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*Ecce wahine: Towards a Māori translation of Western text*

2014

Te Ara Poutama

An exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of PhD

## PREAMBLE

Wahine has never kept silkworms. She lives amongst their gougings into wood and paper and their fertile droppings, syncopated markings of text, of image, of whakapapa, traces of appetites, of desire seeking out ways to full-fill itself. She devours, swallowing

down and breathing out other markings, some-times marking threads between the two, between wood and paper. She gouges and marks. She

insinuates crawling traces between many twos, between whatever twos find themselves before her. She de-vours, until there is enough thread to spin, to weave a shell, a shawl around this self, of self and not-self, to cover a self in prayer, in precarious words; entreaty.

Wahine has never been burnt at the stake. She lives amongst the still flaring embers of colonization, daily wending careful paths on unshod feet, marked with the scars of burnings, of falterings, of blindness to the traces and resurgences of fires that have swept away buildings, artworks, ancestors.

sans voir et sans savoir – without seeing and without knowing, deprived of vision and verity she blindly enters into a relationship with the image, the images, moving and still. She has not allowed herself to see this way before, has held back the tears in an attempt to retain at any one time only one side of her whakapapa...

## TUHINGA WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA (ABSTRACT)

Taking its lead from pūkenga Ngāpuhi Māori Marsden's (Māori Marsden, 2003) writings relating to Papatūānuku (Motherearth) and Ngā Tawhito (the ancient ones), this thesis seeks a reading of two Western texts that retains Māori customs and philosophy, acknowledging that 'Western' and 'Māori' are linguistic and cultural constructs that cannot be simplified in opposition. In response to the vast range of artworks addressing the biblical 'Ecce homo', *Ecce wahine* traces a route through images operating at the margins of Jacques Derrida's chapter 'A Silkworm of One's Own: Points of View Stitched on the Other Veil', and Carl-Theodor Dreyer's 1927 film *The Passion of Joan of Arc*.

Marginal images perform as sites of possibility for translation, retaining references to Ngā Tawhito, traditionally reserved for readings of Māori text and image from Aotearoa-New Zealand. This thesis also pays respect to Hinengaro (Hidden Maiden), who brings to the surface connections hitherto buried in memory. It prompts discussion on gendered and cultural difference in vision and seeing, naming, signs and signatures, notions of translation, sovereignty, colonization, film, image and text and on the place of Ngā Tawhito in contemporary readings of image.

In search of a return home to and through the title, the graphic and visual encounter involving exegesis and exhibition that makes up the thesis moves slowly through a concealing and revealing veil, to approach those gendered and cultural differences. For it is at the site of vision and visibility that (im)possibilities of reading a relationship between Māori and Latin, between film and text, offer a translation in the form of a poetic opening. Such reading(writing) calls for inventions and interventions, for a poetics of mourning to pay respect to the dissimulating veil that hides ways of beholding cultured and gendered difference and attempts to read together two very disparate words; *Ecce* and *Wahine*.

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### **ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

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 in the acknowledgements), nor any material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or any other institution of higher learning.

## NGĀ MIHI (ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS)

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karanga maha, Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou.

Tuatahi, ngā mihi nunui ki te Atua. Nāna i hanga ngā mea katoa. Ko Papatūānuku ki raro, ko Ranginui ke runga. He mihi ki a kōrua.

The list of those who have contributed to this thesis is immense. I begin by acknowledging the Creator, then Earthmother, Skyfather. Their children, Ngā Tawhito, who have shown themselves throughout this writing, I acknowledge. Those waters who have nourished this body I salute.

To Hinengaro, my own personification of the hidden maiden as mind, emotions and heart, through whom much of this work has risen to the surface displacing much of my former thinking, I am eternally grateful.

To my supervisors, firstly to Dr. Mark Jackson in the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies, I acknowledge a debt. Without your insistence on delving deeper into Western philosophy I should never have discovered the value of resistance, and would not have made the shift to Te Ara Poutama, where this movement towards a Māori reading is possible. Sometimes the most painful of experiences are required to push through to the heart of a matter.

To Professor Tania Ka'ai, whose manaakitanga enabled the completion of this thesis in an environment of whānau, ngā mihi nunui. Already overloaded, you found room, time and skills to share with this stray, giving space to bring out and develop the artworks and thinking. I am forever grateful for the time and expertise you have devoted, particularly in the final stages of this process. To Associate Professor Hinematau McNeill, whose ability to harness the wildness of this Ngāpuhi writer gave order to thinking, and whose insistence on kaupapa Māori grounded the thesis, I acknowledge your great abilities, persistence and aroha. I also acknowledge with much gratitude the selfless support and practical assistance from Dr. Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul.

This journey began with the gift of a title. To Associate Professor Pare Keiha, I give thanks for that gift, and for the convoluted journey that would not have been possible without that title. I assure you that the journey is far from over and that the title will continue to work its way through whatever comes from these hands.

Ki aku hoa mahi, ngā taurua o Te Ara Auaha me Te Ara Poutama, ngā mihi nunui ki a koutou. Special thanks to Ena Manuireva, whose assistance with translations from French was invaluable; Jason King, whose encouragement and humour led to some rethinking of 'Ecce'; Elisa Duder, for being a shoulder and an ear when needed; Toa Raukura Amoamo, whose persistence, smile and manaaki warmed the workplace; Tania Smith, for taking such superb care of the requirements of a university; Suzie Gorodi, for not letting me leave Art and Design entirely; Lesley Kaiser and Antony Nobbs, for employing me and valuing my teaching; Moana Nepia, for long kōrero; and my Iranian daughter, Azadeh Emadi, for the smoothest of collaborations and for extending whakaaro and wairua to embrace Islam. My gratitude and love also to Yael Klangwisan, who gently facilitated an approach to the tallith, and whose beautiful writing is included in the Appendix.

To Bernice Meyle, dear friend and flatmate extraordinaire, I have been nourished throughout the final stages of this process by your wonderful cooking and baking, your warm hospitality and generosity.

To my unnamed spiritual advisor and guide. Ngā mihi nunui. I could not have completed this without your continued attention to my heart.

My unending gratitude to my whānau, particularly to Peata, Connor and Ella, who have supported, suffered, laughed, cried, complained, demanded, and loved me throughout this process. I apologize for my lack of patience at times, and for being elsewhere when needed. I pray that this will show to have been worthwhile in some ways.

To both my grandmothers; Maria te Waa, whom, sadly, I have never met, and Nellie, who was there for much of my young life, I acknowledge my love for you both. To my father, Sydney, who passed too young, ngā mihi nunui mō ngā taonga i homai e

koe. You are always remembered along with my karanima. To my mother, Yvonne, so fortunately still with us, my love and thanks for all you have taught me.

To those of you whom I have forgotten to mention, in the rush of completion of writing, and to those who were there for me in the making of artworks; Ana Sadlier, Camron, Muriwai, Myra Tapsell, Peata McNamara, my gratitude, ngā mihi, ngā mihi, ngā mihi.

## PEPEHA

*E tū te tari Māori, ki te wehenga o ngā ora*

*Tirohia atu ngā ara tawhito o namata.*

*Uia ki te wāhi ngaro, “Kei hea tō wāhi pai?”*

*Haere rā reira ka kitea rā e koe,*

*Te tānga manawa mō te iwi – mō te rahi, mō te iti*

*Hoea tō waka kia māro te haere*

*Wāhia te moana waiwai o te Ao Pākehā*

*Arise, Māori house and seek out life.*

*Study the ancient pathways of long ago*

*Ask of the hidden reality, “Where should I go?”*

*Go there, and you shall see*

*The beating heart of your people, of the great and the small.*

*Row your canoe and be committed to your journey*

*Cross the open sea of the European.*

*From ‘He pepeha mō ēnei rā’, Māori Marsden (Royal, 2003, p. 145).*

## HE TĪMATANGA - INTRODUCTION

*To understand is to know. To know and honour Creators, creatures of this planet, plants, trees, the earth, sand, gravel and the rocks, the oceans and their inhabitants, is essential to our being ourselves and each other. I honour also my hinengaro (hidden maiden), the deep hidden part of my mind where all the memories, information and linked emotions are stored until she wishes to release them... The Skyfather, the Earthmother, and beyond them the Creator with the Hidden Face, the Parentless one, the Ultimate One, I ask to remove the imperfections of what I write (Hohepa, 2007, p. 90).*

### WHAKAPAPA – LAYING THE GROUND

Matawhaorua waka (canoe) brought my tupuna (ancestor) Kupe to the shores of Hokianga Whakapau Karakia, accompanied by two taniwha (sea dragons). Arai-te-uru, a female taniwha, who sits on one side of my moko kauae (chin tattoo), settled on the southern side of the mouth of the Hokianga harbour, where my tupuna also settled. Her many offspring forced their ways inland, forming the many awa (rivers) of the Hokianga harbour.

