

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS  
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES OF  
WOMEN'S AND GENDER ACTIVISM  
AND SCHOLARSHIP**

**SITE: NEW ZEALAND**

**Transcript of Qiane Matata-Sipu  
Interviewer: Nicky Newton**

**Location: Māngere, Auckland**

**Date: June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

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**Qiane Matata-Sipu** (Te Waiohua Te Ahiwaru me Te Ākitai, Waikato, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Pikiao, Rarotonga, Mangaia) is an esteemed Māori-Pasifika creative, storyteller, strategist and award-winning journalist and photographer. The impact-driven social activist and cultural commentator is all about disrupting the mainstream approach to amplify the voices of marginalised people and their communities to change the narrative for future generations. With a long career contributing to leading media publications and books across Aotearoa and the Pacific, Qiane is a regular guest speaker at women's, education, arts, business, and leadership events. She is the founder and director of NUKU, a social enterprise championing Indigenous women through podcasts, live events, video and a book, and her multi-media production company QIANE+co. She is also a founding member and co-leader of SOUL Protect Ihumātao. In 2021, Qiane was awarded the Women of Influence Arts and Culture Award, and in 2023 became a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to the arts. Her first book NUKU: Stories of 100 Indigenous Women was shortlisted in the 2022 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards for Illustrated Non-Fiction and the PANZ book design awards.

**Nicky Newton** is an Associate Professor of Psychology, who was born and raised in Christchurch, Aotearoa/New Zealand. Nicky trained and performed as a classical flute player in New Zealand, Australia, and Austria. She played with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in the 1990s, before a hand injury curtailed her career. After moving to the United States, Nicky gained a PhD in psychology from the University of Michigan (2011). She has held research and teaching positions at Youngstown State University, Northwestern University, University of Michigan, and Wilfrid Laurier University (Canada). Most recently, she moved back to Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and is currently a Research Fellow with the Health, Work, and Retirement Study based at Massey University. Nicky uses quantitative and qualitative approaches to research relationships between personality, social roles, gender, life transitions, and well-being across the latter half of adulthood. Recent projects include a multi-faceted study of older Canadian women's lives, an examination of stressful events and well-being among mid-to-later life women in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and a case study of the life of an Ann Arbor-based community activist. She recently co-edited, with Jamila Bookwala, *Reflections from Pioneering Women in Psychology* (2022), a volume of 26 essays from trailblazing women in the field.

*Keywords: Art/Writing as Activism, Indigenous Issues, and Intersectionality*

**Nicky Newton: The first block of questions is about the background about your life. As you think about where you are today, how would you depict the journey that's brought you to this place? What are the central commitments in your life, what does your career look like, what do you consider your most significant lifetime achievements professionally? I'll say to this point because it seems as though you've got a long and illustrious career ahead of you.**

Qiane Matata-Sipu: Everything in my life has got me to where I am today. Just over the weekend, I was a keynote speaker at two events, and at both of those events I heard the word self-made from people in the audience. I was very clear to correct them and say, nobody is self-made, nobody at all is self-made. We're all made from our community, from our *whanau*<sup>1</sup>, from our family, from those who have had different parts of their journeys interweave with our journeys. That's how we've all been made and how we've managed to get to where we are.

Someone had said to me, you must be self-made because look at what you're doing this weekend. I said, "I'm only here because my husband's at home looking after our five-year-old. I can't do what I do without him doing what he does." I was at the other event on the Saturday where my mum was there. I was like, "I'm here because my mum is an early childhood teacher who has inspired me to come and speak to you all, who are a group of play center coordinators from around the country."

All of these things have come directly from my upbringing and from every experience that I've had in my life has created who I am. I think it's really important that we reflect on that and that we honor that as *wahine*<sup>2</sup>. Especially as an Indigenous<sup>3</sup> woman, there is a *whakatauki*<sup>4</sup> that says, "*Ka mua, ka muri*"<sup>5</sup>. Everything that I am comes from what has come before me.

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<sup>1</sup> Whānau is a Māori word that is often translated to family. It can also refer to generations of a family and many values of Māori individuals depend on their whānau. ("Contemporary understandings of whānau." Te Ara. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/whanau-maori-and-family/page-1>. Accessed 9 October 2023.)

<sup>2</sup> Wahine is a Māori word that refers to a Māori woman. ("Wahine." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahine>. Accessed 9 October 2023.)

<sup>3</sup> Indigenous refers people who first lived in an area before it was colonized. ("Indigenous Definition & Meaning." Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/indigenous>. Accessed 9 October 2023.)

<sup>4</sup> Whakatauki refers to inspirational sayings or proverbs from the Māori language. ("Whakatauki." Twinkl. <https://www.twinkl.com/teaching-wiki/whakatauki#:~:text=A%20Whakatauk%C4%AB%20is%20a%20M%C4%81ori%20proverb%20with%20unknown%20origins,or%20have%20an%20underlying%20meaning>. Accessed 9 October 2023.)

<sup>5</sup> 'Ka mua, ka muri' is a Māori proverb that means walking backwards into a future. This proverb can also mean that in order to move forward, you must look back first. ("Ka mua, ka muri – walking backwards into the future." RNZ. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/morningreport/audio/2018662501/ka-mua-ka-muri-walking-backwards-into-the-future>. Accessed 9 October 2023.)

I was raised in South Auckland<sup>6</sup>, which Auckland is the biggest city in Aotearoa<sup>7</sup>, New Zealand. South Auckland has a reputation for being a low socio-economic part of Auckland, has lots of Māori<sup>8</sup> and Pacific Island people<sup>9</sup> who live here. We're often seen as a crime hub, or all of these headlines that come out in the news, but I had the most incredible upbringing here. I am from an iwi<sup>10</sup> who is from here. My hapu<sup>11</sup> is *Te Ahiwaru*<sup>12</sup> and *Te Ākitai*<sup>13</sup> and my iwi is *Te Waiohua*<sup>14</sup> and *Waikato*<sup>15</sup>. All of those hapū and iwi are what we call *mana whenua*<sup>16</sup> or *Ahi kā*<sup>17</sup> to this area.

My ancestors arrived here 800 years ago. My *Te Puna hape*<sup>18</sup> came here on the back of a stingray. He had clubbed feet, he has this incredible story of resilience in coming here when people told him that he couldn't, that he wasn't of able-bodied. Even just those stories alone

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<sup>6</sup> Auckland is a city located in New Zealand. It is one the most populated and urbanized areas in the country. ("Auckland." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auckland>. Accessed 12 October 2023.)

<sup>7</sup> Aotearoa is the Māori word for New Zealand. ("Aotearoa." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aotearoa>. Accessed 13 October 2023.)

<sup>8</sup> Māori refers to the group of individuals from Polynesia who inhabited New Zealand first. ("Māori people." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C4%81ori\\_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C4%81ori_people). Accessed 13 October 2023.)

<sup>9</sup> The Pacific Island people encompasses individuals from islands in the Pacific Ocean or individuals from Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia. ("Pacific Islander." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific\\_Islander](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Islander). Accessed 13 October 2023.)

<sup>10</sup> Iwi is a Māori term that refers to tribe or nation. ("Iwi." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iwi#:~:text=In%20M%C4%81ori%20iwi%20roughly%20means,pluralised%20as%20such%20in%20English>. Accessed 13 October 2023.)

<sup>11</sup> Hapu is a Māori term that refers to a group of people within their tribe, or a clan. ("Hapu." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hap%C5%AB#:~:text=In%20M%C4%81ori%20and%20New%20Zealand,of%20its%20iwi%20\(tribe\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hap%C5%AB#:~:text=In%20M%C4%81ori%20and%20New%20Zealand,of%20its%20iwi%20(tribe)). Accessed 13 October 2023.)

<sup>12</sup> Te Ahiwaru is a Māori tribe in New Zealand. ("The hapu and iwi of Tāmaki Makaurau." Auckland Council. <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/about-the-auckland-plan/Pages/iwi-tamaki-makaurau.aspx>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>13</sup> Te Ākitai Waiohua is a Māori tribe in southern New Zealand. ("Te Ākitai Waiohua." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te\\_%C4%80kitai\\_Waiohua](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te_%C4%80kitai_Waiohua). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>14</sup> Te Waiohua is a Māori tribe that was more well known in the 1500s. This tribe has split into many other smaller tribes, like the Waikato. ("Te Waiohua." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te\\_Waiohua](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te_Waiohua). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>15</sup> Waikato is a Māori tribe located in western New Zealand. ("Waikato Tainui." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waikato\\_Tainui](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waikato_Tainui). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>16</sup> Mana whenua refers to the Māori people who have historical rights on a piece of land. ("Te Whakapā atu ngā manu whenua." Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau. <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/building-and-consents/resource-consents/prepare-resource-consent-application/Pages/engaging-with-mana-whenua.aspx#:~:text=%E2%80%8BWhat%20is%20mana%20whenua,rights%20in%20T%C4%81maki%20Makaurau%2C%20Auckland>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>17</sup> Ahi kā is a Māori term that refers to establishing rights over a piece of land by visibly occupying the land. ("Ahi kā." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahi\\_k%C4%81](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahi_k%C4%81). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>18</sup> Te Puna hape, or Rakatura, refers to an old Māori priest who navigated the Māori people to New Zealand. He was not able to arrive to New Zealand on a boat, so a Māori god took the form of a stingray so Rakatura could sit on his back. ("Rakatura." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rakatura>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

feed into who I am today. I am the eldest grandchild of my grandparents, and my mum was the eldest daughter. My grandmother was the eldest, my mother was the eldest, and I am the eldest. In traditional Māori culture, often the eldest is raised with their grandparents, and so my mum gifted me to my grandparents to raise me.

