# Artistic practices, representations of Māori women and the paradox of Kaupapa Māori

**Cat Ruka Gwynne**

**Abstract:** This article examines some of the ways in which young Māori women are negotiating their lives through contemporary colonization. By sharing stories around the key concepts of race and gender, insight is given into the notions of racist exclusivity and patriarchal authority in relation to being a Māori woman. The artistic practices of the participants are revealed as being ways in which to critique these subordinating notions, and to find a sense of agency or tino rangatiratanga that is relevant to their multi-cultural, multi-perspectival realities.

**Keywords:** artistic practice; colonization; feminist theory; Kaupapa Māori; multi-culturalism

## Introduction: Dance and the knowledge of our bodies

Dancing in the present, is to stir the sensations of our past. It is to come into a tangible contact with the quality and tone of the body's stored experiences, to rouse the memories of them so that they can swell into our cells, explode to the skin's surface, and relive to make a sacred exchange with the world again. Monsters and goblins may be there, a dusty, neglected old skeleton from a closet, or pehaps the warmth of a hand that once reached out towards your empty one. Whatever we bring back when we are inside that moment of dancing, time collapses the past into now and ritualizes our present, so that we can catch up, reconcile, grieve over, delight in and express the sensorial knowledge of our bodies.

In the later part of 2008, I decided to conduct a series of solo dance improvisations as a way of generating questions for research. I was interested in how dance improvisation might be used to bring to the surface body memories, and how those memories could inform a subjective, experiential and body-centred inquiry into research. As well as drawing on ideas from ideokinesis which, "places a person directly in touch with their own unique world of images, and with the unique operation of their own creative process" (Dempster, 1985, p. 20), I was also interested in how a Māori understanding of memory and its being stored in the bones might find relevance in this particular approach to knowledge. Key questions driving this investigation were: What can this dancing tell me about the memories stored within my body, so that I may look at those memories as pathways to knowledge? What could my moving body tell me about the subjective exchanges between my body and the world? What framework do I dance inside of, what fills the space that I move in? The method was simple: set up occasions within which the body was given license to move and reflect in privacy, and see what emerges.

The process resulted in me forming a diverse and messy collection of written reflections strung together by memories of racism. Through dancing, I was forced to confront how those experiences had directly affected my body. As the process developed, I realised that my body could be seen as a colonized object; a site of strain where the external inscriptions of hegemony attempt to etch themselves into bones and flesh and over the embodied teachings of my ancestors. With each movement of the spine was a wash of uncomfortable memory, realisation that I lacked agency over the way my body struck itself into being, realisation that resonating within this practice was a paradoxical view through the colonizing gaze (hooks, 1992) and myself as tangata whenua, as indigenous to this land. It felt as though it was an

issue of inscription, and how this had directly affected my identity and experiences as an indigenous woman.

## Linking embodied knowledge to a community

I started to wonder about the qualities of other Māori women's experiences of identity, and the diverse ways in which indigenous women negotiate their lives through contemporary colonization. A particular interest was in the lives of female Māori artists who have to make sense of their urban/global realities, and who use their chosen mediums to articulate and work through these issues.

Connecting my particular dance practice to a cultural community or collective began to interest me, and how I might contextualize this body memory within the experiences of other indigenous women. Anna Marie Christiansen (2000), a scholar of Pacific Island descent, suggests that, **"**perhaps the solution [to the problem of identity] will become apparent as women of colour in the academy make their communities the centre of study" (p. 193). As a dance practitioner, I began to think of making a dance out of the knowedge we could collaboratively construct from research, how it could be placed as koha (gift) to the contemporary struggles of indigenous women, and as an investigation into whether or not dance had the potential to contribute ideologically to the quest of Kaupapa Māori.

