

Mana Whenua, Mana Moana, Mana Tinana, Mana Mōmona

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Abstract

E rere ana ngā ngaru, hoki ki te wai whakatau ai. Ko te āio te take. Hoki ki a Hinemoana, ki tōna whakaniko, ki tōna pikopiko, i reira ngā ngako o te mōmonatanga, o te tinana, hei rongoā mō tatou.

E tipu, e tū ana ngā maunga, hoki ki te whenua whakatau ai. Ko te āio te take. Hoki ki a Papatūānuku, ki tōna tinana, ki tōna whakaniko, ki tōna pikopiko, i reira ngā ngako o te tinana, o te mōmonatanga, te mōmonatanga o te whenua. Hei rongoā mō tatou.

Nō te whenua, nō te moana.

Koinā te whakapapa.

Tihei Mauri Ora.

The ways in which we understand bodies and fatness are complex. While coloniality unduly influences and shapes normative meanings of the body in everyday contexts, Māori conceptualisations of the body and of fatness remain inscribed within the moana, the whenua, te reo Māori and our whakapapa. These understandings provide insight into fatness and bodies from a Māori worldview. Our whakaaro in this article speaks into Māori ways of being and knowing, including meanings of mōmonatanga as bountiful, rich, fertile, and powerful. This article develops an expansive and holistic Māori understanding of bodies and fatness from the whenua, from the moana, from our whakapapa.¹

Keywords: Whenua; Moana; Tinana; Mōmona; Fatness; Bodies

¹ Editors' note: This article makes extensive use of te reo Māori, the Māori language, and rather than giving individual glosses after each Māori word, a full glossary is included at the end. The explanations of te reo Māori words are from the authors. Additional support can be found through *Te Aka Māori Dictionary* (Moorfield, 2011).

Mihimihi

“He aha tēnei mea ko mana tinana ki a koe?”

I te ata, i noho au ki mua i te whakaata.

Kei te matareka ahau ki te whenua, te awa, te moana, te mōmonatanga o tōku tinana, ki reira.

In the mornings, I sit in front of the mirror.

I look like the whenua, the awa, the moana, the bountiful, fatness of my body.

The curves, the hills, the ways, the waves, the movements.

Koinā te whakapapa,

Te mōmonatanga o te tinana, o tōku tinana, mana o te tinana, o tōku tinana, nō Papatūānuku, nō Hinemoana. Koia rā te whakapapa.

Whakatakinga

E rere ana ngā ngaru, hoki ki te wai whakatau ai. Ko te āio te take. Hoki ki a Hinemoana, ki tōna whakaniko, ki tōna pikopiko, i reira ngā ngako o te mōmonatanga, o te tinana, hei rongoā mō tātou.

E tipu, e tū ana ngā maunga, hoki ki te whenua whakatau ai. Ko te āio te take. Hoki ki a Papatūānuku, ki tōna tinana, ki tōna whakaniko, ki tōna pikopiko, i reira ngā ngako o te tinana, o te mōmonatanga, te mōmonatanga o te whenua. Hei rongoā mō tatou.

Nō te whenua, nō te moana.

Koinā te whakapapa.

Tihei Mauri Ora.

Hinemoana's curves, like flowing waves, her curves, her body winding like young fern shoots, the essence of fatness, of the body, her body, provides healing and re-balancing for all of us.

Papatūānuku's curves, like lofty mountains, her body full of growth, her body winding like young fern shoots, the essence of fatness, the substance of fatness, the bountiful, fertility of the land

*we return to for re-balancing, for composure, for settling, for calm,
for healing.*

When searching for clarity, understanding, and stillness as Māori, we often return to the whenua or moana. This re-connection provides us with insight into our own experiences and thoughts. It can bring us a calmness that transcends physical understandings and is undefinable in English. Indigenous insights from the whenua and from the moana as our places of origin can highlight the importance of the ways in which we relate to, and (with)in, these spaces. These ways of knowing, relating, and discussing the moana and whenua as actual bodies themselves can offer understandings into how we can conceptualise bodies and fatness from a Māori worldview. Māori conceptualisations of fatness can be seen in the ways we talk about the whenua, the moana, and kai. Jenny Lee-Morgan (2019, p. 164) notes that “[i]t is the connection of our language that is key to opening the door to the worlds and knowledge of our ancestors – that enables us to theorize about the meaning, the intent, and the practice”. As such, this article seeks to offer an insight into the ways in which Māori conceptualisations of fatness and bodies can be understood through the whenua, the moana, our reo and the various contexts within which it is expressed and utilised. We seek to present perceptions of fatness and bodies that stem from our whakapapa and mātauranga Māori and that challenge and disrupt hegemonic discourses around fatness and bodies informed by coloniality that convey negative connotations (Gillon, 2020).