I interviewed my mum a couple of years ago, and for the very first time, I asked her why. Why was I raised with my grandparents? She, at the time, she was a single mum, so my father had left when I was two and she said, I wanted to give you something that I couldn't give you, I wanted to give you an upbringing and surrounded by my parents. It was a really beautiful reflection, to think that growing up with my grandparents meant that I was at the *marae*<sup>19</sup> all the time.

I was learning from my grandmother who was an early childhood teacher. My grandfather was a *kaumātua*<sup>20</sup> at the *marae*. I was going to *marae* meetings from the time I was eight years old. I was raised with my grandparents in a time that they were coming towards the end of their careers. They had more time and *aroha*<sup>21</sup> to give, and maybe even more than what they gave their own children, because at the time they were raising their children, they were building a house, and building a life, and working and all of those sorts of things. I was really privileged in my upbringing being raised in what we call being raised in the village or being raised by the village.

Then I had my grandparents, my auntie, who's my mum's younger sister--she lived in the same household that I lived in and she ran a business. I learned all about business through her, and my first job was in her hair salon. Then of course I still had my mum and my mum is an incredibly strong woman who I think I get a bit of my stubbornness from her. All of these things created me.

Then when I was at high school, I went to a Decile 1 school<sup>22</sup>. In Aotearoa we have 10 deciles. 10 is high socio-economic community, probably quite wealthy families, living in

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<sup>19</sup> Marae is defined as area of buildings and huts that a specific Māori tribe belongs. These areas are generally used for tribe meetings, celebrations, meetings, or community gatherings in general. ("Marae: Māori Meeting Ground." 100% Pure New Zealand. [https://www.newzealand.com/us/feature/marae-maori-meeting-grounds/#:~:text=Marae%20\(meeting%20grounds\)%20are%20the,place%20to%20stand%20and%20belong](https://www.newzealand.com/us/feature/marae-maori-meeting-grounds/#:~:text=Marae%20(meeting%20grounds)%20are%20the,place%20to%20stand%20and%20belong). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>20</sup> Kaumātua refers to an elder that is highly respected in a tribe. These elders have usually been active in their tribe for a long time and are elected as kaumātua by surrounding tribe members. ("Kaumātua." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaum%C4%81tua>. Accessed October 15 2023.)

<sup>21</sup> Aroha is a Māori term that refers to love. ("Aroha." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aroha#:~:text=Aroha%20is%20a%20M%C4%81ori%20word,Female%20or%20male>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>22</sup> The education system in New Zealand uses deciles to measure socioeconomic status. A Decile 1 school is one of the 10% of schools in New Zealand with the lowest socioeconomic status. ("Socioeconomic decile." Wikipedia.)

good neighborhoods, and one is at the complete opposite end of the scale. I went to a Decile 1 school. As I said, I was a Māori *Pasifika* woman. My *whakapapa*<sup>23</sup> has connections to Rarotonga<sup>24</sup> and Mangaia<sup>25</sup> in the Cook Islands<sup>26</sup>. Then I also have *whakapapa* to *Ngāti Pikiao*<sup>27</sup> and *Ngāpuhi*<sup>28</sup>, two other *iwi* here in Aotearoa.

At school, it was just expected that the students at my school probably weren't going to succeed, probably weren't going to go to university, probably were going to leave school early, probably were going to get pregnant at a young age. These were the statistics that were coming out of schools in South Auckland. When I got to my final year of high school, I went to my careers teacher and she said, what do you want to do, where do you want to go?

I was the co-head girl<sup>29</sup> of school that year and I ended up being the dux<sup>30</sup>. Yet my high school teacher, my high school careers teacher said to me, what do you want to do and I said, I want to go and do the communications degree at AUT<sup>31</sup>, and I want to be a journalist. She said, "Oh, that's the hardest degree to get into at that university. I think you should try something else."

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socioeconomic\\_decile#:~:text=Decile%20%20schools%20were%20the,Equity%20index%20in%20January%202023](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socioeconomic_decile#:~:text=Decile%20%20schools%20were%20the,Equity%20index%20in%20January%202023). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>23</sup> Whakapapa refers to the genealogy or ancestry in the Māori language. ("What is whakapapa?." Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/whakapapa-genealogy/page-1>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>24</sup> Rarotonga is one of the multiple Cook Islands. Most of the country's population resides on this island is a popular tourism area. ("Rarotonga." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rarotonga>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>25</sup> Mangaia is one of the multiple Cook Islands. It is one of the larger islands by area and is not very populated. ("Mangaia." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangaia>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>26</sup> The Cook Islands is a country in the Pacific Ocean made up of many islands. Although it is a self-governing country, it depends on New Zealand for defense resources. ("Cook Islands." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cook\\_Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cook_Islands). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>27</sup> Ngāti Pikiao is a Māori tribe in New Zealand. ("Ngāti Pikiao." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ng%C4%81ti\\_Pikiao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ng%C4%81ti_Pikiao). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>28</sup> Ngāpuhi is a Māori tribe in New Zealand in northern New Zealand. ("Ngāpuhi." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ng%C4%81puhi>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>29</sup> Head girl refers to roles in the student body of a school. The head girl is responsible for leading the student body and representing the school in public. ("Head girl and head boy." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head\\_girl\\_and\\_head\\_boy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_girl_and_head_boy). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>30</sup> Dux is a Latin term that refers to a leader. Dux is also used to refer to students of the highest ranking in regards to academics or sports. ("Dux." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dux#:~:text=aircraft%20in%20Moscow,-Education,lead%20to%20scholarships%20at%20universities>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>31</sup> AUT refers to the Auckland University of Technology. AUT is one of the largest universities in New Zealand and was started in 1895. ("Auckland University of Technology." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auckland\\_University\\_of\\_Technology#North\\_campus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auckland_University_of_Technology#North_campus). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

Even though I had been achieving at school, she just didn't have that belief that a young Māori Pasifika woman from South Auckland in a Decile 1 school was going to make it to get into that university. This beautiful, big, boisterous, Samoan<sup>32</sup> man, his name was Arunji Tanielu, he came to our school and he said to me, "Why don't you apply for the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship?"

No one had ever believed in me in that way. He was from South Auckland and he was Samoan, and I said, "Okay," so I applied and I got it. I got a full scholarship to go to university, and I got into the communications degree, and I finished it in three years. That conversation I had with that teacher, and not all of our teachers were like that, but this careers teacher was. I think there were like 27 students in our final year of high school; that's not a lot when you think about how many people made it to the end of high school, and 25 of us went on to higher education or went into trades.

**NN: Wow.**

QMS: That was our own resilience, that was our own drive, and of course supported by some of the other teachers that were there. I did the degree at AUT, I did an extended major in journalism. When I was at AUT I became what we call the token Māori, which a lot of Indigenous people probably feel in Western systems and Western workplaces, and where there's a Western framework.

Whenever anybody had a question about Māori language, Māori language week, *Matariki*<sup>33</sup> [Pleiades star cluster rises, signaling Māori new year], it was like, "Ask Qiane, ask Qiane, ask Qiane." I was so over it and I'm like, "How am I supposed to know all that there is to be in *Te Ao Māori*<sup>34</sup>?" In my final year I was like, "I don't want to work in Māori media. I don't want to work in Māori media. I'm going to be typecast as only being able to do Māori stories."

I went through my final year and I interned at a few different places and then I got offered a job at *Mana Magazine*<sup>35</sup>, which was the leading Māori magazine. [chuckles] I took it. I

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<sup>32</sup> Samoan refers to people from the Samoan Islands in Polynesia. ("Samoans." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samoans>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>33</sup> Matariki refers to the Pleiades collection of stars which represent the Māori new year when they rise in Māori culture. ("Matariki." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matariki>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>34</sup> Te ao Māori refers to the respect of Māori beliefs and morals. ("Embracing Te Ao Māori – an offshore guide.") kea. <https://keanewzealand.com/embracing-te-ao-maori-an-offshore-guide/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>35</sup> Mana magazine started in 1997 and ended in 2017. The magazine wrote about news concerning the Māori culture in New Zealand. ("Mana : the Māori news magazine for all New Zealanders." National Library of New Zealand.

always talk about my *tīpuna*<sup>36</sup>, knowing better. My *tīpuna* were like, "No, this is what you're doing." [chuckles] They put me on that pathway. I went to *Mana* for a few years and there was only three staff at this magazine. It was like the biggest Māori magazine in the country, and had a long legacy.

I was really privileged to be part of that team because it came-- It was called *Mana*, but it also came with *mana*<sup>37</sup>. It came with the status of being part of it. I was there for three years under Derek Fox<sup>38</sup> and Katherine Findlay<sup>39</sup>. I went in as a staff writer and when I left there, I was selling advertising, I was flat planning, I was producing, I was taking photos. I was shooting covers, I was writing cover stories, I was getting exclusive interviews. It really grew me in that storytelling space.

In terms of getting my start in storytelling, I talk about *Mana* being my first job, and being where I honed my craft, but my storytelling came from when I was a kid. When I was two years old my grandmother interviewed me in what we would now call a podcast, but it was a cassette tape recorder. She interviewed me at two and she talked all about--

Asked me who I was, what my favorite songs were. We sang songs on this interview tape. I think I was destined to be a talker- [laughter] -and to tell stories, because it was something that I'd done when I was really, really little, but *Mana* really honed those skills. Taught me how to do it as a trade and taught me how to engage with all of these different kinds of communities. I was talking with *kuia*<sup>40</sup>, up in the far north. Then I was talking with celebrity bands who were top of the charts in New Zealand. This diverse group of people that I got to

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[https://natlib.govt.nz/records/21107476?search%255Bi%255D%255Bsubject\\_text%255D=Maori+%2528New+Zealand+people%2529+--+Periodicals&search%255Bpath%255D=items](https://natlib.govt.nz/records/21107476?search%255Bi%255D%255Bsubject_text%255D=Maori+%2528New+Zealand+people%2529+--+Periodicals&search%255Bpath%255D=items). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>36</sup> *Tīpuna* is defined as ancestor in the Māori language. ("tipuna." Te Aka Māori Dictionary.

