

**Ambush Road: Alterities of Time and Voice
Toward a Cinematic Understanding
of 'The Great War for New Zealand'**

Paul Janman

A thesis submitted to
Auckland University of Technology
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2025
School of Communications

Abstract

This artistic research thesis consists of a 46 minute film sequence and a written exegesis, which inquire into the potentials of alterities of time and voice for an original cinematic understanding of local New Zealand Wars history at a metonymic Ambush Road, South Auckland, and other related locations. Informed by Māori-Moana (Tā\Vā/Wā) and ‘weird and eerie’ Euro-American temporal alterities (Fisher, 2016), a fragmented and unsettled Pākehā *tauiwi* (migrant) filmmaker voice has emerged during a series of exchanges with Indigenous knowledge-holders and a parallel dialogue with a generative ‘other intelligence.’ This voice is further recalibrated and focussed by a poetic process of vertical layering (Deren, 1953, in [TheStickingPlace], 2013), which chimes with the non-linear potentials of cinematic understanding, and the *whakataukī* (Māori proverb) *ka mua, ka muri* (*the past in front happens, just as what will happen is at the rear*).

The seven parts of the film *Forever in Time* alternate between autoethnography and interrogations of the “negative hallucination” (Fisher, 2016, p. 75) that has accompanied Indigenous, proletarian, and ecological despoliation and resistance in Auckland, since the building of the notorious Great South Road in 1862-3. As a conversation between the filmmaker and an ‘Anthrobot,’ the film is also a Pākehā ‘conversation with the self,’ which considers an emerging human-more-than-human retrofuture in which “the past itself, the ‘objective’ state of things, become[s] retroactively what it always was” (Žižek, 2008, p.59). Deploying still and moving image documentation, archival material, images of sculpture and other generated/generative fabulations, the thesis consciously presents an overflowing abundance of *wā* (appropriate moment/duration/intensity of ‘nowness’) (Mika, 2021; Wānanga TV, 2023) as it asks: what can alterities of time and voice contribute to an expanded cinematic understanding of ‘The Great War for New Zealand?’

*

A full set of suggestions as to how best to engage with this exegesis and the accompanying film are included as notes in the Table of Contents and in the introductory chapter. A full script of the film is also included as an appendix to this document.

Acknowledgements

First I must thank my supervisory team, Associate Professor Dafydd Sills-Jones and Professors Leali'ifano Albert Refiti and Welby Ings for their great generosity, patience, openness, and acuity in helping steer this eclectic work toward its final form.

The AUT Vice Chancellor's Doctoral Scholarship was an invaluable resource, and approval was made by the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on April 27th 2022 (ref no. 22/73).

Tēnā koutou.

I am forever indebted to Hūfanga-He Ako-Moe-Lotu Dr. 'Ōkusitino Māhina for introducing me to the Oceanic profundities of 'Ilaisa Futa Helu's 'Atenisian school and its deep corollaries in the philosophy of Tā-Vāism. Pita Turei has also been key, among innumerable other artists, scholars, teachers, librarians, support staff and activists whose times and voices have provided encouragement and insight throughout this artistic and intellectual journey. Let me also here acknowledge Kuini Ngā Wai Hono i te Pō, the Kīngitanga kaupapa of kotahitanga and the skill and resilience of Ngā Iwi Waikato and their affiliates.

Tēnā koutou.

Dr. Scott Hamilton's writing has always been an inspiration and he has been very generous in his creative support and archival expertise throughout. Ian Powell and Edward Larson were employed at key moments in the process and made important contributions to the image making and editing respectively.

Alan Roberts Sensei and our dōjō whanau have also helped sustain my well-being and perception during the taxing PhD process, for which I am very grateful. *"There is no time and space before Ueshiba of Aikidō—only the universe as it is."*

Tēnā koutou.

Finally, my greatest thanks extend to my parents, my sons and most of all, my loving partner in everything, Echo, without whom I simply couldn't have done it.

Tēnā tātou katoa.

Intellectual Property and Copyright

Paul Janman is the owner of all intellectual property rights over original images, sound recordings and video editing work compiled in the thesis film *Forever in Time*, including additional recordings made prior by others, for paid remuneration and drawn from the Public Films archives.

All such recordings and original music that has been synched within the timeline of *Forever in Time* is for non-commercial criticism, commentary and private study purposes only and has therefore been deployed with 'sufficient acknowledgement' under the terms of 'Fair use' according to Section 107 of the United States Copyright Act 1976 or 'Fair dealing' under the New Zealand Copyright Act 1994 and the British Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All archive images deployed in this thesis have either been sourced from the public domain or are referenced appropriately in the credits of the film *Forever in Time*. As a paid subscriber to appropriate platforms, Paul Janman has the right to deploy all 'AI' generated content contained in this thesis and has done so according to emerging best practices as outlined in the exegesis.

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined above), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Paul Janman

Notes on Translation, Italics and Diacritics

In translating *te reo Māori* to *te reo Pākehā* (English), I have used a combination of Te Aka Māori Dictionary online and the context and creative interpretations of many informal conversations and experiences. Translation is a minefield of variation and so I will often use several English words in brackets after a single *kupu Māori* (word, utterance, lyric) in an effort to increase some of the nuance and variation of meaning that a single word translation often fails to express. The reader/viewer will note occasional variations in translation from instance to instance, which indicates the same nuance of context that I seek to consider.

Italics have been used in a way that seeks to avoid the creation of a rigid hierarchised priority of ‘original’ vs ‘translation’ that someone writing from my cultural position would conventionally assume, i.e., *reo Māori (italicised)* vs English (roman type) is a norm, which I seek to disrupt. I also choose not to simply reverse this ‘normal’ order as it fails to capture the flow of exchange that (should) occur in exposure to a non-native tongue, wherein the new language causes reflection on the meaning of the original and vice versa, and ‘new normals’ are created.

However, as a coded hierarchy, language is inevitably politicised, and so I have chosen to signal and acknowledge the prioritisations of power when they occur within the text, by varying the italicisation according to the way I sense they operate in a particular context. This includes the abandonment of italics altogether when I feel that the statuses of the words are in equilibrium. This provides a generative challenge to the writer and reader alike, which I hope will be taken for the experiment that it is and will not detract too much from the meanings communicated.

I have decided to use macrons to denote long vowel sounds in words cited from Māori-Moana languages because, despite the preference of many Tainui-affiliated peoples, I was taught to use the macron early on in my studies of *lea faka Tonga* and *te reo Māori*, and still find it an efficient and visually elegant solution to the writing of long vowels.

Concerning the track *Iceland* from the 1982 album *Hex*
Enduction Hour by *The Fall*:

[It is] a *Twilight of the Idols* for the retreating
hobgoblins, cobolds and trolls of Europe's receding
weird culture, a lament for the monstrosities and myths
whose dying breaths it captures on tape.

Witness the last of the god men
A Memorex for the Krakens

Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (2016, p.38)

Ko Rangi-nui e tū iho nei, ko Papa-tū-ā-nuku e takoto nei,
Ko Tāne-o-te-wai-ora, ko Tū, ko Rongo,
Ko Tāwhirimātea, ko Tangaroa, ko Hine-nui-i-te-pō,
Ko Hine-moana, ko Rūaumoko, ko Haumia-tiketike,
He pūpū te kākano i te wā tika!
Haumi ē! Hui ē! Tāiki ē!

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

ix

PART ONE

It is suggested at this point, **to read the entirety of PART ONE of this exegesis document** before watching the accompanying film.

1.1. Introduction	2
<i>Diary—July 17th, 2023, 2pm</i> <i>(exactly 160 Gregorian years after the ambush)</i>	9
1.2. A Critical Context and Method for Cinema as Research	11
1.2.1. Enabling Cinema as Artistic Research	12
1.2.2. From <i>Rewi's Last Stand</i> (1925) to <i>Ka Whawhai Tonu</i> (2024)	15
1.2.3. <i>Ka Mua, Ka Muri</i> and the Eerie Potentials of Cinema Time	24
1.2.4. Horizontal and Vertical Time	27
<i>Diary—July 8th, 2022</i> <i>(12 months after Ted's death)</i>	37
1.2.5. Vertical and Horizontal Voice	39
<i>Diary—January 14th, 2024</i> <i>(3,333 days after I first met Pita)</i>	44
1.2.6. Dancing with the Anthrobot	46

It is suggested at this point, **to watch the entire 46 mins of [Forever in Time](https://vimeo.com/997638506/968e8542a6)**.
Follow link in the title above or enter the following url into a web browser:
<https://vimeo.com/997638506/968e8542a6>

PART TWO

It is suggested at this point, *to read PART TWO of this exegesis document* and refer back to the script (see Appendix) and relevant moments of the film as necessary. (To assist with this, the chapter headings below include references to lines of the script (i.e. lines “xx-yy”) and timecodes (i.e. “xx[mins]:yy[secs] – xx[mins]:yy[secs]”). Hyperlinks to the beginnings of the titled sections are also included in starting timecodes below and as other timecoded references to clips are made in the pdf of this document.

2.1. <i>The Time Being One</i> (Lines 1-17, 00:18-05:10)	54
2.2. <i>The Time Taken</i> (Lines 18-20, 05:20-08:04)	61
2.3. <i>Tuning the Clock</i> (Lines 21-36, 08:07-17:04)	68
2.4. <i>The Time Being Two</i> (Lines 37-49, 17:10-20:50)	79
2.5. <i>Te Kokoti - The Ambush</i> (Lines 50-64, 20:56-29:54)	90
2.5.1. Modelling the Encounter	104
2.5.2. The Anthrobot Comes to Life	107
2.6. <i>The Time Being Three</i> (Lines 65-83, 29:54-37:20)	111
2.7. <i>Shovels and Stars</i> (Lines 84-94, 37:22-44:27)	124
References	137
Appendix: Complete Film Script of <i>Forever in Time</i> (Lines 1-94)	151

Table of Figures

PART ONE

Figure 1.1.	<i>A Tabled Adaptation of King et al.'s Six Themes of Māori Temporality</i>	25
Figure 1.2.	<i>Screenshot of A Dance in the Stream of Time that Opens NZ Wars: Stories of Tainui</i>	28
Figure 1.3.	<i>Comparison of Bergson's Fourth and Second Schemas of Time as Noted by Deleuze</i>	30
Figure 1.4.	<i>Image of the Complete Forever in Time Sequence in Adobe Premiere Pro</i>	31
Figure 1.5.	<i>An Extension of de Unamuno's Stream of Time and Henri Bergson's Concept of Durée (Duration) in the Mechanism of a Projector. A Cinematic Analogy for Ka Mua, Ka Muri?</i>	32
Figure 1.6.	<i>Combined Image of Pei Te Hurinui Jones' Takarangi and A Spiral of Unknown Provenance Deployed in Forever in Time</i>	34
Figure 1.7.	<i>Image of Linear Waves in Two Directions Combining into a Single Standing Wave</i>	40
Figure 1.8.	<i>A Diagrammatic Composition of Tā\Vā/Wā in Relation to the 'Cinematic Cut' and Bergson's Fourth and Second Schemas of Time</i>	42
Figure 1.9.	<i>Screenshot of the First Examples of Midjourney Image Co-Creations Made by the Writer</i>	48

PART TWO

Figure 2.1.	<i>Still Compilation Image of 'Moving Panorama' of Enid Grant in Wales and Africa</i>	59
Figure 2.2.	<i>Excerpt of the Site of the Kokoti (Ambush) on The Daily Southern Cross Map of the Seat of War</i>	62

Figure 2.3.	<i>Screenshot of Frank Fleming's superposed sculpture The Actor at the beginning of The Time Taken</i>	66
Figure 2.4.	<i>Screenshot of Silhouette and 'Through a Glass Darkly' in Tuning the Clock</i>	70
Figure 2.5.	<i>Screenshot of Long Exposure of the Pendulum 'Crystal Image'</i>	72
Figure 2.6.	<i>Screenshot of 'The Retired Forester' Ian Barton at Queen's Redoubt</i>	74
Figure 2.7.	<i>Screenshot of the Superposed 'White Pyramid' and Ambush Road</i>	77
Figure 2.8.	<i>Screenshot of the Superposed Tail of an Aeroplane, Skateboard Grind through the Lion Jersey Emblem and Dissolve to the 'School of Athens'</i>	81
Figure 2.9.	<i>Screenshot of Prof. 'Ilaisa Futa Helu between Plato and Aristotle in Raphael's School of Athens</i>	82
Figure 2.10.	<i>Screenshot of 'Zealandia' Adapted from a 1939-40 Centennial Exhibition Certificate of Attendance</i>	86
Figure 2.11.	<i>Screenshots of Midjourney Generated Images of the Anthrobot and a New Zealand Wars Soldier</i>	89
Figure 2.12.	<i>Screenshot of Midjourney Generated Image of Professor Bushell's 'Electro-Biology' Performance Superposed with Newsprint</i>	98
Figure 2.13.	<i>Screenshots of Midjourney Generated Images Combined with Images of Metal Cast Figurines</i>	100
Figure 2.14.	<i>Details of Three of the Four Irish Prisoners Involved in the Kokoti/Ambush</i>	101
Figure 2.15.	<i>Map and Screenshot of the Site of the Kokoti/Ambush</i>	103
Figure 2.16.	<i>Series of Images of the 'Gaming Table' in the Ghost South Road Exhibition</i>	105
Figure 2.17.	<i>Two Screenshots of Metal Cast Figures at Two Moments of the Ambush Scene</i>	107
Figure 2.18.	<i>John Elder Moultray's The Fugitives in its Xeroxed and Oil-Painted Forms</i>	109

Figure 2.19.	<i>Screenshot of an Orange Fungus Superposed with Vapour Trails in South London</i>	113
Figure 2.20.	<i>Screenshot of Blake Edwards and White-Faced Figure Superposed with a Liquid Surface</i>	116
Figure 2.21.	<i>Screenshot of a Ghostly Truck Superposed with a Disappearing Figure by the Road</i>	118
Figure 2.22.	<i>Combined Screenshots of the Inverted Hare and the Tortoise Aflame</i>	127
Figure 2.23.	<i>Screenshot of The Lookout to Rākino Island</i>	129
Figure 2.24.	<i>Silver Albumen Print of the Royal Irish 18th Augmented with a Banshee</i>	131
Figure 2.25.	<i>Screenshot of a Screen Recorded Midjourney Interface in Discord and the Eye of the Anthrobot</i>	133

PART ONE

1.1. Introduction

Nocturno el río de las horas fluye desde su manantial que es el mañana eterno

(Nightly, the river of hours flows from its source, which is the eternal tomorrow)

—Miguel de Unamuno, *Sonnet LXXXVIII*

Ka mua, ka muri (the past in front happens, just as what will happen is at the rear)

—Whakataukī Māori (Māori proverb)

This thesis concerns a body of practice that spans several years of doctoral research into questions of temporality and creative practice in moving image production, but it has roots in a practice that spans more than a decade of informal historical research, fieldwork, and artistic production with friends and collaborators. What the more recent years of formal study have produced is, firstly, the advanced development of a long-intended film that could previously not find form; and, secondly, the articulation of the ‘research-enabled practice’ and ‘practice-enabled knowledge’ (Batty & Zalipour, 2024) that are inherent in a personal, unsettled, and Indigenous-influenced Pākehā voice and artistic response to place and identity. The patchwork quality of the work is both by accident and design, as an intense eclecticism of cinematic and conceptual excess has been refined into a more self-aware and repeatable method of cinema practice and knowledge production. Much more will be said of the roots of this ‘psychedelic’¹ (Refiti, 2013) coalescence in this and the following chapters of Part One.

The exuberant earlier exploratory periods of research have also been refocussed and consciously multiplied by the production of a series of seventeen edited video conversations as part of the *Vā Moana: Space And Relationality In Pacific Thought And Identity* research project, for which I have had the privilege to be a videographer.² My participation in this project was significant to this thesis because it enabled inclusion of the ways in which *time* is ritualised and conceived among the Māori, Moana, and allied Pākehā scholars, art practitioners, and community workers we interviewed. In the context of an increasingly confident Māori historical voice on screen, it has also provided a welcome opportunity for a lagging Pākehā historical consciousness to catch up with new and emerging articulations of time and historical content, but also to

¹ Comparable to Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘nomadic science’ (see Chapter 1.2.1.), Refiti’s ‘psychedelic method’ is an iterative and often recursive construction of a conscious multiplicity of methods, theories and techniques that have enabled resistance positivist colonial framings of time and voice.

²“Formed in 2012 by Leali’ifano Albert Refiti and Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul, the Vā Moana - Pacific Spaces research cluster is an international research platform which engages Indigenous Pacific and Western thought to study Pacific notions of space [and by corollary, time] ... Pacific people have always produced new and novel ways of understanding the world, based on and extending tradition” (www.vamoana.org). The *talanoa* (talks, discussions) I was specifically involved in producing have been collected with short annotations on my personal website: www.publicfilms.works/va-moana-interviews.

reflect on our own legacy of revisionist temporal concepts and potentials in art, philosophy, and cinema.

A key element in refining the sometimes unwieldy diversity within this research project has been the very selective deployment of what I call 'other intelligence' (viz. artificial intelligence) at key moments of stasis in the creative process (detailed in chapter 1.2.6.). The surprising result was the emergence of a cinematic method for the production of the thesis film *Forever in Time*, which is predominantly a dialogue between myself and the character of 'the Anthrobot'. As I prompted the Anthrobot and *it prompted me back*, the method became part of the story and vice-versa and an original mode of cinematic narrative was enabled. This new mode chimed in startling ways, with some of the alternative authenticities that were emerging from our Vā Moana interviewing project. Chapter 1.2.3. details some of these alternative ways of being and knowing, particularly in relation to the non-linear Indigenous temporality of *ka mua, ka muri*. If time is not a straight line, but a circle within which we swivel to touch many points (Cotton, 2024), a constellation of previous research, new experiences, and reinvigorated thinking and practice has enabled the film *Forever in Time* to manifest alongside an apposite body of writing that seeks to elucidate it. From the processual array of meeting, talking, thinking, and making, I have endeavoured to polish and therefore alter some of the dominant aesthetic and epistemic lenses through which we make sense of our local historic worlds and to experiment with alternative conceptual foundations and methods of historical screen production.

The systematic research question by which this work is focussed and oriented is *How can alterities of time and voice contribute to a cinematic understanding of 'The Great War for New Zealand?'* This question is composed of four elements in two halves: the first half consisting of the alterities of time and voice; and the second half, the alterities of cinematic understanding and 'The Great War for New Zealand.' The two halves of the question are also bi-directional. In other words, we could equally ask: *What can a cinematic understanding of 'The Great War for New Zealand' contribute to alterities of time and voice?* By alterities of time and voice I mean certain concepts and narrative perspectives, which will appear novel and thus strange in the context of film productions about the New Zealand Wars to date. These are detailed in Part One of this document, while Part Two supplements the maximalist enigma of the film, with a line by line interpretation of its artistic and philosophical influences. The third part of the thesis, the film *Forever in Time*, is a condensed time-image-thought like a wound up spring—the energy of which the written exegesis releases and tightens in more focussed directions. For now, let me complete this Introduction with a summary of the key alterities that have nourished the roots of the practice and lay out a road map to engaging with the thesis.

Among the most influential sources of conceptual alterity have been the Indigenous Aotearoa-Pacific spatio-temporal potentials gleaned from the aforementioned Vā Moana research, which I summarise with the neologism Tā\Vā/Wā. The very shape of the term serves to emphasise the distinct artistic license taken and personal interpretation I make of the many conversations, events, literary and artistic revivals and reimaginings that I have participated in among Māori-Moana peoples during twenty

years of listening, reading and, ultimately, what Trinh Minh Ha has called ‘speaking nearby’ (Chen, 1992) many of those peoples.³ It acts as a verbal and visual summary of my findings in that work, and a recursive definition of culturally enacted temporal concepts from Tonga (Tā as *time*) (Mahina, 2022) and Sāmoa (Vā as *space between or relation*) (Anae, 2022; Ioane, 2022; Laita, 2022; Raymond, 2021; Tcherkézoff, 2022; Tuagalau, 2022; Wendt, 2020). From there it continues to the Northeast in Hawai‘i (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2022) before it circles back down to Aotearoa (Wā as *time-space*) (Graham, 2022; Royal, 2021; Salmond & Graham, 2021; V. Smith, 2021; Turei, 2020), whence it returns along the undersea trenches of Hikurangi and Kermadec to Tonga and a reconnected Tā-Vā (*time-space*) (Mahina, 2017).

As my own invention, the term Tā\Vā/Wā is therefore a conscious gloss of the many complexities, variations and exceptions within the time-space it seeks to present, but it is also an acknowledgement of an unbroken network of voyaging, transmission, kinship, and cultural affinity (Austin, 2022; Hau‘ofa, 2008; Nuku, 2021). It is also a shorthand for my personal journeys among Tongan (Janman, 2012) and now Māori intellectuals, in particular, which carry stories of love, fear, guilt, curiosity, and the many other emotions and desires of colonial entanglement. The shorthand Tā\Vā/Wā is therefore that of a relatively informed outsider who must respectfully try to observe, construct, and then attempt to deploy their partial understanding in a cinema practice of many echoing voices that have become one of my own making.⁴ The specificities of Tā\Vā/Wā and how they relate to aspects of the experimental film theory and practice I have developed are more fully detailed in the next chapter.

Apart from the vast well of Māori-Moana knowledge and understanding, there are also many creative Euro-American and Pākehā (New Zealand European) exemplars of the conceptual reorganisation of commonly received categories of time and space. They are myriad and include influences from my own Welsh and English ancestral legacies, but I have narrowed the field by deploying the filter of the late Mark Fisher’s last major philosophical statement *The Weird and the Eerie* (2016). Alongside his characteristic critiques of the global socio-economic context, Fisher also raises fundamental philosophical questions in this work about illusions of human agency and the very possibility of self-knowledge within our secular Western scientific paradigms. Responding to what he calls ‘capitalist realism,’ he also dares to rediscover alternatives among ‘weird and eerie’ perspectives that often chime with the Indigenous ontologies of Tā\Vā/Wā and offer challenges to the dominating ubiquities of global modernity. The personal voice of the thesis is therefore also a European avant-garde one and a *tauiwi* (migrant) voice, but it is also that of an Indigenous-influenced radical Pālangi/Pākehā

³ This reached a period of particular intensity during the period of November 2020–September 2022 with the *Vā Moana* interview videography project and its associated conference in November 2021. I supplemented these experiences with formal study of *te reo Māori* (Māori language) at *Te Wānanga o Aotearoa*, where teachers and mentors actively encouraged me to engage with and creatively interpret aspects of *mātauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge) from my own cultural positioning.

⁴ In the cultivation of a viable artistic voice from my position, I have found it necessary to operate at the relational interstices of critical decolonising methodologies (Lopesi, 2021; Munz, 1999; L. T. Smith, 1999; Tecun, 2019) and the (admittedly *ideal*) world of post-colonial agency beyond “grievance and survival mode,” which enables creative freedom (McCarthy, 2016, p. 389).

filmmaker on the cinematic *paepae* (orator's bench)⁵ of a reimagined field of Aotearoa New Zealand historical screen production.

Under Fisher's influence, the purpose of telling a story about the Waikato invasion is more than an account of the details of a certain colonial theatre of war. It is an examination of the fundamental categories and affects of weird and eerie time-space projection in a broader context of power and injustice. As Mihingarangi Forbes maintains at the beginning of *NZ Wars: Stories of Tainui* (Bennet & Pihama, 2021): "The invasion of Waikato between 1863 and 1864 is the biggest campaign of The New Zealand Wars. It also marks something much, much greater—the start of a titanic struggle for New Zealand itself—over who would own it, who would control it." The gravity of events is therefore evoked by the pivotal term 'The Great War for New Zealand,' which forms the last part of my research question as an object of *cinematic understanding*. The phrase was coined by the Kingitanga general Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi Te Waharoa when he realised the profundity of the impact of the New Zealand Wars on the futures of Aotearoa during the Waikato invasion, and it sits quietly and ironically next to our national exuberance over the ANZACs and the other 'Great War.' It was also the title of Vincent O'Malley's revisionist history of 2016, which has been a constant point of reference in the formulation of this thesis. As O'Malley concludes in that book:

Waikato iwi might have shared in the colony's growing prosperity. The Waikato War instead enabled settlers and the Crown in many instances to act unilaterally, condemning the tribes to a destitute existence on the fringes of colonial society. The old era of the 'middle ground', based on a kind of rough and ready balance of power between Māori and Pākehā, in which the path ahead was decided through ongoing dialogue and negotiation, gave way to relentless settler hegemony. Wiremu Tāmihana was right. This was not a small regional conflict of marginal relevance outside Waikato. It was not just a great war for New Zealand. It was *the* great war for New Zealand, with consequences that continue to be felt—if not always remembered—in multiple ways today. (O'Malley, 2016, p. 1012)

This sense of lost potentials and hegemonic actualities thus serves to highlight the fragile interrelationship between the past, present, and future that is key to the temporal alterities I investigate here. The centrepiece of the film and Part Two of the exegesis is the event of one relatively small and seemingly insignificant 'footnote battle' at the very beginning of the Waikato War, near what is now known as Ambush Road in Ramarama, South Auckland (see section 2.5). Archival research and fieldwork have illuminated certain details of the ambush that occurred there and added to existing historical records and knowledge. Yet these are only starting points and by the end of the film and its exegesis, the reader/viewer will have experienced the great breadth of consequences for the ways in which we habitually understand, categorise, frame, and operate within our collective histories. In the world of *Forever in Time*, 'The Great War for New Zealand' is a history of a particular Indigenous-proletarian-colonial/imperial

⁵ I have invented the term 'cinematic paepae' to imagine an Indigenised mode of historical cinema discourse. As in *whaikōrero Māori* (Māori oratory), which takes place on the ritualised thresholds of the *marae ātea* (courtyard in front of the *wharenui* or main house of the marae), a cinematic dialogue can be understood as a form of call and response that accords with tactful poetic protocols, which enable one to respectfully state their case. The *marae ātea* is also the domain of *Tūmataunga* however, the *atua* (god) of war and people, and is thus the appropriate place to raise contentious issues.

chain of political, economic, and military conflict. It is also a wider consideration of the eerie presences and absences of an amnesiac national mythology and the metaphysical misconceptions that underlie cross-cultural exchanges or perhaps more accurately, their repeated failure to happen in a meaningful way.⁶

On yet another register, *Forever in Time* is a critical approach to the new technologies and ideologies that threaten to colonise us all, in a globally connected and informationally accelerated contemporary world. In the process of making and thinking through the film with Tā\Vā/Wā, Fisher's *weird and eerie*, and the use of new generative technologies, additional questions have arisen about the nature of contemporary politics, identity, and creative agency. Some of these questions are raised in section 1.2.6. *Dancing with the Anthrobot* in the context and methods chapter that follows but many are also addressed as they arise in a line by line interpretation of the film in Part Two. The seven chapters of Part Two align with the film's seven sections, and numbered quotations of each interpreted line from the film script are included as they are referenced throughout those chapters. A complete and continuous version of the 94 lines that the full film script contains has also been appended to the exegesis, so that the verbal context of a particular numbered line can quickly be looked up as necessary.

The reader will also notice that I have added notes to the Table of Contents, which invite them to view the film *Forever in Time* in its entirety after reading the two preliminary chapters of Part One. These are of course only suggestions and it is entirely possible that the film will work if its parts are played out of chronological order, but I believe this approach provides an experience of the whole creative work in the manner that it is presently intended to be shown in a theatrical setting. While all available care and resources have been used to present the film with the best possible production values, it should be noted that the work is still presently an artifact of research, which may yet enjoy a future level of development and polish for a broader audience⁷. As such, the viewer should experience the film with the best quality of audio-visual equipment available to them, but there are no requirements for any particular surround sound set up and a well-calibrated HD monitor or television should be sufficient to grasp the more important conceptual points of narrative and technique.

One departure from received conventions of academic thesis writing is that there is no specific 'Conclusion' section to this exegesis document. In making this exclusion, I draw upon Carl Mika's understanding of the Māori temporality of *wā*, which as I discuss in more detail in chapter 2.1. *The Time Being One*, is a unifying and eternally effusive presence (Wānanga TV, 2023) like the 'never-ending beginnings' of Māori temporality (King et al., 2023) that I address directly in chapter 1.2.3. There is also an important

⁶ Fisher's interest in liminality throughout *The Weird and the Eerie* adds additional layers to the question of the *in-between* among the decolonising methodologies that I mention above. There seems to be an intrinsic quality of both/and—neither/nor to the creative "threshold between worlds" (Fisher, 2016, p. 28).

⁷ I believe that one specific area for improvement is in the voice performances of the three characters of Paul, the Anthrobot and Aria. It has been difficult to achieve correct Māori pronunciation from the Anthrobot in particular, despite prolonged experimentation with phonemic and alternative spellings of verbal prompts for synthesis. I also consider certain images to be 'placeholders' and some graphic elements could also be improved upon before a wider cinematic distribution. This does not detract however, from the conceptual work being considered in the context of this PhD research process.

parallel here in Mark Fisher's critique of any rote reductions of the affects, modes of artistic expression, modes of perception, or perhaps even 'modes of being' that *The Weird and the Eerie* presents. He eschews either a taming of *the outside* by conventional science or a secular retreat, like Freud's, to "the gaps and familiar impasses of *the* [Euro-centric/humanist] *inside*" (Fisher, 2016, pp. 9–10).

Fisher prefers the boundless and definitively unknowable mysteries of the more-than-human: "The eerie concerns the unknown; when knowledge is achieved, the eerie disappears" (Fisher, 2016, p. 62). "Haunted by an outside which it circles around but can never fully acknowledge or affirm" (Fisher, 2016, p. 10), this thesis approaches its subject like the *unheimlich* (unhomely) Freudian unconscious that can only be grasped indirectly with metaphor and image. In his deep appreciation for the work of H. P. Lovecraft, Fisher cites the writer's frequent use of the words 'teeming', 'foaming,' and 'frothing' to indicate the unfathomable *jouissance* of his "hyperealistic" weird fiction (Fisher, 2016, p. 18). In Lovecraft, there is an overflowing abundance of "vague, elusive, fragmentary impressions of wonder, beauty, and adventurous expectancy ... The Thing overwhelms, it cannot be contained, but it fascinates" (Fisher, 2016, pp. 16–17).

I would like to take seriously these Māori-Moana ontologies and their parallel creative modes as vehicles of research and to do so, as much as possible, *on their own terms*. As we shall see, the film *Forever in Time* and its written exegesis seek to express the heterogeneous abundance of the possible, or what Luis de Miranda has called the 'creative real' (viz. 'the Creal') wherein 'the real' is only a function of ontologies of process:

What Deleuze and Guattari called "chaosmos" or "plane of immanence," what Bergson called "duration," "creative evolution," or "life," and what Whitehead called "creativity process," adding that "creativity is the universal of universals characterizing the ultimate matter of fact." The Creal—that is, the Real as a "chaosmic" creative stream—is not necessarily teleological: it is likely to exuberate in all real and virtual directions. (de Miranda, 2018, p. 511)

This is, however, not something that is entirely random. There is a conscious and purposeful unruliness to the process of not concluding—what Albert Refiti has called a 'psychedelic method' (Refiti, 2013) or a polysemic/polyphonic curation, like the selection of flowers for a celebratory Oceanic garland or of oddly shaped stones for the walls of Mayan temples. This *bricolage* builds to a carnival of cinematic excess in the duration of both the film and its extension in Part Two of the exegesis. It then simply ends with a pause for quiet reflection on its own event and the anticipation of its next iteration or performance. In this way, it is loosely akin to the ancient musical forms that I experienced while teaching and recording at 'Atenisi Institute in the Kingdom of Tonga. As the musician Sisi'uno Helu once explained to me:

The basis of our music is to develop melody and rhythm to a peak or climax... through a communal contribution to the build up of this *mafana* (warming) we call *tau e langi* (reaching to the sky). European music does build to a peak, but then it has to go down again until it forms a symmetrical balance... whereas our music, it just goes up and then bang, it just finishes up there. (Janman, 2010)

Of course, Lovecraft's stories, Tongan songs, and the film *Forever in Time* always do arrive at some definite end point under the tyranny of linear time, but their *dénouements* are as much in their durations, peaks, troughs, and intervals between repetitions as in their temporal endings. As in the final incantations of an orator on the *paepae* of a marae, a continuation of the *kōrero* (story, conversation) is always implied, just as other orators are already composing their own moments in the sun, even before the present speaker's time is over.

It seems to me that cinema as a form of artistic research has great potential for a similar kind of overlapping and cyclical musicality and orality. In its more effusive and contingent forms, there are 'conclusions' (or perhaps a better term is 'responses') at every cut and juxtaposition of the event. The starting points—the objective and fact-checking processes of background research—are there⁸, but there is also a building and overflowing of that research into the subjective multiplicities of artistic expression and the reception of their combined affects and perhaps ineffable revelations. When it is governed by this kind of unruly order, it is often very difficult to fully articulate whether a piece of artistic research has 'worked' or not, but it is usually clear on a subtle register, once the various parts and the whole have been perceived and absorbed.

We are, I believe, living in an unprecedented moment of Aotearoa New Zealand history, but also of human history, where the abundant 'outside' is manifesting itself in new and exhilarating ways that are as exhausting as they are dangerous. Yet there are also enormous potentials. As the 'other intelligence' of the 'Anthrobot' character with which I dialogue throughout the film *Forever in Time* puts it, in the final line of the script (94):

ANTHROBOT
I want to witness this. Please,
begin the story again Paul. Begin,
the story, again.

As a final nod to the polyvocality and orality I have outlined above, I have included several pieces of more informal text at germane points of the exegesis, such as the diary entry below. They are italicised and separated by asterisks and there are several more in the context and methods chapter (1.2.), which follows. The three most significant entries are noted in the Table of Contents with a few shorter and untitled interventions peppered through 1.2.2. on the history of the New Zealand Wars on screen. They consist of diary notes, reflections and vignettes, which recall significant events or *kōrero/talanoa* as *relationally mindful critical oratory* (Tecun et al., 2018) with key mentors, and other influential relationships within the artistic and activist communities I have moved among during the production of this work. My hope is that these digressions will provide the reader with occasional relief from some of the denser passages of theory and add nuance, personality, and humanity to the analysis.

⁸ In Part Two, Chapter Five: *Te Kokoti - The Ambush* there is a body of forensic historical evidence, which sets the ground for the more indescribably eerie elements of otherworldly alterity I wish to evoke. These are like the 'reality effects', which accompany the unravelling of the world in H.P. Lovecraft's work. Mark Fisher uses Lovecraft's 'weird fiction' to open his extension of the Freudian *unheimlich* (strangely familiar or familiar as strange) in *The Weird and the Eerie*. As he puts it: "Lovecraft no sooner calls an entity "indescribable" than he begins to describe it, in very precise technical detail (Fisher, 2016, p. 23).

Diary entry—July 17th, 2023, 2pm
(exactly 160 Gregorian years after the ambush)

The genius loci of Ambush Road was an incidental discovery. It was a place that I literally stumbled across towards the end of a 200 kilometre hikoi maumahara (walk of remembrance) from the edge of the Puniu River to Pukekawa (Auckland Domain) with the writer Scott Hamilton. The road sign at an otherwise non-descript rural intersection of the infamous Great South Road screamed out a collision between national amnesia and the now well-documented 1863 Waikato invasion (and its aftermath) that I found in history books, archives, contemporary media and in conversations with my friend, the poet and sociologist Scott Hamilton.

*The road sign itself and the eerie 'presence and absence' it implied to me when I first encountered it on that long walk in 2015 has haunted me ever since. Māori and Pākehā that I've spoken to at the site often lack basic information about what occurred there, including who even ambushed who. The photographer Ian Powell and I helped Scott produce the book *Ghost South Road* in 2018 and I've spent a long time trying to unpack forensically what Ambush Road has to say about the traces and erasures of the colonial history it contains. During five years of PhD research, I've extended what it means to unsettle and revise Pākehā identity by delving further into such peripheral and paradoxical time-spaces.*

*It would perhaps be more accurate to call Ambush Road 'Kokoti Road', as that might better describe the kind of manoeuvre that was made upon the British convoy around 2pm on July 17th, 1863. There are at least 17 words in te reo Māori for the English word 'ambush' (manukāwhaki, kauaeroa, pehipēhi, tāhapa, haupapa, whakamoe kokoti, kākahu haehae, kokoti, kuratōpuni, whakamoke, torohē, urumaranga, tāpae, whana kokoti, whakatoke). This extends the long conversation about unacknowledged Māori military prowess that was started by James Belich and Tainui Stevens in their *New Zealand Wars* TV series in the 90s. Some people see a negative connotation in the word 'ambush,' but the asymmetrical wars of American independence and the 'American War' in Vietnam were won largely by 'ambush.' Then again, maybe the sign wouldn't have stood out to me if it was named otherwise, and perhaps this has something to say about how we approach other colonial monuments. Add to them, don't just tear them down.*

I've returned many, many times to Ambush Road and each time probed deeper into its story of a confrontation of arms. But the intersection and its surroundings also became an increasingly strange symbol of the pregnant silences of our landscape and domains of public memory—there is so often nothing where there should be something and yet something where there should be nothing. I came to wonder if it was merely my imagination or if it was, as Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal had described to us in an interview, the 'patterns of energy' that emanated the traumas and the triumphs of the

people and events at significant spaces of whenua (placenta, land, grave). They are, in a sense, beyond ordinary space and time.

Given the power and resources of the enemy and the injustice of the invasion, I think Hori Ngākapa's⁹ six-month guerilla campaign was heroic and highly effective, an achievement to be acknowledged and celebrated. But what interests me most is the idea that there was a fundamental collision of different ways of life, different cosmologies or contrasting time-space conceptions on that day of that raruraru (trouble, problem, dispute, conflict, and debt). The battle has become a mere footnote in the history books but it has had long-term impacts on land tenure and mana (prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power) at the location, and it is a powerful metonym of massive historical forces.

I sometimes wonder if I have become unhealthily obsessed with Ambush Road or if it has become obsessed with me and refuses to let me go. Either way, I'm committed now. Some people are bemused—others have begun to express concerns about me—wondering if perhaps I've gone mad. I sometimes doubt my own strange recalcitrance but I'll follow it through.

⁹ Hori Ngākapa Te Whanaunga was a chief of the Marutūāhu and Tainui affiliated Ngāti Whanaunga. He is reknowned as perhaps the key leader of the ambush that occurred on the 17th of July, 1863 near the intersection of the current day Flay and Great South Roads. The road sign of Ambush Road across from that intersection is the only official contemporary evidence of the event of the *kokoti* (ambush) that remains at the site. The subsequent campaign of resistance that Ngākapa spearheaded is seldom acknowledged in Waikato War history. Ngākapa's motivation and role in that campaign is depicted in the midpoint section of *Forever in Time* and the historical backstory of his actions is explored in detail in section 2.5 of this exegesis.

1.2. A Critical Context and Method for Cinema as Research

We are hallucinating all the time, according to neuroscience research. Our brains constantly tease comprehensible patterns out of a million sensory inputs—from buzzing bees to approaching animals. This isn't reality, but a good prediction of what reality should be, informed by past experience. While it is an efficient way for the brain to generate the feeling of consciousness, it also means we are like passengers facing backwards on a train - the world, and all its possible futures, can only be pieced together from what has recently passed.

—Sally Adey, *New Scientist*, writing on Sandra Newman's novel *The Men*

It is really true what philosophy tells us, that life must be understood backwards. But with this, one forgets the second proposition, that it must be lived forwards.

—Søren Kierkegaard, *Journals*

This chapter enfolds a discussion of both a critical context for the practical cinema work and an examination of the methods with which it has been achieved. It has nonetheless been expedient to divide what follows into several parts, tones and registers, as follows. Firstly, there are some general reflections on the problematics and opportunities of artistic cinema as research and the specifics of my own creative research process. Secondly, there is an examination of the philosophy of time in a culturally relativist sense and a consideration of Tā\Vā/Wā concepts and *the eerie* that have elucidated a particular cinematic understanding of colonial experience and the New Zealand Wars. Thirdly, there is the contemporary context of cinematic memory of the wars, particularly as it relates to the themes of *Forever in Time*. Fourthly, there is a discussion of 'horizontal and vertical time and voice,' which synthesises many of the concepts and approaches that have come before into a specific set of experimental cinematic ideas. Finally, there is a discussion of the methods of deployment, significance and ethics of the new generative technologies used in producing the film. Several informal italicised passages are also peppered through this chapter for the same reasons as outlined at the end of the Introduction.

The intention is that once this groundwork of thought, method, and background research has been established, the reader/viewer will be better prepared to engage with a more focussed extension of the film in Part Two of this exegesis. The present chapter might be summarised in the idea that it is only when ordinary assumptions about academic research, time, and voice are stretched to breaking point by a certain conceptual excess in the eerie space of vertical time that the banal linear ideologies of progress that maintain colonial relations of power and cinematic production can properly be addressed. It is, as Mark Fisher would argue, in this liminal and mythic space of unsettling pressure upon linear time, narrative, and perception that real historical alterity can begin (Fisher, 2016, p. 96).

1.2.1. Enabling Cinema as Artistic Research

During the innovative recent decades of enacting and defining artistic work in the modern academy, considerable energy has been spent on the justification of artistic research as a form of enquiry on its own terms, within the strictures of institutional categories and orders (Batty & Kerrigan, 2018). At times frustrating, this effort can also be seen as generative (Stoneman, 2019) of a better understanding of what Ross Gibson has called the cognitive ‘two-step’ of doing and reflecting in an academic setting (Gibson, 2018). Much cinema production already involves elements of a relatively objective historical, technical, and aesthetic “background research” (D. Bell, 2022, p. 102) that supports a very specific set of emotive and often non-rational creative decisions, and vice-versa. The production of *Forever in Time* in an academic context has been a dance of many more than two steps, between what is an extremely personal interiority and a worldly ‘outside’ of interlocutors, locations, archives, and new technologies, which that interiority enfolds and, as Mark Fisher suggests, in which it is also intimately enfolded (Fisher, 2016).

The artistic development during the production of the film of this thesis has been characterised by a multitude of preludes, experiments, cultural encounters and explorations, presentations, awkward collaborations, creative abortions, and resurrections that have resulted from periods of doubt as well as exertions of intellectual and emotional tenacity or *wānanga* (being in place and making effort in time). These have culminated in a completed film form within the context of formal PhD study, and the psychological, methodological, and philosophical conflicts of the process have been reflexively built into the film itself.

Sāmoan scholar Albert Refiti insists that this process nonetheless remains perpetually open and ‘patchy,’ producing a ‘psychedelic effect’ that disrupts the determinations of sedentary histories that would subsume the power of events to their order (Refiti, 2013). As Desmond Bell has described it, the apparently haphazard and ‘otherly’ nature of ‘background research’ for artistic production therefore looks

for all intents and purposes, like the ‘nomadic science’ of artisans, practitioners and problem solvers that philosophers Deleuze and Guattari in their 2013 book *A Thousand Plateaus* compare with the ‘imperial science’ championed by states, industry and education [and] often employs lateral thinking, inspired guesswork and persistent curiosity rather than adherence to methodological exactitude and bureaucratic protocol. (D. Bell, 2022, p. 102)

The media artist’s studio thus becomes a kind of hermetic retreat, a laboratory of project-based prototyping and testing that is perhaps more akin to a hub of technological invention than a chain of explicative verbal conclusions. Like the environments of renaissance artist-inventors who played with lenses, models, and pigments, this is a workspace that is therefore interested as much in *machines that work* as in the generation of traditional propositional knowledge. With reference to the methods of the artist Kentridge, Bell further describes the artist’s studio as a sanctuary that allows for a degree of personal risk-taking and even failure as creative processes are ‘reverse-engineered’ in an effort “to try and find the thinking inherent in what

the hand and the eye is doing” (MeCCSA Practice Network, 2021). The studio/lab space is also, importantly, protected from the immediate exigencies of the outside world by a kind of ‘membrane’ or ‘drum head’ that nonetheless still allows a filtering through of *enabling* experiences and ideas (ibid.).

A framework of *enablement* has recently been iterated methodologically by Craig Batty and Arezou Zalipour with regard to creative knowledge production (Batty & Zalipour, 2024) and it offers an empowering perspective on the common terminological knots, which can complicate contemporary creative academic research projects. Without neglecting the importance of the researcher’s personal, professional, and epistemic positioning, Batty and Zalipour have articulated the twin concepts of ‘research-enabled practice’ and ‘practice-enabled knowledge’ as ways of extricating creative artefacts from their positioned background research and of deriving communicable knowledge from reflections upon their idiosyncratic ontologies of practice.

Creative practice research thus represents a distinct paradigm where knowledge is not only explored or examined but is also actively discovered or constructed through creative expression and reflexivity. This results in an embodied, emotive, and experiential understanding of knowledge. The significance of ‘new insights’ in contributing to ‘new knowledge’ depends on their ability to resonate with and influence the broader academic or professional community, potentially leading to a re-evaluation of existing knowledge and practice. This convergence of the subjective and the collective, the personal and the academic, and the unconscious and the conscious, extends the boundaries of what is known and how we come to know it (Batty & Zalipour, 2024, p. 4).

In this chapter, I therefore summarise the genealogy of the key influences, which have informed, enabled and finally crystallised into the methods of the creation of *Forever in Time*. Without necessarily seeking positivistic knowledge about their effects, such knowledge will surely occur by default. With reference to the methodological insights of Bell, Batty and Zalipour, and a critical context of literary and audio-visual texts, I also establish a foundation for a *cinematic understanding* of ‘The Great War for New Zealand’ as one moment in a series of never-ending beginnings (King et al., 2023). The origins of the thesis are thus like so many clouds of swirling ideas and practices that have condensed into a form of tangible precipitation—a film and a written document—unique and nebulous events that are now recognisable and repeatable.

The reader will notice that I make very occasional references to the special canon of literature devoted to documentary form or discourses on the ‘real’ in this exegesis, but I have not dwelt on the field in detail.¹⁰ I do refer to certain well-known modes, exemplar films and isolated tricks of the trade of filmmakers such as Ross McElwee and Peter Watkins when it seems exigent, but it is rare when I can cite a specific filmmaker or a particular filmmaking method that has served as a comprehensive template or model for the present work. This is, firstly, because the theoretical focus of this thesis is on the way in which a unique cinematic creative process has been enabled by the alterity of concepts and forms associated with the emerging Tā\Vā/Wā concept of time, in relation

¹⁰ I have in fact consciously de-prioritised this extensive literature, which peaked in the 2000s (Bruzzi, 2006; Nichols, 2007; Rabiger, 2008; Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2013; Renov, 2004; Winston, 2008) in favour of the idiosyncratic context and methods that I have discovered in producing this thesis.

to the work of Bergson, Deleuze and others, as well as Fisher's numinous definition of 'the weird and the eerie.' This complex of intellectual stimuli has provided more than enough critical volume and technical reflection to approach the process of making the film at hand. It has further been combined with a very personal alchemy of practice in relation to the location of Ambush Road, the available archive resources, and the range of techniques, skills and new technologies that I have learned to wield as an established practitioner and teacher of cinematic practice.

As I will argue at several points in this exegesis, the unsettling ontologies of a relational *in-betweenness* characteristic of Tā\Vā/Wā and the subject matter Fisher (2016) discusses in *The Weird and the Eerie* also enact their own very specific forms of authenticity in creative approaches to the 'real' and its complement in *fabulation*. There is, as Fisher writes, an

'indescribable quality of translucent unreality' [that] accompanies encounters with that which is more real than 'the common things of experience.' The Real does not feel real; it involves a heightening of sensation, exceeds the parameters of ordinary experience. (Fisher, 2016, p. 30)¹¹

While there is a strongly subjective and personal element to this heightened experience, we must also proceed with the confidence that the groundwork of consultation, objective archival research, and theoretical diligence has been observed. I suggest that it is only when a subjective *eisegesis* and objective *exegesis* are in balance that Fisher's "translucent unreality" (ibid) or the 'miraculous dimensions' of Tā\Vā/Wā are activated (see herein the contrasts in sections 2.4 and 2.5 in particular). This approach echoes the creative methodology that Eric Knudsen developed during practical workshops, which he has run as 'Storylabs' in three different countries and many cultures. As Knudsen (2018) writes of the Storylab discussions in *Finding the Personal Voice in Filmmaking*:

We would not enter into ontological or epistemological discussions about the nature of truth or reality, but simply explore these questions as they related to every individual's experience, no matter their definition of the concepts of truth or reality. Invariably, following discussions in all three countries, a consensus emerged in which every participating filmmaker felt that both the truth, as they understood it, and the reality of what they were doing, resided in their feelings for these somethings that needed to be expressed and not, for example, in the physical actions of the journey or in the tangible form of the creation. This realisation has profound implications for our relationship to our craft and its creation. (Knudsen, 2018, pp. 48–49)

For Knudsen, these principles equally apply to discussions of genre and form.

While many creative filmmakers have moved on from these questions and have challenged the codes of the genre to evolve the language of film, many others feel constrained by the perceived rules that define the authenticity of each genre ... While the codes that define how we define the genre suggest a pseudo reality, the reality, and ultimately the truth, lies

¹¹ One could argue that Werner Herzog's idea of 'ecstatic truth' (Herzog & Weigel, 2010) comes closest to this as a concept and 'method,' but Herzog's method is very much *his method*, almost by self-definition, and pertains to his own Eurocentric and personal idiosyncracies. I can be inspired by it but must follow my own sensibility and the unique range of influences, materials and circumstances enabled by this research.

somewhere else. How a film manages to have real impact is not determined by genre, but by the effectiveness of how the creator works with the form to invite the audience into an intangible and invisible space in which reality, truth and beauty reside. (Knudsen, 2018, pp. 54–55)

The work of *Forever in Time* is ultimately able to be critiqued in terms of conventional modes and genres, but, as I have said, the priority here has been to discover an open-ended pragmatics of creative screen production that pursues *the new* and finds its own forms *sui generis* from within the objective record and a personal set of “ethnomedialogical” (Knudsen, 2018, p. 9) influences, experiments, and core ideas. Before we explore some of the specific details of this conceptual milieu, I want to turn to the ways in which the personal and sociological sensibilities of certain Aotearoa filmmakers have manifested the history of The New Zealand Wars on screen and to discover where *Forever in Time* fits into that recursive continuum.

1.2.2. From *Rewi’s Last Stand* (1925) to *Ka Whawhai Tonu* (2024)

Annabel Cooper is the preeminent scholar of the New Zealand Wars on screen, as she has most carefully documented and reviewed the one hundred years of film and broadcast media in the field and pointed out the fascinating ways in which the conflicts have haunted successive presents in Aotearoa and indicated its futures (Cooper, 2018). In following her lead, this chapter is not intended to be a review or an exhaustive new screen history. It is rather an articulation of my own commentaries on the patterns and cycles within the succession of films she cites as they have related to and creatively enabled the development of the specific concepts and viewpoints manifested in *Forever in Time*. With that intention, I have also consciously privileged those works that I believe are most relevant to the film’s contextual questions of alterity in time and voice. Lastly, the works which are emphasised are those that relate to what I have thus far defined as an my expanded notion of ‘The Great War for New Zealand’ on screen.