Hine-i-te-aparangi, first wife of the navigator Kupe, was the first person to sight Aotearoa. Noticing a long white cloud in the distance she purportedly said “He ao, he aotea, he Aotearoa” (It is a cloud, a white cloud, a long white cloud). Named for the veil covering the land and also exposing it to the voyagers, Aotearoa was named and first glimpsed by wahine.

There are two traditions relating to Kupe’s second wife, Kuramarotini (Gudgeon, 1885, p. 16). While not specifying the source of either version, Gudgeon includes both narratives in his discussion. One version has Kuramarotini carried away by Kupe’s brother Hoturapa, prompting Kupe’s journey to Aotearoa in pursuit and in the second, more widely recognized version, Kupe had killed Hoturapa and carried off his wife (Kuramarotini). In either case the tupuna Kuramarotini is implicated in the leaving of their homeland of Hawaiki and arrival in Aotearoa.

According to another of her descendants, my tupuna whaea (ancestress) Maraea Te Kuri o te Wao was known to speak frequently in the whare hui (meeting house). Maria Te Wā McNamara, who died shortly after my father left home at an early age, was her mokopuna (granddaughter) and my karanima (grandmother). Much of my artwork over the years was about getting to know her, imagining how her life might have been and speaking with her through marks on paper, clay and video.

This thesis may seem to be an attempt to represent wāhine, to bring back the grandmothers and others I have known or never known. However, I cannot represent in marks a grandmother that I have never met, whose only likeness is retained on a tiny photograph as a minute, almost indistinguishable figure in a garden. How, in fact, might I mark the lives of both my grandmothers, one French, one Māori? The marks operate as signs, signs that might hold some of my love for Karanima, for this and other wāhine, signs of a self descended from both and many grandmothers. These signs, these markings of a name, my name, the signature, bear traces of all of my tupuna<sup>1</sup>.

The signature required on the attestation preceding this writing, marks an inherited responsibility to write, to sign, to write the several threads of a whakapapa (genealogy). My tupuna who signed He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga (the Declaration of Independence, 1835) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840) with a cross or with parts of their moko (tattoo), understood signature as a marking of whakapapa. The experience of signing would have been foreign to most of them. In that moment of decision of how to sign we can read something of an understanding of tohu (sign), of what it might mean to sign, to affix one's mark to a document.

Setting out on this thesis journey, I find myself intimately implicated in the title. As a Māori woman, I move through moments of identifying as wahine. Trinh T. Minh-ha (Minh-ha, 2011) asserts that “[t]he boundaries of identity and difference are

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<sup>1</sup> Derrida writes of “the revenance of the mark, then of language, then of the word, then of the name” (Dutoit & Pasanen, 2005, p. 33) in connection with mourning, a connection that will reappear in the exhibition works and throughout the exegesis.

continually repositioned in relation to various points of reference.”. Where, at times, the ‘I’ takes up a position as *wahine* in relation to an other, at other times this position disappears, or is covered over in favour of another movement in an ever-changing spectrum of belonging. Whilst I am implicated in *wahine*, I must move both inside and outside the word in order to discuss it, in order to behold it. Within the word *wahine* itself a range of other words or positions continually perform; *tamāhine* (daughter), *whaea* (mother), *kuia* (grandmother), *ruahine* (elderly woman). Whereas *wahine* involves both gendered and cultural difference “as *wahine*” moves amongst this range of positions, range of points of view.

This *as* is problematic: in order to see a self, and particularly to see-self-as, the *I* and *wahine* must be located outside any notion of self. There must be some notion of a self outside of the speaking-writing self that is able to behold self, to speak-write self. As Jacques Derrida insists throughout processes of deconstruction, there is always more than one in any *I*. This is already part of Māori epistemology, where one is never singular, always already part of *whānau* (family), *hapū* (subtribe) and *iwi* (tribe), with *tūpuna* (ancestors) looking on, from both inside and outside. While this was probably not what Derrida had in mind it nonetheless coincides with the notion of multiplicity in any ‘one’, in any ‘I’. This multiplicity writes;

Through my father I come from Waima, a small place in the Hokianga region of Northern Aotearoa, a place where I have never lived but which feels, in an uncanny way, home. I was born in Rotorua, of a Māori-Irish father and French-Scottish mother. My mother, still living, is a kind and sensitive woman, who cared well for my brother and me and the multitude of other children in the neighbourhood. My father worked for Internal Affairs as Conservator of Wildlife, and the happiest memories I have of my childhood are of times travelling with my father into the *ngāhere* (bush), onto *roto* (lakes) and *awa* (rivers), where he was responsible for overseeing and maintaining indigenous and introduced wildlife. As the elder of two children from this, his third marriage, my much older siblings having left home to begin their own families, I was often able to accompany my father in his work.



On these outings I learnt to read the signs around me - the blossoming kōwhai<sup>2</sup>, patterns in flights of birds, marks of poachers, cloud formations, embers of fires - from a man whose life involved and depended on the reading of signs. We were a whānau rich in kai (food), having an enormous garden that my father and I lovingly tended, and meat and fish from frequent journeys to moana (sea), roto, awa, and ngāhere. My father knew where and when kai was plentiful and ready for harvesting. We supplied neighbours and other whānau from this abundance, and I learnt that reading signs was not solely for one's own benefit, but implied a responsibility to feed others.

My father was suddenly torn from my life when I was seven, passing away in the middle of a tall fish story. He died laughing and making others laugh, and in that moment of laughter my world changed from one of happiness to an obscure sadness. My mother was in shock for years. My French grandmother and Scottish grandfather, her parents, came to live with us, bringing with them their kind ways and wonderful idiosyncracies. Reading became something different when we shifted to Auckland, where school and books became its new sites. Strangely, two weeks after my father's passing, I was unable to read the blackboard in class, having enjoyed excellent vision before. Myopia became part of my reading an uncertain world<sup>3</sup>, which had opened through the chasm of the death my father.

Signs that had been so much a part of my life were replaced with vague hoardings, advertising a range of kai that I was not accustomed to, but once spectacles were in place, greeted with some delight. Trips to moana, ngāhere and back garden were replaced by rides to the fish shop, butcher and greengrocer. Later my mother would go to work to pay for the education she wanted for us, and my brother and I were sent to boarding schools.

This was not a particularly happy time, for me, as I became very conscious of a relative poverty. My peers at boarding school all came from very wealthy families.

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<sup>2</sup> Indigenous tree with yellow flowers of genus *sophora*.

<sup>3</sup> It must be noted here that 'A Silkworm of one's own' is Derrida's response to Hélène Cixous' letter discussing her recent laser surgery to correct myopia. Derrida had been unaware of this blindness of his close friend, until the time of the letter.

The only other Māori student was a member of the whānau kingitanga (Māori royal family), and I was so fair that no one knew of my own whakapapa. My only solace came in the form of a very loving French teacher, who stood in for my French grandmother. Language and literature increasingly gained importance in my life, although te reo Māori (Māori language) was not taught or heard in school.

Leaving school, I continued to study languages at university for some time, dropping out to follow the poet James K. Baxter to Hiruhārama (Jerusalem) on the Whanganui River, yet another education in language and literature. This gave me a love for poetic English, and a return to the sounds of te reo Māori, the sounds of my beloved father. This life, set amongst the signs of ngāhere and awa, was familiar to my heart, but again I was ripped out of this familiarity, shifting to Oratia, north-west of Auckland to raise two wonderful daughters.

Many journeys followed, in and out of education, learning and teaching, community work, naturopathy, more community work, failed marriages, relationships, another daughter and many mokopuna (grandchildren and greatgrandchildren). I fell into art and design by accident, as one of two options available to me at the secondary school next to the Kōhanga Reo (preschool total immersion Māori language nest) my youngest daughter attended. Years of training followed, formal and informal, in what I read now as making signs, marking spaces for others to read. This sign making then extended into text, leaving marks, traces of a way of thinking through making, the trials that may never reach resolution, but may resound with the journey of another, a viewer, a reader.

I regard this mark making, this leaving of traces, as part of woman's work, a responsibility to those I will one day leave behind. More specifically, it is part of my work as a wahine. I do not weave, my eyes not being up to the task, and my hands too clumsy for fine work. I cannot make the fine garments I would like to leave for my daughters and mokopuna (grandchildren). This thesis, then, is my weaving, still clumsy, still hard on the eyes, performed with love and hope for the future.