A curiosity also began to develop around how the process of research might be designed as a problem-solving action that fitted in with the aims and goals of Kaupapa Māori research, what we might learn from sharing stories and how we might move forward in our current colonial environments. According to Bishop (1998), "One fundamental understanding to a Kaupapa Māori approach to research is that it is the discursive practice that is Kaupapa Māori that positions researchers in such a way as to operationalize self-determination (agentic positioning and behaviour) for research participants" (p. 202). This idea is central to the present research situation, that is, to enable the participants to talk through their concerns and hopefully gain further understanding of their lives as Māori women. I was also interested in reducing the separation between researcher and participant, by placing myself in the discourse. One way of doing this was to use the principles of 'hui' (Māori meeting), which acknowledges everybody present as being active in collaboratively constructing story-lines (Bishop, 1998). In speaking of this, Bishop argues that:

> He or she does not start from a position outside of the group and then choose to invest him/herself. The researcher cannot 'position' him/herself or 'empower' the other. Instead, through entering a participatory mode of consciousness the individual agent of the 'I' of the researcher is released in order to enter a consciousness larger than the self (1998, p. 205).

This article draws on the knowledge generated at a hui that took place in Western Springs, Auckland, February 2009. Present at the hui was Jess Hansell who is also known as 'Coco Solid', a rapper/musician/writer, Jodhi Hoani, a visual artist/writer/production assistant, and myself as an emerging choreographer/choreographic researcher/writer. It examines some of the paradoxical identity-based experiences that were discussed and storied upon, and the way each of our artistic practises are used in relation to the experiences of being Māori and being female in our current urban and colonial context. This paper seeks insight into a way in which post-modern artistry can be used to critique racist exclusivity and patriarchy in relation to Māori women, and how it can be used to explore new modes of agency for Māori women in a complex, multi-cultural and global reality. It also demonstrates how Māori women are finding self-appropriate ways of exercising tino rangatiratanga (self-determination).

## Colonialism and Māori women

Many scholars have outlined the direct effects that the colonial project has had on the development and cultural evolution of indigenous peoples. According to Buckman (1995) colonization is a project that is based on a dialogue of domination and subordination, constructed out of the notion of difference, and is "established and maintained in order to serve the interests of the dominant group, fortifying its position and eroding choice for non-elites through force, authority, influence, and dominance" (p. 89). In specifying colonization in relation to Māori women, and in discussing what it means to be Māori and female in Aotearoa/New Zealand today, it is necessary to examine the colonial notions of race and gender, and how they interwove to create the dominant/subordinate lens through which Māori women were first viewed through. Goldberg (1993) speaks of the concept of race as being one of the central inventions of modernity and its underpinning philosophy of liberalism. The irony of modernity and racial invention is outlined by Goldberg, who suggests that although "race offers itself as a category capable of providing a semblance of social cohesion, of historical particularity, of *given* meanings and motivations to agents otherwise mechanically conceived as conduits for market forces and moral laws" it is also determined, in modernity's commitments to universality, "by the likes of racial specificity and racist exclusivity" (Goldberg, 1993, p. 4).

It is this racist exclusivity that has been experienced by indigenous people, and is highlighted by Smith (1999), who suggests that in some instances, we were not regarded as being fully human due to an assumption that, "We could not invent things, we could not create institutions or history, we could not imagine, we could not produce anything of value, we did not know how to use land and other resources from the natural world" (p. 25). Although Māori women had full status in Māori society at this time, the way in which they were viewed by colonizers through the lens of patriarchal authority meant that female chieftainship was considered to be an exception as opposed to being a normal part of the belief system (Smith, 1992). When the Māori understanding of gender is compared to the Western concept of gender being employed at the time of colonial initiation, we become aware of two very differing systems and ways of making sense of the world.

Smith (1999) extends this race/gender subordination dilemma further, however, and opens up a space in which we can discuss the current experiences and complexities of being female and Māori today. She points out that the process of description, objectification and representation of indigenous women by Europeans in the nineteenth century has not only created marginalization within the colonizing society, but also within indigenous societies. It is also suggested by Goldberg (1993) that "How we comprehend others and conceive our social relations and how we come thus dialectically to some sort of self-understanding are molded by concepts central to the dominant sociodiscursive scheme" (p. 2). This indicates that the way in which Māori women are described, viewed and represented can no longer be essentially associated with the colonizer and its descendants, and is therefore not an issue of Pākehā views of indigenous women, but rather an issue of stereotyping that can be learnt and employed by anyone, independent from a particular race. "What makes ideas 'real' is the system of knowledge, the formations of culture, and the relations of power in which these concepts are located" (Smith, 1999, p. 48).