Ko wai mātou? Nō Papatūānuku mātou. We are four wāhine Māori researchers. Ashlea (Ngāti Awa, Ngāpuhi, me Ngāiterangi, a fat Māori wahine) is undertaking a PhD with supervision from Jade (Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi), Melinda (Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hau, Ngāti Kahu), and Tracey (Tūhoe). The theorising and conceptualisations within this paper grow from Ashlea’s doctoral research around body sovereignty and fatness for wāhine Māori. These expansions and (re)-interpretations of fatness and mōmonatanga offer insight into how these can be re-Indigenised and re-

understood from an Indigenous perspective that challenges changes in understanding due to colonisation.

Te Tīmatanga: Papatūānuku: Whenua

Papatūānuku, te (whenua) ūkaipō, is often referred to as mother earth, however translations of the Māori are incapable of truly encapsulating all that she is as a space, place, and body (Simmonds, 2009). When conceptualising the whenua and our relationship with her, recognising the ways in which Māori refer to and understand the land in all her bountiful, plentiful curvaceousness is crucial. ‘Papa’ means foundation or layering (Orbell, 1998), and Papatūānuku is generative and expansive; understandings of her vary, and whakamōmona across time, space, place, and body. She is the whenua, the land, our life source, the first wahine body (Gillon, 2020). Papatūānuku is multiple, comprising of layers as illustrated by her name Papa. This includes physical and spiritual ways of understanding her, our engagement with her, and how she supports us to stand. She moves, shifts, to extend all over, to grow—which is signified in her name by ‘nuku’. When examining the etymology and multiplicity of these terms, of te reo Māori, and whakaaro Māori, there is a celebration of curves, creases, movement, and expansion of her body.

‘Papaahurewa’ is another term to understand the way that the valleys and hills settle, nestle, and nuzzle into her curves. ‘Ahurewa’ means sacred space or platform, which has connotations of tapu, noa, and mana. When exploring the components within this word further, ‘ahu’ means to foster, nurture, or extend, and ‘rewa’ means to melt, float, or be elevated. ‘Papaahurewa’ conveys the ways that whenua expands and flows, offering nurturing and safety. Both these names, these terms, are a celebration of the kind of curves, creases, movements, and expansions of the whenua, of Papatūānuku’s body, a positive celebration that references the shape and lusciousness of her body.

Our relationship with the whenua, with Papatūānuku, is (reflective of) our whakapapa; we know Papatūānuku as our ancestor. Waerete Norman (2019, p. 16) notes that “reference to ‘whenua’ is almost always in the sense

of ‘tupuna’”, as opposed to that of a commodity or possession. In extending the ways in which we understand the *mōmonatanga* of the *whenua*, Norman (2019) offers further insight into these notions of nourishment: “[P]lacentia or afterbirth is also termed ‘whenua’ and this is the ‘whenua’ that nourished the foetus as it grew within the mother and went back to the ‘whenua’, to the mother of all, Papatūānuku, when the child was born” (Norman, 2019, p. 16). The multiplicity of meanings within *te reo Māori* emphasises the ways in which we prioritise and understand our world and our relationships with(in) it. Meanings of *whenua* as both land and placenta or afterbirth is an example of this (Le Grice, 2016; Mead, 2003; Mikaere, 2003; Simmonds, 2009; T. Smith, 2012), as are the ways in which we conceptualise *mōmona* as the fatness, nourishment, and abundance of Papatūānuku as *ūkaipō* (Mikaere, 2019). Here, *ūkaipō* is recognised as one of the “most profound and metaphoric historic concepts” (Gabel, 2013, p. 20). It includes three concepts or words: ‘ū’ meaning breast, ‘kai’ meaning food or sustenance, and ‘pō’ meaning night or darkness; *pō* is also the place that *wairua* travel to. In this sense ‘*ūkaipō*’ centres on the original home, origin, source of sustenance—our mother (Gabel, 2013). Often when children are birthed, their *whenua* is returned to the *whenua*, demonstrating the reciprocal, nourishing relationship we have with the land (Le Grice, 2016; Mead, 2003; Mikaere, 2003; Pere, 1993; Simmonds, 2009; T. Smith, 2012). Kahn (2011, p. 68) examines this in relation to reciprocity and embodiment:

[T]he relationship between people and land, exemplified by the act of planting the placenta, is always reciprocal. People must care for the land because the land, in turn, nourishes people . . . because the land embodies such a deep meaning (spirituality, ancestral connections, family history, and cultural identity) as well as providing nourishment, medicine, and shelter.

