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# Whose Futures?

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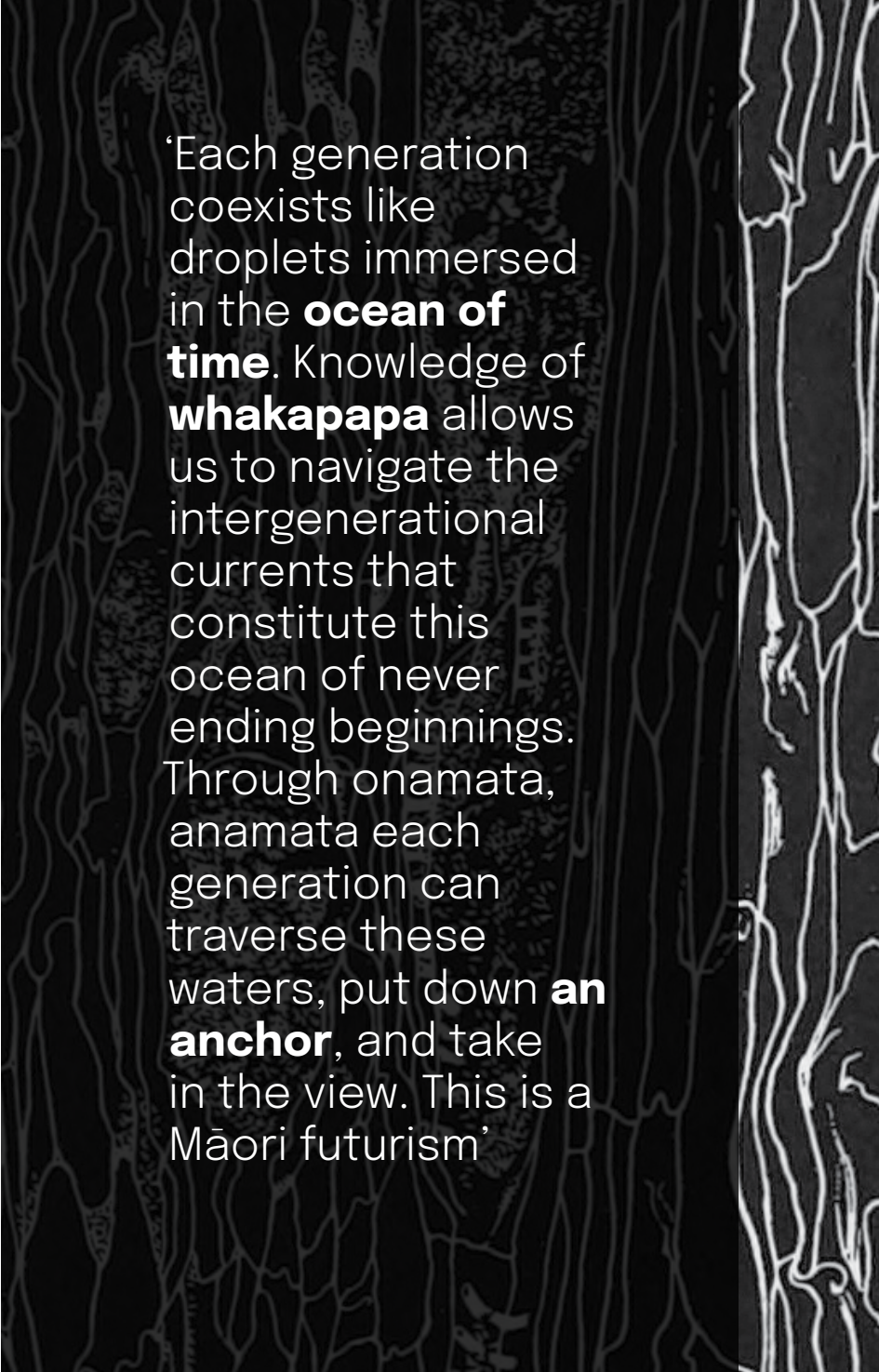
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‘Each generation coexists like droplets immersed in the **ocean of time**. Knowledge of **whakapapa** allows us to navigate the intergenerational currents that constitute this ocean of never ending beginnings. Through onamata, anamata each generation can traverse these waters, put down **an anchor**, and take in the view. This is a Māori futurism’



Hana Burgess

(Ngāpuhi, Te Roroa, Te Ātihaunui a Pāpārangī,  
Ngāti Tūwharetoa)

Te Kahuratai Painting

(Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Rongo, Ngāti Raukawa,  
Ngāti Tūwharetoa)

## **Onamata, anamata: A whakapapa perspective of Māori futurisms**

Ka mimiti te puna i Taumārere, ka totō  
te puna i Hokianga,  
Ka totō te puna i Taumārere, ka mimiti  
te puna i Hokianga.

E whakarongo ana taua ki ngā tai e rua –  
Te Tai Tamatane, Te Tai Tamawahine.

We write this as two descendants of Ngāpuhi from Te Tai Tokerau, connected by the Hokianga flowing to the fierce waters of the west coast, and by Taumārere flowing to the tranquil waters of the east coast. Our roots remain in Te Tai Tokerau, and spread across Te Ika a Maui. We think and theorise as wahine and tane respectively. Born in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa in the early 90s, we live under the shelter of the maunga of Tāmaki Makaurau and the manaakitanga of mana whenua of Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāi Tai, Te Wai-o-Hua, Ngāti Whātua-o-Ōrākei, Ngāti Te Ata, Ngāti Rongo and Te Kawerau-a-Maki.

