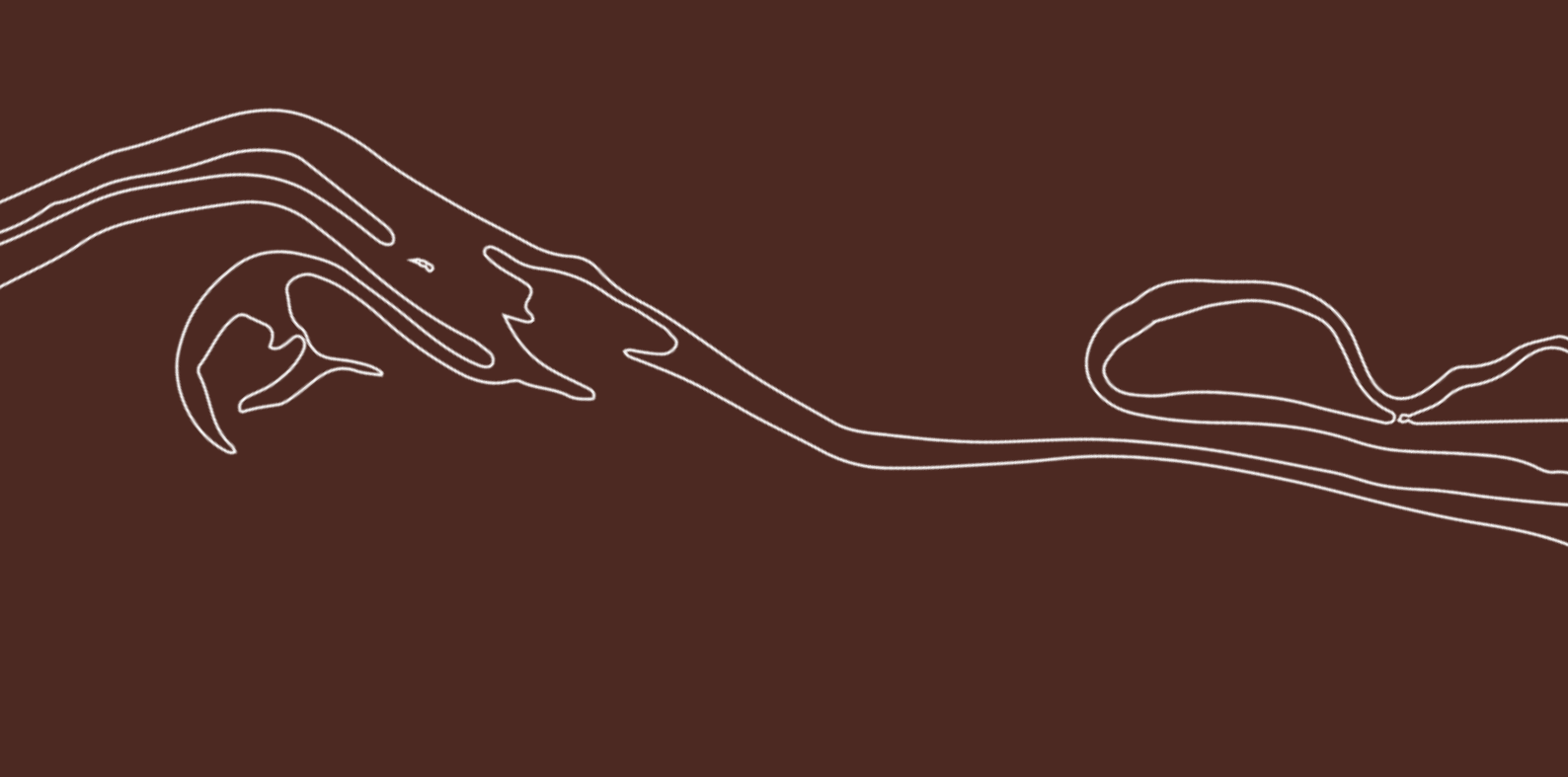
I tēnei huihuinga tāngata, ka tae mai te tini o ngā whānau me ngā hapū o te Hokianga ki te whakapuaki, tūturu nei, i ō rātou whakarihariha ki tēnei pūnaha kua roa e takahi ana i ngā tikanga o te haukāinga. He maha tonu ngā tikanga i whakaingoatia e ngā whānau. Ko tētahi o aua tikanga i kōrerohia ko te tikanga kia kua e whakaranu i te tūtae, i te mimi me ngā wāhi kai. He tikanga tēnei e tiakina ai te tapu o ngā mea e rua, otirā e tiakina ai te tapu o te tangata ka whangaihia e ēnei wāhi kai. I taku rongo ake i ngā kōrero a tō māua whaea kēkē, a Mereana Te Whata, “ka ora te wai, ka ora te iwi”, ka marama pū te tinana, te ngākau me te wairua ki te tika me te pono o ēnei kupu.

I aua rā hui, kotahi tonu te reo o Hokianga whānui - o ngā rangatahi tae noa ki ngā kaumātua - ‘He uri mātou nō te Hokianga nui a Kupe, ko au te wai, ko te wai ko au’. Maha ngā kōrero i puta mō te patu i te mauri o ngā wai, i te mauri o ngā kaitiaki, otirā i te mauri o ngā kai o te moana. Kia ahatia? E kore tēnei mea te ora e tae mai ki ngā uri o te Hokianga ki te kore e ora te pātaka o Hokianga, ki te kore e ora ngā kaitiaki, otirā, ki te kore e ora ngā wai inumia o ngā mātua tūpuna. Ka tino pūrangiaho māua ko Hana, ā, ka ū tonu tō māua manawanui ki ēnei mahi, ka mutu, ki ngā kupu o roto nei.

Ko māua ko Hana e tae noa ana, e haere mārīka ana me ngā au kaha o ngā mātua tūpuna me ngā mahi kua mahia nei e rātou. Kua mōhio rātou me pēhea te oranga tonutanga o te iwi. Ko tā māua, he whakaū noa i ngā kōrero tuku iho hei tūrangawaewae mō tēnei reanga. Waihoki, ko te whakamahea i ngā pōhēhē, i ngā moehewa o te ao Pākehā, e kī nei, kei a rātou ngā urupare ki ngā raru nā rātou i hanga. Ka ruku anō hoki māua ki ēnei pōhēhē toropuku kua whakatōngia, otirā, kua tipu nei i ngā whakaaro, i ngā manawa, ka mutu, i ngā mahi a tātou te Māori. Ko te wawata nui o tēnei tuhinga ko te kawē tonu i te aroha mutunga kore o ngā mātua tūpuna ki tēnei reanga, ā, ki ngā reanga e haere ake nei.

Whai muri i te tū o whaea Mereana, ka tū māua ko Hana, me te whānau whānui ki te tautoko i āna kōrero mā ngā kupu waiata (e whai ake nei) a te mokopuna nei o Kokohuia whenua, a Leah Te Whata. Tēnā kōrua Leah ko Mereana me ngā tūākana puta noa, Dallas King, Rereata Mākiha mā. Otirā, tēnā tātou e ngā tūpuna me ngā mokopuna e kawē tonu nei i te mana o te Hokianga, o tō tātou taiao.





*Taku taumata ko runga Roharoa
Rere iho Waiarohia Ki Hokianga Nui a Kupe
Te ūnga mai o ngā waka tūpuna
I heke mai ai ngā uri
Ngāti Korokoro, Te Poukā, Ngāti Wharara
O te Whakarongotai
O Kōkohuia, te wai i inumia rā e te kōkopu
Huia huia, tuia tuia te herenga tāngata i
nā Leah Te Whata*

Introduction

We write this paper as two wahine Māori thinking deeply about kai in the context of Māori health. Hana (Ngāpuhi, Te Roroa, Te Ātihaunui a Pāpārangī, Ngāti Tūwharetoa) is a kaupapa Māori researcher and teacher, Haylee (Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu) is a Māori Public Health kaiārahi at Toi Tangata leading the kaupapa Kai Māori Kai Ora. Based in Ōmāpere, we are living, thinking and writing in Te Tai Tokerau, looking out to Te Wahapū o Hokianga, in the mana and presence of kaitiaki Arai te Uru and Niniwa. The waters of Waiarohia, Hana's awa, flow nearby into the Hokianga Harbour, while further east the waters of Utakura, Haylee's awa, flow into the distant inland stretches of the Hokianga Harbour from Horeke and the Utakura Valley.

This paper is based on the conceptual framework developed by Hana Burgess and Te Kahuratai Painting entitled 'Onamata, anamata: a whakapapa perspective of Māori futurisms' (2020), and Hana's theorising around settler colonialism arising out of her doctoral research, which is happening in close relation with her tuakana Donna Cormack. We also draw on Haylee's work 'In right relationship - Whanaungatanga' (Koroi, 2021), her mahi with Toi Tangata, including the kaupapa He Kai Kei Aku Ringa¹, and her engagement in wānanga around Aotearoa with Te Korowai Aroha o Aotearoa². Ultimately, this paper is influenced by our nans, namely Nana Maata Botica (nee Riki) and Nana Vera Koroi (nee Busby) who, from other realms, have guided us within and beyond this work. This paper is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather a capturing of our reading, thinking and listening in community³. We write this paper primarily for Māori thinking through kai and Māori health, as well as food sovereignty. We write this paper for our relations making sense of our collective pasts, presence, and futures beyond settler colonialism.

The intention of this paper is to bring to the fore a whakapapa conceptualisation of kai, one that centers whanaungatanga - being in good relation. As Māori, whakapapa is the fabric of our existence, deeply informing our ways of being, knowing, and doing intergenerationally (Jackson, 2013; Mikaere, 2017).

Through whakapapa, all of existence is whanaunga. This structures a world that is deeply and intimately connected, where time is non-linear, where we coexist with past and future generations, our mokopuna and tūpuna. We can consider this complex existence in terms of four key layers of whanaungatanga outlined by Burgess and Painting (2020) - whanaungatanga ki ngā atua, ki te taiao, ki te tangata, ki a koe anō - relationships with ancestors of continuing influence, the natural world, people, and the self. Kai emerges through, and is a reflection of, these layers of whanaungatanga.

Kai is deeply and necessarily localised, collective, and intergenerational. When we talk about kai, we are talking about the food we eat, but through whakapapa, the concept 'kai' evokes the many layers of whanaungatanga that constitute kai. We are evoking the intergenerational intimacies that constitute kai - an expansive view of kai that calls being in good relation to the center. We argue that any conversation about kai is inherently a conversation about whanaungatanga - being in good relation.

Articulating a whakapapa conceptualisation of kai will allow us to make sense of how we can be in good relation with kai. Importantly, for our generation, being in good relation with kai requires seeing through, and beyond, settler colonialism. Drawing from Burgess and Painting (2020), we understand settler colonialism as the antithesis of whanaungatanga. From here, we seek to expose the ways that settler colonialism continues to damage and disrupt our relationships with kai, with particular emphasis on the desacralisation of nature, and kai by extension. This will allow us to envision futures (pasts) where we are in good relation with kai.

We close this paper with a series of provocations. These provocations signal what comes to the fore for us when whanaungatanga is at the center of our frame, guiding once again our ways of being, knowing and doing in relation to kai. We offer these provocations not as definitive, but as an invitation, an invitation for one to deeply consider one's own relationships with kai and the layers that make it up. It is an invitation to immerse oneself in the intergenerational intimacies that kai evokes.