Many Indigenous peoples recognise the land, the *whenua*, as a relation, an extension of us and our bodies (Mikaere, 2003; Pere, 1993; Trask, 1999). This is aptly described by Teresia Teaiwa (2005, p. 74) “in light of an indigenous worldview and language in which land figured as equivalent to one’s own body and family rather than as an inanimate object”. The notion of

understanding the whenua as whanaunga, as a body, an entity, is further reflected in the possessive pronouns and categories we use to describe her, indicating a respectful, revered relationship, rather than a relationship of dominance or control (Kahn, 2011; Teaiwa, 2005; Trask, 1999).

If we understand the landscape as whakapapa, as bodies of knowledge, ancestry, histories, and if we comprehend the whenua as “the personification of the body of Papatūānuku provider of nourishment and sustenance” (Jahnke, 2019, p. 186), then the notions of bountiful, plentiful, enriching fatness are culturally desirable and valued. Differences in bodies are recognised, and their mana and agency are respected and acknowledged. In describing Papatūānuku, Huia Jahnke (2019, p. 189) suggests that in the power of Papatūānuku the “procreative potential of humanity was dependent upon the nourishment and sustenance that only she could provide. Located within the sanctum of her body were the realms of each of her sons.” In providing a home for us, Papatūānuku exemplifies the bountifulness that is mōmona, that is fatness, and in turn “we are Papatūānuku” (Hutchings, 2002, p. 139).

Hinemoana: Moana

Hinemoana, often known as Wainui, Great [Fat] Waters in the Waiariki, Mataatua/Bay of Plenty region; or Moana-Nui, Great [Fat] Ocean in the Tūranga-nui-a-Kiwa/Gisborne region, is understood as the ocean, the moana, which is a wahine element (Orbell, 1998). ‘Nui’ appearing in both names reflects the ways in which the moana is bountiful, plentiful, and the waves and tides fat and full of curves. The lead author has explored the significance of the meanings of ‘nui’: as it can mean big or large, but also abundant, important, superior, great, or plentiful; it also conveys connotations of vastness and of high rank or importance (Gillon, 2020). The word conveys significance.

Ataria Sharman (2019) highlights that there is scarce literature about Hinemoana. Sharman (2019) and Aroha Yates-Smith (1998) posit that colonisation was coupled with a disregard for how wāhine influenced early un-settlers, which shaped what stories un-settlers had access to and

recorded. The ways in which stories of wāhine were purposefully excluded illustrates the narrowness of colonial mindsets, which ignored the mōmonatanga of atua wāhine and wāhine Māori. This lack of recognition of the importance of wāhine Māori means that often accounts of atua include only the 'male' counterparts. As Kirsten Gabel (2013, p. 60) states:

Tangaroa is noted as the atua of the sea, however he co-exists with Hinemoana. Hinemoana is credited with the creation of all the species of the sea, while Tangaroa is vested with the responsibility of taking care of them. Tangaroa is said to be the agitator of the seas, while Hinemoana provides the softer calming influence.

In exploring Māori conceptualisations of, and ways of relating to, Hinemoana, Sharman (2019) discusses how we relate(d) to her through whakapapa. Papatūānuku, the first female (fat) body, and Ranginui, birthed Tāne. From Papatūānuku, Hineahuone was birthed and moulded out of the clay soil at Kurawaka, Papatūānuku's pubic region, her vulva (Murphy, 2011, 2013; T. Smith, 2012), undoubtably a bountiful space of creation and curvaceousness (Gillon, 2020). Tāne and Hineahuone gave birth to Hinetitama, and Tāne and Hinetitama then birthed Hinerauwhāangi, who birthed Hinemoana with Te Kawekairanga (Moko-Mead, 2003; Sharman, 2019). This whakapapa, Sharman (2019, p. 42) states, "clearly shows the transference of divinity through the matrilineal line; from Hineahuone to Hinetitama, to her daughter Hinerauwhāangi and her daughter Hinemoana".