In speaking of power, Foucault (1980) argues that we should regard structures of power not as being monolithic, but rather as being fragmented and constructed from one situation to another. This idea was brought up in the narratives of our hui and was related to by all of us. By sharing stories with each other, we realized that our experiences as Māori women spoke of a complexity that did not have a clear and linear history, and that our realities challenged the simplistic binary of colonizer and colonized. The convenor of the hui, Jodhi Hoani, expresses this in our stories about schooling. She states that, "We have all been to the same schools, and it's quite plausible that a Māori could start coming up with those stereotypes too, because

they may have been taught those things as well" (J. Hoani, Hui, February, 2009). In our discussions of tino rangatiratanga, Jodhi raises another point that challenges the colonizer/colonized binary when she points out that "I do find that there are Māori situations that I will walk into when I am even more aggressively received"(J. Hoani, Hui, February, 2009).

## Kaupapa Māori and self-determination

The indigenous political and social agenda known as Kaupapa Māori is a revitalization movement that developed after the post-Second World War urban Māori migration, intensifying throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Bishop, 1998). According to Nagel (1994), "cultural revivals and restorations occur when lost or forgotten cultural forms or practices are excavated and reintroduced" (p. 162). This loss of autonomy over cultural forms and practices for Māori resulted in key cultural beliefs such as *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty), *whanau, hapu, iwi* (extended family, sub-tribal groupings and tribe), *te reo* (Māori language) and *tikanga Māori* (Māori cultural customs) being employed as foundational concepts to voice and put into action the challenges for Māori across multiple sites (Smith, 1999).

All women from the hui spoke of employing the concepts of Kaupapa Māori in their life and artistry. More specifically, we spoke of employing the notion of tino rangatiratanga or self-determination as a way in which to work through the issues of racist exclusivity and patriarchal authority. However, it is notable that we all had experiences that asserted a frustration towards the irony of what could be described as side-effects of the practice of Kaupapa Māori. We felt that although Kaupapa Māori as a movement sets out to achieve self-determination, we all had experienced subordination and marginalization within it. In relating to this, I said:

> *I think with the revolution though, there are romantic notions around it…I think sometimes we get mistaken with thinking that we have an enemy and that it's a fight…but we're actually looking for a positive outcome out of this, not a war. There's authority on both sides that we need to question* (C. Gwynne, Hui, February, 2009).

Our rangatira Jodhi offers tautoko (support) for this statement and says,

> *Sometimes I get the impression from other revolutionaries that - I know that you're fighting the good fight and I know that what you're saying is right - but you're just another voice if you're telling somebody what to do and how to roll* (J. Hoani, Hui, February, 2009).

Jodhi then provides an example of the way in which she experienced colonial authority in a Kaupapa Māori context:

> *When we were looking for a kura kaupapa for Manaaki we went to one that worked on a prefect in the playground sort of thing, where they would report you and you would get sent to the principal if you korero Pākehā [spoke English] in the playground and your playtime was taken away from you…*(J. Hoani, Hui, February, 2009).

Larner (1995) states that "the 1970s were the years in which young Māori activists, many of whom were women, were combining long-standing grievances about land, culture and language with new protest strategies and goals adapted from international civil rights and feminist movements" (Larner, 1995, p. 182). From this statement we can extrapolate that the movement of Kaupapa Māori was linked to a global indigenous movement, and is therefore,

partly global in nature and in its philosophy. Turner (2002) takes this one step further and suggests that "…indigenous movements are not only indicative of processes of globalization but more objectively representative of them than what we typically take to be postmodern phenomena…" (p. 76). This supports the ironic tension experienced by us as Māori women, in that even though Kaupapa Māori as a movement aims to challenge the dominant discourses of colonial modernity and liberalism, it is also part of a wider global, modern, and liberalist movement. It therefore quite possibly employs colonial notions of patriarchal authority and racial exclusivity. Failure to recognize this can potentially result in inclusion and exclusion by those who assert an essentialist stance. Jodhi rounds this irony off for us by stating:

> *We recognize and we try and strengthen our roots as being Māori, maybe we could reflect that back and look at our roots as being Pākeha, because there are some amazing stories of white women who have travelled on waka to get here too* (J. Hoani, Hui, February, 2009).