¹ He Kai Kei Aku Ringa is a project managed by Haylee. It involves a series of short films that delve into the lives of six whānau as they share their understandings of the whakataukī 'he kai kei aku ringa' and how they practise the whakataukī in their everyday lives. See <https://hekai.co.nz/>

² Haylee would like to acknowledge Te Korowai Aroha o Aotearoa where she worked for several years. They have been pivotal in Haylee's reclamation of her whakapapa, and her understanding and practice of whanaungatanga.

³ A note on citational practice: Much of what influences our thinking in this paper, particularly Haylee's thinking, is difficult to capture through standard citational practice. Haylee's thinking around kai is an accumulation of experiential learnings over years of being involved in kaupapa around Aotearoa. Citation is something we are deeply and continually making sense of (Burgess, Cormack and Reid, 2021). In this paper, alongside our citations we use footnotes to acknowledge the wider influences/contributions of people, place and kaupapa that cannot necessarily be captured by way of reference to a particular publication or source.



Whakapapa

THE NATURE OF OUR EXISTENCE

Whakapapa:
the nature of our existence

Whakapapa forms the foundation of our worlds as Māori, allowing us to understand and live well in the world intergenerationally. Whakapapa is the basis of our ways of being, knowing and doing. Drawing from key theorists such as Moana Jackson (2013), Ani Mikaere (2017, 2011), Mere Roberts (2013) and Leonie Pihama (2001), **Hana Burgess and Te Kahuratai Painting (2020, p209) write:**

The concept of whakapapa explains the origins, positioning, and futures of all things. Whakapapa derives from the root 'papa', meaning a base or foundation. Whakapapa denotes a layering, adding to that foundation. Rooted in creation, generations layer upon each other, creating a reality of intergenerational relationships. Everything has whakapapa, all phenomena, spiritual and physical, from celestial bodies, days and nights, through to the winds, lands, waters, and all that transpires throughout.

Whakapapa is often translated to the Western concept of genealogy, which confines it to the past, and can make it appear to be primarily focused on human relationships of direct biological descent (Mikaere, 2017). However, as Māori, we understand whakapapa as much more expansive. Our whakapapa extends to (and from) our more than human relations. Further, whakapapa is just as concerned with future generations, and how our past and future generations relate to the rest of existence. In knowing something's whakapapa, the layers that make it up, we can know how it came to be, and how it relates to wider existence. In knowing this, we can know what will come to be, we can know the future (Burgess & Painting 2020). Beautifully put by Moana Jackson (2013, p59):

For our notion of time is whakapapa based, and like whakapapa it has its own sense of never ending beginnings in which time turns back on itself in order to bring the past into the present and then into the future. Above all it is a notion of time which recognises the interconnected- ness of all things.

Articulated in depth by Burgess and Painting (2020), we see and understand time through onamata, anamata, through the eyes of our mokopuna and tūpuna. Here, we can see through time by being in good relation with past and future generations - by knowing our whakapapa. This is an intergenerational vision. Through whakapapa, the notion of the 'present' is not central to our reality, but a "fleeting moment where the past and the future meet" (Burgess & Painting, 2020, p218).

We coexist with our mokopuna and tūpuna (Mika, 2017). Every single thing in existence is a meeting point of past and future generations. Whakapapa endlessly unfolds from each of us, and from each of our relations. Our world is a beautiful symphony of generations of whakapapa. The layers of our existence are inseparable, emerging from and constituting each other. We are deeply in relation, all the time (Burgess & Painting, 2020). Importantly, as meeting points in the present, we have a window of agency where we can influence our whakapapa. Burgess and Painting (2020, p208) write "Through whakapapa, we have the ability to shape the future, and as tūpuna and mokopuna, we have an obligation to shape the future well, by being in good relation".







Whanaungatanga

BEING IN GOOD RELATION

Whanaungatanga:
being in good relation

Through whakapapa, all of existence is whanaunga, existing in a natural state of whanaungatanga. Drawing on the work of Burgess and Painting (2020), we understand whanaungatanga as the notion of 'being in good relation'. We can understand what is 'good' as that which is 'tika', that which is guided by tikanga. Moana Jackson (2020, p140) explains tikanga as follows,

In simple terms, tikanga is a values system about what 'ought to be' that helped us sustain relationships and whaka-tika or restore them when they were damaged. It is a relational law based on an ethic of restoration that seeks balance in all relationships.

Embedded in our whakapapa and developed across generations, tikanga guide us to uphold and maintain harmony with our wider relations. Important to tikanga is an awareness of the integral presence of mana⁴ in all our relations. Here we understand mana as spiritual influence, agency, authority and collective acknowledgement of virtue. Mana is generative, taking on many forms, and is of great importance in Te Ao Mārama, mediating the ways that we are in relation with our whanaunga (Pihama, 2001).

Importantly, to be in good relation we must know our whakapapa, our place in the world (Koroi, 2021). While our networks of relationships are complex and infinite, we can consider existence in terms of four key layers of whanaungatanga outlined by Burgess and Painting (2020), whanaungatanga ki ngā atua, ki te taiao, ki te tangata, ki a koe anō - relationships with ancestors of continuing influence, the natural world, people, and the self. While our whakapapa tells us these distinctions are somewhat arbitrary, this framework allows us to begin to unravel and articulate the many layers of our existence.

Ani Mikaere (2011, p318) writes:

Our creation stories reflect the understanding that there is no rigid distinction between the physical and the spiritual realms. Papatuanuku is atua, tupuna and the land simultaneously: there is no sensible way of separating out the ways in which humans experience our relationship with her.

Inherent in whakapapa, is the emanation of the physical from the spiritual. Our existence is first and foremost wairua, and is thus tapu - sacred (Marsden, 2003). As articulated by Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (2009, p6), "the spiritual plane is the fundamental source and nature of all things, both an originating point and a fundamental reality interwoven into the physical material of the world".

Intertwined with mana and tapu, mauri is the life force that constitutes the essential nature and form of all living things, the physical material world (Mead, 2003). Maori Marsden (2003, p174) writes that mauri is "the life-force which generates, regenerates and upholds creation. It is the bonding element... giving creation its unity in diversity". We must deeply consider the mana, tapu and mauri of ourselves, each other, and our environments (Marsden, 2003; Mead, 2003). Ani Mikaere (2017, p73) notes:

It is not surprising that the physical environment featured prominently in the everyday lives of our tupuna. The close connection between people and other aspects of creation is prescribed by an understanding of the world that proceeds from the foundation of whakapapa. Our tupuna drew sustenance - physical, emotional, spiritual - from the world around them, a world which they understood as a complex system of relationships. They saw themselves as forming but one component of the system, and regarded as natural the imperative to nurture the host of relationships with their non-human relatives in order to survive and thrive.

Mauri encapsulates the significance of 'source' (Pohatu, 2011). Our wellness as tāngata is bound to the environments from which we emerge. Burgess and Painting (2020, p214) write "We must nurture and allow ourselves to be nurtured by our whanaunga. In all that we do, we must put whanaungatanga at the center. From this, comes wellness". When the layers of our existence are in balance, we are well intergenerationally.

⁴Our understanding of the concept of mana is based on that of Burgess and Painting (2020), which is drawn from Chapter 10 – Mana Wahine Theory of Leonie Pihama's doctoral thesis (2001), *Tihei Mauri Ora*. In discussing the concept of mana in this chapter Leonie Pihama engages with the work of Rangimarie Turuki Pere, Manuka Henare, Māori Marsden, Hine-Tu-Whiria-O-Te-Rangi Waitere-Ang and Linda Tuhiwai Smith.

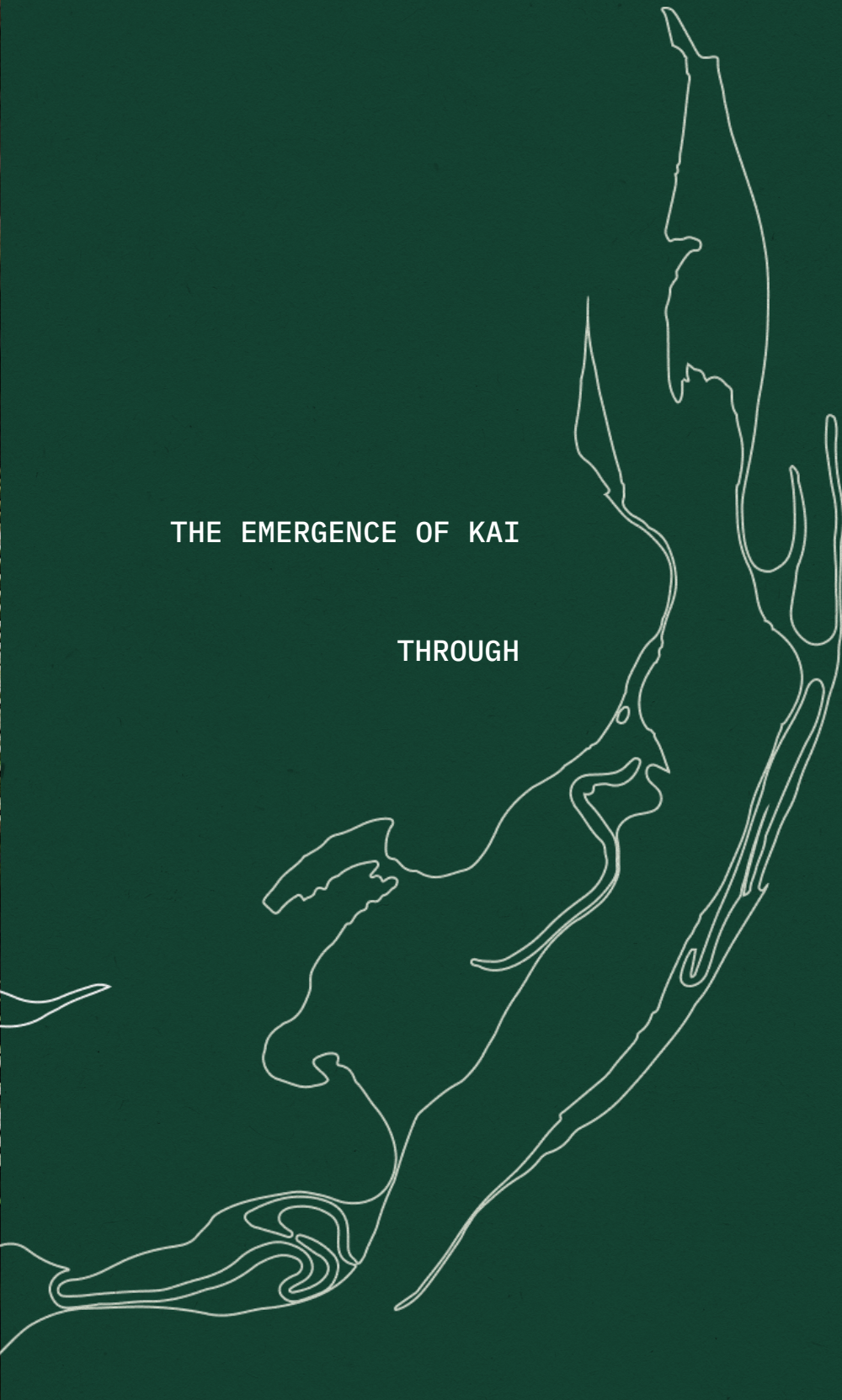
⁵Our thinking around our wellness as tangata being tied to te taiao is strongly influenced by Wayne Ngata and the work of Ihirangi Heke (2020) through the kaupapa 'Atua Matua' (Waka Huia, 2021a). Atua Matua is deeply embedded in the work of Toi Tangata (Toi Tangata, 2023).