In some versions of this whakapapa, wahine atua Wainuiātea, again emphasises the ways we understand and can conceptualise the fatness of the moana and waters. 'Wainuiātea' combines 'wai', meaning waters; 'nui', meaning fat, vast, or big; and 'ātea', meaning a state of clarity or free from impediment or obstruction. In relation to marae, ātea is an open space where formal, spiritual interactions take place to allow the discussion of issues and to welcome people. 'Wainuiātea' in this sense means 'great, fat, vast, open, free waters'. In these versions, Wainuiātea and Ranginui create Hinemoana, and Hinemoana is said to move her waters and reveal Papatūānuku to her lover Ranginui; (Sharman, 2019). Through exploring the immense importance

of Hinemoana, Hirini Moko-Mead (2003) highlights that Hinemoana is an influential, extremely important atua and ancestor whose vast, encompassing āhua provides a home to the forms of life she has created, such as the various ika, wheke, pāoraora, tuna, and other sea life.

When reflecting on the importance of Hinemoana to Māori, Gabel (2013, p. 14) delves into the whakataukī “Tangi kau ana te hau ki runga o te marae nui o Hinemoana”. This whakataukī explores grief and the ways in which it can be all encompassing, much like our relationship with the moana and the vast fatness of her. Gabel (2013, p. 14) refers to the importance of the ocean: “[T]his saying literally refers to a mourning period and likens the anguish associated with such loss with the notion of being adrift in the ocean where no land can be seen. The ocean is the domain of Hinemoana.” The ways in which we relate to and discuss the moana provide valuable insights into Māori conceptualisations of fatness through the depth of these descriptions in te reo Māori.

Mōmona: Tuawhiti; Matū; Ngako; Whaturua

Te reo Māori offers perspectives into pre-colonised definitions and explanations of fatness, implicitly countering colonial understandings. Within te reo Māori there are a multiplicity of meanings, metaphors and deeper conceptualisations of fatness and ultimately fat people and fat bodies. Colonial notions of fatness often re-presented it as inherently negative or a problem to be fixed (Gillon & Pausé, 2021), especially when combined with healthism, which pathologises Indigenous peoples and our bodies. Brendan Hokowhitu (2014) suggests that colonisation and healthism have had an impact on the ways in which Indigenous peoples, particularly Māori, discuss and understand fatness and our bodies. Despite our poor positioning in the hierarchy of systems of oppression, “the relentless language of madness has become ensconced and taken up by Māori themselves. The devotion to be healthy, to live a long and privileged life, has meant forgoing the pleasures and hierarchy of fatness” (Hokowhitu, 2014, p. 39). These notions of pleasure, fatness, and enjoyment Hokowhitu refers to are evident within our language and the ways we discuss the whenua, the moana, and kai.

Kupu mōmona illustrate the complexities of Māori thinking and theorising. The use of the word 'mōmona', for example, as one of the main words for fat(ness) often ignores its multiplicity of other meanings, such as in good condition, bountiful, plentiful, fertile, or nourished. To 'whakamōmona' is to enrich, to nourish, make fat, embellish, make fertile, or fertilise. Here we can see both a reference to fertility, pregnancy, and the growth and nourishment of pēpi through becoming fat, and the importance of recognising the abundance, nourishment, and mōmonatanga of the whenua and the whenua. This links back to the ways in which we conceptualise the whenua and Papatūānuku and the importance that mōmonatanga has for our ways of being, knowing, theorising, and thriving (Gillon, 2020).

'Tuawhiti' also means fat, thick, fleshy, of good quality, of substance, or succulent and highlights the ways in which fatness was, and can be, acknowledged without the imposition of negative colonial interpretations (Gillon & Pausé, 2021). On its own, 'whiti' means to shine, glisten, or change. When re-claiming and expanding our understandings of fatness, te reo Māori offers many insights into how fatness relates to our physical and spiritual worlds. Another word used to describe fatness in te reo Māori is 'matū'. It can also mean the point or gist of a subject, the centre, as well as richness and quintessence (Gillon & Pausé, 2021). Paired with an understanding of fatness, this may be seen as a substantial and important part of who we are, and how we conceptualise quintessential components of bodies. 'Matū' is also used in the context of talking about matter and science chemicals, where it means substance, offering further insight into the complexities of Māori understandings of fatness.

Additional terms inscribe a more expansive understanding of fatness. The word 'ngako' means fat, essence, gist, or substance, it means to be ever ingrained or unrestricted. The word 'whaturua' is used to describe excessive fatness. This is often used to describe Indigenous birds such as the kererū, particularly in relation to them holding a supportive layer of fat around the kidneys as desirable, linking back to the ways in which we describe health and food (Hutchings, 2015). 'Whaturua' also means mid-winter, a duality in meaning that emphasises how fatness was sought after, particularly in winter

when more body mass supports warmth, greater health, and sustaining oneself. Te reo Māori reinforces the mōmonatanga of the ways that we engage with fatness, often noted in positive connotations of these words.

