

# **‘Thinking with Kaipara’: A decolonising methodological strategy to illuminate social heterogeneous nature–culture relations in place**

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## ***ABSTRACT ORIGINAL***

Decolonising methodologies continue to be critically developed to disrupt the marginalising approaches to knowledge production. By privileging Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, relations with nature are a more-than-human entanglement and a relational pursuit. Ecosystems such as estuaries and rivers are connected through kin-based relationships and treated as (or are) ancestors and family members. Such embodiment connects the body–mind–spirit to maintain relations with the mauri of ancestral beings and Deities. Within this ontology, nature is indistinguishable from culture. Our research responds to the call of how method might proceed to de-centre the human and make bodily and material encounters with the nonhuman matter. ‘Thinking with Kaipara’ is a methodological strategy that is a deliberate attempt to pursue embodied ways of producing knowledge. To work with situated knowledges, place and social difference to address the crisis of representation of such in ecosystem-based management, the problematising of ecosystem degradation and restoration practices. Research data produced is founded on human and nonhuman collaboration, an ethic of care, diverse epistemic nature–culture relations, social/nature/gender justice and equality, which makes for empirical evidence not enjoyed by scientific and technocratic methods utilised to inform and shape ecosystem-based management decisions and policy. Geo-creative practices are used by co-researchers/co-participants to recount their lived experiences and knowledges of ecosystem degradation and restoration. Storytelling, poetics, and painting, sculpting, whaikorero, waiata and writing were practices used. We argue that such geo-creative practices challenge the normative spaces and practices of disciplinary knowledge-making and enable the examination of social heterogeneous nature–culture relations in settler-colonial societies. © The Author(s) 2021.