## Identity, stereotypes and Māori women

Something that further challenges the colonizer/colonized binary that Kaupapa Māori can potentially assert, and which leads us into the area of identity, is how as multi-cultural indigenous women, we are each fitting *tino rangatiratanga* into our complex 'multipositional' identities. The following story told strongly by Jess speaks to this clearly:

> *Sorry I don't belong to you, I don't belong to you either, and there is nothing you can do about it because I am operating in a space that is completely governed by concepts and motifs and ideas and kaupapa that I formed independently of all of these conventions. And that's when I have that feeling of effective fusion, and when I feel like I am communicating a true idea that is independent of all those cultural obligations or political obligations. To me that's tino rangatiratanga* (J. Hansell, Hui, February, 2009).

This expression voiced by Jess brings us into what it means to be Māori women who are part of an urban, global and multi-cultural reality. We talk about a frustration of feeling as though we are quite frequently viewed and validated in relation to fixed representations and stereotypes of ourselves, even though our complex realities do not fit into these stereotypical images. Christiansen (2000) relates to this when she states that, "Even as our identities are layered with various experiences, we [pacific islanders] are often perceived by others as having a fixed identity based on how various cultural and political conditions shape perceptions" (p. 190).

In relation to my own experiences, this notion is taken further when in the hui I talk about past memories of feeling as though at times (and perhaps to some degree, always) I was perpetuating these stereotypes; and felt as though I experienced the world *through* the stereotypes and representations given to me. In relation to this, Goldberg (1993) argues that prevailing concepts stemming from dominant discourses project an image of the subject, and that the social formation of this subject largely involves us thinking of ourselves as this projected image. Christiansen (2000) relates to this notion when she reflects on her experiences and states "I was acting according to how I thought others were seeing me, allowing their perceptions to dictate how I thought about myself" (p. 190). In relation to our stories of stereotypes and representation, Jess expresses a frustration that comes from her experiences as a musician, and she asks the question, "Does it mean that if I don't employ a particular motif or idea or kaupapa, it depreciates my value as a Māori entity, as a Māori artist?" (J. Hansell, Hui, February, 2009). This point is echoed by a story of Jodhi's in relation to the images that she has chosen to tattoo on her body, and the ways in which those images are received by others:

> *I have Hong Kong Fui tattoos, and people don't really know how to get that…They go, oh but she's Māori. Well why wouldn't a Māori woman like Hong Kong Fui? Think about it! ... Let's start these conversations, are we really living together as one big multi-cultural country, and what does that really look like?* (J. Hoani, Hui, February, 2009).

According to Larner (1995), it is necessary to accept that our identities are likely to be dis-unified and contradictory; and that the subject positions from which they emerge are multiple and develop in relation to each other. A concern raised by Jess in relation to this was, "So what becomes of somebody who's born to both worlds? When the two worlds don't know each other?" (J. Hansell, Hui, February, 2009). Campbell (1993) relates to this expression by recognizing that "…subjects may simultaneously belong to groups that are associated with quite contradictory recipes for living" (p. 52). Jess continues her story and suggests, "Maybe that's where our passion for the hybrid world comes from; it neutralizes us from all expectations from our conflicting worlds" (J. Hansell, Hui, February, 2009).

## Finding self-determination through cultural hybridity

Throughout the hui, *cultural hybridity* in our postmodern artwork reveals itself as a way in which to critique stereotypes, to overcome the paradoxes of being Māori women today, and to feel as though we can exercise some sort of agency or self-determination that is independent of the rules belonging to our conflicting worlds. An example is provided by Jess (Figure 1).

> *I use my art as a total therapeutic autobiographical extension of my identity, workshopping my complexes, experimenting with self, and an opportunity to have fun and have control over my representation because I have no control of it anywhere else in society* (J. Hansell, Hui, February, 2009).