Despite the abundance of terminology in te reo Māori that conveys positive associations for fatness and embodiment, colonial interpretations have crept into some translations, as alluded to by Hokowhitu (2014). For instance, Brougham et al. (2012) have characterised whakataukī by themes, including a whakataukī that they have assigned to the category of ‘obesity’: “He nui tangata nā te kai i whāngai (A fat man has been nourished by food)” (Brougham et al., 2012, p. 100). The western concept of obesity stems from the body mass index (BMI) and the pathologisation of fatness and fat bodies in negative, restrictive ways (Gillon & Pause, 2021; Lee & Pausé, 2016). The infiltration of colonial mindsets into our worldviews and language as Māori is complex. ‘Obesity’ is not a Māori construct, nor does it have a direct translation in te reo Māori. It is not Māori whakaaro, as evident in the ways in which Māori words for fatness have a plethora of meanings that convey positive connotations (Gillon, 2020; Gillon & Pausé, 2021). Additionally, Māori understandings of abundance and hospitality are intimately linked with food (Hutchings, 2015). The notion of nourishment mentioned in the translation of this whakataukī can be understood in a way that emphasises the importance of our vital and comprehensive relationships with food and the whenua and moana from which it is grown and sourced from. This relationship is illustrated further in another whakataukī: “Te toto o te tangata, he kai; te orange o te tangata, he whenua (Food supplies the blood of people, their welfare/wellness depends on the land)” (Brougham et al., 2012, p. 82).

The relationship between whenua, food and bodies is complex and again whakataukī present contrasting understandings of the connotations we (through colonial mindsets) place (or do not place) upon bodies. Brougham et al. (2012, p. 144) also categorise whakataukī in relation to ‘thinness’:

Ka rere ki Orutai.

So you are rushing off to Orutai.

Orutai was a place where food was scarce. The saying was addressed to anyone who was becoming noticeably thinner.

In contrast to the authors' extrapolation of negative meanings of fatness in a prior theme pertaining to 'obesity', this whakataukī does not relay a negative meaning of thinness, despite identified issues with food scarcity and lack of resource accessibility causing starvation and weight loss. This disparity in assigned value suggests that the imposition of colonial values around body size and fatness does not align with Māori words for fat(ness) and their subsequent meaning.

Kanaka Maoli scholar Hōkūlani K. Aikau (2019, p. 81) locates the relationship between the 'āina and abundance in their work, in particular, they speak about seeking to make the "'āina (land, that which feeds) mōmona (abundant) once again". Thus, they highlight the ways in which there is flexibility and variability in how we as Indigenous peoples comprehend fatness and bodies of fatness and abundance.

Tinana

Bodies are spaces that occupy space, as we have seen with Papatūānuku and Hinemoana (Simmonds, 2009). Naomi Simmonds (2009) explores notions of embodiment and how the ways we understand bodies are informed by spiritual, material, and symbolic elements: "[T]he body is an important site through which place is experienced and constructed and vice versa" (Simmonds, 2009, p. 30). When theorising about bodies from a Māori perspective, there remains limited access to our knowledge because colonisation has violently suppressed our intergenerational transmission of mātauranga and pūrākau around Māori bodily tikanga, especially for wāhine Māori (see Gillon, 2020 for exploration of Hine-Nui-Te-Pō and bodily tikanga) (Simmonds, 2009). However, bodies are often inscribed in ways that influence our understanding of them and the ways in which they are (de)valued, and subsequently treated (Gillon, 2020). Colonisation has affected the ways in which bodies and bodily functions are understood (August, 2005; Gillon, 2020; Murphy, 2011; 2013), including body changes and body sizes, as is

apparent in western readings of whakataukī, fatness, and food. The social processes and ideas of space that shape our relationship with bodies (of land, of water, of wāhine, of people) are evident in the languaging we use (Simmonds, 2009). The ways in which coloniality informs colonial mindsets shapes the treatment of bodies which contrasts Māori conceptualisations of these bodies (Mikaere, 2005; Simmonds, 2009). This violence extends to the ways in which Indigenous bodies are removed from bodies of land and ocean (Moreton-Robinson, 2011; Simmonds, 2009; Yates-Smith, 1998), such as the separation from ūkaipō. This highlights the exploitative, extractive nature of colonisation, rather than the way we privilege relationality and recognise relationships as our lifeblood. The impact of conquest simultaneously exploits bodies (of land, ocean, and people) and re-positions and re-presents bodies as exotic and fetishised (Gillon, 2020; Kahn, 2011). The extent of colonial imposition on Indigenous bodies is profound when thinking about the ways in which bodies are restricted, categorised, and disciplined (Bond [Watego], 2015; Gillon, 2020; Kahn, 2011; Moreton-Robinson, 2011).

