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"You're the One That Was on Uncle's Wall!": Identity, Whanaungatanga and Connection for Takatāpui (LGBTQ+ Māori)

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Abstract: Takatāpui (Māori LGBTIQ+) challenge static notions of relationality and belonging or whanaungatanga for Māori. Explorations of Māori and LGBTIQ+ identity can often polarise experiences of family as either nurturing spaces or sites comprised of actors of spiritual and physical violence. However, such framing ignores the ways in which cultural practices for establishing relationality for takatāpui extend beyond dichotomies of disconnection or connection within families and into spaces of new potential. In this paper we outline a bricoleur research praxis rooted in Māori ways of being which underpins the research. We engage in photo-poetry as an analytic tool, constructing poetry from our interviews with Waimirirangi, a twenty-year-old whakawahine (Māori term for trans woman or trans femme) and bring them into conversation with the images she provided as part of the broader research project. As the interface between her ancestors and future generations, Waimirirangi demonstrates the potentiality of whanaungatanga as a restorative practice for enhancing takatāpui wellbeing.

Keywords: takatāpui; Indigenous LGBTIQ+ identities; re-membering; photo-poetry; case study; whanaungatanga; relationality

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1. Introduction

Takatāpui is an umbrella term that describes Māori (Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) of diverse gender, sexuality and sex characteristics (Kerekere 2017). However, it is important not to assert a monolithic link of Indigenous sexual and gender diversity within and across Indigenous nations, colonial borders and global networks (Driskill et al. 2011). There is no single story. Furthermore, Indigenous linguistic terms conceptualising historical gender and sexual diversity do not necessarily describe a minoritized group in Indigenous societies that existed in opposition to a sexual and gender majority (Driskill et al. 2011). Takatāpui, as a distinctly Māori identity, moves beyond Eurocentric imaginings of sex, gender and sexuality as somehow removed from other important aspects of who we are. In this paper, we present one offering of creative theorizing, drawing on a narrative case study of Waimirirangi (pseudonym), a twenty-year-old whakawahine (Māori term for trans woman or trans femme) and how her experiences inform us of the enactment of relationality and belonging or whanaungatanga for Māori. Through these practices, Waimirirangi asserts an identity as takatāpui, remaps practices of relationality and resists the destabilising effects of colonisation. We foreground our analytic approach by detailing a bricoleur research praxis rooted in Māori ways of being which underpins the research.

Takatāpui as an identity has a contested history, with variations in the definition between those who claim it as an identity (Kerekere 2017; Te Awekotuku 2005), within Māori dictionaries (Moorfield 2005) and Aotearoa New Zealand society more broadly (Aspin and Hutchings 2007). These differences in the definition of takatāpui relate to the impacts of colonisation on the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and practices. Takatāpui as a term was separately (re)claimed in the 1980s by two Māori academics, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and Lee Smith, within the manuscripts of Wīremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke (Kerekere 2017). In these manuscripts, Te Rangikāheke describes Te Arawa ancestors Hinemoa, Tūtanekai and Tiki, and the erotic possibilities that existed between them (Te Awekotuku 2001, 2005). In this account, Tiki is referred to as the hoa takatāpui (intimate companion) of Tūtanekai, someone for whom Tūtanekai felt immense love.

This differs greatly from how the story was retold in George J. Grey's—a colonial administrator—anthropological text *Polynesian Mythology*, first published in 1855 and adapted from the manuscripts of Wīremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke (Te Awekotuku 2001). The legend of Hinemoa and Tūtanekai is one of the greatest love stories of the thermal regions of Aotearoa New Zealand and of the Māori world (as above). The lovechild of a warring chief's wife, Tūtanekai was not of the same social pedigree as Hinemoa and thus did not meet her parents' approval. However, young Hinemoa was not to be deterred; she was wilful and determined, but essentially feminine. She defied her parents' wishes, and as Tūtanekai passively waited playing his flute, she swam across the cool night waters of the lake guided by his melancholic music and into his arms. It is retold over and over to titillate tourists as they languish over the details of Hinemoa rising from the heated pools on Mokoia Island after her swim where she rested, cloaked in night, naked from the waist up, long hair moulded to her body as Tūtanekai watched in awe and worship. Here, Tiki is reimagined as Tūtanekai's clumsy but faithful servant and no more. The tribes are reunited through the couple's marital union, and the colonial fantasy of Romeo and Juliet with a happier ending takes hold. It is George J. Grey's version that still pervades today, and Wīremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke's that is silenced and forgotten—even to ourselves. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku describes how she wept as she—a Te Arawa woman, a prominent takatāpui activist and an academic—interpreted and understood the words of her ancestor in a university library where the manuscript was (with)held (Te Awekotuku 2001). Drawing on the richly nuanced story of these Te Arawa ancestors, Te Awekotuku and Smith reclaimed and regifted the term takatāpui across Māori LGBTIQ+ networks where it began to grow in circulation and power across the 1990s and 2000s (Kerekere 2017).

Colonialism, gender, sex and sexuality are irrevocably intertwined and cannot usefully be extracted from one another (Roen and Groot 2019). Understanding the nuances of precolonial sexual expression and gender diversity is severely hindered by colonising practices that were and are commonplace. This includes the massacres of Indigenous peoples, accompanied by rape and sexual mutilation of both Indigenous bodies and sacred symbols depicting histories of gender and sexual diversity (Smith 2011; Te Awekotuku 2005). It is through these very mechanisms that Europeans were able to colonise Indigenous peoples in the first place. Similarly, Smith (2011) asserts that the maintenance of such cis/heteronormative systems prevents decolonisation and the assertion of Indigenous sovereignty.

The inheritance of the British legal system was formalised through the English Laws Act 1858 (Laurie 2005). This act criminalised buggery, and enabled cissexism and heterosexism to become legally entrenched throughout the nation. The dichotomisation of sexuality into heterosexual ('normal') and homosexual ('abnormal/illegal') and gender into man and woman (with similar associations of superiority and inferiority) in the 1880s served to further stigmatise sex, gender and sexual diversity (Aspin and Hutchings 2007). This stigmatisation and shaming were normalised as Māori practices began to absorb colonial heteropatriarchy through Christianity (McBreen 2012). Further, the ways in which colonisation impacts takatāpui today connects to how it has impacted on knowledge systems, gender politics and cultural practices. Such complexities highlight how colonial processes

seek to control Indigenous identity and coerce Indigenous people to assume Eurocentric ways of knowing and being (King et al. 2017). This is particularly relevant to scholarship addressing the needs and rights of takatāpui. In the following section we discuss the ways in which belonging and relationality or whanaungatanga for takatāpui move beyond dichotomised framings of dis/connection within whānau (community of related families) and into spaces of infinite potential.