## TE HOKINGA MAI - THE RETURN

Entering university in this country at the time of this doctoral study, (initially through the department of Art and Design), involved a bombardment from the corpus of Western philosophy. Largely devoted to sustained analysis and production of art and design works and engaging with such philosophy or philosophies, I found it often difficult to include Māori epistemologies. For this thesis I had to move to another faculty, Te Ara Poutama, where art making and Western texts are still present, but a focus on a Māori reading is crucial.

Cherryl Waarea-i-te-rangi Smith highlights;

*the urgency of beginning to make Māori philosophy more overt in our approaches to all aspects of the way we live our lives and the ways that we engage academic practice (C. W.-i.-t.-r. Smith, 2000, p. 44).*

I take up this urgency in this thesis, where a Māori world view includes not only things identifiably Māori, but approaches a reading of the Western world, through Māori philosophy. The thesis casts off from a title, *Ecce Wahine*, that gathers, for any reader, an array of images associated with one or both of its words. *Ecce Wahine* calls up *Ecce Homo* (Behold the man!), Pontius Pilate's exposition of the suffering Christ to the judgement of a people (John 19:5), which introduces a vast body of artworks and literature to this scene<sup>4</sup>. But *Ecce Wahine* came about through a mishearing of the Māori word eke (to mount, to climb on board, to embark and to arrive on another shore) as *ecce* by Professor Pare Keiha<sup>5</sup>.

Having been gifted with this coupling, both uncalled for and uncanny, I was prompted to instigate further couplings, where each must listen to an other and find difference in the eyes and ears of an other. This thetic engagement connects subject and complement (copula), suggests seizure of power (coup) and sexual intercourse

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<sup>4</sup> The title *Ecce Homo* has been taken up by numerous artists to depict the biblical scene of Christ's exposition, and by Friedrich Nietzsche in naming his 1888 manuscript for publication. Discussion on some of these works continues in Chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> Professor Pare Keiha, Dean of Te Ara Poutama, AUT's Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Development, gifted this title in a discussion following a presentation of my Masters project to the Faculty in 2002. Keiha, hearing the Māori word eke as **ecce**, voiced a desire for the title *Ecce Wāhine* to be taken up. This desire set in motion a writing that has not for a moment given up on its title, seizing it as an itinerary for investigation.

(copulate) cuts (*coups*<sup>6</sup>) and cups (*coupes*<sup>7</sup>) On the other hand, it speaks of play, ranks and rows and of disobedience (*kapa*). The transliteration *kāpara* (couple), when separated, yields *kā* (fire) and *para* (sediment, impurity and refuse), a charred writing of traces of encounter.

Film maker and post-colonial theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha (Minh-ha, 2011) writes;

*When two strangers meet and become friends, lovers or companions, it is often said in Asia that “their paths are bound to cross” and that they are merely resolving a past debt (Minh-ha, p. 34).*

This could well be said of these two companions, *Ecce* and *Wahine*, bound together from the time of first meeting, the first moments of colonization of Aotearoa. Sometimes enemies, sometimes friends, sometimes lovers, they have waited in the wings for this moment of standing together, entwined in a title, enmeshed in past debts which continually seek resolution. An English translation of both words together yields ‘Behold the Woman’. *Ecce Wahine* is thus also a deliberate mistranslation of *Ecce Homo*, Pontius Pilate’s call to the assembled crowd, presenting Man in the form of Christ, scourged and bleeding, and Christ as man, as not-God, whose frailty and diminished sovereignty is represented through a crown of thorns.

The convoluted meanderings of *Ecce Wahine* cast off from its homeland of Aotearoa-New Zealand, to engage with a French film by Swedish director, Carl-Theodor Dreyer, *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (Dreyer, 1999a), henceforth referred to as *Joan*, and a text by Jewish Franco-Maghrebian literary and cultural theorist<sup>8</sup>, Jacques Derrida, “A Silkworm of One’s Own: Points of View Stitched on the Other Veil”, (Derrida, 2001b), henceforth *Silkworm*. Extracted images from these two texts form the whariki (woven mat) on which a Māori way of reading Western images proceeds.

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<sup>6</sup> Fr. *Couper* – to cut

<sup>7</sup> *la coupe* – Fr. Goblet, cup and cut

<sup>8</sup> Confining the name Derrida to literature and culture may seem an anathema in deconstructive terms. However these labels are intended to confine only in the sense of the limitations of this thesis. Many other descriptives have been associated with the name Derrida, too many to fully address here. This description has also been put to use in *Methodology of the oppressed* (Sandoval, 2000, p. 147).

## TAITARA TUARUA - SUBTITLE: TOWARDS A MĀORI READING OF WESTERN TEXT

Where the title names a text to be read, gives name to something, positions and introduces the work, the subtitle in an academic writing is usually more specific in outlining or framing what is to be read. Both title and subtitle operate as headlines to the body of writing, with the subtitle maintaining a lesser position in a Western hierarchical positioning, often in smaller font and beneath the title.

While this thesis, too, is a constellation revolving around its title, its subtitle is also to be read. A destination is suggested in its opening with the word 'towards', indicating a specific point where arrival might be recognized, where there might be, at some time, the possibility of marking closure and a specific site of disembarkation. "Towards" points to deferral, a word that takes root from the Latin *differre*, from *dis-* "apart" + *ferre* "bring, carry", a notion of being en route to a place or event to come.

"Towards" is also linked with "guarding", with "keeping watch", through its whakapapa to the Old English *weard*, which, when used as suffix, suggests a turn in a particular direction as in "eastward". In this thesis' subtitle, the turn is to a specific way of reading, defined as Māori, a word used (post colonization) to inscribe the varied tribal groupings in Aotearoa–New Zealand. "Reading", in its whakapapa, relates back to the Old English *ræda*, of Germanic origin, with early senses of interpretation, guessing, and advice. Thus a Māori reading is a particular way of interpretation, not fixed or static but open to change and a multitude of possibilities.

There is always, within the word "towards", the potential for a destination never to be reached, or for an unintended destination to be arrived at, for the journey to remain a continued movement without end. In any interpretation of what operates under the rubric of 'Western text', the journey must, of necessity be without end. Production of Western text continues to be prolific, even in the narrowest sense of 'text' as written or printed material. Derrida's well worn phrase "il n'y a pas de hors texte", "there is no outside the text"(Derrida, 1998b, p. 158), and his discussion around the reading of context have extended understanding of what can be called 'text'. For the purposes of this thesis 'text' largely refers to film, writing, drawing, and

photographic image, while the term 'Western' relates back through the title of the thesis, to languages and cultures of European origin.

#### **WHAKAMĀORI (TRANSLATION)**

Translation is always a movement towards, an attempt to carry something across from one language and set of values and customs to another. As with any border crossing it is fraught with dangers. Translation, in te reo Māori involves a process of becoming, a distinct movement towards whatever culture is named after the prefix whaka-. To whakamāori, then, is to become Māori, to somehow take concepts that are held in the linguistic confines of one culture and turn it into Māori, a word that in itself, pre-colonization, was used to reference what was normal, usual.

To become Māori, to move something across so that it is Māori involves a massive shift in thinking, where it is often impossible to hold the shape or content of the "original" language. A very simplistic example of this is the word 'boat', which is commonly translated into the Māori 'waka', and yet when I bring forth an image of 'boat', it is very different from the image I hold of 'waka', having a different shape, made from different materials, perhaps a similar function in that both are vessels to cross water, but the visual accompaniment to both words makes translation impossible. Thus translatability is always in question, even in the most rudimentary terms of translation of a single word. Translation in this thesis goes even further, attempting to translate image, an impossible task.

Lastly, it cannot be forgotten that the small preposition 'of' is somewhat ambiguous in the subtitle, raising uncertainties between positions occupied by the Western text and Māori reading. While the intention is to specify a Māori interpretation derived or casting off from Western text the 'of' could also suggest a Māori reading belonging to or with Western text, Western text's Māori reading. While the latter option would severely strain the reading of the phrase, it should nevertheless be remembered that this other lurks within the subtitle, within any usage of this small seemingly insignificant 'of'.

## TE HANGATANGA - STRUCTURE

*Ecce Wahine* approaches its title on two fronts; written exegesis and visual artworks. The first, the exegetic *Ecce Wahine* critically engages with the notion of wahine beheld and beholding, through reading both Dreyer and Derrida's texts, which, on first sight, appear entirely foreign to the notion of wahine. This textual engagement explores Māori ways of seeing and vision, which are then brought to the images accompanying the Derridean text and interstitial stills from Dreyer's film.