A word for body in te reo Māori is ‘tinana’, which means real, actual, the trunk of a tree, the main part, or the centre of things, as well as self, person, or reality. Tinana is also used in reference to Papatūānuku and her body.

As Indigenous peoples we recognise the ways in which tinana, bodies, are not just physical or human, as illustrated with Papatūānuku and Hinemoana (Simmonds, 2009). Miriam Kahn (2011, p. 63) states that “[m]arae are sacred temples dedicated to individual deities, and serve as portals for the deities when they descend to earth”. As quintessential, mōmona bodies of home, belonging, nourishment, marae are spaces of encounter, connection and sustenance (McCallum, 2011).

For Māori, marae are another example of how bodies are conceptualised as bountiful, evoking deep connection to our ancestors. Marae are often understood as places to come together, to gather, to spend time with relations; indeed, marae themselves are bodies (Brown, 2009). They are bodies of knowledge, genealogy, history and land that house and nourish people. Marae are made up of multiple dwellings, particularly a wharenui, ‘whare’ meaning

house or dwelling, and ‘nui’ meaning big, fat, or important. A wharenui or whare tipuna, is an ancestral house, often an embodiment of an ancestor (Brown, 2009). The architectural structure of a marae encompasses different elements of a body. This body may relate to a wahine ancestor, with the interior depicting a womb, and the relational engagement that occurs between people understood to conceive and reproduce new initiatives and ideas for generations to come (Le Grice & Braun, 2016). In other interpretations, the kōruru is carved to illustrate the face of the ancestor, the maihi are the arms, at the end of the maihi are raparapa, the fingers, the tāhuhu, the backbone, the heke are the ribs, and the poutokomanawa in the centre is the heart, manawa meaning heart (Brown, 2009; McCallum, 2011).

Whakataukī again can illustrate how we have multiple interpretations and realities of bodies: “He tangata i akona i te whare, tūnga ki te marae tau ana; A person taught at home, will stand on the marae with dignity and calm”. This relates to the ways in which we understand nurturing and nourishment and the importance of reciprocal bodily relationships. Further, whakataukī about marae illustrate the consequences of neglecting bodies: “He tangata takahe manuhiri, he marae puehu; A person who mistreats their guests has a dusty marae”. This speaks to the importance of hospitality, reciprocity, and nourishment, and the ways in which these values are central to how we treat all bodies, as well as ourselves, in te ao Māori. The mistreatment of people can result in the neglect of the body of the marae and whenua. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 124) notes that a key value and principle within Kaupapa Māori and te ao Māori is “manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous).” This value centres on the ways in which we show nurturing and care, and in which we can perpetuate the nourishing, the whakamōmona of people, of our bodies as marae, as physical, corporeal bodies, as spiritual beings, as whenua, moana, and tinana katoa.

An understanding of marae as diverse bodies that go beyond individualised and isolated re-presentations can be further illustrated in the links they have with whenua, Papatūānuku being the foundation upon which marae are built and upheld. However, marae can also be conceptualised in further ways of nourishment, of fattening and ensuring nurturing, as

whakataukī again illustrate: “Toitū te marae a Tāne-Mahuta, Toitū te marae a Tangaroa, Toitū te tangata -If the land is well, if the sea is well, people will thrive). We would, however, offer a re-presentation, or a reclamation of these kupu that convey these important concepts of bountifulness, plentifulness, and fatness being central to our thriving: “Toitū te marae a Papatūānuku, Toitū te marae a Hinemoana, Toitū te tangata.”