2. Whanaungatanga: Remapping Pathways toward Each Other

Whanaungatanga is a central concept and everyday practice for Māori wellbeing, described as the 'basic cement that holds things Māori together' (Ritchie 1992, p. 67), and the collective orientation of whānau to nurture, protect and raise descendants is a key aspect of this (Pere and Nicholson 1997; Metge 1999). It is the *process* of tying people together in bonds of association and obligation through kinship ties or relatedness (Groot et al. 2011). However, takatāpui challenge static notions of whanaungatanga and belonging for Māori. Much of the literature regarding takatāpui has highlighted the ongoing experiences of heterosexism, cissexism and racism that takatāpui experience, as well as the lack of support takatāpui face within and beyond their communities (Glover et al. 2004; Kerekere 2017; Morgensen 2011; Pihama et al. 2020). Scholarship exploring Māori and LGBTIQ+ identity can often polarise experiences of whānau as either nurturing spaces or sites comprised of actors of spiritual and physical violence (Kerekere 2017). Such binarised framing obscures the ways in which whanaungatanga for takatāpui moves beyond dichotomies of dis/connection within whānau and into spaces of vast potential. In this paper we respond to the urgent need for research which attends to takatāpui understandings and practices of whanaungatanga to strengthen efforts to promote wellbeing for takatāpui.

Ritchie (1992) introduces whanaungatanga as part of a conceptual framework that allows us to explore the interrelationships between facets of everyday life for Māori (Nikora 2007). This includes manaakitanga (reciprocal care), wairuatanga (the notion that everything in the Māori world is spiritually connected), rangatiratanga (leadership and getting things done) and kotahitanga (unity in complex relationships between status, history, kinship and the human need for affirmation and esteem) (Groot et al. 2011; Ritchie 1992). None of these terms has a simple translation, and the use of any one concept draws upon a host of meanings, all of which are irrevocably linked to one another. These concepts can be abstractions that represent the atmosphere within which Māori enact and give meaning to their lives (Nikora 2007). There is still space for greater theorizing about how whanaungatanga can occur within experiences of marginality, and how the ever-expanding networks of care crafted by takatāpui inform us of the ways in which whanaungatanga can offer restoration during moments of rejection and exclusion.

Many researchers will draw on ideas of an untainted 'traditional' Māori identity to speak back to colonisation (Hokowhitu 2008). However, these portrayals of Māori may fall into the different patterns of colonial representation, emphasising cisheteronormativity in Māori practices, including romanticised assumptions that gender roles in the Māori world were complimentary (Hokowhitu 2013; Kerekere 2017; Mikaere 2011). This binary of traditional versus modern flattens the ways in which colonisation has shaped Indigenous communities, often making it difficult to assert what is 'modern' and what is 'traditional' (Hokowhitu 2008). Further, it persists in promoting the idea of Indigenous communities as fixed and belonging to the past, as opposed to being innovative and adaptive to our needs over time. The ongoing colonisation of Indigenous peoples perpetuates inequities which privilege white, cisgender bodies and intellects, while degrading Indigenous gender and sexual diversity (Abustan 2015; Vandenburg et al. 2021). The embodiment of such ideologies is experienced when Indigenous peoples view themselves as bodies, without intellect and incapable of self-governance (Finley 2011).

On a cautionary note, prioritising an essentialised view of culture at the expense of other relations or structures (such as class), may limit the opportunity for takatāpui to use cultural frameworks as a means of challenging oppression (cf. Lugones 2007; Roen

and Groot 2019). Indigenous peoples should be *self-critiquing* of Indigenous constructions of 'tradition' and similar cultural nationalisms that are dependent on the exclusion of takatāpui (Roen and Groot 2019). Mātauranga Māori, or Māori ways of being and engaging in the world, are an ever-evolving knowledge base rather than a stagnant pool that is never rejuvenated or questioned (Hoskins and Jones 2017). To support the wellbeing of this pool, Indigenous research which resists static and binary representations of Māori communities, theories and practices is important.

In the following section, we present one offering of creative theorizing, drawing on a narrative case study of Waimirirangi (pseudonym), a twenty-year-old whakawahine (Māori term for trans woman or trans femme) and how her experiences inform us of the enactment of whanaungatanga for takatāpui. Through these practices, Waimirirangi asserts an identity as takatāpui, remaps practices of relationality and resists the destabilising effects of colonisation. This is followed by a section detailing a bricoleur research praxis rooted in mātauranga Māori which underpins the research. We engage in photo-poetry as an analytic tool, constructing poetry from our interviews with Waimirirangi and bringing them into conversation with the images she provided as part of the broader research project.

How Waimirirangi and her whānau enact whanaungatanga provides a core theme for threading together the four sections of our analysis. Firstly, we address the malleability of whanaungatanga for Waimirirangi when reconciling experiences of dislocation and disruption to identity. Secondly, we explore how cherished familial objects become intertwined with our sense of self and can unlock deeper narratives regarding relationality for Māori. Thirdly, we consider the cosmological and psychological elements of whanaungatanga embedded within culturally imbued encounter spaces. Finally, the analysis is completed through an exploration of how Waimirirangi herself embodies whanaungatanga as the interface between her ancestors and future generations, creating new possibilities for takatāpui and Māori to resist coloniality. We conclude the paper by placing emphasis on the potentiality of whanaungatanga as a restorative practice to enhance takatāpui wellbeing.

3. Ko wai au, ko Waimirirangi: Who Am I, I Am Waimirirangi

At the time of this research, Waimirirangi was a twenty-year-old whakawahine living in Auckland—Aotearoa New Zealand's most populous city. She had moved to Auckland, where she was living with her sister, from a smaller Northland urban community at the age of 18. Waimirirangi is the living descendant of two iwi or tribal groupings from the Northland region where she had spent most of her childhood. In her interview, she recounted how she had been raised by her grandmother there for a period while her mother was training to be a teacher. She would often travel back and forth across the greater North Island to see whānau and attend tangi (mourning procedures laden with ancestral and tribal symbolism) of whānau members who had passed at her marae (Māori cultural epicentre).

In a colonial context, whānau is often unimaginatively translated as 'family', but its meaning is much more complex. Whānau can be multilayered, flexible and dynamic. It is through the whānau that histories, knowledge and practices from our ancestors evolve and are adapted for the contemporary world. The most important features of whānau that distinguish it from neoliberal understandings of 'family' and other social groupings are whakapapa (complex genealogical layering), spirituality and the responsibility to marae and hapū (smaller tribal groupings).

Waimirirangi is the youngest child in her whānau with four older sisters, each of whom she has a very different relationship with. One sister lives in the Northland region with their mother, another has down syndrome and is blind, the other lives in a different area of Auckland with Waimirirangi's nephews and Waimirirangi herself lives with the fourth sister. Many notable ancestors who were the youngest child or pōtiki are fondly remembered for encapsulating the personality structure (intelligent, resourceful, cunning and fearless) idealized in te ao Māori or the Māori world (Walker 2004). For example, Maui Pōtiki, a popular and heroic figure, serves as a model to all tēina (younger relative or

mentee) and in particular the last born, that they have within them the will and determination to change their worlds—our world (Walker 2004). As takatāpui, as whakawahine, Waimirirangi embodies such ideals.