The thoughts in this paper reflect those of our relations, emerging from generations before us, our tūpuna. We acknowledge the futurists in our lives, our relations that we think with; our kaumatua, tuākana and tēina, our whānau, friends, and communities. We acknowledge our more than human relations, for so patiently teaching us how to think, and live well in this world. And we acknowledge our mokopuna, whom these thoughts are for.

Whakapapa weaves all of existence together into an ever-expanding web of intimate relationships, forming the basis of Māori ways of being, knowing, and doing. Connected by our origin stories, whakapapa reveals that this web of relationships is whānau, existing in a state of whanaungatanga. With whakapapa, past and future generations, our tūpuna and mokopuna, are intimately related. Mokopuna are reflections of tūpuna. Whakapapa can explain the origins, positioning, and futures of all things. Any conversation about the future, is inherently a conversation about whakapapa. With this, any conversation about the future is inherently about our relationships with our mokopuna. Here, the future is not something unknown and separate from us, but something that we are intimately related to all the time. As Māori, we are constantly thinking about our tūpuna and our mokopuna, because they are here with us. We see into the past and future with them, this is known as *onamata, anamata*.

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. For our generation, this requires seeing through, and beyond, settler colonialism. We argue that settler colonialism is the antithesis of whanaungatanga, but in this, whanaungatanga becomes the antithesis of settler colonialism. Here, being in good relation is decolonisation. Thinking and

theorising about the future through whakapapa has always been a part of our everyday existence as Māori. Thus, whakapapa is a Māori futurism.

### **Whakapapa: The nature of our existence**

The concept of whakapapa explains the origins, positioning, and futures of all things.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 biological descent. However, as Māori, we understand whakapapa as much more expansive.<sup>3</sup> 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, you can know how it came to be, and how it relates to wider existence. In knowing whakapapa, we can know what will come to be – we can know the future.

Whakapapa allows us to understand the world in all its complexities. It not only provides a body of knowledge, but a way of comprehending the universe, forming the foundation of Māori ways of being, knowing, and doing.<sup>4</sup> In knowing our whakapapa, we know our place in the world. This establishes important guidelines for being in good relation with the rest of existence, intergenerationally.

### **Whanaungatanga: Being in good relation**

Through whakapapa, all of existence is whanaunga, existing in a natural state of whanaungatanga. In this context, we interpret the concept of whanaungatanga as pertaining to the notion of ‘being in good relation’, which Kim TallBear draws from a Dakota understanding of existence.<sup>5</sup> ‘Whanaunga’ refers to relation, and the suffix ‘-tanga’ denotes being in the state of. We propose that being in relation is ‘good’ as whakapapa has inherent value in Te Ao Mārama. When we speak of whanaungatanga in this paper, or being in good relation, we are inherently talking about our whanaungatanga through whakapapa. The notion of being in good relation, within and between generations, is a common thread among Indigenous peoples,<sup>6</sup> weaving together the existence of Indigenous peoples, lands and oceans worldwide.

Intergenerational relationships through whakapapa are the ‘essential nature of all reality’,<sup>7</sup> and are ontologically privileged in Māori thought.<sup>8</sup> To *be* is to *be in relation*. Relationships constitute who we are. Within this worldview, nothing exists in isolation. In fact, the notion of isolation is a fallacy. Everything in existence is infinitely and complexly in relation all the time. This shapes a reality of interdependency,<sup>9</sup> where the well-being of the whole is dependent on the well-being of its closely related components, and vice versa. When these relationships are at their natural state of balance, we are well.

As people, we encounter the world as but one part of this intimate web of whanaungatanga, thus have an obligation to maintain the balance of the whole. In order to do so, we must know our whakapapa, our place in the world. Our collective well-being as peoples rests on this. In knowing our whakapapa, we can come to know how to be in good relation. While our networks of relationships are complex,

multifaceted and infinite, we can consider existence in terms of four key layers of whanaungatanga: whanaungatanga ki ngā atua, ki te taiao, ki te tāngata, ki a koe anō – relationships with ancestors of continuing influence, the natural world, people, and the self.<sup>10</sup> While these separations are somewhat arbitrary, this allows us to begin to unravel the many layers of our existence, and we can come to know our obligations to our whanaunga. These obligations can offer us guidance, which is a blessing. Especially when faced with uncertainty. Fulfilling these obligations brings intimacy, wellness, and joy. Knowing our whakapapa brings us joy.