In order to ensure the thriving of our bodies in all their forms, at times, cultural protocols and systems of support can be utilised. Rāhui demonstrate when tikanga and practice can assist in the whakamōmonatanga of bodies. In enacting our rights as kaitiaki, rāhui reiterate our agency and authority, and are preventative, restorative, protective ritual prohibitions that provide a means of re-balancing through relationality (Maxwell & Penetito, 2007). Rāhui are an illustration of kaitiakitanga and of social and political agency, autonomy and mana. They present ways in which we can re-think the relationship Māori have with notions of restriction. In elaborating further on the word rāhui, we can understand the term hui to refer to a bundle, cluster, swarm, gathering, and rā as day, sun, a period of time, a space in the distance. In this sense, rāhui can be understood as a period of time in which an area is protected and left alone in order for abundance to prosper, and fatness to increase, and where the bodies (of whenua, moana, kai, people) within that space can replenish and gather. This includes how we relate to the whenua to ensure she remains mōmona, fat, and nourished, and reciprocally nourishing and fattening us; how we relate to the moana to ensure she remains mōmona, to ensure that she is fat, and her children within her nourished, fat, and reciprocally nourishing and fattening us; how we relate to our bodies, our tinana, to ensure they are fat, nourished, and reciprocally nourishing and fattening us. In this sense, we can (re)conceptualise rāhui as processes that re-establish and ensure fatness, of the whenua, the moana, of kai and of tinana katoa. In re-claiming these notions of ‘restriction’, which are often appropriated through colonial understandings of bodies (of land, water, people, and food), we are able to challenge the idea that restriction and subordination are synonymous (August, 2005), and highlight the importance of whanaungatanga and the relationality that we have and engage in.

Kia ahatia?—So, what? Concluding comments

E rere ana ngā ngaru, hoki ki te wai whakatau ai. Ko te āio ano te take. Hoki ki a Hinemoana, ki tōna whakaniko, ki tōna pikopiko, i reira ngā ngako o te mōmonatanga, o te tinana, hei rongoā mō tātou.

E tipu, e tū ana ngā maunga, hoki ki te whenua whakatau ai. Ko te āio ano te take. Hoki ki a Papatūānuku, ki tōna tinana, ki tōna whakaniko, ki tōna pikopiko, i reira ngā ngako o te tinana, o te mōmonatanga, te mōmonatanga o te whenua. Hei rongoā mō tatou.

Nō te whenua, nō te moana.

Koinā te whakapapa.

Tihei Mauri Ora.

Mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori present a plethora of insights into how we can understand bodies and fatness and the relationality between the two. Te reo Māori and Māori ways of thinking extend how understanding lattice meanings of different terminology contribute to shaping our knowledge about a given phenomenon. This can provide a counterpoint to the restrictive, oppressive colonial social norms and meanings that suppress the complexity of our experience and existence as Indigenous beings and bodies. Reflecting on our practices, our processes and our relationships (re)presents alternative ways of engaging with the connotations imposed upon fatness and bodies of variable shapes, forms, and sizes. Here, it is suggested that mōmona(tanga) is a crucial component of how we understand and engage in (reciprocal) relationships with bodies. Further, it illustrates how fatness offers nourishment, nurturing, abundance and are fundamental to our flourishing, thriving and sustenance. This article concludes by offering a whakataukī illustrating the complexities of fatness, fertility, nourishment, whakapapa, and power:

Te whenua ūkaipō, te moana ūkaipō, te tinana ūkaipō, te
mōmonatanga te ūkaipō.

The land, the ocean, the body, the fatness—the source of sustenance.

Glossary

This glossary is not intended as an all-encompassing guide to, or complete translation of, the Māori concepts and ideas discussed in the article. This list is included to ensure Indigenous peoples have access to understanding the discussions within this paper. For further support, see Moorfield (2011).

ahu	to tend, nurture, to move in a certain direction, to stretch, extend, mound, sacred mound
ahurewa	a platform, a sacred space and place for rituals
ātea	to be clear from obstructions, unrestricted
atua	ancestor/s with influence, spiritually powered entities, deities
heke	to descend, to move, migrate, to be coming, rafter or ribs
Hineahuone	the first wahine created and birthed from Kurawaka, from Papatūānuku
Hinerauwharangi	an atua and child of Hinetītama and Tāne, the personification of growth in the vegetable world
Hinetītama	an atua and child of Hineahuone and Tāne, known as the Dawn Maiden, the first human born
hui	gathering, coming together, to gather, to assemble
ika	fish, creatures of both fresh and salt water
kai	food, sustenance; to eat, to consume, to partake,
katoa	all, totally, every
kaupapa (Māori)	a Māori approach, Māori focus, Māori principles, Māori ideologies, Māori ways of doing, thinking, and being
kupu	words, language, saying, messages, statement; to speak
maihi	to embellish; bargeboards, facing boards of a house; the arms
mana	agency, authority, spiritual power from the ancestors and atua; control, enduring indestructible power in all things from the atua or ancestors or gods
manaaki	to support, take care of, to protect, to show respect; generosity, kindness, and care for others
manawa	heart, patience, tolerance, breath
marae	to be generous; meeting spaces, spaces, and places to come together, to gather, to spend time with relations; marae themselves are bodies
mātauranga	knowledge, wisdom, ancestral understandings, skill
matū	fat, gist, substance, richness, sense, point, spirit, quintessence, matter
mihimihi	a way of acknowledging, addressing, tributing, thanking, and greeting
moana	ocean, sea, lake