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?&keywords=tipuna>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>37</sup> *Mana* refers to a supernatural force that contributes to an individual's status or control in the Māori language. ("mana." Te Aka Māori Dictionary.

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=mana#:~:text=2..surrounded%20by%20tapu%20and%20mana>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>38</sup> Derek Fox is a journalist and a politician from New Zealand. He also served as the mayor of Wairoa for 6 years. ("Derek Fox (broadcaster)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek\\_Fox\\_\(broadcaster\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek_Fox_(broadcaster)). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>39</sup> Katherine Findlay is a NZ writer and editor; she is associate editor of *Mana* magazine.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/katherine-findlay-19210572/?originalSubdomain=nz>.

<sup>40</sup> *Kuia* refers to an elder woman in the Māori language. ("kuia." Te Aka Māori Dictionary.

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?&keywords=kuia>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)



interview and share stories about, was incredible. From there I got post and I went to *Spasifik Magazine*<sup>41</sup> and became their deputy editor<sup>42</sup> when I was 25.

**NN: Wow.**

QMS: I peaked really early. [chuckles] Because you can't go too much further than a deputy editor. You can be an editor, but essentially I was doing the editor's role. The editor got made redundant when I got appointed, and I couldn't be given the editor's role because when you make a position redundant, you can't fill it again. I was a deputy editor for a company called *Pacific Magazine*<sup>43</sup>.

They were for Pacifica and a Māori Magazine. I worked there for a couple more years and actually I realized a few things during that time. One was that I really hate people telling me what to do. [laughs] I'm not a very good employee. I am quite strong headed, and I enjoy my *mana motuhake*<sup>44</sup>. I enjoy that self-determination and being able to live life on my terms. It was a little bit hard for me in the end, but also my 15-year-old sister was about to have a baby. Between that and my mum-- I was suffering through infertility<sup>45</sup> at the time, and my mum was like, "Oh, *moko*<sup>46</sup> Like, "Yay."

Which is actually, when we put into context I remember our neighbor saying to us, "Oh, what's going to happen? Your teenage daughter's having a baby." My mum's like, "Whoa, my 20-something-year-old daughter who's been with her partner since she was 18 still can't have a baby so let's just celebrate the baby. What are we going to do? This is what it is." I left that job.

I'd already started a business. When I was working at *Mana*, I'd already started a business working as a sole trader and doing comms and doing photography so I carried that all the way through. When I decided that it was time for a change, I went full-time into my

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<sup>41</sup> Spasifik Magazine identifies as "New Zealand's only publication dedicated to Pacific and Maori people." ("SPASIFIKmag.com." X. <https://x.com/spasifikmag>. Accessed 10 June 2024.)

<sup>42</sup> A deputy editor is responsible for assisting the chief editor of a publication by helping edit or proofread writing pieces. ("Deputy Editor Overview." Zippia. <https://www.zippia.com/deputy-editor-jobs/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>43</sup> Pacific Magazine ran from 1976 to 2008. The magazine wrote about news specifically in the Pacific region. ("*Pacific Magazine*." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific\\_Magazine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Magazine). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>44</sup> Mana motuhake is a Maori phrase that refers to individualism and self-determination. ("Mana motuhake : Māori resistance to colonization." New Zealand History. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/te-akomanga/contexts-activities/mana-motuhake#:~:text=Mana%20motuhake%3A%20self%2Ddetermination%2C.of%20one%20people%20by%20another>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>45</sup> Infertility is a condition that affects the reproductive capacity of men and women. It prevents men and women from having children. ("Infertility." World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/infertility>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>46</sup> Moko, or mokopuna, refers to a grandchild in the Māori language. ("mokopuna." Te Aka Maori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=mokopuna>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

business, and then supported my sister for about six weeks before she went back to school. She went back to high school, my mum's an early childhood teacher, so baby went to preschool, and I went to my business.

All of these things, all of these experiences, have just added little bits to who I am and what I do. I've been in my business now for about 16 years. Moved it into a limited liability company a few years ago and turned it into *Qiane and Cos*<sup>47</sup> that I could bring on some cos, bring on some contractors to come and support me. My business is multimedia production. We support organizations, businesses, IWI, government, individuals who are doing incredible work in the social and environmental space. Definitely led by indigenous values. I'm very picky with who I work with and it's great. I've had my business and business has taught me a lot and I've met so many people and been able to do so many things. From a career perspective

That's been that side and then there's this other side, which is a very long answer to this question. The other side is just who I am is a *wahine*<sup>48</sup> Māori. As I said, my grandparents would take me to *marae* meetings from when I was eight years old. The first Sunday of every month at 10:00 AM, your marae, (your village) comes together and you meet all about issues and what's happening and how do we support each other and all these sorts of things. I was involved in governance from a very, very young age.

I was able to work in the *marae*, I was able to run fundraising committees where we'd have these big community galas and fundraise money to build our new dining room and all these sorts of things. My heart was really grew in that *marae*. Our *marae* is my second home. It was my grandfather's first home. He preferred to be at the *marae* than being at home. [laughter] When I got to my teen years and older, I became really involved in the governance of our *marae*. I was the chairperson of our *hauora*<sup>49</sup> committee. Myself and our team would run screening days for women and pamper days for our *Kaumātua* and *Kuia*, and we'd go on trips and we'd do smoking cessation programs and all these different things.

I then started gaining all of this experience, lived experience, by doing all of these other things, and I--in 2014, with five of my cousins, launched a campaign called Soul Protective *Matau* [fish hook, symbolizes abundance, nourishment, strength; provides protection]. We

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<sup>47</sup> Qiana+Co is a company that helps small businesses or organizations spread their story about their impact on the world. ("Home." QIANE+Co. <http://www.qiane.co.nz/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>48</sup> Wahine is a Māori word that refers to woman. ("Wahine." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahine>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>49</sup> Hauora refers to an idea of health that is specific to the Māori culture in New Zealand. ("Hauora." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hauora>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

had found out that the government had changed the laws in New Zealand to allow for fast-tracked housing, special housing areas. One of those is going to happen in our *kainga*<sup>50</sup> on ancestral land on top of burial caves.

In *Ihumatao*<sup>51</sup> where I live, we've already been encroached by airport, by factories, there's been pollution of our river, there's been pollution of our *moana*<sup>52</sup>. It was like, "Enough is enough." We'd grown up with the stories of our grandparents telling us how they would live off the land and how they would get *kai moana*<sup>53</sup> straight out of the sea. How my grandmother would get freshwater crayfish<sup>54</sup> in the river that's just behind our house. Because she couldn't do that two generations later.

So we launched this campaign to stop the development and have the land returned because it was unjustly confiscated in 1863. I became strategic comms and co-leaders of that campaign and it made international headline news in 2019 when we went head to head with the police on the *whenua* [land]. We had a very passive peaceful resistance and we're still fighting that now eight years later. However, we're in a much better position now, because the government bought out the developer and we're now working with the government to have the land returned.

All of that diverse experience from my upbringing, to my career, to just who I am as an Indigenous woman, and the responsibilities I have to my people and to my land have all made me who I am today. They all came to a, not came to a head, but they all interwove themselves when I created *Nuku*<sup>55</sup>. *Nuku* is the *kaupapa*<sup>56</sup> that I started that is very much focused on *wahine*, (an indigenous woman).

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<sup>50</sup> Kāinga is a Māori word that refers to home or village. ("kāinga." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/1971>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>51</sup> Ihumātao is a designated archaeological site in a suburb of Auckland. The site is important historically to the Māori as the Māori first settled there after coming to New Zealand. The land was then taken by the New Zealand government in 1863 in an invasion. ("Ihumātao." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ihum%C4%81tao#:~:text=M%C4%81ori%20first%20settled%20in%20the.t%20as%20%22cold%20nose%22>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>52</sup> Moana refers to a body of water, like a sea or lake, in the Māori language. ("moana." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?&keywords=moana>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>53</sup> Kaimoana is a Māori term that means seafood or food that comes from the sea literally. ("Kaimoana." NZ Māori Tourism. <https://maoritourism.co.nz/what-say/kaimoana#:~:text=Kaimoana%20refers%20to%20food%20which,Kina%20%2D%20sea%20egg>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>54</sup> Crayfish are a species of animals found in bodies of water. They are similar to lobsters and are a common type of seafood. ("Crayfish." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crayfish#Culinary\\_use](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crayfish#Culinary_use). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>55</sup> Nuku is a book that consists of stories from 100 indigenous women from different cultures and tribes. ("The Book." NUKU. <https://nukuwomen.co.nz/nukubook/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>56</sup> Kaupapa is a Māori term that refers to a plan or initiative. ("Kaupapa." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/2439>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

It didn't just get plucked out of thin air, it came with a whole lot of experience beforehand. In 2016, my grandmother died really suddenly, and really unexpectedly. At that time, my husband and I had still been suffering through infertility and had still been unable to fall pregnant, and had gone through fertility treatments and indigenous treatments, and all of these different things. When my nana died, some people label it today as depression or all these mental health labels.

We have this *atua*<sup>57</sup> in South Māori called *whiro*<sup>58</sup>. *Whiro* is the name of one of the moon cycles, that's the new moon, so when there's no moon, which is darkness and black. *Whiro* is also the name of the *atua* who is the *atua* of disease or sickness or that kind of stuff. To *wānanga*<sup>59</sup> is to talk and to sit down and to express ideas and have long-winded conversations. When my grandmother died, I say I had my *wānanga* with *whiro*.