The exhibition continues my initial engagement with the topic, in an Art and Design project. Concerned with thinking through technologies of image making, the exhibition draws out research findings that retain visible traces of a way of thinking through some aporia involved in the journey. The process leading to the exhibition explores the coupling of the two words, *Ecce* and *Wahine*, allowing Hinengaro (the hidden maiden)<sup>9</sup> to appear perhaps more powerfully than in the written exegesis. Thus the exhibition enables a viewer to move amongst the research findings, between different threads of connection that are often slid over in a linear reading of phonetic text.

Chapter one in this exegesis discusses the conceptual framework of the thesis; *eyes*, *memory*, *understanding*, *hyphen*, and *translation* are introduced. A brief touching on these issues will later be developed through discussion of the two texts. This chapter presents basic Māori understandings of the issues, specifically, where possible, relating to my Ngāpuhi tribal heritage, which belongs to a grouping of subtribes in the northern region of Te Ika-a-Māui (the North Island of Aotearoa).

This thesis research involves a fairly complex interweaving of styles, and this is discussed in Chapter two. This interweaving works with deconstruction, practice as research and visual readings, all of which are related back to kaupapa Māori (a methodological approach integrating Māori knowledge, skills, attitudes and social values). A range of very different texts are used, many of which are touched on,

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<sup>9</sup> Williams (2002, p. 51) translates Hinengaro as the "seat of thoughts and emotions, heart", suggesting difference in location and connections from a Western notion of thinking. Highlighting the role of Hinengaro in this thesis connects thinking to a methodology of love, and writing to the heart.

leaving the literature review in Chapter three to focus largely on a review of visual materials. Discussion of images at this point adopts a Western reading of image ably framed in Gillian Rose's *Visual Methodologies* (Rose, 2005).

Chapter four continues with further readings of images, which now turn to interstitial frames, stills from *Joan*, where visible splices and decay open to translation, to splicing yet other readings onto what are already multiple frames. From this Chapter five leads into elisions from *Silkworm*, where images were notoriously omitted in readings of the phonetic text. In the first publication of *Silkworm* (Derrida, 1997a) images of veils open to Māori readings, which include Ngā Tawhito, those beings commonly relegated to discussions on background and aspects of landscape in discussion on Western art. The discussion articulates differences in ways of seeing, shifting points of view addressing a "Māori world view" and a relationship between wahine and mata (eyes).

A process of art making as a way of research that makes up this thesis is recorded in Chapter six, tracing a journey through some of the aporia involved in working towards exhibition and exegesis. These aporia have arisen in relation to the spliced images from *Joan* and the interstices of varied publications of *Silkworm*.

*Ecce Wahine* involves a complex journey, approaching home through the foreign. Perhaps the departure is an expedition into the lands of *Ecce*, only to return home to Wahine, and perhaps, in the words of poet T.S. Elliot from 'Little Gidding'

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.  
Through the unknown, unremembered gate  
When the last of earth left to discover  
Is that which was the beginning;*



## 1 NGĀ WHAKAEKE: POINTS OF DEPARTURE

This chapter offers a background to the choice of Western texts to be worked with, to translation as a process for proceeding with these texts and firmly locates this translation in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Throughout this thesis a notion of Hinengaro, my personification of the Hidden Maiden (from hine [maiden] and ngaro [hidden]), arising from Hohepa's citation that opens the Introduction (p.5), is discussed, where unforeseen connections come to the surface. Often neglected in academic writing, these connections, starting with the unforeseen connection that gifted the title *Ecce wahine*, are brought out to further open discussion. Hinengaro, usually translated as "mind, thought, intellect, consciousness, awareness" (Moorfield, 2005) has come to mean much more, as she wends her way through the writing process.

### NGĀ KAPE (SOCKETS): AROUND THE EYES

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Figure 1 *The Passion of Joan of Arc*

Of all memorable Western films and texts encountered, *Joan* and *Silkworm* remain, for me, the most insistent. Both text and film under examination in this practical engagement portray memorable encounters with the eye, with eyes and vision as instruments of culturally conditioned perception. Both are written and directed towards the eye, playing out a Western notion of vision and visibility, while

challenging the foundations of Western thinking in relation to vision. In *Joan* this is revealed through an unrelenting series of close-ups and in *Silkworm* through discussion around the unveiled myopia of Derrida's friend, French feminist writer Hélène Cixous, which leads him into musings on the difference between veil and tallith, differences of gender and sensory engagement, differences also of seeing and perception.

Nowhere is the Western dominance of the eye more clearly stated than in the spliced images from *Joan*, where Dreyer exchanges one set of eyes for another, sometimes in exact positioning. Eyes form a pivot around which many shots revolve, visible only in the interstitial splices, rendered invisible by the motion of the film (Figs. 2 & 3).

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Figure 2 *The passion of Joan of Arc*

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Figure 3 *The passion of Joan of Arc*

Under Dreyer's direction eyes dominate Joan's trial. She is questioned at some length on the visions of angels that have appeared to her. She has seen what others have not. Truth of vision is in question, or rather truth, reliant on vision, has been challenged. Seeing, which, as Derrida reminds us in *Copy, archive, signature* (Derrida, 2010c), relies on differences in darkness and light, is here on trial for difference. For while

difference in darkness and light is that which enables vision, there is an assumption of truth in a supposed homogeneous perception. What is invisible to the majority or to those in positions of power, is deemed untrue, false witness, and to be eradicated, or at the very least kept hidden, lest others begin to question (in)visible truth, differences in perception. In Aotearoa-New Zealand this led to legislation such as the 1907 Tohunga Suppression Act, where tribal spiritual leaders and healers were forbidden to practice. The preamble to this Act reads;

*Every person who gathers Maoris around him by practising on their superstition or credulity or attempts to mislead any Māori by professing to possess supernatural powers in the treatment or cure of any disease, or in the foretelling of future events, or otherwise, is liable on summary conviction before a Magistrate to a fine of not exceeding twenty-five pounds or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months (Tohunga Suppression Act, 1907).*

Decisions on what amounted to “supernatural” depended, of course, on a dominant Western reading of such practices. For Māori such practices were a very real and natural part of everyday life and this Act led to the loss of many cultural practices and understandings.

Dominance of a close-up view, movement around and between eyes and discussion on suppression of difference in vision also occurs in *Silkworm*, where Derrida’s text responds to and includes large tracts from Cixous’ mourning on the passing of her myopia, eradicated through laser surgery. The different ways of seeing that she has experienced since childhood have gone, with laser surgery to correct her myopia. Blurred vision is not any longer to expose a different truth, a visibility of the veil that is imperceptible to the clear-sighted. Vision, reliant on difference, is altered to restore a supposed homogeneous truth.

#### **NGĀ MAUMAHARA – HOLDING MEMORIES**

Hohepa (2007, p. 90) locates mahara (memory) in Hinengaro, in the heart or spleen<sup>10</sup>, along with “information and linked emotions”<sup>11</sup>. With attention to the etymology of

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<sup>10</sup> Williams (2002, p. 51) offers spleen as alternative site of Hinengaro

<sup>11</sup> For extended citation see p. 3 this thesis

'hinengaro', he addresses the "Hidden maiden<sup>12</sup>" (ibid), the internal feminine, kaitiaki (guardian) who veils and unveils thought, memory and emotion.

Hinengaro weaves her maumahara (memories) throughout *Silkworm* through Derrida's attention to childhood memories, from the middle of the first paragraph (p.21) to the very end, with his sustained narrative of raising silkworms as a child (pp.87-92). An aspect of these workings of Hinengaro could also be said of Dreyer's *Joan*, which is a response to the official transcript of the trial of Joan of Arc. The film is extracted directly from the transcript of the trial, with the only addition being a singular intertitle proclaiming the saving of France as her raison d'être. The film translates the already translated transcript, holding fast to its memory of a series of events through a radical selection process, condensing months into days.

Discussion on *Silkworm* is at once a discussion on one side of another discussion; of Derrida's response to Cixous' 'Savoir', an article that precedes the Derridean text in the three publications engaged with here<sup>13</sup>. As such it is always open to and enfolding the other that went before. As a singular text it is always mokemoke (longing) for its other, always attempting to hold within it the account of laser sugery that allowed Cixous to see, as it also burnt away a particular vision that had been hers since childhood, an indistinct vision, her myopia<sup>14</sup>. *Silkworm* weaves threads between the two, holding to an analysis of 'Savoir' through Derrida's intensely autobiographical encounter with veil and tallith.