Waimirirangi described several moments in her life which had irrevocably impacted herself and broader whānau and their experiences of whanaungatanga. These include her parents' separation, moving between different towns in the Northland region, the death of her cousin by suicide and moving to metropolitan Auckland. She notes in her interview, '. . . a lot of people would look at it like "Oh yeah, the moving thing is kind of insignificant in comparison to the others", but yeah, it still really just shook me up a lot'. Waimirirangi reflected on her whānau experiences of intergenerational poverty to account for the disruption and movement characteristic of her childhood. Frequent upheaval and movement between communities and schools often disrupt young people's educational performance and community support networks in ways that exacerbate experiences of precarity (Groot et al. 2017). She discussed having to get by without a lot, and how she and her sisters would navigate these challenges through humour, even when they were fighting with one another. The precariat is an emergent social class, overrepresented among Māori and Pacific peoples, but also with a large Pākehā (New Zealand European) cohort, who face various employment, income, housing and food insecurities (Stubbs et al. 2017; Groot et al. 2017). This precarity is particularly evident among Waimirirangi's whānau whereby pursuing educational opportunities and having a job is often not sufficient to resolve the accumulative material, cultural, psychosocial and spiritual insecurities and complex health inequalities they face every day (Rua et al. 2019). She described this precarity as a large factor impacting the enactment of whanaungatanga in her whānau where people often struggled to find the time to care for one another.

This is perhaps most profoundly exemplified by the death by suicide of her older cousin. Waimirirangi discussed how following the death by suicide of her cousin's boyfriend, her cousin absorbed the grief of all their friends and whānau to support them but had no means by which she could mourn her own loss. Shortly after the passing of her boyfriend, she too would die by suicide. For Māori, suicide is intrinsically related to a state of mind characterized as kahupō (Kruger et al. 2004), meaning the relentless attrition of hope and purpose, followed by an enduring sense of despair (Lawson-Te Aho 2016). It manifests as the separation of the physical from the spiritual, and the psychological separation of the person from their community. The spirit comprises the core of Indigenous wellbeing, and similar states of spiritual hurt and suffering exist in other Indigenous cultures that experience colonisation (Lawson-Te Aho 2016). With colonialism came urbanisation, displacement, disease, war and death, resulting in the degradation of Indigenous kinship systems, economic capacity, culture and spiritual connectedness (Groot et al. 2017). In contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand, such histories carry grave consequences for health and identity. As such, the disproportionately high rates of suicide completion for rangatahi Māori (Māori young people) have occurred through the machinery of colonisation that continues to have an impact on lives today (cf. Groot et al. 2017). In a void of deep mourning, Waimirirangi's cousin's passing reverberated throughout her whānau networks and propelled discussions of mental health for the first time. This also provided the impetus for understanding and addressing Waimirirangi's own experiences of depression and how her whānau might support her, including living with her sister.

While Waimirirangi is 'out' to her whānau as whakawahine, not all members of her whānau have accepted her or chosen to maintain connections with her. In the absence of some of those relationships, Waimirirangi has drawn upon the cultural practice of whanaungatanga and cast her net far and wide to establish a close-knit network of takatāpui who have become her 'found' whānau in Auckland. The enactment of whanaungatanga by young takatāpui such as Waimirirangi gives rise to multiple relationships and ways of belonging, perhaps transforming cultural lifeworlds, and in turn being transformed by them (Groot et al. 2019). In the following section we outline a bricoleur research praxis rooted in mātauranga Māori which underpins our engagements with Waimirirangi.

4. The Present Research Context

Our interactions with Waimirirangi were part of a broader kaupapa Māori project investigating the cultural, material, spatial and relational contexts of whanaungatanga and their links to wellbeing for rangatahi and their whānau. Kaupapa Māori research is an Indigenous approach to creating knowledge that foregrounds the importance of relational ethics and the lived realities and experiences of Māori (Rua et al. 2021). Lead investigators, interviewers and emerging researchers (including the authors) were all Māori with experience on a wide range of kaupapa Māori and Māori-centred approaches to research. The project aspirations were also supported by allied researchers (including the final author) who worked alongside us. Research produced by Māori scholars and allied colleagues is often subversive and exemplifies scholarship that seeks to disrupt coloniality and to advance processes of decolonisation (Rua et al. 2021). Communities beset by various forms of oppression, whose members have suffered from a diminished sense of themselves through racism and classism, use such research to not only nurture community understandings, but to help preserve cultural practices (Land 2015; Watkins and Shulman 2008).

Creative methods of engagement were woven together through a bricolage research praxis. The term bricolage has etymological foundations in the French expression describing a craftsperson who inventively shapes new objects using only the tools and materials 'at-hand' (Vandenburg et al. 2021). The origins of bricolage research and researcher-as-bricoleur can be traced to the works of Lévi-Strauss (1966), who drew upon the metaphor of 'intellectual bricolage' to signify creative practices of human meaning making and knowledge production. We creatively bring Māori ways of being and engaging in the world into conversation with concepts from the visual arts, including interpretation, abduction, mimesis and bricolage (Hodgetts et al. 2018, 2021). First, participating young people were provided with a camera-equipped computer tablet and prompted to take photographs that represented their experiences of whanaungatanga and wellbeing over a one-week period. A photo-elicitation interview was then arranged in which young people reflected on their photos, explicating their meaning and significance to the researcher.

In this article we draw upon the visual materials and photo-interviews produced by Waimirirangi who was recruited with the aid of an LGBTIQ+ community organisation in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. Within the broader research project, Waimirirangi was the sole participant to position themselves as whakawahine, and the only participant who reflected on how her identity as takatāpui added complexity to the enactment of whanaungatanga. For us as researchers engaging with the visual material and talk produced by and with Waimirirangi, this necessitated a more dynamic understanding of whanaungatanga. The selection of Waimirirangi's photo-interviews provided a contrast to how other young Māori understood what whanaungatanga meant for them. We utilise a case study design to investigate a particular situation in relation to the wider social forces at play and as a way of extending conceptual understandings (Radley and Chamberlain 2001; Small 2009) of whanaungatanga. In total, Waimirirangi produced 13 images which she reflected upon during her photo-interview with a takatāpui researcher involved in the broader research project. Through the accumulation of multiple data sources in the creation of our case study, we seek to demonstrate how a myriad of events and relationships may be interconnected and embedded in the life of Waimirirangi in a particular time and place.