THE EMERGENCE OF KAI

THROUGH

WHAKAPAPA



The emergence of kai through whakapapa

Grounded in the conceptualisations of whakapapa and whanaungatanga outlined above, this section seeks to unravel the layers of whanaungatanga that constitute kai – whanaungatanga ki ngā atua, ki te taiao, ki te tangata, ki a koe anō. Articulating a whakapapa conceptualisation of kai will allow us to make sense of how we, as tāngata, can be in good relation with kai intergenerationally.

Like all of existence, kai is first and foremost wairua, emerging through whanaungatanga ki ngā atua. Burgess and Painting (2020, p211) write:

In Te Ao Mārama, all of existence descends from Ranginui and Papatūānuku, our primordial parents. Ranginui and Papatūānuku, in their loving embrace, brought into being their children, ngā atua, who found domains in the natural world. After which, ngā atua had children of their own, and so the natural world, in all its diversity, came (and continues to come) into being as one whānau. In this whakapapa, humans come into Te Ao Mārama last, thus we are tēina. All that comes before us in creation is our tuākana. As tēina, we look to our tuākana for guidance. They show us how to be in good relation.

Here, ngā atua manifest within and as various realms of te taiao, the natural world, from mountains, to rivers, lakes and oceans. Ngā atua coexist as whanaunga, giving rise to the dynamic and ever-changing realities of Te Ao Mārama. Kai emerges as uri of ngā atua. For example, kūmara emerges as uri of Rongo, pikopiko of Tāne, and pātiki of Tangaroa and Hinemoana. Through whakapapa, kai is intimately intertwined with the environments from which it emerges. Burgess and Painting (2020, p210) emphasise that whakapapa “shapes a reality of interdependency, where the well-being of the whole is dependent on the well-being of its closely related components, and vice versa.” By virtue of its descent from ngā atua, kai is imbued with mana, tapu and mauri (Marsden, 2003). Kai emerges under the influence and protection of ngā atua, and thus must be deeply considered and protected.

Kai is not separate from te taiao, kai is te taiao.

As tēina to te taiao, it is our role to be in good relation, to act in ways that honour and uphold the mana of the environments from which kai emerges. This includes waters, soils, seeds, plants, insects, from sunlight to microorganisms (Hutchings, 2020). Being in good relation with te taiao is integral to our existence as tāngata. Burgess and Painting (2020, p212) write:

Our descent from ngā atua means the natural world makes up our whakapapa. Here, mana whenua and mana moana are integral to our existence. Our descent is layered through whānau, hapū and iwi, to the whenua, and the landscapes of these ancestral areas, including mountains, rivers, lakes and oceans. In turn, we exist not as separate individuals, but as wider collectives that emerge from, and are sustained by, our intimate relationships with the natural world. This is how we relate as people. Our mana comes from our whakapapa to the natural world, the whenua – mana whenua.

Within this context, whanaungatanga ki te taiao occurs in place. Across the diverse landscapes and seascapes that constitute Aotearoa, it is mana whenua who know best how to be in good relation. Guided by tikanga, mana whenua understand deeply what it is to be tēina to te taiao, to act in ways that recognise te taiao as tuākana, as tūpuna, as a source of sustenance and care. Through enduring relations with te taiao, mana whenua know the land intimately (Burgess & Painting, 2020; Koroi, 2021). These intimacies are embedded within kōrero tuku iho and deepened with each generation. This does not mean that there are not moments of imbalance, but rather, that tikanga provides a means by which balance can be restored. To have living peoples who know these landscapes intimately, who can call forth past, present, and future generations into place, is something to be deeply grateful for. As manuhiri, we are tēina living and moving through the lands and oceans of mana whenua. We look to them for guidance.

Importantly, ways of being, knowing and doing surrounding kai are deeply and necessarily localised and seasonal. The collective planting, harvesting, preparation, preservation and eating of kai is vital to the collective wellbeing of whānau and hapū (Hutchings, 2015; Matamua, 2020). Moreover, systems of trade and koha between whānau and hapū are vital, expanding the landscapes, networks of people, knowledge systems, and kai that could be drawn upon for sustenance. In turn, not only are our kai practices localised and seasonal, they are necessarily collective and intergenerational. Grounded in whakapapa, these collective processes were (and are) always done with future generations, mokopuna, at the forefront⁶.

As tāngata, our intergenerational intimacies with kai are evident in the ways that kai is woven throughout kōrero tuku iho, karakia, waiata, and haka. Kai is deeply intertwined with our rongoā^{7,8}, our patterns of weaving, tāniko, and kōwhaiwhai. We mark these patterns on our skin⁹. We sing to kai, about kai, for kai¹⁰. Kai is featured in place names (Koroi & Maihi, 2021). We can look up and see kai in the night sky, across many of our constellations (Matamua, 2020). Kai is embedded within whānau and hapū conceptions of time and space as exemplified in maramataka (Tāwhai, 2013) and the celebration of the rising of Puanga and Matariki (Matamua, 2020). We can see kai intergenerationally through kōrero tuku iho¹¹, through the vast ways we engage with and share knowledge. **Kai is intertwined with all that we do, and all that we are as Māori.**

⁶ We want to acknowledge the influence that Papa Rereata Mākiha has had on our understanding of kai and whakapapa here. His influence cannot be captured by citations, because the learnings from him are through reading, listening and engaging with his words in multiple realms. Examples of his influence are in his Waka Huia (2018) episode, and an interview with Dale Husband 'Rereata Makiha: Holding on to ancestral knowledge' (2021).

⁷ Joe McLeod (Waka Huia, 2021b) speaks to the intertwined nature of kai and rongoā. We have recently been in wānanga with Matua Joe, in Waikarā, August 2022. It is from this wānanga that Hana captured the images accompanying this paper.

See <https://ekaimaori.co.nz/>.

⁸ We have also come to understand the intertwined nature of kai and rongoā through the work of Donna Kerridge (see Matata-sipu, 2021).

⁹ We understand this from being in conversation with Mokonuiarangi Smith (Uhi Tapu) as he hand tapped pātiki onto Haylee's arms in August, 2022.

¹⁰ Much of our appreciation of the depth and expansiveness of waiata, and its relationships with kai, are learnings from our friend and relation Meri Haami, whose work so powerfully explores the relationship between the Whanganui River, marae, and waiata (Haami, 2022).

¹¹ Alongside Papa Rereata Makiha, we are also influenced by the mahi of Dallas King, who speaks powerfully to the importance of kōrero tuku iho. In particular we acknowledge the importance of wānanga like Te Rawenga, hosted by Dallas and Rereata and other mātanga that have taken place throughout Te Tai Tokerau each year since 2022.

For instance, the mana of whānau is reflected in the manaakitanga that is shown to manuhiri through kai that is shared. Beyond taste (although this is deeply relished!) kai shared is reflective of the many layers of whanaungatanga that constitute kai. **For example, pātiki served is a reflection of knowledge of tides, the abundance of foodstocks, the health of the moana and the wider relations that constitute the harbour, of the mauri of Tangaroa and Hinemoana. Kai shared is reflective of the intergenerational envisioning of tūpuna, whose intimate relationships with te taiao would ensure a harvest for us, their mokopuna.** Jessica Hutchings, in writing about soil beautifully states, "The 'miracle' of fertile soil is thus the result of an elaborate choreography of relationships" (2020, p23). Indeed, the same can be said of a fertile moana.

Kai brings us into relation with those who have planted, harvested, preserved and prepared kai for us, who uplift the mana of the kai that we eat. As whānau we revere kai, celebrate kai, we celebrate each other with kai. Kai calls forth feelings of closeness with our loved ones, a sense of belonging, of being loved and cared for. It brings about feelings of gratitude. Kai brings us to ourselves, binding us to the land and to one another.

Kai is also an important reflection of our whakapapa across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. Kai was (and still is) brought to Aotearoa on waka from across the ocean, our whanaunga, our tuākana. The exchange of kai across oceans further expands the landscapes, networks of people, knowledge systems, and kai that are drawn upon for sustenance. The ongoing cultivation of these kai speaks to our co-existence across time and space, it speaks to the ways that kai continues to bind us across oceans, to remind us of our whakapapa beyond the shores of Aotearoa. Moana Jackson (2020, p137-138) illustrates:

The tūpuna never forgot that, as much as whakapapa tied us to this land, it also tied us to the Pacific Ocean that we call Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa. When Māui dragged the land from the sea, these islands were known as 'te tiritiri o te moana', the gift from the sea, and so they have remained. We also use the name Aotearoa because the islands were bigger than others we may have once known. Yet we never lost sight of the fact that we were still standing on Pacific Islands and that relationships in such a place would always be mediated through a palpable sense of intimate distance.

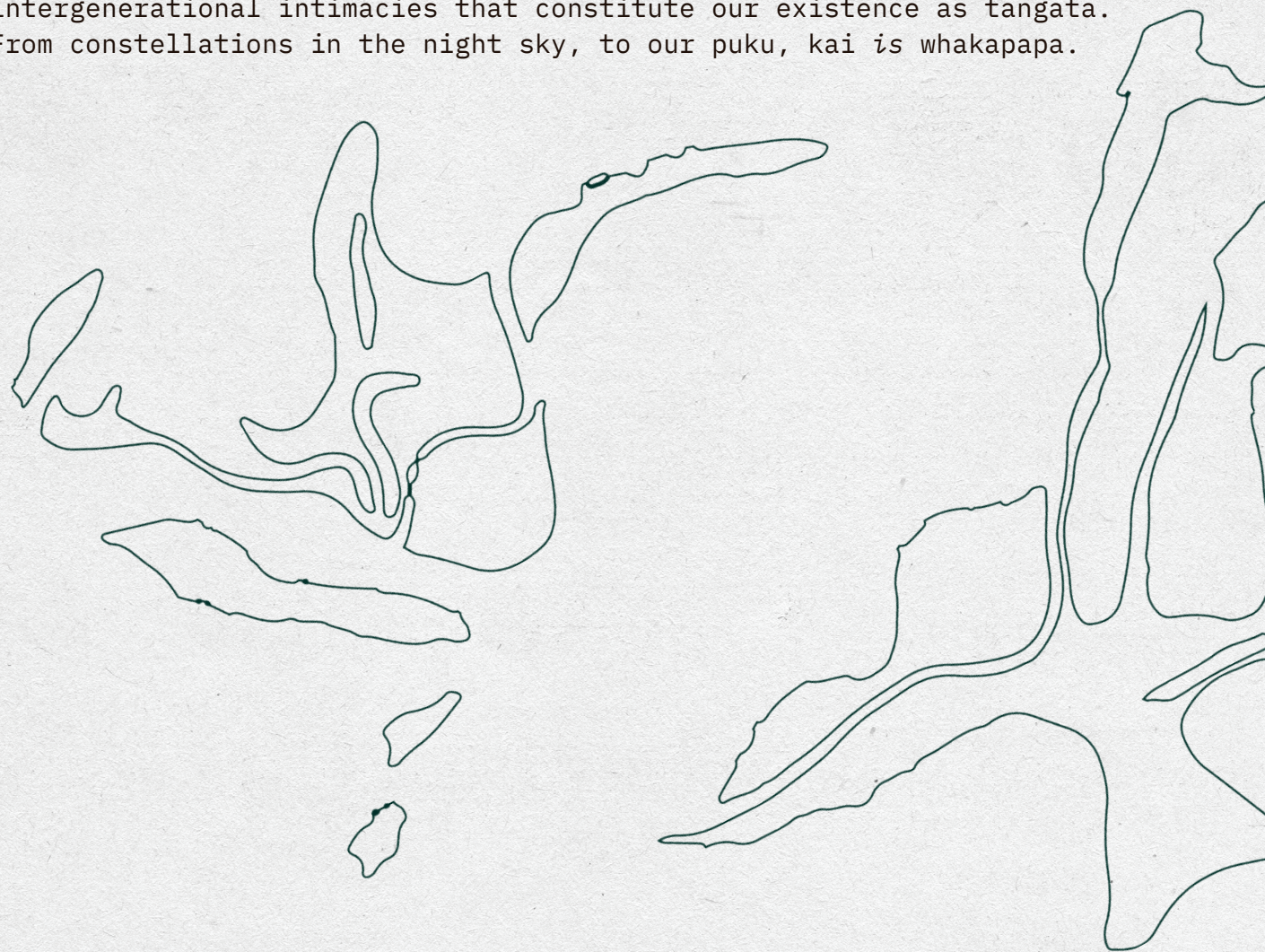
Importantly, localised, collective and intergenerational relationships with kai exist among Indigenous peoples and communities all over the world (Kimmerer, 2013). We can learn alongside our relations from across Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa and beyond¹². We can envision expansive futures with kai in community and solidarity¹³.