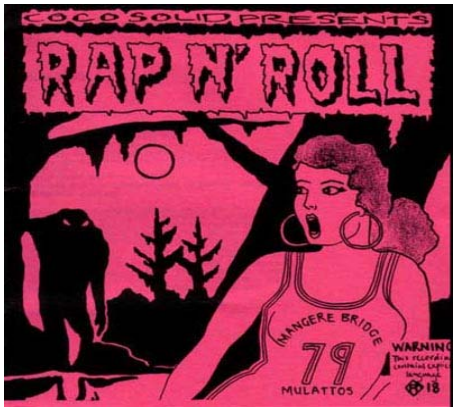


**Figure 1. Jess Hansell's album. It indicates the hybridized sound of her music and artistry. (Artwork by Zelda Murray)**

Smith (1999) argues that the indigenous critique of Kaupapa Māori has consisted of a constant reworking of our understandings of the impacts of colonialism and imperialism, and part of this critique has been to draw upon "a notion of authenticity, of a time before colonization in which we were intact as indigenous peoples" (p. 24). In the hui however, we discussed an authenticity that is suitable and relevant for us *now*, and how we negotiate through our circumstances and artistry in order to act from a place that feels 'true'. A story of Jess's echoes this:

> *We must preserve the reo [language], we must preserve the tikanga [customs], you have to preserve the things that go along with our culture because we are living in such a colonized reality…we are responsible for our taonga [treasures]. But at the same time, sometimes you just don't relate to something like kapahaka, you know, sometimes you just don't relate on any level.* (J. Hansell, Hui, February, 2009).

For us, we spoke of authenticity being less about returning to a time before colonization, and more about drawing from what is around us, from acknowledging the truth of our whakapapa and our global realities. In Jess's story, kapahaka acts as another example of irony – even though its aim is to find cultural 'authenticity', sometimes the truth of our experiences means that it cannot be related to, and is therefore, not authentic.

In her choreography for the music video 'Space Surfer', Cat Gwynne uses a hybridization of contemporary dance techniques and aesthetics, and the genre of hip hop dance (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Choreography for the 'State of Mind' music video 'Space Surfer' by Cat Gwynne.**

> *I think dance has the potential to de-colonize all of our notions about identity, because it is to do with the body. Things like race and gender and sexuality, these colonial categories are all to do with the body and the way that it's represented in the world, and I think dance can be used to expose the body beyond these categories. That's how I use dance.* (C. Gwynne, Hui, February, 2009)

In speaking of 'blackness' and postmodernism, bell hooks (1990) suggests that "Postmodern critiques of essentialism which challenge notions of universality and static over-determined identity within mass culture and mass consciousness can open up new possibilities for the construction of the self and the assertion of agency" (p. 10). In the hui, we spoke of finding this agency or authenticity artistically through the technique of hybridity, through confusing the fixed rules and symbols of the many cultures we feel a part of. Finding agency for us has meant including rather than fighting those parts of ourselves that our colonial ancestors have opened us up to, and as suggested by Christiansen (2000) in referring to gender:

> Recognising the dimension of my gender in reference to my cultural background means much more than openly talking about Polynesian myth and menstrual cycles. It means that I actively own how my gender has been shaped by cultural forces (Polynesian or others) and vice versa (p. 194).

In speaking of agency, authenticity and 'truth' Jess states:

> *You're an entity that no one will ever be able to lock down. Once you embrace that, I think you're free to be true to yourself. That's my ultimate, is that I am true to the situation, and I am true to myself in the situation. For a long time, I thought I was doing it right or wrong, and then you realize there is no right or wrong. It's just about being true to yourself* (J. Hansell, Hui, February, 2009).

In our stories of multi-culturalism however, Jodhi brings another contradictory or paradoxical point to our awareness. She reminds us that the rules of engagement of tikanga Māori are receptive of multi-culturalism, and allow for the many cultural dimensions of a person to be embraced. A simple example of this can be seen in the way that we identify ourselves as Māori with a *mihimihi* (speech of greeting/tribute) when we are visiting marae or are at a hui. As opposed to being defined by your race and gender, you are understood by where you come from, by the mountain and waters you are associated with through your bloodline, by the name of the waka (canoe) that your ancestors travelled on to get to Aotearoa/New Zealand, by the name of your iwi (tribal grouping). This is echoed by Bishop (1998) who states that, "[A] mihimihi is a statement of where you are from and of how you can be related to these other people and their land, in both the past and the present" (p. 203). It is paradoxical however, that even though tikanga Māori embraces people in this way, we spoke of experiencing marginalization by Māori: for recognizing our Pākehā lineage; for not fitting into a comprehendible image; for being female: and perhaps for having an urban or more global reality. In speaking of her urban reality, Jess states:

> *I am a city girl. I was born in South Auckland you know? I was raised in that kind of system. I was educated in the urban schools. I have tried to embrace that kind of rural traditional Māori ideal…but the truth is I am not a small town girl, and that affects the work I want to make* (J. Hansell, Hui, February, 2009).