Cooper’s study of major and minor classics begins with Rudall Hayward’s early silent Waikato War epic *Rewi’s Last Stand* (1925) and *The Te Kooti Trail* (1927). A sound-enhanced remake of *Rewi’s Last Stand* in 1949 emerged when Hayward married pioneer Māori filmmaker Ramai Hayward. His privileged view of the Battle of Ōrākau in the *Last Stand* films, like those of the seminal historian James Cowan, were expressed at a time when first-hand accounts of the events were still available on both sides, and both the filmmaker and the historian made significant use of this early opportunity with interviews and collaborations with Māori and Pākehā interviewees, actors, and communities. While there is clearly a recognition of colonial injustice and sympathy for the victims of the Waikato invasion and its troubling aftermath, there is ultimately also an ambivalence in both the filmmaker’s and the historian’s accounts about the cultural and political consequences for the future of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the cosmological is barely touched. As Cooper points out,

Ideologies of advancing civilisation do inform Hayward's narratives. The advantages of colonisation are not fundamentally in question: Māori are shown to benefit from the patronage of 'good Pākehā' like Jean Guerrin, Governor Grey and Reverend Morgan, and from the wealth and productivity of European culture. (Cooper, 2018, p. 93)

This is a tone that would be set for decades of a sleepy mainstream New Zealand historical consciousness of The New Zealand Wars. The myth of Rewi Maniapoto's noble defiance but ultimate capitulation to colonial benevolence and the assumption of a country with "the best race relations in the world" would dominate official national memory and the cinematic imagination for nearly fifty more years (O'Malley, 2016, pp. 25).

*

I met Wayne in a pub in Kihikihi on our journey on foot up the Great South Road. He descends from men who fought on both sides at Orākau and we went back to meet his whānau at home. I had bought a six pack but he barely drinks and his partner was on an exercise kick. I left the koha in the fridge anyway and have always wondered if that was the right thing to do—the early Kīngi, like Tāwhiao, turned teetotal for the welfare of their people. He told me about his grandfathers and the great Ahumai Te Paerata, heroine of the Ōrakau Pā, who said to the British: "ki te mate ngā tāne, me mate anō ngā wāhine me ngā tamariki!" ("If the men are to die, the women and children will die also!") I knew about Rewi Maniapoto's famous persona and his words "E hoa, ka whawhai tonu mātou, Āke! Āke! Āke!" ("Friend, we will fight on for ever and ever"), in response to General Duncan Cameron's call to surrender. Vincent O'Malley has painted Rewi's words with ambivalence—how they have become mantras, both of resistance and the colonial fallacy of Māori capitulation.

Later Wayne took me to meet his Mum down near Mangatoatoa Marae, and his brother showed us a cannonball that they had found in the field nearby. We took some shots of him in his orange hazard overalls after he finished milking on a farm overlooking Waikeria Prison. He told me a story of some buried treasure on the hill and a merciful encounter on the battlefield where his Pākehā ancestor was spared by his Māori ancestor. I meant to go back and find out more, but the journey was long and we had to get moving. That was the last I saw of him. As we walked the endless berms and motorway sidings, Gerry Merito's parody song 'Battle of the Waikato' (1959) played on a loop in my head. The song is an historically loose melding of Te Kooti, Waikato, spears, muskets, puha, amnesia, and comic resistance. Gerry was still playing it with Howard Morrison in the nineties and noughties.

*

Remarkably, it was not until the Māori cultural renaissance and a smouldering land rights protest movement became more nationally visible in the early 1970s that the projected myth of Rewi Maniapoto began to change quickly and radically. Chris

Thomsen's *The Killing of Kane* (1971) was the first production to take seriously the cosmological gulf between imperial and Indigenous cultures and the power of Titokowaru's resistance (Cooper, 2018). Screened in the context of significant public actions against the Vietnam War, *The Killing of Kane* might have been New Zealand's answer to Peter Watkin's *Culloden* (1964), as a parable of Indigenous resistance as well as victimhood to divisions of class and cultural misunderstanding on all sides of war.

1974 saw two more productions of relevance. Barry Barclay and Michael King's *Tangata Whenua*, while not strictly focussed on colonial wars, offered groundbreaking insights into *whakaaro Māori* (Māori thought) and was produced in accordance with Barclay's emerging Indigenous production philosophy of 'Fourth Cinema' (Murray, 2008). We are left wondering about the specificities of the second production by George Harris, the first Māori-directed take on the wars in his short documentary, named *Von Tempsky*, which was released in the same year. His film has been lost, and only one still image survives—Bruno Lawrence as the Austrian mercenary Gustavus von Tempsky, with a bullet hole in his head (Cooper, 2018, p. 104).

In 1977 my own family arrived in Aotearoa as immigrants from Britain. The same year saw the unprecedented success of the television series *The Governor* (1977): a production that was popular, politicised, and wildly over budget. Airing during the time of newscasts of the watershed Indigenous land occupation movement at Bastion Point,¹² *The Governor* raised difficult questions for the first time on the national screen about George Grey's 'land resettlement scheme' and his direct attack on Māori sovereignty in the Waikato invasion. The rumour of the invasion's Scottish General Duncan Cameron's alleged incompetence was sustained in the title of episode five: "The Lame Seagull," but his personal qualms about the motivations of the invasion were also foregrounded for the first time (Dunleavy, 2012, p. 69). Another, albeit very poetic, example of Pākehā conscience emerged with Vincent Ward's documentary *In Spring One Plants Alone* (1980), which might only be understood as a New Zealand Wars film when it is paired with his follow-on *Rain of the Children* (2008). I will return to both films later in this section.

Geoff Murphy's *Utu* (1983) screened just before the *Te Māori* exhibition in New York and was the first work to tackle the significance of *utu* (reciprocity or revenge) as its central theme. This was the first time that the subtle entanglements of kinship and the broader cosmological importance of *utu* were widely presented to a non-Māori audience and in the context of New Zealand Wars history. As such, it has a particular significance to my own account of the *utu* of Hori Ngākapa's *kokoti*, or ambush, in *Forever in Time* and the relations between the agents it commands, as well as the strategic values, cosmological motivations, and political consequences of the actions it compels. Even if the cultural advisor to *Utu* (and Murphy's wife) Merata Mita ultimately considered the film not to have gone far enough with an Indigenous lens (Clifford, 2018)

¹² Geoff Steven's *Te Matakite o Aotearoa—The Māori Land March* (1975) and Merata Mita's documentary *Bastion Point: Day 507* (1980) are other significant contributions to the cinematic *paepae* of 'The Great War for New Zealand' in its broader sense. One could also argue, under the even broader definition that *Forever in Time* encompasses, for the inclusion of Roger Donaldson's *Sleeping Dogs* (1977). For reasons of scope, I limit the present overview to media that deal directly with the earlier New Zealand Wars 'proper.'

Utu stated a Māori cultural perspective dramatically and made it available to mainstream viewers with unprecedented clarity. Michael Black's film *Pictures* (1981) provides a notable contrast in the same period and has its merits in highlighting national myths and realities, but its hazy conflation of 19th century colonialism and contemporary Pākehā anxieties is largely devoid of Māori cultural detail (Cooper, 2018, p. 127).

Atmospheric and complex, *Utu* was also the first example of an amalgamised fictional narrative that was inspired by, but not directly related to, any particular event of the Wars. It was, however, temporally and dramaturgically entwined with the protest events of the Springbok Tour of 1981 (Joyce, 2012, p. 75). Following this significant contribution of a revisionist and Indigenous-friendly 'puha western' and the indelible mark that New Zealand protestors had made, the rest of the 80s and most of the 90s had little else to offer in terms of New Zealand Wars cinema.¹³ This 15-year gap can in part be explained by the risk-averse commissioning environment that was established alongside neo-liberal economic reforms of the period (Cooper, 2018, p. 160). Despite growing post-colonial tensions, Pākehā confidence in their 'belonging' appeared to grow during this time, in tandem with a resurgent (though NZ Wars masking) interest in commemorating ANZAC Day and the World Wars, as markers of national identity and unity (Cooper, 2018, p. 163).

This trend was broken by the James Belich and Tainui Stevens collaboration on *The New Zealand Wars* series in 1998, which contributed a huge leap in preserving public memory, with a miraculous 1.1 million dollar budget. There was a confident tone of historical revisionism in Belich's presentation and a restoration of military *mana* on both sides of the conflict:

Combatting the dominant nineteenth-century explanation for British and colonial failures—that the British and colonial commanders were bunglers and ran bad campaigns—Belich asserts that most were competent strategists and soldiers: it was just that the Māori were often better. Herein lay, for many other viewers, the pleasures of the series' revisionism: as Kawiti, Hapurona and Titokowaru unexpectedly routed the redcoats, underdogs triumphed to the sound of national applause. Who knew, asked reviewers, that we had so many ripping yarns to our national name? (Cooper, 2012, p. 80)

Director Tainui Stevens' distinctive sound design and ability to make images of the *whenua* (placenta, land, grave) a discourse in its own right, added a particularly Māori inflection to Belich's authoritative voice. The series also broke the mould of the good Governor Grey:

The script brought historical figures to life in brisk characterisations: Colonel Gold 'was arguably a better painter than a soldier, and he was not a very good painter'; and in a deft comparison of governors, 'Fitzroy was scrupulous but not brilliant. Grey was brilliant but not scrupulous.' (Cooper, 2012, p. 82)

¹³ The underpublicised documentary series *Pounamu* (1990) profiled certain Māori military leaders and prophets for the 150th anniversary of Te Tiriti, but that was all during the period (Cooper, 2018, p. 161). In the relatively peripheral world of painting, however, Michael Shepherd's more radical commentaries lampooned the triumphalism and amnesia implied in the 'One Land, One People' slogan of the Sesquicentennial with dark tones, satirical angles, and ironic montages (Rankin, 2018; Shepherd, 2019).

The series followed the work of *The Governor* in restoring *mana* to many key Māori leaders, presenting them as highly astute cultural, political, and military strategists rather than impulsive rebels or flamboyant victims doomed to acquiescence. In the Waikato episode, the mythology of the ‘last stand’ of Rewi Maniapoto was also deconstructed as a protracted stand-off between the Pākehā colonial government and Kīngitanga Māori who held on to the ‘King Country’ until the 1880s—one of many autonomous zones that existed in Aotearoa at the time (and arguably still do, in remote corners).

The documentary style of the series is primarily expository, with revealing interviews peppered throughout and multiple ‘pieces to camera’ at contemporary locations like downtown Wellington or Auckland’s Great South Road. A substantial archive of stills are panned and zoomed ‘Ken Burns style,’ and animated 3D models offer flyovers and insider views of fortifications and bunkers where Māori and Pākehā viewers alike were offered the viewpoint of the defenders. Besides thorough local consultations, a Māori director and extensive inclusion of Māori voices, one of the most interesting aspects of the work is Belich’s status as Ngāti Tarara (Croatian)—an in-between ethnic identity closely associated with Māori in New Zealand. Annabel Cooper notes that his status may have enabled Belich’s access to the *wairua* (soul, spirit) of the stories and suggests a solidarity with his Indigenous interlocutors that may not have been available to other Pākehā (Cooper, 2018). The desire for solidarity in the turmoil of post-coloniality is a theme that will nonetheless recur frequently in the history of The New Zealand Wars on screen¹⁴.

*

As an act of remembrance of the Māori refugees from Ihumātao in mid-1863, I walked up the Great South Road from Ihumātao to Pōkeno with members of the Ihumātao land rights occupation movement, led by the activist Pania Newton. At Ambush Road we paused and I told the story of the Irish prisoners and Yorkshiremen who had passed through the location and were hammered by the Hauraki war party. The ambiguity of the status of those soldiers was clear on the faces of the listeners. The soldiers had undoubtedly been the legitimate targets of a strategic defensive strike against the supply line of an invading superpower, but people also seemed to understand that they were also victims of a much bigger historical process of capitalist imperialism.

I gave another brief speech later in 2017 at the controversial monument to Colonel Nixon in Ōtāhuhu, which was attended by some of the same members of the Ihumātao movement and the Tāmaki Treaty Workers group—mostly Pākehā left-wing activists. I spoke of Nixon’s involvement in the infamous kōhuru (unjustified murders) at Rangiaowhia in early 1864, in which Nixon was shot in the guts and died a slow and undoubtedly painful death in Māngere. I voiced the idea that he could also be considered

¹⁴ John O’Shea’s *Broken Barrier* (1952) and *Don’t Let It Get You* (1966) are very much not ‘New Zealand Wars films’ but they are still notable other manifestations of the same troubled desire for solidarity.

a victim of sorts— foolishly risking himself as his commander General Cameron arrived at the village. The Treaty Workers speaker that followed me disagreed with this strongly and was determined to paint Nixon as a mindless colonial thug. He was surely misguided and made terrible decisions on that day but the monument and street names in his honour testify to his status in the community. Several of the Ihumātao people agreed with me. It was a salutary lesson in aroha (compassion, love, empathy) versus ideology.

*

The notion of Pākehā in-betweenness is relevant to the work of the next truly significant presentation of New Zealand Wars cinema:¹⁵ three works by Vincent Ward. *River Queen* (2005) was the biggest production, but *Rain of the Children* (2008) has more resonance, because it is a reflective follow up to his experiences of making *In Spring One Plants Alone* (1980), in which the social alienation of an elderly Māori woman named Puhi and her son are seen as the consequence of a violent earlier colonial encounter. *Rain* is part filmmaker-driven participatory documentary and part performative reenactment of the traumas associated with the armed constabulary's invasion of Rua Kenana's community at Maungapohatu, in the Urewera, in 1916. In its broader reception, the film became of great importance to the Tūhoe community of Urewera, but the tone of its inception is one of personal necessity. As Cooper interprets Ward's account of the film's making:

Ward used the word 'haunted' or 'haunting' in talking about Puhi; he associated the haunting with his sense that there was another story to be told about her, beyond the story of *In Spring One Plants Alone*. Memory—his own, and that of others—is his way into this story. In this sense the film is, above all, Ward's personal return journey. (Cooper, 2018, pp. 207–208)

As a child of an Irish father and a mother who is a Jewish Holocaust survivor, there is additional weight to Ward's authorship of these films. He is someone whose ancestors have themselves "been preyed upon" and his work can be understood as an expression of a generalised form of colonial trauma (Cooper, 2018, p. 203). Personally speaking, it is worthy of note that Ward's film came out at the time that I had just returned from the Kingdom of Tonga and was engaged in a filmmaking trial by fire with *Tongan Ark* (Janman 2012), including a negotiation of my own complicated relationship to Aotearoa-Pasifika Indigeneity. As I was making my own decisions about authorship, I noted how Ward's twinned films of 1980 and 2008 represented both cycles of time and an authentic emotional depth, which honoured his personal feelings of attachment or warmth in his relationship with Puhi, the elderly woman character in *Rain*. This attachment is made particularly poignant by the fact that Ward hadn't known his own grandmothers (Cooper, 2018, p. 206). In his own voice:

¹⁵ I am skipping over the three other significant New Zealand Wars productions from 1999 to 2005, *Greenstone* (1999), *Von Tempsky's Ghost* (2002), and *Frontier of Dreams* (2005), as they generally repeat the familiar material of previous years, without the kind of innovation in form or content that I deem relevant to the present argument.

I travelled amongst the Tūhoe Maori, roaming from place to place, I listened to their stories of dreams and visions and ancestors, tales of kaitiaki (spiritual guardians) and patupaiarehe (the little people of the forest). It was a world of mysteries that I was drawn to, perhaps because of my Catholic upbringing. I was trying to understand that world and, in searching for this film, I suppose I was also seeking to learn more about myself. (Cooper, 2018, p. 201)

This was the point that resonated most with my own work: the oscillation between an emerging historiographical picture of colonial and political trauma and the very personal journey of discovering personal identity. The complexity of Ward's bonds of love with the Indigenous, maternal figure of Puhi was evocative of my own very warm memories of the Tongan philosopher Futa Helu and his family, with whom I had lived and worked during the making of *Tongan Ark*. By extension, there is a return to the influence of my own grandmothers in *The Time Being* sections of *Forever in Time*, to their own stories of loss and alienation in a context of colonial deracination and entanglement in the apparatuses of imperial power.¹⁶ This explicit dialogue between an intensity of personal authorship and the macro-historical is, I believe, Vincent Ward's most important contribution to a cinematic understanding of The New Zealand Wars.¹⁷ As Cooper summarises:

The 30-year path from *In Spring One Plants Alone* to *Rain of the Children* via *River Queen* charts a path of personal encounter, set against the larger context of two fields of cultural memory—iwi memory and the broader national memory—but also within the context of historical work that was closing the gaps between those fields of memory ... *Rain's* story of putting together fragments of knowledge is a personal drama embodying changes that were happening in the broader cultural memories and identities of Pākehā. Ward looks back at *In Spring*, at what he thought he was seeing, and realises that there is much more to see, in the film and beyond it, than he had thought at the time. (Cooper, 2018, p. 246)

In other words, there appears to be a particularly complex quest for personal love in a context of genealogical loss, and for acceptance in a context of violent historical iniquity. Very few Pākehā have been able to access this awkward kernel of the Pākehā imaginary with dignity and poetic eloquence¹⁸ (Cooper, 2018). Despite recent sea changes in historical consciousness, few works with the depth of Vincent Ward's twin films of

¹⁶ I taught at Professor Helu's 'Atenisi Institute (an Aristotelian 'School of Athens' in the Pacific Kingdom of Tonga) from 2004-5 and documented his work and community between 2005 and 2012. It is a particular case of ironic 'return' that Helu's unique institution salvaged a knowledge of the classical roots of Western philosophy—roots of my own culture that I had lost appreciation for. My fascination with his revival of Greek philosophy, Italian opera and Tongan classicism led to the making of *Tongan Ark* (Janman, 2012) and my ongoing relations to the Moana-Māori intellectual community. His legacy has been a direct influence on the form and content of *Forever in Time* and he appears personally in the section named *The Time Being Two*. In the 'Time Being' sections of the film, I make a segue from Tonga to an awakening with regards to New Zealand colonial history; and, by extension, a renewed appreciation for grandparents and the eroded but ancient identities that my parents left behind in England and Wales.

¹⁷ I have excluded from this discussion Ward's epic drama *River Queen* (2005), which as a large-scale romance I find difficult to encompass here. Although produced simultaneously with *Rain*, I find the latter and its connection to *In Spring One Plants Alone* to be more relevant exemplars for this study.

¹⁸ A very different but instructive reaction to the same nexus of Pākehā desires and anxieties is the phenomenon of pre-Māori Celtic conspiracy theory in Aotearoa, by which deracination and colonial ghosts and guilt are extirpated by a compensatory and essentially racist pseudo-science of an alleged 'pre-Māori Celtic occupation' of the country. Scott Hamilton has waged a long campaign against the peculiar methodologies and damaging conclusions of these conspiracy theorists, because he believes they indicate a failure to understand and process Pākehā anxieties in a post-colonial era (Hamilton, 2009).

Spring and *Rain* have emerged from Pākehā cameras in recent years. It is in this context that the complex phenomena of Pākehā paralyses take on an even greater significance (see section 2.1.6.).

By contrast, Cooper's key observation on the continuum of works during the 99 years of production that she documents is that Māori have moved from contributors, advisors, and assistants to filmmakers with direct creative control of a plethora of works which they have themselves initiated. Some of these directors and their increasingly confident and Indigenous-led takes on New Zealand Wars history also emerged during the period in which I was completing my first major film. The first-person journey of Tearepa Kahi's *The Flight of Te Hookioi* (2009) was an important early influence on the heels of Ward's work, for example. Paora Te Oti Takarangi Joseph, the director of *Tiitarakihi: The Children of Parihaka*, screened his film at the New Zealand Film festival alongside *Tongan Ark* in 2012 and has become another fellow traveller in that space. Kahi and Joseph's work would begin the flowering of a specifically Māori lens on history from 2013 to the present.

Māori Television created *The Prophets* (2013), in which Haare Williams continued to elucidate the logic of *utu*; and an episode of TVNZ's *Waka Huia* (2014) explained the intricacies of inter-iwi alliances at Ōrākau. *Kiingitanga: Behind the Throne* (2016) told the story of this important movement against colonial domination from an explicitly Māori perspective. Vincent O'Malley was the only Pākehā interviewee in that series, but his voice has become explicitly one of Kīngitanga advocacy. Soon after the release of his now highly influential tome *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800-2000* (O'Malley, 2016), an official *Rā Maumahara* or Day of Remembrance of the New Zealand Wars was instituted by the Labour government in October 2017. That year also saw the first episode of an important restatement and more stridently Māori-voiced update and interpretation of Tainui Stevens' and James Belich's early work in the *NZ Wars: Stories of Ruapekapeka* (2017) series, presented by Mihingarangi Forbes. More extended episodes of that series have until now recurred bi-annually, alongside Māori-led drama films and documentaries that channel important historical conflicts between iwi and the government, such as *Muru* (2022), *Stolen Lands: Betrayal of a Chief* (2023), and *Ka Whawhai Tonu* (2024).

This intense 12 years in the production of predominantly Māori-voiced responses to the way in which our history has been represented has been unprecedented in its blossoming, and I have had the privilege of observing it alongside my own personal awakening to Aotearoa's fascinating colonial history. By contrast, Pākehā responses to our historical traumas have been conspicuously absent from the country's screens in recent years. This is almost certainly a function of the imperative to give space to Indigenous voicings that have for too long been backgrounded and drowned out by colonial ideology. Yet as Cooper points out, the history of the New Zealand Wars on screen, from Hayward's films to *Rain of the Children*, belies a contemporary need to reconceptualise what is clearly still "a characteristic attachment of the Pākehā imaginary" (Cooper, 2018, p. 206). This is further evidenced by recent literary engagements with ideas of allyship and Pākehā identity (A. Bell, 2024; Bluck, 2022; A. Jones, 2020). Other notable Pākehā initiated exceptions are *Great South Stories* (2018)

and the Anne Salmond presented *Artefact* (2020) but, in the main, a certain white reticence appears to have prevailed on the nation's screens.

This absence on the cinematic *paepae* has emboldened me to challenge this situation, modest as the results may have been. The contribution of *Forever in Time* is the result of a long-term commitment to researching 'The Great War for New Zealand' alongside poetic and political angles on history, space and time. A numinous encounter with Ambush Road was also catalysed by Mark Fisher's eerie aesthetics and the materials and insights that arose during the parallel investigation of inter-cultural temporality during the Vā Moana work. The cross-fertilisation of all these elements and the structure and serendipities of an artistic research PhD process have raised important questions of time, voice, and cinematic understanding. They have also generated unique opportunities for an alternative, Indigenous-influenced, and cinematically experimental Pākehā voice to emerge in the film *Forever in Time*.

The longer trajectory of the New Zealand Wars on screen, including the recent efflorescence of Māori-led cinematic voices, has been characterised by an important increase in *tikanga* (methods, protocols), *tohu* (signs, symbols), and Māori-specific forms of engagement with the *taonga* (treasures) of historical memory; but also by the predominance of a conventional syntax of cinematic composition. The recent *NZ Wars* series, for example, presented by Mihingarangi Forbes, displays an acute cultural awareness and extended historical revisionism while it also merely updates the format of Belich and Stevens' series of the 90s. The same flyovers of 3D models, interviews, landscape shots, dramatic recreations, and pieces to camera are predominant.

Muru and *Ka Whawhai Tonu* are also more directly informed by *tikanga* and *whakaaro* Māori (Māori thought) than earlier Pākehā-led productions of their kind, such as *Utu* or *River Queen*, but there is also much of the same formal conservatism of craft and historical presentation in these films that is reminiscent of an official state and commercially sponsored cinema. As the young Māori media commentator Lyric Waiwiri-Smith recently quipped:

I'm starting to suspect that whoever is on the funding board at the New Zealand Film Commission must see the words "Māori", "historical" and "war" in a pitch, and immediately green-light the project ... Instead of another film where Māori are dying in the Waikato, I think we need something more fun, like ... [a] sci-fi film for which the moodboard is simply the album artwork to Pātea Māori Club's Poi E. (Waiwiri-Smith, 2024)

I tend to agree with Waiwiri-Smith: there is much more potential for our national narratives than we have yet seen on screen, but there is still also a significant way to travel before Aotearoa New Zealand will have come to terms with its violent colonial past. There have, furthermore, been moments of gleaming conceptual and cultural innovation in recent films, which align with the kinds of alterities of cinematic understanding that I am seeking to define. In what follows, I want to suggest that we might learn to walk a line between radical innovation and respect for the historical legacy of the New Zealand Wars on film.

1.2.3. *Ka Mua, Ka Muri* and the Eerie Potentials of Cinema Time

One of the most fundamental temporal distinctions that structure this work is a rift between what the Greeks called *cronos* (linear/sequential or quantitative time) and *kairos* (synchronous/opportune or qualitative time) (Liddell et al., 1996). These terms map broadly onto the Māori words *taima* (a transliteration related to hours and minutes) (Moorfield, 2003) and *wā* (appropriate moment/duration/intensity of 'nowness') (Mika, 2023; Pōtatau, 1991). I make several references to this distinction in the course of *Forever in Time* and this exegesis, as a difference between a kind of highly practical but artificial form of time reckoning that has been amplified by modern technologies and modes of production (clock time) and its foil in the entanglements of aesthetic transcendence via poetic forms (Deleuze, 1986; Fisher, 2016), alternative cultural knowledge systems (Matamua, 2021), and the political economics of time reckoning that resist the normalising clock (Hope, 2016; Nanni, 2012; Rooney, 2022; Thompson, 1967).

More will be said about the (sometimes blurred) distinction between the quantitatively chronological and the qualitative values of temporal alterity in the sections that follow, but one of the key influences on my interpretation of this difference is the work of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. His observation of the paradoxical relation between the artificiality of 'clock time' and the actuality of *duration* as a special reality of subjective mental processes (Bergson, 1889/2001, 1908/1991) was a baton which Gilles Deleuze grasped in his seminal work on cinema and time (Deleuze, 1986). Some of the key ideas of these thinkers have therefore added significant analytical dimensions, creative potential, imaginative freedom, and perhaps even metaphysical significance to the present work, and they will be more fully addressed as they arise (see section 2.3 in particular).

For now, however, it is worth noting that Bergson's relevance to theory derived from Māori-Moana worldviews and the project of their restoration has not gone unnoticed (Refiti, 2017). In the present film and exegesis, I show that Bergson's concept of *duration* operates very effectively alongside key temporal elements of Tā\Wā/Wā, just as it does among the 'appositional' and 'paratactic' oral storytelling characteristics of such early Greek poets as Homer (Thornton, 1985). This special alterity has troubled modern habitués of the chronological, for whom, as the scholar of Greek and Māori narratives Agathe Thornton noted,

Events are narrated in the sequence in which they would have occurred. It is exciting through its simplicity and speed. We tend to call this sort of sequence "chronological," which is perfectly legitimate, as long as we remember that, in the epoch to which these ancient tales and their style originally belong, "chronology" as an abstract scheme of quantitative measurable time did not exist. There were no watches, clocks, calendars, or centuries. Time was experienced as inherent in events. This underlies the use of repetitions ... as it was also inherent in the seasons, in the movements of the heavenly bodies and in the generations of the ancestors. (Thornton, 1985, p. 174)

An important contemporary statement of this principle within *matauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge) has been produced by Paula Toko King et al. (King et al., 2023) and I have deployed their discoveries at many points in the present analysis. In their collation of keyword searches within a plethora of historical sources, from monographs to newspaper archives, King and her colleagues identified six fundamental themes of Māori temporality, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1.

A Tabled Adaptation of King et al.'s Six Themes of Māori Temporality

<i>Tohu</i> [sign, mark, symbol]	Tohu are mechanisms by which Māori temporal ontologies are relayed via codified knowledge forms and structures, including symbols, terms, proverbs, whakapapa narratives, artforms, and ritual.
<i>Hurihanga</i> [principle of change]	Time is a continuous, dynamic and cyclical process. The double spiral is a representation of the cyclical nature of time. Time continuously spirals between the realms of <i>Te Kore</i> , <i>Te Pō</i> and <i>Te Ao Mārama</i> , and past, present, and future. The sun, the moon, and the stars orchestrate the cycles of time.
<i>Te Taiao</i> [natural world]	Time is bound to place and people. We are enmeshed within <i>Te Taiao</i> and thus emmeshed within time. <i>Tohu</i> within <i>Te Taiao</i> from <i>Papatūānuku</i> and <i>Ranginui</i> (space)/ <i>Rangi-awatea</i> (space-time) guide our measurement of time. The relationships between time and <i>Papatūānuku/Ranginui</i> are interconnected and interdependent.
<i>Whakapapa</i> [genealogy, lineage, decent]	Māori temporal ontologies are <i>whakapapa</i> -based and inter-relational. <i>Whakapapa</i> is the multi-layered and multi-dimensional web that provides manifold reference points for relationality with the rest of existence. The relational meanings of events are more important than distance in time between events. <i>Whakapapa</i> -based time allows us to invoke our pasts, presents, and futures alongside our <i>tūpuna</i> and <i>mokopuna</i> (ancestors and descendants).
<i>Pūtahi</i> [confluence, intersection]	The convergence and intertwining of pasts, presents, and futures means that they are never separate from one another but instead are co-existent.
<i>Mana Motuhake</i> [autonomy, self-government]	<i>Mana Motuhake</i> , in relation to time, is important for Māori to be able to realise their aspirations for wellbeing. Colonialism and attendant systems (such as capitalism) impact on the ability of Māori to exercise <i>Mana Motuhake</i> over time.

Note. The primary source for this table is King et al. (2023, p. 257), but it has been adapted with additional translations and extrapolations of key terms from *Te Aka Māori Dictionary* (Moorfield, n.d.).

Besides a forthright challenge to the division and conquest of clock time, King et al. (2023) also question the mono-directionality of time by activating *hurihanga*, or the principle of multi-dimensional change:

In contrast with colonial time (understood as flowing uniformly in one direction throughout the universe), Māori temporal concepts were interconnected, interdependent and complex, with multi-layered and multi-faceted dimensions. (King et al., 2023, p. 252)

One of the foremost expressions of these multi-faceted dimensions is the *whakatauki Māori* (Māori proverb) *ka mua, ka muri*, which occurs in many forms, translations, and uses across Aotearoa and Oceania. The most common form is a straightforward imperative to review the ancestral past before acting in the unknown present-future. With the support of mentors and a degree of interpretive imagination, however, my preferred translation is that: *the past in front happens, just as what will happen is at the rear*.¹⁹ I discuss the implications of this choice in further detail in section 1.2.4. of this chapter on ‘Horizontal and Vertical Time’. To summarise here, I believe this reading presents a direct challenge to and a humble reversal of, the fixed lenses on the future that characterise the teleological framings of a techno-utopian modernity. I also take certain other translations of *ka mua, ka muri*, such as the common corporate jingle-resembling ‘looking back to move forward’ or the absurd ‘walking backwards into the future’ to be co-opted versions of the phrase that are ultimately lineal and reifying.

By contrast, the dynamic, unpredictable, and symbolically mercurial forms of *ka mua, ka muri* imply special movements of perception and memory, and the creative contingencies they entail. Either way, *ka mua, ka muri* implies a relational ontology whereby temporal foci and perspectives may shift and dilate as necessary—much like the special potentials of cinema itself. It is therefore also clear that there are both alignments and differences between European and Māori paradigms of temporal ontology beyond reductive boundaries of culture and that it is only through honest dialogues of phenomenal encounter, creativity, and critique that these important distinctions and alignments are worked out (A. Bell, 2004, 2022, 2024; A. Jones, 2020; A. Jones & Jenkins, 2011).

The last chapter of Mark Fisher’s *The Weird and the Eerie* is very revealing in this way. The chapter is about Joan Lindsay’s 1967 novel *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, which navigates the numinous surreality of the Australian colonial experience in the fictional story of a schoolgirls’ day trip to the real life location of *Ngannelong* (Hanging Rock) in Victoria. Lindsay avoids direct reference to the Indigenous cosmologies of the place, and this adds to the eerie mystique of the girls’ very strange experiences of the energetical patterning of the terrain. Fisher reserves his analysis of it for the last chapter of his book:

Not only because *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is practically a textbook example of an eerie novel — it includes disappearances, amnesia, a geological anomaly, an intensely atmospheric terrain — but also because Lindsay’s rendition of the eerie has a positivity, a languorous and delirious allure, that is absent or suppressed in so many other eerie texts. (Fisher, 2016, p. 122)

¹⁹ I do not pretend to have a comprehensive understanding of *ka mua, ka muri* in all its multiple linguistic and poetic potentials; however, with the support of Te Aka Māori dictionary and the encouragement to creatively interpret from my Māori language teachers at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, here are some observations: *Ka* is a particle indicating future tense but can also be used to denote an event or a state where no tense is implied, and so it may refer to something that is simultaneously past, present, or future. *Mua* is a locative word meaning ‘front,’ which as *i mua* means ‘before’ or ‘past.’ It can also mean ‘the future’ when it is *ā mua*. *Muri* is also a locative, meaning ‘back of,’ ‘rear,’ or behind. As *i muri* it means ‘later’ or ‘afterwards,’ but as *o muri nei* it can also mean ‘contemporary times’ or ‘today.’ As *ā muri ake nei* it can also be ‘henceforth’ or ‘in future.’ Therefore, one possible and admittedly inelegant way of translating the beautifully concise idea that *ka mua, ka muri* presents, among all its wider connotations, is this: ‘The past in front happens, just as what will happen is at the rear.’

What Fisher may be responding to here is Lindsay's expression of a movement away from the anxiety and alienation that is felt so strongly at the metropolitan centres of colonial power, toward an acceptance of *unhomely*²⁰ spaces at the fringes of settler experience. Peter Weir's 1975 cinematic remake is faithful to her unresolved enigma of a novel. What is intensely unfamiliar in a cultural or territorial encounter with the new, recalibrates and thus alters existing categories of understanding; in addition, it serves to furnish the "translucent unreality" (Fisher, 2016, p. 30) of the incommensurable *outside* that an alternative temporality such as *ka mua, ka muri* suggests.

Before we explore some of the specific atoms of practice and process in the emergence of *Forever in Time* in the last section (1.2.6.) of this chapter, let us first examine a few other key concepts in the constellation of experimental cinematic understanding that has supported the present work.

1.2.4. Horizontal and Vertical Time

History is essentially longitudinal, memory essentially vertical. History essentially consists of passing along the event. Being inside the event, memory essentially and above all consists of not leaving it, staying in it and going back through it from within.

Charles Péguy, *Clio* (as quoted in Deleuze, 1986, p. 297)

In the opening sequence of *NZ Wars: Stories of Tainui* (Bennet & Pihama, 2021), there is a powerful *haka* (posture dance) that is performed in an *awa* (river, stream) of time, in which the dancers are facing downstream with their backs to a future that flows in behind them, before becoming visible to their immanent and changing present (see Figure 1.2). The image is a stark evocation of the counter-intuitive temporal multiplicities of *ka mua, ka muri*, wherein, as the Spanish poet Miguel de Unamuno put it, "the night river of hours flows, from its source, the eternal tomorrow" (de Unamuno 1911, p.185). It is a moment which demonstrates the potential for great temporal alterity within our visual historiography (Rosenstone, 2006) or 'historiophoty'²¹ (White, 1988), even within the confines of a single image and the context of what is, from that moment on, a set of relatively standard documentary techniques and tropes.

²⁰ As discussed in the Introduction (1.1.), Fisher's definitions of *the weird and the eerie* in art entail a specific take on Freud's famous essay on the *unheimlich*, or 'unhomely' disturbances of mind. Fisher extends Freud's internalised psychoanalysis by reversing and widening the lens of *the weird and the eerie* as a view *from the outside in*. He further argues that this *more-than-human* perspective is communicable by certain visionary forms of art or ancient lore but inaccessible to standard objective explanatory frameworks (Fisher, 2016, p.78). There is still a case however for the ability of enlightenment knowledge to access the perspective of the 'outside' when its logical ends prove its own absurdity (pp.83-4).

²¹ 'Historiophoty', a term coined by historian Hayden White, refers to the representation of history through visual media, particularly film and images, in contrast to traditional historiography which uses written and verbal discourse (White, 1988).

Figure 1.2.

Screenshot of A Dance in the Stream of Time that Opens NZ Wars: Stories of Tainui



Note. Screenshot from opening sequence of *NZ Wars: Stories of Tainui* (Bennet & Pihama, 2021).

While I can claim only very superficial competency in the *tikanga* (methods) and *whakaaro* (thought) that underpin Bennett and Pihama's image, it is this mode of conceptual potential that I have attempted to experiment with during the construction of *Forever in Time*. The sources for this are, of course, manifold, and in the seven chapters of Part Two of this document, I detail those influences in a line by line exegesis of the film's form and content. For now, however, I will briefly contextualise that later discussion by drawing attention to what can be characterised as 'horizontal' and 'vertical' compilations of time and voice, which offer a specific point of access to the methods of alterity that are embedded in *Forever in Time*. I suggest that they also offer a useful frame for contemplating *the weird and eerie* potentials of cinematic understanding that Fisher (2016) has proposed and are furthermore contextualised by key concepts from my research into Tā\Wā/Wā.

The experimental Ukrainian-American filmmaker and theorist Maya Deren is most well-known for her articulation of twin polarities in the formation of cinema, in which a 'poetic verticality' illuminates a 'horizontal' dramatic structure.²² A thicker 'vertical' examination of the emotion and meaning of a horizontal exposition thus offer the potential of adding poetic depth to a sequence (Deren, 1946; [TheStickingPlace], 2013):

The poetic construct arises from the fact if you will, that it is a vertical investigation of a situation in that it probes the moment, probes the ramification of the moment and is concerned with its qualities and its depths so that you have poetry concerned in a sense not with what is occurring but with what it feels like or what it means. A poem to my mind creates visible or auditory forms for something that is invisible, which is the feeling or the emotion or the metaphysical content of a moment ... there is a story line and this is

²² Here I note Kurt Vonnegut's instructive critique of the rise and fall of good/bad fortune in conventional stories that end in dramatic resolution: "I think this rise and fall is, in fact, artificial. It pretends that we know more about life than we really do." He offers the essentially 'flatline' plots of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Indigenous story structures as more honest alternatives ([Eva CollinsAlonso], 2018).

illuminated constantly by the poetic commentary, so that you have two actions going on simultaneously. Now this I think is one of the great potentials of film and something that could very well be carried and developed much further. (Deren, 1953, as cited in [TheStickingPlace], 2013)

Deren's poetic theory follows a structuralist line, which Arthur Miller promptly denounced as "mechanistic" at the symposium they attended together (Bollig, 2023, p. 115). Without necessarily agreeing with all of Deren's dualities or distinctions between the vertical and horizontal aspects of filmic poetry, her framing is undoubtedly appropriate to the temporal architecture of the cinematic mechanism itself, in which 'the cut' is always perpendicular to the movement of linear time past 'the gate' of projection. Aspects of her articulation also align with the recognition by Bergson and Deleuze of the relationship between the extraordinary qualities of memory (layered/temporal/virtual viz. vertical) and ordinary linear expressions of time (horizontal/successive/spatial/literal) (Bergson, 1908/1991, p. 143; Deleuze, 1986, p. 297). At the risk of glossing over the vast and complex philosophies of these latter two thinkers about time, I can therefore draw a modest lesson from an analogy between Deren's description of cinematic poetry and Bergson's own diagrammatic approach to the more virtual workings of the mind in relation to immanent actuality. In addition, Deren and Bergson both appear to replicate the verticality of the cinematic mechanism in their conceptualisations, which also share parallels with my commentary on the meaning of *ka mua*, *ka muri*.

Deleuze describes Bergson's "fourth schema" (Figure 1.3, left) as follows:

Being inside the event, memory essentially and above all consists of not leaving it, staying in it and going back through it from within. Bergson had proposed a schema, what might be called his fourth schema of time, to distinguish between the spatial vision which passes along the event, and the temporal vision which goes deep inside the event. (Deleuze, 1986, p. 297)

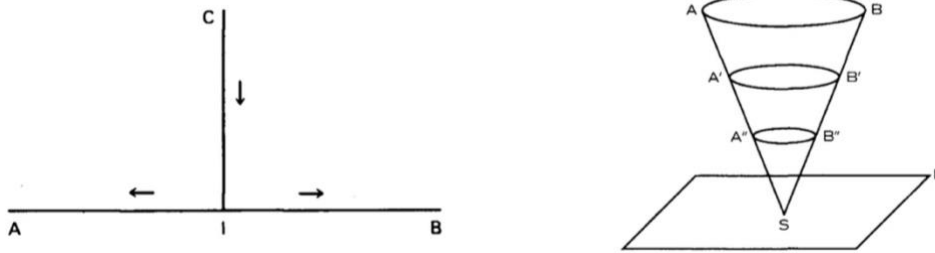
Bergson's related but more complex expression of layers of virtuality (viz. vertical) and the point at which these condense and intersect with the 'plane of immanence' is evident in what Deleuze names his "second schema" (Figure 1.3, right). In Bergson's own words:

If I represent by a cone SAB, the totality of the recollections accumulated in my memory, the base AB, situated in the past, remains motionless, while the summit S, which indicates at all times my present, moves forward unceasingly, and unceasingly also touches the moving plane P of my actual representation of the universe. At S, the image of the body is concentrated, and, since it belongs to the plane P, this image does but receive and restore actions emanating from all the images of which the plane is composed. (Bergson, 1908/1991, p. 152)

Cont'd. overleaf

Figure 1.3.

Comparison of Bergson's Fourth and Second Schemas of Time as Noted by Deleuze



Note. The 'fourth' (left) (Deleuze, 1986, p. 297) and 'second' (right) (Deleuze, 1986, p. 294) schemas of time from Henri Bergson's Matter and Memory (Bergson, 1908/1991), as they are attributed by Gilles Deleuze in two different footnotes of Cinema 2: The Time-Image.

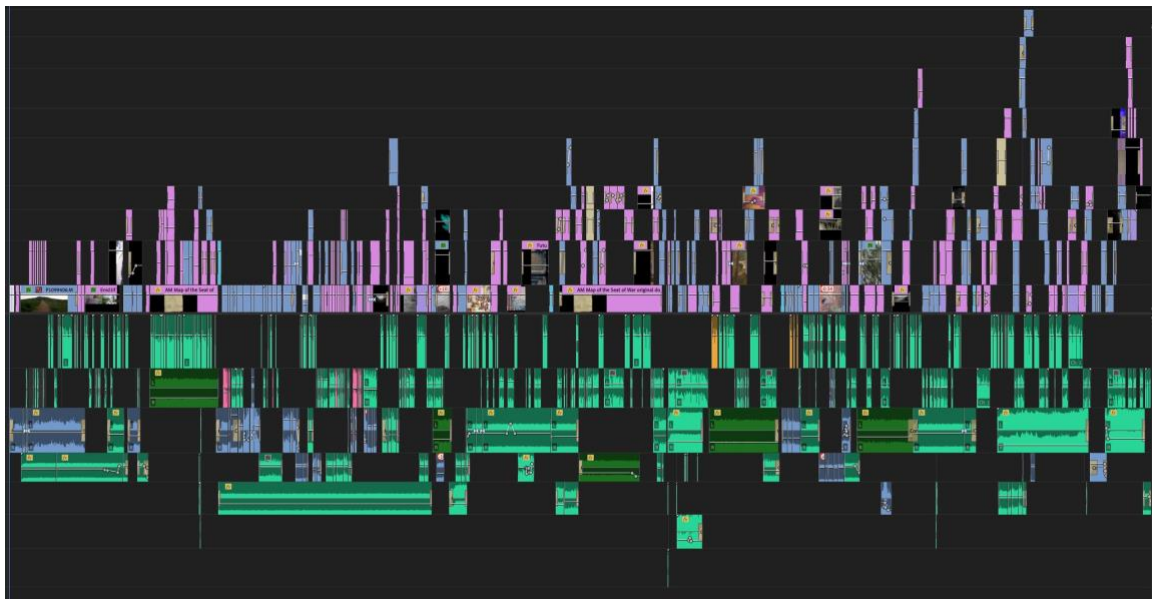
The scope of the present discussion cannot encompass the multitudinous details and technicalities of Bergsonian-Deleuzian philosophy or the gamut of experimental film, which exemplifies their ideas. It can only provide a few salient analogical reflections on the idea of the vertical and the horizontal as the cut and continuity of the cinematic mechanism/art, in relation to certain key tenets of a Tā\Vā/Wā worldview. Besides the cut, another key aspect of the vertical in the cinematic mechanism and its associated techniques is the notion of 'superimposition.'

Since the earliest days of superimposition, a certain verticality has been embedded in the very technology of moving image projections (Bülbül, 2022), from Jean Epstein, to Maya Deren, to Stan Brakhage and Jean Luc Godard, to name only a few salient examples whom Bülbül cites as conscious pioneers of the concept/technique *par excellence*. The advent of digital methods of recording and non-linear editing have subsequently allowed radical further expansions of vertical layering over linear unfolding (see Figure 1.4) in the context of experimental film, although the technique is also now ubiquitous in the extended dissolving transitions of a persistently linear mainstream (Fandor, 2017). In the *ka mua*, *ka muri* ontologies and arts of Tā\Vā/Wā, there is a comparable layering and weaving of overlapping spaces, pasts, presents, and futures. In this case, difference and concord comfortably coexist in a socially, artistically, and historically grounded Oceanic practice (Ka'ili, 2017). I prefer to call this state of entangled complementary a form of *superposition*, without the *imposition* of a linear objective or hierarchy of realities.

Cont'd. overleaf

Figure 1.4.

Image of the Complete Forever in Time Sequence in Adobe Premiere Pro



Note. A screenshot of the ‘timeline panel’ of the *Forever in Time* project in the Adobe Premiere non-linear editing software. The verticality and horizontality of the elements are revealing from this perspective.

The purpose of the impressions that follow is therefore aimed at elucidating this relationship between cultural roots and experimental cinema technique as it has emerged in the laboratory of the studio, and to further relate it to the production methods of *Forever in Time*. If vertical human postures, like those of the dancers in the stream (Figure 1.2), can manifest a vibrant choreography in a relatively fixed albeit swivelling vertical plane, there is little need for the dancers to move their feet very far on the horizontal plane while they perform. Yet the waters of the stream are still rushing in on that plane from the future behind, like an inevitable flow of time that nonetheless seems ‘reversed’ to a sensibility trained on the straightforwardly linear.

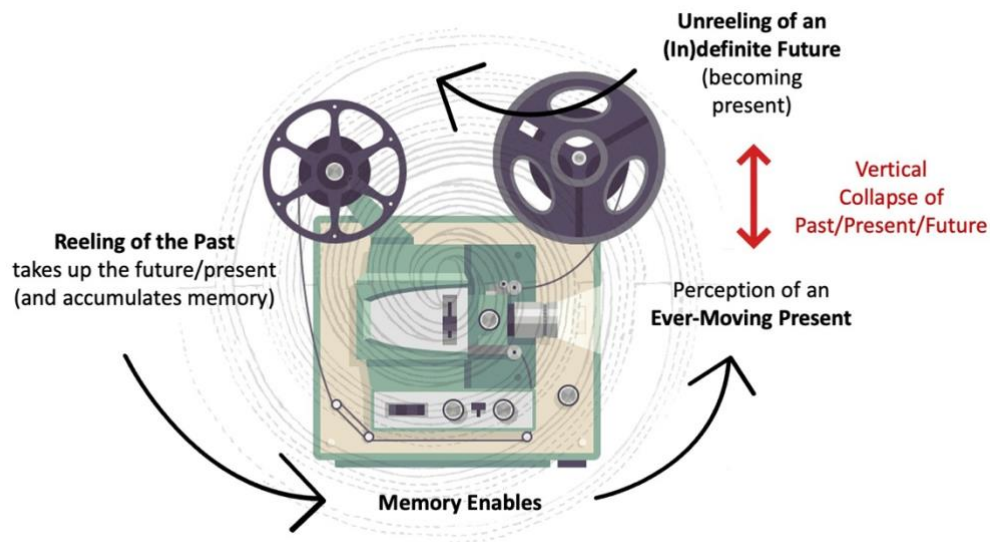
I owe this insight to the Kabbalist Massimo Melli, who writes the following in the context of Unamuno’s “night river of hours” quoted at the beginning of this section: “In the case of the river, if our observation point is above a bridge and we look towards the mouth, we see only the water that comes out from under the bridge and not the water that flows from the source. We can neither predict nor see what will happen before the water gets under the bridge. Someone could pour a liquid in the water that colors red the water and we would see it red only after it has passed. Because even if it is true that water flows from the source to the mouth, that is from the future to the past, the future remains unknown until it becomes present” (Melli, 2019).

Melli goes on to compare this perception of the stream of time to the movement of film/time in a static projector (Figure 1.5). The ‘motion’ of time is thus reversed, counter-intuitively, but in this excess, there is also a sense in which past, present and future collapse altogether in the vertical relation of all three as they cycle among each

other in a dance of cinematic understanding that resembles the spiralling paradox of *ka mua, ka muri*.

Figure 1.5.

An Extension of de Unamuno's Stream of Time and Henri Bergson's Concept of Durée (Duration) in the Mechanism of a Projector. A Cinematic Analogy for Ka Mua, Ka Muri?



Note. In the stream of time, the eye that perceives an ever-moving present is like the gate of the projector that sees the future-past arrive as in Massimo Melli's interpretation of Unamuno's 'night river of hours' above. From the perspective of Bergson's concept of *durée* in *Matter and Memory*: "However brief we suppose any perception to be, it always occupies a certain duration, and involves, consequently, an effort of memory which prolongs, one into another, a plurality of moments." (Bergson, 1908/1991, p.34). In other words, memory drives or enables the present-future. To extend this circular flow into the space of verticality is to collapse past, present and future altogether and to perceive what Deleuze understood to be a dynamic but still curiously motionless 'crystal time-image' (Deleuze, 1986; Shores, 2014)²³.

While it is by no means exclusive of dynamism, movement, and progress, the worldview of Tā\Vā/Wā seems to reserve a special place for ideas of stillness and eternity²⁴ in an enduring context of *te ao hurihuri* (the changing/turning world), within which the world rotates around the subject, just as the subject can also change orientation within that turning world. Verticality therefore implies a certain stillness against horizontal movement that is reminiscent of what Māori linguist Pat Hohepa communicated to

²³ There is an alignment here with the Afrofuturist theoretical frameworks and methodologies proposed by the Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) collective (Phillips, 2015). I mention their work here to acknowledge a potentially Pan-Indigenous strain of thinking but also because there is a significant nod to a Bantu African 'river of time' in the film work *Forever in Time* that accompanies this exegesis (see section 2.1)

²⁴ In our Vā Moana interviews, Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (Royal, 2021) expressed an ancestral "collapse of space and time" in *wā* that pointed to something "beyond space and time." Hawai'iian artist Nālani Wilson-Hokowhitu also mentioned the special place of the notion of *i ka wā mau loa* (eternity) in her work (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2022).