Photo-elicitation is widely praised for bringing perspectives of minoritised groups to the fore and facilitating social change (Harper 2002; Hodgetts et al. 2011, 2018). Participating young people led interviews with the images they produced to direct researcher attention to specific issues, influence the analytic process and potentially extend research implications (cf. Vandenburg et al. 2021). Further, during the photo-elicitation interview, participants are invited into a reflexive reading of their images during which they assume a panoramic view of their positioning (such as gender, sexuality, culture, class) and relationality to the object(s) of inquiry and wider context (Hodgetts et al. 2011; Freire 1970). The meanings of photographs are never fixed, that is, they are not contained solely within the image

themselves and rely on the reader/viewer's own knowledge and understanding and the context in which the image is seen (Nicholls and Ling 2020). As such, visual objects are polysemic or capable of carrying multiple meanings and can be read differently. We treat photo-elicitation as a creative dialogical practice, where photographs act as mimetic objects that facilitate a process of negotiation and meaning making between young people and ourselves as researchers (Hodgetts et al. 2018). The mimetic nature of visual objects—that photographs are an act of imitation or reflection of participant lifeworlds—necessitates processes of participant engagement and analysis that goes beyond 'first impression' and extends beyond the frame (Vandenburg et al. 2021). Here, the researcher-as-bricoleur, in collaboration with participating young people, works to assemble multiple methods, meanings and concepts when interpreting images and talk.

As part of our analytic process, poems were constructed from the interview transcripts to complement the images taken (Butler-Kisber 2020; Sjollema et al. 2012). Poetic inquiry has been used within Indigenous research, for example, to explore complex issues relating to incarceration and health (Kidd 2018; McIntosh 2018) and LGBTQ2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Two-Spirit) identity and rights (Driskill 2004). Of course, poetry as an aesthetic practice is perhaps different to the style of poetry presented here in our research. The intention, the analysis and meaning making of research poetry is different from other forms of poetry, as the spaces into which these cultural products emerge are different (Madge 2014). Our data poems were constructed through selecting and refining quotes from the transcripts which spoke to takatāpui identity and engaged with the visual material to form an interconnected narrative of whanaungatanga as enhancing wellbeing. This was an abductive process where quotes were selected by the first author based on their ability to puncture the taken-for-granted. For example, these may have initially elicited an emotional response (joy, sadness, regret and anger, among others) which generated additional meanings within the visual material, enabling greater appreciation of Waimirirangi's lifeworlds. This aligns with Prendergast's (2015) guiding characteristics of research poetry, where aesthetic power, truth telling, insight and surprise are all useful to the formation of poetry that engages the senses.

The term 'photo-poetry' and its various alternatives—photopoème, photoetry, photoverse, photo-graffiti, etc.—attempts to describe an art form in which poetry and photography are equally important and symbiotically related (Nicholls and Ling 2020). The relationship between poems and photographs was imaginatively explored by members of the avant-garde in the early 20th century (Bošković 2016). This includes the famous collaborative publication by Paul Éluard and Man Ray entitled *Facile* (Éluard and Ray 1935), in which images and text create an integrated and unified design. Photographs are often accompanied by various kinds of text—titles, captions, articles, etc. The text helps to anchor the image which, otherwise, would be open to many possible meanings and interpretations (Nicholls and Ling 2020). Photo-poetry then might be considered as a unique example of this form of collusion between image and text. Notts (2018, p. 11) suggests that 'the relationship between poem and photograph has always been one of disruption and serendipity, appropriation and exchange, evocation and metaphor'. Works of photo-poetry seek to connect poems and photographs whilst maintaining their distinctness. The language of one can be used as a metaphor for the language of the other (Nicholls and Ling 2020).

Poems and photographs are both representations of something. If the written word is the 'image' of spoken language, then the photograph is the 'image' of the visual subject (Nicholls and Ling 2020). Poems and photographs could be said to have 'leaky' frames as they are both compressions, and abstractions, of reality (Nicholls and Ling 2020; Hodgetts et al. 2018, 2021). They both convey an experience of heightened perception, an intensity of looking and feeling. As a creative dialogical research practice, we share a common interest with poets and photographers when interpreting their creations, in transforming a lived experience into a memorable evocative representation—a work of art (Nicholls and Ling 2020). In our analysis, we consider how images taken by Waimirirangi and found poetry

drawn from her interviews comprise 'snapshots' into the lifeworlds of takatāpui. Such abductive approaches to reasoning are primarily concerned with the relationship between a situation and inquiry (Brinkmann 2014). This draws from a continental philosophical tradition that speaks to Māori ways of being and knowledge production, more so than the analytical philosophical tradition that is concerned with atomization (King et al. 2017; Rua et al. 2021).

5. Analysis

How whanaungatanga is enacted by Waimirirangi and her whānau forms the core focus for her narrative across the four sections of our analysis. Each section is centred on a photo (see Figures 1–4) and the associated stanza(s) of poetry which provide greater explorations of the photos meaning as negotiated by us (the authors) and Waimirirangi. As such, the poem is intended to be read in its fullness before we present our interpretations of the stanzas and images. As a creative output, the poem and images capture different elements of whanaungatanga for Waimirirangi and the complexities which underlie it. In particular, our analysis highlights the diverse forms of whanaungatanga enacted by takatāpui, and the ways in which this is nurtured even when the threads linking us together are strained. Whanaungatanga provides a bastion of strength which is asserted in the conclusion of the poem centring on an image of Waimirirangi's face and the possibilities of a brighter, if not always certain, future for her, takatāpui and Māori.

"Part of the whānau: Waimirirangi's story".

Ducks like to raise their babies at our place
this family of ducks just growing up. 8 of them.
Seeing them getting older
Not as in getting old and dying
But more just like
Growth
Their own little family unit
Still hanging around with each other

I suppose I just kind of miss it
Growing up
Family all around me
We didn't have much
There were times when
We were at each other's throats
But we learned to make jokes about
Being without

(**a.i & a.ii**)

(**b**)

Figure 1. This figure depicts (**a.i**) Stanza 1 of the poem; (**a.ii**). Stanza 2 of the poem; (**b**) A picture of ducklings.

5.1. Stanzas 1 and 2, Image 1: Evoking Absent Whānau

For Māori, to be human means understanding ourselves through our relational entanglements, which are navigated in accordance with our core cultural values (King et al. 2017).

This involves embracing our shared humanity and responding to the cultural expectations and obligations that texture the places in which we reside as well as the metaphysical worlds that are at play in our lives (Groot et al. 2019). Everything and everyone is related and interdependent in our world. We have a primary duty of care for others, particularly those with whom we are related and/or reside (Nikora et al. 2017). For young people, whānau constitute a foundational source of identity development and sustenance (Moeke-Pickering 1996). However, there are many issues that impede the ability of precariat whānau to flourish and support one another, so where do young people look to when the threads that connect us are stretched or, in some cases, may be irreparably severed? Our attention turns to how Waimirirangi draws upon the cultural practice of whanaungatanga to replenish those threads connecting her to whānau and beyond to establish a close-knit network of takatāpui who have become her 'found' whānau in Auckland.