Both *Joan* and *Silkworm* respond to prior texts in similar and radically different ways, *Joan* through visual translation and carving out of segments of the transcript and *Silkworm* through an autobiographical response. As maumahara (memorials), both maintain sections of the texts to which they respond. In the ways of maumahara, they hold images and words of the other close. Whakairo (carving), tukutuku (woven

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<sup>12</sup> From hine (maiden) and ngaro (hidden)

<sup>13</sup> Derrida, J. (2001). A silkworm of one's own: Points of view stitched on the other veil (G. Bennington, Trans.). In *Veils* (pp. 17-92). Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, Derrida, J. (1998). Un ver a soie: Points de vue piques sur l'autre voile. In *Voiles*. Paris: Editions Galilee, and Derrida, J. (1997). Un ver a soie: Points de vue piques sur l'autre voile. *Contretemps*, 2(3), 11-51.

<sup>14</sup> Etymology from early 18th century: from French, via late Latin from Greek *muōps*, from muein 'to shut' + ōps 'eye.'

panels), and kōwhaiwhai (painted rafters) all worked to write history prior to colonization. This writing, not merely decorative, held memories of a hapū inside the whare hui, accessible and looking on when meetings took place. In a similar way, *Joan* and *Silkworm* have housed within them, the writings to which they respond.

### WHAKAPAPA – JOAN

Whakapapa, as used here, may be translated as “genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent” (Moorfield, 2005) consists of whaka, which, “combined with a noun to form an intransitive verb, signifies the assumption of the character or form expressed by the noun” (Williams, 2002, p. 486). The noun papa, connects directly with Papatūānuku, with the ground, and more recently floor. Papa is also a layer, and, following whaka, suggests a layering, a making ground. Whakapapa is also, according to Willims (ibid. p.259) the name given to bush felled for burning. *Joan* has become part of both my whakapapa and the whakapapa of this thesis through these varied applications of the word.

In 1985 restoration was completed on the negative of a film that had been both destroyed by fire and, in its reworked version, presumed again destroyed by fire until uncovered in its entirety and in restorable condition in a Norwegian psychiatric institution. That film is *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, Carl Theodor Dreyer’s 1927 black and white silent translation to film of excerpts from the transcript of the trial<sup>15</sup>, torture, judgement and sentence of a young French woman, Jeanette-Jehanne-Jeanne d’Arc-Joan of Arc<sup>16</sup>. Dreyer had made the film in response to the canonization of Joan in 1920 and to the multitude of works around her life<sup>17</sup>. Through a bizarre resonance

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<sup>15</sup> Transcripts of the trial have undergone an interesting itinerary of translation and movement between languages. Records taken in French during the investigation and trial were taken by three notaries and collated at the end of each day. These records were later translated into Latin by the chief notary Guillaume Manchon and Thomas de Courcelles and have since been translated into English.

<sup>16</sup> Signing her “confession” as Jehanne, Joan is commonly known as Jeanne d’Arc in France, a proper name that has been translated into the English Joan of Arc. Jeanette is the name by which she was known “in her country” (see images on title page of this thesis). The sataement “In my country Dans mon pays)” puts into question what Joan regarded as her country, suggesting a regional or tribal identification rather than national.

<sup>17</sup> These include Shakespeare’s *Henry VI, Part 1* (1591), Robert Southey’s epic poem in honour of Joan (1794), Voltaire’s *La Pucelle d’Orléans* (published 1899), *Die Jungfrau von Orléans* by Friedrich Schiller (1808), Verdi’s *Giovanna d’Arco* (1845), the Russian opera in four acts by Tchaikovsky *Орлеанская дева* (1878-79), Mark Twain’s *Personal Recollections of Joan*

between the content of the film, which ends with Joan being burnt at the stake, and the life of the artefact, the film has undergone trial by fire, with no known provenance of how it came to arrive in a cupboard in the psychiatric institution<sup>18</sup>. Restoration of this and any film, while invaluable in the survival of a work, also involve processes of homogenization in order to render film acceptable to a viewer.

From her death in 1431 both French and English history have been divided over Joan of Arc's role and in particular her relationship to her God. She was largely decried until in 1803 Napoleon Bonaparte, in his battle against the English, called on Joan as symbolic of French patriotism. An intensive five year research by French historian Jules Quicherat gathered together all documents from Joan's life and trial, making these widely available through translation into a readable French.

From an environment of rising popular support a petition for canonization, submitted in 1869, was eventually set in motion in 1894. Interruption to the process of canonization came through the 1870 Franco-Prussian war through which France suffered defeat, losing the territories of Alsace and Lorraine to the Germans. Commencement of the process of Beatification, a step towards canonization, was instigated at the behest of Pope Leo XIII as a political move to bring France closer to the Vatican (a relationship that had been stretched through the Western Great Schism, where two popes, one in Rome and one in Avignon operated in opposition as centers of the Catholic Church, between 1378-1423).

A screening of Joan in 2000, at a festival in Tāmaki-makau-rau–Auckland, was far from silent. Its projection was accompanied by a choir of women to one side of the screen, singing the Einhorn libretto (Einhorn, 1999) included voices in Latin, French and English, poetry (some misogynistic and others by female saints), hymns, prayers, letters and biblical citations. Mouths open, they breathed out this writing, notations set to cover sounds of projector, for this film that was seen to have no sound of its

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of Arc, by the Sieur Louis de Conte (published in serial 1895 and book 1896) George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1924), Henri Auguste Barbier's *Jeanne d'Arc* (1909), the monumental oeuvre of Charles Péguy (1910-1930's) and Anatole France's biographical *La vie de Jeanne d'Arc* (1908).

<sup>18</sup> Some of the frames have retained traces, marks of disintegration (e.g. Fig. 16). These remain invisible through the movement of projection.

own, to be silent. With this accompaniment, one accompanying the other, silences performing as chasms between women's voices were intense.

Working in some ways similar to women's role of leading waiata (songs) to support formal speech on marae, the film became whaikōrero, the male speech to which the women's voices responded. Formalities of the film were strengthened through moments where breaches in a protocol of filming close up interspersed in wide and long shots gave in to an unrelenting onslaught of close ups. The role of women in this screening reflected the balance that occurs between whaikōrero and waiata, between gendered roles in addressing manuhiri (visitors). In this performance/screening, however, whaikōrero and waiata performed together, side by side, sometimes one overshadowing the other with little space between the two.

The gap between visual and vocal reading at this performance of *Joan* highlighted an articulation between film and soundtrack. Barely visible women, visually indistinguishable one from the other in their distance from this viewer, contrasted with the enormous faces on screen in everchanging relationships of singing to, as, for and against. Somewhat akin to Michel Chion's "acousmatic voice" (Chion, 1999), the interdiction against seeing the choir, provided by the strength and sheer violence of the film, set up a very different experience to that of regular cinema.

A heightened sensory awareness of the slightest movement, sounds and smells around me accompanied the virgin encounter with this film. The psychological complexity of a live performance of women's voices overtaking and playing around with, folded into and enfolding Dreyer's unrelenting procession of closeups and extreme closeups of the faces of participants in the trial of Joan of Arc and Falconetti's embodiment of Joan, provoked, for me, a physical engagement with this film<sup>19</sup> that remains with me to this day, even without vocal accompaniment. Once drawn in through the voices of women, entering through the ear, and wrapping around an audience, this is how the film is heard. This is how the silence of the film plays and replays, calling and recalling .

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<sup>19</sup> References to a physical engagement with *Joan* have also been made through other films such as Jean-Luc Godard's 1962 film *Vivre sa vie* (Godard, 2010) and more recently Kaufman's *Henry and June* (Kaufman, 1990)

The film spoke loudly to me of processes of colonization of women, Hinengaro recalling to the surface instances of oppression in my own life, both those internally experienced and witnessed. On this occasion seeing and hearing, severed from each other and yet insistent, brought touch to the fore. Touched by images on a screen, I experienced bodily responses in relation to images of the woman, Joan/Maria Falconetti, movement matching movement, neck tension matching stretches of head and neck. Enfolded by vision and sound, I reached out bodily to engage with the film, not in a sense of physically replacing or standing in for Joan, but of being touched by and touching the same light, burnt by the same fires as the body on screen, an engagement that has occurred in few other films and one that has silently called, not only for a response, but also for a working through of questions of what was happening in the encounter with this particular film to provoke such depth of engagement. This response may already have occurred in relation to every other film, with this film marking an awareness of such responses, an awareness of body in relation to reading film, an awareness of a reading/writing body that touches and is touched by film<sup>20</sup>.