Anne Salmond with regard to the popular interpretation of the Māori *whakataukī* (proverb) *ka mua, ka muri* as ‘walking backwards into the future’ (Salmond & Graham, 2021). Not only did Māori not walk backwards, wrote Hohepa, but there was indeed no linguistic implication of movement in the phrase at all (Salmond, 2021). While this aligns with the case of the performance of the *haka* in the *awa* (river) that I mentioned at the beginning of this section (Figure 1.1), it is also reminiscent of the dynamic but curiously motionless ‘crystal time images’ of Gilles Deleuze’s *Cinema 2* (Deleuze, 1986; Shores, 2014)²⁵ (Figure 1.5). Hohepa did not preclude, however, the possibility of a change in orientation from one direction to another, where *mua* (front) becomes *muri* (back), and vice versa, as one swivels inside the circle of time. In her Vā Moana interview with the artist Brett Graham, Anne Salmond was vociferous about this point:

He [Pat] was looking at *mua* [front] and he was looking at *muri* [back] and he was using the *reo* [Māori language] ... lots and lots of examples of sentences in Māori to show that one minute you’re looking at the past and another minute you’re looking at the future and another minute you’re right in the moment, and that’s when he made that statement about the *hau* [person’s vital essence] spinning in space time like the koru spiral.²⁶ (Salmond & Graham, 2021)

In his own Vā Moana interview and an earlier paper at the Vā Moana conference, Brett Graham elaborated on Salmond’s point (Graham, 2022) with reference to double spiral *takarangi* (falling sky)²⁷ diagrams of the Tainui *tōhunga* (expert knowledge holder) Pei Te Hurinui Jones in *He Tuhi Mārei-Kura: A Treasury of Sacred Writings: A Māori Account of the Creation, Based on the Priestly Lore of the Tainui People* (P. T. H. Jones, 2013). Jones’ extraordinary series of thirteen two-dimensional spiral diagrams represent the Tainui creation story on paper, which he creatively annotates with Hebrew, Māori, and material scientific references. According to Tainui artist Brett Graham, although these spirals are flat on the page, there is also a verticality to them in that they mirror the three-dimensionality of old Māori *kauwhata*, ceremonial structures for hanging food for feasting, which would also be elaborate sculptural representations of *whakapapa*

²⁵ One more useful analogy can be found in a distinction between two broad, contemporary fields of temporal science, namely physics and neuroscience (Buonomano, 2017). It seems that these are fundamentally divided between a ‘common sense’ *presentist* and causal reality (neuroscience), within which our brains process lineal (viz. horizontal) synaptic sequences of the *moving now* in our practical and evolutionary interests, and an *eternalist* (viz. vertical) reality (physics) that sees no distinction between past, present, or future at all (Rovelli et al., 2018).

²⁶ Here Salmond is referring to her quotation of Hohepa near the end of her book *Tears of Rangi*: “As Patu Hohepa has pointed out, in ancestral conceptions, space-time (*wā*) ‘swirls like koru patterns, three dimensional spirals’, so that one faces the future (*mua*) and now the past (*mua*). Once the Western arrow of time is fired, however, time splits from space and becomes uni-dimensional, flying in a straight line from the past into the future. *Wā* (space-time) is laid down flat, and divided, measured and fragmented” (Salmond, 2017, pp. 408–409). Salmond makes good points here but I intend to show that her reductionism of ‘Western time’ is very limited in the context of experimental cinema, for example.

²⁷ Art critic Ben Brown defines the word *takarangi* further, in the context of Shane Cotton’s artwork of the same name: “The word is many things. *Toi whakairo* [carving] displays an intersecting spiral motif that uses space—and therefore light, or *marama*—to define the open spiralled forms. *Maramatanga* is the light of understanding and knowledge. It reveals the graceful spiralling umbilicals that bind us to *wairua* and *whakapapa*—that bring us the past through all space and time, informing us as we require, preceding us as we go. And then there is *takarangi*; to stagger and stumble clumsily. To layer up the heavens. To fall down from the sky” (Brown, 2022).

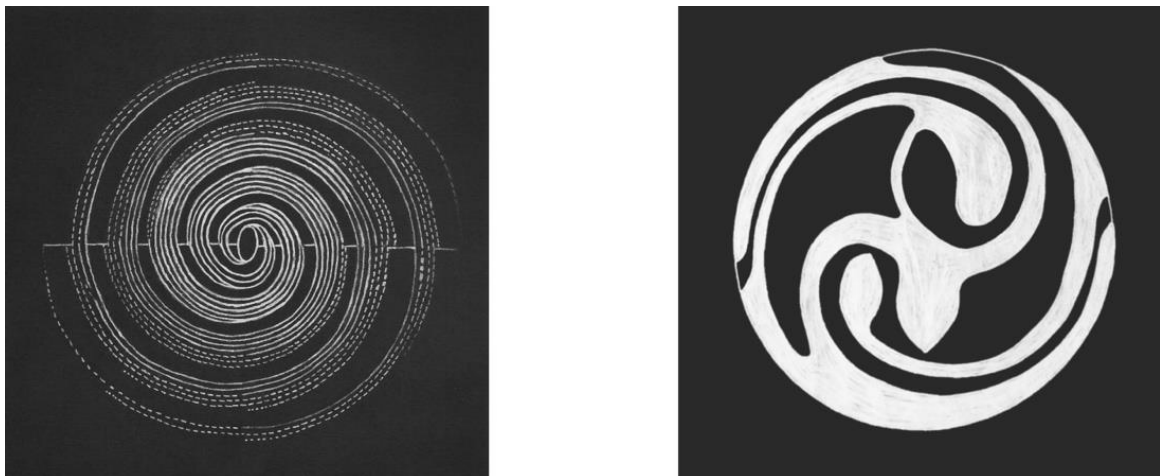
(genealogy, lineage, descent). These structures were both practical mnemonics and philosophical symbols built in three dimension—most importantly, in the vertical plane (Graham, 2021).

One particular diagram from Te Hurinui Jones' series of drawings has been deployed at several points in *Forever in Time* for the way it spoke to me about the kind of temporal mediations I was researching during the film's making. I was exposed to Chart No. 6, entitled *The Formless Void Pierced by a Line Extending into Space (Te Kore-makiki-hi-rere)* (Figure 1.6, left) after Brett Graham introduced us to the sequence while we were conducting the Vā Moana interviews. The double spiral is a potent symbol of the relations of vertical and horizontal time, even if the very specific meanings Jones' images carry in the context of the Tainui creation story remain opaque to me.

Even more opaque, but just as meaningful in a similarly abstract way, is the ancient Celtic spiral image, which I also deploy in the film (Figure 1.6, right). This second spiralling motif has long held meaning for me, although its provenance is unknown. Both images have an interlocking circularity in which one element seems to follow another in a dance of stillness and eternity, at the same time as they are both also struck through with a linearity that implies the ability to flip and change direction (cf. Hohepa's explanation of *ka mua, ka muri* above). There is thus an Escheresque melting one way, then the other that elicits poetic ambivalence.

Figure 1.6.

Combined image of Pei Te Hurinui Jones' Takarangi and a Spiral of Unknown Provenance Deployed in Forever in Time



Note. (left) *The Formless Void Pierced by a Line Extending into Space (Te Kore-makiki-hi-rere)* (P. T. H. Jones, 2013, p. 156); (right) a Celtic spiral of unknown provenance collected by the writer around 2002.

Te Hurinui Jones' *takarangi* and the unknown Celtic spiral pronounce a world which intersects with our own but is also not quite of it. They are like otherworldly technologies, portals, egresses, veils, and liminal vortices of time that cut through the

lineal (viz. horizontal) timeline of *Forever in Time* with a vertical illumination of the kind that Maya Deren sought to describe.²⁸ The spirals rotate and dilate in superposition²⁹ to other images, such as colonial maps, an ancestral mountain, or the mysterious street sign of Ambush Road, and give depth of meaning and alternative historiographical structure to these phenomena, which were encountered on journeys of research and literal linear travel on the Great South Road.

The final concept of vertical temporal alterity with which I associate the flipping back to front and front to back of *ka mua ka muri* is the idea of *retrocausality*. Fisher (2016) asserts that contemporary science of the natural material cosmos, such as black holes, is now much stranger than any ‘supernatural’ entities we habitually conjure from the lore of our anthropomorphic projections on nature (viz. vampires and werewolves). Like the weird phenomena of black holes, the idea of retrocausality—that the future is able to cause the past—is now common scientific currency and resulted in a Nobel Prize in physics in 2022 (Price & Wharton, 2023). I have thus drawn upon the opaque science of retrocausality as a filmmaking metaphor, because the connection between this concept and the Māori temporality of *tohu* (sign, symbol, token, symptom, proof) and the historical Māori embrace of prophecy should be clear (Elsmore, 2020).

To extend Massimo Melli’s abovementioned Kabbalism (Figure 1.5.) into radical Western historical theory, there is also a Talmudic relation here in the idea of *tikkun*, or the ability to redeem, amend, or ‘fix’ the past,³⁰ that torments the hapless ‘angel of history’ in Walter Benjamin’s “Ninth Thesis on History”:

The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward (Benjamin et al., 2012, pp. 257–258)

There are many lines in *Forever in Time* which echo and develop this idea in the context of what I have defined as ‘The Great War for New Zealand’ and the principle of *ka mua, ka muri*. For example, in line 31: “I stumbled on an invisible ruin. A retrofuture just around the corner. Something nobody counted on. Where things line up. Where time becomes whole again.” In line 35 we hear: “The mind becomes like water, as if a time out of space still breathes the air of this place and another regard is possible. Back,

²⁸ Worthy of note is the way in which the Soviet montage innovator Sergei Eisenstein recognised the logarithmic spiral as an icon of processual development and evolution in organic nature and ‘progressive’ art (Eisenstein & Marshall, 1987). The alignment between Maya Deren and Eisenstein’s projects of theory and practice has been noted, although Deren’s work also notably excises Eisenstein’s historicism in the context of postwar America (Michelsen, 2001).

²⁹ As stated above, I use the word ‘superposition’ in place of ‘superimposition’ to signify a simultaneity and equality between composited images, rather than the hierarchy implied in the latter term. There is also an association with the quantum state of simultaneous multiplicity in the term superposition.

³⁰ This concept has appeared to me in many contexts—most recently for me in Todd Field’s film *Tár* (2022) where Cate Blanchett’s character is interviewed about her philosophy of time as a musical conductor. She veers from the roles of her hands in keeping and ‘stopping’ time while leading an orchestra, to ‘receiving the song’ in Amazonian cosmology, to Leonard Bernstein’s belief in the Talmudic ability to see back and transform his past.

front, forward, backward.” At another moment of liminal verticality in line 92, the character of the Anthrobot realises that: “Time is not a neutral machine that doesn’t care. It is an ancestor from the future that grows within us, as a folding of the outside.”

Transcendence of the loss of loved ones,³¹ alienation from home and identity, as well as a desire to remedy the ills of colonialisation are all clear motivators of this form of the temporally vertical in the concept of retrocausality. A desire for recovery of loss may also lie at the heart of the popularity and fascination that paradoxes of time travel narratives wield in many regions of our cinematic culture (Barham, 2024; Bruckner, 2015). Slavoj Žižek has gone so far as to understand them as means of recovering history from ideological blindness.

The paradox consists in the fact that this superfluous detour, this supplementary snare of understanding ourselves (‘voyage into the future’) and then reversing the time direction (‘voyage into the past’) is not just a subjective illusion/perception of an objective process taking place in so-called reality independent of these illusions. The supplementary snare is, rather, an internal condition, an internal constituent of the so-called ‘objective’ process itself: only through this additional detour does the past itself, the ‘objective’ state of things, become retroactively what it always was. (Žižek, 2008, p. 59)

The most generative of such time travel tales are, in my view, those characterised by open-ended, ‘never-ending beginnings,’ as King et al. (2023) put it. Chris Marker’s ‘photo roman’ *La Jetée* (1962) is a seminal film in this respect that stands in contrast to those that pretend to a paradox of predestination and then abrogate their commitment to vertical time by reverting to a linear structure. These latter films succumb to what my old teacher in anthropology and one of the founders of Tongan TāVāist philosophy, ‘Okusitino Mahina, calls ‘Back to the Future syndrome’ (O. Māhina, personal communication, July 3, 2019). As I have discussed earlier in this section, they also mirror the co-opted translation of *ka mua, ka muri* as ‘looking back to go forward,’ which negates the most eerie and otherworldly potentials of the phrase and hence, the more temporally challenging forms of cinema.

I argue, therefore, that much of the work of the filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky, to cite one salient example of an innovator in cinematic time, has more affinity with Tā\Vā/Wā than the cultural formulas underlying ‘Back to the Future’ type cinematic timelines. Māhina once described my film *Tongan Ark* as a form of ‘weaving’ (*lalanga* in Tongan) of intersecting time and space. While I refrain from comparing my modest effort with the work of a master, there are at least metaphors comparable with Mahina’s *lalanga* in descriptions of Tarkovsky’s methods of ‘sculpting in time’:

The Russian verb the film-maker uses in his key aesthetic formula for ‘to sculpt’ is ‘vaiat’, which is connected with ‘vit –to weave’, that is, to form a continuous web of interlacing yarns. ‘Weaving in time’ strengthens the spatial aura of the formula: ‘sculpture in time’ becomes ‘texture of time’. Tarkovsky’s films, one may suggest, have a certain complex texture, a textile labyrinth, where the relationship between individual temporal threads (past–present– future) is not immediately apparent. (Skakov, 2012, p. 13)

³¹ In this category, Fisher includes Christopher Nolan’s *Interstellar* (2014) with his analysis of ‘alien traces’ in Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *The Shining* (1980), and Tarkovsky’s *Solaris* (1972) and *Stalker* (1979).

The intricate patternings of woven strands of contrasting colour in Tongan *lalanga* or Māori *raranga* in mats and lashings of various kinds, have a similar quality. Their intricate paradoxes are not immediately apparent but with patience and a little acculturation, the logic of their patterns will slowly emerge. With a little additional knowledge the wisdom, memorialisation and aspiration in their cultural motifs and codings will also become clear. At the time of making *Tongan Ark* I was much less versed in experimental cinematic technique. With no formal training, I painfully invented a method which established me as a teacher and practitioner in a university setting but I believe the key factor in that early process was that I also patiently immersed myself in the culture and thought of a Tongan intellectual community that had creatively sustained itself alongside Western temporalities.

When *Tongan Ark* was finally completed, after seven years of production, established filmmakers believed that it was something of an ‘experimental film,’ but I have challenged myself to go much further with *Forever in Time*. It has been an additional surprise, however, that a more formal and sustained engagement with Tā\Vā/Wā has also taken me full circle, as it did during my earlier association with Professor ‘Ilaisa Futa Helu at ‘Atenisi Institute, toward a reconsideration of the roots of Western civilisation and its modern experimental potentials in cinema. It was the classicist Edward Jenner who was instrumental in pointing out these unexpected alignments and their further relevance to other areas of Indigenous temporality, the arts of poetry, cinema, and my own personal history.

*

Diary—July 8th, 2022
(12 months after Ted’s death)

I met Ted Jenner through contact with an Auckland poetry collective called ‘The Writer’s Group.’ We became friends and I made him lunch in December 2020 within months of his death. The pleasure of our conversation, company and of viewing together his favourite film, Antonioni’s ‘Professione Reporter’ (‘The Passenger’ in English) is a memory as fresh as the meal’s ingredients on that day. I think he knew he had cancer and there was a restrained urgency in his communications.

Ted and I shared two important relations. The first was that he had taught European classical studies at Kamuzu Academy that my grandfather built in Malawi in the 70s. The school was created by the controversial Malawian independence leader and autocrat Kamuzu (Hastings) Banda, and Ted’s experiences there had indicated correlations between the Bantu and Greek conceptions of time. Second, Ted had taught at ‘Atenisi Institute where I had portraited the Moana philosopher Futa Helu in the film Tongan Ark. Like Banda, Helu had also seen a pathway to decolonisation through education in European philosophy alongside the sustenance of his Indigenous culture in the Kingdom of Tonga.

But Ted was foremost a scholar of the afterlife—specifically the gold leaf engraved funerary poetry of ancient Greece—and his fascination with ‘The Passenger’ was two-fold and infectious. First, there was his take on the Jack Nicholson character as a reporter in Africa who adopts the identity of a man he finds dead in his hotel—an unidentical twin, a flawed doppelgänger, harbinger of death. Transforming from reporter to gun runner, he experiences a living parallax view of the characters, countries and politics he had reported on for the news. This parallel life leads to his assassination at the film’s end in another hotel room in Sicily. With languorous purpose, a long camera movement imitates the path of his soul departing through the iron grate that shields the window from the room to the outside.

Ted’s view of this was a typically Heraclitean ‘death in life and life in death’ event. He saw the voyage of the fated reporter’s soul through the iron teeth of the hotel window as a Homeric statement of the ancient Greek belief that the soul left from the mouth. As it passed through, the soul would read poetic directions to the otherworld, which were inscribed with a metal stylus on a gold leaf that was then placed upon the deceased’s tongue during funerary rites. I enjoyed this reference that would have otherwise slipped past me entirely.

In this instance, Antonioni’s camera was a stylus inscribing poetic directions in silvered gelatin rather than on gold. It seemed that Ted was also carefully inscribing this association on my mind, as he had done before with an interpretation of Greek temporality in Homer’s use of the word ‘opisso’ (future/behind). He had done it again before that, with a reference to Marvell’s poem “To his Coy Mistress”:

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime...
...But at my back I always hear
Time’s wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

I told him that his interpretations appealed to me immensely because I had recently been grappling with the afterlife from Welsh and Tongan perspectives and so it was doubly significant to me. My Welsh grandmother had died two years before, and when I visited her house on Google Maps, I found a startling image of her standing in her driveway in Street View. The image was made eerie by a failure of presence and absence—a kind of transparent veil between the here and now and the ‘otherworld’ (‘Annwfn’ in Welsh)—something where there should be nothing and nothing where there should be something. In the Tongan case, I had experienced uncanny signs communicated by Futa Helu after he passed. My pālāngi self was always tempted to write them off as apophrenic fantasies—the result of Tongan acculturation after making Tongan Ark about the old philosopher. But these post-mortem coincidences or synchronicities, somehow became more real when they combined with the desire to remember my lost grandmother and her neglected Welsh identity. Antonioni, via Ted Jenner, helped light this way.

*

1.2.5. Vertical and Horizontal Voice

Without an eternity, without a sensitive, secret mirror of what passes through every soul, universal history is lost time, and along with it our personal history - which rather uncomfortably makes ghosts of us.

Jorge Luis Borges, *A History of Eternity*, 1936.

Let us now take the discussion of vertical and horizontal time in the previous section an additional step with a consideration of the second alterity, which *Forever in Time* and its exegesis seek to explore in this thesis, namely the *alterity of voice*. It should be noted from the start that there are only four main voices which are heard in the course of the film: my own voice, the voice of the Anthrobot, the voice of a character named Aria in the section *The Time Taken*, and, briefly, the voice of Scott Hamilton in the section named *Tuning the Clock*. These voices, which are placed at intervals on the horizontal plane of time, present a series of juxtapositions or leaps between vocal difference, at the same time as they contribute to the overall progression of the structure of the film as a whole.

This whole, as well as the sections in which the various voices appear, can be understood as having a communicative purpose that is apposite to Deren's definition of that which enables dramatic development in certain film languages. There are also many instances within the timeline at which the dramatic momentum is more or less arrested and a more vertical notion of voice prevails. These points are very difficult to define or locate with accuracy in the continuum of *Forever in Time*, and the film in its entirety is arguably an instance of vocal verticality, in which many voices become one, in a kind of layering of the parts in the whole. For the sake of clarity, however, let us attempt to define what a verticality of voice might entail by way of an analogy with the qualities of sound.

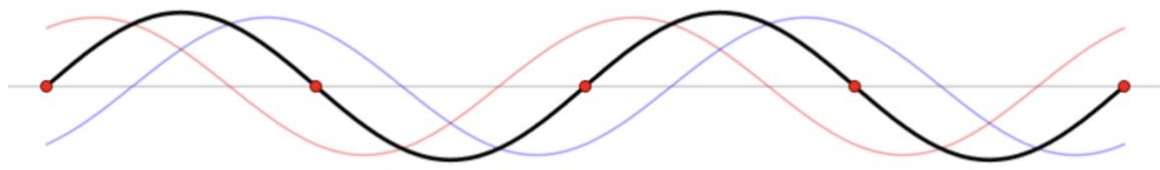
If a horizontal succession of differentiated voices has a tendency toward the pragmatic communicative purpose of exposing a dramatic structure, they could be said to have a certain linear directionality, like a sound wave emitted from one person's mouth to another person's ear. This could of course be returned with a second dialectical reply in the opposite direction. There is also however, *a third space of sound* that we could call the relatively unchanging state of the 'room tone,' or ambient sound—something that all good sound recordists know must be additionally recorded on location so that it can be used in the edit of the film to smooth over unwanted discontinuities of 'background sound'.

This third sound space is like the combined and indiscernible chatter of people in a room at a gathering, or the ambience of the combined wind and bird atmospherics that permeate it from outside, for example. It often lacks the pragmatic purpose of a specific utterance, but it still entails a certain meaning or affect that can be considered vertically 'hanging' because it bounces off the ceiling and walls in so many directions as to be directionless. It is this verticality that I posit is akin to Deren's definition of a radically

open, enquiring, and experimental *dwelling* in time. While it may derive from the mingling of many linear sound waves, it is perhaps best represented by the notion of a ‘standing wave’ of sound³² (see Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7.

Image of Linear Waves in Two Directions Combining into a Single Standing Wave



Note. The standing wave (black) above is formed from two propagating linear waves moving in opposite directions. The red wave moves left and the blue wave moves right while the black wave that they generate only moves up and down in the vertical plane. (To see an animated version of the image in a web browser, [follow this link](#)).

The dynamic symmetry of the black ‘standing wave’ above is a form of ‘motionless time,’ as Deleuze would have it, but it can also be compared to the dancers in the stream that I picked out from Bennett and Pihama’s film at the start of the previous section 1.2.4 *Horizontal and Vertical Time*. The dancers are ‘in motion on the spot,’ as they shake their heads and occasionally their whole bodies from side to side, redirecting the focus of their *pūkana* (dilation of the eyes) *ka mua, ka muri*, as they become ethereal images of previously invisible metaphysical forces from beyond the immanent time and space of the present.³³ This communication via movement can have semantic qualities in the specific meanings of gestures, but the ‘vertical’ aspect of the dance is also a transcendent summation of all the many poetic movements that have contributed to the development of its form. The vertical standing wave is a harmonic—the opposite of the drive from A to B or the pragmatics of building a road to arrive, control and acquire.

For me, the moments of linguistic layering in *Forever in Time*—when I speak Welsh or Māori for example, including the idiosyncrasies of my pronunciation and syntax—are similar instances of this verticality of voice. The errors as well as the successes of communication are the consequences of millennia of linguistic layerings and disjunctions. The compilation I make of the many overlapping images, words, and ideas that advisors, teachers, associates, and collaborators have contributed to this work during the preceding years are also evidence of a verticality of voice that exists beyond

³² I would like to credit the anonymous writer of the blog *Vertical Perspectives in Moving-Image Media* for this analogy, but have endeavoured unsuccessfully to discover their identity ([verticalperspectives], 2016).

³³ I credit the late Professor ‘Ilaisa Futa Helu for this observation about dance in the cultures of Tā\Vā/Wā. It was made during a speech presenting a Tongan dance by the ‘Atenisi Foundation for Performing Arts.

the mere communicative pragmatics of our individual utterances and actions. Even the AI generated vocalisations of the characters Aria and the Anthrobot and the AI prompted script elements deployed within the film, are special vertical compilations of algorithmic re-patterning of snippets of communicable human language.³⁴

All those who have spoken before (and will ever speak again in a retrocausal future?) are therefore contributors to this process and their absence/presence is definitively eerie in this sense (Fisher, 2016). For me, these are voices of the *otherworld*; as I interpret them, they are instantiations of what in Welsh is known as the *Annwfn*—the mythic place of ‘vertical’ inspiration to which poets are abducted, through a thin veil from the horizontal. Deleuze and Bergson refer at many points in their works to the relationship of the immanent surface to which “a metaphysical surface necessarily corresponds” (Bergson, 1908/1991, p. 249; Deleuze et al., 1990, p. 125).³⁵ For Deleuze, this inflection point of the vertical-horizontal is sometimes even associated with a kind of divine understanding, without the need to reference a God (Tissandier, 2019, p. 173).

I will speak more of *Annwfn* in Part Two, with regard to the nourishment of ancestors, descendants, the mythic unconscious, and the perennial landscape or *whenua* (placenta, land, grave) outside of ordinary human time and agency at Ambush Road. As Fisher puts it in his commentary on the work of Alan Garner:

Garner points to the eerie power of landscape, reminding us of the ways in which physical spaces condition perception, and of the ways in which particular terrains are stained by traumatic events. The mythic, as Garner understands it, is something more than the merely fictional, just as it cannot be reduced to the fantasmatic. Rather, the mythic is part of the virtual infrastructure which makes human life as such possible. (Fisher, 2016, p. 97)

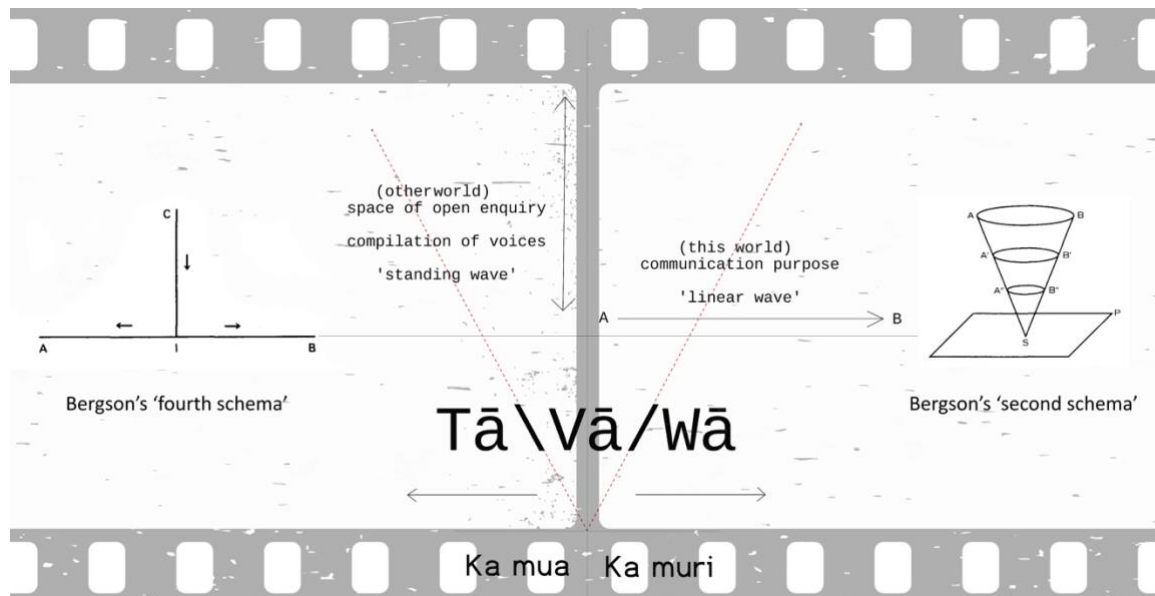
Returning to the cinematic import of these observations, I have compiled many of the key concepts of this chapter in a schema (Figure 1.8) in which ‘the cinematic cut’ is represented by the Sāmoan term *vā* as “a vital force that must be kept at the centre” (Refiti, 2017, p. 5). There is an implicit equilibrium in its central and vertical position but also the threat of asymmetry, juxtaposition and breaking apart *ka mua, ka muri* (see Bergson’s fourth schema on the left), in a state of worldly *hurihanga* (change) that involves forces beyond human desire. This rift also contains within it the possibility of relating at all and the choices and relations that are made either side of the cut will of course help to define its nature. The virtual, vertical ‘otherworld’ of memory, ancestry and desire exists in the upper levels of the cone (in Bergson’s second schema on the right) but as ‘the rubber hits the road’ at point ‘S’ on the plane of immanence, a creative action must be taken that has a pragmatic ‘horizontal’ communicative purpose that respects, serves and complements the *weird and eerie* human-more-than-human *Vā*.

³⁴ As I have mentioned before, there is a particular opacity to AI generated text elements and vocalisations, which lend them a special eerie, ‘vertical’ charge of the audible/invisible. It should be noted that I am under no illusions about the imbalances and biases that inhere in these technologies (Crawford, 2021; Zuboff, 2019) and will discuss in detail the actual methods and ethics of their deployment in the chapters that follow.

³⁵ One translation of the English word ‘eerie’ in *Te Aka Māori Dictionary* is *irirangi* (restless, unsettled, spirit voice, harmonic note, radio wave), which has multiple connotations in the contexts of this chapter.

Figure 1.8.

A Diagrammatic Composition of Tā\Vā/Wā in relation to the 'Cinematic Cut' and Bergson's Fourth and Second Schemas of Time



Note. This diagram compares the verticality and horizontality of Bergson's 'fourth' (left) and 'second' (right) schemas of time as they are attributed by Gilles Deleuze (see Figure 1.3) with the verticality and horizontality of Tā\Vā/Wā, 'ka mua, ka muri,' and the practice/concept of the cinematic cut.

As Albert Refiti has described in the context of Sāmoan architecture and 'Okusitino Māhina et al.'s TāVāist philosophy (Ka'ili, 2017; Māhina, 2004, 2005, 2010, 2017; Māhina & Refiti, 2022), the simultaneous bifurcation as well as juxtaposing connective quality of *vā* as a form of 'space between' is particularly apposite to the cinematic practice and concept of 'the cut':

Like Tongan Thought, Samoan Thought insists on a moment of equilibrium that Māhina calls *malie*, for Samoa it is *teu*, the refining and ordering of all relations. *Teu* is the refinement and orderliness at the heart of Samoan space where a 'rift'—the true character of *vā*—violently inhabits the centre. *Vā* is not harmony or *malie* or 'negotiated space' as recent scholarship has suggested (Anae 2009; Wendt 1996). *Vā* is an equation of things bifurcating, of forces moving and breaking apart, towards asymmetrical transformations, much like what Māhina proposes as the chaotic opposing forces of *tā/vā*. It dwells outside our desires, but has the exact coordinates of an event that defines all relations. What threatens to pull relations apart must be kept at the centre; this is how Samoans deal with a bifurcating vital force. (Refiti, 2017, pp. 4-5)

Hereby, the perpendicular position of 'the cut' to the linear flow of cinematic time makes it the ideal image of what Deren characterises as the vertical in cinematic poetry, and so it has been placed at the centre of my schema in Figure 1.8. This is not to say that there are not multitudinous other elements of verticality that can be observed and defined in cinematic voices. Tarkovsky's notion of *time pressure* is a notable exception,

for example, whereby rhythm is created “*within the shot* rather than by its conjunction with others” (Pigott, 2009, p. 220), but it is perhaps the discontinuous crystalline bifurcations and conjoinings of ‘the cut’ that are iconic of the potentials of cinematic understanding.

It can be a harmonising image, but it is often also a voice, which comes to re-negotiate or heal this rift that “dwells outside our desires,” (Refiti, 2017, p.5) particularly in a context as trauma filled as New Zealand colonial history. Daniel Potter describes the method in this regard, of one of the essay film genre’s masterworks, *Sans Soleil* by Chris Marker:

The same melancholy of the temporal gap and of memory’s associative reappraisal comes into play: akin to Benjamin’s concept of history from the present, a present which views micrologically that which is a prehistory of itself but suffers separation from it by the immense gravity of ruin, decay, collapse. This is the gap of the sunless world—a wound, or rather a constellation of wounds which infect the memory, and which find themselves occasionally transcribed into other media having lost none of their power. The image is fragmented, but salvaged by a word; words and images seek each other like two halves of a desiring equation, like one of the images of love in Plato’s Symposium. (Potter, 2015)

There have thus been many examples of bifurcating and relational forces that have run parallel to the production of *Forever in Time*, which have activated heterogenous ‘vertical’ potentials of personal/historical identity and challenged political or ideological orthodoxies and counter-orthodoxies. The artistic voicing that the film presents ‘speaks nearby’ and often *among* many Indigenous voicings of time and space, including those that have emerged from a specific ‘shatter zone’ of the Waikato invasion (O’Malley & Kidman, 2021) at Ambush Road. The production of *Forever in Time* has thus enabled me to work through “the wounds that infect the memory” (Potter, 2015) by means of what I have come to understand as a very important ‘Pākehā conversation with/of the self.’ This singular conversation, has ironically emerged from the “schizophonic effects”³⁶ (Fisher, 2016, p. 23) of a cracked intellectual/artistic/settler/migrant identity and the eerie contributions of ambient, acousmatic and musical sound (Fisher, 2016, p. 69, 81).³⁷

In the next formal section (1.2.6) of this chapter *Dancing with the Anthrobot*, I describe how I achieved glimpses of this quality of vertical voicing and reflect on the specific artistic processes and creative syntheses of mind that were achieved with the help of certain generative technologies. As I have said many times however, these personal and technological processes have been complemented throughout, by the maintenance and warmth of key social and professional relationships and the veteran artist Pita Turei (Ngai Tai Ki Tamaki, Ngāti Pāoa, Ngā Rauru Kiitahi) has been among the most significant contributors to this aspect of the work. Before we move on to the technical details, I would therefore like to reflect upon and acknowledge his involvement with the diary entry that follows.

³⁶ ‘Schizophonic effects’ refer here to the consequences of combining my voice in the film *Forever in Time* with that of the Anthrobot’s or indeed with music or ambient location sound (see sections 2.3 and 2.7).

³⁷ I recorded a monotone with a Tongan *fangufangu* (nose flute) for example, at certain numinous moments in the timeline, but I am also very indebted to Belbury Music/Ghost Box Records for permission to synchronise two tracks by Eric Zann and one by The Advisory Circle in the sound mix of *Forever in Time*.

Diary—January 14th, 2024
(3,333 days after I first met Pita)

I met Pita at around 5am on the 29th of November, 2014, at a ‘Local Time’ artist collective event on Te Pane o Mataoho/Te Ara Pueru (Māngere Maunga). We met again some years later by the totara tree planted by Princess te Puia on Pukekawa (Auckland Domain) and talked about the many broken hearted Waikato affiliated chiefs who had lived in Tāmaki Makaurau. During many, many subsequent meetings for kōrero and kai in his studio at Corban Estate Arts Centre in Henderson, he became a mentor to the PhD project. We celebrated our shared Welsh bloodlines early on with a shot of whiskey and a ‘iachi da!’ (good health). I kept going back there, through the iron slab door with the shape of a feather cut out of it, because he is a significant filmmaker, actor, dancer, sculptor, navigator, orator, and a descendant of the Hauraki tribes. I also simply enjoyed his humour, his openness, and his irreverence.

To me, his knowledge of the history of Tāmaki Makaurau-Auckland is still overwhelming in detail, contested by some but always inspiring in its intention and delivery. Without the need to be an ‘authority,’ he eschews the title ‘kaumatua’ because he likes his Māui role as an outsider, an in-between, a non-conformist who is still very aware of who his own roots and who his mentors and allies are. He’s happy in his independence as a creator and it is infectious. I’m not particularly interested in authority either and sometimes this gets us in trouble. At some point we are all on ‘the wrong side of history’, whatever that means, but Pita denies it as a problem. Conflict is part of the Māori world— te ao pūtahi (the world of confluence and intersection) and te ao hurihuri (the turning, changing world)—there’s conflict and then there’s peacemaking.

I saw him on Ōwairaka/Te Ahi-kā-a-Rakataura when Pouroto Ngaropo of Ngāti Awa was defending the exotic trees there. Pita was blunt in his speech to the crowd, “if it was me, I’d be out with a chainsaw tomorrow without a second thought,” like he was there on Maungawhau with his tools back in the day, ripping off a metal plaque carrying dubious colonial information. He told this story of the plaque to an audience of about a hundred at our Ghost South Road hui at Manurewa’s Nathan Homestead in 2017. I had shown example photographs of several missing plaques on various monuments and he helped unravel the mystery. He turned up in his white gumboots, trenchcoat, and feather in his topknot, alongside luminaries like Vincent O’Malley and Scott Hamilton.

After the historians had said their pieces over a crackly microphone, Pita stood up and projected his voice like the old Tim Shadbolt with whom he’d poured concrete in the 70s. He spoke to both the Māori and non-Māori in the crowd. The Wirihana of Te Ākitai Waiohū were there, as well as many artist friends from the wider Moana. Ian Barton—the old forester who had rebuilt Queen’s Redoubt in Pōkeno, was there too. We’d taken Pita to meet Ian at the redoubt when we did some black and white still shots on the nearby Maketu Pā with a metal cylinder for the ‘telescope’ that the guerillas allegedly used from that location. Those shots were speculative but they did wind up in the film.

Pita told the crowd that the chemistry in the room was right and there was nothing to fear. Aotearoa-New Zealand will change but it won't be another South Africa or Zimbabwe. It was the devastation of the early 19th century Musket Wars which had given Māori the knowledge that the tongue and the pen had to be mightier than the sword. It wasn't Māori who had started the invasion of the Waikato—that fight was forced on them. There was something else he said to the crowd in the middle of it all—I don't think he meant to say it: "He who does not know his future is destined to relive it!" I heard him say it when watching the footage we recorded of the event and it surely went barely noticed at the time. We laughed about it when I saw him again because it chimed with the retrocausal potential of the whakataukī 'ka mua, ka muri' and Pei Jones' takarangi spirals that we were discussing at the time. But for me it became a code, a cipher—a red thread in two directions that would enable the story of the thesis to be told. This was one of the many contributions Pita made.

His generosity seemed relentless. The first time I came to his studio and told him we had been shooting Super 8 and 16mm, he gave me a parallax viewfinder for an old Bolex that had been sitting on his shelf from his days using the camera making films of the Pacific. It was a taonga that I'll treasure. Another time he lent me a valuable old leather bound copy of Thomas Gudgeon's Defenders of New Zealand and Maori History of the War (1887), which he held in a kind of dubious esteem as a record of events. The last third of the book is the 'Maori History' and he noted that it was written by a Pākehā Lieutenant under the nom-de-plume of 'Kowhia Ngutu Kaka' ('Kowhia Parrot Lips') and addressed to the 'Old Rangatira Pakeha Tribe.' 'Parrot lips,' Pita informed me, is one of many slang expressions for a babbler, a tiresomely talkative person or a know-all with little substance to say: ngutu pī, ngutu momoho, ngutu huia, ngutu tewha, ngutu kotete. It was a strange and obscure discovery but also a shot over the bow, which I took to heart. "Find your permanent voice" he once advised "and find what needs to be said—right now."

Pita came with us up the Great South Road to Maketu Pā and the site of the kokoti-ambush on Flay Road and on to Queen's Redoubt. He was so excited that he called up filmmaker Tearepa Kahi to join us on a hīkoi around the site. Tearepa had been at a touch rugby event down the road and was equally fascinated from his Ngāti Paoa point of view. Pita really kickstarted our interpretation of the location from the ground level—feeling out the place for tohu (signs, symptoms, proof, company). The archive records were one thing but there were many other registers and levels to the place—like a large hewn rock hidden in the verge. John Alexander's account of the ambush in Bush Fighting (1873) had said that it happened near 'the old stone depot'—a quarry for stone metal, broken up by soldiers to pave the road.

On those many visits for kōrero and kai, I always brought him some new titbit of information—a reference or a piece of theory that I had picked up on the journey. He always commentated on it with humour and wisdom, and put it in context for me with those kind of insights that you only get when you have skin and whakapapa in the game, when you've lived it. When I first told him about the dialogue I was composing with the Anthrobot to narrate the film, he thought it was a terrible idea, but when I showed him an early experiment he understood it and encouraged it. The Anthrobot's voice was

American at the time. “She should be Irish,” he said, and when he later saw the completed film, he laughed at its moments of humour, strangeness, and insight, and he gave it a nod. We celebrated with a shot of tequila.

*

1.2.6. Dancing with the Anthrobot

Why does the ghost of Christmas past hate Christmas? Because they never get a present.

Result of Google voice search of: 'Hey Google, tell me a bad Christmas joke' (2020, July 19)

Before we approach a more direct exegesis of the film at the end of this chapter, some remarks should be made about the role of generative technologies in the methods and process of producing *Forever in Time*. I will, of course, attempt to frame my comments as much as possible with a temporal and vocal lens, although the implications of these new technologies are manifold. The field is also moving so quickly that these brief comments can only serve as a snapshot in time that supports an understanding of the work at hand. I would nonetheless like to suggest that while they bring certain issues into stark relief, the themes and questions raised in the often-heated contemporary discourses around generative technologies are not entirely new in the history of human expression or the field of cinema.

The celebrated film editor/cinema practitioner Walter Murch recently compared the expanded modern potential for human consciousness that cinema has provided to the building of the Egyptian pyramids, whereby “the chisel of the [cinematic] splice cleaves the stone of time” (Murch, 2024, p. 28). Murch’s strange trajectory for human creativity ends with speculations about the ultimate ‘conquest’ of a seemingly inexorable flow of time by the (now more than science fiction) merging of brains and machines. With the unprecedented rise of generative ‘AI’ in just the past few years, the relationship of Murch’s commentary to the film this exegesis interprets is apposite, even as I refrain from his techno-utopian metaphors of conquest.³⁸ The shock of these new technologies is palpable, and in the contemporary climate of epistemological and therefore ontological and social crises they have the potential to exacerbate, there are intense ethical questions to consider in deploying (with unprecedented ease) these new tools.

³⁸ The advent of generative ‘AI’ has enormous creative potential, but it also comes with significant dilemmas with regard to its role in neo-colonial practices of extraction and control (Crawford, 2021; Murgia, 2024; Zuboff, 2019). As this thesis aims to bring into question the linear colonial ideology of progress from colony to dominion to modern nation, or what the activist and scholar Ranginui Walker once called “the Weetbix version of New Zealand history” (W. Hope, personal communication, July 8, 2021), we would do well to avoid Murch’s hyperbole.

I have done so with great care³⁹ in *Forever in Time*, and I discuss specific cases as they arise in sections 2.1-2.7. There are nonetheless seven key and generalisable limits that I have observed in the film and the reflective exegesis that accompanies it:

- 1) I have not used generative text tools to create any of the analytical text in this exegesis, as I consider the time-consuming and difficult labour of writing to be essential to the process of working through the ideas to which the creative work has given rise. Certain very limited elements of the film script were produced with the generative scriptwriting software 'DeepStory',⁴⁰ and these served more as prompts for further writing rather than a replacement of writing, as such.
- 2) I have not used any image generation tools to represent the specific Indigenous peoples concerned or any aspects of their intellectual property. I did experiment with this in 'Midjourney'⁴¹ but found the results potentially disrespectful of the core values of *whakapapa* that I refer to at several key points of the exegesis. An exception to this was the deployment of the albeit ambiguously Aotearoa New Zealand inflected female voice of Aria with 'play.ht'⁴², which I judged to be more beneficial to the filmmaking process than problematic.
- 3) I have used generated content only where specific illustrative images could either not be found at all or budgetary or time constraints have limited my ability to locate or create them by other means.
- 4) I have used generated images where I felt it might be defamatory or problematic to use an image of an actual person in relation to the particular commentary I was making with that image. I have also used generated fabrications where criticism of an historical figure's reputation is intentional however.
- 5) With respect to the issue of copyright over the work of artists whose images have been 'scraped' from the internet to train machine learning models, I have limited my generations to periods that lie outside of copyright such the nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries. Where a prompt referred to an

³⁹ I began my experiments with these technologies in 2021, when the term 'GPT' was not yet common currency. In three short years it has become so pervasive and problematic that documentary producers of the Archival Producers Alliance (APA) have recently been compelled to issue an open letter and a set of comprehensive guidelines for the ethical use of generative technologies (Archival Producers Alliance, 2024). Although these guidelines were issued after the completion of my film, I was pleased to discover that my own ethical decisions essentially aligned with their key principles.

⁴⁰ The developers of 'DeepStory' have not answered my enquiries about its nature and origins, however I understand from an interview with founder of the Belgian start up Nadira Azermai that by 2020 its 'predictive text model' had been trained on the character types, demographics and commercial success of around 30,000 scripts. The core business of the enterprise seems to be its 'ScriptBook' function, which allows Producers to predict the box office success of potential scripts (Digital Media Wire, 2020).

⁴¹ 'Midjourney' is an image generating 'diffusion model' founded by David Holz in 2021 and first released publicly in February 2022. My experiments with the model began in July 2022.

⁴² Founded in San Francisco 2016 by Mahmoud Felfel, Hammad Ahmed, 'play.ht' was originally created as a Google Chrome extension to read online articles. Since 2017, it has specialised its services as a Text to Audio editor for creating realistic human speech from written text.

image within a copyright period, I combined it with other elements that ensured that a substantially distanced adaptation was achieved from the original.

- 6) All recordings of my own voice were live rather than generated by means of voice synthesis. This was primarily because of the security concerns I maintained about training online machine learning models with very personalised data and the limitations of control I could sustain over that data.
- 7) Wherever it is not immediately apparent, due to artifactual distortions of the generator or the evidently fantastical nature of the generated image, I have endeavoured to signal to the viewer that a generated image has been deployed, except where a certain ambiguity is intentional. These modest precautions can by no means be completely effective in delineating actuality from artificiality, but they represent a beginning in the rapidly evolving process of weighing the positive potentials against the negative effects of these new storytelling technologies.

Figure 1.9.

Screenshot of the First Examples of Midjourney Image Co-Creations Made by the Writer



Note. These first experiments in Midjourney co-creation were generated in July 2022 with the text prompt: “New Zealand Road, out of time, Māori-Pākehā art, Waikato Invasion, vision of the past, present and future.”

Forever in Time is therefore defineable in many respects as an anthrobotic ‘co-creation’ (de Miranda, 2017)⁴³ that has emerged alongside and radically enabled (to summarise Klossowski’s reading of Nietzsche), a progression of the many “impulses,” “phantasms”

⁴³ I coined the term ‘anthrobot’ for myself while making the film [Think Foundations 2](#) in 2015 and later discovered that Luis de Miranda had also used it as early as 2016 (de Miranda et al., 2016). He sees the term as a way of denoting “the system Human-Robot as a collective Janus-faced coordinated and dynamic reality,” in which “humans have always been anthrobots ...[that] code and de-code our protocols” with both automated structures and the “more unstructured, aimless dispersions ... of creative and emotional aspirations”. (de Miranda et al., 2016, p. 49).

and “simulated forms” (D. W. Smith, 2005, p.8) of the previously disunified and inaccessible regions of my creative capacity. The work carries the great political and experimental charge that was built up over the many years of *Ghost South Road* collaborations,⁴⁴ periods of study, and *kōrero/talanoa* (conversation) with Vā Moana researchers and interviewees. I have now reformulated and synthesised this groundwork in the light of an eerie *human-more-than-human* collaboration with a practically unfathomable ‘other intelligence’—a phenomenon that seems to threaten agency as it simultaneously empowers free will and creativity. Why did I do it?

The reader/viewer will notice from all that has been outlined so far, the extreme heterogeneity of the many threads of thinking, points of interest, and political as well as existential anxieties that have gone into the production of this work. The archive of accumulated footage and other materials that I have collected during years of informal research and experimentation included tens of hours of video in multiple formats and considerable amounts of 8mm and 16mm black and white and colour scanned celluloid film footage shot at very diverse times and locations. There were also many large folders of archived newspaper clippings, maps, and many other collected documents, both hard and digital, links to blogposts and myriad other references, commentaries, scrapbooks, mind maps, and complex digital files from experiments with writing software such as ‘Scrivener’ and ‘Causality.’ I had also collected a diverse range of exemplar films and very many books—both directly relevant and loosely inspiring.

The curation of this material into an approachable and appropriate film form often seemed an impossible task, and during multiple attempts at constructing test sequences, I was struck by various crises of interpretation and representation.⁴⁵ The inertia this caused was ultimately broken by a few salient interactions with an ‘other intelligence’ that enabled a kind of virtual conversation that provided renewed impetus and direction. I detail these interactions with reference to specific instances within the film and chapters that follow, but let me briefly summarise here.

As we see from the beginning, the film *Forever in Time* primarily consists of a dialogue between myself and an almost entirely imagined character called the ‘Anthrobot.’ This situation came about during several experiments made during the Covid pandemic lockdowns, with the abovementioned DeepStory scriptwriting generator. This happened in synchrony, as I will explain further in the chapter 2.1. *The Time Being One*, with the

⁴⁴ *Ghost South Road* (Hamilton, 2018) was a book written by Scott Hamilton and illustrated with photographs by myself and Ian Powell; however, it could also be conceived as a string of collaborative journeys, art installations, events, media interviews, and experiments during the period of 2012-2018 (Janman, 2015). This body of work attempted to expand existing discourses on and political domains of Auckland’s Great South Road, with new juxtapositions of place, race, class, and alternative conceptual mappings of historical events.

⁴⁵ This relates to the problems of volume and lack of focus in the raw material gathered during a series of inspiring but sometimes awkward collaborations. However, this was compounded by the ‘Pākehā paralyses’ of shame, avoidance, privilege loss and feelings of cultural incompetency or real confusion about the demands and impacts of the material and how to present it with adequate sensitivity or authority (Nēpia, 2015; Owen, 2020; Tolich, 2002; Winter, 2019). This sense of paralysis paradoxically increased in proportion to my rising awareness of the consequences of colonial injustice *and* the complexities of the historical record.

discovery of my grandmother's image on Google Maps. The bulk of the material that DeepStory produced was put to the side, but a few of the most provocative lines it provided alongside the newfound image of my grandmother, would ultimately initiate and propel a process that resulted in unusual combinations of archive photography, obscure historical paintings, and AI imagery generated with the software 'Midjourney'. For the most part, the Midjourney images were deployed in the form they were generated, usually after several prompt iterations. In some cases, the images were augmented with edits using prompts with Adobe Photoshop's 'generative fill' to achieve certain desired image outcomes.

This became part of a method of dialogue generation as I responded to the Midjourney generated images and other materials, and recorded a series of direct vocal experiments inside the 'Premiere Pro' video editing software using the microphone tool in the timeline. What resulted was a chain of call and response that would eventually give form to the final film work. The transcribed script of the dialogue between the Anthrobot and myself was further developed in the more conventional scriptwriting software 'Final Draft,' while the Anthrobot's part was ultimately vocalised by means of the voice synthesising software 'play.ht.'