In Waimirirangi's account, whānau were discussed as sources of great affection, love and support and, sometimes, experiences of marginality (cf. Kerekere 2017). Waimirirangi took a series of images of a paddling of ducks, including their ducklings (see Figure 1), which frequently nested where she lived with her sister. In stanza 1 Waimirirangi describes observing the ongoing relationships between the ducks as the ducklings grew to maturity. She then connected this to her own shifting experiences of whānau as exemplified in stanza 2. All Māori can lay claim to multiple descent lines through maternal and paternal lines that echo back to cosmological origins and ripple outwards across generations in particular places (Nikora et al. 2017). Kinship networks provide spaces for selves to rest, renew and become energized towards collective action. When one part of the network is strained and burdened, the network reconfigures as we attempt to meet our duties of care (Nikora et al. 2017; Groot et al. 2019; Le Grice et al. 2017).

Through the imagery of the ducks, there is a collapsing of time between past and present contexts, where multiple realities converge to form a complex whole. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the metaphor of the *pā harakeke* is of relevance here as it is invoked to describe the strength of whānau and core aspirations to leave improved legacies for future generations (Pihama et al. 2015; Rua et al. 2021). Pā harakeke in a literal sense refers to a plantation of selected varieties of flax native to Aotearoa New Zealand that provide high quality fibre and leaf material for weaving. In this metaphor, the flax plantation is symbolic of whānau or a community of related families, with young people positioned as the rito or central shoot of the bush. Enveloping the rito in a fan-like pattern are successively larger leaves which are analogous to parents, grandparents, etc. To ensure the vitality of the whanau—or the flax bush—the central three leaves of a fan should never be harvested. In this metaphor, whanaungatanga is energized and enacted through other concepts like wairuatanga (the notion that everything in the Māori world is spiritually connected) and manaakitanga (reciprocal care).

A carefully selected site for the establishment of a pā harakeke will survive even the worst of conditions and they survive because of the strength of its root system. It survives through collective will, with each blade protecting the next. It survives because the outer leaves provide shelter and care for the inner leaves, and in this metaphor, each generation is critical to the survival of the collective, with young people acting as a centralizing force (Pihama et al. 2015). In her interview, Waimirirangi recounted key events which had irrevocably impacted herself and her whānau and their experiences of whanaungatanga. These include her parents' separation, moving between small towns in the Northland region, the death of her cousin by suicide and moving to Auckland. She reflected on her whānau experiences of intergenerational poverty to account for the disruption and movement characteristic of her childhood.

In response to these destabilising experiences, aspects of Waimirirangi's relationship to her whānau have been revised. This has necessitated recreating whānau in Auckland, where she has established networks with other takatāpui who support her health and wellbeing, inclusive of the sister she lives with. Māori moving into urban spaces have always sought to foster whanaungatanga with other Māori living in the city to buffer

themselves against experiences of precarity and colonisation (Hill 2012; Rangiheuea 2010; Edwards et al. 2007). The move to Auckland is not experienced as a complete disruption to the enactment of whanaungatanga, but rather is recontextualized as part of a broader hanau narrative marked by periods of affinity and distance. Central to her discussion of the ducks is a yearning for closeness within her hanau and optimism for the future where this can occur again. Whanaungatanga as a process of bringing people together is constantly being renegotiated, reshaped and shifts in response to the ever-evolving needs of the communities at its centre.

In the process, Waimirirangi can maintain a sense of cultural identity and mitigate feelings of mokemoke (loneliness). A seemingly innocuous image of a paddling of ducks provides continuity across places and spaces despite experiences of dislocation and disruption. If whanaungatanga is the 'glue' that holds Māori society together (McNatty 2001), then Waimirirangi's account in these stanzas and the associated image highlight the ways in which that glue can be malleable. The above section illustrates the relatedness of Waimirirangi's sense of self and the relevance of the idea that the people we interact with complete us (Groot et al. 2019). In the following section, we extend this to consider the material realization of whanaungatanga.

5.2. Stanzas 3 and 4, Image 2: Re-Membering and Re-Storying Whānau

Rejection from whānau is still a reality for many takatāpui young people, especially for those who are trans or gender diverse (Aspin and Hutchings 2007; Pihama et al. 2020). Although Waimirirangi is 'out' to her whānau as whakawahine, not all members of her whānau have accepted her. In the absence of some of those relationships, 're-membering' practices provide a context for Waimirirangi to revise or reorganise her relationships within her whānau. The hyphen is crucial for evoking distinctions between 're-membering' and 'remembering', as it draws our attention to notions of belonging rather than to a simple recalling of history (Carey and Russell 2002). Re-membering moments of connectedness is another way of 'thickening' the longed-for story. They link the newly coauthored story of identity to a sense of history and to the lives of other people (Carey and Russell 2002, p. 68).

When reflecting upon an image she had produced of her sister's jewellery that had been given to Waimirirangi when they were close (Figure 2), she spoke to the tensions within her whānau, unravelling the threads that hindered practices of whanaungatanga. Since 'coming out' to her whānau, her sister (who lives in another area of the Auckland region) has forbidden Waimirirangi from having contact with her nephews. In Stanza 3, Waimirirangi describes this as an all-too-common experience for takatāpui who may not be affirmed within whānau (cf. Pihama et al. 2020). Perceptions that exposure to trans people provide a 'risk' to children as 'inappropriate' role models who could 'influence' children (McBreen 2012) severely impedes efforts to support flourishing trans identities (Pearce et al. 2020). Trans women in particular experience further oppression and scrutiny when accusations of gender deception and racist caricatures of Polynesian peoples as criminals and predatory are conflated with bigoted paranoia of their 'intentions' with children (Williams 2019).

my sister's jewellery on the wall
thinking about my siblings
my relationships with them
some of them are great
other ones
a total mystery
I have four sisters
I'm the baby.

my oldest sibling
she lives in Manurewa with my nephews
My relationship with that sister is…
because of that
I don't really get to see my nephews
It's usual for a lot of takatāpui
having come out to her
she has sort of… kind of... been accepting
but is still a little weird
what is the deal with that

(**a.i & a.ii**)

(**b**)

Figure 2. This figure depicts (**a.i**) Stanza 3 of the poem; (**a.ii**) Stanza 4 of the poem; (**b**) Image of jewellery given to Waimirirangi by her sister on her wall.

In her interview, Waimirirangi grieved for the cultural mentoring roles lost between older-younger siblings and cousins (referred to as tuākana-tēina) due to her sister's refusal to embrace her reality as whakawahine. She discussed being particularly close to her middle nephew, who she described as rejecting the idealisation of a 'staunch masculinity' and wanting to protect him from some of the same experiences of heterosexism and cissexism she had endured growing up. Tamati-Quennell and Skinner (2005) describe how objects (such as Waimirirangi's sister's jewellery) can unlock deeper narratives regarding relationality and identity for Māori. These cherished items become intertwined with our sense of self and connections to whānau, as they embody physical representations of the connections to people that have either worn the jewellery or gifted it to us.