Within the context of these layers of whanaungatanga we consider whanaungatanga ki a koe anō, being in good relation with our expansive selves. Through ngā atua, te taiao, te tāngata we are imbued with mana, tapu and mauri. We emerge from the spiritual. Moreover, we are whanaunga, reflecting infinite layers of whakapapa, our whānau. Kai too is expansive. **Every time we eat, we are meeting innumerable relations, the layers of whanaungatanga that constitute the kai that we eat. In this, kai presents a deeply intimate opportunity for us to know the land from within ourselves as Jessica Hutchings (2020) states, from within our divine senses. Indeed, we have terms like pukumōhio - to know through our stomachs.** Marjorie Beverland (2022, p88) acknowledges the puku as,

our ability to understand our bodies, their tohu, and the importance of not relying solely on our mind for guidance. The Puku site requires us to enact rongo (our senses) as it is a site for listening to our intuitive nature for guidance¹⁴

Through tohu that arise within our bodies, our wairua, we can come to understand the expansive worlds within - our capacities, our desires, how we feel, how kai makes us feel, what we need to feel nourished in any given moment.

As te taiao moves through its cycles and seasons, as we move through our cycles and seasons, kai can offer us grounding. Kai can teach us, guide us in what it means to be in good relation with our expansive selves, and therefore with wider existence. We reflect on the aforementioned quote by Ani Mikaere (2017, p73), in that "our tupuna drew sustenance - physical, emotional, spiritual - from the world around them", and we think about the intimacies surrounding kai. Kai shapes us, our bodies, our wairua, our relationships, our experiences of the world. Further, we consume the landscapes that shape us (Hutchings, 2020). In this, we must deeply consider our obligations in shaping the land, for ourselves and for future generations. In unraveling the whakapapa of kai, we can begin to appreciate the intergenerational intimacies that constitute our existence as tangata. From constellations in the night sky, to our puku, kai is whakapapa.

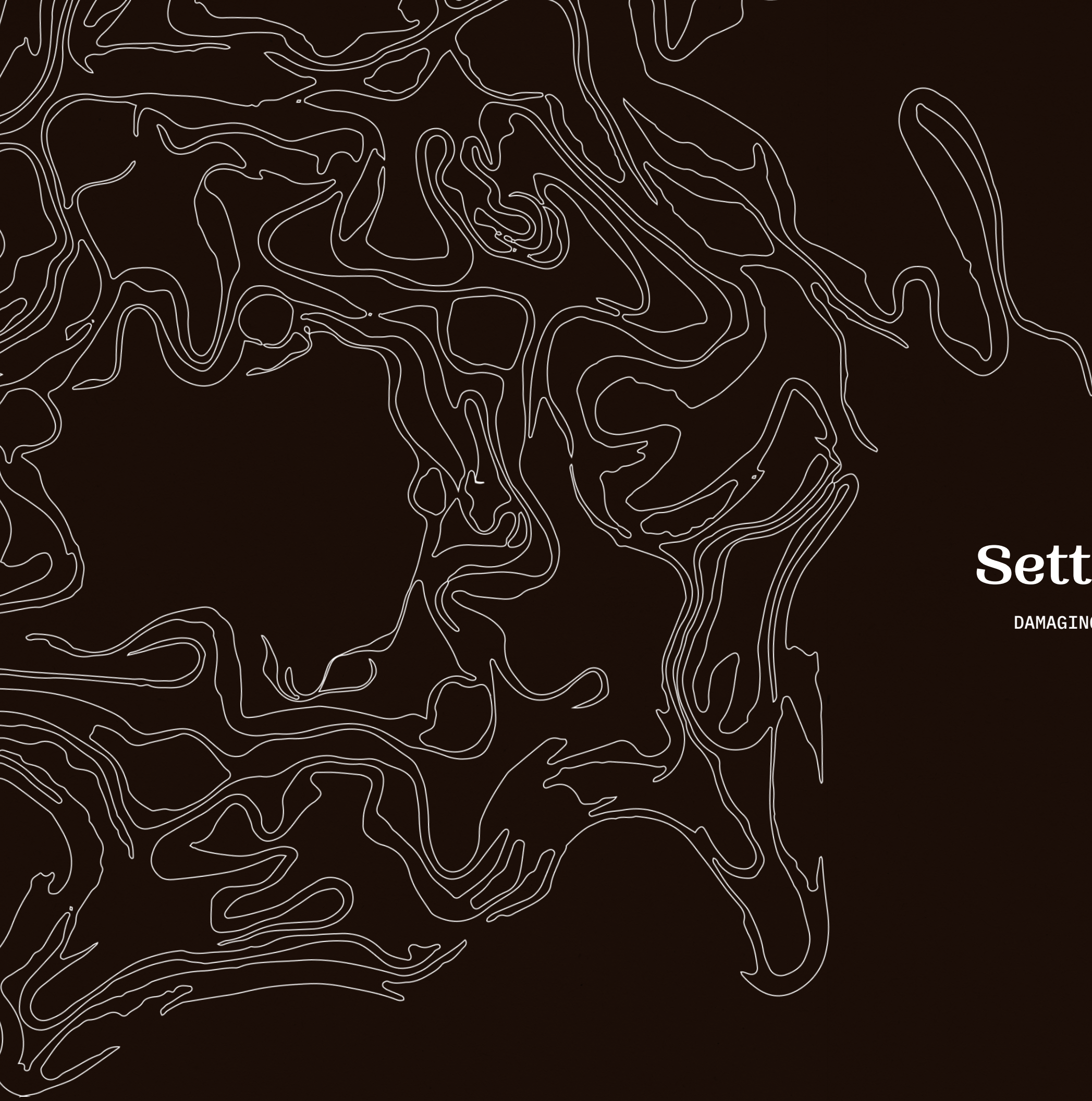


¹² Our understanding of our relationships with kai across oceans is grounded in our relationships with our "ancient cuzzies" David Garcia aka Mapmakerdavid (Kapampangan, Tagalog), and Charles Buenconsejo (Sugbuanon) and Grace Bariso Buenconsejo (Tagalog) of Soil of Cultures (previously Open Homes) <https://www.soilofcultures.com/>

¹³ Here we acknowledge the work of A Growing Culture a non-profit organization working to unite the food sovereignty movement <https://www.agrowingculture.org/>

¹⁴ This discussion of puku in Marjorie Beverland's (2022) doctoral thesis occurs in the context of an adaptation of the framework 'Ngā Nohanga Tuakiritanga/Sites of the Inner Being' by Taina Pohatu (2011)





Settler colonialism

DAMAGING AND DISRUPTING OF WHANAUANGATANGA

Settler colonialism:
damaging and disrupting of whanaungatanga

In order to make sense of our relationships with kai, we need to understand the ways that settler colonialism has violently damaged and disrupted our intimately related worlds. This section will provide a brief overview of our understanding of settler colonialism in Aotearoa¹⁵, which will provide broad context from which we discuss the damaging and disrupting of our relationships with kai. Burgess and Painting (2020) illustrate that settler colonialism is fundamentally concerned with the damaging and disrupting of whanaungatanga, our relational ways of being, knowing and doing. In turn, settler colonialism can be understood as the antithesis of whanaungatanga. Burgess and Painting (2020, p220) write:

In short, settler colonialism is a violent ongoing process of entering and erasing Indigenous worlds by settlers, in order to permanently establish a new nation state (Jackson, 2019). Driven by imperialism (Smith, 2021), Western nations have been invading Indigenous worlds for centuries, violently imposing Western authority over our intimately related worlds (Jackson, 2019).

Christianity has laid the foundations for the settler colonial society of "New Zealand" as we know it today (Mikaere, 2017; Ngata, 2019). Through Christianity, human beings are reconceived through the white supremacist notion of Man¹⁶ - individual, white, straight, cisgender, able-bodied, Christian Man - at the center of the universe, closest to the Christian God, separate from and superior to all of existence (McKittrick, 2015; Wynter, 2003). This fundamental belief drives settler colonial domination, imposing a hierarchical view of the world, under which all of existence is objectified, and can be "tallied, classified and compartmentalised according to its worth" (Mikaere, 2017, p30). Ani Mikaere (2017, p190-191) writes:

The introduction of hierarchy contributed to the success of colonisation... by reframing a range of complimentary pairings as oppositional binaries - male/female, tuakana/teina, human/non-human, and so on - it attacked the very bonds that tied people to one another and to the world around them. It was a profoundly destabilising approach.

The fundamental belief in the dominion of Man drives global colonial domination. Drawing from the work of Mignolo and Walsh (2018), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021) discusses how through imperialism and settler colonialism, Man and Nature¹⁷ would emerge as separate ideas, a separation that would be central to the colonial project. Through the separation of Man and Nature, and the proclaimed superiority of Man, te taiao is desacralised. Nature is made to seem inert raw material, an oppositional binary antagonistic to Man (Ghosh, 2021; Kimmerer, 2013). In turn, Nature becomes something to control, to dominate. Those who are not an individual, white, straight, cisgender, able-bodied, Christian Man, are not seen as fully human, or not human at all, thus are coupled with Nature. This thinking would justify the domination and control of Indigenous peoples (Ghosh, 2021; Smith, 2021).

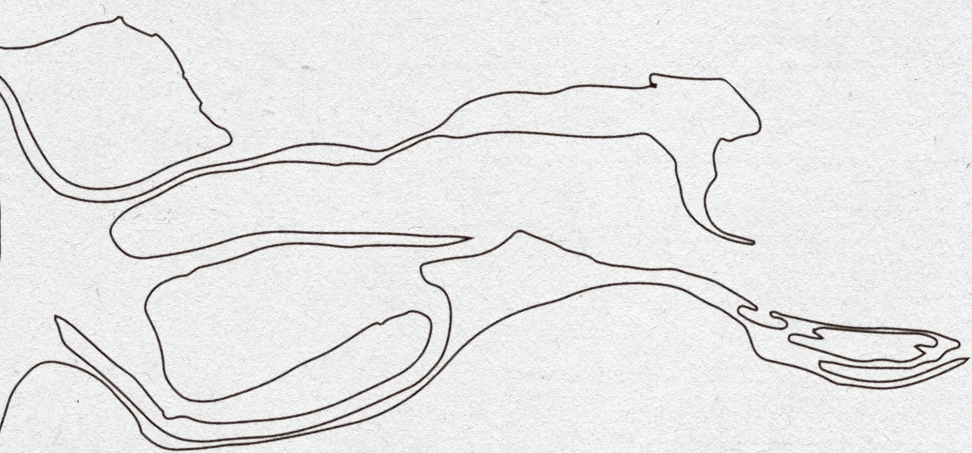
¹⁵ The theorising around settler colonialism in this section is based on Hana's unpublished PhD research, which is supported by Donna Cormack. We would like to acknowledge Donna's support, especially in introducing us to the work of Sylvia Wynter (2003) and Katherine McKittrick (2015), and for helping us make sense of this literature in the context of Aotearoa.