In Te Ao Mārama, all of existence descends from Ranginui and Papatūānuku, our primordial parents. With this, the complementary nature of te ira tane and te ira wahine (masculine and feminine essence) flows through all of creation. 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 tuakāna. As tēina, we look to our tuākana for guidance. They show us how to be in good relation. This is illustrated by Robin Wall Kimmerer:

In Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as the ‘younger brothers of Creation.’ We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn – we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance. Their wisdom is apparent in the way they live. They teach us by example. They’ve been on the earth far longer than we have been, and have had time to figure things out.<sup>11</sup>



Ngā atua have continuing influence over Te Ao Mārama, imbuing the natural world with mana. Fundamentally beyond translation into te reo Pākehā,<sup>12</sup> mana is associated with notions of spiritual influence, power, strength, status, and collective acknowledgement of virtue. Mana is generative, taking on many forms, and is of great importance in Te Ao Mārama, mediating the ways in which we are in relation with our whanaunga. We must be aware of the integral presence of mana in all our relations. From this awareness, mana must be appreciated and respected, and interactions and phenomena must enhance it – this is referred to as manaakitanga. Mana is central to the integrity of whanaungatanga.<sup>13</sup>

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. Being in good relation occurs in place. Those who have mana whenua have deep, intergenerational relationships with these areas, practised and refined over generations. Mana whenua know best how to be in good relation in any given area. Therefore, when we move through land, we must look to, and be in good relation with, mana whenua. With nothing existing in isolation in Te Ao Mārama, no land is ‘empty’. A relationship between people and the land already exists, and, when we are manuhiri, we are woven into existing networks of relationships, and have an obligation to maintain balance.

We are descendents of Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, thus the moana is another important source of mana – mana moana. Our whanaungatanga to the moana is articulated by Moana Jackson:

The tīpuna 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.<sup>14</sup>

Being in good relation extends to our whanaunga in the Pacific, our tuākana from which we descend, who have deep intergenerational relationships with and through these waters. Our tūpuna traversed these waters and arrived to Aotearoa on waka that we still name when we introduce ourselves. We must continue to nurture these relationships. Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa constitutes a third of the surface of the Earth, and immense depth, thus these relationships are as vast and significant as our whakapapa that connects us to them.

Within this complex, multifaceted and infinite existence, we consider what this means in terms of our whanaungatanga ki a koe anō, the relationship with the self. As individuals, to know ourselves, is to know how we relate to the world, our whakapapa. To know your whakapapa, means not only to know your descendants, but your wider place in the intimate web of existence. These layers of whanaun-

gatanga – ngā atua, te taiao, te tāngata – comprise who we are. We are never isolated. Such knowledge can guide how we move through the world and be well within it. 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.

Importantly, whakapapa traverses time and space. Our existence as Māori is intergenerational, each of us intimately connected to innumerable past and future generations, our tūpuna and our mokopuna. We live as though they are here with us, seeing what we see. We are reflections of each other. It is important to note that when we talk about our intergenerational relationships here, this is not confined to Western ideas around direct biological descent. We belong to collective generations of peoples, organised in whānau, hapū, and iwi, connected to the natural world. In turn, speaking of tūpuna and mokopuna relationships is inclusive of, but not exclusive to, our direct, biological ancestors and descendants. We speak about tūpuna and mokopuna here as generations of intimate relations, which encompasses the vastness of our whanaungatanga, through time. With this intergenerational existence, relationships with tūpuna and mokopuna is essentially a relationship with the self.

Whakapapa is fundamentally inclusive. When we say at the outset of this chapter that we are Ngāpuhi, we are being inclusive, in that we are saying how we relate to the world around us. In connecting to a part of our whakapapa, we do not disconnect from all else. In being fundamentally inclusive, whakapapa acknowledges wholeness. Whakapapa (and by extension, each of us) can never be halved or quartered. As Moana Jackson emphasises, ‘you can’t have half a mokopuna’.<sup>15</sup> Each of us is whole already. Having whakapapa from different iwi and different lands

only expands relationality. Whakapapa is not concerned with difference, it is concerned with how we connect.

Relationships are fluid and everchanging. In turn, although being in good relation is our natural state, this is not fixed nor constant. Temporary imbalance is a part of the natural fluidity of whanaungatanga, and an important aspect of our lives, bringing with it lessons woven into our whakapapa. Here, the notion of being in good relation does not mean that we are always in balance, but that being in good relation is an active process, where we always have ways to return to balance. This negotiation of whanaungatanga is guided by tikanga. Moana Jackson defines 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'.<sup>16</sup>

As the multiplicity of relationships, environments, and contexts that make up Te Ao Mārama change through time, so too do our obligations to all our relations. Our obligations are negotiated and re-negotiated. Navigating how to return to being in good relation when whanaungatanga is damaged or disrupted is a welcomed and expected part of the process. Being in good relation requires constant critical engagement and reflection, within and between generations. This is fundamentally embedded in Māori conceptualisations of time.

### **Onamata, anamata: A whakapapa conceptualisation of time**

Whakapapa informs how we conceptualise time. In ontologically privileging relationships in our understanding of existence, we also ontologically privilege relationships in our understanding of time. Here, we conceptualise

the ‘past’ and ‘future’ through our whanaungatanga to our tūpuna and mokopuna. Beautifully put by Moana Jackson: ‘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 interconnectedness of all things.’<sup>17</sup>

Notably, the Western concepts ‘past’ and ‘future’ have no direct translation in te reo Māori. But we do have the concepts *onamata* and *anamata*. Literally speaking, *mata* refers to eyes. *Onamata* refers to the eyes of those who have come before us, and *anamata* refers to the eyes of those who come after us. In essence, this tells us that we see and understand the time that comes before us, through the eyes of our tūpuna, and we see and understand the time that comes after us, through the eyes of our mokopuna. In turn, *onamata*, *anamata* represents a whakapapa-based time, whereby we see through our whakapapa with our mokopuna and tūpuna. In Te Ao Mārama, time is whakapapa based, and *onamata*, *anamata* is a way we can think through it.