mōmona	fat, in good condition, bountiful, plentiful, fertile, nourished
mōmonatanga	fatness, bountifulness, plentifulness, fertility, nourishment
ngako	fat, essence, gist, substance; to be ever ingrained, unrestricted
noa	able to move through spaces (physical, spiritual, metaphysical) safely without restriction, to be able to move freely due to being spiritually safe and protected within said spaces
nuku	to move, shift, extend all over, grow; breadth
nui	fat, big, large, abundant, important, superior, great, plentiful, vast, of high rank/importance
pāoraora	shellfish, shell; to open or shuck
Papa	short for Papatūānuku; papa also means 'foundation, layering, generative, expansive'
Papatūānuku	atua of the land, Te Whenua Ūkaipō
pō	night, darkness; the place that wairua travel to, the realm of Hinenuitepō
poutokomanawa	centre ridge poll of a house ('pou' meaning 'post', sustenance, support, mentor; 'toko' meaning 'to move, to spring to mind, to support'; 'manawa' meaning 'heart, patience, tolerance, breath')
pūrākau	stories, ancestry, Māori narratives with philosophical epistemological thoughts centring around relationships
rā	day, sun, a period of time, a space in the distance
rāhui	illustration of agency and authority, a preventative, restorative, protective, ritual prohibitions are a means of re-balancing through relationality, a means of kaitiakitanga, of social and political agency, autonomy, and mana
Ranginui	atua of the sky ('rangi' is a word for day or sky; 'nui' for fat, big, large, abundant, important, superior, great, plentiful, vast, of high rank/importance)
raparapa	to seek, to search; the ends of the maihi of a wharenui, the fingers
rewa	to melt, to float, to be elevated
tāhuhu	the ridge pole, the backbone, direct line of ancestry
Tāne	atua of the forests
Tangaroa	atua of the ocean
tapu	often understood as sacred, set-aside, under the protection and restriction of atua; a spiritual and social code for moving through the world, tapu can vary and change, and to safely engage in and with tapu, one needs to be noa or to whakanoa
te ao	dawn, the world, earth, daytime
te reo Māori	the Māori language

te tīmatanga	the beginning, the commencement, often used when referring to the creation of the world and Papatūānuku and Ranginui
tikanga	customs, procedures, methods, means, meaning, practice; a customary system of values and practices that are flexible and changeable
tinana	body, real, actual, the trunk of a tree, the main part, the centre of things; self, person, or reality
tipuna/tupuna/tīpuna/ tūpuna	ancestor/s
tuawhiti	fat, thick, fleshy, of good quality, of substance, succulent
tuna	eels
ū	breast, kai, sustenance
ūkaipō	original home, our origin, our source of sustenance, our mother
wahine/wāhine	often understood as woman/women, however wāhine focuses around the wā (time and space) and hine (feminine energy or essence)
wai	waters (in multiple forms)
Wainui	big, vast, bountiful, fat waters
Wainuiātea	atua of the Great Expanse of Water, atua of the Gathering of Waters
wairua	spirit, soul, essence, part of a whole, quintessence
whakaaro	thought, plan, understandings, idea; to think, to consider
whakamōmona	to enrich, to nourish, to make fat, to embellish, to make fertile or fertilise
whakapapa	genealogy (from 'whaka' meaning 'to' and 'papa' meaning 'layering, genealogy, lineage, descent')
whakatakinga	introduction
whakatauikī	proverb, significant saying
whanaunga	relation, relative, kin
whanungatanga	relationship, kinship, sense of connection
wharenui	an ancestral meeting place (from 'whare' meaning 'house' and 'nui' meaning 'big, fat, important')
whare tipuna	an ancestral house, an ancestor
whaturua	excessive fatness, mid-winter
wheke	octopus, squid
whenua	land, placenta, afterbirth, ground
whiti	to shine, glisten, change

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