¹⁶ When we write *Man* throughout this paper, we are evoking the white supremacist concept of the human that is outlined in this section. *Man* as in individual, white, straight, cisgender, able-bodied, Christian *Man*. This is drawing from Sylvia Wynter's (2003) discussion of Man1 and Man2, which is further discussed by Katherine McKittrick (2015).

¹⁷ When we write *Nature* throughout this paper, we are evoking the imperial and settler colonial conceptualisation of *Nature* discussed in this section, that is placed in an oppositional binary antagonistic to *Man*.

With the separation of *Man* and *Nature*, further hierarchies based on ideologies of race, class and gender are constructed (Davis, 1991; Pihama, 2019; Roberts, 2011; Smith, 2021). These notions are inseparable, bound up with one another, continuously developed, maintained and reproduced globally (Pihama, 2019)¹⁸. These hierarchies work to further classify and compartmentalise humans according to their worth, creating further justification for colonial domination¹⁹.

This is the context in which capitalism would emerge as a global system (Pihama, 2019). Importantly, capital begins with the domination and control of *Nature*, and the exploitation of human labour in order to commodify natural resources (Coulthard, 2014; Kelley, 2017). Robin D.G. Kelley (2017)²⁰ names capitalism 'racial capitalism', emphasising that "racial capitalism is not merely a type of capitalism... say as opposed to like non-racist capitalism, we don't have non-racist capitalism, it doesn't exist... The term simply signals that capitalism develops and operates within a racist system". The imposition of hierarchies of race, class and gender are necessary for capitalist systems of exploitation (Coulthard, 2014; Pihama, 2019).



Christian conceptualisations of *Man* are what would drive the development of Western Science during the period of Enlightenment (Mikaere, 2017; Smith, 2021). Enlightenment would see the biologisation and naturalisation of hierarchies of race, class, and gender (Pihama, 2019; Roberts, 2011; Wynter, 2003). *Man* is conceived of as naturally superior due to his biology. Here, *Man* is also conceived of as the pinnacle of health. This shift from theological to biological thinking resulted in the institution of Western Science gaining ultimate authority over a supposed universal truth and knowledge (Roberts, 2011; Wynter, 2003). The development of Western Science is entwined with capitalism. In turn, *Man* is reconceived as dually biocentric and economic (McIttrick, 2015; Wynter, 2003). The period of Enlightenment was impelled by the imperial imagination. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021, p25) writes:

The imperial imagination enabled European nations to imagine the possibility that new worlds, new wealth and new possessions existed that could be discovered and controlled. This imagination was realised through the promotion of science, economic expansion and political practice.

Colonial worldviews "individualise, hierarchize and universalise" (Day, 2021, p2). Colonialism claims a universal truth, a universal knowledge system. Day (2021, p6) states "Eurocentric knowledge of life universalises in such a way that it reconceives humanity and human relations as 'naturally' hierarchical and dichotomous." In Aotearoa, hierarchies of race, class, and gender were imposed on our lands through colonisation (Pihama, 2019; Smith, 2021) and continue to shape the basic societal institutions that constitute the nation state of "New Zealand", such as economic, legal, education, health, and social systems (Pihama, 2019). The profound and devastating effects of settler colonialism are something Māori have long articulated (Durie, 1994; Jackson, 2013, 2019, 2020; Mikaere, 2011, 2017; Ngata, 2019; Pihama, 2001, 2019; Reid, Cormack & Paine, 2021; Smith, 2021; Walker, 1990).

¹⁸ A deep exploration of these complex and intertwined systems of power is out of the scope of this paper. Our conceptualising in this section is mainly centered on the writing of Leonie Pihama (2019). Moreover, we wish to explicitly acknowledge that when we speak of gender, we are including the imposition of heterosexuality and heteropatriarchy (Day, 2021).

¹⁹ Our thinking around hierarchies of race, class and gender has been influenced by the work of Alyssa James and Brendan Tynes in the podcast 'Zora's Daughters', which was introduced to us by our friend and tuakana Jaclyn Aramoana Aldridge.

See <https://zorasdaughters.com/>

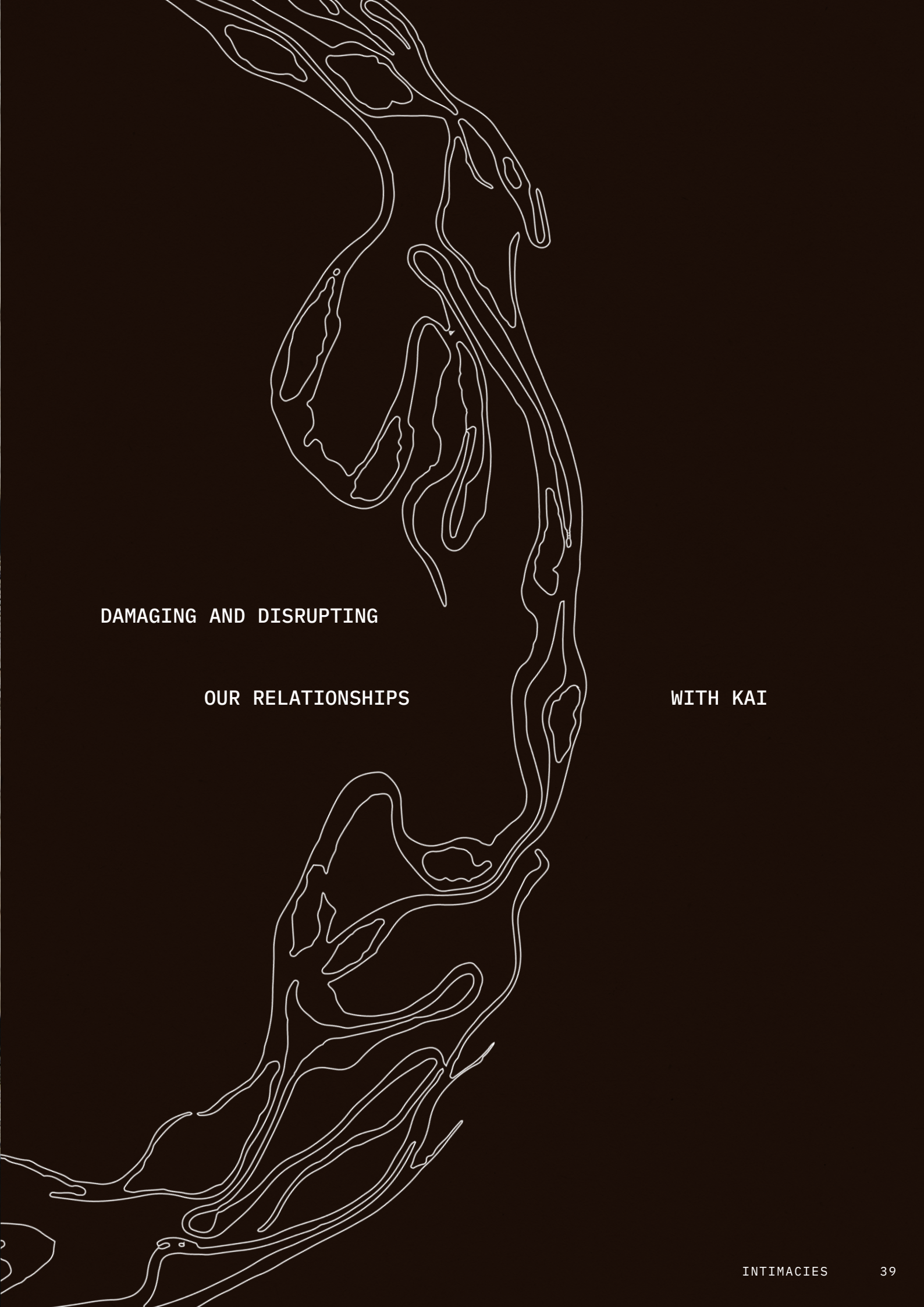
²⁰ Hana was introduced to the work of Robin D.G. Kelley through her friend and tuakana Makaanaka Tuwe, through The Well, which is a seasonal 10-week race, culture and identity workshop series by Sesa Mathlo Apothecary.

See <https://www.sesamathloapothecary.online/>

Importantly, these systems are inherently violent (Hutchings, 2020). Moana Jackson (2019, p4) writes that “violence is the systemic reality of colonization”. Key to enacting this violence is the justification of settler colonialism through falsehoods, doctrines and rewritten histories (Jackson, 2019), termed ‘colonial fictions’ by Tina Ngata (2021). Settler colonialism is deliberately made to appear natural, normal and inevitable (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Burgess and Painting (2020, p222) discuss that as a result of these colonial fictions, “structures imposed by settler colonialism seem permanent, making it difficult to envision and enact a reality where whakapapa and whanaungatanga are at the center of our ways of being, knowing and doing.” Colonial fictions distort our intergenerational vision, our ability to see and understand our existence through whakapapa. Settler colonialism reaches ‘into our heads’ (Smith, 2021), which Ngūgī wa Thiong’o (1992), terms ‘colonisation of the mind’.

Settler colonialism and the imposition of hierarchies fundamentally misalign with Māori conceptualisations of whakapapa and whanaungatanga (Burgess & Painting, 2020; Mikaere, 2017). Indeed, settler colonialism is antithetical to whanaungatanga (Burgess & Painting, 2020). Our vast, endlessly complex, fluid existence is violently flattened, made one dimensional. Placed on a colonial trajectory of linear time, we are made to seem like we are moving away from distant pasts, into distant, unknown futures (Burgess & Painting, 2020). The desacralisation of nature is a violent denial of the intrinsic mana, tapu and mauri of all living things. This has rippling effects throughout the intimately related and inseparable layers of whanaungatanga that constitute our existence. We are placed in opposition to that which deeply constitutes who we are, our relations, ngā atua, te taiao, whānau. We are forced to unnaturally partake in settler colonial ways of being, knowing, and doing. We are fed colonial fictions that relationships premised on colonial domination are natural, that hierarchies of race, class, and gender are natural, when in fact there is nothing natural about settler colonialism.





DAMAGING AND DISRUPTING

OUR RELATIONSHIPS

WITH KAI

Damaging and disrupting our relationships with kai

Settler colonialism has deep and wide-reaching roots, damaging and disrupting our relationships with kai in complex and insidious ways. This section discusses the damaging and disrupting of our relationships with kai, namely through the separation of *Man* and *Nature*, and the subsequent desacralisation of te taiao. This section is not intended to be comprehensive, indeed many of the points made here require a deep unraveling of their own. Our intention here is to touch on key points of damage that come to the fore when we conceptualise kai through whakapapa in the context of settler colonialism outlined above. Key theorists in this section include the work of Amitav Ghosh (2020), Jessica Hutchings (2002, 2015, 2020) and Vandana Shiva²¹.