#### *Onamata – the eyes of our tūpuna*

We can see and understand the ‘past’ through the eyes of our tūpuna. This vision comes by knowing our whakapapa. We are taught to know our tūpuna – their lives, their character, the nature of their relationships, their accomplishments, and their mistakes – just as we might know our living relatives. Knowing our tūpuna is nurturing our whanaungatanga with them. When we trace whakapapa through generations, we trace whanaungatanga. Knowing our tūpuna extends beyond knowledge of human relationships, to relationships with the rest of existence. Knowing tūpuna connects us to the spaces and places they occupied,

and the relationships they had both within and between generations. We are able to see *with* our tūpuna. The more we know our whakapapa, our ability to see *with* them becomes clearer and our field of view widens. Importantly, in looking *with* our tūpuna, we can see their visions for generations to come, their mokopuna. This includes us.

*Anamata – the eyes of our mokopuna*

We see and understand the ‘future’ through the eyes of our mokopuna. Mokopuna are reflections of tūpuna, past generations reconstituted in future generations.<sup>18</sup> In turn, knowledge of our tūpuna provides knowledge of what will be reflected into the future. Thus, the more we know our whakapapa, our ability to see the future becomes clearer and our field of view widens. In essence, through whakapapa we can see the future. Just as we are able to see *with* our tūpuna, we are able to see *with* our mokopuna.

Importantly, in looking *with* our mokopuna, we can see the whakapapa that has been laid down by the generations that came before, the sources of the reflection, their tūpuna. This reflection includes us. In looking *with* our mokopuna, we can see our generation; our lives, our collective character, the nature of our relationships, our accomplishments, and our mistakes. We can see the futures shaped by our actions. Importantly, our actions speak to our relationship with our mokopuna, and the kinds of futures we envision for them. This urges us to question: How can we be in good relation with our mokopuna? This includes considering: what do we currently see when we look with our mokopuna at the actions of our generation? What do we collectively envision for our mokopuna? How can we ensure our actions reflect this vision? This places huge importance on the actions of every generation, including ours. We can come to understand our obligations, through onamata, anamata.

*Onamata, anamata – seeing with the eyes of our tūpuna  
and mokopuna*

In this intergenerational existence, we are where our mokopuna and tūpuna meet. Here, the notion of the ‘present’ is not central to our reality. Indeed, there is no direct translation of the present in te reo Māori. We comprehend the present as that fleeting moment where the past and the future meet. By meeting, the past and future interact. At this point of interaction, whakapapa is laid down. We are where our tūpuna and mokopuna meet, this is our sense of self, a beautiful embodiment of this fleeting moment of intimate relation. In this embodiment, we have a window of agency, where our actions shape what is laid down, and by being laid down becomes a part of whakapapa.

In being a part of this infinitely expanding web of existence, everything we do lays down whakapapa. We are never isolated, we are always in relation, thus always laying down whakapapa. Knowing this, we understand that there is no neutral action, there is no action disconnected from our tūpuna and mokopuna. Therefore, just as isolation and emptiness are fallacies, so too is the notion of inaction. In ontologically privileging relationships, everything is understood in terms of its relations, and all relationships emerge through whakapapa. This emphasises the importance of centering whanaungatanga as we shape the future.

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. Here, we see and act with, and as, mokopuna and tūpuna. In a world that ontologically privileges relationships, this is not figurative. They are here with us, we are with them, in deep relation. In turn, time is not linear, and the ‘present’ is not the centre of existence, there is no centre. In laying

down whakapapa, we are not standing on top of our whakapapa, we are immersed in it. The meeting and interaction between mokopuna and tūpuna is happening at each point in whakapapa, at once. Each and every thing in existence is a fleeting embodiment of the meeting of past and future generations, in what Moana Jackson describes as a 'series of never ending beginnings'.<sup>19</sup> Carl Mika explains:

This seemingly paradoxical phenomenon – where a thing is both the origin of, yet immediately collapsed with, all other things – is expressed in the Māori philosophy of time that does not assume time is linear but that it is interlocked or co-present with all other time. That is, one thing can form another and, simultaneously, be formed by that other.<sup>20</sup>

Each generation coexists like droplets immersed in the ocean of time. Knowledge of whakapapa allows us to navigate the intergenerational currents that constitute this ocean of never ending beginnings. Through onamata, anamata each generation can traverse these waters, put down an anchor, and take in the view. This is a Māori futurism.

Whakapapa is a Māori futurism that is perpetually immersed in creation, informing our ways of being, knowing and doing intergenerationally. As the embodiment of where our tūpuna and mokopuna meet, we must be in good relation, and maintain balance within and between generations. We must continue to critically engage with what it means to be in good relation, as the environments that shape the future are in a state of flux. Our mokopuna are looking to us for guidance on how to do the same.



### **Settler colonialism: The antithesis of whanaungatanga**

For our generation, being in good relation requires critical engagement with settler colonialism. We argue that settler colonialism is antithetical to whanaungatanga, and has seriously (but not permanently) damaged and disrupted the ability of more recent generations to be in good relation. In particular, the colonisation of time itself has damaged and disrupted our whanaungatanga with our tūpuna and mokopuna. Settler colonialism has become the status quo in society, and without critical engagement, will be reflected into future generations. Whanaungatanga, in being antithetical to settler colonialism, is how we can heal our relationships, and be in good relation with our mokopuna. Here, being in good relation is how we can conceive ‘decolonisation’.