Choir and film, sound and vision, alive and dead, *physus* and *technē* played out a dangerous supplementation in this performance, drawing a viewer into the very tensions that are covered over. Perhaps, amidst these tensions, a sense of self lost itself to an other while becoming increasingly aware of both self and other, self as and through other. Distances collapsed in the darkness of the cinema. There was only touch, only the shimmering light and heat of a projector calling and recalling movement, calling and recalling a burning heat, a fire that threatened to darken, to devour all, a fire without trace, that leaves only ashes, traces of former hiding places of fire, where the remnants of Mahuika's stolen fingernails had been stored, awaiting her call to ignite.

A Māori epistemology locates the gift of fire through the trickster-hero Māui, asking his grandmother, the Tawhito, Mahuika, for fire to warm the village hearths. In the

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<sup>20</sup> Laura U. Marks (2000, p. xvii) discusses this experience at length in *The skin of the film*, arguing that "our experience of film is mimetic, or an experience of bodily similarity to the audiovisual images we take in." See Chapters 4 & 5 for further discussion on touch and vision.



way of grandmothers, one by one she gifted her fingernails that held the precious fire, until no more remained<sup>21</sup>. Mahuika was there in the cinema, both in the film, where fire devoured and Joan as it had devoured copies of the film, and in processes involved in making and projection. Flickering light and heat that allow an image to appear large on screen expose a clear connection between fire and technology, extending to the laser burning of digital video discs in current use. Mahuika is involved in these processes, forgotten or covered over, perhaps, due to the oppressive weight of Eurocentric (or phallogocentric as Derrida would have it) readings of what is happening in any situation.

#### WHAKAPAPA - SILKWORM

In 2001 I attended a presentation of a reading from another of Derrida's responses to another Cixous text, a response to Cixous' dream of an ant (Derrida, 2002a, p. 119). Throughout the reading I was unable to not-write, unable to permit this reading between English and French to continue without te reo Māori, a Māori response. And, in that writing, phonic connections, homophones and mishearings between languages, waiata and childhood rhyme scrawled across page after page, mostly in a language known as 'Māori'.

The reading worked between 'ant' and *une fourmi* (ant), a playful working through of gendered difference through introducing a masculine ant (*un fourmi*), through homophony in translation (for example "for me") and working with two languages in coupling ("four mis"). [It is interesting to note here, in a study very much involved with text and textile (*Silkworm*), that the French phrase '*avoir des fourmis*', literally 'to have ants' translates having pins and needles, the sharp points that sting and hold together (*piquer*<sup>22</sup>)].

In this instance, reading-writing worked on at least two registers; it was a recall through Hinengaro to three languages interwoven, a calling together through a way of working with, working between sounds and meanings, not covering over but

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<sup>21</sup> In a similar trajectory a Eurocentric view cites Prometheus, the Greek trickster-hero, as having stolen fire from the gods, coupling his gift of the stolen fire to the advent of technology

<sup>22</sup> *Piquer* also refers to the subtitle of the French original of *Silkworm*; '*Points de vue piqués sur l'autre voile*'

allowing mishearings to arise at the site of opening. This reading of the Derridean text also exposed an active underground site of language, a site of possibilities and openings hitherto experienced only at the level of mahara (memories) of childhood, where, for me, three languages intersected.

Like the karanga, the call of wahine on the marae, the call that welcomes and opens the heart to what is to come as it opens to other worlds in an acknowledgement of those who have gone before, this short text brought together languages in a poetic inteweaving. In this instance Hinengaro, allowing memories of intewoven languages, interwoven ancestors and heritages to rise to the surface, was the site of promise and promises, of promises of difference in language, promising subtleties in sounds and textures between cultures, promising a richness in textiles.

This site was also a karanga to come together, to write together difference and différance, reo (languages), tikanga (customs and ways), tūpuna. It was a reminder of the several tongues that are active in thinking through any film, any text, any reading. It held a promise of possibilities not without danger, of ways of reading-writing, of translating.

It was also, for me, a karanga to pay attention to Hinengaro, the hidden maiden who can bring to the surface seemingly disconnected events that question prior connections, holding the possibility for new ways of thinking, for decolonizing thinking and reading.

Some time later, having wended a shaky path through much of Derrida's writing, I came across the book *Veils*, a small, little discussed volume coupling Cixous's 'Savoir' with Derrida's response *Silkworm*. This is, for me, amongst all the Derridean texts, a space where Hinengaro is most strongly acknowledged, a space in writing that opens for the hinengaro of a reader to respond. It is also the site of a very specific discussion of whakapapa. From the first words of 'Savoir' memories and tupuna were engaged, points of view, of difference floating to the surface.

## MĀRAMATANGA – UNDERSTANDING DERRIDA

On a visit to Aotearoa-New Zealand in August 1999, only five years before his passing in 2004, Derrida was welcomed through a pōwhiri (ceremony of welcome) onto Waipapa marae (meeting ground), at Auckland University. In his whaikōrero (formal address), Derrida acknowledged a different way of experience, a different way of reading an event.

*“I must tell you that, despite all the problems of language and translation that this country has had to overcome, and still has to overcome, through the heart, and without understanding absolutely everything that was said, I felt a very strong, very deep sentiment of belonging, and as soon as you authorised me to cross the threshold I had a feeling that I experienced a moment of hospitality which is for me absolutely unforgettable. I have been teaching for years, I thought I was teaching for years, on hospitality, but today I experienced directly, with my heart what hospitality is or should be, what our relation to our ancestors, our relation to our heritage is and should be” (Simmons & Worth, 2001, pp. 26-27).*

“...through the heart and without understanding absolutely everything that was said” may seem an unusual selection of words from an academic whose work in deconstruction, rigorously tracing paths of words and ideas, has led to an impressive body of work. And yet this is precisely the place from where he begins reading-writing. “Understanding”, at first sight, looks to open a duality; either one understands or does not understand, either understanding is there or not there, involving something of a metaphysics of presence and absence.

There are, however, differences in understanding that must be considered in any discussion, differences that open understanding to other voices and other languages. Etymologically ‘under-standing’ suggests a standing under that closely aligns with the writing of whakapapa in traditional Māori carving, where the figure of the tupuna stands above her descendants. Understanding is then read as whakapapa, as having a relation through ‘descending from’, a relation of heritage. Marsden (2003, p.61) refers to whakapapa as “a tool for transmitting knowledge”, pervading every aspect of Māori culture. Dreyer’s *Joan* and Derrida’s *Silkworm* stand on the shoulders of any work that engages with them, becoming part of the whakapapa of this thesis, part of my whakapapa. With the spatializing of standing under, a degree, then, can be seen in its etymological sense, as a stepping down, a further approach in proximity to

Papatūānuku, where what has gone before is raised on the shoulders of a carved/written work.

#### TE HONONGA (HYPHEN): SIGHTING THE SILENT LINE

In locating this study on two Western texts in Aotearoa-New Zealand we immediately have a hyphen, two sites of identity stitched together through the line between, which in a spatial shift, lies above vowels as macron to give notice of a lengthening, of a doubling of the vowel sound in te reo Māori. As hyphen the line separates those that it joins, assuming also that each is whole, entire unto itself. The hyphen, in its silence and through its whakapapa, brings together under one (Greek *hupo* – under and *hen* – one) words, lands, cultures and languages, Aotearoa and New Zealand. In another from his vast oeuvre Derrida warns of the hyphen, here in relation to the hyphen between Franco and Maghrebian in his own whakapapa;

*The silence of that hyphen does not pacify or appease anything, not a single torment, not a single torture. It will never silence their memory. It could even worsen the terror, the lesions and the wounds. A hyphen is never enough to conceal protests, cries of anger or suffering, the noise of weapons, airplanes and bombs. (Derrida, 1998a, p. 11)*

While the particularity of Derrida's Franco-Maghrebian hyphen and memory sounds and soundings in Aotearoa-New Zealand differ with technologies deployed in processes of colonization, the tangihanga (cries of anger and suffering) still resound. The hyphen silences nothing. Each time the name Aotearoa-New Zealand is written the silent line brings out the "lesions and wounds". Every hui mate (time of mourning also known as tangihanga) mourns and re-members those who have gone before, pre and post colonization, pre and post wars. In re-membering our tūpuna, there is a redressing of colonization that took place with the first wounds and imported diseases as well as the deaths that continue to occur through new forms of colonization that take place under global capitalism<sup>23</sup>. This silent line continues to insinuate threats to kaitiakitanga (*stewardship*) of lands, waterways, natural resources that have been the lifeblood of a people as evidenced in recent government sales of assets and rights for oil exploration.

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<sup>23</sup> Included here are those transnational companies that continue to promote poisonous and addictive substances, the rampant destruction of environments by others leaving indigenous populations without sustenance.