As noted above, at the heart of colonialism, is the desacralisation of te taiao (Ghosh, 2020). Here, our more than human relations are made to seem dead, inert, raw material, reduced to a physical, objectified form (Ghosh, 2020). In being antagonistic to Nature, it becomes the role of *Man* to pacify, improve upon, make productive and commodify *Nature* (Ghosh, 2020; Smith, 2021). Amitav Ghosh (2020) emphasises that in making productive *Nature*, *Man* lays claim to it.

Controlling food, its commodification, production, and distribution is instrumental to the colonial project (Ghosh, 2020). Globally, European models of agriculture, and the import of domesticated animals, were frequently used to claim land, to aid in the terraforming and destruction of te taiao (Ghosh, 2020; Hutchings, 2020). This process also involved the extraction and commodification of Indigenous foods, including medicines and spices, which were (and still are) instrumental in the development of a globalised food industry (Ghosh, 2020). Evidently, this is seen in New Zealand's' early settler colonial histories, which endure today through the billion-dollar dairy industry, an industry so prolific it has become a part of New Zealand's national identity (Hutchings, 2020). Hutchings (2015, p30) states that "food is now one of the hottest global commodities". There is no question that food industries hold immense political power both locally and globally (Ghosh, 2020; Hutchings, 2020).

Leonie Pihama (2019, p15) discusses that the "confiscation of lands and reconstruction of lands as commodity, as property and exploitable resource is central to the colonising capitalising project, and is widely documented by Indigenous nations." In Aotearoa we just have to look at decades of Waitangi Tribunal claims, from mana whenua all over Aotearoa to see this (e.g. Waitangi Tribunal, 2011). Every whānau, hapū and iwi will have their own stories of colonisation (Jackson, 2019). We look to the stories of our own whānau, and we see lakes and wetlands drained (Koroi, 2021), awa dammed and diverted, forests cleared, maunga quarried and oceans trawled. The global commodification, production and distribution of food is deeply entwined in these violent processes²². This profoundly damages and disrupts our deeply localised, collective and intergenerational relationships with kai – an assault on the very foundations of our existence as mana whenua.

As noted above, those that do not reflect *Man* are not seen as fully human, thus are coupled with *Nature* (Wynter, 2003). People, in our vast and expansive existences, are reduced to physical, objective bodies. Bodies that are conceived through hierarchies of race, class, and gender (Davis, 1991; Pihama, 2019; Roberts, 2011;). Here, the "body" too becomes a site of violent desacralisation, a resource to be pacified, improved upon, made productive, commodified (Ghosh, 2020). In making productive the "body", *Man* lays claim to it. This is evidenced by the millions of peoples violently removed from their homelands, forced into slavery and indentured labour (Roberts, 2011; Smith, 2021). Jessica Hutchings (2015, p35) speaks to:

the conversion of the 'Global South' into a world farm for a minority of global consumers in the 'Global North'. This mimics the extractive relationship set in place in the colonial era between Europe and the rest of the world, where colonies were converted into supply zones of food and raw materials in order to fuel European capitalism and imperialism.

²¹ We were introduced to Vandana Shiva's work through Jessica Hutchings. Our main form of engagement with her work at this time is through her many talks, lectures and interviews available online, some of which are referenced at the end of this paper. She is a prolific writer and this paper is an opening for us diving into the archive of her work.

²² Detailing these processes of widespread damage and disruption of whanaungatanga is out of the scope of this paper, however we implore readers to understand the ways settler colonialism has damaged and disrupted relationships in their locality. This is a journey we ourselves continue to be on.

We can see the same colonial logics of domination and control play out today across the profit-driven globalised food industry, although colonies now look more like global corporations (Ghosh, 2020). Indeed, the current globalised food industry, which was accelerated by the Green Revolution (Shiva, 1991), is fuelled and therefore controlled by advances in the oil industry (Ghosh, 2020; Hutchings, 2015). Dominant modes of food production today are enabled by and rely upon “oil-dependant inputs such as synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, as well as on unsustainable forms of irrigation” (Hutchings, 2015, p33). Food is getting caught up in hyper-tech visions of colonial futures. The imperial imagination has its sight on growing food detached from te taiao in highly controlled artificial environments (Ghosh, 2020; Hutchings, 2020). The separation of Man and Nature persists.

Shifts in Western Science and technology now see the colonial project, and the control of food, playing out at the genetic level (Hutchings, 2002; Smith, 2021). In Aotearoa, conversations around the domination and control of food have emerged around the 2000 Royal Commission on Genetic Modification (Cram, Pihama & Philip-Barbara, 2000), which brought together key Māori theorists, writers, activists (Cram, Pihama & Philip-Barbara, 2000; Hutchings, 2002; Mead, 1996; Mead & Ratuva, 2007; Reynolds, 2004), and saw the formation of the groups such as Nga Wahine Tiaki o Te Ao and Te Waka Kai Ora (Hutchings, 2002). Kai was a key element of enquiry for Māori, alongside impacts on human health and biological diversity (Cram, Pihama & Philip-Barbara, 2000). Genetic modification of kai has been referred to as biocolonialism (Harry, 2011; Hutchings, 2002; Reynolds, 2004; Whitt, 1998). Māori resistance to the ongoing colonisation of Aotearoa is clear and concerted. We have long articulated clearly our responsibilities around kai, and our obligations through whakapapa, especially in contexts where science and technology are shifting (Harry, 2011; Hutchings, 2002; Mead, 1996; Mead & Ratuva, 2007; Reynolds, 2004; Waitangi Tribunal, 2011).

Again, the profound and devastating effects of settler colonialism are something Māori have long articulated (Durie, 1994; Jackson, 2013, 2019, 2020; Mikaere, 2011, 2017; Ngata, 2019; Pihama, 2001, 2019; Reid, Cormack & Paine, 2021; Smith, 2021; Walker, 1990). Our wellbeing is bound to that of te taiao. This is something we have always known. Indeed, colonisers are only recently (if at all) naming this widespread damage and disruption as ‘climate change’ (Koroi, 2021). Drawing from Kyle Whyte (2018), and Heather Davis and Zoe Todd (2017), Burgess and Painting (2020, p225) write:

While the dire consequences of bringing imbalance to te taiao are only recently coming to the attention of settlers, it is something Indigenous peoples have long known. Heather Davis and Zoe Todd point out that settlers are, only now, feeling the reverberations of the seismic shockwave of colonisation, that has been felt by Indigenous peoples for generations. In fact, the dreaded hardships many settlers fear most about the climate crisis, Indigenous peoples are already enduring.

Through settler colonialism, Western Science emerges as the dominant knowledge system informing conceptualisations of food and its relationship with health. Premised on the desacralisation of te taiao, as discussed above, kai is made to seem dead, inert, raw material, reduced to its physical, objectified form (Ghosh, 2020; Hutchings & Reynolds, 2005). This is the context from which Western Nutrition²³ emerges. Within Western Nutrition, food is reduced into universal components, such as fibres, fats, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, parts of food that can be “tallied, classified and compartmentalised” (Mikaere, 2017, p30). These food components are arranged into ratios and equations, alongside notions such as calories, that can supposedly tell us what we need to be “healthy”. **Kai becomes void of its intrinsic value, void of mana, tapu and mauri.** This is a relationship with food premised on function, bound up in colonial fictions of “health” (read: individual, white, straight, cisgender, able-bodied, Christian *Man*). Despite its very recent emergence throughout the 1950s, Western Nutrition continues to shape dominant conceptualisations of food and health²⁴.

²³Western Nutrition is a branch of Western Science concerned with nutrients (the chemical compounds found in food). Nutrition is defined as the “science of food, the nutrients and other substances therein, their action, interaction and balance in relation to health and disease, and the processes by which the organism ingests, absorbs, transports, utilizes and excretes food substances” (Lagua and Claudio, 1994).

²⁴Our understanding of Western Nutrition and its dominance is informed by the work of Aubrey Gordon, alongside the work of her co-host Michael Hobbes in the podcast Maintenance Phase “Debunking the junk science behind health fads, wellness scams and nonsensical nutrition advice.” <https://www.maintenancephase.com/>



Western Nutrition, as an extension of Western Science, further serves to “individualise, hierarchise, and universalise” (Day, 2021, p6), claiming a universal truth, a universal knowledge system surrounding kai. Here, food is conceived through a hierarchical view of the world, whereby food falls into colonial binaries such as good/bad and healthy/unhealthy. Food is assigned moral value. In turn, we are assigned moral value by the food we eat (Gillon & Pausè, 2022; Harrison, 2021; Mercedes, 2021).

Colonial fictions place *Man* at the pinnacle of health. It has long been recognised that dominant notions of “health” are deeply entrenched in white supremacist notions of *Man*, and hierarchies of race, class, and gender (Harrison, 2021; Roberts, 2011; Smith, 2021). There is increased recognition of the ways that conversations around food and health are bound up in fatphobia (Gillon, 2020; Gillon & Pausè, 2022; Gordon, 2020; Harrison, 2021; Mercedes, 2021), anti-Blackness (Harrison, 2021) and ableism (Boberg & Sherwood-O’Regan, 2021; Harrison, 2021; Wong, 2020)²⁵. Da’Shaun L. Harrison (2021, p37), in discussing the politics of anti-fatness and anti-Blackness writes “The medical industry, the healthcare industry, and diet industry all exist to maintain a culture intended to “discipline” those whose bodies refuse to—and for many simply cannot—conform to the standards of health.” Here colonial notions of “health” become an extension of the settler colonial domination and control of our bodies.



Colonial conceptions of health insidiously weave their ways into whanaungatanga ki a koe anō, reaching into our heads, into our minds. We discipline ourselves. We discipline each other. Rather than seeing ourselves as reflections of our wider relations, ngā atua, te taiao, whānau, their multitude of forms, their cycles and seasons, our visions of ourselves are distorted, flattened and made one dimensional. So too are the deep intimacies that arise from our relationships with kai, our divine senses, our feelings, the tohu that arise within our expansive bodies. We are disrupted from coming to a deep knowing of ourselves. Our deeply localised, collective, and intergenerational relationships with kai are violently damaged and disrupted through settler colonialism, disrupting our ability to deeply consider the intrinsic mana, tapu and mauri of ourselves, of each other, and of te taiao. Settler colonialism insidiously weaves its way throughout our lives, and thus cannot be ignored as we make sense of our pasts, presence and futures with kai.

²⁵ These are all important and intersecting areas that need to be deeply reckoned with in the context of public health in Aotearoa. An in-depth discussion here is out of the scope of this paper, we look to the work of those leading the way, our friends Ashlea Gillon (Gillon, 2020, Gillon & Pausè, 2022), Jason Boberg and Kera Sherwood-O’Regan (2021) in Aotearoa, and overseas to scholars such as Da’Shaun L. Harrison (2021) and Marquisele Mercedes (2021).



SEEING THROUGH

AND BEYOND

SETTLER

COLONIALISM



Seeing through and beyond settler colonialism

Settler colonial violence has not subsided over generations, it has only changed face, becoming more insidious (Jackson, 2019). The notion of hierarchy has corrupted and contaminated our understandings of whakapapa, which Ani Mikaere (2018, p285) describes as “a form of pollution that has rippled throughout our thinking and our practice”. Burgess and Painting (2020, p225) remind us:

Settler colonialism is a lie. Settler colonialism is not permanent, nor is it natural, normal or inevitable. Its societal institutions are founded on lies... In turn, the foundations of settler colonialism are fragile, thus extremely vulnerable, and amenable to change.