That's my indigenous perspective. Is that I didn't fall into a state of depression, I had my *wānanga* with *whiro* and when I was ready to finish my *wānanga* with *whiro*, then I would have my *wānanga* with the next *atua*.

**NN: Right.**

QMS: At the time that my grandmother died, I was questioning who I was as a woman, because a lot of who I was as a woman came from the woman around me. What does it mean to be a woman who couldn't have children? What did it mean to be a woman who didn't have that intergenerational knowledge being shared anymore? What did it mean to be a woman who was a journalist who didn't get the story of her grandmother before her grandmother died? What did it mean to be all of these things? I was questioning them all. Then I was thinking about the intergenerational wisdom and how I just lost a whole generation, and how I hadn't yet produced the next generation. What does that mean as an indigenous woman when you have a responsibility to the seven generations in front of you? During that time of *wānanga*, I was undergoing *romiromi*<sup>60</sup> which is a Māori health practice,

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<sup>57</sup> Atua refers to gods or spirits in Polynesian cultures. ("Atua." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atua#:~:text=Atua%20are%20the%20gods%20and,the%20monotheistic%20conception%20of%20God>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>58</sup> Whiro is a Māori word that can refer to either anything that is related to death and evil or the first moon of the lunar month on the Māori calendar. ("whiro." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=whiro>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>59</sup> Wānanga is a Māori word that means to a discussion in which individuals can share their differing opinions in a safe space. ("What wānanga means to Māori." The Spinoff. <https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/02-08-2023/what-wananga-means-to-maori>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>60</sup> Romoromi is a type of Maori massage which removes energy that is blocked in the body through the stimulation of body tissue. ("What is Romiromi Massage?." Wikitoria Māori Healing. <https://www.wikitoriamaoirihealing.co.nz/massage-therapy/what-is-romiromi->

which is a very intense, very painful deep tissue bone massage. Physically very painful. Emotionally it can also be quite painful. I was undergoing this treatment to just help me release. Help me release the grief, and help me and all of that sort of stuff and I naturally fell pregnant.

**NN: Whoa.**

QMS: I fell pregnant, and then I said to my husband just before we went into our 12-week scan, I said, "We're having a girl. She's going to be born at 38 weeks on the full moon, and her name is *Haeata-te-Kapua*<sup>61</sup>. He was like, "Whoa, what are you even talking about? This is your first pregnancy." I called my mum, my mum was like, "Okay." I told my midwife, my midwife is like, "It's your first baby, you don't really know." I said, "No, I know. 38 weeks on the full moon. [unintelligible]"

We went into our 12-week scan and I said to the sonographer, can you tell what we're having? She goes, "Normally, we wait for the 20-week scan," and then she's like, "But I'm pretty sure you're having a girl." "I am?" Looked at my husband, he's like, "Oh, 50% chance that you were right."

**NN: You are right, yes.**

QMS: Now, my husband comes from 11 boys, and he just expected that there was going to be a boy in there.

**NN: Yes, seriously.**

QMS: I come from a line of girls, and I was like, "No, no, no, my genes are stronger." I then started thinking about my responsibility in raising a young Māori *Kūki 'Āiran Tongan*<sup>62</sup> woman, my husband is Tongan<sup>63</sup> in Aotearoa, in a Western framework, in a Western world, what did that all mean? As I was growing this baby, I was growing *Nuku* [see above]. I feel like *Nuku* came with her from the *wānanga* from wherever she came from. My baby at 38

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[massage/#:~:text=Romiromi%20is%20Body%2C%20Mind%20and.%2C%20mental%20and%20spiritual%20bodies](#)). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>61</sup> Haeata-te-Kapua is a Māori name that translates to 'the beam of light that broke through the clouds'. Haeata directly translates to dawn and kapua directly translates to clouds. ("haeata." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/709>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>62</sup> Māori Kuki 'Āiran Tongan refers to a subdivision of the Māori language that originates from the Cook Islands. ("Cook Islands Māori." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cook\\_Islands\\_M%C4%81ori](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cook_Islands_M%C4%81ori). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>63</sup> Tongan refers to individuals from the island country of Tonga in the Pacific Ocean. Tonga is made up of more than 150 islands. ("Tonga." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonga>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

weeks on a super moon was born and her name is Haeata te Kapua and with her came the *Papatūānuku*<sup>64</sup>.

**NN: Wow.**

QMS: So none of us are ever self-made. We're made by all of these things and all of these are experiences.

**NN: *Nuku* is amazing. I have the book and I've looked at some of the podcasts. I haven't listened to them quite yet, but that is amazing. The story that you've just related is in the introduction to the book, which is astounding to me. That was really - that fueled into my interest in what you do really because I like to interview older women, and get their stories, and think about what their lives, where they've come from, what society was like when they were growing up, and all that.**

**This is wonderful to hear that there is this history that can be this intergenerational for your daughter and for others, other generations beyond. That they can actually see and hear and relate to their culture. It's wonderful. It's really wonderful.**

QMS: It's really gratifying. It really is about the diversity of what it is to be an indigenous woman today but also the diversity of what success means and looks like. One of the *wahine* has 10 children under the age of 15. I'm like, "Damn, you are successful." [laughs] We think that success comes with awards or comes with accreditations or comes with--

**NN: Lots of money or recognition.**

QMS: Yes, lots of money or this particular job position, but actually success is way more diverse than that. I wanted to show not only our *tamariki*<sup>65</sup> and our *mokopuna*, not only our children and our grandchildren, that-- I not only wanted to show them people who looked like them and sounded like them or had lived experiences like people in their family so they could relate to all of these things and be like, "Wow, they were in a podcast, and they were on a book, and their voice is being amplified." Not only that, but I wanted to show ourselves.

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<sup>64</sup> Papatūānuku is a Māori term that refers to Mother Earth. ("Papatūānuku – the land." Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/papatuanuku-the-land#:~:text=In%20M%C4%81ori%20tradition%2C%20Papat%C5%AB%C4%81nuku%20is,land%2C%20which%20then%20nourishes%20them>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>65</sup> Tamariki is a Māori word that refers to children. ("tamariki." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=tamariki>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

Because often we do a lot of stuff for our young people, we do a lot of stuff for our youth and we help the youth, but there's a lot of us that are my age, that are older than me, that are my grandmother's age, who are still dealing with intergenerational trauma. Who are still dealing with intergenerational land loss, who are still dealing with the effects of the urban drift, from moving away from small rural villages and communities into the city to find work and that's had a flow-on effect with how connected those people are to home. Then their feeling of not being enough. You're not enough to fit in the Western world but then you're not enough to fit in an indigenous world.

Are you only Māori if you wear *moko kauae*<sup>66</sup> and you speak your language? Or what if you are a Pasifika woman who lives in diaspora in Aotearoa because your family came here for work in the '60s? None of these things make you any less of a woman, let alone any less of an indigenous woman. I wanted to show ourselves that we are enough, as we are and how we are in this world.

There's always time and it's never too late to go home. It's never too late to learn this thing. It's never too late to-- whatever it is that might continue to fill your cup that little bit more. *Nuku's* been quite successful. It was very much a self-funded, [laughs] mostly self-funded project or *Kaupapa* [venture]. It's a social enterprise that sits underneath my business, and my business helps to just operate the financial side of things, but otherwise it sits in its own space.

It was some of my best and closest friends who came on board to help make that happen. We would go off and we'd make a little bit of money and go off and do the next thing, and interview some people. Our youngest was 14 and our oldest was in her mid-70s. 100 women from the top of the North Island<sup>67</sup>, or from Waitangi<sup>68</sup>. Not quite the top, but from Waitangi down to Ōtepoti Dunedin<sup>69</sup> in the South. Across both coasts and over to Rēhoku<sup>70</sup>, the Chatham Island. Then I self-published the book. The book made it to--The book was a

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<sup>66</sup> Moko kauae is a traditional tattoo that Māori women have on their lips and chin. The tattoo is representative of the status and abilities of the woman in her tribe. ("Tā moko : Traditional Māori tattoo." 100% Pure New Zealand. <https://www.newzealand.com/int/feature/ta-moko-maori-tattoo/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>67</sup> New Zealand consists of 2 large islands, the North Island and South Island, and many smaller islands. The North Island is one of the most populated islands in the world and is home to the capital of the country. ("North Island." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North\\_Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Island). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>68</sup> Waitangi is a town in New Zealand on the North Island. ("Waitangi, Northland." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waitangi,\\_Northland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waitangi,_Northland). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>69</sup> Dunedin, Otepoti in the Māori language, is one of the largest cities on the South Island in New Zealand. ("Dunedin." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunedin>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>70</sup> Rehoku is the Māori term for the Chatham Islands, which is a group of small islands part of New Zealand. ("Chatham Islands." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chatham\\_Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chatham_Islands). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

finalist in the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards<sup>71</sup>. It was the only self-published book to be a finalist.

**NN: Congratulations.**

QMS: The PANZ Book Design Awards<sup>72</sup>. We're a top seller in Aotearoa, we're one of the top-selling books. I've just signed a deal with Penguin Publishers<sup>73</sup> who are going to print the third. I've printed two print runs. They're now going to print the third print run with the idea that they will be able to get it into more retail outlets and take it international. We've got into 150 retail outlets nationwide on our own. Aotearoa is a small country. Michigan<sup>74</sup> probably has 150 outlets just in one little town. [laughs]

**NN: That's wonderful, congratulations. Because then Penguin can actually distribute it like--that's global. Fantastic.**

QMS: They can.