Again, this raises questions around the revitalisation movement of Kaupapa Māori, and whether or not, in its very attempt to revitalize culture, it has also ironically taken on the racist exclusivity and patriarchal interpretation of gender that it sought to dismantle. bell hooks (1992) gives an example of this irony by suggesting that although the Black Power movement of the 1960s was influenced by the modernist discourses of gender, race and class, this was not recognised with the movement itself and therefore issues such as patriarchy and racism were left unaddressed. As mentioned earlier, Smith (1999) puts this paradox down to the process of description, objectification and representation of indigenous women by Europeans in the nineteenth century creating marginalization within indigenous societies. This is supported by Goldberg (1993), who argues that we understand ourselves and make sense of our social relations through whatever the dominant sociodiscursive concepts are.

As suggested by our rangatira Jodhi, a return to tikanga and an examination of its philosophical underpinnings may remind us of the world-view that we are struggling to have autonomy over, and may ask us to rework and re-evaluate the ways in which we are approaching the movement of Kaupapa Māori:

> *We have rules of engagement about things. We've got ways of moving into lots of different scenarios, and so you learn how to read those waters, and you just know what kind of waka to take in that water really. Sometimes we might crash and burn, and then other times its plain sailing. I think that we just negotiate it in the way that we always do, which is being able to read a situation, being able to move freely between whatever world we're in* (J. Hoani, Hui, February, 2009).

## Conclusion

In the context of initiating qualitative research, dance improvisation reveals itself as being a way in which to generate subjective, experience-based research inquiries. By linking these subjective experiences to a community through ethnographic research (in this case through stories at hui), the researcher's community becomes the object of study, thereby giving voice in an academic setting to groups that may be marginalized or under subordination by dominant structures of power. As a researcher, the acknowledgement of my subjective experiences as Māori and female has allowed me to give voice to my own marginalized community, and dance improvisation provided the inroad into doing so.

In terms of a methodology for Kaupapa Māori research, using hui and discourse to investigate our identity-based experiences proved to be beneficial for all participants. The emergent approach to knowledge that hui provides means that participants could work through what was necessary for themselves, as opposed to having to answer questions that were pre-determined by the researcher. It proved to be an holistic approach to knowledge that was culturally significant for the participants and for the subject matter. In this particular instance, the hui marked an evolutionary exchange for the participants between past experiences and ways of approaching the future. This can be echoed in Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the 'rhizome' (2004), in which the hui could be seen as "an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying" (p. 11). Future methodological research may benefit from a deeper dialogue between the rhizome theory of Deleuze and Guattari (2004) and the investigations into Kaupapa Māori research (Bishop, 1998; Smith, 1990; Smith, 1999).

Through the examination of some experiences of what it is like to be a young Māori woman living in an urban and global environment today, the colonial notions of racial exclusivity and patriarchal authority were revealed as being systems of power that are now independent of the colonizer. This means that stereotypes and representations of Māori women that stem from these colonial notions can be learned by anyone, and that subordination and marginalization can be experienced by Māori women within 'Māori' contexts as well. The diverse experiences of Māori women reveal themselves as being pertinent to a critique of current systems of power, as they not only expose racial exclusivity and patriarchal authority as stemming from the colonizing gaze, but also that this colonizing gaze can and is employed by indigenous people themselves.

Experiences from the hui expressed frustration towards perceptions of fixed identity, and that we have at times felt as though we are expected by Māori, Pākehā and others, to experience the world and validate ourselves through static images of self. As voiced in the hui, our identities as Māori women are not fixed, and that living in an urban/global environment means that our realities are constructed in a complex manner. Through sharing stories it becomes apparent that being an indigenous woman in this country also means being a multi-cultural, multi-constructed subject whose whakapapa (lineage) is diverse.