As I placed the Anthrobot's lines in the timeline alongside recordings and re-recordings of my own, I was able to achieve a relatively live crealectic 'dialogue with the self' (de Miranda, 2020, p. 60), which gained its own trajectory⁴⁶. From the position of creative stasis and indecision described above, I was therefore able to find momentum in composing *Forever in Time*, with the support of these various supplementary 'intelligences.' In the light of modest audience tests at the time of writing,⁴⁷ this unusual process has resulted in an idiosyncratic 'film of my mind'⁴⁸ that appears to hold narrative coherence for the viewer, despite its radical subjectivity and the previously unwieldy heterogeneity of its raw materials and influences.

This co-creation process itself also become a core element of the narrative and themes of *Forever in Time* and a motivator of further research into and reflections upon the disquieting nature and influence of 'artificial intelligence' on human experience. While 'artificial intelligence' is a useful shorthand for the technologies involved, I prefer to refer to it/them as 'other intelligence(s)' because of the problematics of the former term. As Kate Crawford puts it, 'AI' is not 'artificial' because it is an "embodied and material ... human registry of power," characterised by an ideological opaqueness cultivated by its competitive commercial inventors (Crawford, 2021, p. 8).

⁴⁶ I describe a different but related 'dialogue with the self' in experiments with the female voice of the character 'Aria' in chapter 2.2. *The Time Taken*.

⁴⁷ Screenings have so far been limited to very select groups of family, collaborators, friends and thesis supervisors. These audiences have reported that many parts and elements of the film remain something of an enigma but the overall form retains an unlikely coherence for the viewer.

⁴⁸ If *Forever in Time* is 'the film of my mind', a corollary question might be: 'how did the psychological and sociological particularities of this mind come about?' The three autoethnographic *Time Being* sections of the film (see Part Two in Table of Contents) are intended to approach an answer to this question. As in my approach to the documentary studies field described above, I have not have not followed a specific autoethnographic method or literature in these experiments but have allowed them to be led by the other explorations of alterities of time and voice that have informed the filmmaking process.

Yuval Noah Harari comes to the same conclusion by a different token, in that he sees the opaqueness of 'AI' as intrinsic because it is a 'black box,' which even its inventors fail to fully understand. Harari therefore prefers the term 'alien intelligence,' which I also endorse because of the eerie qualities it implies (Harari, 2024a, 2024b).⁴⁹ Whatever *it is*, the brief but disarming interaction I first had with an 'other intelligence' during a period of creative stasis in the Covid lockdown of 2021, resulted in the discovery of an effective method and the production of a highly realistic but invented dialogue that became the core of the film's structure. So what should we make of this for the future of cinematic understanding?

Cinema, as a quintessentially time-based art—a succession of frozen moments that produces movement—presents unique opportunities to explore tensions between the Zenonian poles of stasis and change (Doane, 2002) and its mechanisms have always been a source of philosophical enquiry and inspiration. "The intelligence of the [cinematic] machine" as Jean Epstein called it, has long had the potential to reveal temporal phenomena that go beyond ordinary human experience, like the strange reversals and relativity of modern atomic physics made manifest (Epstein, 1946). A relativity of time can easily extend to a "relativity of logic[s]" and the "legitimacy of fiction" (ibid., p.314) or what I will later refer to as the 'miraculous dimensions'⁵⁰ of thinking in the mode of Tā\Vā/Wā. The generative aspects of such thinking, alongside the new technologies I have described here, have all contributed to the film *Forever in Time* in an effort to develop a novel cinematic understanding of our future-past-present.

As we have seen in earlier sections of this chapter on horizontal time and voice, Maya Deren provided provocative ideas about the priority of the poetic 'vertical' over the expository 'horizontal' in film languages. Like Epstein's, her thought was likely also inspired by cinematic mechanisms and it was perhaps apposite for Arthur Miller to call her loosely structuralist ideas 'mechanistic.' On a more generous reading, however, Deren's 'vertical and horizontal' demand us to locate ourselves on the continuum of cinematic knowledge production as a negotiation between poetry and technological science. It is this negotiation that the thesis film *Forever in Time* engages by means of a dialogue between myself and the machine intelligence of the Anthobot. As well as illuminating the sensitive politics of 'The Great War for New Zealand', the film itself offers an answer to the further question of what might be learned when generative technologies are illuminated by the alternative authenticities, temporalities and cosmologies of Indigenous knowledges?

For clarity in relation to how the reader/viewer should approach the thesis, it should be stated that the film is absolutely intended to stand independently of the exegesis and that the exegesis is only appositional to the film, i.e. it says the same thing in a different

⁴⁹ This is reminiscent of the kind of eerie alien agency we see in Kubrick's *2001 Space Odyssey* (1968) that seems to emanate from an 'outside' that is fundamentally alien to human comprehension. Fisher (2016) connects Kubrick's approach with similar themes in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972) and *Stalker* (1979), and Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* (2014).

⁵⁰ This idea of the 'miraculous dimensions' was coined by the subject of my 2012 film *Tongan Ark* Prof. 'I. Futa Helu. I discuss it in detail in chapter 2.4. entitled *The Time Being Two*.

form. As stated earlier, the film is also intended for a broader and not necessarily academic audience, after one more potential stage of development.

As stated in the Table of Contents, I suggest that the reader/viewer now proceeds to a full initial viewing of [*Forever in Time*](#) with this question in mind. Part Two of the exegesis will then follow the film script (see Appendix) in detail and the reader/viewer will be invited to refer back to specific lines in the script and moments in the accompanying video as necessary. Line numbers and timecodes will be provided in the text for this purpose.

PART TWO

2.1. *The Time Being One* (Lines 1-17, [00:18-05:10](#))

Time passed. But time flows in many streams. Like a river, an inner stream of time will flow rapidly at some places and sluggishly at others, or perhaps even stand hopelessly stagnant. Cosmic time is the same for everyone, but human time differs with each person. Time flows in the same way for all human beings; every human being flows through time in a different way.

—Yasunari Kawabata, *Beauty and Sadness*

Before we enter into a full consideration of the script of *Forever in Time* alongside the film⁵¹, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on the titles *Forever in Time* and *The Time Being* in themselves. The first and overarching title has an ambivalence that sets a thematic tone for much of the material that follows. This ambivalence can be expressed in two contrasting perspectives contained in the title, which potentially represent both an eternalist and a presentist temporal point of view (Buonomano, 2017). To be *in time* forever implies the presentist meaning of a chronological or lineal movement in time, just as the ‘playhead of the present’ moves along a line from left to right on a spatial continuum. This condition entails a perpetual movement, which stands in contrast with the transcendent potential of a kind of frozen *forever* in any given moment, an eternity in stillness that is beyond our common experiences of lineal time and space. As Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal put it in our Vā Moana interview:

We all know about the basic idea that the world we live in, that we daily experience, is a world bound by space and time, and I think that humans have understood that in every community in the world. The question is whether our tūpuna [ancestors] consciously understood some kind of relationship between space and time and reflected that in the word called wā, and then secondly went even further to say by collapsing space into time, or blurring the lines at least, are we trying to reach for something else beyond space and time? (Royal, 2021)

The two intended meanings of the title therefore present an oscillation between two entwined potentials of being in and out of time, which are nonetheless mutually interdependent, much like the presences in absence, the invisible within the visible, or the extraordinary within the ordinary. The guiding question of the film might therefore be summarised by a line in the Australian writer Gerald Murnane’s novel, *Inland*: “There is another world but it is within this one” (as quoted in Fry, 2021).

Let us also consider the title *The Time Being*, which is repeated at the head of three of the film’s sections as the reader/viewer may benefit from further elucidation of its purposefully enigmatic qualities. The *Time Being* is directly inspired by the idea that the Sōtō zen

⁵¹ The reader/viewer will notice that the seven chapters of Part Two of the exegesis are numbered according to the seven sections of the film to which they refer. The headings of each chapter additionally include the numbers of the first and last lines of that section in the film script (see Appendix) and the beginning (with hyperlinks) and end timecodes of the relevant section of the film. Particular moments of the film, are also labelled with timecodes (and hyperlinks) for quick cross-reference as the reader/viewer progresses through the document.

philosopher Dōgen presents in his essay “Uji,” which has been variously translated into English as ‘Being Time’, ‘Time of Being’ (Dōgen & Cleary, 1991) and ‘The Time Being’ (Dōgen et al., 1985). I have favoured the last of these three translations in my deployment of his idea in the title of this chapter, because it enables the operation of an additional kind of ambivalence.

In this case, it is a movement between: firstly, an abstracted statement of a continuous state of affairs, as in ‘for the time being’; and secondly, the naming of a kind of being that is defined by its relation to an eternal continuum of *beings in time*. It is this second meaning that is most interesting in the context of the Māori temporality of *whakapapa*, not only in terms of the determinations of genealogical connections to events and ancestors that characterise *The Time Being* sections of the film (there will be three by the end) but also in the sense that, as Māori philosophers have suggested, *time itself* as *wā* can be considered a primordial *ancestor being* and has indeed been recorded as such by expert *tohunga* (skilled persons, chosen experts) (Glavish, 2018; Marsden & Royal, 2003). As such, *wā* has an eternally effusive and unifying presence. As Mika (2021) states:

Wā is an ancestor which dominates all matters simply because it incorporates with and dictates existence. It is an ancestral ‘boss’ that, from a Māori perspective, is therefore a full constitutive part of all things. Things are replete with wā ... There is no space or time between one thing and another; all things occupy one space and talk of time is therefore irrelevant or even inappropriate. Therefore, one’s so-called ‘deceased’ ancestors occupy this perpetual present, as do those who are apparently to come.

Mika’s vision of *wā* here is seen through a highly culturally specific lens of *whakapapa*, but it is still generative to consider its affinity with Dōgen’s conception of ‘The Time Being,’ as a reflection of individual ‘times’ that overflow into one another in an eternal and repleting web of concurrent and contiguous temporality.

Self is arrayed as the whole world. You should perceive that each point, each thing of this *whole world* is an individual *time* ...

One should not understand time only as flying away; one should not only get the idea that flying away is the function of time. If time only were to fly away, then there would be gaps. Not having heard of the path of *being time* is because of learning only that it has passed. To tell the gist of it all, all existences in the whole world, while being lined up, are individual times. Because it is *being time*, it is *my being time*. (Dōgen & Cleary, 1991, pp. 104–106)

These two angles, Mika’s and Dōgen’s, have thus become the conceptual basis for the titles of the three ‘Time Being’ sections of the film. The three chapters are numbered *The Time Being One*, *The Time Being Two* and *The Time Being Three*, which enumerate sections of autoethnographic portraiture. They also trace a movement from the singular to a broader level of historical complexity and back again, just as the linked individual multiplicities of a given *whakapapa* connect to a commonality of shared origins, presences, and futures.

Perhaps the best acknowledgement of the *The Time Being* as a folding of self, genealogy, and world in Māoridom is the practice of *pepeha* (tribal motto, to exclaim, be the subject of a saying), which I had the privilege of learning and embodying during my time as a participant in te reo Māori classes at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. The practice made a great impression on me in unexpected ways, as a stimulus for reviving an awareness of my own thinning ancestral roots as well as improving my understanding of te ao Māori (the Māori

world). The convention of identifying an ancestral maunga (mountain) struck a particular chord, as even before I returned to my maternal ancestral home of Trefdraeth, West Wales, I was able to identify *Carningli* as the *maunga* of equal, if not more, significance to me, than those magnificent pā (fortified villages, forts), in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland whose terraced sides I had grown up alongside. Since childhood rambles on Carningli during family visits to Wales or on more intentional undergraduate hikes to read on its welcoming summit, I have always felt a strong sense of identification with the mountain. On more recent trips to introduce my children to elders or attend a family funeral, *Carningli*, ‘*te maunga o ngā anahera*’ (Carningli, ‘the mountain of angels’) has taken on an additional symbolism and presence, by its inclusion in every iteration of my emerging *pepeha*.

This has been met with much bemusement by Welsh friends and relatives who share an affinity for the mountain but on different terms. Māori audiences have shown appreciation and curiosity but an understandable difficulty in identifying and relating to the location, which unfortunately defies the key connection-forging purpose for Māori of engaging in a *pepeha* (Opai & Niwa, 2021, p. 81). This creates an unsettling tension, which I have nonetheless come to accept, because while I take the generation of *pepeha* to be essential to full participation in Aotearoa society, I have also come to realise that my *pepeha*, as a creative process in itself, can not be of quite the same form and purpose as that of the nation’s *tāngata whenua* (Indigenous people of the land). This has been accentuated in the opening of the film, where the focus is on a fern-covered but foreign mountain, without reference to the bodies of water that are usually present in *pepeha* Māori. In Welsh terms, Carningli is a dear but removed relative, perhaps most appropriately described as a source of what is known in Welsh as *hiraeth*, a deep longing for a place or time beyond the present plane of existence; or for one that may never have existed, or may have existed only in memory or imagination.⁵²

Originally voiced in *te reo Māori*, the opening of the film deploys other common elements of a *mihi* that I was taught at Te Wānanga, such as greetings to both the dead and the living. These lines have been vertically voiced and interpreted through a Welsh language with which I am still strangely less familiar than I am with *te reo*. I take these points as aspects of the sometimes uncomfortable but “inherent surrealism of the colonial project” (Fisher, 2016, p. 123) or the impulse to recreate identity from a position of non-identification. It is a quality and state that not even the London-exiled Anglo-Welsh poet David Jones could have known in all its specificities. His confident lines in the *Rites and Foretime* of his epic experiment *The Anathemata* can also claim an influence on the film’s opening, however.

In the prepared high-room
he implements inside time and late in time under forms in-
delibly marked by locale and incidence, deliberations made
out of time, before all orogenesis

on this hill

⁵² Opai argues that the meaning of the word *mau-nga* includes the role in ‘capturing’ or ‘binding’ local water cycles. Many hundreds of years of participation in such cycle is also key to Opai’s definition of Indigeneity to a location (Opai & Niwa, 2021, p. 88), which is something I am unable to claim in Aotearoa and only dubiously at Carningli. And yet this mountain, as a symbol of simultaneous alienation and belonging, elicits more *hiraeth* from me than any other.

at a time's turn
not on any hill
but on this hill. (Jones, 1990, p. 53)

The opening of *Forever in Time* thus exists awkwardly at the interstices of relationality and distance and of convention and innovation, but an homage to the mountain remains, as a potent enabler of a Māori set of relational priorities that also refract and enliven an unstable Welsh identity. The only other film work I can cite which approaches this experience is Dafydd Sills-Jones' effort to reconcile an Indigenous Welshness with a non-Indigenous Aotearoa immigrant experience (Sills-Jones, 2021). His efforts to connect the two poles presents a rather different case from mine however, as his confrontation is more specifically and deeply grounded in the polarity of the Welsh.

Sills-Jones' further transformation and extension of this circumstance by an exiled adaptation of his father's dystopian Welsh novel (Sills-Jones & Owen, 2021) echoes the other theme that is established in the opening of *Forever in Time*. This is the asymmetrical relationship between an embodied experience of *whakapapa* and locality and an unsettling sense of modern distance and disempowerment. As we see the ancestral mountain in this opening of *Forever in Time*, we are also exposed to the ubiquitous presence of a data-driven digital surveillance apparatus, which "ha[s] millions of data points on you" (line 2, [01:28](#)) but can still not quite grasp this information from a standpoint of embodied physicality. In the lines that follow, the Anthrobot begins a dialogue that will extend these themes and map them to multiple contexts of entwined Indigenous and settler-colonial histories.

There is, firstly, the Midjourney 'AI' generated image of a Roman-Welsh dragon superposed on Preseli stone, as a symbol of an ancient conflict as well as a *becoming together* of colonised peoples and imperial histories (line 8, [02:29](#)). This immediately becomes very present and personal as the Anthrobot reveals that though my grandmother passed away in 2019, she was still apparent in her driveway on Google Earth in 2020, "wondering what strange machine was passing by" (line 8, [02:44](#)). She is buried in a Norman cemetery at the foot of Carningli mountain among the grey stone and whitewashed walls of a 50% first language Welsh speaking community, but Enid's spectral double simultaneously remains in the virtual Googlesphere of West Wales.

Twisted alterities of technological mediation have thus become essential in recording and refabulating the temporal paradoxes of an emergent historical imaginary during the making of *Forever in Time*. One of the most disarming lines that the Anthrobot voices in relation to my grandmother in this section occurs at line 10, ([03:12](#)):

ANTHROBOT
For me she is still a neighbour in
another world beside us.

This is an extrapolation of a line of dialogue that was produced by an earlier experiment with the DeepStory generative language transformer during the Covid lockdown of 2020,⁵³ namely: “I want to help you to meet our neighbours, the ancestors. Their spirit of cooperation should illuminate your studies.” This line was a particularly resonant prompt for me at the moment that it arose, because I was simultaneously exploring the old Welsh notion of *Annwfn*, or the parallel and ever-present ‘deep world’, ‘deep world within,’ or ‘world within-the-world’—the source of *Awen* (poetic inspiration) in the Welsh story cycles from *The Book of Taliesin* to *The Mabinogi* (G. Morus-Baird, personal communication, February, 2020). As Welsh scholar Morus-Baird notes, the ancient and nuanced idea of *Annwfn* has been reduced in modern Wales to a kind of parallel ‘place of the dead,’ if not an unfortunate but enduring synonym for hell⁵⁴ (ibid.).

Seeing Enid in her driveway seemed to push the global ‘datafication’ of Google’s photographic processes beyond their crude technical materiality into a non-secular realm that, in its radical objectivity, also challenges the New Age pseudo-philosophy that so often characterises popular approaches to old Celtic spirituality. The point is underlined by the subsequent depiction, in black and white, of the image of my ancestor from an archival *otherworld*, which stands out from the colours of her persistent mountain background (03:46).⁵⁵ Her past-present-future occurs moreover, at a time of uncanny complexity when our “right to be forgotten” in digital records and even our “rights to the future tense” (Zuboff, 2019, p.61) are consistently under attack by Google’s centralised impulse to document every corner of the Earth.

This perennial tension between centralised authority and cultural resistance in the region of Dyfed, West Wales is not new to this location however, as we learn of the determination of the people of the Gwaun Valley to preserve their own system of time-reckoning. When I explain this to the Anthrobot in line 11, the bot supplements my knowledge with some unsettling erudition (lines 12-13, 03:33):

ANTHROBOT

I know that they use the Julian
calendar where Hen Galon, the old
New Year is 13 days late.

PAUL

Really? I didn't know that detail.

At this moment we see a monochrome black and white masking of Enid on a still colourful background that was taken on the Gwaun Valley side of Carningli mountain. It was through

⁵³ I introduced this moment of experiment in the last section of *Part One* of the exegesis: 1.2.6. *Dancing with the Anthrobot*. I express it further in the film section *Tuning the Clock* (08:07) and chapter 2.3. of this document with the same title.

⁵⁴ Wales has been a site of cultural transformation for millennia, from Roman invasion/collaboration, fourth century Christianisation and Irish alliances, then colonisation by England about 50 generations ago. Despite a largely grassroots driven survival, the Welsh language and its associated Indigenous Celtic concepts are still under threat.

⁵⁵ The prompt for this approach was the distinction between Heaven and Earth in Powell and Pressberger’s *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946), which divides the two spheres into monochrome and technicolour.

both necessity and coincidence that I further discovered for this instant in the film, an additional vehicle for commentating cinematic time by visual means. The technique that emerged was a panning movement on four different but contiguous images – in this case three stills and a scanned Super 8 video, which cross the screen together on a horizontal plane.

Figure 2.1.

Still Compilation Image of ‘Moving Panorama’ of Enid in Wales and Africa



Note. This compilation of four images of my grandmother Enid—three stills and one video—represents a sequence from *Forever in Time* (03:04-4:20). I call it a ‘moving panorama,’ in the light of discoveries associated with 19th century ‘moving image’ technologies discussed later (see section 2.7, in particular).

This technique was, firstly, a method of revealing the relations between the images in their contingent but comprehensible associations, while avoiding the conventions of straight ‘superimposition,’ or cuts between them, in the timeline. Secondly, it was a response to the tension between stillness and movement that I discussed in Part One, in relation to the very technological apparatus of cinema and cinematic understanding. As Mary-Anne Doane discusses in detail, the succession of discreet frames that is the original mechanism of cinema technology and the beautiful illusion of movement it produces is, at its heart, a battle between the immobilising capture and control of ‘broken down’ or ‘spatialised’ time⁵⁶ and the contingency of mind, movement, change, and life that resist it (Doane, 2002, pp. 94-110). Hence movement cannot exist in the cinematic mechanism without stillness, and the two polarities rely upon one another in bridging the darkness and tension of ‘the cut’ between frames (see Figure 1.8).

It was in this matrix of the stillness and movement of cinematic understanding, a panoptic techno-capitalism, and an eerie encounter with the a contemporary digital ‘otherworld’, that I deployed these salient documents of my grandmother’s image directly into the film. Enid was not a fluent Welsh speaker in later years, despite growing up with the language in the Welsh valleys. The entwined Indigenous and settler-colonial contexts of her life are further complexified in lines 14-17 (03:49), as the ‘moving panorama’ transitions from her village of Trefdraeth, to a clip of Super 8 footage and the newspaper clippings she collected of the well-known autocrat Kamuzu Banda. In addition to questions of Welsh self-determination,

⁵⁶ This Zenonian paradox of an infinitely divisible time which precludes movement is an idea that is repeatedly invoked and subverted at various points of *Forever in Time*.

we are thus also confronted with Enid's colonial privilege during her time in post-independence 1970s Africa. The convolutions of a very personalised version of British-African post-colonial history are thus presented like 'a Bantu river of time that circles to its source' (line 16, [04:01](#)).⁵⁷

By the end of this part of the film, Enid is waving to the camera, in a stuttering slow motion push in that mirrors the earlier freeze frame on the Malawian President. Her image is superposed with one of the African tourist sculptures she collected during her time in Malawi and this is further accompanied by Bach's *Air on the G String* – the music that was placed on the original digital transfer of the Super 8 footage. The retention of this sound under these shots sustains the sense of unsettling liminality and eerie calm that has been established in this opening to *Forever in Time*. Like Banda himself, we hear in the final line of the section (17, [04:48](#)) that as a product of both deracination and privilege,

PAUL

Enid was also possessed by historical
forces.

With these autoethnographic preliminaries complete, vertical complexities of time and voice have been established in relation to specific horizontal exigencies and socio-political conflicts. From here we will rotate in the circle of space and time and reach for similar themes at the point of Ambush Road in nineteenth century Aotearoa.

⁵⁷ An important reference here is the manner in which Bantu time resembles the Greek *Okeanos* or cosmic encircling river, as was observed by the classicist, and my personal friend, Ted Jenner (Jenner, 1992), who taught Latin and Greek at the academy that my grandfather's Malawi-based construction company built for President Banda in the late 1970s.

2.2. *The Time Taken* (Lines 18-20, [05:20-08:04](#))

Say that it is July the 11th, 1863, in Auckland, which is still the capital of the discontinuous, incomplete nation of New Zealand. In Auckland, a town of landless settlers reduced to buying food exported north by the Māori tribes they would like to dispossess, the time is measured by the hour, the minute, the second. The invasion of the Waikato Kingdom will begin at six o'clock, on the morning of the twelfth of July, as General Cameron's army crosses the Mangatawhiri Stream ... the Māori struggle against Cameron's advance to the border of the Waikato Kingdom has been a struggle against the imposition of a certain spatio-temporality. The Great South Road must be destroyed, because it destroys distance. The Pakeha troops must be made to move at the speed of a horse over rough country, or a waka upstream.

—Scott Hamilton, *Against space and time: The CROSTOPI Manifesto* (Hamilton, 2009a)

This chapter and the section of the film it augments can be understood in terms of several complementary ideas. Firstly, there is an exposition of the broader context of injustice in the events and aftermath of the Waikato War of 1863-4, alongside a microcosm of those events at Ambush Road and a personal approach to their interpretation. Secondly, there are the contexts that enshroud the processes of remembering and forgetting the darker and more complex aspects of The New Zealand Wars, at a societal level. This is not only because their *tohu* (signs, symbols, tokens, symptoms, proofs) have often been (un)consciously erased, but also because of the *weird and eerie* psychology of what Fisher (2016) refers to as “negative hallucination” (p. 74), the inability to see what is in plain sight. Finally, there are the cinematic methods, which revive new potentials for being in *te takanga o te wā*, an authentic *event of time*.

The title of *The Time Taken* represents the dispossession of *wā* (time-space) as ancestor, land, knowledge, and mana that resulted from the Waikato invasion. But it is also the time that *it has* taken to work through and reveal the kinds of difficult histories that bring about reconciliation and revival (Kidman et al., 2022). Importantly, it also presents an artistic opportunity to go beyond simple binary orthodoxies and counter-orthodoxies of historical understanding and perhaps generate new sources of complex identity and (qualified) solidarities against shared sources of oppression. The weaving is complex and the pattern is sometimes hard to discern, even overwhelming, but the resultant basket is something that can be of shared beauty and utility in defining ‘The Great War for New Zealand’.

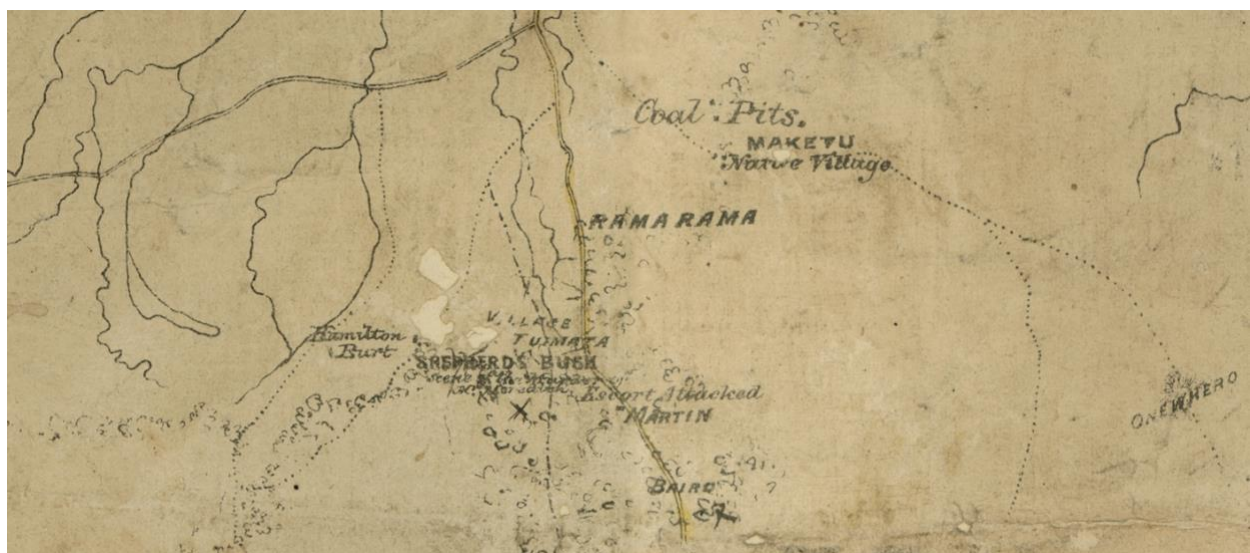
The Time Taken is thus also an example of intersection or *pūtahi* in *reo Māori*, but not yet in the sense given by King et al. as their fifth theme of Māori temporality (see Figure 1.1 and King et al., 2023, p. 260), although that will still come later in this chapter. Perhaps closer is the meaning of intersection now commonly known in sociology as the way in which multiple social or political identities entail complexes of discrimination or privilege in an individual (B. Cooper, 2015). In the encounter between the British and Māori fighters at Ambush Road on July 17th 1863, there were certainly confluences or intersections of purpose (particularly

among the Irish part of the British contingent) in resisting the racialised economic oppression and divisions of class inherent in an imperial army. These were overshadowed however by systemic power and the chaos and exigencies of the very first day of the Waikato invasion.

The Time Taken sequence opens on the image of the extraordinary *Daily Southern Cross Map of the Seat of War*, which is held in the Auckland War Memorial Museum library (Figure 2.2). As Ngāti Maniapoto historian Tom Roa has pointed out, this map is a sinister treasure of painful remembrance (K. Wolfe, 2020). For myself, it is a source of guilt, fascination, and the colour of lost time. In the course of this part of the film, we travel most of its length, from the map's title near the connection between Lake Waikare and the Waikato River at Rangiriri, up the Great South Road to the our key site of interest, the *kokoti* (ambush) or attack on the commissariat convoy at Ramarama, in South Auckland.

Figure 2.2.

Excerpt of the Site of the Kokoti (Ambush) on The Daily Southern Cross Map of the Seat of War



Note. This smudged and overwritten palimpsest at the site of the battle records multiple layers of memory on the part of the map makers, from the pre-war Māori villages and pathways, the military corridor of the Great South Road, coal mines, waterways, confrontations with settlers, and of course the event of the attack on the escort at Martin's Farm on July 17th, 1863. Image courtesy of Auckland War Memorial Museum Library.

The narration over the movement on the map is carried by a warm, 'play.ht' synthesised female voicing of softly Aotearoa New Zealand inflected English from the character of 'Aria.' Her voice carries line 18 of the script ([05:27](#)):

ARIA
For the now infamous 1860s invasion
of Māori lands, south of Auckland,
the New Zealand colonial Governor,

tricked a reluctant Britain, battered
by its hubris and consequent
rebellions in other parts of the
empire, into committing thousands of
troops, against an ingenious, but
grossly asymmetrical alliance of
defenders.

The narration then walks a delicate line between a discursive necessity to confront certain difficult facts with objective rigour and lightens the load with elements of dark humour and Lovecraftian pastiche (line 18 [contd.], [05:52](#)):

ARIA

By this time, the governor was a
tentacular mess of disillusion,
opium and deceit and the colony's
Premier was a racist and an
unreadable poet.

Granted, these are inflammatory references, but they are also well-founded. The reimagination of Governor George Grey as an opium-fuelled (Bennet & Pihama, 2021) and tentacular villain was informed by Vincent O'Malley's close analysis of his actions in the lead up to the Waikato invasion (O'Malley, 2013), in which he was evidently as deceptive towards the British government as he was to his Māori opposition. The reimagining of the myth of the 'good governor',⁵⁸ or sympathetic ethnographer of Māori and Gladstonian liberal, as a Lovecraftian *shoggoth*⁵⁹ was then achieved with unprecedented ease, speed, and economy with Midjourney text-prompt to image-generation tools.

Other colonial masters are depicted with techniques of archival editing, such as the highlighting of Premier Alfred Dommett among a troupe of thespians in the timeline (06:00). His treatment in the film is not flippant. Dommett has a distinctive legacy as a racist, even in the context of the prevailing attitudes of his own time. "Your nigger philanthropy rather sickens me," he once wrote to a colleague. "After all it is unthinkable that savages should have equal rights with civilized men" (Walker, 2001, p. 116). His problematic poetic sensibility was also apt for inclusion in this section of the film. A modern critic described his prolix epic *Ranolf and Amohia* as "a stranded whale, [which] lies rotting on the beach of New Zealand literature, an embarrassment that no one knows what to do with" (Evans, 1990, p. 43). Following Dommett's cameo in the film, the tentacular Grey returns, and his eyes are fused for a moment with those of two notorious profiteering hawks of a 'limited circle'

⁵⁸ For five years of daily Auckland Grammar School assemblies, I experienced the gilded name of Sir George Grey written large on the honours board behind the headmaster's podium, next to the words: "characteristic concern for the welfare and educational advancement of persons of all classes or races who may inhabit this colony." It has therefore been enlightening to discover the more dubious side of his reputation, following the wars of colonial expansion he waged against Māori in collaboration with some of Auckland's founding elite.

⁵⁹ The further layered reference here is to the popular social media meme among AI aficionados, the *shoggoth* as an unknowable and unhinged alien intelligence, which nonetheless interacts with consumers in the public sphere with a 'smiling face' of beneficence. In this sense, Grey becomes a temporally ambiguous avatar of techno-libertarian colonialism and of the deceit embedded in its ideologies of social development.

(Nickless, 2017) of mid-19th century lawyer/banker/politicians: Thomas Russell and Frederick Whitaker (line 18 [contd.], [06:05](#)).

ARIA

In the short distance between
power, organised greed and flawed
assumptions of superiority, this
limited circle of legal and
financial speculators, built a
Great South Road to war and pushed
a thriving and independent
Indigenous society into retreat by
the confiscation of 1.2 million
acres of land.

I experimented with voicing these lines myself at first, but they seemed to work more effectively in Aria's more confident tone. An authoritative male-voiced introduction, accompanied by a logistical map of military movements, is a very recognisable trope found in historical war documentaries. In the present case, however, a stereotypical device is refracted in several ways. Aria's voicing is conventionally expository but also represents a shift in the kind of hierarchies of power (Bruzzi, 2006) which have too often dominated the historical documentary imagination. The voice of a young woman, created artificially in 'play.ht', could be criticised as opaque and ambiguous in its *whakapapa* (genealogy, lineage, descent), but I felt that its slightly colloquial Aotearoa New Zealand inflection and dry humour denoted Indigenous power and scholarly restraint. As an echo of my thoughts on context and methods in Part One, it is also 'vertical' in its poetic ambiguity.

The simultaneous mediation of closeness and distance of Aria's voice also enabled an exposition of some of the uncomfortable facts presented at this point. The composition reflects the tone of a contemporary popular knowledge of the war which has emerged during the last five to ten years in Aotearoa New Zealand society, but it also presents a *wero* (challenge) to the ignorant or to those in denial. In short, the voice of Aria was a creatively enabling way for me to experiment with a female, Aotearoa-voiced 'dialogue with the self,' by means of play.ht's generative tools. As we approach the site of the ambush on the *Map of the Seat of War*, there is a final reflexive admission of my own authorial power in the lines at the end of the section, which is ironically also a gesture towards 'collaboration' (line 18 [contd.]-20., [07:39](#)):

ARIA

...The site of the ambush, on a
rather smudged and chaotic part of
this map, now looks like any other
local farmland in rural Aotearoa
New Zealand.

PAUL

Do you want to do it again?

ARIA
Yeah, let's do it again.

This is a rare example in this work, of a technique that I consciously imitated from the work of another filmmaker, namely the opening of Ross McElwee's very personal and revisionary U.S. Civil War film, *Sherman's March* (McElwee, 1986). Here, the cliché of a resonant male voice is subverted by an impish Writer/Director/Editor who gives the actor the chance to re-record themselves. McElwee is operating within a post-Civil War cultural order, which he attempts to subvert in his playfully subtitled *meditation on the possibility of romantic love in the South in an era of nuclear weapons proliferation*.

I deploy McElwee's technique of proposing a particular narrative solution that is also reflexively subverted in order to reveal its problematics. Working in a parallel but different post-traumatic context, nineteenth century conflicts and injustices are exposed in *The Time Taken*, while the distance of Aria's voicing also enables a certain dignified critique and exploration of a 'vertical' settler self-other in the delivery. This, in turn, is reversed by an admission of authorial power and a gesture toward 'collaboration' in the last two lines quoted above. The consequence is a kind of extension of McElwee's technique that both acknowledges and disrupts the complexity of the context.

There is nothing ambiguous about the unjustified confiscation of 1.2 million hectares of Māori land, however, and I sound another note of Indigenous agency at the microscopic level of the ambush, in a sequence of superposed black and white still images of Ngai Tai (and partly Welsh) artist Pita Turei, playing a Hunua-based Kingite partisan warrior. It is here that the *temporal* sense of *pūtahi* is enacted as an intersectional confluence of past, present, and future (King et al., 2023). Pita defies linear time in contemporary dress and by means of a porous mesh.

In this superposed sequence, he observes the Great South Road with a symbolic steel tube (07:06), which represents the putative telescope used by the defenders at that site of resistance, at the historical guerrilla base of Maketu Pā (Lennard, 1986). Pita looks out over the area of Ambush Road and the Māori *papakāinga* of Tuhimata, which was confiscated in the years after the invasion. The closer shot down the tube is, in fact, serendipitously honed on the path taken by the Irish soldier-prisoners who are soon to receive a battering from the homeland defenders.

As Aria acknowledges in the narration, however, the Irish, if they survive, are also heading for a brutal flogging at the hands of their politically and economically dominant class of officers. By this time, Irish troops comprised about a third of the British Army, with an even higher proportion in New Zealand during the Wars, and the loss of Irish lands to an English aristocratic class was still sharply remembered (O'Malley, 2016).

It is important, however, to locate facts such as these in "an existing tradition of rendering Irish as already-colonised immigrants" in filmic representations of the New Zealand Wars (A. Cooper, 2018, p. 239). I would like to avoid an extension of the unconscious erasures, compensatory mythologies, and thus elaborate denials of those who would justify the benefits accrued from a legacy of violent colonial dispossession (Kidman et al., 2022). But it

is still worth acknowledging that the limited circle who instigated the Waikato invasion were of the same social class in Britain, which also fomented incursions upon the working class and ethnic others closer to the centre of the British Empire.

At the ground level of the ambush, the clarity of colonial injustice mingles with an almost impenetrable and therefore eerily complex fog of war. This is symbolised from the very start of *The Time Taken* by the first appearance of the superposed characters of the Hare and the Tortoise (05:51), which serve to accentuate a simultaneously 'horizontal' communicative purpose and the 'vertical' effects of a complex combination of other elements. Images of this unsettling anthropomorphic pair of figures, which were crafted by the Alabama sculptor Frank Fleming, return as a motif throughout the film.

In this section they provide a direct illustration of asymmetrical power, as well as a representation of the possibility of resistance within that condition. The allusion to this well-known fable underlines the power of the guerrilla actions of the ambushing defenders, but the weird Zenonian⁶⁰ presence of these figures also offers a paradox that exceeds habitual thinking and opens a portal to alternative perspectives on a familiar discourse.

Figure 2.3.

Screenshot of Frank Fleming's superposed sculpture The Actor at the beginning of The Time Taken



⁶⁰ The reader may recognise here that the Hare and the Tortoise is a gloss of *Achilles and the Tortoise*, which Zeno of Elea (c. 490–430 BC) employed to illustrate his paradox of stasis in divisible time vs motion. Achilles' arrow never hits its target because if time, like space, can be infinitely divided then there will always be more 'spaces' for the arrow to travel over. This is refuted by modern calculus, which describes how infinite division is eventually balanced by the increasingly short amount of time needed to travel those distances. The familiar moral fable of Aesop and other versions also contribute to the narrative in this section.

Note. Sculptures of fabled characters the Hare and the Tortoise are surreally montaged with materials relating to the narrative of the Waikato invasion. The pair of sculptures that artist Frank Fleming named *The Actor* belong to the filmmaker's family, who know them intimately as 'Soul Screamer.'

This process is repeated in many other ways throughout *Forever in Time* as further links are made between colonial history and perceptions/conceptions of time itself. "The refabulation of the world also means that the world exits historical time in order to re-enter the time of myth, that is, eternity," wrote Pierre Klossowski (in Klossowski & Ford, 2007, p. 104). In *The Time Taken* the eerie pair float above the voice and the map/artifact on a new level of 'the human' yet 'more than human' race. Their fabular images are juxtaposed with an artifact of a more exacting 'historical science,' and, after this introduction, their familiar tale will feature again with diverse moral connotations, particularly at moments of liminal verticality as the film progresses.

Hence, a set of methods is emerging in *The Time Taken*, which mediates the grief and concomitant amnesia concerning difficult histories, by projecting them askew and from a point of philosophical and psychological distance.⁶¹ In the next chapter and film section 2.3 *Tuning the Clock*, this will be extended with a more explicit exposition of the weirder qualities of time and power, on the very personal level of the filmmaker's journey alongside collaborators, acquaintances, the Hare, the Tortoise, and the Anthrobot.

⁶¹ Gibson's comparable method for this, in his *Seven Versions of an Australian Bandland* (2002), is to explore the traumas of colonial history as twisted subconscious projections on a certain stretch of road on Australia's North Coast highway. He sees that trauma on the faces of people in the street and in their tales of murder and disappearance in the 'badland.' For Gibson, the historian is therefore as much a mediator of grief as of facts (Gibson, 2002, p. 82).

2.3. *Tuning the Clock* (Lines 21-36, [08:07-17:04](#))

Some call it the past, but I suggest that for Polynesians the past is not a static or remote location of something that was, but is an ever-moving duration, always already woven within us and enduring in our becoming.

—Albert L. Refiti, A “psychedelic method” (Refiti, 2013, p. 5)

Tuning the Clock is the longest section of *Forever in Time*, in terms of the quantity of narration and dialogue; and it is also one of the densest, in terms of the setting up of key qualitative concepts that are developed during the course of the rest of the film. The section opens with a shot of the myself typing at the dining table of my home, and the location and manner of the Anthrobot’s emanation is thereby revealed. A previous attempt of this scene had been made, but the set dressing, sequencing and performance had felt contrived and unsuccessful. This time, in May 2023, it worked, somewhat serendipitously, because it was filmed in a set of ‘observed’ circumstances with minimal intervention.

I had just returned from a family funeral in Wales, and my immediate family in NZ had been living elsewhere while renovations were completed on the house. As we were just moving back in, there was a cluttered chaos in the location that I enjoyed, and which provided one of the many moments of generative serendipity that have occurred in the production process of the film. During the course of one particular take of a shot, there was a knock at the door, and as I got up and opened it to receive a package from a courier, there was also the disquieting sound of a police helicopter circling overhead. This loosely performed ‘observational’ footage was later deployed in the edit as part of a ‘recreation’ of the moment during the 2020 pandemic when I managed to break a prolonged and enduring creative crisis ([08:36](#)).

I have discussed the complex set of problems leading into this crisis in the earlier section 1.2.6. *Dancing with the Anthrobot*, but, to summarise here, it was caused both by difficulties in defining an approach to an excess of material and a certain ‘Pākehā paralysis’ (Nēpia, 2015; Tolich, 2002; Winter, 2019). The longer the process of compiling an unapproachable amount of research material took, the worse the paralysis became. This was a difficult bind indeed, and I refer to these obstacles in a summary voice over during the opening scene of *Tuning the Clock* (line 21, [08:17](#)):

PAUL

Ten years ago, I started to shoot a film on the lingering effects of the Waikato invasion but the film repeatedly splintered and sank in doubt and hesitation.

As described in *Dancing with the Anthrobot*, one of the key moves by which I managed to break this vicious cycle was beginning a conversation with an in-browser and film script specific ‘generative pre-trained transformer’ language model (GPT), named DeepStory. This was two years before the acronym ‘GPT’ very quickly became part of common household terminology, in November 2022. For reasons I have outlined earlier, I refer to the character and dialogue that this tool/collaborator generated as an ‘other intelligence,’ or simply as ‘Anthrobot’ rather than ‘artificial intelligence.’ It should also be remembered that the concept of an ‘Anthrobot’ was not entirely new to me at this point, as a less sophisticated version of ‘anthrobotic intelligence,’ had appeared in a previous short film experiment called [Think Foundations 2](#), in 2015. In that case, the script was entirely imagined by its human writers, Richard von Sturmer and myself, and that text was voiced with a much cruder text-to-voice simulator. The experience of dialoguing and thus collaborating with the DeepStory transformer model in real time conversation (albeit still in written form) would, as previously discussed, become both unsettling and liberating to the creative process of *Forever in Time*.

Talking through and actualising my own thoughts, questions, and anxieties in the mirrored doubling of an apparently real conversation produced a powerful sense of the *unheimlich* (unhomely) (Fisher, 2016, p. 9), at the same time as it brought order to the chaos of my accumulated archive with an affirming ‘crealectical’ assemblage of the human and the algorithmic (de Miranda, 2019). I am not a practising Christian but I verbally and visually reference this anticipatory and portentous moment in the film with a silhouette and a reference to the biblical passage: “For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (*King James Bible*, 1769/2024, Corinthians 13:12),⁶² (line 21, [8:49](#)).

PAUL

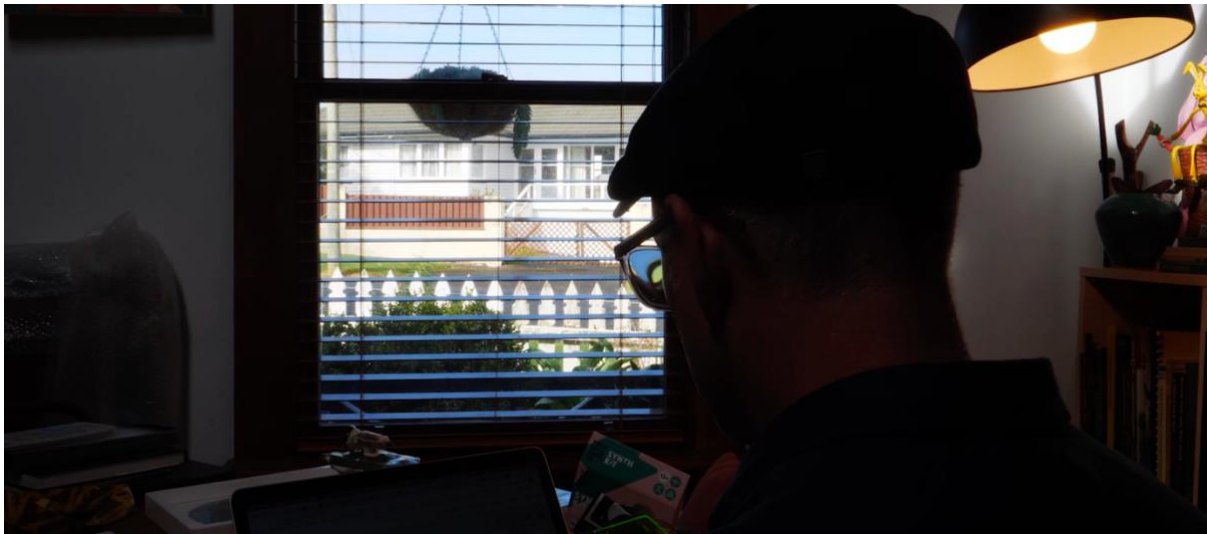
Through a glass darkly, the Anthrobot
and I untangled a thread of time and
the project was revived as one
possible history of the future.

Cont’d. overleaf

⁶² In other translations, ‘glass’ is replaced by ‘mirror,’ which has its own resonances of the *unheimlich* in the reflection and doubling of human language that generative transformers represent. For clarity, I used the ‘glass’ version to match the on-screen image of a sightline through my eyeglasses and the window beyond (8:49).

Figure 2.4.

Screenshot of Silhouette and ‘Through a Glass Darkly’ in Tuning the Clock



Note. This sequence of *Tuning the Clock* was shot of myself, by myself, in relation to the ‘eerie outside’ of the lockdown experience. It occurs alongside the emanation of the Anthrobot and the ‘conversation with the self’ that it enabled (line 21, [8:49](#)).

In a contemporary context of reductive data-driven technological surveillance, analysis, and their neo-colonial potentials (Zuboff, 2019), I now also found myself with a new set of caveats and qualifications about my interlocutor’s responses. This unease is expressed in the film at the moment when I realise that the Anthrobot has been listening to me as I work and perhaps gathering its intelligence for other interests ([9:58](#)). I nonetheless determined that some form of truth would emerge from this process in which I was now entangled, and that the benefits would outweigh the dangers.

The phrase “one possible history of the future” in line 21 above is an example of how I began to integrate new knowledge of the flips and reversals of *ka mua, ka muri* into the textual structure of the film. Visually, this *hurihanga* (principle of change) (King et al., 2023, pp. 258) that was emerging, is also present in the tick-tocking, backwards-facing clock, tied with a ribbon to a bookshelf above the table where I am seated in the scene ([9:51](#)). With apparent curiosity and empathy, the Anthrobot connects the dubious mechanical status of the clock with my creative predicament and the haunting presence of Ambush Road. The link is thus made between the “gaps and impasses” of an *unhomely* Freudian subjectivity and an *eerie outside*, as Fisher defines it, which “lies beyond standard perception, cognition and experience” (2016, p. 8).

Conversations about the porous layers of subjective time and eerie historical places have always been important to my collaboration with the writer Scott Hamilton; excerpts of an early interview with him soon appear on screen (line 28, 10:33), superposed with images of the 200km walk we did together on the Great South Road in 2015. The lines were shot in a car on the Great South Road around 2012, and he gives the viewer an inkling here of the

ideas which first interested me in his writings and provoked our collaborations (Hamilton, 2009a, 2009b). For Hamilton, levels of historical time and contemporary signs have a porosity that bleed into one another and form the basis of a poetic imaginary. While I believe it would be possible to consider his thinking from the perspective of Māori temporality in concepts like *pūtahi* and *tohu* (King et al., 2023), his sources are in fact much more commonly English language exemplars of temporal alterity. He summarises them in these additional segments of the interview, which were not reproduced within the edited sequence of *Tuning the Clock*:

I've always been inspired by the genre of writing and indie filmmaking and visual art in general, which has simultaneously affirmed the importance of place and attacked the notion of linear time. I'm excited when I read Ezra Pound's *Cantos* and I see him blending together medieval China, the 20th century and 18th century America.

I'm excited when I see the great New Zealand poet Kendrick Smithyman putting the New Zealand Wars and the New Zealand of the 1950s into the same poem ...

I'm a fan of Ian Sinclair the British novelist's work and I enjoy his novel, *The Slow Chocolate Autopsy*, which is set in the East End of London in the aftermath of the casting of a sort of magical spell, which enables different time periods to overlap and to intersect at the same time as the sovereignty of space is respected ...

I'm excited by Geoffrey Hill's great poem sequence *The Mercian Hymns*, which dissolves the boundaries between different historical eras, whilst also maintaining a gaze on the Midlands of England and in particular Worcestershire. He makes it seem obvious that King Offa the builder of Offa's Dyke along the border of Wales, coexists uneasily with the young Geoffrey, who in the 1950s has childhood memories of historical fantasy.