**NN: Easily.**

QMS: All of these different things have been happening. I know you asked the question, what's maybe one of the career highlights or that sort of stuff? To be honest, none of those things are career highlights for me. The highlights for me come when I got an email from a dad who talked about dropping his two daughters off, seven and nine, his two daughters off to school every morning and every morning they listen to a *Nuku* podcast. Now, that to me trumps anything. When my daughter stands in the mirror and draws a *moko kauae* on her face because that's what she sees as beautiful. Because she sees it in *Nuku*. When she's out in the supermarket and she's like, "Mama, you should interview that *wahine* for *Nuku*." Just because she sees a *wahine*. Because she can see the value in woman because she's been brought up that way. She just sees a woman, has no idea who that woman is and she's like, "Mama, you should interview her for *Nuku*." She already sees the specialness in *wāhine*.

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<sup>71</sup> The Ockham New Zealand Book Awards was started in 1996 and are given to literature authors every year. ("Ockham New Zealand Book Award." Wikipedia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ockham\\_New\\_Zealand\\_Book\\_Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ockham_New_Zealand_Book_Awards). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>72</sup> PANZ, the Publishers Association of New Zealand, awards books in different categories every year for their cover design. These categories include children's books, cookbooks, and more. ("PANZ Book Design Awards." Publishers Association of New Zealand Inc. <https://publishers.org.nz/awards/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>73</sup> Penguin Books is a publishing company based in Britain. It was established in 1935 and distributes books to many countries around the world. ("Penguin Books." Wikipedia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penguin\\_Books](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penguin_Books). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>74</sup> Michigan is one of fifty states making up the United States. It is one of the most populated states in the country. ("Michigan." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michigan>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)



All of those things are great. I've won journalism awards, I've won photography of the year awards, all that kind of stuff. Cool, thanks. I appreciate it, I'm grateful for it. It looks really good when I've got to apply for funding and investments. That's not what drives me. What drives me is the little incremental change that's made from the work that I'm able to do.

**NN: Oh, fantastic. Not even the recent Kings Birthday Award<sup>75</sup> that you received has--**

QMS: Look, if I'm completely honest, it was the hardest award to accept, and I was 99% close to declining. My mother and my husband wouldn't let me decline.

[laughter] I do a lot of things for other people so I thought, "Oh, I'd better give them this one thing." The King's Honour, I received a-- I'm now a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit<sup>76</sup>. I received an Honour in the most recent King's coronation, King's Birthday Honours List. The reason it was so hard to accept is because everything that the King and the British monarchy<sup>77</sup> stand for is everything I've spent the last 20 years working against. Trying to decolonise our thinking, working to help in the self-determination of Māori and Pasifika people to indigenize our thinking and changing our Western frameworks is something that I've been doing my entire career.

However, I'm also very clear that it's highly likely the King doesn't even know that I got this thing, and that it's an award from Aotearoa for services to Aotearoa. When I looked at that particular line, of "we want to recognize the work, the commitment that you have made to serve the people of Aotearoa," I thought, "Yeah, okay, that I can accept because that I have done."

I found my purpose really early in life, and I got it down into one line. It's a very long line, but it's-- I amplify the voices of marginalised people in their communities, so that we can change the narrative for future generations. If this award means that my voice is amplified, then that then means the voices I represent are further amplified. By accepting, it only gives me another platform to amplify those voices that need to be heard the most. With that, I accepted, and the investiture ceremony is happening in September.

**NN: Oh, wow.**

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<sup>75</sup> The Kings Birthday Award, or the Birthday Honours, celebrates the birthday of Britain's monarch by awarding individuals across the commonwealth. ("Birthday Honours." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birthday\\_Honours](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birthday_Honours). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>76</sup> The New Zealand Order of Merit is a group of individuals from New Zealand who are recognized by the monarch for their service to their country. ("New Zealand Order of Merit." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Zealand\\_Order\\_of\\_Merit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_Order_of_Merit). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>77</sup> The British monarchy refers to the kings/queens of the United Kingdom who are the head of state of the United Kingdom as well. ("Monarchy of the United Kingdom." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy_of_the_United_Kingdom). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

QMS: So I'm still a little bit--I tell people to sit in their uncomfortability a lot. One of my friends said to me, "Maybe you just need to sit in your uncomfortability." I was like, "Okay." [laughs] I just sit in an uncomfortable space, and don't expect me to ever feel comfortable about it, but I know both sides and I'm quite happy to just sit uncomfortably in the middle. [laughs]

**NN: In a way, your uncomfortability is making those people who might believe in the people who gave you the award, it's making them uncomfortable too. The visibility is out there. It's like feminism—you need to have men on board too for it to work. You need to have *Pākehā*<sup>78</sup> on board and the Crown<sup>79</sup> on board for it to work.**

QMS: It is very funny though. Because I was very aware that I am-- My name is known in the activism space. Not as much as others, and I haven't done anywhere near as much activism as some of the most incredible Māori out there, but my name is known in that space. I was like, "Let me into Parliament." The very next day after the awards were nominated, I was in Wellington<sup>80</sup> for a speaking event for the Ministry for Women<sup>81</sup>. I know a few people in Parliament<sup>82</sup>. I was like, "Hey, can I come and have a cup of tea? Because I actually just wanted to see if I could get in the door." [chuckles] The last time I was here, I was processing outside. I'm just wondering if they'll let me in the door. [laughs] That was fun. They did let me in. I got in.

**NN: Actually, that's where I saw you. I saw you on that, it was some kind of seminar about from the Ministry of Women that was broadcast a month ago, maybe?**

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<sup>78</sup> Pākehā is a Māori word that refers to New Zealanders that are not of Māori descent. ("Pākehā." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P%C4%81keh%C4%81>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>79</sup> The crown refers to the British monarchy. ("The Crown." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Crown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crown). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>80</sup> Wellington is a city in New Zealand on the North Island. It is one of the largest cities and is the capital of the country as well. ("Wellington." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wellington>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>81</sup> The Ministry for Women is a New Zealand service organization that is responsible for assisting the New Zealand government with anything relating to women. ("Ministry for Women." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry\\_for\\_Women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_for_Women). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>82</sup> The New Zealand Parliament is the governing body of the country that consists of representatives and the British monarch. ("New Zealand Parliament." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Zealand\\_Parliament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_Parliament). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

QMS: Yes, that was at the National Library<sup>83</sup> and it was the *Manatū Wahine*<sup>84</sup>, the Leadership and Legacy<sup>85</sup>.

**NN: That's right.**

QMS: Yes. Alongside some pretty incredible *wahine* [women].

**NN: You're pretty incredible yourself there. That was really good.**

QMS: Earlier that day I'd just come from Parliament. [laughs]

**NN: You've answered a lot of my questions already. I was going to next fold into what drew you to the work that you do, but you've answered that. You've talked a little bit about-- The one that really interests me in this particular block of question is how has change in your work shaped your life and how has the change in your life shaped your work? You've spoken to that quite a bit, but is there anything you want to add specifically?**

QMS: I think if I focus on *Nuku*, interviewing 100 women is not only an incredible honour and privilege, but it is life-changing. It is absolutely life-changing, and it's healing. I don't think I realised the healing that was needed, until I got to the end and realised how healed I was. As I said, I didn't capture my grandmother's story. I've got parts of her story, but I didn't sit with her and just get her whole story, and I will always live with a little bit of regret with that.

I went out and I told 100 other women's stories to try to make up for it. Not to try to make up for it, but you know-- Being able to sit with these women, especially the *kuia* [older women], especially those older women who come with that lifetime of lived experience and knowledge and wisdom. Every single woman that I spoke to gave me more strength, gave me more knowledge, gave me more tools, gave me more ways to think about the world. Changed the way I was as a mother, as a wife, as a *wahine* [woman]. Even if it was just one little thing, imagine that 100 times. A hundred times. There are people who have listened to

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<sup>83</sup> The National Library of New Zealand is a national organization that allows individuals to access various works of knowledge. ("About the Library." National Library of New Zealand. <https://natlib.govt.nz/about-us>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>84</sup> Manatū Wahine is the Māori name for the Ministry for Women. ("Ministry for Women." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry\\_for\\_Women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_for_Women). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>85</sup> Leadership and Legacy is a series of talks hosted by the National Library of New Zealand where women leaders of New Zealand speak about their experiences. ("Leadership and legacy: Celebrating women leaders in Aotearoa." National Library of New Zealand. <https://natlib.govt.nz/events/leadership-and-legacy-celebrating-women-leaders-in-aotearoa-june-06-2023>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

all 100 podcasts. We have the book, and the book is amazing. To toot my own horn, the book is amazing. [laughs]

**NN: No, it's gorgeous.**

QMS: Yes. There's also nothing like listening to those words from the voices of those women, and the way that they--their tone, and the way that they speak. They were just things that I had learned. Ngahua Murphy<sup>86</sup> is researching indigenous knowledge around menstruation<sup>87</sup>. The way that I talk to my daughter about menstruation is completely different to the way that my mother and my grandmother spoke to me about it, and it's purely because of my work. Because of work that I've been able to do, the knowledge I've been able to gain, the experiences I've been able to have.

Now what I share with my daughter is so different and it's beautiful. She's got all these words for it, she's got books about it, she knows about *Ikura*<sup>88</sup> our connection to the first *wahine*, *Hineahuone*<sup>89</sup>, *Hinetitama*<sup>90</sup> all of these *atua* that I may have shared that with her, but I may not have. I don't know. I don't know until-- I am in this world, I am in this space right now because of a career that has centred me on all of these *pūrākau*<sup>91</sup> and all of these stories and it has definitely changed my life. My work has changed my life, my work has changed the life of my daughter.