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. Western nations have been colonising Indigenous worlds for centuries, violently imposing Western authority over our intimately related worlds.<sup>21</sup> In order to erase us, settler colonialism has sought to erase our very existence – our whanaungatanga. This has meant not only the imposition of Western authority over our whanaunga, but over our expressions of whanaungatanga – our ways of being, knowing and doing.

Upon damaging and disrupting whanaungatanga, new (settler colonial) ways of being, knowing, and doing have been established. Settler colonialism ontologically privileges isolation, reduction, separation, and severing, unnaturally placing the individual human (white, straight, cis, able-bodied, Christian, men to be more specific) at the pinnacle of existence. On the basis of such ontologies,

whanaungatanga is replaced by settler colonial relationships that are premised on systems of domination, exploitation, possession and commodification. With this, ideologies of race, gender, and class are imported into Aotearoa, and justified by Christianity.<sup>22</sup> These systems are upheld by social, political and economic structures and institutions, which ultimately seek to erase our whanaungatanga – to erase us from settler colonial visions of the future.

In an intimately related world, anything that damages or disrupts relationships is inherently violent. Settler colonial violence has not subsided over generations, it has only changed face, becoming more insidious.<sup>23</sup> So insidious that it is the status quo. In turn, not critically engaging with settler colonialism, perceived ‘inaction’, only ensures settler colonialism will be reflected into the future.

Settler colonialism is antithetical to whanaungatanga. It has no apparent consideration for our vast and expansive networks of relationships, within and between generations. Such violence has impeded our processes of being in good relation, forcing us to unnaturally partake in settler colonial ways of being, knowing, and doing. Relationships premised on domination, exploitation, possession and commodification are not natural, nor are settler colonial ideologies of race, gender, and class. This has resulted in serious imbalance, affecting the well-being of the whole. This is evident in our whanaungatanga ki ngā atua, ki te taiao, ki te tāngata, ki a koe anō. You just have to look at Māori health outcomes to see how this violence manifests.<sup>24</sup> While these systems of oppression may present some perceived short term benefits to some, our well-being as a whole is ultimately affected. This whole includes those placed at the pinnacle of this violent society. By upholding settler colonialism, settlers are doing themselves and, more seriously their mokopuna, a great disservice. Because ulti-

mately, in settler colonial societies, if Indigenous peoples are not well, no one is.

Not only is this violence afflicted on our whanaungatanga, but is backed up by a multitude of falsehoods – doctrines and rewritten histories – that seek to justify this ongoing violence.<sup>25</sup> Such falsehoods deliberately attempt to make settler colonialism appear natural, normal and inevitable, and even without origin (thus without end), giving settler colonialism a ‘monopoly on the future’.<sup>26</sup> As a result, structures imposed by settler colonialism seem permanent, making it difficult to envision a reality where whakapapa and whanaungatanga is at the centre of our ways of being, knowing and doing. Settler colonialism reaches ‘into our heads’,<sup>27</sup> which Ngūgī wa Thiong’o, terms colonisation of the mind.<sup>28</sup>

Settler colonialism distorts our vision, and narrows our field of view, giving us misleading impressions about our current realities. We are unable to see through generations, and conceptualise ourselves as where our tūpuna and mokopuna meet, immersed in an infinite ocean of time. This is a grave assault on our whanaungatanga, impacting our sense of self. This affliction has occurred through the colonisation of time, which Rangi Matamua duly argues is one of the most significant impacts of settler colonialism.<sup>29</sup>

### **The colonisation of time**

With settler colonial ontologies, time is flattened, made one dimensional, reduced to a linear process. The ocean of time based on whakapapa is replaced by what can be known as the ‘arrow of time’, where time linearly progresses forward, away from the past and towards the future. Here, time is enumerated, and we understand separate events along a *timeline*. Generations of complex and intimate relationships are reduced to chronological numbers. Along this

arrow of time, the 'present' is placed at the pinnacle of existence, disconnected from both the past and future.

The settler colonial past is conceptualised as a series of relatively isolated events. When compared to whakapapa, these events are notably distant and disconnected. The settler colonial past is something we move away from along the arrow of time. Events, by happening, become fixed, 'accurately' recorded on the enumerated timeline and called 'history'. The people of the past are an afterthought, understood in relation to these events, and become similarly fixed in time. History is deliberately taught to seem unrelated to ourselves, and our sense of self. As such, settler colonialism can disavow its past, devolving present generations (thus, their governments) of responsibility. Indeed, Indigenous worlds, and processes of settler colonialism are reduced to 'history'. We hide away from the 'backwards' past, as present generations move forwards alone, towards 'progress'. As a result, we are unnaturally confined to the present.

This understanding of time has reached into our minds, preventing us from seeing, and being in relation, with our tūpuna. As an exercise, in writing this paper we considered the year 1950. In thinking about this year, we feel distance, with no sense of relation to this date. We are able to consider it in relation to WWII, an event on the timeline of colonial history, but those feelings of distance remain. However, when we think of the 1950s instead as the childhood of our grandparents, centring our relationships with our tūpuna, we feel a sudden, deep connection. Knowing our grandparents, their lives, their character, the nature of their relationships, we are transported to them, immersed in their worlds. We feel a sense of who we are, and how we came to be. We are able to see with our mokopuna in the same way.