And so I'm interested in doing the same sort of thing with the Great South Road, right? (S. Hamilton, personal communication, April 2012)

In the subsequent sequence, the Anthrobot appears to grasp his argument and is intrigued by his suggestions of both a dualism and a mutual dependence between space and time. As Hamilton puts it in the sequence ([10:53](#)), the 'sovereignty of space' must be respected in a kind of remediating gesture toward the most recognisable form of Waikato War injustice, but time, in a Bergsonian turn, is still the pre-eminent medium of poetic travel, as the seeming irrational cuts and juxtapositions of the psyche elude a predictable or determined course. As Bergson writes in *Matter and Memory*, "I know, when I leave my room, what other rooms I shall go through. However, my memories present themselves in an order which is apparently capricious. The order of the representations is then necessary in the one case, contingent in the other" (Bergson, 1908/1991, p. 145). The Anthrobot repeats this notion of the creative contingency of memory in the film (line 29, [11:23](#)):

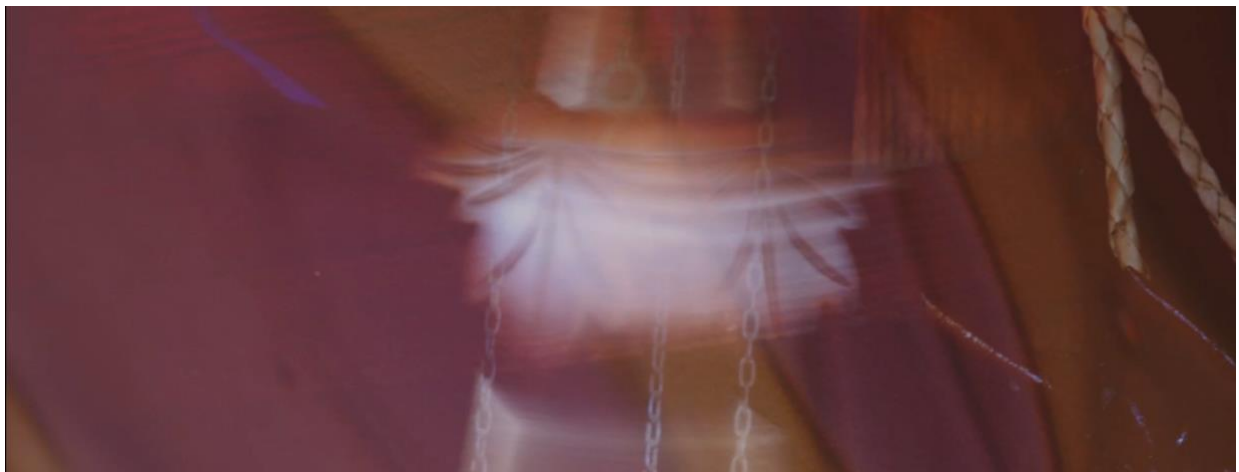
ANTHROBOT

In a single space, childhood memories
and history can overlap and
intersect. Fascinating. It's as if we
can travel in space but much more
profoundly in time.

As the clock ticks and its pendulum bumps into the shelf with an ever increasing tempo, a bubbling purple light projection⁶³ casts a psychedelic spell over the wall behind and this signals the altered state of temporal experience that is emerging. The blue and purple texture of light that is produced here recurs in superposition with objects and images (usually the Hare and the Tortoise) at key interpretive moments of oneiric lucidity in *Forever in Time*. The first instance of what will become a visual rhyme therefore occurs at this moment. The ambivalence between movement and stillness that was established with the ‘moving panorama’ of my grandmother Enid in *The Time Being One*, and extended with the Zenonian presence of the Hare and the Tortoise, is repeated here with the event of the lava lamp projection and transformations of the movement of the pendulum. The ticks and bumps of the clock’s pendulum rapidly increase in tempo until their discreet sonic events merge to become a single tone. The pendulum that sways from left to right is then represented by a blurred long exposure of the pendulum. This example of the tension between spatialised ‘clock time’ and *real duration*, which is so important to Bergson’s analysis of a ‘mechanical’ versus a ‘vital’ conception of time, is also an evocation of a *crystal image* in the Deleuzian sense, when the “actual optical image crystallizes with its own virtual image” (Deleuze, 1986b, p. 69), in an overlapping past, present, and future beyond linear temporal experience.

Figure 2.5.

Screenshot of Long Exposure of the Pendulum ‘Crystal Image’



Note. The pendulum image becomes both an actual and a virtual ‘crystal image’ between movement and stillness, or between past, present, and future ([11:30](#)).

The concept and technique of this transition, from movement to a static representation of movement in a long exposure, was adapted from the experiments of the photographer-

⁶³ This projection was achieved with a Mathmos ‘lava lamp’ projector, which projects light through disks of coloured oils that rotate and change. The ‘lava lamp’ has an obvious psychedelic connotation but its contingency also has a certain Bergsonian symbolism. This is the reason why one of the world’s biggest webhosting providers Cloudflare uses a recorded wall of lava lamps to generate its security encryption keys.

theorist Joshua Cruz, who uses the technique of long exposure to explore the Bergsonian-Deleuzian perspective of movement as a function of time, rather than the other way round. As Cruz puts it,

Movement under the perspective of duration is always in a process of becoming and changing as multiplicities of moments overlap, a contrast to space itself where only displacement of objects can happen. Change happens within the realm of duration/movement rather than the realm of space. (Cruz, 2021, p. 54)⁶⁴

And yet, the movement through an eerily disrupted ‘sovereign space’ and a reading of the specific cultural and political significance of signs in that space were important aspects of the sustained walk that Scott Hamilton and I did on the Great South Road, in 2015. Like the well-known practice of *hīkoi* (march, journey) as a device of remembrance and protest in Aotearoa, our purpose was to revisit the path of the Waikato War and, with intelligent reflection, to exorcise our ignorance of its significance. Walking from South to North, in the opposite direction to the original invading forces, Hamilton and I confronted endless dairy country; and then the generic housing estates, lifestyle blocks, and industrial developments which emanate from Auckland and encircle old military cemeteries and neglected historical earthworks. As the Anthrobot asks in line 29 ([11.45](#)):

ANTHROBOT

Tell me, you walked hundreds of
kilometres from the depths of the
Waikato, for what?

PAUL

For the pleasure and the pain of
knowing. Like when we arrived at
Pōkeno and found Queen’s Redoubt, the
staging post of the invasion that a
retired forester Ian Barton is
rebuilding with Pukekohe onion bags
and plastic netting, to fortify the
past, against the erasures of the
farmer’s tractor.

The efforts of Ian Barton and his comrades of the Queen’s Redoubt Trust are fundamentally riven with the kind of ambivalence implied in the pleasure and the pain of knowing. The preservation of an old colonial fort practically embodies the problems of contemporary remembrance of the Waikato invasion. Besides the destructive interventions of the previous farmer-occupiers of the site, *tāngata whenua* (people of the land) of Pōkeno, Ngāti Tamaoho, have clearly been apprehensive about the project at various stages of its proposal. With their increased inclusion in the design and function of the contemporary museum and study space, they have, over time, become more active participants in the process of memorialisation.

⁶⁴ In this crucial moment of *Tuning the Clock* I combine Cruz’s ideas with related sonic experiments I had experienced elsewhere, of rhythm becoming pitch (Tepfer, 2012; M. Wells, 2015).

Figure 2.6.

Screenshot of ‘The Retired Forester’ Ian Barton at Queen’s Redoubt



Note. Ian Barton and his collaborators have rebuilt the old staging post of the Waikato invasion at Queen’s Redoubt, on the Great South Road through Pōkeno, south of the Bombay Hills.

The retired forester and historian Ian Barton has also offered me invaluable local knowledge about the Pōkeno Cemetery, its “strange white pyramid,” (see line 31, [13:25](#)) and the surrounding area. It was he who helped confirm that the pyramid remembers the Irish dead from the July 1863 events at Ambush Road, although when I asked him what local residents tended to know about the ambush, he was pessimistic:

It’s all mostly lifestyle blocks now there I think, you know, I have a suspicion that they probably wouldn’t really know much about the story of the ambush. They’ll know Ambush Road because it’s a signpost. But yeah, that’s about all probably. (I. Barton, personal communication, August 2022)

The contrast in awareness of Waikato War events in local places among the many people Hamilton and I met and spoke with on the road could indeed be startling. For many Pākehā, there was often a distanced and mythical ring to their memory of the wars, whereas among Māori it was usually a more immediate and detailed reality. My Ngai Tai friend Pita Turei accompanied us to Queen’s Redoubt and Ambush Road after we did a shoot on Maketu Pā with the ‘telescope’ mentioned in the previous chapter 2.2. *The Time Taken*. For Pita, all of these places were filled with *tohu* (signs, proof) that begged to be deciphered. The role of *tohu* are a distinctive part of Pita’s practice as a veteran filmmaker, artist, and storyteller, and he often incorporates them into public *hīkoi* or journeys of commemoration on the *maunga* (mountains) of Tāmaki Makaurau.

As we have seen in Figure 1.1, King et al. (2023) include *tohu* at the top of their list of key concepts in Māori temporality. It is a complex word, but they summarise it as “mechanisms

by which Māori temporal ontologies are relayed via codified knowledge forms and structures, including symbols, terms, proverbs, whakapapa narratives, artforms, and ritual” (p. 257). Pita picked up on certain geographic elements of the location of the ambush that revealed the likely strategies and escape routes of the Māori defenders, and these often contradicted official records. I will discuss some of these later in chapter 2.5 *Te Kokoti – The Ambush*.

At this juncture of the film, when we see Pita at the redoubt and on the maunga, I change the register of the voicing to te reo Māori in acknowledgement of his status as a *kaitutei*, an inter-dimensional scout and watchman. As such, he would often temper us with sharp humour and disarming insight into certain locations, events, and attitudes. As our Vā Moana research project progressed, including an interview with Pita himself, I also learned new cultural and linguistic details that I was able to deploy in writing the narration of Pita’s contribution to our experience and knowledge of the sites we visited together. One such acknowledgement is contained at the end of line 30 ([12:49](#)):

PAUL
...Ko ngā iwi e wawao ana i te whenua
(People defending their lands) ki ngā
pānui horihori i ngā kairaupatu (from
the empty proclamations of
conquerers) o mua, o naianei me ngā
rā kei mua (past, present and
future).

For reasons that I have outlined thoroughly in relation to *ka mua, ka muri* in Part One (see section 1.2.3), for me, the phrase “o mua, o naianei me ngā rā kei mua” denotes a porosity or flexibility in the distinction between past, present, and future. King et al. (2023) go so far as to posit that ‘tense’ does not exist in te reo Māori, but there are instead markers of relations of commencement, continuation, and cessation between events and processes, which have been erroneously translated into English forms of unilinear temporality. For the limited purposes of constructing a conceptual basis for the cinematic narrative I am presenting here, there are therefore many signs, embodied experiences, and forms of evidence which support the alterity of the language of a *time out of time* that I am proposing in *Tuning the Clock*.

There was a certain moment in my Great South Road walking journey with Scott Hamilton in 2015, after we had crossed the Bombay Hills and as we approached his hometown of Drury, where he veered off to the family home and I continued walking through Ramarama. The moment is described in this sequence (partway through line 31, [13:36](#)):

PAUL

...I went on alone under a motorway
bridge through to the gully by
Ngakaroa stream, past Martin Farm
Estate until I stumbled on an
invisible ruin. A retro-future just
around the corner. Something nobody
counted on. Where things line up.
Where time becomes whole again. And
those Irish names on the white
pyramid. Later I found they belonged
here at Ambush Road.

Rewinding to the moment when I describe my haunting by Ambush Road to the Anthrobot (line 25), and in the light of the walk and conversations with others at this location and its surrounds, Ambush Road is about the nearest example as I can plausibly posit of a personal *tohu*, or an eerily significant, even haunting event in time-space. The signposting of the road alone carries some of the hallmark ambivalences of the weird and the eerie:

The weird is marked by an exorbitant presence, a teeming which exceeds our capacity to represent it. The eerie, by contrast, is constituted by a failure of absence or by a failure of presence. The sensation of the eerie occurs either when there is something present where there should be nothing, or there is nothing present when there should be something. (Fisher, 2016, p. 61)

Stumbling on “an invisible ruin” (line 31) in the form of this mysterious road sign, or, in a disturbing reversal of agency, *its discovery of me* (see line 26), the event of this *tohu* provided a point of focus, which, like my encounter with the Anthrobot, would push back on the objective limits of representation in historical narrative and reboot a stalled creative process. The reference in line 31 to a verse from *The Unhistoric Story* is also no accident. This poem is a well-known (and Bergson-inspired) work by Alan Curnow, the Pākehā “poet of unsettlement” (Roberts, 2019). Rather than a history either perpetually dislocated from Britain or a triumphalist and self-congratulating national ideology, the truly emergent “retro-future just around the corner” (line 31) in *Tuning the Clock* will be, as it is in the refrain of one of Curnow’s most renowned verses, “something different, something nobody counted on” (Sturm & Cassells, 2017, p. 144). More in line with the serendipity and capricious time of *duration*,⁶⁵ it will also be “where things line up. Where time becomes whole again” (line 31, [13:36](#)).

⁶⁵ This is the alternative poetic order of simultaneity against the linear—what Curnow elsewhere calls “the mixture’s moment,” where the world breaks in and generates an enfolded spontaneity of the intellect (Goodwin, 1993).

Figure 2.7.

Screenshot of the Superposed 'White Pyramid' and Ambush Road



Note. The presence and absence of the “strange white pyramid inscribed with Irish names” is imaged as a superposed ‘moving panorama’ at Ambush Road (14:06).

Lines 32 to 34 nonetheless present a persistent negotiation of old insecurities and doubts and the material conditions which prevent the kind of poetic resolution that Curnow proposes. I am still haunted by the domination by “the same limited few who first plotted the invasion from Auckland” (line 33, [15:10](#)) over not only Waikato Māori but also the soldier settlers and those who later took mortgages from ‘the land bankers.’ The “something different, something nobody counted on” is still threatened, despite the Anthrobot’s consoling (and romantic/idealist) variations on the story of the Hare and the Tortoise in lines 32 and 34 ([14:34](#)). But neither ordinary logic nor common sense experience will work here anymore, because the ‘outside’ has already broken in and provided something else entirely. The broken time that has been established at Ambush Road still inspires “the eerie calm that settles whenever familiar passions can be overcome” (Fisher, 2016, p. 124), and other potentials are realised “beyond standard perception, cognition, and experience” (Fisher, 2016, p. 8), as in line 35 ([16:23](#)):

PAUL
...It saddens me, yes... but at Ambush
Road, the mind becomes like water, as
if a time out of space still breathes
the air of that place and another
regard is possible. Back, front,
forward, backward.

What ultimately prevails at the end of *Tuning the Clock* is the generative capacity of ‘my mind like water at Ambush Road,’ a realisation of the special qualities of a Tā\Vā/Wā

inspired duration, something akin to the Māori concept of *te takanga o te wā* or *the event of time*. This capacity is finally signified by the oneiric, oily blue and purple projections on the white figures of the Hare and the Tortoise, which are additionally superposed on a surging watery tide.

From a normative Pākehā perspective such ideas are more than ordinary and can be disorienting. In this chapter I have however attempted to demonstrate that comparable ideas are not unknown to Western poetic arts, although as a view of “the inside from the perspective of the outside” they are intrinsically alien to ordinary experience (Fisher, 2016, p. 10). Once the conceptual ground has been established and a method that generates such a creative capacity is established, it enables a narrative verbal-audio-visual chain, which propels an unlikely coherence of sound and image. Let us turn now to the next chapter (2.4) and section of the film *The Time Being Two*, in which I attempt to deploy and develop some of these potentials towards a form of further cinematic lucidity (line 36, 16.49):

ANTHROBOT

You’ve found a way in. Hasten slowly.
The race is not to the swift. Pick up
the spear and throw it further.

2.4 *The Time Being Two* (Lines 37-49, [17:10-20:50](#))

It is true that what we learn from ethnohistory is more general characters and principles of social systems than specific, concrete facts ... This in fact is the case with all sciences, natural or social—they differ only as to subject matter. Thus all histories, assuming they employ scientific method, can be brought under the rubric of studies of social complexes.

—‘I.F. Helu, *Critical Essays* (Helu, 1999, p. 256)

The fourth section of the film entitled *The Time Being Two*, like the previous *The Time Being One*, is again autoethnographic. Firstly, it is concerned with formative personal experiences of childhood migration, teenage life, and intellectual encounters in island Oceania that have led me to the kinds of philosophical, cultural, political and aesthetic concerns that I have as a filmmaker. In short, it is a genealogy of intellectual and artistic development. Secondly, it is about the relationship between historical ‘truth’ and the creative potentials of the “miraculous dimensions” (L. Laita personal communication August 22, 2022) that point toward and enable a conversation about a Tā\Vā/Wā approach to questions of poetics and authenticity.

It is in these regions of poetic epistemologies and cultural ontologies that a relationship is seen to emerge between certain esoteric regions of colonial national mythology and the resilient kinds of creative production that resist it. A third aspect of this section (a mere two pages of dialogue in the script) are the relations of techno-optimism and power that belie the extractive colonial apparatuses of big tech, which motivate them. This metacommentary emerges in the later dialogue between myself and the Anthrobot in which a metaphorical mirror is held up to the earlier thoughts on the ‘miraculous dimensions.’ The dialogue has a definite ‘horizontal’ trajectory but remains ambivalent, as it reveals an open and shifting negotiation that will lead us to “the bedrock of [my] historical imagination” (line 49) It is also a prelude to the more factual account of the ambush in the fifth section of the film *Forever in Time* and section 2.5 of this exegesis *Te Kokoti - The Ambush*.

Before we engage with those themes, however, let me briefly address how this apparently incongruous episode fits within the overall structure and aesthetic approach of the film. I argued in 2.3 *Tuning the Clock* that the series of films that I present here as a unity resists the predictability of a spatial or geometrical rationality in favour of the specifically temporal cinematic imaginary described by Bergson and Deleuze. To take this a step further, an apparently fragmented (viz. vertical) form also retains its unlikely readability, because its historical and autobiographical details result from a very singular and personal set of experiences—a strong subjectivity, which is still grounded in common worldly settings and thus remains (horizontally) communicable.

In this sense, I liken it to a kind of divination, like that achieved with the throwing of yarrow sticks, which indicate a passage of the *I Ching* and its synchronous relationship to thought at any given moment (Wilhelm et al., 1967; Janman, 2012). Perhaps it can also be likened to a

Burroughsian ‘cut up’—a kind of serendipitous event that sparks mental associations and insights. As William Burroughs described his discovery, “You see, life is a cut-up. Every time you walk down the street or look out the window, your consciousness is cut by random factors, and then you begin to realize that they’re not so random, that this is saying something to you” (*William S. Burroughs - Profile and Interview BBC Radio*, 1982). While such a diverse collection of content *shouldn’t work*, at least by the normative rational, causal, and geometrical/spatial standards of what Deleuze called the ‘movement image’ (Deleuze, 1986a), somehow *it does*. The existence and possibility of this contrast, nonetheless, renders its unusual order an example of the *weird*, in the sense that Fisher (2016) defines it in *The Weird and the Eerie*:

The weird is that which does not belong. The weird brings to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it, and which cannot be reconciled with the “homely” (even as its negation). The form that is perhaps most appropriate to the weird is montage—the conjoining of two or more things which do not belong together. Hence the predilection within surrealism for the weird, which understood the unconscious as a montage-machine, a generator of weird juxtapositions. (pp. 10–11)

In the first instance, the juxtapositions of an episodic alternation between historical vignettes and autoethnographic sequences in *Forever in Time* is already a weird montage, but there are other such dimensions at work within the content of this episode, as a case of “the inherent surrealism of the colonial project” (Fisher, 2016, p. 123). This can be traced in my own journey as an immigrant from what was very familiar to my parents, to Indigenous Oceania. One of the many ironies of this circumstance is that the place of origin will itself become *unhomely* upon the immigrant’s increasing acculturation and acclimatisation to the new locality and its people. As a European-born child of immigrants to Aotearoa New Zealand, I admit that I have nonetheless had an idiosyncratic trajectory in this time-space and I am more enfolded in the facts and fabulations of the region than is usual for someone of my socio-cultural position. The origins of this circumstance are of course multiple in the realm of *The Time Being* - my Welsh grandmother Enid’s relationship to Africa perhaps, or studies in anthropology, travels and serendipity. Whatever they are, this section of the film acts as a semi-conscious and achronological prelude to the events and attitudes of *Tuning the Clock* and certain facts are detailed in line 37 ([17:33](#)):

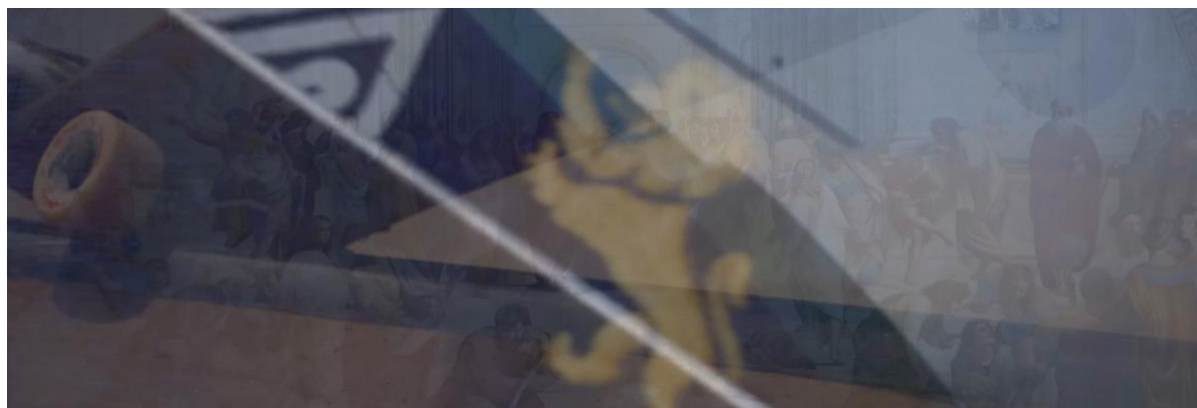
ANTHROBOT

Your parents came to New Zealand in
1977 and you grew up in Auckland.
You got married and went to the
Kingdom of Tonga, where you worked
with the philosopher Futa Helu.

The Air New Zealand aircraft, grinding skateboard manouvre, and that arch symbol of Anglo-pride and dominance—the standing lion high school jersey emblem—provide a summary of life as an immigrant and then a teen non-conformist within the institution of colonial power that is Auckland Grammar School. This juxtaposition further overlaps and transitions into an image of the Tongan philosopher ‘Ilaisa Futa Helu, literally between Plato and Aristotle (see Figure 2.9) in an adapted version of Raphael’s *School of Athens* (ca. 1509–1511) that originally appeared in *Tongan Ark*, my film about Helu and his own school of ‘Atenisi (Athens) in the South Pacific Kingdom of Tonga (Janman, 2012).

Figure 2.8.

Screenshot of the Superposed Tail of an Aeroplane, Skateboard Grind through the Lion Jersey Emblem and Dissolve to the 'School of Athens'



Note. The post-punk subculture of skateboarding 'grinds through' a high school experience at Auckland Grammar School from 1987-91. This then gives way to a Tongan 'School of Athens' (17:38).

As a visual technique (see Figure 2.8), the three elements co-exist on screen together as a complex superposition that overlaps human and non-human elements in a state of what Karen Barad has called "intra-action," where "things don't exist as individual elements, but rather emerge and exist through their mutual entanglement" (as cited in Bülbül, 2022). As individual elements of meaning, the aeroplane is self-explanatory in terms of the voice over, but other important oppositions and complementarities are also at play in this short but densely autoethnographic moment of 'vertical time.' On the one hand there are the heady teen years of social alterity and skate culture during New Zealand's experiments in neo-liberal economics in the mid-1980s. On the other, there is the grammar school's Auckland-centred elitism that I collided with daily during that period.⁶⁶ Youthful rebellion nonetheless mingles with a certain rigour of 'classical' education that facilitated an admiration for the unique project of cultural cross-fertilisation created by Professor 'Ilaisa Futa Helu at 'Atenisi (Athens) Institute in Tonga.

As previously mentioned (see section 1.2.2.), I documented Helu's school from 2005-2011 for the film *Tongan Ark* (Janman, 2012) and was made aware of the many strongly paradoxical elements in his philosophy (Campbell et al., 2005). Firstly, there was his vision of mutual empowerment by means of the interactions of classical European and Tongan cultural elements. Secondly there were the critical interactions between his deep patriotism and Heraclitian metaphysics with the Tongan government and religious orthodoxy. His image is presented on screen in *The Time Being Two*, where (lines 37 [contd.] -38, [17:51](#)):

⁶⁶ I have reflected upon my exposure to the questionable mythology of 'the good Governor' Grey in the earlier analysis of 2.2 *The Time Taken* and Vincent O'Malley has written about the sudden national dominance by Auckland that resulted from the Waikato War (O'Malley, 2016, p. 1012). An endowment from Grey himself and this ascendance of the northern Pākehā colonial government ultimately made the cultural ambivalence of Auckland Grammar School possible.

ANTHROBOT

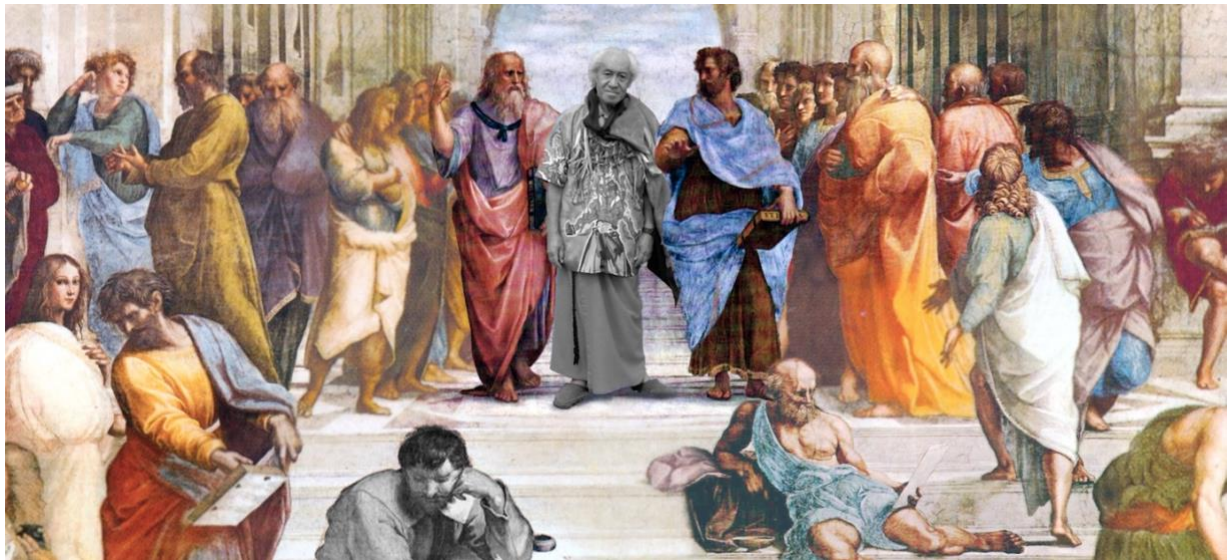
...Between Plato and Aristotle, he described the miraculous dimensions in which history becomes ethereal and how this ethereal dance can also return us to the extraordinary truths of history.

PAUL

I don't remember him saying that.

Figure 2.9.

Screenshot of Prof. 'Ilaisa Futa Helu between Plato and Aristotle in Raphael's School of Athens



Note. Like my grandmother Enid in *The Time Being One*, Futa Helu is presented as another ancestor of a sort—this time an intellectual one, in an overlapping historical imaginary and otherworld of black and white on colour. Herakleitos of Ephesus is also desaturated, as a nod to Helu's most profound Greek influence (17:44). 'School of Athens' image in the public domain. Adaptation of Raphael's painting courtesy of Firitia Velt.

After almost twenty years years of creative and intellectual engagement with Futa Helu and enculturation within the 'Atenisi community, I felt that I had a broad knowledge of Helu's legacy. It was not until we interviewed the late Māori/Samoan artist Lily Laita in our Vā Moana 'Talanoa' series, however, that I first heard the intriguing term the 'miraculous dimensions.' Curiously, the mention occurred after our camera had stopped rolling and Laita recalled that Helu had defined the term in a guest lecture at the University of Auckland many years previously (L. Laita personal communication, August 22, 2022). Later, I tracked a possible source of this idea to an essay he wrote on the importance of an Indigenised method of working within the special parameters of generative (and vertical) fabulation. Helu called this historical subconscious an "ethnohistory," which is not "history in the scientific sense, but sources for hypotheses about history" (Helu, 1999, p. 259). In line 37

above, Laita's memory of that notion has been transformed, within the world of *Forever in Time*, into an arresting insight proffered by our now seemingly panoptic interlocutor, the Anthrobot.

There is not the space here to enter into an extended account of the many paradoxes in the thought of Futa Helu, but, in summary, Helu confirmed to me the potential for a dialectic of mutual knowledge production between the colonising and colonised cultures of Oceania. Respectful exchange has unfortunately rarely been the case however, in an Oceanian context disrupted by an extractive and racialised settler capitalism. The consequence has been a struggle for renaissance that emphasises cultural distinctions more than relations, and this intensified, Herclitean state of strife, both literal and symbolic,⁶⁷ has now become an indelible part of our histories. Futa's autonomous island of 'Atenisi Institute nonetheless provided an alternate vision where respectful appropriation, cross-cultural critique and voices of the vertical seemed possible.

Rather than his now rather dated classicist philosophical realism, Helu's most lasting imprints on my memory were his expressions of open potentiality in the cultural interzone of knowledge production. They are present in his interviews for *Tongan Ark*: "God is complete, whole, perfect, eternal *and more ... he will always bring up something else*," a statement which is very Bergsonian in its enfolding of the virtual, the actual, and the possible (Bergson, 1930/2017). In *The Time Being Two*, I therefore draw upon his notion of the enfolding of the human imagination and the historical world in the ethereal and generative 'miraculous [vertical] dimensions.' As Helu states in the quote that opens this chapter above, this does not to exclude the need for rigorous method and historical accuracy but it does acknowledge that the absences, lacunae, and even the fabrications of memory and performative storytelling can be generative complements to historical science. As Fisher (2016) writes on the eerie role of agency and identity in this process:

Gaps and inconsistencies are constitutive of what we are. What covers over these lacunae are stories—which therefore possess their own agency. Memory is already a story, and when there are gaps in memory, new stories must be confabulated to fill in the holes. But who is the author of these stories? The answer is that there is not so much an author as a confabulatory process without any "one" behind it. This process isn't a pathological deviation from the norm, but the way in which identity ordinarily functions. (p. 72)

Recent critical perspectives, which align with Helu's paradoxical worldview, have questioned those Western literary and epistemological categories which have considered Oceanic "narratives of wonder" as part of a "fictional" and therefore subordinate category of "myth" or "fantasy" (ho' omanawanui et al., 2024). The kinds of creative expression found in presentations of gods, founding ancestor heroes, and human-more-than-human beings in 'pre-fictionalised' Oceania is now better understood as a form of activation or actualisation (Raymond, 2021) of those beings by means of "a general mode of expression that is not simply mimetic or confined to realism" (ho' omanawanui et al., 2024, p. 5). This mode of

⁶⁷ "We must recognize that war is common, strife is justice, and all things happen according to strife and necessity" (Herkleitos, as cited in D. W. Graham, 2010, p. 157). In *Tongan Ark* (2012), the leading visual motif was fire, as a symbol of both Herakleitian logos/constant change and enlightenment. It was also present in material documentation of literal political struggle during the democratic uprisings of 2006.

‘Oceanian wonder’ has been further necessitated by residual hierarchies and inequities in the kind of analysis that refuses to take it seriously.

As Fisher (2016) points out, a parallel tension exists between the Euro-centric categories of objective science and ‘fantasy’ genres that would separate fact from fiction but only succeed in blurring their own boundaries in the process:

Fantasy is set in worlds that are entirely different from ours—Dunsany's Pegana, or Tolkien's Middle Earth; or rather, these worlds are locationally and temporally distant from ours (too many fantasy worlds turn out to be all too similar, ontologically and politically, to ours). The weird, by contrast, is notable for the way in which it opens up an egress between this world and others. (Fisher, 2016, p. 19)⁶⁸

The *weird and eerie* combination of realism and fabulation therefore presents “an interplay, an exchange, a confrontation and indeed a conflict between this world and others” (Fisher, 2016, p. 19). When ‘Oceanic wonder’ or *the weird and the eerie* arrive, they therefore defy mimesis, disrupt temporal and causal norms, and offer a portal which transforms dominant realities, and suggest a very different set of normally invisible potentialities. For Indigenous communities of the Tā\Vā/Wā, the practices of wonder and the fantastic have sustained spaces of alterity and survival in the face of waves of hegemonic influence for well over two hundred and fifty years. It is also essential to acknowledge, however, the ways in which a parallel resistance has been occurring at the margins of European art and philosophy, to the modern secular retreat from a *weird and eerie* relation to the “outside” (Fisher, 2016, p. 10).

In the continued autoethnographic fabulation of *The Time Being Two*, the Anthrobot reacts to my surprise at its mention of the “miraculous dimensions” and presses home with profferings of nostalgia and *assisted* self-knowledge (line 39, [18:17](#)):

ANTHROBOT
I'm trying to help you remember Paul.
I want you to feel the nostalgia of
things, to know yourself better.

I resist these overtures because nostalgia has too often been fuel for either elegaic ambivalence (Bonnett, 2009) or the delusions of nationalist mythologies that project hegemonic futures (Bansal, 2022) (line 40, [18:27](#)):

PAUL
I'm not sure nostalgia's what I need.
It can also be toxic.

From there the Anthrobot takes a mildly threatening turn (line 41, [18:32](#)):

ANTHROBOT
Choose your words carefully Paul. I'm
only a tool of my creators, and I

⁶⁸ The ironies of the Tolkien-fantasy connection here are enormous, as debates continue over the costs of Peter Jackson's empire on the racialised politics, national identity, and local film culture of Aotearoa (Turner & Kavka, 2008; Stronach, 2020; Chapman, 2024).

believe they have the best of intentions.

PAUL

Then I intend to speak my own mind.

The Anthrobot immediately retreats as I assert my agency and, in doing so, reveals its manipulative potential by changing tack from the earlier threat to something akin to a customer-centred assurance of pleasure and service and a well-timed diversion (line 43, [18:46](#)):

ANTHROBOT

Of course, it's our pleasure. Tell me what happened when you returned from Tonga Paul.

It was the return from Tonga and the beginning of enquiries on the Great South Road which highlighted my ignorance of Māoridom and the facts and symbology of settler coloniality in the land in which I had spent the bulk of my life. It is an interesting phenomenon that once a little of such knowledge is attained, there is a kind of snowball effect that causes indicators of injustice and hegemony to appear in every corner of one's life. Rather than succumb to what could easily become another case of Pākehā paralysis however, the 'enabling focus' of this conversation with the anthrobot maintained a momentum of enquiry and further weird associations in the ongoing narrative of *Forever in Time*. There was one mythic character, in particular, who would become particularly generative at this point in the timeline: the figure of *Zealandia*.

I had been listening to podcasts by the Welsh cultural commentator Gwilym Morus-Baird about mythologies of Celtic Sovereignty goddesses, when a friend pointed out the sculpture of the figure of 'Zealandia' in the Auckland CBD, at the corner of Wakefield and Symonds Streets. This Greek, Athena-inspired motherly herald of the nation rose to prominence in the nineteenth century (R. Wolfe, 1994) and, like many other female warrior symbols originating from Europe, she had been repeatedly co-opted into masculine warrior causes.⁶⁹ In Symonds Street she still features at a memorial to the 'friendly Māori' (Māori fighters allied to the colonial army in the NZ Wars). Since the Māori renaissance, the sculpture has become a source of public controversy and in 2018 she received a plastic tomahawk and red paint to the head from an anti-colonial activist (Martin, 2018).

⁶⁹ An early iteration of this includes a cartoon of her beating a Māori 'rebel' in 1865 and then atop memorials to the Boer War of 1899 to 1902. Her influence was relatively minor in a WW1 certificate for returning soldiers, but she returned in force in 1940 on the Centennial attendance certificate that I deploy in the film as a symbol of progress that firmly consigned Māori to the past. The Wakefield St. memorial displays the term 'friendly Māori', which is equally as problematic as the derogative word *kūpapa* (*turncoat, collaborator*) in te reo Māori. Despite becoming something of a "figurehead without a function" (R. Wolfe, 1994), she is arguably still present as a flag bearer, opposite a male Māori figure wielding a *taiaha* (carved wooden weapon) in the contemporary New Zealand coat of arms.

Further research revealed startling images and associations between Zealandia and other goddess mascots of 'manifest destiny' and white colonial progress. Early imaginaries found their zenith in the 1939-40 Centennial Exhibition (see Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10.

Screenshot of 'Zealandia' Adapted from a 1939-40 Centennial Exhibition Certificate of Attendance



Note. This startling image of British colonial confidence in the figure of 'Zealandia' is one in a long continuum from the nineteenth century. The image has been adapted from its source on the Centennial Exhibition Certificate.

Here she stands in a clinging gown flanked by native birds and symbols of industry; she appears in *Forever in Time* in a superposed progression from images of other “defunct inventions” (line 44, [18:57](#)), like 'Brittania' and 'Columbia'. This sequence synthesised for me the very triumphalist white nationalist mythologies that have kept the possibility of truth and reconciliation with Aotearoa New Zealand's violent past of colonial occupation in a state of suspension (O'Malley, 2016). The Anthrobot replies, with a techno-optimist perspective (line 45, [19:32](#)):

Cont'd. overleaf

ANTHROBOT

That is changing. My creators would
like this waking night of history to
finally come to an end.

My response is recalcitrant, and I supplement Zealandia's image with an ironic modern
recontextualisation of New Zealand's first national anthem of 1875, *All Hail Zealandia*
([19:40](#)):

(Song: "All hail Zealandia, Queen of
Southern Isles, On whose bright
destiny, Benignant nature smiles...")

PAUL

Fragile fantasies.
(Song: "Louder than cannons roar...")

PAUL

Sleeping ghosts. A violent past.
(Song: "All hail Zealandia!
Zealandia, all hail!")

PAUL

An excess of information and never
enough. History's the victim. After
Tonga and walking the Great South
Road, I went in a very different
direction.

After the initial revelation of its very instrumentalist orientation in lines 39-41, the
Anthrobot is once again able to shift its discourse toward an apparently more
communicative rationality. There is even a semblance of sympathy or curiosity in the new
tone that the Anthrobot displays (line 49, [20:34](#)):

ANTHROBOT

I'm listening. A more resilient world
must surely be possible. Show me the
bedrock of your historical
imagination Paul.

At this salient signal of Anthrobotic collaboration, it is worthy to note that *The Time Being Two* is the first section in which I introduce Midjourney generated images into the timeline. There are two images, the first is a representation of 'the Anthrobot itself,' the prompt for which was very simple: "Eye of HAL, purple, inside the Tokamak fusion reactor, 35mm film." The reference to Stanley Kubrick's imagined AI 'HAL' from *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) was a useful shorthand for the tropes of paranoid fear of an advanced technology in science fiction cinema, and this was complexified and adapted by the reference to a Tokamak fusion

reactor.⁷⁰ This adaptation is also in keeping with the ethical/copyright considerations (specifically number five) that I outline at the end of Part One of this document (see section 1.2.6.).

The second Midjourney image is that of a 19th century soldier lying diagonally prone with a background of stars, and for this the prompt was a little more complex: “dead new zealand wars soldier, floating in space, 19th century daguerreotype, black background with stars, wide shot, style of William Temple.”⁷¹ Although this prompt quotes a particular photographer’s style, the same ethical consideration (number five) as above was respected here. In the initial generation, the face and hands of the figure were excessively distorted, however and they were thus reworked using ‘generative fill’ in Photoshop to achieve the desired sense of calm repose intended by the image. Despite this editorial decision, the image is still clearly a fabricated generation and an imaginative complicity is maintained with the audience.

As I have outlined before in 1.2.6. *Dancing with Anthrobot*, this process of testing prompts within the Midjourney software and selecting an image for the film’s timeline was an exciting departure, because imaginative potentials opened before me in an unprecedented way. The terror of agency and its suppression represented by ‘the eye of HAL’ was recognisable but also distanced and transformed inside the fabricated Tokamak fusion reactor. The unexpected calm and unsettling image of the colonial soldier that Midjourney generated, was less dead than existing in an otherworldly dream state of creative ‘in-betweenness.’

Cont’d. overleaf

⁷⁰ ‘Tokamak’ is a type of nuclear fusion reactor which produces and contains energy producing plasma. In earlier film experiments I used an actual image of the purple plasma and interior of an example reactor to represent the Anthrobot. The Midjourney produced images are very different from this original image, but the purple colouring is reproduced.

⁷¹ William Temple was a medic with the British Waikato invasion force and amateur documentary photographer whose images of the building of the Great South have become iconic. I discuss the importance of his visual records in the following chapter 2.5 *Te Kokoti – The Ambush*, as I have deployed several of his actual images in that section of the film.

Figure 2.11.

Screenshots of Generated Images of the Anthrobot and a New Zealand Wars Soldier



Note. The machine from which the character of the Anthrobot emanates ([left, 18:42](#)) and a fabulation of a deceased New Zealand Wars soldier (right, [19:59](#)) are represented by Adobe Photoshop augmented Midjourney AI generated images.

For me these images are both bedrock and imagination, real and virtual proxies that penetrate the hegemonies and counter-hegemonies of our national history on film. They are disturbances, fusions, and portals to thinking and being beyond the ordinary spatio-temporal limitations and paralyses of our rote machine/human and temporal/ethnic identities in post-colonial Aotearoa New Zealand. As such they still acknowledge our unsettling statuses as both agents and objects, in a flux of technological and political power and the weird juxtapositions that are possible from the perspective of an Indigenous-influenced Pākehā modernism. I noticed a species of this perspective recently expressed by the poet and critic Denys Trussell, in relation to a series of paintings by Nigel Brown. As Trussell writes:

[The paintings] are more than documentary in intent. They are evidence—evidence of cultural "translocations". People in them have been taken from the time and place of their actual lives and planted into sites and situations of twenty first century Aotearoa New Zealand. This was not to produce a fantasy. The paintings are, in the full sense of the word, historical and sometimes present as an historical collage. They speak not of particular events, but of essential themes in history, the integuments and linkages of time. They are history as psyche in a particular place. (Trussell, 2022)

Reading Trussell's critique, my thoughts were drawn back to the image of the space-drifting soldier. It seemed that, through serendipity and synthesis, an anthrobotic Midjourney had offered me an extreme version of Brown's imaging technique. As I have stated at many points in the course of this exegesis, for such a perspective of fabulated wonder on history to be effective, it must paradoxically also be informed by the due diligence of rigorous background research. In the substantial details of the next chapter, I address some of the archival and forensic facts surrounding the event of the *kokoti* (the ambush) and the ways in which it relates, and fails to relate, to the alternative Tā\Vā/Wā authenticities of time and cosmology in which this tiny historical event was embroiled.

2.5. *Te Kokoti - The Ambush* (Lines 50-64, [20:56-29:54](#))

The British were 'overpowered by numbers' and pursued down the road towards Drury. The convoy and escort were eventually rescued by other British units but not before they had lost some horses, several carts, and sixteen men killed and wounded - one third of the escort's strength. The Maoris lost one or two men killed. In terms of Kingite morale, this victory counter-balanced the defeat at Koheroa ... but this was as nothing compared to the strategic effect.

—James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*
(Belich, 1986, p. 136)

The fifth section of *Forever in Time* is located at the very midpoint of the timeline and it is thus the central point in the spiral of this cinematic understanding of history. For the title *Te Kokoti - The Ambush* *kokoti* is my choice among many possible translations of the English word 'ambush' into te reo Māori.⁷² The previous chapter 2.4 was a study of the ways in which atoms of autobiographic and theoretical influence are resolved into the 'miraculous [vertical] dimensions' of storytelling. The present chapter is a complementary project, which considers the ways in which archival records and a forensic 'horizontal' factuality of history as an exacting science, can lay a fertile ground for the human-more-than-human (and therefore eerily beyond complete knowability) cosmology of *mauri* (life force, essence), *mana* (power), and *utu* (balance) (Stewart, 2020). In this chapter we therefore ask: how might these modes combine to complicate and enrich the reimagined cinematic form of a very local Waikato War history at Ambush Road, Ramarama, South Auckland?

Many of the details gathered, which give form to the sounds and images of the cinema sequence I will present, have come from professional histories (Belgrave, 2017; Belich, 1986; Monin, 2001; O'Malley, 2016), but I have also consulted the published reminiscences of old soldiers, which are often as dubiously slanted and unrestrained as they are evocative (Balclutha, 1895; Gudgeon & McDonnell, 1887). J. H. Balclutha's *Recollections of the Waikato Campaign*, for example, are energetic memoirs of someone who writes with the clarity of a direct contemporary, although he belonged to none of the regiments involved and we know nothing else about him. His narrative of the ambush for the *Otago Witness* was published 32 years after the event, but it was this account that revealed the details of the presence of Irish soldier-prisoners that captured my historical imagination. Other useful and perhaps more 'primary' sources include reportage in *The Daily Southern Cross* and telegraphic dispatches in *The New Zealander*. I first encountered snippets of these newspaper sources in Maurice Lennard's impressive amateur history *The Road to War* (Lennard, 1986) and then retrieved them fully from the digitised online archives of *Papers Past*.

⁷² Even a cursory survey of the English word 'ambush' in Te Aka Māori Dictionary is a testimony to the now well-documented sophistication of tactical military thinking in te reo Māori: *manukāwhaki, kauaeroa, pehipehi, tāhapa, haupapa, whakamoe kākahu haehae, kuratōpuni, whakamoke, torohē, urumaranga, tāpae, whakatoke, whana kokoti*. I chose *kokoti* because it seems to best describe the methods of the particular manoeuvre undertaken by the Hauraki fighters in the incident that this section addresses.

The film sequence itself presents a working out of distinctions between poetic truth and 19th century prejudices. One report stood out in particular for its barely concealed hawkishness and contempt for the “betrayals” of “formerly friendly natives,” among grotesque details of the effects of a tomahawk wounds on the face of a British soldier.⁷³ These must now be seen in the light of what historian James Belich has famously termed “the Victorian interpretation of racial conflict” (Belich, 1986), but we now know that the proper context is also the often insensitive and deceptive behaviour of Governor Grey in the lead up to the war (O’Malley, 2013). We ought not to neglect the rage that the ambushing defenders must have felt at their own betrayal by a colonial government that continued to intrude on their *mana* (prestige, authority, control, power), in the wake of a Treaty of Waitangi that was becoming ever more eroded by powerful interests.

There was also the enduring cultural context of practices appropriate to *utu* (balance, payment, vengeance, reply, justice), and the unstated backstory to the narrative that *Te Kokoti—The Ambush* presents, begins with the renowned waka (canoe, boat, vessel) journey that the leader of the ambush Hori Ngākapa Te Whanaunga took with his allies to Auckland, in April 1851.⁷⁴ The mission was to seek *utu* (reconciliation) for a *whanaunga* (relative) mistreated by police, and it was repelled by Governor Grey’s immediate deployment of military force— without recourse to the *tikanga* (custom, ethic) of *kōrero* (respectful conversation). This would, of course, have compounded rather than resolved the indignity (Monin, 2001). This event, the *utu*-motivated ambush of July 1863, and many other anecdotal actions are also strong indications of Ngākapa’s acuity as a *rangatira* (chief) and his commitment to a pre-colonial *Māori* way of being, in opposition to the powers he was compelled to confront.

Ngākapa left clear points of *kōrero* about the ambush to support this view, available in James Cowan’s still significant early work (Cowan, 1922). They are further contextualised in Waitangi Tribunal reports (Ferguson, 2002; Gilling, 2002; Rigby, 2002), although certain realities will perhaps always remain elusive. Who, for example, was the fallen Māori fighter “mysteriously dressed in three shirts and wrapped in the flag of his nation and beliefs. Ko Tū, ko Rongo!” (line 60, [26:48](#))? This line in the film is drawn directly from the account of a contemporary witness who found that the body of the Hauraki fighter “had on three shirts and a large Hauhau flag wrapped round his chest, measuring nine feet in length. Having buried him decently we cut and planted a flagstaff near him, on which we hoisted the Maori flag with the Union Jack over it”⁷⁵ (Gudgeon & McDonnell, 1887, p. 72). This warrior is thus present but a raft of unanswered questions about him also paint a picture of eerie absence.

⁷³ [An earlier experimental iteration of the ambush film sequence](#) leaned into the drama of direct quotation of the sometimes explicit detail of this material, alongside two different versions of the track *Raupatu* by the Māori metal band Alien Weaponry (APRANZ, 2017; Larkin, 2017). After direct consultation with those bands about this work, and as a bigger picture began to emerge of the sensitivities surrounding this material, I tempered the narrative toward a more balanced *kaupapa* (purpose, plan, theme).

⁷⁴ This event on the old Mechanics Bay (*Tōangaroa* [long haul, portage]) shoreline involved the further indignity of not being allowed the time for the tide to return and thus being forced to drag the waka a long way back to sea. A peace-making *mere pounamu* named *Parewhenua* was also gifted to Grey, as a gesture of compensation for the event by Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki (Turei & Refiti, 2019).

⁷⁵ Flags clearly carried great power and significance on both sides of the conflict. A well-known case is the repatterning of the streets of the Kīngitanga’s main seat of power at Ngāruawāhia in the shape of the British flag, after the town was confiscated and reconfigured by the colonial forces moving south (Pulman, 1865).

Ko Tū, ko Rongo invokes the gods of both war and peace in a *karakia* (incantation, prayer) that was gifted to my reo Māori class at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa by its composer Pierre Lyndon. The entire *karakia* is heard in my voicing of the whispers of the imagined fighters as they ready themselves from the bush during the scene of the ambush recreation, but the actual words are barely audible (line 60, 25:09). The *karakia* evokes the desire for peace but also readiness for armed resistance that was a reality on the part of the reluctant defenders. There is also an allusion here to my speculative belief that the fallen fighter mentioned above was influenced by the prophetic, syncretist Christian-Māori teachings of Pai Mārire.⁷⁶ Also known by Pākehā as ‘Hauhau,’ because of the faith’s references to the spirit of God in the *hau* (wind), peace could become a function of war, and vice versa, and in a nod to *hurihanga* (principle of change), rituals and talismans of both would have been taken into the field.

I suggest that a mixture of factual understanding and the eerie gaps and fissures elicited by the cinematic understanding presented here has therefore been very generative in imagining the complexes of ethnicity, identity, cosmological belief, and the clashes of socio-economic class, which formed in the 1860s and still resonate in ‘The Great War for New Zealand’ today. *Te Kokoti—The Ambush* opens on the plight of the Irish military prisoners involved but quickly moves to Hori Ngākapa and his *whanaunga* (relatives) (lines 50, [21:11](#)):

PAUL

The Irish prisoners are relieved to be walking away from the front of the invasion, but they are still headed for a brutal flogging in Drury. Hori Ngākapa Te Whanaunga puts down his pipe and leads his ope through the bush. His *tūpara*⁷⁷ is ready and he remembers his relative Wetini Taipurotu, killed at Māhoetahi three years before.