I think how my life has changed my work is that every experience that I have changes the way I approach what I do. It's all just this circular. As I grow, the work grows. As the work grows, I grow. It's the same with-- I do a lot of speaking at the moment, like speaking at

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<sup>86</sup> Ngahua Murphy is an academic and author from New Zealand. Much of her work surrounds Māori culture. ("Ngahua Murphy." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngahua\\_Murphy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngahua_Murphy). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>87</sup> Menstruation is a monthly process in which women shed the lining of their uterus. ("Menstruation." MedlinePlus. <https://medlineplus.gov/menstruation.html>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>88</sup> Ikura is the Māori term that refers to menstruation. ("An update on the Ikura – Manaakitia te whare tangata – Period products in school initiative." New Zealand School Nurses. <https://www.nzschoolnurses.org.nz/article/an-update-on-the-ikura-manaakitia-te-whare-tangata-period-products-in-schools-initiative#:~:text=Ikura%20links%20back%20to%20the,of%20women%20and%20menstrual%20blood>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>89</sup> Hineahuone, according to Māori legend, was the first women created from soil by Tāne, who is said to be responsible for creating humans. ("Tāne, Hineahuone and Hine." Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/first-peoples-in-maori-tradition/page-2>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>90</sup> Hinetitama, according to Māori legend, is the daughter of Hineahuone and Tāne and is said to be responsible for night and day. ("Tāne, Hineahuone and Hine." Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/first-peoples-in-maori-tradition/page-2>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>91</sup> Purākau is a Māori word that refers to legends or ancient stories. ("purakau." Te Ara Māori Encyclopedia. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=purakau>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

conferences or running workshops, and my life now also informs the work that I'm able to do and share with others, and help them to find their *tuakiritanga*<sup>92</sup>.

To help them build the narrative for their businesses, to help them-- all of these different things that I've experienced, and the way that I've done it in my way, I'm now able to share with others. There's always this beautiful connection and relationship that's ongoing.

**NN: I had a really major moment then, when you were talking about the honor of interviewing a hundred women and I've interviewed 11 and I've grown as well. It was like, but here I'm interviewing the goddess of interviewing. [laughter] It was like, "Wow. Okay. Yes, I get what you're talking about. Which really [unintelligible]. Thank you. Very good." Let's move on to the third block of questions. How do you understand the term feminism?**

QMS: I don't use the term feminism. I understand feminism as championing women as equity for women, not necessarily equality, because we always talk about equality. I'm like, well, let's talk about equity because actually, that's probably a better way to describe it, that feminism-- I also most of the time see feminism from White women. That can be quite jarring for indigenous women because if feminism isn't intersectional, then it's not for us. Lots of people talk about feminism as ensuring men are part of the feminism movement or the feminist movement, but where in feminism do we actually recognize the privilege of women who lead feminism movements? How are we actually amplifying the intersectional parts of feminism? Where are our disabled representation in feminism? Where is our indigenous representation in feminism?

Now, the reason why I personally don't subscribe or champion specific could be like feminism is because, *Te Ao Māori* [the Māori world], we always talk about balance and that *tāne*<sup>93</sup> and *wāhine* [men and women] are equal. Within yourself, you have your *whatukura* - let me just get this right - (*whatukura, mareikura*. *Whatukura* being your feminine side and your *mareikura* being your male side within you as a woman). We have a masculine side and we have a feminine side within all of us.

That doesn't take away from the fact that I champion women 100,000%. I will be in rooms and challenge everybody in that room, and only speak to the women. [laughs] I will get out there and unapologetically stand for women and women's rights and indigenous women, all of these sorts of things. But I do that with the knowledge and understanding that there's

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<sup>92</sup> Tuakiritanga is a Māori word that means identity. ("Tuakiritanga (identity)." Arrowtown Stonework. <https://www.arrowtownstonework.co.nz/collections/tuakiritanga-identity>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>93</sup> Tāne refers to a boy or man in the Māori language. ("tane." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=tane>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

always a balance. Even at the *marae* [community meeting place], I'm about to go to the *marae*, the first voice that we hear on the *marae karanga*<sup>94</sup> from a woman.

The first person to speak is a man. The woman calls the spirits in, and the men send the spirits back. If you don't have both of those roles, you don't have that process of *tipuana*<sup>95</sup>, and so you cannot have the balance in an indigenous world without both. Our women are the *te whare tangata*<sup>96</sup>, we are the house of humanity. We are sacred. Our men are what create the *tāngata*<sup>97</sup> [then unintelligible]. Our men have specific roles, our women have specific roles. Without both of those, everything falls over.

It's a very Western *whakaaro*<sup>98</sup>, very Western thought, to say that, well, men are better than anyone else, or the men get to sit in the front. That must mean they're better, or the men sit in the front because they're supposed to be protecting the woman. We don't need protection. We're actually-- from a *Te Ao Wairua*<sup>99</sup> perspective, if someone was to throw *makutu*<sup>100</sup>, they target the woman because the woman are the house of humanity, because if you target the woman and the woman falls, you no longer have generations to come after you. The role of the men in that space, yes, is to protect the *te whare tangata* because the women are so special, because the men could be but disposable. [laughter] You know what I mean? It's very much a non-indigenous way of thinking when we think about feminism because we in *Te Ao Māori*, think about the duality, and how we have *Tangaroa*<sup>101</sup> the god of the sea. *Hinemoana*<sup>102</sup> who is the sea. One is a *tane atua* [male god], one is a *wahine rei* [female spirit embodiment] We have *Papatūānuku* who is our earth mother, and we have

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<sup>94</sup> A marae karanga is a chant that is part of a Māori welcoming ceremony and is usually done by women. ("Karanga (Māori culture)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karanga\\_\(M%C4%81ori\\_culture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karanga_(M%C4%81ori_culture)). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>95</sup> Tipuana is a Māori word that refers to ancestors of a family, such as grandparents. ("tipuna." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>96</sup> Te whare tangata is a Māori term that refers to a womb or a house of humanity. ("whare tangata." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=whare+tangata>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>97</sup> Tangata is a Maori word that means human or person. ("tangata." Te Ara Maori Encyclopedia. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=tangata>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>98</sup> Whakaaro is a Māori word that refers to thought or opinion. ("whakaaro." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=whakaaro>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>99</sup> Te ao wairua is a Māori phrase that refers to the spiritual world. ("A Māori Perspective." Pause Breathe Smile. <https://pausebreathesmile.nz/a-maori-perspective/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>100</sup> Makutu refers to sorcery or a curse in the Māori language. ("Makutu." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makutu>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>101</sup> Tangaroa refers to the god of sea and animals within the sea in the Māori culture. ("Tangaroa." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tangaroa>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>102</sup> Hinemoana refers to the goddess of the ocean in the Māori culture. ("Māreikura: Exploring the goddess in Māori women." Garland Magazine. <https://garlandmag.com/article/mareikura/#:~:text=Hinemoana,the%20creatures%20of%20the%20sea>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

*Ranginui*<sup>103</sup> who is our sky father, but without either one of those, we die. You have to have them both. You have to celebrate them both.

You have to do different things with different ones of them. I do believe that we live in a Western world, and it is very much fact that our women are being beaten at the hands of men. They are being hurt emotionally, spiritually, physically by men. They are also being paid way less than men. They have more laws on their bodies than men. There is no doubt about that, from a Western framework, in the Western world that we live in. It's about reconnecting to our indigenous knowledge, reconnecting to our indigenous practice. That we then begin to understand how we can achieve all of these things by understanding that duality, that balance, and reminding out *tāne* [men] that the roles that we have as *wāhine* within these spaces. I think because we've all been brought up--most if not all indigenous cultures around the world, the first thing colonizers did was take our language away, because in that language are all of those answers.

In that language are words that you cannot translate into the English language that represent all of those things. Taking away our language and trying to assimilate us into another culture made us forget that actually we already have all of these practices within our culture. We just have to reawaken them. That doesn't mean I won't stand up and hold a placard, [laughs] for fairer pay for *wāhine* and hands off my body, and let me make the right decisions about my body by myself. That doesn't take away from any of that. It's just not a word or a movement that I personally associate directly with.

**NN: Right. I'm mindful of the time and I know we have to-- I've got a few more questions--**

QMS: I'm still okay with time. I literally am walking next door. [laughs] I'm all right.

**NN: You've talked a little bit about the relationship between activism, and how you feel about feminism. The next question talks about, and this might be a difficult one, scholarship--the relationship between scholarship and activism. How do you perceive that relationship? Is it relevant for you, and what you do? Then in general, I guess, and then for you specifically.**

QMS: What do you mean by scholarship?

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<sup>103</sup> Ranginui refers to the sky father who represented the heavens in Māori legend. ("Ranginui – the sky." The Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/ranginui-the-sky/print>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

**NN: I guess any writings, and this is to do with feminist scholarship. It would be any theoretical tomes, any empirical research, any wisdom that you've received, maybe.**

QMS: I guess everything I do is activism, because everything I do is about pushing against the system and the way we're currently doing things. Every voice that I'm able to amplify is activism. Every story that I write is activism. I've just written a chapter for a book about celebrating 30 years of publishing in Aotearoa.

They asked for my input as a self-published author. That chapter that I put into that book is activism. It's about pushing against the grain of everybody's going to go to a publisher. Here's how you can do it on your own. Here's what story sovereignty could look like. Here's *mana motuhake* [see previous; self government, autonomy, self-determination] in publishing could look like. I see everything as activism. If you are disrupting a system, however, you are disrupting that system, is activism.

I think people put activism in a box. If you have to be at a march, or you have to be holding a placard, or you have to be standing in front of police, or you have to be whatever, but actually activism is you as a woman waking up every morning and making a decision for yourself. That is activism. If we are thinking about scholarship and activism, if you're researching about topics that no one else is researching, if you're bringing histories back to life, if you're opening doors for people that are coming after you.