Conceptualising our existence along the arrow of time makes conceptualising the future extremely limited. The enumerated timeline that we are moving forward along ‘ends’ with the present. The settler colonial future has not happened, thus it cannot be reduced to an event, and assigned a place on the timeline. This essentially renders the settler colonial future unknowable. Settler colonial futures are mystified, seen as far off and fantastical, thus not part of our everyday existence. When the future is considered, the present is extrapolated along this numerical timeline, and we imagine dates. This only allows for a superficial, near-sighted vision of the future, limited in that it remains fundamentally disconnected from us.

The far off and fantastical futures of settler colonialism are often envisaged in terms of a utopian/dystopian binary. In alignment with notions of ‘progress’, extrapolated fantasies of settler colonial futures are often envisioned as a technological utopia (for settlers that is), where Indigenous peoples have (successfully) been erased. On the other hand, apocalyptic dystopian futures are imagined. Apocalyptic narratives of the future are becoming more relevant in settler colonial society, as worldwide crises such as climate change, species extinction, and pandemics (to name a few) are exposing the instability of societies structured by settler colonialism. However, analyses remain limited. Crises are still largely treated as separate events, as opposed to being deeply intertwined, with whakapapa stemming from settler colonialism. As Leanne Simpson aptly states ‘colonial thought brought us climate change’.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, we think the same could be said for pandemics and species extinction (again, to name a few). This is something settlers need to come to terms with. These crises will continue exponentially into the future if the underlying ideologies driving settler colonialism are not engaged with (and dismantled) meaningfully.

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.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the dreaded hardships many settlers fear most about the climate crisis, Indigenous peoples are already enduring. Indigenous peoples have been living in apocalyptic worlds for generations.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, apocalyptic dystopias dominate settler colonial futurisms, because settler colonialism is seen as natural, normal, and inevitable. Trapped in the present, isolated from past and future generations, settlers struggle to envision anything outside of present colonial realities. But as Indigenous peoples, we know how to see into the future. We always have.

Like their conceptualisations of time, the settler colonial sense of self is one dimensional. When time is reduced to a one dimensional linearity, we are isolated from our tūpuna and mokopuna. In doing so, we are isolated from the true nature of our existence. Thus it is through returning to whakapapa based time that we can return to being our multidimensional, intergenerational selves. We can navigate the ocean of time, and see beyond the realities imposed on us by settler colonialism.

### **Onamata, anamata: Seeing through settler colonialism**

Settler colonialism is a lie. Settler colonialism is not permanent, nor is it natural, normal or inevitable. Its societal institutions are founded on lies. Categorisations of race, class, gender, are lies. And so too are notions of isolation, emptiness and inaction. In turn, the foundations of settler colonialism are fragile, thus extremely vulnerable, and amenable to change. In the words of Moana Jackson 'to

decolonise is to realise colonisation is a deceptive lie as much as a crushing oppression'.<sup>33</sup> This is a source of hope. Settler colonialism is indeed a part of our whakapapa, but it is just that, one part of our expansive whakapapa existence. While our whanaungatanga has been damaged and disrupted, our whakapapa remains at the core of who we are, unable to be severed. The more whakapapa we know the more that falsehoods and rewritten histories are exposed as a lie, the more our vision becomes clear, and undistorted. Our field of view widens to include our vast networks of relationships within and between generations. In coming to know our whakapapa, and seeing with onamata, anamata, we can uncover who we really are.

Seeing with our tūpuna, we speculate that one of the greatest and most violent lies imposed on our whanaungatanga is heteropatriarchy.<sup>34</sup> In knowing our whakapapa, we know atua wāhine, and rangatira wāhine – mana wāhine – which is imbued in the world around us, and in each of us. We see our mothers and grandmothers, who exude mana in the ways they lead us, the way they karanga, calling forth generations, opening portals, embodying creation. We see the way wāhine complement and uplift tāne on the marae, and vice versa. This is balance, this is harmony. Whakapapa tells us of the significance and fluidity of mana tāne and mana wāhine in everything, including each of us. This not only exposes heteropatriarchy a lie, but also exposes the fallacies of heteronormativity, homophobia, and transphobia. These lies are not ours, they are violent impositions on our whanaungatanga, intended to sever us from who we are.

Another great fallacy imposed on our whanaungatanga is how Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa is both 'empty' and a barrier between lands. We are separated and isolated to the land we occupy, Aotearoa, separated from our whanaunga in Te

Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. In knowing our whakapapa, we know our tūpuna had deep intergenerational connections with, and drew strength from, mana moana. We can hear our whanaungatanga with Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa in our native languages, in our songs and in our creation stories. We are able to see with our tūpuna traversing the Pacific to find Aotearoa. We know the deep connection our tūpuna had with the currents, and the celestial bodies that guide us to relationships across a third of the surface of the world. Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa connects. This not only exposes narratives of isolation and separation as lies, but illustrates the intelligent, scientific and innovative nature of our tūpuna, and therefore ourselves.

Violent lies are uncovered virtually everywhere, we just have to look. Through whakapapa we can begin to see clearly who we are. We are mokopuna and tupuna, existing along a continuum of whakapapa, who for generations have developed and refined sophisticated ways of being, knowing and doing, that are stronger than the weak foundations of settler colonialism. We are living proof of this. With onamata, anamata we are able to see through settler colonialism, and envision a future that is ours.