The cultural revitalization movement of Kaupapa Māori is experienced by the women present at the hui as being paradoxical, and as having both positive and negative effects in relation to being Māori. As Turner (2002) suggests, indigenous movements are indicative of processes of globalization. It can therefore be extrapolated that Kaupapa Māori is partly modern and liberal in its philosophical underpinnings, which needs to be addressed in order to prevent racist exclusivity and patriarchal authority within the movement itself. Has Kaupapa Māori affected the evolution of our culture? Does Kaupapa Māori, in its attempt to revitalize culture, insist on revitalizing a certain kind of ideal that does not necessarily apply or have relevance for everyone today? Perhaps the attempt to return to a place of 'authenticity' belonging to pre-colonial times has created ideals in itself, ideals of the past which cannot be related to and therefore, do not feel authentic. Perhaps authenticity can be found by looking at our current

reality, by actively being ourselves, by acknowledging rather than fighting the many worlds we are a part of today, and considering those worlds as being 'authentically Māori'.

Through speaking of our artwork in relation to our experiences as Māori women, it became apparent that the postmodern artistic technique of 'cultural hybridity' can be used to find a sense of authenticity, agency and self-determination for female Māori artists living in multi-perspectival realities. Cultural hybridity reveals itself as being a way in which to avoid racist exclusivity and essentialism, and to critique the stereotypical images of ourselves asserted by structures of power. In this sense, art opens up a space in which tino rangatiratanga can be asserted through finding new and relevant constructions of self.

Above all, our rangatira of the hui, Jodhi Hoani, reminded us that the rules of engagement of tikanga (customs) give space for the recognition of multi-culturalism, diversity in whakapapa and multi-perspectival realities. Perhaps there is a discrepancy between these specific rules of engagement and the way in which Kaupapa Māori is being approached and asserted as a modern movement. The stories from our hui suggest that it is possible to assert racist exclusivity and patriarchal authority within the framework of Kaupapa Māori, a paradox which could possibly be overcome by closer examination of the philosophical underpinnings of tikanga.

## References

Bishop, R. (1998). Freeing ourselves from neo-colonial domination in research: a Maori approach to creating knowledge. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(2) 199-219.

Buckman, R. (1995). The body as a site of colonization: Alice Walker's possessing the secret of joy. *The Journal of American culture*, *18*(2) 89-94.

Campbell, C. (1993). Identity and Difference. *Agenda: Women and Difference, 19*(1) 45-63.

Christiansen, A. (2000). Cultural hybridity, gender and identity: a Pacific Islander woman in the academy. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies, 21*(3) 187-196.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (2004). *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Continuum

Dempster, E. (1985). Imagery, ideokinesis and choreography. *Writings on Dance, 1*(5) 48-61.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: selected interview & other writings 1972-77.* Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Goldberg, D.T. (1993). *Racist Culture: philosophy and the politics of meaning.* Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing.

hooks, b. (1990). Postmodern blackness. *Postmodern Culture , 1*(1) 23-31.

hooks, b. (1992). *Black looks: race and representation*. Boston: South End Press.

Larner, W. (1995). Theorising 'difference' in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Gender, Place and Culture, 2*(2) 177–190.

Nagel, J. (1994). Constructing ethnicity: creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture. *Social problems special issue on immigration, race and ethnicity in America, 41*(1) 152-176.

Smith, G. (1990). *Research issues related to Māori education.* Paper presented to NZARE Special Interest Conference, Massey University, reprinted in 1992, *The Issue of Research and Māori,* Research Unit for Māori Education, University of Auckland.

Smith, L. (1992). Māori women : discourses, projects and Mana Wahine. In S. Middleton & A. Jones (Eds.), *Women and education in Aotearoa 2.* Wellington: Bridget Williams Books.

Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Turner, S. (2002). Sovereignty, or the art of being native. *Cultural Critique*, 51(1) 74–100.

## Author Notes

The author extends appreciation to Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga for supporting this research through its Internship programme.

Catherine Moana Te Rangitakina Ruka Korako Gwynne (Ngapuhi, Waitaha) is a graduate student at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She is currently completing her Masters in Creative and Performing Arts (Dance) at the NICAI Faculty's Dance programme.

E-mail: catgwynne@gmail.com