There's an indigenous Indian woman named Aki Tammi, who's one of the *wāhine* in *Nuku*, and she is studying at university, and she decided to do her Ph.D.<sup>104</sup> because she could not quote an indigenous woman in her work. There were- no one that she could quote as an indigenous woman from the Himalayas. She was like, "I'm going to go and do this study and do this research and get this qualification, so that someone coming after me can quote me." That's activism. That is activism. I see them all as interconnected, as one and the same. It's just another form of activism. Woman in university is activism. Woman voting is activism. I think because Aotearoa had the vote for so long. Oh, you know--it's still activism. We're still being active in our decisions. We're being active in our pursuit for answers. We're being active in our research. The work that you're doing is activism, because the voices that you're bringing to life, and allowing the next generation to hear and engage with, my voice is going to be heard in a completely different country. It's going to disrupt someone somewhere.

**NN: Hopefully. Yes.**

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<sup>104</sup> Ph.D. stands for a Doctor of Philosophy which is the highest academic degree an individual can receive. ("Doctor of Philosophy." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor\\_of\\_Philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor_of_Philosophy). Accessed 15 October 2023.)



QMS: You have been the channel for that. You've enabled that to happen. I think it's just the way we maybe think about things. We put them in boxes, scholarship is this thing and activism is this thing, and feminism is this thing, but they're actually all the same thing. Everything is connected. Again it's a *Te Ao Māori* worldview. It's an indigenous worldview that every single thing is connected. We just have to open our minds up to see how they're all connected. Reframe the way we're thinking about it.

**NN: Thank you. Very nice answer. You've really talked about this a little bit, the intersection of your work with women's movement in the country. This is a difficult question I think, or it has been a difficult question. What is your analysis, evaluation and expectation of the development of feminism, whatever that means to you, in New Zealand? What's going to happen?**

QMS: Well, I'm very open about the fact that I want to be building an army of indigenous women who are empowered and who are so clear on who they are, their *tuakiritanga*, that they stand strong in this world, because if we have more people who are standing strong within themselves the world changes. I have a very clear expectation that-- it may not be a group of people, it may not be an organization but I have a very clear expectation that every *wahine* stand strong in their own *tuakiritanga*.

Part of that is not just indigenous women. The women who are *Tangata Tiriti*<sup>105</sup>, *Pākehā* women or women of European heritage or some might call themselves Kiwi<sup>106</sup> women, however you want to identify, that they also know who they are. It's really important for a movement, a feminist movement, a *wāhine* movement, for us to truly understand our identities. Some people go, "Well, I know I am. I'm a third-generation New Zealander. Where's your *maunga*<sup>107</sup>? All right, 'I live next to this mountain.' No, no, no. Where's your *maunga*? Where's the *maunga* that your ancestors walked on? Where is the *awa*<sup>108</sup>? Where's the mountain? Where's the river that your ancestors bathed in? Is it in

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<sup>105</sup> Tangata tiriti refers to the treaty people, meaning people from New Zealand who are not Māori. ("tangata tiriti." Wiktionary. [https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/tangata\\_tiriti](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/tangata_tiriti). Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>106</sup> Kiwi is a New Zealand term that refers to people from New Zealand. ("Kiwi Definition & Meaning." Meriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kiwi>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>107</sup> Maunga is a Māori word that means mountain. ("maunga." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?&keywords=maunga>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>108</sup> Awa is a Māori word that refers to a river or a stream. ("awa." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?&keywords=awa>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

Denmark<sup>109</sup>? Is it in Scotland<sup>110</sup>? Is it in Ireland<sup>111</sup>? Go there. Go there. Walk on your mountain. Understand what your tartan is. Find your family crest because when you know deeply your identity, yes you are also a third-generation New Zealander who has this *whakapapa*, who has this *pepeha*<sup>112</sup>, who can *hono*<sup>113</sup> to these two *Tohu Whenua*<sup>114</sup>. (Who can connect to these landmarks.)

It's not just an indigenous thing. I'm lucky. I live right by my river, by my mountain, by my ocean. I can speak those things to life. When I need healing, I can walk two minutes down the road and be healed at the place where my ancestors healed. Today, yes, we want to contribute to a feminist movement, or contribute to a women's movement, but we're not whole. How do we contribute when we're still empty? How do we give everything when we don't have everything to give?

The thing that we need is *tuakiri*, is our identity. I just had this conversation with a woman on Saturday who said, "My two children love *kapa haka*<sup>115</sup>, they're not Māori. Does that mean they have to stop doing *kapa haka*?" I was like "No. Do *kapa haka*. *Kapa haka* is awesome. Everybody loves *kapa haka*. Go and do that. Your *tamariki* know where are they from? Do you know where you're from?" She's like, "We don't really have culture." Like, "How do you not have culture?"

"Because we're Kiwis. Our culture is a Kiwi culture." I'm like, "No, that's part of your culture. Where were your ancestors buried? Go home." That's not to be offensive at all. That's not to say this is not your home but I say that-- Māori in the city: we say go home. Go

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<sup>109</sup> Denmark is a country in Europe. It is part of the Scandinavian countries. ("Denmark." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denmark>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>110</sup> Scotland is a country in the United Kingdom. It is one of the largest countries in the UK. ("Scotland." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>111</sup> Ireland is an island in the Atlantic Ocean, near Europe. It is one of the largest islands in the world. ("Ireland." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ireland>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>112</sup> *Pepeha* is a Māori word refers to a set of phrases that help outline an individual's tribe and ancestry. ("Pepeha for non-Māori." E-Tangata. <https://e-tangata.co.nz/reflections/pepeha-for-non-maori/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>113</sup> *Hono* is a Māori word that refers to a link or connection. ("hono." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?&keywords=hono>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>114</sup> *Tohu whenua* is a Maori word that refers to a national landmark. ("What does tohu whenua mean in Māori?." Word Hippo. <https://www.wordhippo.com/what-is/the-meaning-of/maori-word-f6fb4cba16fe28138250539bfb6bf6e14d50ff29.html>. Accessed 15 October 2023.)

<sup>115</sup> *Kapa haka* refers to a Māori dance in which groups of individuals stand in rows to dance. ("What is kapa haka?." Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/kapa-haka/page-1#:~:text=The%20M%C4%81ori%20word%20'kapa'%20means,is%20a%20living%20art%20form.> Accessed 15 October 2023.)

home. Go back to Ruatoria<sup>116</sup>, go back to Kawhia<sup>117</sup>, go back to wherever it is that your ancestors are from and connect with who you are.

I say that to everyone who is not of the land that they live in. Where are your ancestors from? Find that story because it builds who you are. I can proudly stand up and say [this is her *pepeha* – introduction that outlines her connections to people and places] I can say all those things because that's where my blood is from, that's where my bones are from. I feel so much more whole walking in this road because I've got those whole history behind me. I've got those *whakapapa* [ancestors] behind me and I've got these landmarks I can always go back to for healing.

I think the future of these movements in Aotearoa is actually individuals, in the first instance, being whole or as whole as they can be, understanding that they are enough as you are, how you present right now, even if you don't know that you're still enough. When we have all of that because you're so full and empowered you can then walk out the door and be like, "That's it. Today I'm not putting up with this and I'm going to get this thing." We don't have to try build each other up, like, we're all going to meet, we're all going to march and we're all going to change the landscape, because actually if you were to walk into your business whole, walk into your workplace whole and say, "This person is getting paid this much more than me and I want to get paid that." Because you're whole you're not going to sit there and hear someone go, "Well, no." You're going to go, "This is what I want. Make it."

The more of us that can do that that grows the movement. As well as organizing and coming together as groups, and strategizing, and having different platforms-- all of that helps, but it helps when you come to it whole in the first instance. That's what I want to see in Aotearoa. I want to see that. I want to see *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*<sup>118</sup> being incorporated into this idea of woman's rights. What does that look like when we have *Te Tiriti* that honors the *tino rangatiratanga*<sup>119</sup>?

We both deserve, all groups. deserve self-determination. What does that actually look like, in a feminist woman's rights movement? How are we being intersectional about what we're

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<sup>116</sup> Ruatoria is a town in New Zealand on the North Island. ("Ruatoria." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruatoria>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>117</sup> Kawhia is a town in New Zealand on the North Island. It is bordered by the Tasman Sea. ("Kawhia Harbour." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kawhia\\_Harbour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kawhia_Harbour). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>118</sup> Te Tiriti O Waitangi, or the Treaty of Waitangi, is an old document between New Zealand and the Māori people signifying the rights of the Māori people. ("Treaty of Waitangi." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Waitangi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Waitangi). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>119</sup> Tino rangatiratanga is a Māori term that means self-determination or sovereignty. ("*Tino rangatiratanga*." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tino\\_rangatiratanga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tino_rangatiratanga). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

doing? How are we ensuring? People talk about trans<sup>120</sup> rights. A woman's rights are trans rights and trans rights are-- All these sorts of things. They are because if one part of society is still marginalized, we are so marginalized. We need to be able to support all of these movements.

I'm really disappointed in the feminist-- Actually, I don't want to say it's a feminist actually. It's people who are using and weaponizing the word feminism to be anti-trans and who are saying, "I just want the right to use a bathroom." I'm like, "It's a fucking bathroom." No one wants to come and see what you're doing in the bathroom. I don't know anyone-- close to me, far from me, in any of the networks have ever experienced in my nearly 38 years of life who's ever been hurt by a trans person, ever.

Why are we as women further ostracizing and further marginalizing more people in our community? Because we know what that feels like. We're only further doing it to ourselves because then we're growing a movement that's like, "Oh, well, we're just going to keep hurting people." The future is all of these things that we need to think about. There's no one single answer. There's no magic bullet for that.