### **Whanaungatanga - the antithesis of settler colonialism**

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. How to be in good relation has already been laid out by our tūpuna. We just need to look with them, to our mokopuna, for guidance. Here, instead of asking ‘how do we decolonise?’ centring (the removal of) settler colonial



ways of being, knowing and doing, we ask, ‘how can we be in good relation?’, centring whanaungatanga and whakapapa. Here, whakapapa not only helps us to expose settler colonialism for the lie that it is, but gives us somewhere to anchor once our vision becomes clear, and deceptive lies fall away. By centring whanaungatanga and whakapapa, settler colonialism will cease to be reflected into the future.

In centring whakapapa and whanaungatanga, our tūpuna have always found creative ways to engage with the changing world around us. From arriving in Aotearoa on waka, to being in contact with early settlers, we have always keenly engaged with new opportunities that can expand and enhance our relational worlds.<sup>35</sup> In turn, whakapapa and whanaungatanga can continue to provide a way to think through engaging (or not) with current changes. Namely, science and technology. We can think through how we can be in good relation with new things, as we always have. Our tikanga has always been fluid, because at its core, our whakapapa remains, so we can always know our positioning in the world, and obligations that arise as a result. By centring whanaungatanga ki nga atua, ki e taiao, ki te tāngata, ki a koe anō in our thinking and interpreting different contexts, we can gain clarity as to what is right. So much is possible. Our opportunities for relationships are so expansive, our tūpuna have always seen this, and we too know this by looking with them.

In speaking of decolonisation, Moana Jackson states ‘decolonization takes many forms because there is so much to reclaim and every Indigenous nation, and every Indigenous person, will know what that means for them.’<sup>36</sup> We take this to mean the same with being in good relation. There are so many ways to be in good relation, and so many spheres of relationality that contribute to the whole. Be that within our whānau, hapū, iwi, wider communities,

workplaces, education, both locally and globally. We are always in relation, so there is always an opportunity to be in *good* relation. Knowing whakapapa is coming to know our importance, and the inevitability of our importance as a tupuna. Ani Mikaere writes that ‘...each person plays their role in establishing the precedents that are bequeathed to later generations. Without the unique characteristics of each and every individual, the strength of the collective is diminished.’<sup>37</sup> In turn, whakapapa implores us to be unique selves. After all, being ourselves is being reflections of our tūpuna.

We must center whanaungatanga ki ngā atua, ki e taiao, ki te tāngata, ki a koe anō in all that we do, so our mokopuna can do the same. This is our obligation. Doing this in a settler colonial society takes courage, but our people have always been daring.<sup>38</sup> Being in good relation is possible. We do not have to look far to know this is true. We look to the Kura Kaupapa Māori movement, Land Marches, the signing of He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti. We look to Māori thinkers and theorists, activists, artists and creatives, whose ideas are woven throughout this paper. Such movements have laid a whakapapa for us to move into the future, it is from this whakapapa that we write this, as the mokopuna these movements were intended for, that we will ensure continue into the future. Everything we need to do so, we already have, we just need to look with our relations – onamata, anamata.

### **Whakapapa - a Māori futurism**

In all, thinking and theorising about the future is not new for us. Futurisms are woven into the very fabric of our existence as Māori. We were, we are and we always will be futurists. We are here aren't we? Futurisms constitute who we are. Each generation coexists, like droplets immersed in the ocean of never ending beginnings. With onamata, anamata

each generation can traverse these waters, put down an anchor with their whanaunga, and take in the view. No matter how little you know your whakapapa, it is there for you, waiting, calling you even. Moana Jackson posits ‘in whakapapa no relationship is ever beyond repair’.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, whakapapa is imperishable. Even in crisis, whanaungatanga can always be restored. We can always return to balance. Whakapapa as a Māori futurism implores us to consider: how can we be in good relation with our mokopuna? It is up to each of us to figure out what that means for us. After all, the eyes of our tūpuna and mokopuna are on us.

Being in good relation with the future begins with knowing whakapapa. With knowing we are mokopuna of ngā atua, and tēina to te taiao. When we wake up we can see Tamanui-te-rā in the sun. When we sleep we can see Rona in the moon. When our hands work the garden, we work with Rongo. When our feet touch the soil, we feel Haumie. When we are immersed in the ocean, we feel Tangaroa and Hinemoana, and when we eat paua, we thank them. When we look up to the night sky, we see the children of Uru-te-ngangana and Wainui, who guided us home. Life itself is a wonderful flowing together of whanaungatanga ki ngā atua, ki te taiao, ki te tāngata, ki a koe anō. We just need to make sense of our whakapapa, our place in this life.<sup>40</sup>