Settler colonialism is indeed a part of our present day, but it is just that, one part of our expansive existence. While whanaungatanga has been damaged and disrupted, our whakapapa remains at the core of who we are, unable to be severed. Burgess and Painting (2020, p227) articulate:

Through whakapapa and whanaungatanga we can heal damaged and disrupted relationships, within and between generations. Settler colonialism and whanaungatanga are antithetical to each other. Thus, we argue that whanaungatanga inherently dismantles settler colonialism. Whanaungatanga can therefore shape decolonisation.

This critique is not a start or end point, but an important layer if we are to see through and beyond settler colonialism and be in good relation with our mokopuna and tūpuna. We can widen and deepen our vision, and see that colonialism is not us.



Intergenerational intimacies:
being in good relation with kai

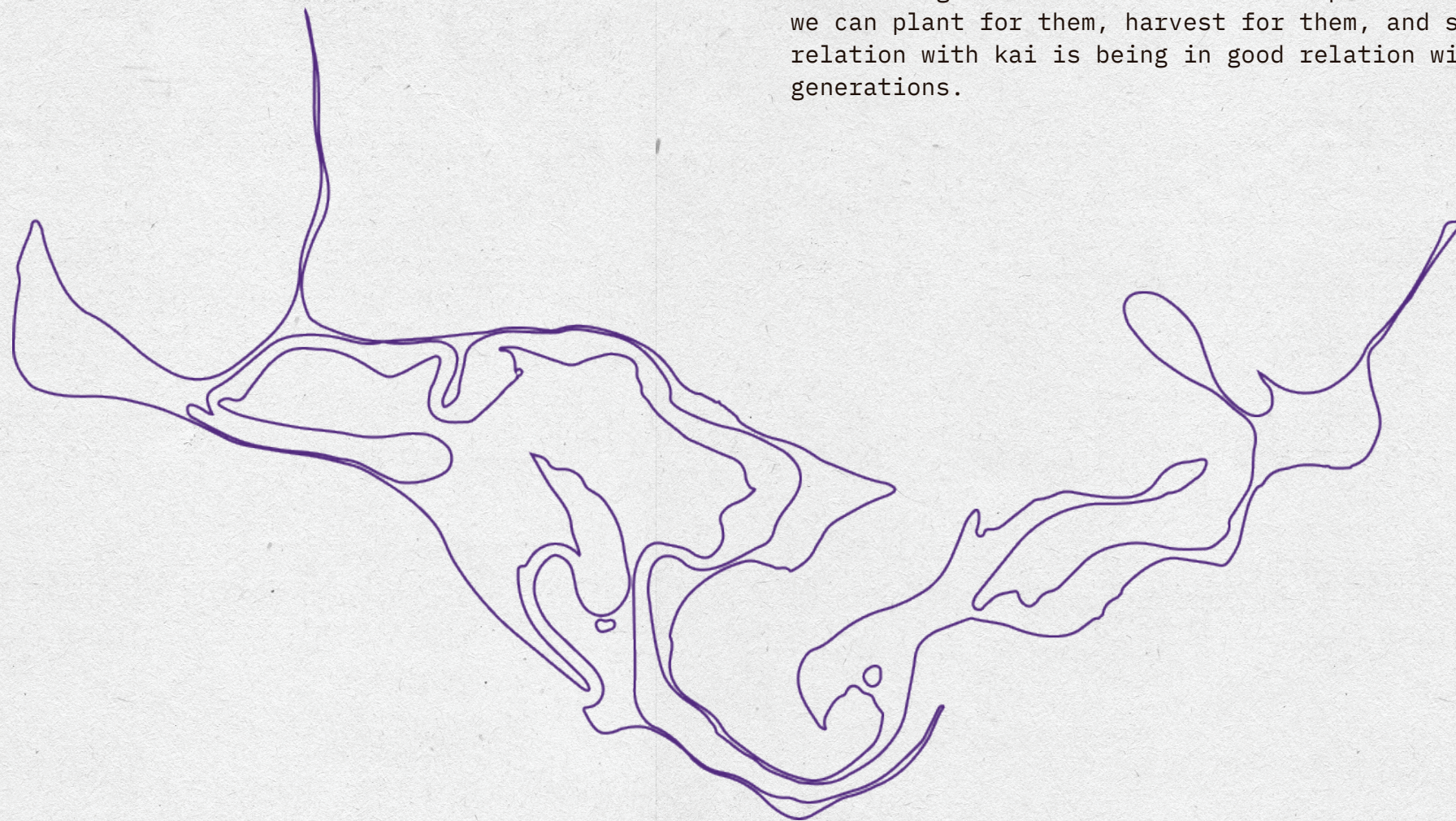
This section is our envisioning of being in good relation with kai. It is an opening, an imagining, an offering. It is what is called to the fore when we conceptualise kai through whakapapa. As we have illustrated, any conversation about kai is inherently a conversation about whanaungatanga. We offer the following points not as definitive, but as provocations, as an invitation for one to deeply consider one's own relationships with kai and the layers that make it up. It is an invitation to immerse oneself in the intergenerational intimacies that kai evokes.

We think to the words of Graham Hingangaroa Smith and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2018, p25) in that "there is a need for all of us to appreciate that what may seem a utopian vision is worth striving for and maybe won through a series of small and incremental gains rather than singular and spectacular actions". This is our small and incremental contribution—each meal, a small and incremental gain.

Kai as intergenerational

Acknowledging the intergenerational nature of kai calls us to immerse ourselves in whakapapa, and in whakapapa-based notions of time. Outlined in depth by Burgess and Painting (2020), through whakapapa we coexist with past and future generations, our mokopuna and tūpuna. As Māori, we see and understand time through onamata, anamata, through the eyes of our mokopuna and tūpuna. This is an intergenerational vision. It is through whakapapa that we can make sense of our role, as this current generation. Burgess and Painting (2020, p218) state "Looking with our tūpuna provides great insight into their aspirations for future generations. We join them as we look to the future for our mokopuna. Concurrently, our mokopuna look to us, as a part of generations of tūpuna."

Being in good relation with kai requires us to decenter the present and recognise that kai, and the layers that make it up, span generations. We can sit at our tables, and see generations of whanaungatanga unfolding, infinitely cascading oceans of whakapapa. We can be in good relation with our tūpuna, whose planting, harvesting, preparation, preservation was always done with us, future generations, in mind. We can look with them, and envision how we, in the present, can be in good relation with our mokopuna. We deeply consider how we can plant for them, harvest for them, and so forth. Being in good relation with kai is being in good relation with past and future generations.



Kai as te taiao

Being in good relation with kai intergenerationally means recognising that kai is not separate from te taiao. Kai is te taiao. By virtue of its descent from ngā atua, kai is imbued with mana, tapu and mauri. Kai is a reflection of the environments from which it emerges. This calls us to have a deep consideration of the ways we are in relation with te taiao. **Here, being in good relation requires us to be good teina, to noho teina, to whakarongo ki ngā tohu, to listen to the ways te taiao is communicating with us.**

Where we are mana whenua, we can get to know intimately the landscapes that constitute who we are. Guided by kōrero tuku iho we can stand in our awa, walk our maunga, swim in our moana. We can be immersed in the mana, tapu and mauri of te taiao, of ourselves. We can sit with and listen to the stories of our kaumātua. We can hear the songs sung by our aunties and uncles on our marae. We can walk with our tamariki as they play, laugh, and explore. Their curiosity can guide us.

Where we are manuhiri, we can be grateful for the presence of mana whenua, for those with enduring relationships to place, whose knowledge around the emergence of kai spans generations. We can look to mana whenua, and recognise our role as manuhiri, as tēina. We can offer our support and resources, and do what we can to ensure the mana of te taiao, and of mana whenua, is enhanced by our presence.



Kai as a call for critical analysis

Being in good relation with kai requires a deep reckoning with the ways settler colonialism continues to damage and disrupt whanaungatanga. As we have illustrated, settler colonialism profoundly distorts our conceptualisations of kai. An analysis of settler colonialism means grappling with the separation of Man and Nature, and imposition of hierarchies of race, class, and gender. Kai is deeply entwined with systems of power. The globalised food industry is political. **To have critical analysis absent risks further perpetuating settler colonial ideologies, allowing them to shape shift and deepen into envisionings of our futures.**

We need to push back against that which dismisses the inherent mana, tapu and mauri of te taiao and, by extension, ourselves. We need to push back against conceptualisations of food and health that continue to "Individualise, hierarchise, and universalise" (Day, 2021, p6), where Man remains at the center of existence. We must continue to dismantle systems of power. We must recognise our own positioning and privilege among these systems. Critical analysis means knowing when to speak, when to listen, when to support, and when to step aside.



Kai as community

To be in good relation with kai is to be in good relation with each other as tāngata. Through the land our pasts, presence and futures are deeply intertwined with our communities. From its planting, harvesting, preparation, and preservation, to its envisioning, kai is deeply and necessarily collective. Kai calls forth a rich diversity of skills, capacities, resources, and knowledge. As individuals we cannot know everything or do everything. **Kai demands communal effort. It demands interdependence. Kai reminds us that we cannot move into our futures alone. We need each other.** In this, kai presents a beautiful opportunity for whanaungatanga, for deepening our relationships with community, and with kai.

Importantly, intimate relationships with kai exist across Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa and beyond. Many of the foods we know today come from other lands and waters and carry with them their own stories. Immersed in their own kōrero tuku iho, these stories persist amongst Indigenous, Black, and Migrant communities around the world, and here in Aotearoa. This is something to be grateful for, as settler colonialism continues to deny the inherent mana, tapu and mauri of kai, silencing the stories of kai that sustain us. We can stand in solidarity with our relations from across oceans. As time and space collapses at our tables, we can learn together, sing together, eat together.



Kai as nourishment

To be in good relation with kai is to acknowledge the expansive ways that kai nourishes us. When we eat, we are nourished by past and future generations. Our tables, a beautiful symphony of intergenerational intimacies. When we eat, we are meeting the lands, waters, soils, the many relations that nurture our kai. We are meeting the people whose hands nurture the seeds. We hear their stories and songs. We are nourished. The mana, tapu and mauri of our kai is a reflection of them. We are a reflection of them. When we eat, we can meet ourselves. We can listen and learn, we can move with curiosity. We can come to understand what we need to feel nourished in any given moment, what we need to move through the day. Kai can teach us, guide us in what it means to be in good relation with ourselves, and with wider existence.

When we eat, we can be transported to the whenua of our ancestors. We stand with them, looking to Ranginui, to the same stars that signal the time to plant kūmara. We are transported to the same waters that our ancestors knew, where they harvested pātiki by the marama. We follow the same pathways through ngāhere, where pikopiko continue to unfurl. We are transported to our nannies māra, picking peaches and feijoas with them, from trees their nannies planted. We are in their kitchens following their recipes. We walk the whenua with them, sharing the hua with our wider whānau. We remember their laughter, their lessons and their growlings. We are nourished.