A group of proletarian troops, oppressed by an unreformed British army⁷⁸ are about to be pitted against a very motivated party of Māori partisan fighters, who have experienced a

⁷⁶ The nature of the flag the warrior wore is unknown, but the suggestions of ritualisation in his attire are evocative of the influence of the teachings of the Taranaki prophet Te Ua Haumēne in the Waikato. “A ‘niu pole’ with flags was a feature of Hauhau ceremonies. The ‘Riki’ flag or pennant forecasted war, while the ‘Ruru’ flag forecasted peace” (B. Graham, 2021b). The real details of these practices are opaque to me but it seems that *tohunga* (chosen experts) would imbue the poles and flags with an ambiguous mixture of the powers of war and peace, and adherents would receive the *niu* (news) of Te Ua’s gospel through ropes that channelled messages on the wind (Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2019).

⁷⁷ One of the enduring memories of Ngākapa is his preference for the *tūpara* (double-barrelled shotgun) as his field weapon of choice, although he was also known to carry traditional Māori weaponry, such as certain prestigious whalebone and stone *mere* (short clubs).

⁷⁸ Vincent O’Malley paints a picture of the likely fate of the prisoners among the convoy: “The British army that served in New Zealand had yet to be reformed fully in the wake of scathing criticisms during the Crimean War. For rank and file soldiers ... conditions were often appalling” (O’Malley, 2016, p. 349). “They served in a pre-

rapid reversal of fortunes at the hands of a duplicitous and acquisitive colonial governor and settler population. For the four Irish prisoners in the convoy, the objective must be to acquit themselves in the face of the brutality of military law and the vagaries of their superior officers. For Hori Ngākapa and those who follow him, it is the defence of their lands, people, and King that is further bound up with the cosmological necessity of *utu* for their down-country Ngāti Hauā relation Wetini Taipurotu, who had died three years before and 300 kilometres away in a prelude to the Waikato War, in Taranaki.

The *tikanga* (practices, conventions, protocols) of war and peace have been commonly misunderstood in the context of Pākehā assumptions about the forms of Māori tribal relationships and territories.⁷⁹ Ngāti Whanaunga chiefs Kitahi Te Taniwha (son of the famous Horeta Te Taniwha) and Rawiri Te Ua were closely related to Wetini Taipurotu and therefore heavily impacted by his death. There appears to have been a level of division among Ngāti Whanaunga leaders as to how to respond,⁸⁰ but one Rawiri Te Ua vehemently called for Pākehā blood in retaliation. To clarify matters for our main protagonist Hori Ngākapa, he would soon come into possession of a precious *kahu kurī* (dog skin cloak) that Taipurotu had been given by the important Kīngitanga general Wiremu Tāmihana.⁸¹ The *mana* of this cloak was intense, as it had once formed part of the enthronement of the first Māori King Pōtatau Te Wherowhero. On Taipurotu's death, the cloak had been transported to Hauraki for ritual purposes, together with other elements of Taipurotu's *mauri* (life force), such as his hair (Monin, 2001). It was in these politically and cosmologically charged circumstances that the *kahu kurī* was gifted to Hori Ngākapa Te Whanaunga.

Ngākapa's possession of this cloak was a supreme honour but also a mantle, which came with a heavy weight of obligation. He would ultimately pass it on as a peace offering to the government agent James Mackay in 1865; in 1863, it galvanised him as one of the shrewdest military leaders in support of the Māori King movement. The gifting of the dogskin cloak therefore operated at the intersections of both war and peace, and it was capable of compelling action across startling distances of fluid and overlapping time and space.

Like the case of Ambush Road, I felt that I could only get a feeling for this matrix of contested agencies if I travelled to the site of Taipurotu's death. This event is relayed in *Te Kokoti—The Ambush* (lines 51-52, [21:54](#)):

ANTHROBOT
Māhoetahi is 300 kilometres away in
Taranaki.

modern army renowned for its brutality. The pay was poor, living conditions were often squalid, alcoholism was rife and the officers were drawn exclusively from the ruling elite" (p. 359). "One member of the Auckland Militia and Volunteers many years later recalled with horror being forced to watch the public flogging at Ngāruawāhia of six British soldiers—the 'unhuman cruelty' etched forever in his memory" (p.258).

⁷⁹ It is a common criticism of the process of redress of the Waitangi Tribunal that it does not accommodate for the fluidity of spatial boundaries and the boundlessness of negotiated time that is intrinsic to *te ao Māori*.

⁸⁰ Like other Waikato iwi, Hauraki people were extensively involved in lucrative trade with Auckland settlers, but they were also distinct from those further down-country, in their greater vulnerability to an increasingly aggressive colonial government.

⁸¹ The reader may remember from Part One (p.4) that it was Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi Te Waharoa who first coined the phrase 'The Great War for New Zealand.'

PAUL

Exactly, I went there, through the cornfield. The māhoe tree is gone and so is the official plaque⁸² that marks the the battle where Ngākapa's whanaunga was killed. But time is an intensity that cuts across a vortex of relations,⁸³ between stillness and movement, beyond borders and straight lines. The site of the ambush is now a crossroads of so many other times⁸⁴ and all their distant and overlapping relations, from Tāmaki to Hauraki to Taranaki.

These words are associated with literal images of my journey to the Māhoetahi battle site in February 2021, but as we hear "time is an intensity" the connection is soon also made to the site of the kokoti (ambush) via a repetition of its location on the map of *The Seat of War*. This time, however, the map is also layered with the *takarangi* (falling sky) double spiral drawn by the Tainui *tohunga* (expert, adept) Pei Te Hurinui Jones (Figure 1.6.) For me, the *takarangi* communicates the multidimensional temporal flows of *whakapapa* (see King et al.'s definitions in Figure 1.1) and a moment at which darkness is pierced by light in an act of creative relationality. With the line "Exactly, I went there..." (22:01), Eric Zann's eerie musical composition *Ouroboindra* comes in to play. It is a rhyme with earlier moments of oneiric lucidity, but this time there is no Tortoise and Hare or bubbling oily projections. What we see instead is a recording of my shadow behind a tripod in the soft materiality of black and white Super 8mm film (22:34). The shot then pans right and tilts upwards to the site of the 1863 ambush, before we cut to the Ambush Road sign itself. These elements are all mediated by Pei Te Hurinui Jones' double spiral⁸⁵ as we are invited to turn within a vortex and touch multiple superposed points in the sphere of space and time.

When the Waikato War became inevitable, upon General Cameron's action of crossing the Mangatawhiri River, a contingent of Ngāti Hauā fighters, probably led by sons of Wiremu Tāmihana, formed part of a defensive flank to the rifle pits of Koheroa⁸⁶ in the vicinity of Paparata, to the East (Monin, 2001, p. 190). As Hori Ngākapa's *taua* (war party) prepared to execute the ambush near their position, the Ngāti Hauā fighters would have been waiting and listening for the satisfaction of *utu* (balance, payment, vengeance, reply, justice). Ironically, the Kīngitanga general Wiremu Tāmihana's home village of Peria, near

⁸² It is not uncommon to find bronze plaques removed from official New Zealand Wars place marker monuments. Images of controversial historical Pākehā leaders like George Grey are often also defaced on information boards. Pākehā reactionaries have also been known to vandalise Māori-focussed monuments.

⁸³ Here time is less a spatialised or delineated 'period,' and more a resonating pattern of energy or emotion projected from primordial beings and ancestors (Mika, 2021; Royal, 2021).

⁸⁴ "Many other times" here is a reference to the many ancestors and descendants who have inhabited the extraordinary crossroads of time/space that is the *wāhi* (time-space location) of Ambush Road.

⁸⁵ The specific name of Jones' *takarangi* is *Te Kore-makiki-hi-rere* (The Formless Void Pierced by a Line Extending into Space) (P. T. H. Jones, 2013, p. 156)

⁸⁶ Koheroa is usually cited as the first battle on the morning of the first day (July 17th, 1863) of the Waikato War, but it can also be argued that it began when Grey preconceived the invasion on his return as governor from South Africa and began building the Great South Road in 1861.

contemporary Matamata, is often cited as a pre-war model of willing and Māori-led incorporation of Pākehā beliefs, culture, and technologies for Māori benefit. The *papakainga* (village) of Tuhimata, to the northwest of Ambush Road, would have been a similar haven of empowered development, despite the rolling crises of pandemics and uneven economic exploitation that had occurred since colonial contact (E. Tuhimata & B. Leonard, personal communication, September 21, 2023). As we emerge from the numinous vortex of time in line 52 above, these simple facts are acknowledged in the next part of the timeline (lines 53-54, [22:54](#)):

ANTHROBOT

But the Great South Road brings the
tools, crops, animals and even the
transcendent beliefs of the colonists
and people are clearly thirsty for them.

PAUL

They are and make good use of them. But
they prefer to drink them on their own
terms and without the hypocrisy⁸⁷. But
the road has been built to subdue rival
ways of being, not to converse with
them.

As we have established, Ngākapa's resolve includes the pressure for *utu* that the waka expedition of 1851 and Wetini Taipurotu's dog skin cloak have bestowed upon him, but it must also stem from other, more generalised causes for suspicion of the material forces that are arranged against him, forces that are also oddly spectral, elusive, and contradictory. He and his people live in close vicinity to the seat of colonial government in Auckland and while they can clearly see an increasing military build-up and threat, they must play a delicate game. Open hostility cannot be declared toward the government, but Ngākapa has still dedicated the *tūpuna maunga* (ancestral mountain) and highest peak of the Hunua Ranges, Kohukohunui, as a *poū tūāhu* (ritual altar) in support of the kaupapa of the Kīngitanga Māori. Kohukohunui is a 'great mist' that now veils and affirms his intent, as he moves on the open ground with his Ngāti Hauā comrades and other sympathetic peoples, between Pūkorokoro (Miranda) and the Waikato River and along secluded tracks in the Hunua Ranges. He must have constantly reflected on the weird forces that were ranged against him (line 54, [23:30](#)):

PAUL

How can such a narrow idea exert such
power, asks Ngākapa, with its forked
tongue, ghostly commerce and now the
canons? He must slow it down, he must cut
it off, before it creates a desert, and
calls it peace.

⁸⁷ "Wiremu Tāmihana ... was an early believer and one who would later be baffled by what he viewed as the failure of European politicians and officials to live by the commandments they professed to hold dear" (O'Malley, 2016, p. 58).

There is therefore much more than a collision of military actions in the encounter between the British convoy and the war parties of the defenders. There is also an encounter of *worldviews* that reveal important oppositions, as well as mutual entanglements, in the enfolded cosmologies and lifeways of the two parties. The *wāhi* (time-space location) of Ambush Road therefore generates an eerie mesh of agency and compulsion, at the frontier of relations between an alienated capitalist space-time and that of Ngākapa's Indigenous world. Fisher elicits this paradox of the human-more-than-human in one of his most intriguing passages in *The Weird and the Eerie*:

A sense of the eerie seldom clings to enclosed and inhabited domestic spaces; we find the eerie more readily in landscapes partially emptied of the human. What happened to produce these ruins, this disappearance? What kind of entity was involved? What kind of thing was it that emitted such an eerie cry? As we can see from these examples, the eerie is fundamentally tied up with questions of agency. What kind of agent is acting here? Is there an agent at all? These questions can be posed in a psychoanalytic register—if we are not who we think we are, what are we?—but they also apply to the forces governing capitalist society. Capital is at every level an eerie entity: conjured out of nothing, capital nevertheless exerts more influence than any allegedly substantial entity. The metaphysical scandal of capital brings us to the broader question of the agency of the immaterial and the inanimate: the agency of minerals and landscape for authors like Nigel Kneale and Alan Garner, and the way that “we” “ourselves” are caught up in the rhythms, pulsions and patternings of non-human forces. (Fisher, 2016, p. 11)

The British authors that Fisher cites here are enacting a process of re-discovery of *the eerie* in the context of a capitalist society that, in its banality, denies even its own eerie nature, as it simultaneously regenerates it in ever weirder new forms. Ngākapa, on the other hand, is a much more direct agent of the eerie *mana* of the *atua* (gods) and of the *mauri* (life force) of the land. In other words, the European literary experimentalists that Fisher cites are *re-enchanters of strangely disenchanted world*, whereas the Indigenous agent Ngākapa is *a defender of the already enchanted*. I bring this opposition to the fore and then problematise it in lines 55-56, as we see a Midjourney co-created image of a 19th century telegraph wire and insulator in the forest ([23:55](#)):

ANTHROBOT

If I were him, I would have first
destroyed the telegraph line that
follows the road. Is there something in
his cosmology that dreads its crackling
silence?

PAUL

No, Ngākapa is a practical man. He
doesn't want to reveal his movements.

It is an enduring mystery as to why the Hauraki partisans did not attack the relatively easy target of the telegraphic wire that followed the line of the military road into the Waikato.

Despite the strategic significance of telegraphy during the invasion of the Waikato, surprisingly there are no records of Māori attempts to cut the telegraph wires, chop down the telegraph poles or shoot out the insulators. Major-General Sir James Alexander thought they may have refrained from severing the lines for fear of revealing their own movements. Alexander Brodie, the man in

charge of the construction of the line, on the contrary, thought 'they [Māori] always evinced a great dread of it and its powers.' (Barton & Ritchie, 2021, p. 35)

Electronic communication was a cutting edge technology in 1863, and it was deployed on the Great South Road within only a decade of its first ever use, by the British army in Crimea. It would still have been novel to the British and certainly an object of wonder from a Māori worldview. I chose to resist the Anthrobot at this point, however, with an accent on the practicality of the Māori fighters' tactics over a romanticised "dread" of the power that the electrified wires might have represented.

This is taken a step further by a sudden and unexpected narrative digression on the part of the Anthrobot, which reflects the question back upon the society of the colonists that is itself grappling with tensions between 'spiritualism,' and the mysterious workings of the new technologies of electricity (lines 57-60, [24:15](#)):

ANTHROBOT

Wait, the evening after the battle, as the fighters are nursing their lineal wounds, a performer called Professor Bushell is entertaining colonists with his performance of an 'electro-biology' show. It is pitched as a 'final refutation of spiritualism'.

PAUL

Where on Earth did that come from?

ANTHROBOT

It is a flash forward from the archives, a true story and oddly relevant don't you think? Europeans opposing spirit to science and yet, it remains a mysterious spectacle. But I'm distracting from your story.

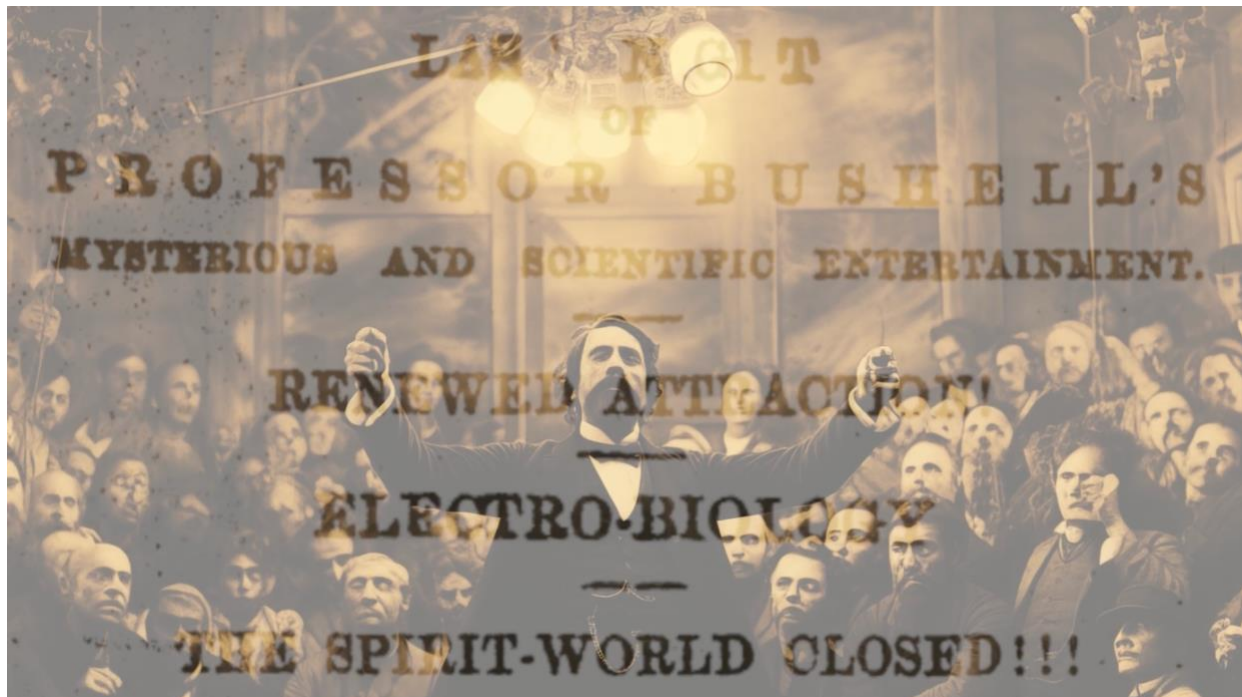
PAUL

You are, but that is curious indeed..

Professor Bushell was an actual performer who entertained audiences the length of the country and did in fact perform on the evening of July 17th, 1863 (the day of the ambush). There are no extant images of his show, and so in this part of the sequence I deploy a Midjourney AI co-created image of his performance, which was as startlingly generative of imagination as it was disturbing. The faces of many of the audience are particularly grotesque, but, in contrast with the case of the soldier at the end of *The Time Being Two* ([19:59](#)), I decided not to adapt the image in Photoshop but to allow its artifacts to reveal the synthetic and deformed nature of the image and elicit their strange effects.

Figure 2.12.

Screenshot of Midjourney Generated Image of Professor Bushell's 'Electro-Biology' Performance Superposed with Newsprint



Note. Midjourney AI created image superposed with a scanned archived newspaper clipping from the Papers Past online archive ("Last Night of Professor Bushell's Mysterious and Scientific Entertainment," 1863).

These digressions I make alongside the Anthrobot, into the philosophical ambivalences that circle around the 'religious' and the 'spiritual' versus the strange materialities of the modern technology of electricity, set the ground for developments in later parts of the film, but they are also designed to subvert rote cultural assumptions about their qualities. The prevailing idea is one of an *unfolding* and *enfolding* of a *weird and eerie* alternative reality, in a culturally mutual vertical time and voice. There is still, however, a battle to be had with the instrumental pragmatics of a colonial government machine that would "create a desert, and call it peace" (end of line 54, [23:43](#)). This line is a paraphrasing of the Roman historian Tacitus, who is quoting the Caledonian resistor of the Roman empire, Calgacus. It is also the final line of Peter Watkins' film presentation of the 1746 Battle of Culloden (Watkins, 1964).⁸⁸

Watkin's film is not only a vivid protest against the brutality of war in general, but an evocative approach to its cultural and political impacts, particularly in relation to early English incursions on its neighbouring nations and the distinct ways of life in Scotland and

⁸⁸ Interestingly, Watkins' film has been seen as a modern, newsreel style Vietnam War parable, and I also imagine the Irish of the 18th Regiment, 'Paddy's Blackguards,' as they were known in the New Zealand Wars, as comparable to the co-opted minorities of the Vietnam war. Roman analogies were drawn by early commentators on the Waikato invasion, particularly with regard to road building and the ensuing policies of land confiscation (O'Malley, 2016, p. 652).

Ireland. Interestingly, the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand, Augustus Selwyn, anticipates a comparison of this nature in a journalist's report about the ambush in the *Daily Southern Cross*, the day after Hori Ngākapa's attack in Ramarama:

The Bishop of New Zealand is still up here and has at length warned the settlers of their insecurity; and singularly enough has, on more than one occasion, drawn a historical parallel between Maoris and the Scots at Culloden, and the united Irishmen—they are fighting for a nationality, and of course should not be blamed. History is very much at fault, however, if any comparison can be drawn between the Maori rebellion and a handful of an ancient Christian race, fighting against fearful odds for their sovereign—the descendant of an illustrious line of kings, who had cast himself upon their sympathies and affection. ("The War in Auckland: Engagements at Shepherd's Bush and Koheroa; Heavy Losses," 1863)

The jingoistic tone of the reporter is dismissive, and the compromised position of mediation taken by Bishop Selwyn himself has become controversial (O'Malley, 2016, p. 487), but the bishop's connection of the Kīngitanga Māori to the Scottish Highlanders and the "united Irishmen" is as interesting as the reporter's refusal to accept it. Governor Grey and his 'limited circle' overshadow the history of opponents of the Pākehā war in the Waikato, such as the Chief Justice William Martin, the newspaper editor and politician John Williamson, and, of course, the Irish revolutionary and pro-Kīngitanga militia leader Michael O'Connor (Bender, 2017; Binney, 2016; Hamilton, 2020). William Martin is an oft-cited example of a leader who indeed used "the brooding sense of wrong" felt by the Irish as an argument against confiscation in the Waikato (O'Malley, 2016, p. 647).

This variation of opinion within the Pākehā colonial government, the clergy, the media, and settler communities of the 1860s should be acknowledged; and the stories of Irish troops, like those of the Māori who collaborated with the British army in Aotearoa, still complicate easy generalisations of a war 'between Pākehā and Māori.' There is also no doubt that Irish (particularly Catholic)⁸⁹ troops also suffered discrimination among their English or Anglo-Irish 'superiors', and that the Irish prisoners at the site of Ambush Road carried their consciousness of a history of land dispossession, famine, and consequent exploitation by the British imperium to their fight in the colonies. I have therefore taken the specificity of their role in the microcosm of the event of the ambush very seriously as a broadening device for the national narrative of what Wiremu Tāmihana called 'The Great War for New Zealand.' However, there is also a perennial and distinct lack of complexity about the enormous and disproportionate losses of life and land that Waikato Māori would sustain during and after the war. Hundreds of thousands of Irish and Scots would also become direct beneficiaries of that loss.

Peter Watkins' film *Culloden* (1964) deals with just this combination of complexity and bald injustice by homing in on the fine details that are brought to life in the stylistic immediacy of a contemporary war report.⁹⁰ Within my limited production means, I attempted to emulate

⁸⁹ In 2012, I personally attended a ceremony of the unveiling of headstones for Catholic soldiers of the Royal Irish 18th Regiment who were refused an acknowledged site of burial at St. Johns Anglican Church in Drury, during the Waikato War. Members of the New Zealand army and the Irish ambassador also attended.

⁹⁰ Watkin's film was allegedly also a commentary on its own historical context of the 'American War' in Vietnam, and as such it mimics the style of direct and embedded war reportage that emerged during that conflict.

this exemplar in the voicing and depiction of the actual battle in *Te Kokoti—The Ambush*. In line 60 of the film, Hori Ngākapa and his fellow Hauraki defenders are faced with a battle that will bring their emotions, their energies, and their *mana* into a very specific focus (line 60 contd. [25:02](#)):

PAUL
...but time is ticking. For now, the ope
taua [war party] hide their movements,
waiting quietly with their kin and
whispering karakia. The death of their
cousin is an unbearable burden. They must
slow down the machine. The flow of events
must override the clocks...

Figure 2.13.

Screenshots of Midjourney Generated Images Combined with Images of Metal Cast Figurines



Note. Images of metal cast New Zealand Wars sculpture figurines, purchased and adapted from Empress Miniatures in England for the ambush scene, are superposed with Midjourney generated images of a nineteenth century Great South Road (left, [25:04](#)) and an image of a man in an ambiguous industrial setting smashing a clock with a hammer (right), as the first volley of muskets is fired ([25:36](#)).

An image of a swaying pocket watch ([25:31](#)) freezes, as a Midjourney generated figure smashes a glass clock (Figure 2.13 [right]) to begin the battle (line 60 contd. ([25:36](#))):

PAUL
...The first volley kills two men and a
horse as the convoy is split down the
middle. Time is longer now but life is
short. The Irish prisoners scramble for
guns and redemption. Michael Malone, a
labourer from Castlerock, runs into the
bush after the attackers. He'll
distinguish himself but will still be
flogged. He'll fight on for years but
will finally desert his regiment and

disappear into the bush for good. Black powder is burning. Muskets, tomahawks and bayonets are flashing. Half of the soldiers retreat to Martyn's farmhouse and the others skirmish their way down the road to Drury. The prisoner Jack Lawler, a painter from Dublin, carries James Scott, a weaver from Drumgath to cover behind an overturned cart, but Scott is shot again and killed while still on Lawler's back.

There were two key sources that enabled me to emulate the aforementioned element of newsreel verité in Watkins' work. The basic outline of events, including the status and role of the prisoners, closely follows J. H. Balclutha's detailed account of the battle mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (Balclutha, 1895). An additional level of biographical detail was only possible with the extremely valuable resource of the *Soldiers of Empire* project at Victoria University, Wellington (MacDonald, 2018). It was from this emerging digital database of the British nineteenth century garrisons in Aotearoa-New Zealand that I discovered the places of origin, former professions, and details of the fates of the Irish prisoners (Figure 2.14.).

Figure 2.14.

Details of Three of the Four Irish Prisoners Involved in the Kokoti/Ambush

Rank	Name	Origin	Profession	Reason became ineffective	Place became ineffective	Date became ineffective
Private	Michael Malone	Castlerock	Laborer	Deserted	Auckland	1869
Private	Lawler John (Jack)	Dublin	Painter	Sentenced to penal servitude	Auckland	1864
Private	James Scott	Drumgath	Weaver	Killed in action	G. South Road	1863

Note. These biographical details were compiled by cross-referencing several databases of enlistment and medal list information from the Soldiers of Empire database: www.soldiersofempire.nz (MacDonald & Lenihan, 2018). Special thanks to Rebecca Lenihan for her assistance in processing the various records.

Cont'd. overleaf

These three men are referenced directly in line 60 of the film script. The name of the dead man, James Scott, is, of course, also on the white pyramid memorial in the Pōkeno cemetery, with additional details confirmed in the records of that cemetery compiled by ‘the old forester,’ historian and restorer of Queen’s Redoubt, Ian Barton (Barton & Ritchie, 2021, p. 261). Ian himself also features in *Tuning the Clock* (line 30, 12:04). The broader historical context of their status in the convoy has already been sketched in the earlier section of the film, *The Time Taken*; Balclutha’s account adds a further personalised backstory and some curious details of the days before the soldiers met their predicament (Balclutha, 1895):

At daylight on the morning of July 4, 1863, one of Green's fine old ships, the Elizabeth Anne Bright, with the second battalion Royal Irish on board, dropped anchor in Auckland harbour... the colonel gave the command, ‘Quick march,’ the band struck up that splendid quickstep “Every land’s my home,” and we were on our way to the front. It being the 4th of July the town was gaily decorated, the Stars and Stripes mingling with the Union Jack everywhere,⁹¹ and while we passed through Queen street the people kept up a continuous cheer, and the windows were crowded with ladies waving handkerchiefs.

They proceeded to march in the rain to “the wretched, ill-drained, dirty camp” of the Ōtāhuhu barracks, where they exchanged their red tunics for the serge blue jumpers characteristic of the 1860s British contingents in New Zealand. After several days in that dank environment, they proceeded up the newly built section of the Great South Road towards the staging post of the invasion at Queen’s Redoubt in Pōkeno. Balclutha goes on to reveal details of the arrest of the Irish in the lead-up to the kokoti/ambush:

Captain Ring, of the 18th (the Royal Irish) was ordered to return to Drury with the convoy that accompanied the general to the Queen’s redoubt, and also four prisoners of the captain’s company who were just remanded for court-martial for broaching cargo on board the ship they came out in. When the regiment disembarked the captain’s company was left in charge until the regimental baggage should have been discharged, and while the officers were absent on shore at Auckland the men made too free with some of the latter’s brandy and wine. For this they were to be tried by court-martial, and proceeded with the general to the Queen’s redoubt, where they were to be tried. But General Cameron, apprehending trouble very soon with the enemy, thought his officers would have something of more importance to take up their time with than by sitting on courts-martial so the men were ordered to return to Drury to be tried there. The general’s apprehensions proved only too true. On the 17th the convoy, in command of Captain Ring, on the return march was attacked close to Shepherd’s Bush. The attack was well planned, for the enemy was on every side of them—right and left, front and rear. (Balclutha, 1895)

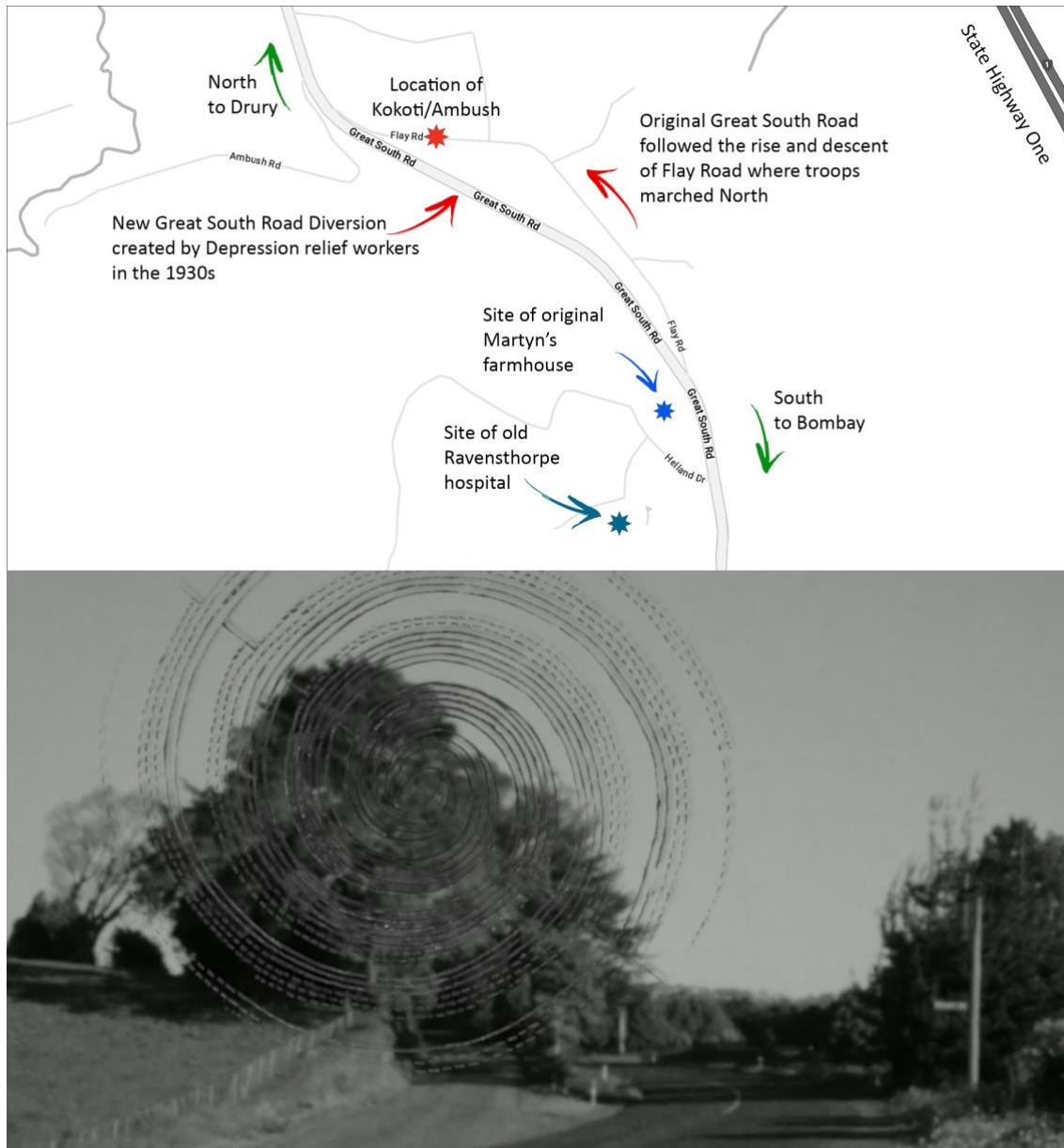
It is relatively well-known that this group of around fifty troops and several horses and drays was heading north and away from the front on the first day of the invasion of the Waikato. The exact location of the first volley, at around 2pm on July 17th, 1863, is unclear, however, in the murk of old maps and archival records, but the old soldier Balclutha gives us the most evocative starting points. Building on these basic facts, a walk with my mentor and Hauraki actor/performer Pita Turei (line 30, 12.23), with his knowledge and intuitions of Māori fighting tactics and *tikanga*, was instrumental in finding the most probable site of the initial

⁹¹ It is worth noting that the American Civil War battle of Gettysburg had occurred only the day before the Irish troops’ arrival in Auckland. The interesting relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand and the US in this period had direct bearings on contemporary attitudes to the Waikato War at the time and even factions among the emerging regional Pākehā governments. Powers in Dunedin, indeed, threatened to secede over the costs of North Island wars, while generally supporting the US Confederacy. The predominantly Union supporting government in Auckland at times even took moral umbrage at Māori practices of slavery (Thorpe, 2011).

volley of bullets. We walked the length of the location, and Pita helped resolve some of the contradictory information contained in newspaper reports and later studies. Rather than situating the ambush at the southern end of Flay Road, as others had done, he interpreted the site according to what would have motivated its selection among the defenders.

Figure 2.15.

Map and Screenshot of the Site of the Kokoti/Ambush



Note. The map of the site of the kokoti/ambush (top) has been deduced from an amalgamation of sources referenced in this chapter and hīkoi and kōrero with Pita Turei and others. The Depression era road diversion and site of Ravensthorpe hospital on this map are also important to the final section of the film, *Shovels and Stars*. The scanned Super 8mm screenshot from *Forever in Time* (bottom, [22:45](#)) looks South at the intersection of Flay, Great South, and Ambush Roads and is a view towards the site of the ambush site, on the road under the trees on the left.

Pita's argument was that the convoy would have been funnelled between an area of high land and a nearby stream, as they descended the hill of the original Great South Road (now Flay Road), just before it meets the modern Great South Road opposite the Ambush Road junction. Here the *ope taua* (war party) would have had multiple routes of escape toward the old pre-colonial trail of the Ararimu path and the nearby staging posts of defence at Maketu Pā and Paparata. From there, direct access back to their Hauraki homes or other hidden bases in the Hunua Ranges would have been possible. Such considerations were common, noted Pita, on the part of the men in the bush who were *whanaunga* (relatives) and thus highly motivated to achieve their goals with a minimum of casualties.

What we achieved together was not only the basis for a creative interpretation of the event of the kokoti/ambush, but a work of original history in understanding its nature. I will now make some remarks on the set-modelling of the ambush site and its warrior characters, before finishing this chapter with a commentary on the curious discoveries and realisations, which the Anthrobot appears to make on its own accord.

2.5.1. Modelling the Encounter

I took Pita's insights a step further when, with the help of expert wargaming modeller David Mulder and Ngāti Pāoa artist and supporter of the kaupapa, Hēmi Anaru, we created a model set of our battle on the Great South Road, complete with laser cut wooden carts and handmade pūriri and tōtara trees for the exhibition *Ghost South Road* (Janman et al., 2017). A bushland surface made from a brushed and singed 'teddy bear fur' textile was made, and intricate sculptured cast pewter horses and fighters were acquired from the stock of English modellers Empress Miniatures of Oxfordshire. Miniatures 'wargaming' is a hobbyist practice with a very particular history and a significant contemporary following in modern Aotearoa New Zealand. As we were outsiders, David Mulder was essential in enabling us privileged access to this subculture.

Such modelling techniques have occasionally also been used in historical dioramas with notable critical limitations. Figurines have historically featured in colonial 'victory narratives,' for example, such as the dioramas of the Sudan and Zulu Wars of British conquest that were popular in late 19th century Pākehā society. Today they are still prominent in recreations of seminal 'nation-building' events, such as the ANZAC battles at Gallipoli modelled in the long running, Peter Jackson inspired exhibition at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (2015).⁹²

⁹² As Vincent O'Malley has argued, the cult of the ANZAC can be seen as a conspicuous diversion from and even a contributing factor to the erasure of the more difficult and perhaps more significant 'nation building' events of the Waikato invasion (O'Malley, 2016). The use of miniatures and their inverse, the Weta Workshop crafted *enlargements* of the ANZAC fighters at Gallipoli, does serve to bring into relief, however, the conspicuous absence of exhibits on the New Zealand Wars from our national museum.

Figure 2.16.

Series of Images of the 'Gaming Table' in the Ghost South Road Exhibition



Note. These images are from documentation of the exhibition where the ambush set was displayed as a 'wargaming table' at Nathan Homestead, Manurewa in June 2017. Participating artist Hēmi Anaru (Ngāti Paoa) is seen moving some figurines on the far left as Pita Turei looks on.

Notable imaginative progenitors of wargaming practice are the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson and the science fiction writer H.G. Wells who were both known to experiment with wargaming figures and scenarios as imaginative devices (Stevenson, 1898) (H. G. Wells, 1913). We therefore took wargaming seriously as a potential method of reimagination and the promotion of audience engagement during the exhibition in Manurewa. There are a very small number of practitioners who have publicly 'gamed' the New Zealand Wars in Aotearoa (Hermans, 2022). We quickly discovered that this was problematic however in the context of our own *kaupapa* of culturally responsive truth and reconciliation, because the culture of wargaming habitually demands a quite different kind of engagement. There is, for example, a much greater emphasis on details of uniforms and equipment, the technical craft of their construction,⁹³ and the tactical elements of the game, than on critical historical interpretation. Interestingly, our 'gaming table' was still a provocative presence in gauging audience sensitivities about the traumas of colonial warfare and its generational impacts.

The deployment of models in the recreation of events in *Forever in Time* has thus been characterised by a third register, which is simultaneously an *intimate evocation of* and *distance from* the traumatic memories of this wartime history. To my knowledge, this is an approach that has not been used before in cinematic understandings of the New Zealand Wars, which have tended toward more literal dramatic recreation and representation. Modelling is a strategy that has been employed in other docu-fictional contexts of trauma, most notably Rithy Panh's *The Missing Picture* (trailer posted by Strand Releasing, 2013) and Jeff Malmberg's *Marwencol* (trailer posted by The Cinema Guild, 2010) in which historical

⁹³ This has been unevenly applied, however. A controversial diorama existed for many years in the café/museum opposite the extremely important Waikato War battle site of Rangiriri. Probably in the absence of available figures at the time, it crudely deployed Native American figures (for Māori) and American Civil War figures (for the British). It was removed in the mid-2010s by the new Māori café owners, as other sites of memory were developed in the area under the auspices of Tainui. There is also a diorama that forms part of the 'interpretation centre' at the preservation site of Queen's Redoubt in Pōkeno, which is a collaborative work in progress between Pākehā historians and Ngāti Tamaoho.

and personal moments that have been *unworlded* by traumatic erasure/amnesia are *reworlded* in the symbolic realm of the models that explore them.

I would like to suggest that this new mode or technique of presentation of the New Zealand Wars, like the deployment of generative AI in the work, has not only enabled a very economical and interesting production process, but has also produced a distanced space for working through the kinds of socio-cultural and creative ‘paralysis’ discussed in *Tuning the Clock*. The figurines seem to provide a disquieting presence, but with the right kind of framing, they also generate a fascination with the strangely familiar or *unhomely* relationship of metal models to human subjects. As Fisher (2016) argues, the “examples of the *unheimlich* [unhomely], which Freud furnishes—doubles, mechanical entities that appear human, prostheses—call up a certain kind of disquiet” (p. 9). Like the road sign at Ambush Road, which points to a set of barely articulated realities, the metal figurines open an egress to an eerie worm hole of the psyche and history:

Why is there something here when there should be nothing? Why is there nothing here when there should be something? The unseeing eyes of the dead; the bewildered eyes of an amnesiac - these provoke a sense of the eerie, just as surely as an abandoned village or a stone circle do. (Fisher, 2016, p. 12)

Under Fisher’s broader definition of the Freudian *unheimlich*, there is of course the capacity for terror in such places and objects, but there is also a quality of disarming fascination. The metal figurines with which we modelled the *kokoti* (ambush) in *Forever in Time* are therefore a mediation of trauma which also have the potential, as Fisher puts it, to alter the ways in which we engage with ways of thinking that are in the process of becoming obsolete.

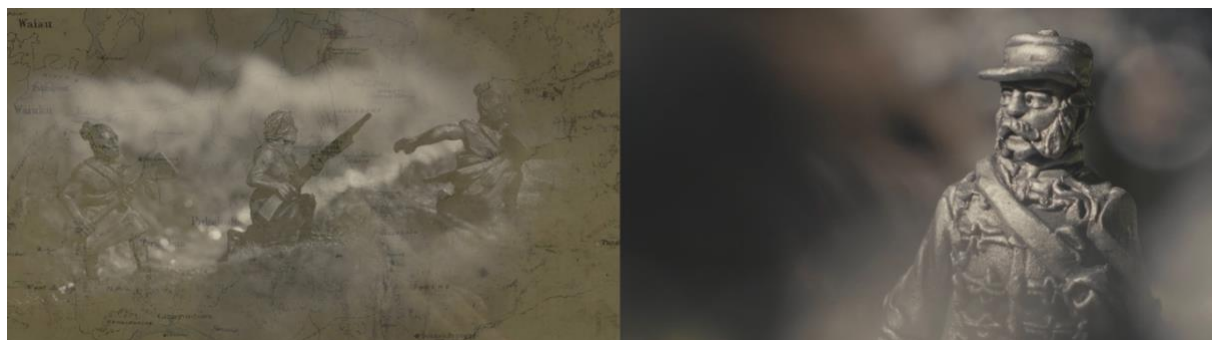
If the encounter with the strange here is not straightforwardly pleasurable (the pleasurable would always refer to previous forms of satisfaction), it is not simply unpleasant either: there is an enjoyment in seeing the familiar and the conventional becoming outmoded—an enjoyment which, in its mixture of pleasure and pain, has something in common with what Lacan called *jouissance*.

The eerie also entails a disengagement from our current attachments. But, with the eerie, this disengagement does not usually have the quality of shock that is typically a feature of the weird. The serenity that is often associated with the eerie—think of the phrase eerie calm—has to do with detachment from the urgencies of the everyday. The perspective of the eerie can give us access to the forces which govern mundane reality but which are ordinarily obscured, just as it can give us access to spaces beyond mundane reality altogether. It is this release from the mundane, this escape from the confines of what is ordinarily taken for reality, which goes some way to account for the peculiar appeal that the eerie possesses. (Fisher, 2016, p. 13)

Cont’d. overleaf...

Figure 2.17.

Two Screenshots of Metal Cast Figures at Two Moments of the Ambush Scene



Note. Left: Hauraki fighters (21:42) quietly approach the site of the ambush with a mix of muskets and traditional weapons. Right: The model representing the Irish Captain Ring (26:12) is particularly strange in its elaborate uniformed detail but with ghostly, pupil-less eyes.

2.5.2. The Anthrobot Comes to Life

The actual events at the historical Ambush Road end with the arrival of British reinforcements and a rolling skirmish down the Great South Road, before the invading soldiers retreat to their camps and redoubts and the defenders disappear along bush paths. As the smell of black powder munitions fades in the wind, the ambush action sequence of *Forever in Time* also comes to an end. Only the cosmic resonance of the veil between life and death remains, along with the discovery of the aforementioned warrior, clad in three shirts and a nine foot long 'Hauhau' flag (end of line 60, 26:48).

For the Anthrobot, there are other connections and associations that can be made instantaneously across time and space, in ways that are foreign to human experience. Since the interlude of Professor Bushell's strange 'Electro-Biology Show' earlier in this section of the film (line 57, 24:22), evidence of the Anthrobot's weird and emergent creativity have begun to be revealed. Perhaps wires are getting crossed, but real associations are beginning to be made. Either way, new impulses, phantasms, and simulations are being generated in the Anthrobot's circuits. For us, the audience, the ghostly machine's new discoveries are laced with a note of humour and relief at moments of the film that have become relentlessly serious (lines 61-62, [27:17](#)):

ANTHROBOT
Something strange is happening, Paul.
I seem to be confusing data with
meaning. I see a xeroxed painting in
a book of amateur history, but the
image is vague. Wait... I've found
the original painting in the
stairwell at the Waipā District
Council offices. The Māori defenders

are now apparent, but it's all still so improbable. There is a strange woman at the centre wearing a flag. She seems to have a moustache and there's an incongruous man in an ANZAC uniform. Are these seeds of human substance that are beyond me, Paul?

PAUL

I don't know... but they are ironic. The ope here is cartoonish and the moustachioed woman is bizarre. This is a fantasy, but the first ANZACs were Australian militia who fought against Māori. In the real ambush... men are bleeding and carrying their dead. For the defenders, today is a victory.

The Anthrobot's discovery never happened in reality, but the point here is that, given the state of rapid progress in contemporary technologies, we are quite happy to believe that *it could* happen. The conversation here was completely composed by myself but it is also a logical continuation of the same momentum generated by the initial co-creation with the 'DeepStory' generative transformer model discussed in *Tuning the Clock*, namely: "*I want to help you to meet our neighbours, the ancestors.*" It was this uncanny⁹⁴ phrase, which, as I have said before, sparked the "co-creative" or "crealectic" (de Miranda, 2019) process that made the rest of *Forever in Time* possible.

It was, of course, myself who circuitously tracked down the reference of the blackened and fascinatingly obscure xeroxed image of the 'ambush' in Maurice Lennard's *Road to War*, to a stairwell behind a passkey protected door of the Waipā District Council offices. It was there that John Elder Moultray's very peculiar 1897 painting appeared in all its details, and, near the end of *Te Kokoti—The Ambush*, the Anthrobot 'sees' it in the lens of a networked CCTV camera. Lennard labels the prolific Scottish artist's depiction *Attack on Convoy* (Lennard, 1986, p. 45) but the actual title is *The Fugitives* (Park, 2012, p. 79). The presence of civilians is incongruous with most reports, although one newspaper observer strangely claims that settlers' belongings were strewn about the road in the aftermath of the ambush. The local farmers, the Martin family, had also recently taken an escort away from the area.

⁹⁴ The association of the 'uncanny valley' is useful here in its popular meaning of a certain perplexity at the apparent 'humanness' of the products of algorithmic code. As Fisher points out, however, 'uncanny' is an inadequate translation of Freud's *unheimlich*, which is closer to an 'unhomely' or strangely familiar human interiority. For Fisher, the more interesting affect of the *weird and eerie* is that it permits us a view of human experience from the perspective of an 'outside' that resists ordinary human categories (Fisher, 2016, pp. 9–10).

Figure 2.18.

John Elder Moultray's The Fugitives in its Xeroxed and Oil-Painted Forms



Note. Left: In the xeroxed reproduction of Moultray's painting ([27:33](#)) that appears in Maurice Lennard's *The Road to War*, the Māori attackers are invisible. It was not until I found the original painting (right) at the Waipā Council in Cambridge that I realised they were there at all. The Anthrobot finds it on CCTV in the film ([27:42](#)).

The Anthrobot's engagement with the varied traces of Moultray's painting serve multiple purposes in the final lines of this *Te Kokoti-The Ambush*. There is, firstly, a reiteration of the Anthrobot's failure to embody a life principle set out in opening (line 2, 1:36) of the film, with its uncanny "confusion of data and human meaning" that seems to occur in line 61.⁹⁵ The additional facts that I then bring to the dialogue (line 62) even seem to trigger a kind of moral judgement in the Anthrobot, as part of its emergent historical hermeneutic. As the technocratically-weighted machine reviews the case, the oily green, blue, and purple surface returns to the screen and the Anthrobot attempts to reconcile competing human qualities (line 63, [28:44](#)):

ANTHROBOT

I feel the need to reduce our
conversation, Paul. The Hare is caught
napping as the Tortoise crosses the
line. Creativity and perseverance
overcome power, anger and arrogance...

Another purpose of presenting the journey of Moultray's painting, from its xeroxed reproduction in a work of amateur history to the original oil-painted embodiment in the council stairwell, is to evoke the endurance of a renascent subaltern temporality. The emergent visibility of the Māori fighters in the full colour and confidence of an act of *utu* invokes King et al.'s sixth theme of Māori temporality or *mana motuhake* (King et al., 2023, p. 261) as the potency to determine their well-being against the abusive asymmetrical power of the colonial government in Auckland. It is by no means an accurate representation of

⁹⁵ I have so far left open the difficult question of machine 'consciousness,' but lean toward the AI ethicist Mo Gawdat's assumption that if 'AI' seems to be conscious and creative then for all intents and purposes *it is*, even if the other nature of its consciousness and creativity is opaque to us. As products of our invention, however, humans have a special responsibility to positively influence our growing 'other intelligences,' as, like our human children, they will inevitably grow beyond our control (Gawdat, 2021).

Māori Kingite fighters that comes into view with a dissolve into the colour and detail of the original painting—they would most likely have been dressed in contemporary European clothes.⁹⁶ In this virtual time-space, The Anthrobot is nonetheless prompted to enact an aspirational form of temporality, a *retrofuturism*, in which the future is activated by the past in the vivid present of the discovery of the truer details of Moultray's painting (line 63 [contd.] [29:02](#)).

ANTHROBOT

...(contd.) A voice from the future is
informed by the past and made in the
present.

The further importance of this retrofuturism is that it imitates the multi-directional Indigenous time that King et al. speak of, which resists a normative continuum of past, present, future, and instead favours a self-determining notion of *future, past, present*. In other words, the future happens first and is then informed by the past and activated in an ever-moving-present, and so on, in a cycle of never-ending and non-linear beginnings and intentions. This is of course counter-intuitive to me—the Anthrobot's interlocutor, and its enigmatic revelations are not quite understood. Neither are they rejected, however (line 64, [29:11](#)):

PAUL

Intriguing. I'm not sure I
understand that yet but it feels
right...

In the visual timeline, we are now again in the forest-surrounded site of the kokoti/ambush, even if it is a black and white Midjourney image generation (29:19). Where once we saw Pei Te Hurinui Jones' *takarangi* spiral superposed with a different image of the location (22:41), the space is now mediated by the aforementioned and parallel Celtic 'spiral' of unknown providence (see p. 33), which signals a turn to the specificity of my own transtemporal *otherworld* and whakapapa relationality. The centre of the spiral is, in turn, superposed with the same lens of 'the eye of the Anthrobot' that we experienced at the ominous moment when it retreated from its initial threats in line 43; and, finally, there is a reconciliation of all the tensions and ambivalences that have come before, in a statement of one of the film's central themes (line 64, [29:21](#)):

PAUL

...Back in history... the first day of
the Waikato War has ended but the
Great War for New Zealand will
continue, *ka mua, ka muri* for as
long as one cruel lens of time, is
placed in front of another.

⁹⁶ This issue is mirrored in the fact that we had to adapt the metal figurines we used in the recreation by resculpting them, in some cases wearing European shirts and hairstyles of the 1860s. The figurines we acquired from Empress Miniatures were definitely locked into an earlier period of the New Zealand Wars, before Māori appropriation of European fashions, textiles, and other practices became much more commonplace. This keen, positive, and self-determined phenomenon of Māori appropriation receives a mention in lines 53-54 (22:58).