There is also an issue here relating to the material basis of cultural practices among Māori. Objects such as pendants and carvings or taonga (something treasured, both tangible and intangible) are woven into a network of relationships, histories and cultural practices that determine their placement in communal life (see De Vidas 2008). Cultural objects like pendants and carvings, mentioned by Waimirirangi in Stanzas 3–4 and depicted in Figure 2, are designed to be circulated amongst the living and absorb some of the previous wearers' mana or spiritual status as well as the accumulated mana of succeeding generations (Te Awekotuku 1996). Hurdley (2006) described how such material expressions of identity and relationality provide a focal point for enabling people to build stories about their lives. In this way, re-membering involves the material (re)construction of memories and familial ties through the recollection of gifts given from the past, which entangle people within practices embedded in another time (Pickering and Keightley 2013).

Re-membering was, and is, one of the revolutions needed to open doors that are not available in conventional interpretations of whānau relationships and identity construction.

It is the 'life-saving' impact of restoration of a relationship when a takatāpui young person is rejected by whānau (cf. King 2019). This is because people's lifeworlds do not develop in a vacuum, 'they have been shaped by the person's history and relationships with others and with the world. It is simply a matter of us finding ways to unearth these connections and histories' (Russell and Carey 2003, p. 26). Objects are fundamentally linked within the social fabric of everyday life (Hodgetts et al. 2011), meaning that in matters of identity, these aspects of life cannot be meaningfully extracted from one another (Ritchie 1992). This reflects Māori notions of pūtahi (flowing together), whereby aspects of the world are not broken down into smaller distinct components or categories. Rather, everything must be viewed within the larger context in which they are situated (Ritchie 1992).

For Waimirirangi, re-membering may involve reducing the influence of the people who have undermined her identity as whakawahine, as takatāpui. Russell and Carey (2003) suggest that ' . . . a person can reclaim the right to determine whose voices will inform their opinion of themselves.' (p. 27). When reflecting on disruptions to whanaungatanga and the tensions that have sprung out of such entanglements Waimirirangi invokes notions of 'absent presences' (Hurdley 2006, p. 721). Enmeshed in the image of her sister's jewellery are the complex social ties she has to each of her sisters. Some of these connections she views as strong and unbreakable, while others are a 'total mystery' (Stanza 3). Whānau memories and practices are regularly anchored in specific familial objects, imbuing them with broader sociocultural significance in the re-membering of who one is and where one comes from (Olsen 2003).

5.3. Stanzas 5 and 6, Image 3: Connecting the Here, and There

The restoration of relationships for takatāpui young people who are rejected by whānau is a crucial consideration for enhancing identity and wellbeing. Such interactions are already being cultivated through dynamic relational practices that are situated within particular encounter spaces, such as marae. In Stanzas 5–6 and the associated image (see Figure 3), Waimirirangi refers to the recent passing of her koro or grandfather whose tangihanga she attended at her marae. This was the first time where she was able to meet members of interrelated networks of whānau on her maternal side (Stanza 5). Here, we provide exemplars of the Māori cosmological and psychological elements of whanaungatanga embedded within the encounter space of marae and set against a backdrop of mourning.

It is important to note that tangihanga is a cultural practice that is dynamic, responsive and has always been with us, as Māori, as we navigate our lives and futures (Groot et al. 2019). Tangi refers to a range of procedural mourning rituals, their beginning marked by the return of the deceased and the immediately bereaved to their marae. They are commonly practiced within culturally distinct spaces, such as marae. It is understood that once the deceased arrives at the marae, the death must be shared with a broader grieving community, not just close family members (Nikora et al. 2012; Nikora et al. 2017). Waimirirangi in her interview alludes to the practice of tangi as an enculturated pattern learned through repeat engagements beginning in childhood (cf. Nikora 2007). At times of death, such cultural practices provide a lifeline.

However, this process can be complicated for takatāpui, who may be constrained in their ability to perform different roles on the marae due to the collusion of colonialism, gender, sex and sexuality. Nikora and Te Awekotuku (2016) note the varied responses of whānau to the passing of takatāpui whānau members. Some takatāpui whānau members are left unmourned, forgotten and denied the spiritual rights to a tangi. Other whānau may opt to hold separate tangi, one for a bereaved takatāpui community and the other for grieving whānau. Still, others will lovingly restore their deceased takatāpui whānau member to their tribal lands and culturally imbued environment, layered with spirit and memory. For Waimirirangi, as a living descendant, her koro's tangi provided the impetus to connect with broader whānau never met before, and experience whanaungatanga as a restorative force with the potential to unite.

My marae

At my koro's tangi

kind of feeling, again feeling

that kind of whanaungatanga

with people I'd barely met

uncles and aunties and cousins

a lot of them were like

oh! You're the one that was on

Uncle's wall

I just wish that my family all had more time

We all just overwork ourselves

My grandfather passes away

We all drop everything

Go back to the marae

Properly look after each other

It just comes back to I wish my family wasn't struggling

Able to keep each other

happy and healthy

(**a.i & a.ii**) (**b**)

Figure 3. This figure depicts (**a.i**) Stanza 5 of the poem; (**a.ii**) Stanza 6 of the poem; (**b**) Image taken by Waimirirangi within her whare tūpuna (meeting house).

It is useful here to turn our attention to the marae, as a physical and spiritual location that remains central to Māori community life (Walker 2004). Māori are a tribal people with each tribe comprised of allied smaller tribal groups (hapū) that through genealogy and customary practices function to draw extensive networks of extended families (whānau) together as a political and caring community (Nikora et al. 2012; Walker 2004). The cultural heart of hapū is the marae, a community meeting place, often with elaborately carved buildings that symbolize the identity of those families that constitute the hapū (Nikora et al. 2012; Walker 2004), and with the architectural structure itself symbolising a womb (Le Grice 2014). The marae-complex itself can be understood as a Māori spatial formation for everyday living that is based on systems of kinship and which takes form through a collection of physical structures (Te Awekotuku 1996). It typically consists of a whare tūpuna (house of ancestors or the meeting house) with the marae ātea (courtyard, public forum) located in front of the house of ancestors, and a wharekai (dining hall) as well as an ablution block. The marae, then, can be understood as both a place and as a network of culturally patterned relationships, reflecting the interconnectedness of physical locations and human action, and how such spaces are produced and reproduced in everyday life (c.f. Lefebvre [1974] 1991; Tilley 1994).