**NN: That's a good answer. When you were talking about finding your home whole, that's quite challenging for a lot of people actually, to think about "Okay, but no one lived here...I'm fourth-generation New Zealander. I've been here for-- No, somebody must have come from somewhere for you to be here.**

QMS: I can tell you the story of my *tupuna Hape* who lived on Hawaiki<sup>121</sup>, who came to Aotearoa. I can tell you the story of my great-great-grandfather who was a stowaway on a ship from Mangaia to Rarotonga to Aotearoa. I've been to Mangaia and stood in the house where he was born. That doesn't make me any less of a New Zealander, doesn't make me less of a *Māori*, it just means I am way more fulfilled. When it gets to here, that just makes room and more keeps coming.

You can never be too full, there's no such thing as being too full. It's just so important for us all to know that, to understand that, to find that. You'll really witness a change in who you are. There was a male, a *Pākehā* (White) male police officer who was on the *whānau Ihumātao* [family site of historic importance in Auckland, the land they were defending from developers – see earlier], who was opposite me on a front line, who was in my class

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<sup>120</sup> Trans, or transgender, is a term that refers to people who identify as a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth. ("Transgender." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgender>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>121</sup> In Polynesian legends, Hawaiki is considered to be the first home of Polynesians. ("Hawaiki." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaiki>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

last year when I was studying *te reo Māori*<sup>122</sup>. Again, I was 37, took a year off to study *te reo Māori*, it's never too late.

He stood up at the beginning of the year and he talked about his *pepeha*. A *pepeha*, I'm just translating things for people in America who probably don't know any of these terms.

[laughs]

**NN: Can I interrupt you there. You're really going to have to send me or translate your heritage, where you come from, because nobody will be able to understand that. [laughter] We can talk about that later.**

QMS: The *pepeha* is you connecting to landmarks around you. In Māori culture, we have an Awa, a river, or you might have a *waka*<sup>123</sup> that your *whānau* came on. You might have, so a *waka* is a boat, or type of boat. It's actually, I should say it better. It's a seafaring vessel that our ancestors read the stars to get here. It's pretty bloody amazing, it's not a paddle one.

**NN: Oh, it's not?**

QMS: It's a big double-hull sail *waka*. It crossed oceans. He talked about his *hononga*<sup>124</sup> to where he currently lived. He talked about the forest where he currently lived, and the mountain where he currently lived, and the ocean where he currently lives. I said to him, "Oh, are you from this particular *iwi*?" I said the *iwi*, which is the tribe. He goes, "Oh, no." I said, "Then how is that your *pepeha*?"

In Aotearoa, we've come to a place where everybody goes, "Well, I live here, so I'll connect to these landmarks." He's like, "Oh, well, because I live there". I said, "Yes, that's not your *pepeha*. That's, well, not my *pepeha*, but that's the *pepeha* of the *iwi*." I said, "What's your *pepeha*?" He goes, "What do you mean?" I said, "Where's your mountain? What's your *marae*?" Throughout the year, he started talking with his grandfather and his uncle. He started having conversations that they'd never had in their family before about their ancestry. Their whole *whanau* [family] was way more enriched with this knowledge. He has three children. He started sharing it with his children. At the end of the year, he stood up and we did our final *whakapuaki* [to talk about a particular topic], which is our final oral exam, which was one hour, speaking *te reo Māori*. He stood up and he did his *pepeha*. He talked about his castle in Scotland.

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<sup>122</sup> Te reo Māori is a Māori phrase that means the Māori language. ("Māori language." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C4%81ori\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C4%81ori_language). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>123</sup> A *waka*, in the Māori language, means canoe. ("waka." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search/?keywords=waka>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>124</sup> Hononga means connection or relationship in the Māori language. ("hononga." Te Ara Māori Dictionary. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=hononga>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

He talked about the river that went past his castle. He wore his tartan. We all just sat there and went, "This is your pepeha." He stood so much differently because he connected to these spaces through his whakapapa. He'd heard all the stories about them. He's planning to go and visit these places. It doesn't take away from the fact that he still lives in Waitākere. It doesn't take away the fact that he still is a third-generation New Zealander, that *his tamariki* are being raised here.

It doesn't take any of that away. It adds so much more richness to who he is. If you can imagine all of us having that, feeling that, remembering, that because for Māori, I don't want to say it's a natural thing because actually a lot of people probably still feel quite uncomfortable trying to trace their *whakapapa* [ancestry], especially urban Māori who are very disconnected from where they're from. It's something that I think is an expectation of us as Māori to know where you're from.

When is it ever an expectation of others to know where they're from? Yet it's so important. It's so important to know those things. Imagine the stories that you get to learn. You might have a *wahine* [woman] in your *whakapapa* [ancestry]. You might have a woman in your ancestry who was a champion for the woman of your area. Look at that. then look at you. Then how do you take inspiration from that? You learn all these stories about these people. They are you. Your ancestors walk with you, not just indigenous people.

We're all indigenous to somewhere. [laughs] All of those things, I think, is important for the future of women's rights, of women's movements, of amplifying women's voices. I think we need to have more of us telling our own stories and not having our stories being shaped and formed by people who don't have our lived experiences. Newspaper editors are often old White men. [laughs] Where are our women in these spaces? Where are our women in the decision-making tables?

Just as I said at that *Manatū Wāhine kōrero* [Ministry of Women discussion/meeting – referred to previously], we're talking about leadership and legacy. Everyone's like, "Oh, we have this many women on boards now. We have this many women on this." I'm like, "Yes, but we still have the highest number of incarcerated women in Aotearoa." Māori are the highest rate. Have the highest rate of incarcerated women in the world. We can't be talking about how good we're doing on boards, when we're all in prison.

We need to make sure that if we're up here, we're bringing everybody with us. That's that intersectionality. We can't say we're winning at the board table when we're losing in the prison table. We have to take all the women with us. We can't just go, "Oh, no, we're going

to forget about you," because that's not what this movement is. That's not what women's rights is about. We can't just have rights for some women and not others.

**NN: Thank you, Qiane. Excellent. I have one more question, but I'm wondering what the-- Let's see if we have time. If we need to cut it short, you just let me know.**

QMS: It's okay. I'll give you a short answer. I'm sorry that they've been so long-winded.  
[laughs]

**NN: It's wonderful. Do you have connections with other activists or organizations in other countries? How do those connections come about?**

QMS: Aunty Pua Case<sup>125</sup> from Mauna Kea<sup>126</sup> is one of the *wāhine* that I am connected with. That's through Nuku. That's actually through another indigenous woman who connected me with her. She has been a leader of the Mauna Kea movement for years. Her and her daughters are strong, powerful indigenous women. I have a connection with her and with them in that movement. I don't have as many international connections as what I would like, to be honest.

I have always wanted to connect more with *wāhine* from Turtle Island<sup>127</sup>, over there in America, indigenous women in Australia<sup>128</sup>. I have connections with women across the Pacific, and that's just naturally because we are based in the South Pacific. I do have connections with *wāhine* there, but I don't yet have the relationships I want to have. People have said to me, "Oh, would you do *Nuku* another country? Would you go and do *Nuku* over in America or do it somewhere else?"

I'm like, "No, I wouldn't because those are not my stories to tell." What I would love to do is to connect with *wāhine* from those places to support them in building a movement to be able to tell their stories. How can we do that? Aunty Pua Case. Aqiu Thami<sup>129</sup>, who runs

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<sup>125</sup> Aunty Pua Case is a spiritual caretaker of Mauna Kea. She is dedicated to protecting Mauna Kea. ("Aunty Pua Case." Thrive Fest Hawaii. <https://www.thrivefesthawaii.com/workshops/aunty-pua-case/>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>126</sup> Mauna Kea is a volcano on Hawaii. It is one of the highest points in the world. ("Mauna Kea." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauna\\_Kea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauna_Kea). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>127</sup> Turtle Island is a phrase used by many indigenous people to refer to North America. ("Turtle Island (Indigenous North American folklore)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turtle\\_Island\\_\(Indigenous\\_North\\_American\\_folklore\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turtle_Island_(Indigenous_North_American_folklore)). Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>128</sup> Australia is a country in Oceania. It is one of the largest island countries in the world. ("Australia." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>129</sup> Aqiu Thami is an artist from the Himalayas. She uses art to promote healing. ("Aqiu Thami." aabaakwad. <https://aabaakwad.com/artists/aqiu-thami/>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

Sister Library<sup>130</sup> in India<sup>131</sup>, so her and I keep well connected. Sister Library is very much an activist movement where everything in her library is written by a woman. There's a lot of content in there from indigenous Indian women.

When you look at the caste scale, the caste system that they have in India, indigenous women don't even feature. They're just seen as nothing. They live in militarized communities.

Those relationships I cherish, but don't have lots of ongoing involvement. It's every now and again when we get to chat and talk and see how we can support each other's work. I'd love to build more. I'd love to come and speak at different international conferences and things like that. I haven't quite worked out how to do that, but it's really important.

**NN: Maybe this will help. Definitely, the Penguin launch of the third edition of your book will definitely--**

QMS: I hope so. I hope so. I just think that when we can connect women globally, when we can connect indigenous women globally, we share and learn from each other's experiences. I would love to have the opportunity to meet more women internationally, and to be able to speak at more international events where we can share some of that--not just intergenerational wisdom, but cross-cultural wisdom because that's really important. How was it working or not working here? How is it working or not working there? What are some [unintelligible].

**NN: Yes, it's wonderful. Hey, I think we probably should wrap it up.**

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<sup>130</sup> Sister Library was started in Mumbai, India that houses many different types of books written by women in many languages. A monthly membership allows individuals to choose books to read at their leisure. ("A Library Which Focuses On Works Written By Women." Outlook. <https://www.outlookindia.com/travel/a-library-which-focuses-on-works-written-by-women-news-213670>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)

<sup>131</sup> India is a country located in Asia. It is one of the most populated and largest countries in the world. ("India." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India>. Accessed 16 October 2023.)