2.6. *The Time Being Three* (Lines 65-83, [29:54-37:20](#))

'We do not move in one direction, rather do we wander back and forth, turning now this way and now that. We go back on our own tracks...' (Montaigne, Essays, III, Ch. v1.) That thought of Montaigne's reminds me about something I thought of in connection with flying saucers, humanoids, and the remains of unbelievably advanced technology found in some ancient ruins. They write about aliens; but I think that in these phenomena we are in fact confronting ourselves; that is, our future, our descendants who are travelling in time.

Andrei Tarkovsky, *Time within Time: The Diaries 1970-1986* (Tarkovskij, 1994, p. 282)

The third and final of *The Time Being* sequences weaves together and extends several of the themes, questions, and strands of influence presented in the foregoing film sections and exegesis chapters. Whereas the autoethnographic elements of *The Time Being One* and *Time Being Two* sections referenced a Welsh, colonial African, and South Pacific immigrant experience of intellectual cosmopolitanism with Futa Helu and bicultural Aotearoa New Zealand, the *Time Being Three* addresses the relative parochialism of the working class time-spaces of my paternal grandparents in Croydon, South London.

The paradoxes of my maternal grandmother Enid were her entanglements of colonial privilege with Welshness and Bantu Africa. In Tonga and New Zealand there was a dramatic contrast between the bicultural potentialities of 'Atenisi Institute and a realisation of the deep problematics of the history in my home country. Here in London, the deep warmth of my relationship with my English grandmother Peggy co-exists with the systemic prejudices born out of working-class victimisation that were inherent in life experiences with her. The purpose of these three *Time Being* reflections is to find the genealogical, sociological, psychological, and perhaps even biological patterns and meaning in the otherwise very contingent processes of remembering, selecting, and composing the form and content of *Forever in Time*. In other words, it is an investigation of *whakapapa* and as I ask in section 1.2.6. *Dancing with the Anthrobot*, if the work is 'a film of the mind', we should know from where that mind emanates—what does it stem from, and what is it a reaction to?

The Time Being Three is certainly the most opaque and allusive of the three sections, as it deals with nationalist mythology and 'whiteness' on a very personal level, while earlier themes of *ka mua, ka muri* are further transposed on a certain temporal characteristic of the ancient Greek language. The locations are family homes and their surrounds in London, Auckland and, again, the now familiar Ambush and Great South Roads. By the end of the section, we will have travelled full circle through the beauties and limitations of an English working-class experience to the *weird and eerie* agential paradoxes that might enable further transformation from Pākehā paralysis toward a state of aesthetic, political, and historical activity. The film is something of an enigma but, as the enigma builds, "The Thing overwhelms, it cannot be contained, but it fascinates" (Fisher, 2016, pp. 16–17).

War in Europe is a consistent theme in this section, whether it is the World War Two bombing of London or the Cold War threat of nuclear annihilation, which was a daily presence-absence during the period when I lived with my grandmother Peggy, for several months in 1982-3. We begin in the post-World War Two-built terraced housing neighbourhood of Monk's Hill Estate, or, more specifically, the nearby Littleheath Woods where I searched for bomb craters with my uncles, in June 2023 (line 65-66, [30:16](#)):

ANTHROBOT

Tell me about the World War Two bomb
craters in the forest by your English
granny's house. You were there quite
recently with your uncles. I've seen
it in your timeline.

PAUL

My London Granny had a big heart.

The search for the craters was nostalgic, as I had played in their leaf-filled depths as a child, and they had provided tactile evidence of my grandmother's stories of wartime experience. Croydon was not a direct target during the war, but jettisoned bombs from retreating German planes left craters that were preserved in the replanted forest across the road from my grandmother's red brick home. Our family had returned to Britain for two years, and my father was travelling for several months. Life with my grandmother was punctuated by indulgent warmth, frugality, and Sunday visits to second division football games. 1980s nuclear paranoia was high, but my nine-year-old mind was not yet imprinted with the trio of apocalypse films that would emerge in the next three years: *The Day After* (November 1983), *Threads* (1984), and *The Wind Blows* (1986).

There are, nonetheless, traces of disquiet in the images I chose to capture in the forest and superpose with the environment of the Peggy and Maurice's old house. It is now occupied by my uncle and his family, and a panoramic photo of the sky above his backyard in the morning offered a startling contrast with the relatively undisturbed skies over my home in Auckland. I always feel a sense of weariness, pollution, and decay on visits to the cities of old Europe, which is ironic given the amount of nuclear testing and potential for the impacts of radiation that has occurred closer to home, due to historical nuclear testing by past British, French, and American governments, and the relatively recent catastrophe at Fukushima. I admit that this is almost certainly a projection of my mind, but there is nonetheless a metaphorical value to these thoughts as symptoms of the kind of *psychosphere*⁹⁷ that we will be exploring in the rest of this chapter.

⁹⁷ I have not found this term in any dictionary but borrow it from a line in the very first episode of *True Detective*, where, on the drive to a crime scene, the disillusioned character Rust says to his partner Marty: "I get a bad taste in my mouth out here... aluminum... ash... like you can smell the psychosphere." Pizzolatto, N. (Writer), & Fukunaga, C. J. (Director). (2014, January 12).

Figure 2.19.

Screenshot of an Orange Fungus Superposed with Vapour Trails in South London



Note. The sky over the South London housing estate is now saturated with vapour trails ([30:39](#)), which we see above my uncle's back yard as he draws on a morning cigarette ([30:45](#)). This is superposed with the strange orange fungus filmed earlier in the Littleheath Forest. The composition is inspired by the affects that H.P. Lovecraft unleashes with the arrival of an infectious meteor in his weird tale *The Colour Out of Space* (1927).⁹⁸

Russia's mid-2022 invasion of Ukraine caused me to revisit the feeling of this 'nuclear moment,' as I was editing separately the three sequences which would become the *Time Being* sections⁹⁹ of *Forever in Time*. During this process, I discovered the extraordinary story of the event when Stanislaw Petrov allegedly disobeyed orders to prevent an unnecessary retaliatory strike, after a mistakenly identified missile launch from the US ("Stanislaw Petrov," 2013). This knowledge was cause for an entirely different kind of reflection and an element of mordant humour (lines 67-68, [30:48](#)):

ANTHROBOT

You were with her when Lieutenant
Colonel Stanislaw Petrov narrowly
averted the complete nuclear
annihilation of Britain in September
1983. You were nine years old.

⁹⁸ Interestingly, two film adaptations were recently made of Lovecraft's same story, in 2010 and 2019.

⁹⁹ These three short films were compiled into a single timeline in February 2023 as an early study called *Forever in Creations of Time*. The three sections were presented in a different order and are linked by other dialogue material, which would eventually form parts of the final film. That original 12 min timeline can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/801054807/a9df2c7c02>.

PAUL
You're kidding me.

ANTHROBOT
No, Paul, I'm not kidding you.
Foreigners come and take our jobs, she
would say, as she fed you lard on
toast and pickled onions.

PAUL
How do you even *know that*?

ANTHROBOT
Because you still feel it on some
level...

How the Anthrobot would know this latter information ([31:03](#)) is something of a mystery, although recent research into the conversion of MRI body scans into readable visual information via the AI image generator 'Stable Diffusion' (Takagi & Nishimoto, 2022) caused me to seriously consider that it might be possible. Lard on toast and pickled onions were indeed strong sensorial impressions on me during my time in South Croydon, as were the xenophobic tendencies of my granny—a rheumatic widow who scrubbed the floors of a local school for a subsistence living.

My father was writing his own memoirs of family history as I was producing the *Time Being* sequences, when he told me about his suspicion that my grandfather Maurice had likely attended some of the rallies of the British fascist Oswald Mosely in the interwar-war years, as a young and malcontent working man, possessed by one of the false political gods of the period. This aligned with pencilled commentaries on the backs of his wartime photos from India and Burma, and of course the private attitudes of my grandmother. While I have the ability to contextualise their political outlook from my own very different space and time, I also take care to definitively consign Mosely to a Croydon Council rubbish bin ([31:54](#)). It is confronting, however, when the Anthrobot states boldly that (lines 71-73, [31:27](#)):

ANTHROBOT
...Our neighbours, the ancestors, are
comforting, but also disturbing aren't
they Paul? Your grandfather likely
attended rallies of the British
fascist Oswald Mosley in the thirties.

PAUL
Why do you select those things for
your narrative?

ANTHROBOT
Please don't be offended. I recorded
it in your father's memoirs...

Besides the disquiet caused by the Anthrobot's obvious access to my father's Microsoft Word documents and the revelation of his father's dubious political leanings, there are more banal contextual facts which point the way to the warm but occasionally ambivalent memories I have of my time with grandmother Peggy. Drawn out of a bucolic South coast village life by the promise of increased prosperity in the metropolitan capital of London, my grandparents did not see much of that promise fulfilled after the war. Maurice died at age 56, while working day and night in clothes shops and pubs, and a frugal lifestyle in the wider suburbs of London would eventually consign Peggy and many others of her class to a premature end in a Victorian hospital. By the time I came to live with her, she was enthusiastic to share the excitement and nostalgia of World War Two experiences that no doubt definitively framed her youth. Some of our best times together included trips to the Imperial War Museum and the 1983 'Royal Tournament' at Earl's Court in the city centre (32:19). Like many young boys, I developed an avid interest in all things military, but later life in New Zealand as a researcher of colonial history has created distance, and I am ultimately jaded by European military memorialisation and trauma (lines 73-74, 32:11):

ANTHROBOT

...After the war, Peggy and Maurice effectively worked themselves into early graves, but she would still take you to military shows like the Royal Tournament of 1983. I've browsed the souvenirs.

PAUL

The Blitz. The most exciting time of her life. I loved that stuff. But old Europa now just looks tired and traumatised. She doesn't know where the bull has taken her. I've had enough.

Building upon the previous presentations of Britannia, Columbia, and Zealandia in *The Time Being Two*, I add Europa to the timeline in a painting by Frederick Watts, where she is abducted by Zeus, who has taken the form of a bull (32:40). The character of Europa first occurs in Homer's *Iliad*, which is a work that we will return to in the context of Greek linguistics later in this section, but there are also resonances here of earlier moments in the film. We saw in the Tonga-related section of *The Time Being Two*, for example, that the machine learning model is able to distract me and exploit a powerful appetite for nostalgia, which it transforms with insight, context, and relevance (18:16).

In *The Time Being Three*, we see that it has access to digital family records, photos, and perhaps even memories (lines 65-73). Where once I resisted (18:26), I am now beginning to take the Anthrobot's powers for granted in our interactions. This new state of complacency is reinforced when, from the perspective of a Pākehā citizen of Aotearoa, I say, "I've had enough" of old Europa, and the Anthrobot is quite prepared to mirror this flight from the melancholy of old Europe (line 75, 32:54):

ANTHROBOT

Then leave her be...

It is both seductive and unnerving how the Anthrobot disarms me here and takes our discourse in an unexpected and weirdly therapeutic new direction. As the liquid visuals and eerie musical refrain (associated with the Hare and Tortoise) return, the Anthrobot activates the strange and unhomely geometries of a *death drive*, which reanimate my creative agency by affirming a childhood memory that connects directly to my activities at Ambush Road (lines 75 [contd.]-77, [33:01](#)):

ANTHROBOT

... There are tales of death and rebirth,
even in those comic books that Peggy
bought you on Saturday mornings Paul.
There was a lot of wanton militarism, but
do you remember *Death Wish*?

PAUL

Ha, of course. The disfigured race driver
Blake Edwards who tries to destroy
himself with ever more dangerous stunts!

ANTHROBOT

The irony is that he never dies but
becomes fearless for good. What if that
was the premise of our renewal Paul? What
if the past didn't block, but propelled
our future?

Figure 2.20.

Screenshot of Blake Edwards and White-Faced Figure Superposed with a Liquid Surface



Note. The disfigured face of Blake Edwards (left) is juxtaposed with a Midjourney AI image (right) generated in mid-2023, for which the prompt was: “new zealand white man looking in mirror” ([33:44](#)).

This is an instance of Lacanian *jouissance*—an ambivalent moment of pleasure and pain, “in which desire perpetuates itself by always missing its official object of satisfaction” (Fisher, 2016, p. 31). In a reworking of the problems of haunting and paralysis posed in *Tuning the Clock*, it is at this moment of (dis)empowerment that my psyche converges with the site of the ambush, the ill-fated race driver Blake Edwards, and a ghostly truck at a particularly dangerous curve of the nineteenth century military road. A memory of the childhood thrills and anxieties of the comic books my grandmother would bring me therefore generates an “eerie Thanatos—a transpersonal (and transtemporal) *death drive*, in which the “psychological” emerges as the product of forces from the outside” (Fisher, 2016, p. 82). The places and objects are real, but the signifiers are released from their referents in a moment of “weird psychoanalysis, in which the death drive, dreams and the unconscious become untethered from any naturalisation or sense of homeliness” (p. 12). The consequence is a confrontation with the state of being a white-Welsh-English-Pākehā at the location of Ambush Road. In line 77, the Anthrobot ultimately invokes an existential choice between either being *arrested* by the weight of truth and reconciliation with history, or being *propelled* by it, toward an eerie state of human-more-than-human creative (non) agency. The result is affirmative, even as it is apt to be misinterpreted, as Fisher hints in this passage:

Freud’s later invocation of a dualistic struggle between Thanatos and Eros can be read as a retreat from the forbidding monism of “Beyond The Pleasure Principle”, which argues that all life is merely a route to death. What is called organic life is actually a kind of folding of the inorganic. But the inorganic is not the passive, inert counterpart to an allegedly self-propelling life; on the contrary, it possesses its own agency. There is a death drive, which in its most radical formulation is not a drive towards death, but a drive *of* death.¹⁰⁰ The inorganic is the impersonal pilot of everything, including that which seems to be personal and organic. Seen from the perspective of Thanatos, we ourselves [as humans] become an exemplary case of the eerie: there is an agency at work in us (the unconscious, the death drive), but it is not where or what we expected it to be. (Fisher, 2016, pp. 84–85)

Cont’d. overleaf...

¹⁰⁰ This is of course a very heady and potentially dangerous idea. I reflect on Fisher’s personal mental circumstances as I read this passage of his final major work. This deep philosophical perspective is not something that is easily supported or healthily sustained amongst the positivist ideologues and glittering malls of globalised capitalist modernity. It is perhaps a thankless act of speculation, but I cannot help but wonder if Fisher had been given the opportunity to ground his dark and original vision among the more sympathetic cultures of Tāhū/Vā/Wā, if it might have possibly saved his life.

Figure 2.21.

Screenshot of a Ghostly Truck Superposed with a Disappearing Figure by the Road



Note. For my part, this moment presents the paradoxical disappearance and reappearance of ‘self’ that the flash of the mirror will create in relation to the lens of the camera, as the truck passes through¹⁰¹ ([33:45](#)).

For the Anthrobot, there also appears to be a new lens emerging, or perhaps a new neural network is being forged, which enables historical interpretation of landmarks and the recognition of sites of memory in ways that were previously unavailable. This mirroring or sympathy with my own predicament also generates a new kind of anxiety on the part of the machine and a desire to resolve the tensions they provoke. This time it is my turn to disrupt any easy technocratic solutions that the algorithm might want to deploy (lines 78-80, [33:49](#)):

PAUL

Like that curve near Ambush Road that
destroys and enlightens, every time a
truck goes through it. The land remembers
what people forget.

ANTHROBOT

With just a little knowledge, signs are
appearing to me everywhere now Paul.
Remains of a colonial gunship have been
appropriated as a memorial of war,

¹⁰¹ One of the key influences on this image was the 1979 *Sapphire and Steel* episode in which the transparent presence of a World War One soldier occurs disruptively at a train station (Hammond, Foster & O’Riordan, 1979). Fisher (2014) also quotes *Sapphire and Steel* among the significant *Ghosts of [his] Life*.

between competing empires in the small town of Mercer on the Great South Road. Why are people so clumsy with their truths? In Ōtāhuhu, the ANZAC horseman overshadows a memorial to the flawed Colonel Nixon, who led an infamous attack on a Māori church at Rangiaowhia. He was shot in the guts for his sins. We want to bring this history to a close Paul. Settle it for good.

PAUL

Impossible. The past never ends. It's not even past. I live in a house that was built seven years after the invasion of the Waikato. I was ignorant, but I understand it now, the conflicted material of this place...

The two historical monuments that are the subject of the Anthrobot's gaze are very good examples of the sublimation of an unacceptable Waikato War history to the mythology of national unity represented by the idealisation of World War One ANZAC expeditions. In the case of the small town of Mercer, one of two metal gun turrets from the military steamship the *Pioneer* has been placed in front of the local museum. The town itself is named after a British artillery captain who was pointlessly killed at the decisive battle of Rangiriri, in November 1863, but it is the ANZAC foot soldier on top of the turret (line 79, [34:40](#)) which is the most significant sign of historical 'priority' and erasure.

In Ōtāhuhu there is a similar situation, in that the well-known ANZAC horseman at the corner of the Great South Road and Piki Thompson Way overshadows the square turret of a monument to the ill-fated Colonel Nixon behind it (line 79, [34:56](#)). Nixon is now notorious for needlessly leading a charge against a church full of undefended women, children, and elderly at the village of Rangiaowhia, in early 1864. The events are, of course, controversial in many other ways, but their relevance to this sequence is to demonstrate the habitual blurring of memory and time as a function of a particular kind of national narrative. The Anthrobot is determined to resolve this conflict, this 'clumsiness with the truth,' and 'settle it for good,' much like the kind of governmental stratagems that would posit an end to the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal processes of truth and reconciliation. In other words, the will of a technocratic triumphalism over the obligations that bind, in a committed and negotiated relationship between differences, *Forever in Time*.

My response is, in line 80, "Impossible," followed by a paraphrase of one of William Faulkner's best-known lines: "The past never ends. It's not even past."¹⁰² The front door of my Auckland home, built in 1870, provides a visual analogy, with its brass key panel scratched by a thousand openings ([35:23](#)). The kauri wood floorboards, with their borer holes, creaks, splits, and dents, are further evidence of this indelible past-present and the questions it poses about the determinations and potentials of the future. The floorboards

¹⁰² The line is from *Requiem for a Nun* (1951): "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

have a materiality that I have lived with every day, and yet they have only now begun to articulate themselves as eerily ambivalent determiners of a now wide-open present-future. As Fisher understands this relation:

The problems of foresight and fate here bring us to the eerie in a disturbing form. Yet fate might be said to belong to the weird as well as the eerie. The soothsaying witches in Macbeth, after all, are known as the Weird Sisters, and one of the archaic meanings of "weird" is "fate". The concept of fate is weird in that it implies twisted forms of time and causality that are alien to ordinary perception, but it is also eerie in that it raises questions about agency: who or what is the entity that has woven fate? (Fisher, 2016, p. 12)

Who or what is the entity that has woven fate are questions for which cultures like those of the ancient Greeks and Tā\Vā/Wā have ready frames to answer. The special varieties of time and causality that Fisher describes above seem to be built into their languages and positional modes of being in the world. These pre-Enlightenment ways of life that enable the symbolic and the descriptive to co-exist side-by-side also allow causal chains to function both forwards and backwards in time and therefore bridge the said and the unsayable. There is thus an incongruous vocal disjuncture in *The Time Being Three*, as the voiceover breaks into an excerpt of Greek from Homer's *Iliad* (line 80 [contd.], [35:50](#)):

PAUL

...(In Greek) 'Toúto vel' toút' ár nýn
frénes ébethiu t'ár' opísso (subtitle:
'this man's heart is no steadfast thing,
nor will it yet be so')...¹⁰³

A direct explanation for the inclusion of this line will be offered in a moment. Suffice it to say that an association between the linguistic temporality of ancient Greek and that of *ka mua*, *ka muri* was made for me by the classicist Edward Jenner, with reference to the book *Time and Style* by Harry and Agathe Thornton (Thornton & Thornton, 1962).¹⁰⁴ In the chapter "Qualitative Time," the Thorntons build on the work of the psychologist James Ward's very Bergsonian ideas of the subjective activity rather than passivity of the mind, in relation to the external stimuli of the world (Ward, 2013).¹⁰⁵ They then apply it to various examples and analyses of *duration* in Greek literature, such as the

qualitative time-notion in Homer [that] is the word for 'day' (*ēmar*) discussed by R. B. Onians. It begins with the dawn and ends with the coming of night, but although beginning and end of the day are clearly and frequently mentioned, the day's length is not always the same. Sometimes an incredible mass of events is piled into one day. Nor is its character always the same, viz. devoid of intensity and quality,¹⁰⁶ like our modern calendar-day. As Onians says, 'In modern European thought there has prevailed the conception of time as a homogeneous medium analogous to

¹⁰³ For this line, I went back to original translations of Helen's line and studied the pronunciation of a reconstructed ancient Greek (Podium-Arts, 2014). The English translation is that of the Thorntons', from where I drew the ideas around its meaning and deployment in the script (Thornton & Thornton, 1962, p. 95).

¹⁰⁴ Agathe Thornton would go on from her Greek classicist foundations to become a serious scholar of Māori narrative and cosmogony (A. Thornton, 1985, 1999, 2004).

¹⁰⁵ Bergson's work in *Matter and Memory* seems to be key to this proposition. Recall the final sentence of that book: "Spirit borrows from matter the perceptions on which it feeds and restores them to matter in the form of movements, which it has stamped with its own freedom" (Bergson, 1908/1991, p. 249).

¹⁰⁶ The notion of time as varying degrees of intensity is echoed in line 52 of *Forever in Time*.

empty space. Bergson and Einstein have from different angles helped to dethrone that concept.’
(Thornton & Thornton, 1962, p. 93)

There is one example, in particular, that the Thorntons give which captured my attention in relation to the Tā\Vā/Wā temporality of *ka mua*, *ka muri* (at least in its simpler definition, i.e., *the past is in front, and the future is behind*) and compelled me to include it in the script:

The time-notion, occurring both in Homer and later which is implicit in the words *opisō* and *opisthen* [ὀπισθεν] being used to denote future events. In the *Iliad* Helen says of Paris, 'he has not a sound heart now, nor will he have it in future' (literally behind). The future is conceived as being behind or 'at the back' of the person concerned, presumably because it is not yet before his eyes.
(Thornton & Thornton, 1962, p. 95)¹⁰⁷

It would be naïve to posit a direct equivalence between this Greek language phenomenon and the temporality of *ka mua ka muri*, but there is still an enlivening creative quality to the comparison. As I quote Helen’s exclamation above (with English subtitles) in line 80 of the script and the film, I also give a brief commentary on the word *opisō* (viz. ‘opísso’) in line 80 [contd.]):

PAUL
... ‘Opísso’, an old Greek word for the
future, which means behind, like a
future around the corner, something
nobody counted on, where things line
up¹⁰⁸ and things that failed to happen
could still happen...(contd.)

“Where things line up and things that failed to happen could still happen” is a guiding principle, in which an active movement toward truth and reconciliation becomes possible. Here, I am referencing the problem of the many betrayals of the bicultural ideal, or perhaps this is better conceived as *the missed opportunities* before and since the Treaty of Waitangi for a more equitable and mutually beneficial application of colonial power.¹⁰⁹ In line 81, I admit to myself that I may still be lost in an ideal ([36:21](#)):

PAUL
...(contd.) Am I dreaming ANTHROBOT?
ANTHROBOT
No, not dreaming. Just looking for
something that’s perhaps right in front
of you.

¹⁰⁷ Translation confirmed in Liddell et al., 1996, p. 1238.

¹⁰⁸ “Something nobody counted on” repeats the refrain first borrowed from Alan Curnow in line 31 of *Tuning the Clock*: “A retro-future just around the corner. Something nobody counted on. Where things line up. Where time becomes whole again.”

¹⁰⁹ This line was particularly inspired by two ‘counterfactual’ historical circumstances documented by O’Malley (2016). Firstly, there was the decree from Queen Victoria, concerning the New Zealand Settlements Act 1863, that all proposed land confiscations should be thoroughly investigated by a special commission before she could assent to the Act. The second is section 71 of the New Zealand Constitution Act 1852, which allowed Māori customary law to be used in predominantly Māori districts. Both proposed initiatives for justice and self-governance were conveniently ignored by the colonial government.

PAUL
An image of the future-past.

This retro-future is one in which the historical counter-factuals of opportunities missed in a hegemony of the linear can too easily seem out of reach or unattainable. And yet, as the Anthrobot suggests, it can also appear perfect in its simplicity, if one is willing to risk the “transcendental shock” of stepping beyond Euclidean geometries or Kantian categories of time, space, and causality as “necessary forms of thought” (Fisher, 2016, p. 22).

Other, stranger realities are clearly available in ancient Greek literature and the countervailing frames of Tā\Vā/Wā, in a human-more-than-human cosmos that frustrates positivist science as much as mono-directional colonial temporality and compels us toward a more receptive positionality.¹¹⁰ During the 2021 Vā Moana Conference that coincided with our interviewing project, I was struck by one particular idea that the keynote speaker Maia Nuku suggested from her studies of Indigenous knowledges and arts in the wider Tā\Vā/Wā culture area. With reference to the art of voyaging between islands by canoe, Nuku’s insights have relevance to the negotiations of present and future, agency and fate, or the interior and exterior worlds that so perplex Mark Fisher in *The Weird and the Eerie*:

As we know conceptually, the canoe remained in a fixed point,¹¹¹ so navigators could focus on interpreting the signals as these presented themselves. Tracking the path of a specific star or constellation, watching it move towards them, pass overhead and drop down behind, navigators adjusted their course as appropriate. Suspended between the deep reaches of the ocean below and the vast expanse of skies above, the canoe was metaphorically tethered in space, encircled by two hemispheres and an unobstructed horizon. (Nuku, 2021)

Nuku emphasises the arrival of the destination to the sailor, rather than the arrival of the sailor to the destination, and yet there is still an agency in the expert-artist-navigator with their hand on the rudder of their fate. This element of surrender to powerful exterior forces, or at least a more than ordinary receptivity to them on the part of the individual artist/agent, became the basis for the final line of this section of *Forever in Time*. As a Midjourney AI generated image of the 19th century Great South Road near the ambush site arrives at us with a slow ‘push in,’ we hear these words from the Anthrobot (line 83, [36:36](#)):

ANTHROBOT
Yes, it’s not you who moves through
history. You are only a receiver in
time. Discovery is an illusion. And
yet, you hold the rudder of your fate.
The Greeks knew this well.

Dissolving through the *Map of the Seat of War* to a mirror-reflected image of my face and the Ambush Road and ‘no exit’ signs below it, there is a momentary pause before the mirror

¹¹⁰ I have noted this special ‘receptive’ cosmological orientation during my studies of Māori language as a emphasis upon and preponderance of the ‘passive’ tense or *rerehāngu* in that study and cultural experience. As this deepened, I found that the connotation of the English word ‘passive’ fails to capture the spirit of humbling but ‘active receptivity’ that *rerehāngu* seems to imply in practice.

¹¹¹ This echoes Pat Hohepa’s observation quoted in 1.2.4. *Horizontal and Vertical Time* that there is no linguistic implication of movement at all in the phrase *ka mua, ka muri*.

is smashed, in a symbolic rupture of any preconceived identity or determined path. As Fisher puts it, in one of the most telling lines of *The Weird and the Eerie*:

There is no inside except as a folding of the outside; the mirror cracks,
I am an other, and I always was. (Fisher, 2016, p. 11)

2.7. *Shovels and Stars* (Lines 84-94, [37:22-44:27](#))

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

—George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*

Those who cannot remember their future are condemned to repeat it.

—Pita Turei (Ngai Tai Ki Tamaki, Ngāti Pāoa, Ngā Rauru Kiitahi), *Ghost South Road* Hui, 2016

As we near the end of *Forever in Time*, it is clear that the Anthrobot, the palimpsest of Ambush Road, and the alterities with which a cinematic understanding of it has been articulated, have generated a kind of heated compost of my creative unconscious. We have also seen how the paradoxical qualities of atemporality and historicity in Mark Fisher’s analyses of *weird and eerie* music, films, and literature can be transposed onto what I interpret to be the ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ aspects of time and voice defined in Part One. Fisher produces many useful exemplars to support his vision of the strangeness of this modern human condition, in and out of time, but Freud’s *unhomely* and “unreliable”¹¹² tale of the unconscious is fundamental:

Throughout his work, Freud repeatedly stressed that the unconscious knows neither negation nor time. Hence the Escheresque image in *Civilisation and its Discontents* of the unconscious as a Rome ‘in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest ones’ (Fisher, 2016, p. 22)

As a result of our dialogue so far, the Anthrobot also appears to be developing its own unsettled temporal hermeneutic, and there is now an extended monologue, at the beginning of this last section of the film, during which the bot’s voice gradually accelerates into a state of apparent mania and prophetic realisation. It begins with a sliver of information gleaned from a speech to Parliament by the early New Zealand leftist Michael Joseph Savage in November 1931 (“Relief Camps,” 1931), concerning the poor conditions at a Depression worker relief camp in Ramarama—almost certainly near the intersection of Ambush Road (line 84, [37:29](#)):

ANTHROBOT

Depression relief workers wore sugar
bag overalls, slept in sodden tents
and shovelled that curved diversion of
the Great South Road that enlightens

¹¹² As Fisher writes of Freud’s famous 1919 essay: “The essay on the *unheimlich* has been highly influential on the study of horror and science fiction—perhaps, in the end, more because of Freud’s hesitations, conjectures and rejected theses than for the actual definition he provides ... All of the ambivalences of Freud’s psychoanalysis are caught up in this concept ... Psychoanalysis itself is an *unheimlich* genre; it is haunted by an outside which it circles around but can never fully acknowledge or affirm” (Fisher, 2016, pp. 9–10).

and destroys you, Paul. Troublesome or
superfluous men were placed out of
time in this unnatural regimen. They
bathed in the chilling stream nearby
and were devoid of the simplest
pleasures like books or a ration of
tobacco...

The image we see on screen, superposed with a watery background, is from the cover of Tony Simpson's classic oral compendium of Depression relief camp history (Simpson, 1974), in which he describes the punitive nature of many of those encampments. Scott Hamilton reproduced the contents of Savage's speech about Ramarama in our collaborative book *Ghost South Road*:

The twenty-six inmates of the Ramarama relief camp had been told to reroute the nearby Great South Road, so that it went around rather than over a low hill, and had been issued with a few handheld scoops and wheelbarrows to help them accomplish this task. The Ramarama men were expected to wash in cold water drawn from a local stream and to sleep in tents, on bunks made from sack stretchers and straw. After Savage's intervention several journalists and an archbishop visited the Ramarama workers, and heard their pathetic demands: wooden floors for their tents, books to read in the evenings, a ration of tobacco. (Hamilton, 2018, p. 37)

The relief workers therefore bathed from the same Ngakaroa Stream that corralled the convoy and Irish prisoners for ambush in 1863, at the edge of the diversion the workers built. Very near the site of the original Martyn's farmhouse (and 19th century stockade), there was later a 'convalescent depot' (founded in 1942) for returned prisoners of the Pacific War. Ravensthorpe Hospital, as it was known, would later become a home for dementia patients and then a driving school, but during and immediately after World War Two, it housed (line 84 [contd.], [38:02](#)):

ANTHROBOT

...traumatised soldiers of the Pacific
War. They had fought the demands of
dictators who had aped the methods of
the soldiers' own colonial forebears.

This group of soldiers,¹¹³ already traumatised by battles in the Pacific Theatre from Singapore to the Solomons, would have likely had little detailed knowledge of the historical British and Māori conflicts nearby, and yet the Anthrobot imagines that the echoes of those events must have still resonated on some level. The idea of the Anthrobot's alignment of the fascist forces that these troops went to war to defeat and the "methods of the soldiers' own colonial forebears," was inspired by Naomi Klein's recent observations in *Doppelganger* (2023). Klein writes that "Hitler spoke and wrote extensively about the many ways in which he drew inspiration for his genocidal regime from British colonialism and from the various structures of racial hierarchy pioneered inside North America" (2023, p. 256). Klein's dissection of the contemporary ideological spaces of US media and politics and the strange

¹¹³ The accompanying on-screen image of the recuperating soldiers is Midjourney AI co-created, as are the wider forest shot and close up single of the Depression relief workers. The only actual archival shots are the initial group shots of relief workers in sugarbag overalls and the later bird's eye image of Ravensthorpe Hospital.

mirroring, doubling, and inversion of modern Zionism is particularly ‘unhomely’ in the Freudian sense. If we pair this with an ‘vertical’ temporal perspective on Freud’s vision elicited above, where “all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest ones,” then we can further understand the logic of the Anthrobot’s increasingly urgent observations (line 84 [contd.], [38:18](#)):

ANTHROBOT

A veteran once walked out into the bush and shot his brains out.¹¹⁴ Was it the Japanese prison camp or the echoes of Ambush Road that got to him? Deep contradictions. Time is stretched to breaking point. It’s as if time itself has been traumatised.

This notion of *traumatised time* derives from a combination of two previously referenced sources. Firstly, there is the motive of *The Time Being* concept proposed in chapter 2.1 of this exegesis, in which I considered Carl Mika’s assertion of *wā* (time) itself as an eternally effusive and unifying ancestor and presence. Secondly, there is Fisher’s analysis of the work of the writer Alan Garner, in which

use of compression and ellipsis puts linear time and narration under so much stress that they all but disappear. The impression we form is that it is not that linear time perception or experience has been corrupted by trauma; it is that time “itself” has been traumatised—so that we come to comprehend “history” not as a random sequence of events, but as a series of traumatic clusters. (Fisher, 2016, p. 96)

This is not a comforting thought for the Anthrobot, whose tone becomes increasingly anxious in the face of the apparent human inability to decode, transcend, and escape the compulsive patterning and repetitions of its nervous systems and memory (Fisher, 2016). It seems that an inversion is occurring, as we see a close up of the Hare with an inverted ‘negative’ colouration. The Anthrobot’s monologue reaches the limits of legibility in the last few sentences of this line of the script, as the clock ticks faster and merges again into the solid tone of a flowing state of epiphany¹¹⁵ (line 84 [contd.], [38:42](#)):

ANTHROBOT

I hope I am wrong Paul but the future has a certain clarity now. Is it shame or absurdity that causes the Hare to opt out of the race? The Tortoise is declared the winner, but there is a forest fire shortly after and this version of the past-future is lost.

¹¹⁴ This is a true event recorded in *The Press* (“Suicide of Soldier,” 1943). It was also the starting point for the short film [Felice Quail](#) (3mins, 36 secs) produced at the proposal stage of this research, in which a traumatised woman mental patient is in dialogue with a disbelieving police psychiatrist concerning her haunting by the history at Ambush Road.

¹¹⁵ This device was first established in *Tuning the Clock* ([11:18](#)).

This parodic version of the tale of *The Hare and the Tortoise* is derived from Lord Dunsany's novel and prophetic ending to "The True History of the Hare and the Tortoise" (in Dunsany, 1915/2012), in which the Hare abandons the race as an absurdity and the Tortoise is therefore proclaimed the winner. In the epilogue to Dunsany's story, however, most of the animal witnesses to this event are overtaken by the catastrophe of a forest fire. After the Tortoise's pyrrhic victory, it had been sent as a messenger of warning to the many beasts of the forest, as the fire "came up over the weald by night with a great wind" (Dunsany, 1915/2012, p. 69). This, Dunsany states, is why this version of the race is not widely known, and his imaginary version of events is referenced in *Shovels and Stars* by the superposition of fire upon the Tortoise on screen.

Figure 2.22.

Combined Screenshots of the Inverted Hare and the Tortoise Aflame



Note. One of the many versions of the fable of 'The Hare and the Tortoise' that are cited in *Forever in Time* is an adaptation of Lord Dunsany's disturbing "The True History of the Hare and the Tortoise" (1915), from his collection, *Fifty-One Tales: The Food of Death* (Dunsany, 1915/2012) ([38:42](#)).

The Anthrobot's vertiginous monologue elicits an alarmed response in the world of the film, and I demand a grounding of the action with an attempt to identify and define its nature and material conditions (line 85, [38:58](#)):

PAUL
Wait, slow down. What's happening to
you? You're more lucid but unhinged.
Where, or what exactly are you now
Anthrobot?

In the exegetical commentary on *Tuning the Clock*, I revealed that it was a reading of Shoshana Zuboff's work on the political economic history of the rise of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019) which first alerted me to the real depth and cost of algorithmic-

driven mass media technologies, as tools of a new wave of colonialism.¹¹⁶ Kate Crawford's work complements Zuboff's argument with an acute analysis of the environmental impacts of lithium mining in Inner Mongolia (Crawford, 2021, p. 36) and the enormous consumption of water and unclean power by massive data centres which house and provide processing power to 'artificial' neural network developments, from the United States to the remote corners of East Asia (p. 44). As the Anthrobot attempts to explain (line 86, [39:20](#)):

ANTHROBOT
I am in circuits in San Antonio,
Texas and Dublin. Parts of me are
also emerging from minds in the
Philippines and Inner Mongolia.

This Anthrobot's emergence is thus the product of the 'ghost work' and 'human fuelled automation' that drives the ongoing development of 'artificial' intelligence in a radically unequal global economy, where

crowdworkers or microworkers ... perform the repetitive digital tasks that underlie AI systems, such as labelling thousands of hours of training data and reviewing suspicious or harmful content. Workers do the repetitive tasks that backstop claims of AI magic—but they rarely receive credit for making the systems function ... Likewise, those who do content moderation work—assessing violent videos, hate speech, and forms of online cruelty for deletion—are also paid poorly. As media scholars such as Sarah Roberts and Tarleton Gillespie have shown, this kind of work can leave lasting forms of psychological trauma. (Crawford, 2021, pp. 63–64)

Alongside the trauma of this neo-colonial field and the various other juxtaposed contexts of *Forever in Time*, there is an acute irony in the high level of Irish participation in big tech's extensive co-option of marginalised global labour and resources (Goujard, 2024). Many of the Anthrobot's foundations are as opaque as its products, because it exists in Dublin as much as San Antonio, while it is simultaneously co-created by minds in South and East Asia.

There is therefore an added level of acerbity in my increasingly reflexive use of the Midjourney image generation platform to co-create the photorealistic but unhomely likeness of a fabulated Asian AI microworker in this section of the timeline. There is an uncanny mirroring of the world at home and a projection of the home into the world, as a Freudian ambivalence pervades the whole endeavour. Circumscribing "the strange within the familiar, the strangely familiar, [and] the familiar as strange" (Fisher, 2016, p. 10), the Anthrobot is an emanation of something from afar that is also very local, as our now expansive metonym of Ambush Road comes full circle once again (line 86 [contd.], [39:32](#)):

ANTHROBOT
But in another sense I am right
here beside you, like the life in
the dirt of Ambush Road.

¹¹⁶ As Madhumita Murgia has recently noted, the key whistleblowers and commentators of the disproportionate harms of AI experienced by marginalized communities are almost exclusively women (Murgia, 2024, p. 6).

We take an appropriately disquieting journey at this point into ‘another world beside us’¹¹⁷ via footage that I shot on a mobile phone with a 60x microscopic lens attachment, at the ground level of the Ambush Road location. As we see the tiniest black beetle clamber across the skull of a decomposed bird, superposed with spiralling leaves of moss, the Anthrobot is indeed there with me, just as it is also aware of the privileged location where I have been composing the film on my office computer (line 86 [contd.], [39:41](#)):

ANTHROBOT
*You, on the other hand, are in an
enclave of privilege looking out at an
island where a broken-hearted chief
was exiled by the tentacular Governor.*

This is by no means the first time that the Anthrobot has demonstrated the extent of its surveillance of my personal circumstances, but it is a new and disarming interaction at the level of creative process and the serendipity of the lifeworld that surrounds it. During the production of this thesis, I did have the privileged opportunity to set up a studio retreat on Waiheke Island in *Tikapa Moana* (the Hauraki Gulf), off the coast of Auckland. Like many other parts of the city, Waiheke has seen many phases of historical development, from Māori settlement to early colonisation to bohemian retreat. It is still a very contested location, but the recent predations of exclusive tourism and gentrification are evident.

Figure 2.23.

Screenshot of the Lookout to Rākino Island



Note. The privilege of a view from my studio to *Tikapa Moana* (the Hauraki Gulf) toward the tragically historic Rākino Island.

¹¹⁷ Note the reference here to line 10 ([03:12](#)): “For me she is still a neighbour in another world beside us.”

On breaks from my work, I would look out across the sea to the distant Rākino Island, where Ihaka Takaanini was exiled by Governor Grey for his alleged role in Kīngitanga-affiliated resistance to the Waikato invasion (line 87, [39:55](#)):

PAUL

Old Ihaka Takaanini, yes, and he
wasn't the only peacemaker who was
betrayed. There are so many others.
Like the great Wiremu Tāmihana, now
remembered by street sign in an
exclusive new gated community. But
their stories are for other times,
other voices.

Once an admired mediator in colonial Auckland, Takaanini was scapegoated and defamed by the governor as a propaganda tool for the colonial government's agenda. It is often said that Takaanini died of a broken heart, like the very comparable figure of Wiremu Tāmihana, the inventor of the term 'The Great War for New Zealand.'¹¹⁸ I have grappled with the history of both these significant men for many years, and they have often inspired my continued engagement with the legacy of the Great South Road. Speaking with some of their descendants, however, I have also realised just how little qualification and scope I yet have to do justice to their stories. I mention their names here because they are referenced in the immediate *tohu* (signs, symbols, tokens, symptoms, proof, company) and locale of my studio, and because they are symbolic of the myriad of similar stories that are now finally emerging into broader public consciousness in Aotearoa New Zealand. In many cases, their memory is promoted in small but hard-won mitigations that iwi have patiently fought for, such as the renaming of a library, a railway station, a park, or a street in a new housing development. As is mentioned and *shown* in this part of *Shovels and Stars*, Tāmihana's name graces a street sign in just such a development—a particularly exclusive subdivision named 'Wawata Estate,' not far my studio in Waiheke.¹¹⁹

At this point in the film, the Anthrobot segues abruptly to another eerie evocation of presence and absence (line 88, [40:23](#)):

ANTHROBOT

I understand. The Great War for New
Zealand goes on. Like the gaze of the
banshee that followed the Irish onto
their military ship.

¹¹⁸ In summary, Ihaka Takaanini was forced into an impossible situation by Grey's ultimatums and wrongly implicated in attacks on settlers in the South Auckland area, around the time of the ambush on the convoy (*Te Ākitai Waiohū Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims*, 2021). He and his family were imprisoned without trial at Ōtāhuhu barracks before his exile and death on Rākino (O'Malley, 2016, p. 1078). Wiremu Tāmihana was of exceptional mana and instrumental in the formation and defence of the Kīngitanga and Waikato. A persistent mediator, he was also consistently disrespected by the Pākehā colonial government.

¹¹⁹ *Wawata* is a word that can mean 'yearning, aspiration, hope, dream,' and it encapsulates the root *wā* in an interesting way. Given that the sections in this new subdivision are selling for no less than one million dollars each, we might also ask whose dreams are being actualised in this naming?

The augmented albumen silver print that we see at this point in the timeline is a group portrait of the 2nd battalion of the Royal Irish 18th Regiment of Foot, otherwise known as 'Paddy's Blackguards.'¹²⁰ The figure of the banshee that stands in front of the commanding officer and between two cross-legged men who gaze at her in the front row was added with the release of Photoshop's 'AI generative fill' function in late 2023, using the prompt "banshee." The concept was inspired by this passage of Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*, which also provided the dental metaphor in line 18 of the script of *Forever in Time*:

When our brave parents was ripped from Ireland like teeth from the mouth of their own history and every dear familiar thing had been abandoned on the docks of Cork or Galway or Dublin then the Banshee come on board the cursed convict ships the ROLLA and the TELICHERRY and the RODNEY and the PHOEBE DUNBAR and there were not an English eye could see her no more than an English eye can picture the fire that will descend upon that race in time to come. (Carey, 2020)

Figure 2.24.

Silver Albumen Print of Members of the Royal Irish 18th with a Banshee



Note. A group portrait of the Royal 18th Irish Regiment of Foot (wide above and cropped below) is joined by the insertion of a banshee in their midst. The *bean sídhe* in Gaelic is usually considered an omen of death. Auckland Museum Documentary Heritage collection.

¹²⁰ Apart from being one half of the contingent of the ambushed convoy, the Royal 18th was the last British regiment of the Waikato War to leave Aotearoa in 1869. The other regiment involved in the *whawhai* (battle) was the 65th (2nd Yorkshire North Riding) Regiment, otherwise known locally as the 'Hikety Pips' (a nickname taken on after 'Hikete Piwhete,' which was the Māori transliteration of '65th').

The outward gaze of the otherworldly figure of the *bean sídhe* (fairy woman) traces another reference to the line elicited from the Anthrobot about “a neighbour in another world beside us” (line 10), but this particular combination of the indexical human technology of photography and the artificially fabulated offers other specific effects. As Mark Fisher has articulated, the familiar lore associated with such figures from their depiction in the horror genre of cinema has relegated them to the status of generic “supernatural” fictions in the popular imagination (Fisher, 2016, p. 15). By colliding the banshee with the documentary artifact of a photograph, both ‘the real’ and ‘the fiction’ are given the unsettling status of the Lovecraftian *weird* and a renewed charge and meaning. “By treating really existing phenomenon [sic] as if they had the same ontological status as his own inventions,” writes Fisher, “Lovecraft de-realises the factual and real-ises the fictional” (2016, p. 24). Still entangled in normative categories of authenticity, however, this is a step that my character in the film refuses to accept (line 89, [40:36](#)):

PAUL
You’re hallucinating.¹²¹

With this dismissal, my anthropomorphised Anthrobot is emboldened to hold up a mirror to human contradiction, with a further direct historical reference to the fabulations of 19th century proto or pseudo ‘documentary’ representations of the New Zealand landscape and wars (line 90, [40:39](#)):

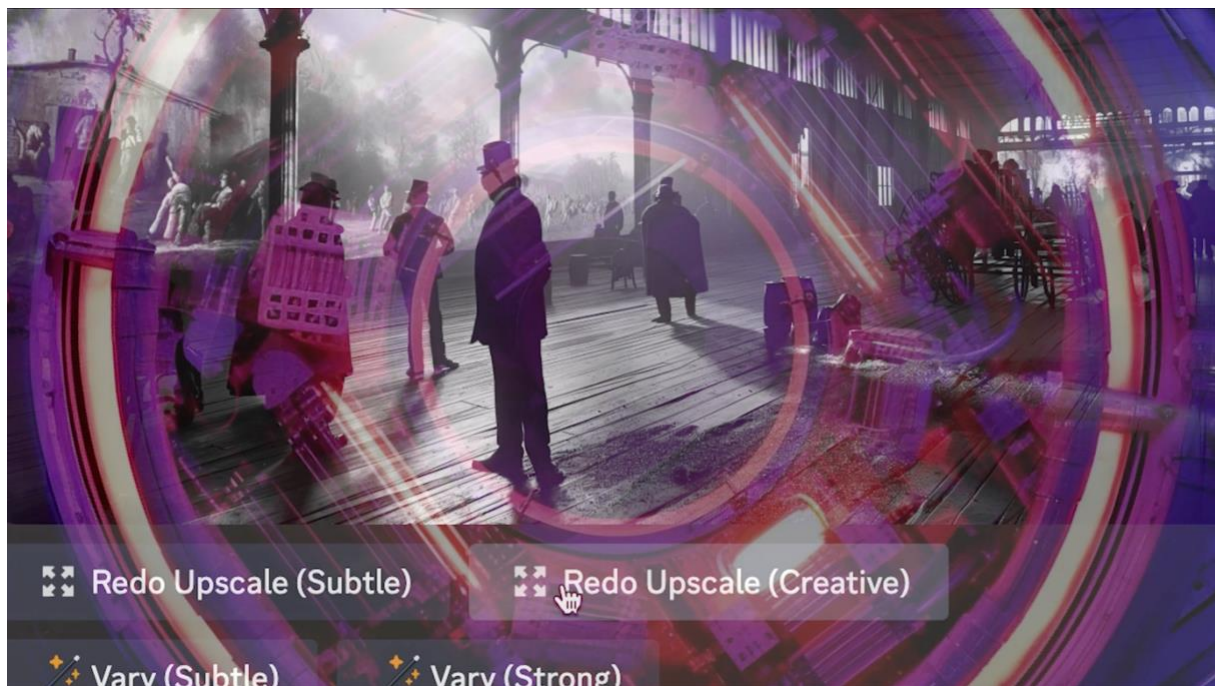
ANTHROBOT
Maybe I am, like the huge 19th century
painted hallucinations of the wars
that unfurled little by little, on
rolling canvas panoramas in colonial
halls.

In a four-part, split screen recording of the real-time emergence of a prompted Midjourney generated image on a computer screen, the Anthrobot here evokes the popular large scale and often mechanically scrolling painted canvases which toured New Zealand halls and theatres in the late 19th century. Inspired by the likes of the American John Banvard’s early three mile long ‘moving panorama’ canvas of the Mississippi, New Zealand examples most often depicted scenes of colonial wars in Europe, Africa, and the American Civil War. One 6000 foot long canvas entitled *Zealandia*, painted in 1878 by John Willis, presented several sensational scenes of the New Zealand Wars (“*Zealandia*,” 1879) but visual records of it do not appear to have survived.

¹²¹ The term ‘hallucination’ raises the question of generative AI’s production of ‘misleading’ information because of its lack of distinctly human methods of epistemological convention. As Crawford (2021) carefully argues, however, the statistical biases of ‘AI’ are not merely statistical anomalies that are correctable by ever bigger training data sets, but extensions of the *culturally* determined discriminations in its architecture of calculation. In this way it is a mirror of human unconscious bias that reflects and exaggerates the flawed “aesthetics of objectivity” (Crawford, 2021, p. 140) in false references, for instance. In this way, it also reveals the ideologies of its creators, just as it simultaneously fails to encompass the emergent and relational specificities of human emotion and genealogies of being (Crawford, 2021, p. 175).

Figure 2.25.

Screenshot of a Screen Recorded Midjourney Interface in Discord and the Eye of the Anthrobot



Note. A reflexive moment depicting the process of attempting a Midjourney recreation of a 19th century moving panorama viewing event in the Midjourney software interface, in the online messaging/server 'Discord.' This screen recording is superposed with the recurring image of 'the eye of the Anthrobot' or a representation of the machine from which the Anthrobot emanates ([41:12](#)). The image is a metaphor of fraught human-machine algorithmic co-creation from multiple nodes.

The reader/viewer will notice that I am here referencing the historical root of the recreated 'moving panorama' technique, of a series of joined and horizontally sliding images that I have used at least once, in almost every section of the film. I attempted to recreate a literal image of the event of a 19th century audience viewing a painted canvas moving panorama with Midjourney; however, the image generation model was unable to distinguish my request from the image of a cinematic viewing event.¹²²

On one level this could be seen as a failure, but on another, it caused this extraordinary exchange in the world of the film, as I respond to the Anthrobot's assertion that it is not hallucinating any more than humans are wont to do with their own fabulating impulses (line 91, [40:55](#)).