## Notes

- 1 We would like to acknowledge that alongside our relations mentioned at the outset of this chapter, our theorising about whakapapa has been notably influenced by the work of Moana Jackson, Ani Mikaere and Mere Roberts.
- 2 Ani Mikaere. *Like Moths to the Flame? A History of Ngāti Raukawa Resistance and Recovery*. Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: Te Wananga o Raukawa, 2017.
- 3 Mikaere. *Like Moths*.
- 4 Mere Roberts. 'Ways of seeing: Whakapapa', *Sites: A Journal of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies*, vol.10, no.1 (2013): 93-120.
- 5 Kim TallBear. 'Caretaking relations, not American dreaming', *Kalfou*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2019): 24-41.
- 6 Our theorising around the concept of being in good relation has been inspired by the conversations in the *All My Relations* podcast, hosted by Matika Wilbur and Adrienne Keene. See <https://www.allmyrelationspodcast.com/>
- 7 Māori Marsden. *The Woven Universe: Selected Writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003.
- 8 Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones. 'Non-human others and kaupapa Māori research'. In Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones (eds). *Critical Conversations in Kaupapa Māori*. Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington: Huia, 2017, pp. 95-108.
- 9 Moana Jackson. 'Where to next? Decolonisation and the stories in the land', in Bianca Elkington and Jennie Smeaton (eds). *Imagining Decolonisation*. Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books, 2020
- 10 Tua Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi. *Su'esu'e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*. Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington: Huia, 2018. We draw from Tua Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi's conceptualisation of the four harmonies – 'harmony between man and the cosmos, man and the environment, man and man, and man and himself' (p. 138). Our interpretation of these from a Māori worldview is how we make sense of the layers of whanaungatanga.
- 11 Robin Wall Kimmerer. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis, United States: Milkweed Editions, 2013, p. 9.
- 12 Rangimarie Turuki Pere. *Te Wbeke: A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom*. Gisborne: Ao Ako Global Learning New Zealand Ltd. Cited by Leonie Pihama. *Tibei Mauri Ora: Honouring Our Voices. Mana Wabine as*

- Kaupapa Māori Theoretical Framework* (Unpublished PhD thesis). The University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2001.
- 13 Our understanding of the concept of mana is drawn from Chapter 10 – Mana Wahine Theory of Leonie Pihama’s doctoral thesis, *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.
  - 14 Jackson. ‘Where to next?’, p. 137-138.
  - 15 Moana Jackson. ‘Power, law and the privileging of difference’. Paper presented at the 4th International Indigenous Knowledge Conference. Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, 6-9 June 2010.
  - 16 Jackson, ‘Where to next?’, p. 140.
  - 17 Moana Jackson. ‘He manawa whenua’. Paper presented at He Manawa Whenua. Hamilton, 2013, p. 59.
  - 18 Makere Stewart-Harawira. *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization*. London: Zed Books, 2005. Cited in Kyle P. Whyte. ‘Indigenous science (fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral dystopias and fantasies of climate change crises’, *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, vol.1, no.1-2 (2018): 224-242.
  - 19 Jackson. ‘He manawa whenua’, p. 59.
  - 20 Carl Mika. ‘The uncertain kaupapa of kaupapa Māori’, in Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones (eds). *Critical Conversations in Kaupapa Māori*. Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington: Huia, 2017, p. 127.
  - 21 Moana Jackson. ‘In the end “The hope of decolonization”’, in Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Elizabeth McKinley (eds). *Handbook of Indigenous Education*. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2019, pp. 101-110.
  - 22 Leonie Pihama. ‘Colonization and the importation of ideologies of race, gender, and class in Aotearoa’, in Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Elizabeth McKinley (eds). *Handbook of Indigenous Education*. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2019, pp. 1-20.
  - 23 Jackson. ‘In the end’, pp. 101-110.
  - 24 Papaarangi Reid, Donna Cormack and Sarah-Jane Paine. ‘Colonial histories, racism and health – The experience of Māori and indigenous peoples’, *Public Health*, no. 172 (2019): 119-124.
  - 25 Jackson. ‘In the end’.
  - 26 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. ‘R-words: Refusing research’, in Django Paris and Maisha T. Winn (eds). *Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with Youth and Communities*. Thousand Oaks, NY: Sage, 2014, pp. 223, 248.

- 27 Linda Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd edn. London: Zed Books, 2012.
- 28 Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational, 1986.
- 29 Professor Rangī Matamua discussed this at a keynote presentation at MAI ki te Ao – Indigenous Doctoral Gathering, Kirikiriroa, Aotearoa, June 2019. He also discusses this idea on the *Planting Seeds* podcast episode 'Dr Rangī Matamua – Māori Astronomer' hosted by Raniera Rewiri.
- 30 Whyte. 'Indigenous science (fiction)'.
- 31 Heather Davis and Zoe Todd. 'On the importance of a date, or, decolonizing the Anthropocene', *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, vol. 16, no.4 (2017): 761-780.
- 32 Whyte. 'Indigenous science (fiction)'.
- 33 Jackson. 'In the end', p. 1.
- 34 Whyte. 'Indigenous science (fiction)'.
- 35 Hoskins. 'A provocation for kaupapa Māori'.
- 36 Jackson. 'In the end', p. 9.
- 37 Mikaere. *Like Moths*, p. 75.
- 38 Jackson. 'In the end'.
- 39 Jackson. 'Where to next?', p. 140.
- 40 We would like to acknowledge Dr Donna Cormack for her ongoing support as we wrote and refined this chapter. Kei te mihi e te tuakana. In positioning ourselves and our thoughts as an accumulation of the peoples, places, lands and waters we are in relation with, it is often difficult, and inadequate, to attribute ideas to individual authors and publications. In addition to those cited in this paper, we again wish to acknowledge the futurists in our lives who we think alongside, who are a part of this paper; our kaumatua, tuākana and tēina, our whanau, friends, and communities. It is an honour and privilege to hold, and be able to share, these thoughts. Kei te mihi, kei te mihi, kei te mihi