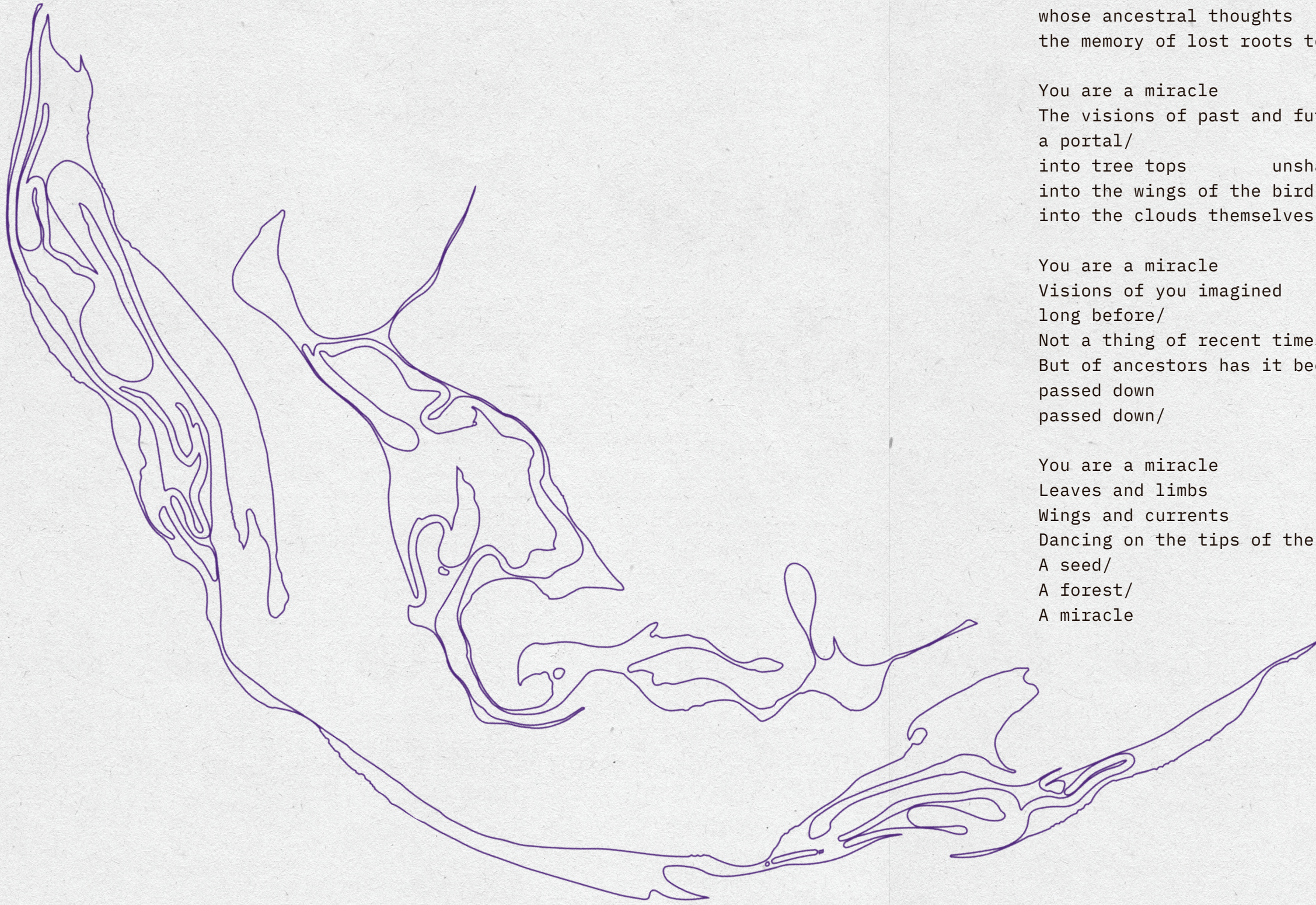
We look with them to future generations, to our mokopuna. We look to them standing in the same awa, walking the same maunga, swimming in the same moana. Our role as this current generation begins to take shape as we consider how they too will be nourished by these lands, waters, and soils. How they will learn the songs we sing, share the same stories, and create stories and songs of their own. We join them as they plant, and harvest. We sing with them, laugh with them, growl them even. We are at the table with them, immersed in these intergenerational intimacies. We nourish them, and are nourished in return.

Mauri ora.



Epilogue

Miracle (noun) / a phenomena inspiring awe and wonder; an extraordinary phenomena attributed to the presence of a divine power



The tips of their visions

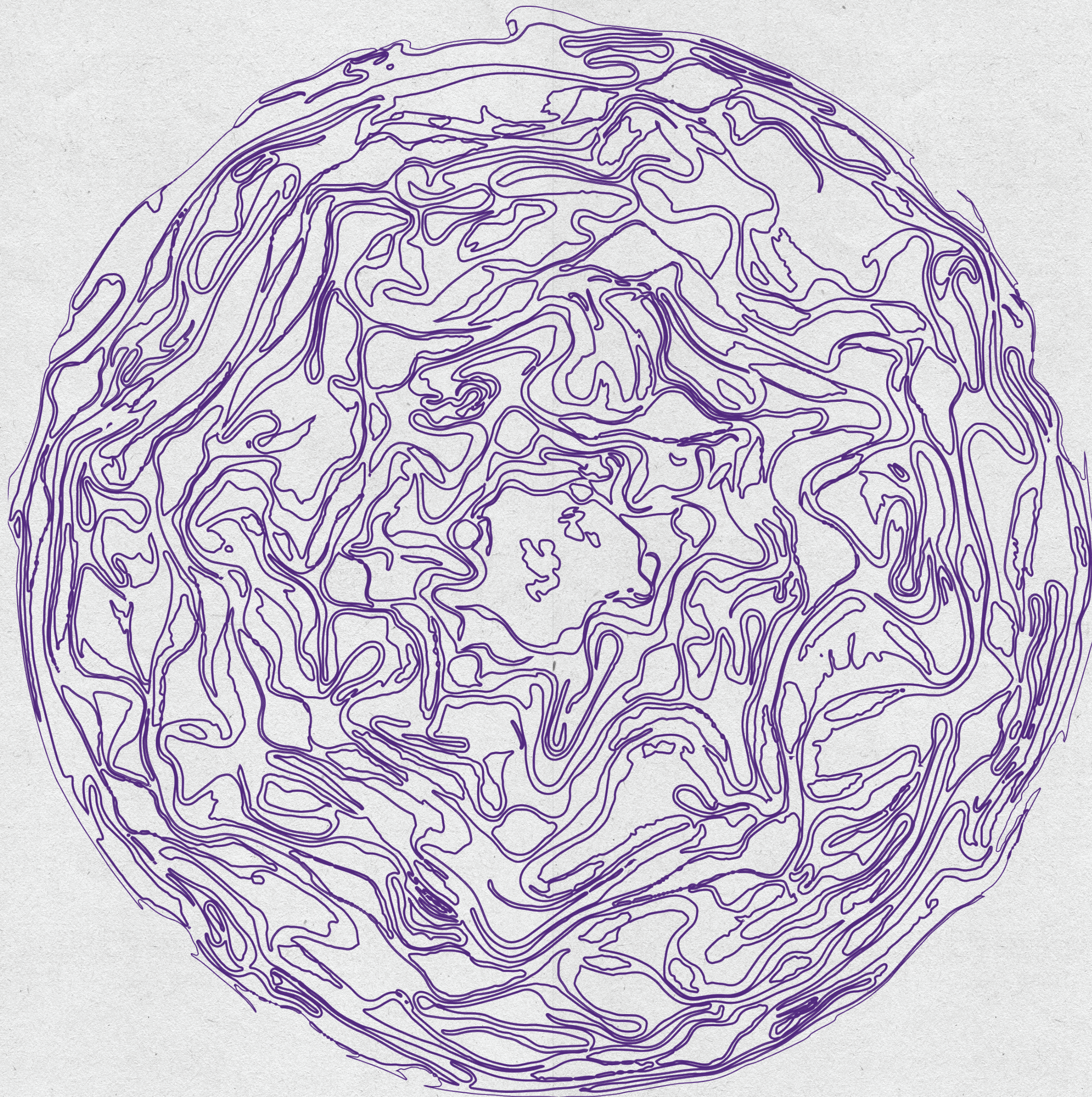
A poem written by Haylee for Hana, 2021

You are a miracle
The visions of a forest born in the form of a seed
a seed/
bound to sow words
whose ancestral thoughts return
the memory of lost roots to the soil/

You are a miracle
The visions of past and future pushing through the surface
a portal/
into tree tops unshaded
into the wings of the bird who soars on high
into the clouds themselves who no longer see, and still/

You are a miracle
Visions of you imagined
long before/
Not a thing of recent times is this love
But of ancestors has it been
passed down
passed down/

You are a miracle
Leaves and limbs
Wings and currents
Dancing on the tips of their vision
A seed/
A forest/
A miracle





References

A note on citational practice:

Much of what influences our thinking in this paper, particularly Haylee's thinking, is difficult to capture through standard citational practice. Haylee's thinking around kai is an accumulation of experiential learnings over years of being involved in kaupapa around Aotearoa. Citation is something we are deeply and continually making sense of (Burgess, Cormack and Reid, 2021). In this paper, alongside our citations we use footnotes to acknowledge the wider influences/ contributions of people, place and kaupapa that cannot necessarily be captured by way of reference to a particular publication or source.

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Wider influences:

Podcasts

Maintenance Phase Podcast

Debunking the junk science behind health fads, wellness scams and nonsensical nutrition advice. Hosted by Aubrey Gordon and Michael Hobbes. <https://www.maintenancephase.com/>

Zora's Daughters Podcast

A society and culture podcast that uses Black feminist anthropology to think about race, politics, and popular culture. Hosted by Alyssa A.L. James and Brendane Tynes. <https://zorasdaughters.com/>

For the Wild Podcast

An anthology of the Anthropocene; focused on land-based protection, co-liberation and intersectional storytelling. Hosted by Ayana Young. <https://forthewild.world/>

Dr. VANDANA SHIVA on Diverse Expressions of a Living Earth /311

Dr. VANDANA SHIVA on the Promise of the Commons /280

Dr. VANDANA SHIVA on Becoming Untameable /212

TRICIA HERSEY on Rest as Resistance /185

KYLE WHYTE on the Colonial Genesis of Climate Change /154

Cultivating Place Podcast

Conversations on Natural History and the Human Impulse to Garden. Hosted by Jennifer Jewell. <https://www.cultivatingplace.com/>

Cultivating Intention: Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Ali Meders-Knight, Mechoopda Maidu

Best of: Soul Fire Farm, Committed To Ending Racism In The Food System, Leah Penniman

Best of: The Palestine Heirloom Seed Library, Vivien Sansour

Taringa Podcast

A weekly casual chat about all things Te Ao Māori (Māori world view) and learning the Māori language by Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. <https://www.taringapodcast.com/>

Ep 133 - Tikanga 101 - Harikai

Ep 103 - Tikanga 101 - Kai Māori

Kaupapa

A Growing Culture

A non-profit organization working to unite the food sovereignty movement <https://www.agrowingculture.org/>

Soil of cultures

Reimagining our Food Systems through Art and Action. Lead by Charles Buenconsejo and Grace Bariso Buenconsejo. <https://www.soilofcultures.com/>

E Kai Māori

Reconnecting our culinary cultural heritage to our marae across the country. Lead by Joe Mcleod. <https://ekaimaori.co.nz/>

Te Waka Kai Ora

National Māori Organics Authority of Aotearoa. <https://www.tewakakaiaora.co.nz/>

Papawhakaritorito Charitable Trust

Kaupapa Māori research, education and development in relation to Māori food sovereignty, Hua Parakore and tino rangatiratanga activities. Lead by Jessica Hutchings and Jo Smith <https://www.papawhakaritorito.com/>

Tāhuri Whenua Incorporated Society

National Māori Vegetable Growers Collective representing Māori interests in the horticulture sector. <https://www.tahuriwhenua.org/>

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