## WHAKAMĀORITIA (TRANSLATION): TRANSLATING IMAGE

What this thesis attempts is a Māori reading, a translation into Māori if you will. To translate 'translation' into Māori is just one of the impossible tasks that call to be addressed. Māori words for translation each pay respect to the recipient language through the prefix *whaka-* (to make, to cause, to become)<sup>24</sup>. *Whaka* also translates as towards, thus any translation is a movement in the direction of another language, and to give a Māori reading can only be a movement towards, an approach in its attempt to *whakamāori*, to become Māori. Impossibility of translation in the sense of carrying across meaning in its entirety is acknowledged.

Reading between image and text, translating between the two is not to reduce one to the other. It is always necessary to acknowledge differences, while these very differences can also indicate hitherto unthought aspects of one through a reading of the other. Artist and philosopher Gerhard Richter in his introduction to *Copy, archive, signature: A conversation on photography* (Derrida, 2010c) discusses the *whanaungatanga* (relationship) between deconstruction and photography through the concept of translation, reminding us that the roots of deconstruction, even the word deconstruction itself, spring from translation, with 'déconstruction' being Derrida's attempt to carry across into French the thinking behind Martin Heidegger's German notions of '*Destruktion*' and '*Abbau*', to include both taking apart and making.

Richter continues with an analysis of Derrida's view on the correspondence between the linguistic related work of writing and speech and those arts such as drawing, photography and painting that appear to be non discursive. Citing Derrida from an interview with Peter Brunette and David Wills (Brunette & Wills, 1994, p. 14) where he states that "the most effective deconstruction ... is one that deals with the nondiscursive, or with discursive institutions that do not have the form of a written discourse", Richter connects deconstruction intimately with the image, to the extent that "There can therefore be ... no translation of deconstruction that is not always also a translation of (in both the genitive and accusative cases) the image" (Richter, 2010, p. xviii).

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<sup>24</sup> Discussion on this small word could fill an entire thesis, and is only approached briefly here.

It is notable, therefore, that the three publications of *Silkworm* that are discussed in this thesis, are accompanied by different images. Even more notable is the lack of discussion on these images, relegated at best to a brief mention as in Alexis Nouss' footnote:

*Ce qui est magistralement donné à voir dans les dessins d'Ernest Pignon-Ernest*

*« accompagnant » Voiles. Vision quasi tactile qui souligne ce sur quoi Derrida a souvent*

*insisté : la connivence radicale du texte et du textile<sup>25</sup> (Nouss, 2002, p. 227).*

#### TĀ TE REO - DRAWING ON TRANSLATION

From the moment of the title of this thesis, 'Translation' in its (im)possibilities begins to perform. And yet what is this word 'translation' and how does it come to gain such currency between people, cultures, languages communities, politics, media, arts? This feminine noun (la traduction, French) renders a notion of movable meaning between at least two, a notion of a possibility of carrying something across from one to another, of trafficking across borderlines. Its usage over past decades has itself been translated from a linguistic (from a 'source' language to another or 'target' language<sup>26</sup>) or ecclesiastic carrying across (the translation of bones), to cover any transporting of something to somewhere else, to embrace transportation and transformation not just in terms of language but through blends of languages, cultures, politics, styles.

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<sup>25</sup> Tr - Which is masterfully revealed in the drawings of Ernest Pignon-Ernest "accompanying" *Veils*. Quasi tactile vision that underlines what Derrida so often stresses: the radical connivence between text and textile.(my translation)

<sup>26</sup> For discussion challenging this duality see in particular;

Benjamin, W. (1992). The task of the translator. In J. Biguenet & R. Schulte (Eds.), *Theories of translation: An anthology of essays from Dryden to Derrida*. Chicago London: University of Chicago Press.

Davis, K. (2001). *Deconstruction and translation*. Manchester Northampton: St. Jerome Publishing.

Derrida, J. (1992). From 'Des Tours de Babel'. In R. Schulte & J. Biguenet (Eds.), *Theories of translation: An anthology of essays from Dryden to Derrida* (pp. 218-228). Chicago London: University of Chicago Press.

Duttman, A. G. (2000). The gift of language: Memory and promise in Adorno, Benjamin, Heidegger, and Rosenzweig. (A. Lyons, Trans.). London: The Athlone Press.

Gentzler, E. (1993). *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London and New York: Routledge.

McDonald, C. (Ed.). (1988). *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation* (P. Kamuf, Trans.). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

McNamara, M. (2005). *Translating Derrida, A Question of Style: An Exposition of Processes of Translation* (MA Art and Design). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland

Translation operates at the borderlines, weaving between languages and cultures, between readings of the wor(l)d.

Translation is currently used very much as a catch-word for operating across a multitude of boundaries, interweaving media, ideologies, commercial transactions, anything where there is movement and a potential for carrying something across. In such a climate a language that has come close to extinction struggles to find its way, to surface. In a sea of multinationalism, universalism, where global capitalism dictates national decision making, what becomes of Māori (and by Māori here I include language, customs, systems of justice, pedagogies and epistemologies that operate under the rubric). It appears that just as Māori begins to gain some leeway through decades of struggle for survival from colonization, newly developed colonizing processes alter to change the field from vertical to horizontal, as cultural theorist Chela Sandoval highlights in *Methodologies of the Oppressed* (Sandoval, 2000). It is no longer possible, in such a climate, to identify an enemy as those who govern. Any notion of enemy must now be reassessed as all come under a 'new world order' of global capitalism.

Knitting together Māori and Pakeha (non-Māori) in such an environment often involves obsuring Māori values and readings in favour of a homogenizing Western view, where English language, due to its colonizing dissemination, acts as suppressant. Working with both stitches at the same time, bringing to the fore that which relates and exhibits te reo me ngā tikanga Māori (Māori language and its customs) is a challenge of this time. Not to be swallowed or devoured in the rapid onslaught of globalisation requires a maintenance of difference and positioning alongside, with, a refusal to allow further veiling of cultural and tribal values.

The notion of diminution, not in the sense of lessening in value, but as a knitting together, once taken up must be carefully practiced. The texts that have been chosen, in this particular process of translation require such careful treatment, ignoring nothing, bringing out the hidden and obscured through a Māori reading.

## 2 NGĀ ARA TOHENGĀ (PATHS OF RESISTANCE): QUESTIONS OF STYLE

In his last interview, Derrida (Derrida & Birnbaum, 2004) offers the following advice;

*Each situation demands the creation of a suitable mode of exposition, the invention of a law of the singular event, takes into account the recipient, imagined or desired, and at the same time demands the belief that this writing will determine the reader, who will learn to read (or to “live”) this writing, which he is not used to finding elsewhere. One hopes that he will be reformed, otherwise determined, for example, these grafts (short of confusion) of the poetic on the philosophical, or certain ways of using homonyms, the undecidable ruses of language – into which many people see confusion, while ignoring the properly logical need for it.*

This chapter opens a discussion on differences between methodology and style. Rather than settling for one particular methodology that is steadfastly applied as a way of working, it involves, through an adherence to tikanga Māori, the possibilities of a different way of writing that approaches the marae. Hoping that a reader will draw close to a poetic and multi-lingual writing, that the grafts will fall “short of confusion”, the chapter discusses a shifting and inclusive process.

Te ārai (the veil) between languages, continually flutters between closures of language, with in(ex)clusion in the etymological sense of ‘clulsion’, of shuttings in and out. Writing operates as a shutter, an eyelid opening and closing in rapid succession. To include also implies that there is more, that there is much more outside of what is written here. This excess, the language of an other, this other-than-Western language nudges its way in, as English pushes its way into Māori, rubbing against the exclusivity of languages already contaminated by others. There is a violence in this ‘clulsion’, in this resistance to ex-clude. It may also perform a violence to you, reader, in a betrayal of any singularity or multiplicity of language. This is, however, a reality for many from mixed whakapapa, where thinking continually moves between languages and concepts.

Again from Derrida’s last interview “Each time, as faithful as we may want to be, we are betraying the singularity of the other whom we address” (ibid). It is, however, an unintended violence performed with love in the Derridean sense, with a love for knowing more of English language with all of its already-inclusions. English, as “the only language that I was taught to cultivate”(Derrida & Birnbaum, p.9) is the



language with which I was and am able to move between Māori, French and whatever other I have inherited. English opens and engulfs, devouring other languages, and in this respect there is always a danger in inclusion of Māori, in that Māori words may be read and misread, used and misused in contexts that I cannot foresee, may be consumed by the sheer rapacity of English.