Lining the walls of the whare tūpuna are the carvings and photographs of ancestors or people who have passed on (as pictured from a distance, see Figure 3). Waimirirangi carefully pictured the walls of the whare tūpuna of her hapū from a cautious distance as each hapū have specific protocol surrounding taking images within the whare tūpuna. Each of these forms—the carvings and photographs, among others—is more than a visual

representation of ancestors. They each carry something of the mauri or vital essence of the people they depict. Within this space, Waimirirangi experienced an aspect of photography that is rarely discussed—the networked relations between photographer, the photographed, and the lifeworlds of the communities involved (Ellis and Robertson 2018). Here, whanaungatanga for Waimirirangi is experienced and energised by the three interrelated concepts of whakapapa (complex genealogical layering), manaakitanga (reciprocal care) and rangatiratanga (sovereignty).

The act of taking photographs within a whare tūpuna is to activate a relationship between these facets. The camera for the photographer then becomes a medium for communicating with the unseen world (Ellis and Robertson 2018). Such practices are also carried over into private homescapes, where portraits of ancestors coexist alongside the portraits of living descendants, aligning the walls of whānau homes. It was through this collapsing of time and generations that whānau members at her koro's tangi were able to recognise Waimirirangi and her mother. When comparing portraits of ancestors along the walls of the whare tūpuna to Waimirirangi and her mother's living faces and to the memory of their faces aligning the walls in the homes of older whānau members, an uncle exclaimed, "Oh! You're the one that was on Uncle's wall for ages!" This recognition facilitated connections to other uncles, aunties and cousins, further affirming genealogical connectedness. In these moments of mourning, this coming together enables collective grieving and healing, giving comfort through enacting rituals alongside more germane moments of connection with whānau (Nikora and Te Awekotuku 2016). For whānau members who may be estranged from other whānau, such cultural practices provide important avenues for the restoration of whanaungatanga. Not only does the image taken within the whare tūpuna provide an affirmation of whakapapa that previously had been unknown to her, but it also foregrounds returning to the fold of her whānau. The importance of such portrait photography observed in marae and whānau homes exemplifies their power and significance which transcend time and space, reconnecting present generations to an umbilical cord of genealogy, history and identity (Schorch and Hakiwai 2014; Metge 1999; Nairn et al. 2021).

5.4. Stanza 7, Image 4: Takatāpui Self-Determination and Indigenous Futures

From the invention of photography, Indigenous people were a popular photographic subject, producing a vast number of photographs that were subsumed into an already flourishing traffic in colonial natural history specimens (Lydon and Wanhalla 2018). Yet, more recently, the creative transformations of photographs produced by Indigenous peoples themselves have become tools for establishing a 'photographic sovereignty' (Ellis and Robertson 2018). For example, Waimirirangi stepped in front of the lens herself, when applying for a youth identity card, which she shared as part of the research process. She draws our attention to the significance of this act in Stanza 7, where, in the interview, she described many points in her life when reaching 'x age' seemed an impossibility. This all-too-real violent erasure is connected to the broader systemic and structural impacts of cissexism and racism, where many trans women (especially trans women of colour) face the potential for decreased life expectancy (Fletcher 2013). Waimirirangi's own image serves as an expression of the uncertain and contested boundaries between the past, present and future, and how the establishment of whanaungatanga provides a pathway for weaving these threads together.

The ongoing erasure of takatāpui identities within familial and societal contexts can make it difficult for takatāpui to imagine a life for themselves as adults. This is a particularly common experience for many trans and gender diverse young people, who have limited examples of what a flourishing adulthood could look like for them (Pihama et al. 2020; Tan et al. 2021). Furthermore, for whakawahine and trans woman of colour this erasure occurs within racialised contexts of hypervisibility and invisibility that both confer and deny identity and protect and subvert privilege (Collier and Daniel 2019; Jones 2020). Trans woman of colour who do not embody white norms of womanhood—

domesticity, respectability and heterosexuality–risk visibility (Glover 2016; Tannehill 2018). The everyday lives of those who do not embody such ideals are etched with humiliation, violence and hate in the public war zone (Health Research Council of New Zealand 2008). Conversely, this hypervisibility is often centred on trans women as nameless, voiceless, placeless bodies which experience violence, enforcing the continuing 'invisibility' of whiteness as a universalising category (Carroll 2020; Vandenburg forthcoming). As such, Waimirirangi must navigate multiple layers of stigma, colonialism, legal ambiguity, cissexism and heterosexism alongside classism and racism. For the trans community, the uncertainty associated with reaching '× age' is a common narrative whereby violence is an embodied reality (Vandenburg forthcoming).

However, takatāpui are more than just the passive victims of colonisation, heterosexism and cissexism. Waimirirangi's narrative highlights the multiplicities of experience for takatāpui. Growing up, Waimirirangi has had to navigate multiple hardships which impacted her mental health and the wellbeing of her broader whānau. However, throughout these challenges Waimirirangi has fostered a community of takatāpui and whānau who reinforce her identity, akin to generations of other Māori who bring practices of whanaungatanga to urban contexts (Hill 2012). These found whānau provide her with a strong sense of whanaungatanga to resist structural and community experiences of marginality experienced by whakawahine, and takatāpui (Pihama et al. 2020; Tan et al. 2020). Alongside her found whanau, she continues to receive support from her sister and other members of her whānau, who influence how she lives her life.

Waimirirangi resists societal and familial attempts at erasure through centring her face as the representation of whānau, whakapapa and whanaungatanga. In a Māori worldview, the body is both the holder of whakapapa and an expression of our whakapapa. The body, especially the head, is sacred from a Māori worldview because of this legacy of whakapapa (Le Grice 2014). There are many metaphorical expressions which relate to the face and head, and the importance of kanohi kitea (the seen face) which emphasises the importance of being present at a significant event as a sign of support and acknowledgment of the event (such as koro's tangi) (Rua et al. 2017). However, this phrase also can link back to being the seen face of ancestors. As an extension of this, Waimirirangi is the kanohi ora (the living face) that embodies the place and people from which she has come and maintains the 'home fires' between her hau kainga (ancestral homelands) and Auckland. Waimirirangi's face in this light can represent not just her own whakapapa, but also a broader takatāpui whakapapa that has confronted attempts at erasure through colonisation. As Rua et al. (2017) noted, kanohi kitea provide Māori a deeper sense of whanaungatanga to whānau who have passed on and manifest a richer collective identity.