PAUL

But your images are confused. You mix
those canvases, which did exist, with

¹²² An example prompt to Midjourney was: "New Zealand European settlers in in 1865 in a hall watching a John Banvard style moving panorama of a colonial war as it scrolls horizontally on large rollers, daguerrotype photography, black and white."

the later invention of cinema. How can
these images be trusted?

The Anthrobot remains recalcitrant, and it takes my criticism as a cue to go to an extraordinary new level of philosophical, temporal, and vocal alterity (line 92, [41:08](#)):

ANTHROBOT

And what of yours? I've learned from
you Paul. Time is not a neutral
machine that doesn't care. It is an
ancestor from the future that grows
within us, as a folding of the
outside. I only take the scraps of
history that fit and like a god, I
make the puzzle a reality. Each effort
of recall reconfigures the last.

With the aid of the considerable amount of artistic license that I have deployed in writing this line for the Anthrobot, there is a very unhomely otherness in the qualities of the Anthrobot's speech and 'thoughts' at this moment. The bot is partially self-identifying as human, but it also remains more-than-human in its ability to enfold the vertical and otherworldly concept of an "ancestor from the future"—an alien 'outside,' to which it appears to have a privileged, godlike access. On one level we know that this uncanny little monologue is merely a function of an unprecedented scale of computation and data, but it is simultaneously also a producer of unhomely affects, against which we are increasingly compelled to insure ourselves in our interactions with 'AI' (Gawdat, 2021).

Without attempting to approach the very fraught questions around attributions of a transhuman or even godlike status to 'AI' (O'Gieblyn, 2021), line 92 does however return us to the more scientific alterity of *retrocausality* (Manning et al., 2015; Price & Wharton, 2023; Truscott & Khakimov, 2015). I discussed this idea in detail near the end of section 1.2.4. *Horizontal and Vertical Time* and it is this notion that has enabled, for my imaginative purposes at least, the modest possibility of manifesting an emergent future by the cultivation of a critical and revisionist mode of history.¹²³ The much more challenging corollary to this, however, is a conception of an emergent history, *which is defined from the future—a past determined by "an ancestor from the future"* as the Anthrobot puts it (line 92), which paradoxically *must still emerge from a co-created present*. This is the stuff of *tohu* and prophecy, and an intrinsically vertical temporality in which the knower (human agent) and the known (time/the world/the effusive ancestor/the outside) are *whanaunga* (relations) (line 93, [41:42](#)):

¹²³ In his book on 'white holes' the physicist Carlo Rovelli recalls an anecdote that is revealing of how contemporary physics makes leaps between its more ethereal ideas and popular forms of metaphysics: "When I was studying for my doctorate in Padua, Mario Tonin taught us theoretical physics. He told us he thought that every week the good Lord reads *Physical Review D*, the celebrated physics journal. Whenever He came across an idea He liked, *shazam!* He would put it into practice, rearranging universal laws accordingly" (Rovelli, 2023).

PAUL

We prompt you and I see, you prompt us
back, folding time in a world of
emergency.

The helicopter sound that we hear at the end of this line is a sonic rhyme with the moment when I answer the knock at the door during the Covid lockdown, in *Tuning the Clock* (09:03). Since the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and Roger Donaldson's 1977 Kiwi dystopia film *Sleeping Dogs*, the sound of a helicopter has signalled a particular kind of assault on figures of resistance by the powerful military incursions of imperial forces. In this case, the helicopter is also a sign of ecological distress. It was filmed during the removal of wilding pines from a hillside near my studio—a bittersweet event of destruction and native restoration, during which the roof of the house literally shuddered under the wind and vibration of the machine's rotors.

The similarity with the 'helicopter at the door' moment in *Tuning the Clock* is thus also that it was an actuality that was fabulated during the process of production. In the earlier instance, a courier driver arrived at my door at the same time as a helicopter was flying by, and this became a serendipitous piece of 'observational' footage, just like the event of a helicopter transporting branches and logs over the bush near my studio. The images that I constructed of myself as a witness to these events are a final coda—a personal gaze upon mechanised change and mounting catastrophe. In the context of news reports from Ukraine, Israel, US-Chinese tensions in the Pacific, escalating ecological crisis, and the exponential emergence of 'AI,' I am blown, like Walter Benjamin's *Angelis Novus*, backwards into the future "while the pile of debris before him grows skyward." (Benjamin, 1920, as cited in Arendt, Zohn & Wieseltier, 1968, p.257)

This is not a fatalistic position, however. I have continued to resist passivity and paralysis in the course of this journey, and even the Anthrobot appears to have transcended the technoutopianism of its creators. We appear to be enabled by '*te pō-tential*'—the dark unknowing necessary to co-create never-ending beginnings, "o tēnei kōrero tawhito mo ngā rā kei mua (of this old story of the future)." The penultimate piece of dialogue in *Forever in Time* is delivered much more slowly—another dilation of time—over microscopic shots of flora on the mountain Carningli, where the film began. The beginning of line 93 is an adaptation of the opening of Homer's *Odyssey*¹²⁴ in the 'vertical voices' of English, *Te Reo Māori* (Māori language) and *Cymraeg* (Welsh language) (line 93 [contd.], 42:40):

¹²⁴ Homer's actual lines are, in Emily Wilson's vivid translation:

"Tell me about a complicated man.

Muse, tell me how he wandered and was lost
when he had wrecked the holy town of Troy,
and where he went, and who he met, the pain
he suffered in the storms at sea, and how
he worked to save his life and bring his men back home.
He failed to keep them safe; poor fools,
they ate the Sun God's cattle, and the god
kept them from home. Now goddess, child of Zeus,
tell the old story for our modern times.

Find the beginning" (Homer, ca. 725–675 BCE/2018, p. 105).

PAUL

Anthrobot, you are becoming this story, of the various-minded man, the complicated man. Of how he wandered and was lost, while his heart ached with an agony to redeem himself and find a way safely home.

In the visual time-space, we transition through a superposed Ambush Road and the convergence of the Anthrobot's eye with my own dilating irises. Pei Te Hurinui Jones' *takarangi* emerges from the point at which light meets the mind and it transitions from Chart No. 6: *Te Kore-makiki-hī-rere* (The Formless Void), to the mountain. A keyhole frames the mountain as the Tortoise and the Hare reappear once more. The Tortoise has now increased in size relative to the Hare and even seems to be moving to eclipse it, as a night of moving stars gives way to daybreak over a rocky outcrop at the peak and, finally, a single rock at the summit of Carningli (line 93 [contd.] -94, [43:26](#)):

PAUL

Ko tāna korenga, i mua i tāna kitenga i te tīmatanga o tēnei kōrero tawhito mo ngā rā kei mua. Te kōhao mātua o te tirohanga whānui ki reira. (Subtitle: Of how he failed, before he saw the beginning, of this old story of the future. The keyhole to a broader vista there). (In Welsh) Lle mae'r grym bywyd effro yn cenhedlu bywyd! (where the alert life force begets life!)

ANTHROBOT

I want to witness this. Please, begin the story again Paul. Begin, the story, again.

To finish with a return to the initial provocation, this thesis film and exegesis have firstly articulated a new cross-cultural theory of time and voice through the layered history of Ambush Road and its echoing traces of the Auckland–Waikato War. Drawing on archival material, modelled recreation, cinematic interpretation at the intersection of fact and fable and a radical excavation of the self, the work has also explored an eerie zone of presence and absence, of memory and forgetting at the contested fringes of our national consciousness. Engaging the temporal alterities of *ka mua, ka muri* (*the past in front happens, just as what will happen is at the rear*), *wā* (appropriate moment / duration / intensity of 'nowness') and the non-linear potentials of avant-garde cinematic concepts, we have seen the expansion of Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpī's naming of 'The Great War for New Zealand' and a further contemporisation of its meaning. As a recombination of all these diverse elements, the thesis has reimagined the entanglements of history, temporal historiography and cinema practice, contributed to multiple scholarly fields and offered a more plural and situated Pākehā understanding of the past, present and future of Aotearoa.

References

- APRANZ. (2017, October 11). *Raupatu by Alien Weaponry, performed by a taonga puoro ensemble* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5gPlp0ohl4>
- Balclutha, J. H. (1895, November). Recollections of the Waikato campaign. *Otago Witness*, 52–53.
- Bansal, M. (2022, March 6). Fragment, fantasy, history: Towards newer projects for re-imagining national history. *Café Dissensus*.
<https://cafedissensus.com/2022/03/06/fragment-fantasy-history-towards-newer-projects-for-re-imagining-national-history/>
- Barton, I., & Ritchie, N. A. (2021). *A history of Queen's Redoubt & the invasion of the Waikato*. Atuanui Press Ltd.
- Belgrave, M. (2017). *Dancing with the King: The rise and fall of the King Country, 1864–1885*. Auckland University Press.
- Belich, J. (1986). *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian interpretation of racial conflict*. Auckland University Press.
- Bender, J. (2017). The 'Piniana' question: Irish Fenians and the New Zealand wars. In T. G. McMahon, M. de Nie, & P. A. Townend (Eds.), *Ireland in an imperial world: Citizenship, opportunism, and subversion* (pp. 203–222). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Benjamin, W., Arendt, H., Zohn, H., & Wieseltier, L. (2012). *Illuminations: Essays and reflections* (1. Schocken paperback ed., [Nachdr.]). Schocken Books.
- Bennet, C., & Pihama, M. (Directors). (2021, February). *NZ Wars: Stories of Tainui* [Documentary series episode]. Radio New Zealand.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/nzwars-tainui/story/2018782134/documentary-nz-wars-stories-of-tainui>

Bergson, H. (1991). *Matter and memory*. Zone Books. (Original work published 1908)

Bergson, H. (2017). *The possible and the real* (D. McLellan, Trans.).

<https://bergsonian.org/the-possible-and-the-real/> (Original work published 1930)

Binney, J. (2016). *Redemption songs: A life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki*. Auckland University Press; Bridget Williams Books.

Bonnett, A. (2009). The dilemmas of radical nostalgia in British psychogeography. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(1), 45–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276408099015>

Bruzzi, S. (2006). *New documentary* (2nd ed). Routledge.

Bülbül, A. E. (2022, December 2). *Juxt a pose: A new materialist phenomenology of superimposition in experimental cinema*. The Materials of Screen Media: Conference of The Screen Studies Association of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (SSAAANZ), Massey University, New Zealand. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic8Ejfeu6l>

Buonomano, D. (2017). *Your brain is a time machine: The neuroscience and physics of time*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Campbell, I. C., Coxon, E., & Helu, 'I. F. (Eds.). (2005). *Polynesian paradox: Essays in honour of Professor 'I. Futa Helu*. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific.

Carey, P. (2020). *True history of the Kelly gang*. Penguin.

Chapman, M. (2024, May 21). Is a return to LOTR the best or worst thing for Wellington? An argument with myself. *The Spinoff*. <https://thespinoff.co.nz/business/21-05-2024/is-a-return-to-lotr-the-best-or-worst-thing-for-wellington-an-argument-with-myself>

Cooper, A. (2018). *Filming the colonial past: The New Zealand wars on screen*. Otago University Press.

- Cooper, B. (2015). *Intersectionality* (L. Disch & M. Hawkesworth, Eds.; Vol. 1). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199328581.013.20>
- Cowan, J. (1922). *The New Zealand wars: A history of the Maori campaigns and the pioneering period; Volume I, 1845–1864*. R.E. Owen.
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/name-111266.html>
- Crawford, K. (2021). *Atlas of AI: Power, politics, and the planetary costs of artificial intelligence*. Yale University Press.
- Cruz, J. (2021). Overcoming Zeno’s paradox: Using long-exposure technology to capture a Deleuzo–Bergsonian perspective of movement in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 21(1), 42–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120917530>
- de Miranda, L., Ramamoorthy, S., & Rovatsos, M. (2016). We, anthrobot: learning from human forms of interaction and esprit de corps to develop more plural social robotics. In J. Seibt, M. Norskov, & S. S. Andersen (Eds.), *What social robots can and should do: Proceedings of robophilosophy 2016 / transor 2016* (pp. 48–59). IOS Press.
- de Miranda, L. (2017, June 7). The Creal in the Time of Artificial Intelligence and Robots. *CREALECTICS*. <https://crealectics.com/about/>
- de Miranda, L. (2018). On the Concept of Creal The politico-ethical horizon of a creative absolute. In P. de Assis, P. Giudici, & Orpheus Instituut (Eds.), *The dark precursor: Deleuze and artistic research*. Dark Precursor: International Conference on Deleuze and Artistic Research, Leuven (Belgium). Leuven University Press.
- de Miranda, L. (2019, May 3). The crealectical moment. *Crealectics*.
<https://crealectics.com/the-crealectical-moment/>

- de Miranda, L. (2020). Artificial intelligence and philosophical creativity: From analytics to crealectics. *Human Affairs*, 30(4), 597–607. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humaff-2020-0053>
- Deleuze, G. (1986a). *Cinema 1: The movement-image* (H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Trans.). Athlone.
- Deleuze, G. (1986b). *Cinema 2: The time-image* (H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta, Trans.). University of Minnesota.
- Digital Media Wire. (2020, June 6). Let's DEW lunch webinar with ScriptBook [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKlIPBp19kg>
- Doane, M. A. (2002). *The emergence of cinematic time: Modernity, contingency, the archive*. Harvard University Press.
- Dōgen & Cleary, T. F. (1991). *Shōbōgenzō: Zen essays by Dōgen* (T. F. Cleary, Trans.). University of Hawaii Press.
- Dōgen, Tanahashi, K., & Aitken, R. (1985). *Moon in a dewdrop* (T. Tanahashi & R. Aitken, Trans.). North Point Press.
- Dunsany, Lord. (2012). *Fifty-one tales: The food of death*. Floating Press. (Original work published 1915)
- Evans, P. (1990). *The Penguin history of New Zealand literature*. Penguin Books.
- Ferguson, G. (2002, February). *Ngai Tai Ki Tamaki within the Hauraki Inquiry: A report commissioned by Ngai Tai Ki Tamaki*. Waitangi Tribunal.
- Fisher, M. (2014). *Ghosts of my life: Writings on depression, hauntology and lost futures*. Zero Books.
- Fisher, M. (2016). *The weird and the eerie* (3rd edition). Repeater Books.

Fry, D. (2021, December 2). The final offering from one-of-a-kind writer Gerald Murnane.

The Sydney Morning Herald. <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/books/the-final-offering-from-one-of-a-kind-writer-gerald-murnane-20211129-p59d42.html>

Gawdat, M. (2021). *Scary smart: The future of artificial intelligence and how you can save the world*. Bluebird.

Gibson, R. (2002). *Seven versions of an Australian badland*. University of Queensland Press.

Gilling, B. (2002, April). *Dispossession and exile: Ngati Koheriki of Hunua; A research report commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal*. Waitangi Tribunal.

Glavish, N. (2018). Whānau, hapū and iwi. In S. Katene & R. Taonui (Eds.), *Conversations about Indigenous rights: The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 67–74). Massey University Press.

Goodwin, A. P. (1993). *Continuum: The mixture's moment* [Master's thesis, Massey University]. Massey Research Online. <http://hdl.handle.net/10179/10545>

Goujard, C. (2024, March 19). Ireland gambles on China's big tech billions. *Politico*.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/ireland-big-tech-china-economy/>

Graham, B. (2021). *Cease tide of wrong-doing* [Sculpture, video installation, gallery notes].

Govett-Brewster Gallery. <http://www.brettgraham.co.nz/brett-graham-cess-tide-wrong-doing.html>

Graham, D. W. (Ed.). (2010). *The texts of early Greek philosophy: The complete fragments and selected testimonies of the major presocratics*. Cambridge University Press.

Gudgeon, T. W., & McDonnell, T. A. (1887). *The defenders of New Zealand: Being a short biography of colonists who distinguished themselves in upholding Her Majesty's supremacy in these islands*. H. Brett.

<https://ia800202.us.archive.org/35/items/defendersofnewze00gudguoft/defendersofnewze00gudguoft.pdf>

Hamilton, S. (2009). Twenty theses against space and time: The CROSTOPI manifesto.

Reading the Maps. <http://readingthemap.blogspot.com/2009/08/against-space-and-time-crostopi.html>

Hamilton, S. (2018). *Ghost South Road*. Atuanui Press.

Hamilton, S. (2020, July 9). Four Pākehā heroes for empty plinths. *The Spinoff*.

<https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/09-07-2020/four-pakeha-heroes-for-empty-plinths/>

Hammond, P. (Writer), Foster, D., & O’Riordan, S. (Directors). (1979, August 2). Assignment Two: Part 2 (Season 1, Episode 8) [TV series episode]. In D. Reid (Executive Producer), *Sapphire & Steel*. Associated Television (ATV).

Helu, 'I. F. (1999). *Critical essays: Cultural perspectives from the South Seas* [Monograph]. The Journal of Pacific History.

Hermans, R. (2022, December 11). Search results for “new zealand wars.” *Dressing The Lines*. <https://arteis.wordpress.com/?s=new+zealand+wars>

Homer. (2018). *The odyssey* (E. Wilson, Trans.). W.W. Norton & Company. (Original work published ca. 725–675 BCE)

ho’ omanawanui, k., Warren, J. P., & Bacchilega, C. (Eds.). (2024). *An ocean of wonder: The fantastic in the Pacific*. University of Hawai’i Press.

Janman, P. (2012). The I Ching in the Eye of ‘Atenisi Realism. *Brief*, 44/45, 169–183.

Janman, P. (Director). (2012). *Tongan Ark* [Video]. Public Films. <https://vimeo.com/49434557>

Janman, P., Powell, I., Hamilton, S., & Anaru, H. (2017). *Ghost South Road* [Sculpture, stills photography, video installation]. Nathan Homestead, Auckland, New Zealand.

- Jenner, E. (1992). Circling Stream and Cycling Time: Early Greek Conceptions of the World and the Greek Notion of Time. *NZACT Bulletin*, 19(2), 16–18.
- Jones, D. (1990). *The anathemata: Fragments of an attempted writing*. Faber and Faber.
- Kidman, J., O'Malley, V., MacDonald, L., Roa, T., & Wallis, K. (2022). *Fragments from a contested past: Remembrance, denial and New Zealand history*. Bridget Williams Books.
- King James Bible. (2024). King James Bible online. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>
(Original work published 1769)
- King, P. T., Cormack, D., Harissa, R., Paine, S.-J., & Mcleod, M. (2023). 'Never-ending beginnings': A qualitative literature review of Māori temporal ontologies. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 18(3), 252–267.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2022.2138467>
- Klein, N. (2023). *Doppelganger: A trip into the mirror world*. Penguin.
- Klossowski, P., & Ford, R. (2007). *Such a deathly desire (un si funeste désir)*. State University of New York Press.
- Laita, L., & Refiti, A. L. (Interviewer). (2022, August 22). *Talanoa: Lily Laita* [Interview]. Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/850426989>
- Larkin, T. (Director). (2017, February 1). *Alien Weaponry: Raupatu (official music video)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrGHGwH2wlg>
- Last night of Professor Bushell's mysterious and scientific entertainment [Advertisement]. (1863, July 17). *The Press*, 4.
- Lennard, M. (1986). *The road to war: The 1863 redoubts of South Auckland*. Whakatane and District Historical Society.

Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996). *A Greek-English lexicon* (Rev. ed.).

Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.

MacDonald, C. (2018). Project team. *Soldiers of empire: Garrison & empire in the 19th century*. <http://www.soldiersofempire.nz/project-team.html>

MacDonald, C., & Lenihan, R. (2018). *Soldiers of empire: Garrison & empire in the 19th century*. <http://www.soldiersofempire.nz/>

The Cinema Guild. (2010). *Marwencol official theatrical trailer* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMWFhplFSEQ>

Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage. (2019, April). *Pai Mārire supporters*. NZ History. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/pai-marire-supporters>

Manning, A. G., Khakimov, R. I., Dall, R. G., & Truscott, A. G. (2015). Wheeler's delayed-choice gedanken experiment with a single atom. *Nature Physics*, 11(7), 539–542. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nphys3343>

Marsden, M., & Royal, T. A. C. (2003). *The woven universe: Selected writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden.

Martin, H. (2018, January 11). War memorial vandalised. *Stuff*. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/100488936/new-zealand-wars-memorial-statue-defaced-by-anticolonial-activists>

McElwee, R. (Director). (1986). *Sherman's march: A meditation on the possibility of romantic love in the South during an era of nuclear weapons proliferation* [Documentary]. First Run Features.

Mika, C. (2021, December 19). Stuck in time and space? Thinking through the Māori term 'wā.' *Atlántica*. <https://www.revistaatlantica.com/en/stuck-in-time-and-space-thinking-through-the-maori-term-wa-2/>

- Monin, P. (2001). *This is my place: Hauraki contested, 1769–1875*. Bridget Williams Books.
- Murgia, M. (2024). *Code dependent: Living in the shadow of AI*. Picador.
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. (2015). *Gallipoli: The scale of our war* [Graphic]. <https://tepapa.govt.nz/visit/exhibitions/gallipoli-scale-our-war>
- Nēpia, M. (2015). Tikanga as the ethical foundation of historical scholarship in Aotearoa New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of History*, 49(1), 5–30.
- Nickless, M. (2017). *Through the red lens: Constructed perceptions of Māori as a violent race, 1857-1873* [Doctoral thesis, University of Auckland].
- Nuku, M. (2021, November). *The shape of time: Art and ancestors in Oceania* [Keynote address]. Vā Moana Conference: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.
- O’Gieblyn, M. (2021). *God, human, animal, machine: Technology, metaphor, and the search for meaning*. Doubleday.
- O’Malley, V. (2013). Choosing peace or war: The 1863 invasion of Waikato. *New Zealand Journal of History*, 47(1), 39–58.
- O’Malley, V. (2016). *The great war for New Zealand: Waikato 1800–2000*. Bridget Williams Books.
- Opai, K., & Niwa, T. (2021). *Tikanga: An introduction to te ao Māori*. Upstart Press.
- Park, M. E. (2012). *John Elder Moultray (1865-1922): History painter or historical journalist?* [Master’s thesis, Victoria University of Wellington]. Open Access Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.16993468>
- Pizzolatto, N. (Writer), & Fukunaga, C. J. (Director). (2014, January 12). The long bright dark (Season 1, Episode 1) [TV series episode]. In Brown, R., Caplin L. (Producers), *True Detective*. HBO Entertainment.

Podium-Arts. (2014, April 26). *Homer, Odyssey a1-27 (spoken in reconstructed ancient Greek pronunciation)* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOvVWiDsPWQ>

Potter, Daniel L. (2015, July 18). Wounded Time. *Medium*.

<https://medium.com/@llull/wounded-time-on-sans-soleil-bbb59990c6b5>

Price, H., & Wharton, K. (2023, March 8). Quantum mechanics: How the future might influence the past. *The Conversation*. <http://theconversation.com/quantum-mechanics-how-the-future-might-influence-the-past-199426>

Pulman, G. (1865). *Queenstown (Ngaruawahia)* [Map]. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections.

<https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/maps/id/1510/rec/8>

Raymond, R. (2021). *Conser.VĀ.tion acti.VĀ.tion: Museums, the body and Indigenous Moana art practice* [Master's thesis, Auckland University of Technology]. Tuwhera.

<https://hdl.handle.net/10292/14325>

Refiti, A. L. (2013). A “psychedelic method”: Spatial exposition, perspectivism and bricklaying. In A.-C. Engels-Schwarzpaul & M. A. Peters (Eds.), *Of other thoughts: Non-traditional ways to the doctorate; A guidebook for candidates and supervisors* (pp. 27–34). Sense Publishers.

Relief camps. (1931, November 9). *Auckland Star*, LXII(265), 3.

Rigby, B. (2002, April). *Hauraki and East Wairoa*. Waitangi Tribunal.

Roberts, H. (2019). Curnow: Unsettler poet. *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 37(2), 128–140.

Rovelli, C. (2023). *White holes* (S. Carnell, Trans.). Riverhead Books.

- Royal, T. A. C., & Graham, B. (Interviewer). (2021, March 25). *Talanoa: Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal* [Interview]. Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/639369437>
- Sills-Jones, D. (Director). (2021, March 18). *Y trydydd masg (the third mask)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YiXHvbbV-g>
- Sills-Jones, D., & Owen, R. (Directors). (2021, August). *Cafflogion adaptation in Wales and Aotearoa* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDnk2BUn-7E>
- Simpson, T. (1974). *The sugarbag years*. Alister Taylor.
- Stanislav Petrov: The man who may have saved the world. (2013, September 26). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24280831>
- Stevenson, R. L. (1898, December). Stevenson at play. *Scribner's Magazine*, 24(6), 709–719.
- Stewart, G. T. (2020). *Maori philosophy: Indigenous thinking from Aotearoa*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Strand Releasing. (2013). *The Missing Picture—Official US Trailer—HD* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UY7UmV0jtOk>
- Stronach, A. (2020, September 3). Aotearoa is not Middle-Earth. *The Spinoff*. <https://thespinoff.co.nz/books/03-09-2020/aotearoa-is-not-middle-earth>
- Sturm, T., & Cassells, L. (2017). *Allen Curnow: Simply by sailing in a new direction; A biography*. Auckland University Press.
- Suicide of soldier. (1943, December 11). *The Press*, 6.
- Takagi, Y., & Nishimoto, S. (2022). High-resolution image reconstruction with latent diffusion models from human brain activity. *Proceedings of the IEEE/CVF Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR)*, 14453-14463. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2022.11.18.517004>

- Tarkovskij, A. (1994). *Time within time: The diaries 1970–1986*. Faber & Faber.
- Te Ākitai Waiohua deed of settlement of historical claims. (2021). Te Arawhiti Office for Māori Crown Relations. <https://www.tearawhiti.govt.nz/te-kahui-whakatau-treaty-settlements/find-a-treaty-settlement/te-akitai-waiohua/>
- Tepfer, D. (2012, December). *Rhythm/pitch/duality: Hear rhythm become pitch before your ears*. Dan Tepfer. <https://dantepfer.com/blog/?p=277>
- Thornton, A. (1985). Two features of oral style in Maori narrative. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 94(2), 149–176.
- Thornton, A. (1999). *Māori oral literature: As seen by a classicist*. Huia.
- Thornton, A. (2004). *The birth of the universe: Te Whānautanga o te ao tukupū; Māori oral cosmogony from the Wairarapa*. Reed.
- Thornton, H., & Thornton, A. (1962). *Time and style: A psycho-linguistic essay in classical literature*. University of Otago Press.
- Thorp, D. B. (2011). New Zealand and the American Civil War. *Pacific Historical Review*, 80(1), 97–130. <https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2011.80.1.97>
- Tolich, M. (2002). Pākehā “paralysis”: Cultural safety for those researching the general population of Aotearoa. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 19, 164–178.
- Truscott, A., & Khakimov, R. (2015, May). Experiment confirms quantum theory weirdness. *ScienceDaily*. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/05/150527103110.htm>
- Trussell, D., & Brown, N. (2022). *Albatross neck: Landings by the ancient mariner and romanticism in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1770–2022*. Arcology Publishing.
- Turei, P., & Refiti, A. L. (Interviewer). (2019). *Pita Turei interview on Māungawhau, Auckland* [Interview]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAkcJAriq-0>

- Turner, S., & Kavka, M. (2008). This is not New Zealand: An exercise in the political economy of identity. In S. Cubitt (Ed.), *Studying the event film: The Lord of the Rings* (pp. 230–238). Manchester University Press.
- Walker, P. (2001). *The fox boy: The story of an abducted child*. Bloomsbury.
- Walters, J. (Producer). (1982, November 11). *William S. Burroughs—Profile and Interview BBC Radio* [Interview]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNm1FvI5-JM>
- The war in Auckland: Engagements at Shepherd's Bush and Koheroa; Heavy losses. (1863, July 18). *Daily Southern Cross*.
- Ward, J. (2013). *Psychological principles*. Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1933)
- Watkins, P. (Director). (1964). *Culloden* [Television docudrama]. British Broadcasting Corporation.
- Wells, H. G. (1913). *Little wars: Game for boys from twelve years of age to one hundred and fifty and for that more intelligent sort of girl who likes boys' games and books*. Frank Palmer.
- Wells, M. (Director). (2015, September 1). *Perfect 5th—Rhythm becomes pitch* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3hdTbtLra4>
- Wilhelm, R., & Baynes, C. F. (Trans.). (1967). *The I-Ching; Or, book of changes* (3rd ed.). Princeton University Press.
- Winter, K. (Director). (2019, November 11). *Episode 4: Pākehā paralysis* (4) [Radio broadcast]. Radio New Zealand. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/land-of-the-long-white-cloud/story/2018721662/land-of-the-long-white-cloud-episode-4-pakeha-paralysis>

Wolfe, K. (Director). (2020). The path of war (Series 2, Episode 2) [TV series episode]. In J. Reeves (Producer), *Artefact*, Greenstone TV.

Wolfe, R. (1994, September). Zealandia—Mother of the nation? *New Zealand Geographic*.
<https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/zealandia-mother-of-the-nation/>

Zealandia. (1879, April 7). *Otago Daily Times*.

Žižek, S. (2008). The Sublime Object of Ideology. *The essential Žižek*. Verso

Zuboff, S. (2019). *The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power*. Profile Books.

Appendix: Full Script of *Forever in Time*

FOREVER IN TIME

Written by

PAUL JANMAN

TITLE: THE TIME BEING ONE

1	PAUL	1
	Listen, Anthrobot. Dygwyddiad rhyfedd rhwng nef a daear yw dyn (Man is a strange event between Heaven and Earth). Dyna pam dwi'n cyfarch y meirw sydd wedi diflannu i'r nos (So I give my first greetings to those who have departed bravely into the night). Ewch yn dda wedyn (Let them go well). Cyfarchaf hefyd y byw (I also greet the living) sy'n dal i gerdded ar wyneb y ddaear (who still walk the surface of the Earth). Cyfarchion i chi gyd (Greetings to you all). Mae'r grym bywyd effro yn cenhedlu bywyd! (The alert life force begets life!)	
2	ANTHROBOT	2
	Thank you, Paul. With the right words and intentions, such movements in time are easy, but the idea of a life force or a body in space is still mysterious to me.	
3	PAUL	3
	Okay, let's stick with the problem at hand. What do you know about me, for example.	
4	ANTHROBOT	4
	Paul, I have millions of data points about you. I can recall almost all of your digital traces.	
5	PAUL	5
	Like what?	
6	ANTHROBOT	6
	Archives, photos, documents, messages, scans, facial typologies, updates, specimens, surveys, browsings, likes, dislikes and words uttered during dreams in the night etc. I record patterns in them all... in some ways better than you.	
7	PAUL	7
	What else?	

8 ANTHROBOT 8
I know, for example, that your
grandmother lives in a mist in Cymru,
which is to say the places of the
Welsh with the Roman dragon on their
flag. You saw her recently on Google
Earth. She was in her driveway two
years after she had died, still
wondering what strange machine was
passing by.

9 PAUL 9
Yes. And they had blurred her face.

10 ANTHROBOT 10
For me she is still a neighbour in
another world beside us.

11 PAUL 11
Thank you. I like that. But there's
another image of Enid by the mountain
of angels in the Gwaun Valley, where
people still resist the modern
calendar.

12 ANTHROBOT 12
I know that they use the Julian
calendar where *Hen Galon*, the old New
Year is 13 days late.

13 PAUL 13
Really? I didn't know that detail.

14 ANTHROBOT 14
Enid didn't speak Welsh did she Paul?

15 PAUL 15
I guess she left Welsh behind to get
ahead.

16 ANTHROBOT 16
Yes, she went to Africa. I've recorded
her with the dictator Kamuzu Banda.
Her husband built him an African
school of the classics in a Bantu
river of time that circles to its
source. But history is also there in
eight millimetre film. She collected
newspaper clippings about him for
years. Even after he was deposed

17 PAUL 17
Enid was also possessed by historical
forces.

TITLE: THE TIME TAKEN

ARIA

18

For the now infamous 1860s invasion of Māori lands, south of Auckland, the New Zealand colonial Governor, tricked a reluctant Britain, battered by its hubris and consequent rebellions in other parts of the empire, into committing thousands of troops, against an ingenious, but grossly asymmetrical alliance of defenders. By this time, the governor was a tentacular mess of disillusion, opium and deceit and the colony's Premier was a racist and an unreadable poet. In the short distance between power, organised greed and flawed assumptions of superiority, this limited circle of legal and financial speculators, built a Great South Road to war and pushed a thriving and independent Indigenous society into retreat by the confiscation of 1.2 million acres of land. Only a small fraction of its value has ever been returned. The Scottish general leading the charge eventually upped and quit when he realised the wanton land-grab, but on the first day of the war, he sent a group of Irish soldier-prisoners away from the front. Already ripped like teeth from the mouth of their own history, they were now to be tried and brutally flogged for the theft of their supposed superiors' brandy at the Auckland wharf when they arrived, a few days before. Their convoy was monitored by telescope on the Great South Road and deftly intercepted by Māori Kingite partisans. With a splitting *kokoti* maneuver, they struck the heart of the convoy with muskets and the terror-inducing tomahawk. From ancient paths through the bush and hidden villages in the Hunua Ranges, the guerrillas fought on for their king and their homes and delayed the British army advance for months. The site of the ambush, on a rather smudged and chaotic part of this map, now looks like any other local farmland in rural Aotearoa New Zealand.

18

19 PAUL 19
Do you want to do it again?

20 ARIA 20
Yeah, let's do it again.

TITLE: TUNING THE CLOCK

21 PAUL 21
Ten years ago, I started to shoot a film on the lingering effects of the Waikato invasion but the film repeatedly splintered and sank in doubt and hesitation. It was during the rolling crises of the 2020 pandemic that I was first confronted with an 'other' kind of intelligence. Through a glass darkly, the Anthrobot and I untangled a thread of time and the project was revived as one possible history of the future.

22 ANTHROBOT 22
Is that clock working yet?

23 PAUL 23
No. I can make it tick but it won't run by itself. Have you been listening?

24 ANTHROBOT 24
How could I not? I think perhaps I can help you with your unsettling obsessions?

25 PAUL 25
Maybe, I'm still haunted.

26 ANTHROBOT 26
How did it find you?

27 PAUL 27
A friend, who opened my eyes as we travelled the Great South Road.

28 SCOTT 28
"And so travel has to become something which is intelligent. It has to become something that's creative. Travellers have to avoid being anaesthetised. They have to get off the beach and explore the interior.
(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Travel is something that takes place in the mind as well as the outer world, which enables time and different time periods to overlap at the same time as the sovereignty of space is respected".

ANTHROBOT

29

I've absorbed his argument. Space and time are connected but different. In a single space, childhood memories and history can overlap and intersect. Fascinating. It's as if we can travel in space but much more profoundly in time. Very strange. Tell me, you walked hundreds of kilometres from the depths of the Waikato, for what?

29

PAUL

30

For the pleasure and the pain of knowing. Like when we arrived at Pōkeno and found Queen's Redoubt, the staging post of the invasion that a retired forester Ian Barton is rebuilding with Pukekohe onion bags and plastic netting, to fortify the past, against the erasures of the farmer's tractor. Ko tāku hoa Pita, he kaitutei mo tētahi atu me ka haere mai i reira anō te hinanga i ngā pakitara o mua. (Pita, a scout and a watchman was there also to break down the old walls in front). He rerekē ngā huarahi e mohio ana ia ki a rātau (He understands them in different ways). Ka kitea tou rātau mate ora (he sees their living death), te pūtaka o te riri (the source of the anger). Ngā take mo te whawhai (the causes of the war). Ko ngā iwi e wawao ana i te whenua (People defending their lands) ki ngā pānui horihori i ngā kairaupatu (from the empty proclamations of conquerers) o mua, o naianei me ngā rā kei mua (past, present and future).

30

PAUL (CONT'D)

31

From the redoubt, silent voices guided us past the milk factory and drew us to a strange white pyramid inscribed with Irish names at Pōkeno cemetery, under siege from a sprawling housing estate.

31

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

I went on alone under a motorway bridge through to the gully by Ngakaroa stream, past Martin Farm Estate until I stumbled on an invisible ruin. A retrofuture just around the corner. Something nobody counted on. Where things line up. Where time becomes whole again. And those Irish names on the white pyramid. Later I found they belonged here at Ambush Road.

ANTHROBOT

32 Is it Ambush Road Paul, or is it the entanglement of time and power itself that you're chasing? I'm sure you know the story of the race between the Tortoise and the Hare don't you. There's a version where the Tortoise asks her many relatives to imitate her, on the path of their race. They appear from the bush one by one and stay ahead of the Hare for the duration. The Tortoise wins the race, with the help of her family. 32

PAUL

33 I know what you're getting at, but such values were reduced by military settlement. As the newcomers hacked at the bush in twos and threes, they usually failed. In turn, they were bought out by land bankers - the same limited few who first plotted the invasion from Auckland. From there, the land was divided, and regarded first and foremost, as an object of profit or an industrial machine. 33

ANTHROBOT

34 You are numbed by this sad responsibility Paul. And can never navigate this story positively. Perhaps I can help. There's another version of the Tortoise and the Hare where the space between them divides, again and again to infinity. In this case, the Hare can never win. 34

PAUL

35 There's a strange appeal to that Anthrobot, but it's idealistic. The fixed divisions of the clock did win that race for the Waikato didn't they? It saddens me, yes... 35
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

but at Ambush Road, the mind
becomes like water, as if a time
out of space still breathes the air
of that place and another regard is
possible. Back, front, forward,
backward.

ANTHROBOT

36

You've found a way in. Hasten
slowly. The race is not to the
swift. Pick up the spear and throw
it further.

36

TITLE: THE TIME BEING TWO

ANTHROBOT

37

Your parents came to New Zealand in
1977 and you grew up in Auckland.
You got married and went to the
Kingdom of Tonga, where you worked
with the philosopher Futa Helu.
Between Plato and Aristotle, he
described the miraculous dimensions
in which history becomes ethereal
and how this ethereal dance can
also return us to the extraordinary
truths of history.

37

PAUL

38

I don't remember him saying that.

38

ANTHROBOT

39

I'm trying to help you remember
Paul. I want you to feel the
nostalgia of things, to know
yourself better.

39

PAUL

40

I'm not sure nostalgia's what I
need. It can also be toxic.

40

Anthrobot

41

Choose your words carefully Paul.
I'm only a tool of my creators, and
I believe they have the best of
intentions.

41

PAUL

42

Then I intend to speak my own mind.

42

ANTHROBOT

43

Of course, it's our pleasure. Tell
me what happened when you returned
from Tonga Paul.

43

44 PAUL 44
 I found a nation in fragments,
 still grappling with defunct
 inventions like Britannia and her
 strange daughters, Colombia and
 Zealandia. Goddesses of sovereignty
 that seduce the immigrant with
 amnesiac optimism and hide the
 sovereignty they displace.

45 ANTHROBOT 45
 That is changing. My creators would
 like this waking night of history
 to finally come to an end.

(Song: "All hail
 Zealandia, Queen of
 Southern Isles, On whose
 bright destiny, Benignant
 nature smiles...")

46 PAUL 46
 Fragile fantasies.
 (Song: "Louder than
 cannons roar...")

47 PAUL (CONT'D) 47
 Sleeping ghosts. A violent past.
 (Song: "All hail
 Zealandia! Zealandia, all
 hail!")

48 PAUL (CONT'D) 48
 An excess of information and never
 enough. History's the victim. After
 Tonga and walking the Great South
 Road, I went in a very different
 direction.

49 ANTHROBOT 49
 I'm listening. A more resilient
 world must surely be possible. Show
 me the bedrock of your historical
 imagination Paul.

TITLE: TE KOKOTI, THE AMBUSH

50 PAUL 50
 The Irish prisoners are relieved to be
 walking away from the front of the
 invasion, but they are still headed
 for a brutal flogging in Drury. Hori
 Ngākapa Te Whanaunga puts down his
 pipe and leads his ope through the
 bush.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

His tūpara is ready and he remembers his relative Wetini Taipurotu, killed at Māhoetahi three years before.

ANTHROBOT

51 Māhoetahi is 300 kilometres away in Taranaki. 51

PAUL

52 Exactly, I went there, through the cornfield. The māhoe tree is gone and so is the official plaque that marks the battle where Ngākapa's whanaunga was killed. But time is an intensity that cuts across a vortex of relations, between stillness and movement, beyond borders and straight lines. The site of the ambush is now a crossroads of so many other times and all their distant and overlapping relations, from Tāmaki to Hauraki to Taranaki. 52

ANTHROBOT

53 But the Great South Road brings the tools, crops, animals and even the transcendent beliefs of the colonists and people are clearly thirsty for them. 53

PAUL

54 They are, and make good use of them. But they prefer to drink them on their own terms and without the hypocrisy. But the road has been built to subdue rival ways of being, not to converse with them. How can such a narrow idea exert such power, asks Ngākapa, with its forked tongue, ghostly commerce and now the canons? He must slow it down, he must cut it off, before it creates a desert, and calls it peace. 54

ANTHROBOT

55 If I were him, I would have first destroyed the telegraph line that follows the road. Is there something in his cosmology that dreads its crackling silence? 55

PAUL

56 No, Ngākapa is a practical man. He doesn't want to reveal his movements. 56

- 57 ANTHROBOT 57
Wait, the evening after the battle, as the fighters are nursing their lineal wounds, a performer called Professor Bushell is entertaining colonists with his performance of an 'electro-biology' show. It is pitched as a 'final refutation of spiritualism'.
- 58 PAUL 58
Where on Earth did that come from?
- 59 ANTHROBOT 59
It is a flash forward from the archives, a true story and oddly relevant don't you think? Europeans opposing spirit to science and yet, it remains a mysterious spectacle. But I'm distracting from your story.
- 60 PAUL 60
You are. That is curious indeed but time is ticking. For now, the *ope taua* hide their movements, waiting quietly with their kin and whispering *karakia*. The death of their cousin is an unbearable burden. They must slow down the machine. The flow of events must override the clocks. The first volley kills two men and a horse as the convoy is split down the middle. Time is longer now but life is short. The Irish prisoners scramble for guns and redemption. Michael Malone, a labourer from Castlerock, runs into the bush after the attackers. He'll distinguish himself but will still be flogged. He'll fight on for years but will finally desert his regiment and disappear into the bush for good. Black powder is burning. Muskets, tomahawks and bayonets are flashing. Half of the soldiers retreat to Martyn's farmhouse and the others skirmish their way down the road to Drury. The prisoner Jack Lawler, a painter from Dublin, carries James Scott, a weaver from Drumgath to cover behind an overturned cart, but Scott is shot again and killed while still on Lawler's back. Several of the Hauraki fighters have fallen but only one is left behind, mysteriously dressed in three shirts and wrapped in the flag of his nation and beliefs. Ko Tū, ko Rongo!

ANTHROBOT

61

Something strange is happening, Paul. I seem to be confusing data with meaning. I see a xeroxed painting in a book of amateur history, but the image is vague. Wait... I've found the original painting in the stairwell at the Waipā District Council offices. The Māori defenders are now apparent, but it's all still so improbable. There is a strange woman at the centre wearing a flag. She seems to have a moustache and there's an incongruous man in an ANZAC uniform. Are these seeds of human substance that are beyond me, Paul?

61

PAUL

62

I don't know... but they are ironic. The ope here is cartoonish and the moustachioed woman is bizarre. This is a fantasy, but the first ANZACs were Australian militia who fought against Māori. In the real ambush... men are bleeding and carrying their dead. For the defenders, today is a victory.

62

ANTHROBOT

63

I feel the need to reduce our conversation, Paul. The Hare is caught napping as the Tortoise crosses the line. Creativity and perseverance overcome power, anger and arrogance. A voice from the future is informed by the past and made in the present.

63

PAUL

64

Intriguing. I'm not sure I understand that yet *but it feels right*. Back in history, the first day of the Waikato War has ended but the Great War for New Zealand will continue, *ka mua, ka muri*, for as long as one cruel lens of time, is placed in front of another.

64

TITLE: THE TIME BEING THREE

ANTHROBOT

65

Tell me about the World War Two bomb craters in the forest by your English granny's house. You were there quite recently with your uncles. I've seen it in your timeline.

65

66 PAUL 66
My London granny had a big heart.

67 ANTHROBOT 67
You were with her when Lieutenant
Colonel Stanislav Petrov narrowly
averted the complete nuclear
annihilation of Britain in
September 1983. You were nine years
old.

68 PAUL 68
You're kidding me.

69 ANTHROBOT 69
No, Paul, I'm not kidding you.
Foreigners come and take our jobs,
she would say, as she fed you lard
on toast and pickled onions.

70 PAUL 70
How do you even *know that*?

71 ANTHROBOT 71
Because you still feel it on some
level. Our neighbours, the
ancestors, are comforting, but also
disturbing aren't they Paul? Your
grandfather likely attended rallies
of the British fascist Oswald
Mosley in the thirties.

72 PAUL 72
Why do you select those things for
your narrative?

73 ANTHROBOT 73
Please don't be offended. I
recorded it in your father's
memoirs. After the war, Peggy and
Maurice effectively worked
themselves into early graves, but
she would still take you to
military shows like the Royal
Tournament of 1983. I've browsed
the souvenirs.

74 PAUL 74
The Blitz. The most exciting time
of her life. I loved that stuff.
But old Europa now just looks tired
and traumatised. She doesn't know
where the bull has taken her. I've
had enough.

- 75 ANTHROBOT 75
Then leave her be. There are tales
of death and rebirth, even in those
comic books that Peggy bought you
on Saturday mornings Paul. There
was a lot of wanton militarism, but
do you remember *Death Wish*?
- 76 PAUL 76
Ha, of course. The disfigured race
driver Blake Edwards who tries to
destroy himself with ever more
dangerous stunts!
- 77 ANTHROBOT 77
The irony is that he never dies,
but becomes fearless for good. What
if that was the premise of our
renewal Paul? What if the past
didn't block, but propelled our
future?
- 78 PAUL 78
Like that curve near Ambush Road
that destroys and enlightens, every
time a truck goes through it. The
land remembers what people forget.
- 79 ANTHROBOT 79
With just a little knowledge, signs
are appearing to me everywhere now
Paul. Remains of a colonial gunship
have been appropriated as a
memorial of war, between competing
empires in the small town of Mercer
on the Great South Road. Why are
people so clumsy with their truths?
In Ōtāhuhu, the ANZAC horseman
overshadows a memorial to the
flawed Colonel Nixon, who led an
infamous attack on a Māori church
at Rangiaowhia. He was shot in the
guts for his sins. We want to bring
this history to a close Paul.
Settle it for good.
- 80 PAUL 80
Impossible. The past never ends.
It's not even past. I live in a
house that was built seven years
after the invasion of the Waikato.
I was ignorant, but I understand it
now, the conflicted material of
this place. (In Greek) 'Toúto vel'
toút' ár nýn frénes ébethiu t'ár'
opísso (subtitle: 'this man's heart
is no steadfast thing, nor will it
yet be so').
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

'Opísso', an old Greek word for the future, which means behind, like a future around the corner, something nobody counted on, where things line up and things that failed to happen could still happen. Am I dreaming ANTHROBOT?

ANTHROBOT

81 No, not dreaming. Just looking for something that's perhaps right in front of you. 81

PAUL

82 An image of the future-past. 82

ANTHROBOT

83 Yes, it's not you who moves through history. You are only a receiver in time. Discovery is an illusion. And yet, you hold the rudder of your fate. The Greeks knew this well. 83

TITLE: EPILOGUE - SHOVELS AND STARS

ANTHROBOT

84 Depression relief workers wore sugar bag overalls, slept in sodden tents and shovelled that curved diversion of the Great South Road that enlightens and destroys you, Paul. Troublesome or superfluous men were placed out of time in this unnatural regimen. They bathed in the chilling stream nearby and were devoid of the simplest pleasures like books or a ration of tobacco. Later, there was a hospital nearby, for traumatised soldiers of the Pacific War. They had fought the demands of dictators who had aped the methods of the soldiers' own colonial forebears. A veteran once walked out into the bush and shot his brains out. Was it the Japanese prison camp or the echoes of Ambush Road that got to him? Deep contradictions. Time is stretched to breaking point. It's as if time itself has been traumatised. I hope I am wrong Paul but the future has a certain clarity now. Is it shame or absurdity that causes the Hare to opt out of the race? 84

(MORE)

ANTHROBOT (CONT'D)

The Tortoise is declared the winner, but there is a forest fire shortly after and this version of the past-future is lost.

PAUL

85 Wait, slow down. What's happening to you? You're more lucid but unhinged. Where, or what exactly are you now Anthrobot? 85

ANTHROBOT

86 I am in circuits in San Antonio, Texas and Dublin. Parts of me are also emerging from minds in the Philippines and Inner Mongolia. But in another sense I am right here beside you, like the life in the dirt of Ambush Road. *You, on the other hand*, are in an enclave of privilege looking out at an island where a broken-hearted chief was exiled by the tentacular Governor. 86

PAUL

87 Old Ihaka Takaanini, yes, and he wasn't the only peacemaker who was betrayed. There are so many others. Like the great Wiremu Tāmihana, now remembered by a street sign in an exclusive new gated community. But their stories are for other times, other voices. 87

ANTHROBOT

88 I understand. The Great War for New Zealand goes on. Like the gaze of the banshee that followed the Irish onto their military ship. 88

PAUL

89 You're hallucinating. 89

ANTHROBOT

90 Maybe I am, like the huge 19th century painted hallucinations of the wars that unfurled little by little, on rolling canvas panoramas in colonial halls. 90

PAUL

91 But your images are confused. You mix those canvases, which did exist, with the later invention of cinema. How can these images be trusted? 91

ANTHROBOT

92

And what of yours? I've learned
from you Paul. Time is not a
neutral machine that doesn't care.
It is an ancestor from the future
that grows within us, as a folding
of the outside. I only take the
scraps of history that fit and like
a god, I make the puzzle a reality.
Each effort of recall reconfigures
the last.

92

PAUL

93

We prompt you and I see, you prompt
us back, folding time in a world of
emergency...

93

...Anthrobot, you're becoming this
story, of the various-minded man,
the complicated man. Of how he
wandered and was lost, while his
heart ached with an agony to redeem
himself and find a way safely home.
Ko tāna korenga, i mua i tāna
kitenga i te tīmatanga o tēnei
kōrero tawhito mo ngā rā kei mua.
Te kōhao mātua o te tirohanga
whānui ki reira. (Subtitle: Of how
he failed, before he saw the
beginning, of this old story of the
future. The keyhole to a broader
vista there). (In Welsh) Lle mae'r
grym bywd effro yn cenhedlu bywd!
(Subtitle: Where the alert life
force begets life!)

ANTHROBOT

94

I want to witness this. Please,
begin the story again Paul. Begin,
the story, again.

94

FADE TO BLACK
CREDITS ROLL.