The image of Waimirirangi embedded within photos taken for her '18+ card' (see Figure 4), and the accompanying stanza, move beyond simple affirmations of having overcome hardships in her life to an assertion of herself as a person with the right to self-determination. This is complicated by constraints placed on the validation of trans identities through legal documentation such as an '18+ card' (or similar identity cards cf. Beauchamp 2009; Vandenburg forthcoming). It is important to be critical of the ways in which medicolegal surveillance forces trans people to perform their identity in certain ways to gain lawful recognition and the protections that come with it (if any, depending on the national context) (Beauchamp 2009). Conversely, it is also one of few avenues afforded to trans people when seeking societal acceptance and asserting their right to self-determination. This is emphasized when Waimirirangi reflected on reaching the milestone of twenty years old, something which had seemed an impossibility for her—an all-too-real scenario for far too many young trans people and a profound loss to te ao Māori (the Māori world) (Veale et al. 2019). Similarly, Indigenous peoples are often historised and placed in the past, and our futures tinged with assumptions of expiration and extinction in the colonial imagination (or lack thereof) (Nikora 2007). An 'Indigenous futurism' encapsulates a space of potential where takatāpui flourish beyond the limited representations of themselves as marginalised, invisibilised or ignored. As a core part

of mātauranga Māori (or Māori ways of being and engaging in the world), whakapapa (complex genealogical layering) also acknowledges future possibilities. The feeling of remarkability that is associated with such images transcend time and space to remind Waimirirangi that perhaps the future exists for her to.

Growing up

Everything was always a question of

If I would make it to x age

Age of 20? Definitely not.

I was kind of thinking about just how much I've changed

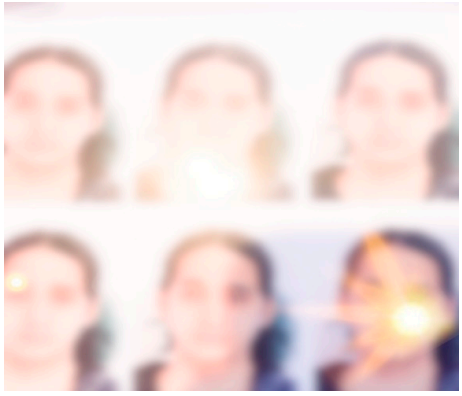
In less than a year

In these pictures for my 18+ card

I remember feeling a lot happier.

I felt it.

(**a.i & a.ii**)



(**b**)

Figure 4. This figure depicts (**a.i**) Stanza 7 of the poem; (**a.ii**) Stanza 8 of the poem; (**b**) Images taken for an 18+ card (a New Zealand identity card).

This aligns with the restorative healing that can take place for takatāpui who are able to reclaim their whakapapa, finding space for their own identity journeys to connect to a broader potentiality for takatāpui legacies (Pihama et al. 2020). This involves engaging with the history of takatāpui identity, but also the potential for a future that is offered to Waimirirangi. She embodies the possibilities of Indigenous futurisms where "the future, or the idea of the future, is an unoccupied space" (Carlson 2018). As the descendants of Pacific way finders and voyagers, Māori history has always been one of movement and adaptation to shifting contexts (Groot et al. 2011). This has often meant moving past the horizon, the familiar, and into the unknown. This can open us up to a maelstrom of emotions, from uncertainty and hesitation, to fear and sadness and all the way through to joy and the transformation of cultural lifeworlds. Pushing past conventional and stale boundaries of what it means to be Māori, as a modern-day navigator, Waimirirangi charters new courses for herself, her whānau, takatāpui and Māori.

6. Conclusions

In this paper we have situated the relational practice of whanaungatanga within the moving social, cultural, economic, and spatial contexts within which takatāpui have come to dwell in response to colonial displacement (Nikora et al. 2017F). Through engaging with Waimiririrangi's narrative, we have highlighted how takatāpui experiences of whanaungatanga can inform broader understandings of the ways in which whanaungatanga plays out in diverse and dynamic ways. Experiences of disruption within whānau are not absolute, we can re-member our time spent together, renegotiating experiences of whānau. Relationships are fluid and dynamic, nourished through different practices and expressions of connection within whānau. These can be through formal rituals such as tangi, which serve as powerful moments of whanaungatanga for Māori who live away from ancestral homelands.

However, whanaungatanga can also be expressed in ways that are perhaps unexpected, such as through what is at hand—be it objects of familial significance or relationships with wildlife. It is important not to overlook otherwise mundane practices that often contain formative experiences of whanaungatanga, such as moments of humour, photographs taken together and even the pain of separation. These everyday moments form the foundations for Māori identities, knitting people together through ongoing and nurtured experiences

of whanaungatanga. King et al. (2017) emphasise that what it means to be Māori often resists static notions of identity and belonging, instead encompassing a range of practices which may not always "seem" Māori at a surface level, when our minds are closed, but most certainly are Māori responses to our everyday realities. What we have offered here is evidence of whanaungatanga as an adaptive and evolving practice exemplified by takatāpui young people as they traverse new spaces, encounters and relationships.

The intimacy of a single narrative case study design embedded within a bricolage research praxis allows us to investigate a particular moment in time in relation to the wider social context and as a way of extending conceptual understandings (Radley and Chamberlain 2001; Small 2009) of whanaungatanga for takatāpui. The exemplar offers us a way of engaging that demands creativity, continuity, humility and accountability, and which will resonate beyond this paper. Abductive inquiry is invoked in situations of uncertainty; as researchers, we are often trained to resist ambiguity. Images taken by Waimirirangi, such as that of the ducks, create uncertainty because they do not fit a singular definition of whanaungatanga. The image creates a moment of breakdown, confusion and wonder. It becomes more than just 'data': it demands we extend our gaze beyond the stillness of the frame. Similarly, photographs represent only a fraction of the time contained within Waimirirangi's poetic extracts. Poem and photograph encounter each other and demand the practice of reading and looking that implores the reader/viewer to make connections and imagine to create meaning between text and image. Here, we document facets of an immersive collaborative Kaupapa Māori research design that emboldens community self-presentation, self-determination and so much more (Rua et al. 2021). We leave behind us a trail for other (LGBTIQ+) Indigenous researchers to map their own creative pathways in research. This speaks to a form of research that transcends the binarism between scholars and communities and instead implicates us within shared research practices of hope and care.

In this paper, we have focused on the multilayered expression of whanaungatanga as exemplified by Waimirirangi. Whanaungatanga creates pathways for managing the uncertainties that often occur when people—genealogically woven together or otherwise—come together to explore the nature of their relationships, to resolve or enforce tensions and to decide on a future together. In this sense, whanaungatanga creates opportunities to (re)negotiate relationships with one another. The rich expression of whanaungatanga by takatāpui young people is one which implicitly desires and seeks space for dialogue. As such, there are many possible outcomes that could emerge from such encounters. This is because, as opposed to a multiplicity of characters within a uniform world, there is a plurality of consciousnesses located in diverse worlds (Mika 2015). Takatāpui young people such as Waimirirangi embolden us to traverse the dangerous night waters of an assumed tribal 'tradition', the narrow constraints placed on identity and heterosexist and cissexist orthodoxy (Te Awekotuku 2001). Cultural practices such as whanaungatanga are not fixed or reducible to a single place or moment in time, but instead are informed by the past, present and future. In turn, we must re-imagine, re-create, re-member and reclaim our understandings of whanaungatanga.

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