An ara (pathway) of working through these aporia cannot simply be defined under one or another methodology. Sandoval (2000), in weaving a “Methodology of the oppressed”, discusses a range of five recognized methods or styles of critical theory; deconstruction, semiotics, meta-ideologizing, democratics and differential consciousness, suggesting that there be an interweaving “necessary for forging twenty-first century modes of decolonizing globalization” She suggests that the apparatus that is capable of such a weaving is “‘love,’ understood as a technology for social transformation” (Sandoval, 2000, p. 2)

#### TIKANGA

Echoing Sandoval’s sentiments and attempting to work through a similar strategy, the use of the term “methodology” with its reference to logos becomes problematic. While both ‘method’ and ‘style’ are translated in Ngata’s Dictionary as “tikanga” (Ngata, 1996) there is a subtle difference in their application. Ngata relates ‘method’ to a way of cooking, “He kōhua tētahi tikanga mo te whakamaoa kai<sup>27</sup>” (Ngata, 1996, p. 277) and ‘style’ to performance and art/writing “I mahia te whakairo na i roto i te tikanga tuku iho?<sup>28</sup>” (Ngata, 1996, p. 461). Where the difference in English might appear to be subtle it is nevertheless noteworthy and fundamental to an understanding of tikanga Māori. Matters pertaining to kai and whakairo were never performed in the same space, were indeed kept distinctly separate and are to this day. The difference is in the nature of tapu and noa, often translated as sacred (tapu) and profane (noa), whakairo coming under things tapu and kai under the notion of noa.

As this work is concerned with art and writing, it comes under those things tapu, suggesting the English term ‘style’ is more appropriate in discussing a way of

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<sup>27</sup> “Boiling is one method of cooking food”

<sup>28</sup> “Is that carving done in a traditional style?”

working through the issues involved. Wāhine<sup>29</sup> have often been more associated exclusively with noa, and with the removal of tapu. Such views as introduced by the writings of Elsdon Best have been disputed by Apriana Mahuika (1975), Hanson (1982) and Ralston (1992) among others. Fletcher (2007) finds no gender distinction in the temporary state that tapu involves. Tapu is, however, bound by certain restrictions and is contaminated by involvement with kai. For the purposes of a thesis, particularly one involving the making of artworks, Ngata's distinction between method and style suggests that the term style is a more appropriate translation.

## DECONSTRUCTION

Writing on style opens to discussion on deconstruction, a way of working through the ideas of the thesis, and perhaps a way of viewing deconstruction that works outside of a formulaic notion of methodology, which deconstruction strongly resists. Style, for Hélène Cixous invokes a "chorus of songs of the whole of time, making a new song stream forth" (2004b, p. xxi) It also

*inscribe[s] an additional memory in language – a memory in progress – of what I have read personally, noticed, retained from a text or a language to the other. And the whole is poured back, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, into the river I sail (ibid).*

Style, thus seen, has much to do with Hinengaro, with memory in progress, with a remembering that rewrites from this "chorus of songs of the whole of time." These songs, these waiata, or wai<sup>30</sup> can blend, transform, rewrite themselves through memory in progress, through Hinengaro pushing forgotten fragments to the surface. Unfinished they arise in response and resistance to writing, to a continual unbroken flow that follows a thesis. Hinengaro, while disrupting a flow, can push meaning beyond its restrictions, opening a text to other readings, as Derrida's style in *Silkworm* suggests:

*Fasting, retreat, departure, as far as possible, lock oneself away with oneself in oneself, try finally to understand oneself, alone and oneself. Stop writing here, but instead from afar defy a weaving, yes, from afar, or rather see to its diminution. Childhood memory: raising their eyes from*

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<sup>29</sup> Wāhine with macron indicates plural of wahine

<sup>30</sup> Abbreviated form of waiata, also translates as water and the personal noun who? whom?, what? [of name]

*their woolen threads, but without stopping or even slowing the movement of their agile fingers, the women of my family used to say... (p.21).*

Addressing himself in a flurry of admonitions, somewhat redolent of Nietzsche's 'Ecce Homo' (Nietzsche, 1969), Derrida stumbles across the word "diminution", unleashing a childhood memory where the word diminish was spoken by women in his family. This memory, Hinengaro rising and written into the text, opens a reader to memory, to an awareness of a touch of the veils through which we all read. Sentences perform that which they discuss, as ritual performance through arrangement of words, through a writing of Hinengaro, which disrupts without "stopping or even slowing the movement" of text. A diminution occurs, shaping a text, holding threads together to shape a reading of reading/writing.

Self and other, child and adult, male and female, come together in the term diminution, in the memory of that word and its significance to Derrida. This weaving together of Western dualities "def(ies) a weaving," defies a systematic following of pattern through the inclusion of childhood memory. Deconstruction, particularly as practiced in *Silkworm*, at its most fundamental, writes both a continual acknowledgement of whakapapa through attention to etymology and the inclusion of Hinengaro, of honouring those memories that surface in relation and response to the written word. Hinengaro informs the writing of this thesis both in this exegesis and through those artworks that further investigate the notions under discussion, perhaps even as a Māori translation of the term 'deconstruction'.

## DECONSTRUCTION – DECOLONIZATION

Derrida includes yet another childhood memory when discussing both theory and practice of the institution of which he is part and to which he at the same time works in opposition:

*When I was very young – and until quite recently – I used to project a film in my mind of someone who, by night, plants bombs on the railway: blowing up the enemy structure, planting the delayed-action device and then watching the explosion or at least hearing it from a distance. I see very well that this image, which translates a deep phantasmic compulsion, could be illustrated by deconstructive operations, which consist in planting discreetly, with a delayed-action mechanism, devices that all of a sudden put a transit route out of commission, making the enemy's movements*

*more hazardous. But the friend, too, will have to live and think differently, know where he's going, tread lightly (Donis & Webb, 2001, p. 5).*

A performative of discreet planting of delayed-action devices suggests a range of strategies of resistance undertaken in this thesis, both through discussion and through a movement between languages; a style. While deconstruction cannot be cited as either philosophy or methodological approach, through various styles, strategies and complications it is engaged as an undertaking of a series of resistances, of planned and unplanned plantings that threaten to explode in the face of a planter, of a resistance worker. To suggest such a strategy recognizes a hoariri (angry friend, enemy) recognizes oppositions to be worked through, not in an effort to resolve, but through a rubbing up against, a friction that threatens to incinerate either one and both and that might also suggest other possibilities for relationships between the two. In the above citation it is the “enemy structure” that is exploded. There is an ambiguity in operation here. The device is set to detonate a structure that both is the enemy and the structure is of the enemy.

Nicholas Royle includes part of the above citation in the article ‘Blind cinema’ (Royle, 2005, p. 13), recognizing a whanaungatanga (kinship) between deconstruction and violence of resistance in discussion around the film *Derrida* (Dick & Kofman, 2002), suggesting that

*Deconstruction involves thinking in terms of a sort of time-bomb. You never know when or how the meaning or significance of a particular image or moment in ‘real life’ or in a film might emerge or change.*

Royle’s statement returns in some ways to Cixous’ idea of style, to the notion of “memory in progress” where recall is continually working with the writing of a “new song”. An interplay between ‘real life’ and film/image/writing forces its way to the surface. This may be another text, may be in and through another medium or technology. This process can equally translate the workings of Hinengaro, the hidden maiden, whose surfacing both in timing and āhua – form is unpredictable. It is through Hinengaro that meanings and significances change. What for Māori is seen as a hidden maiden, is viewed in these instances of Western thinking as “delayed action devices”, manufactured explosives set to disrupt and unsettle a preformed ground.

While Royle raises the involvement between deconstruction and delayed action devices it is not clear precisely how this works. His statement retains an ambiguity in the sense that the time-bomb could be what awaits hidden in memory, the hidden maiden Hinengaro, rising to deconstruct, and also that a deconstructive reading can emerge from the text itself. It is our Hinengaro, the hidden maiden in each of us who reads the world, a reading at once edifying and dangerous. Derrida and Royle's discussions suggest that Hinengaro can work from both inside and outside a mind and inside and outside a text; that text exposes the Hinengaro of another.

Strategies of planting delayed action devices also recognize and acknowledge *ngā hoa* (friends), and responsibilities involved in planting-detonating delayed-action devices. Timing of such action is vital to avoid the device exploding in the face of a planter, or the shock waves from an explosion knocking her off her feet. Deconstructive operations are then the dangerous workings of a thesis, neither methodology nor method, but ways of writing through a series of aporia at work in an opposition between texts engaged in a process of decolonization, through approaching cultural and gendered difference between texts of one and the other.

Derrida's running through of this scenario, of a scenario which, he admits, could be illustrated by acts of deconstruction, is through film, through a movement of and between scenes, sets, stages, through a thin layer of dark-light projected "in my mind". It is interesting that film was the medium through which these 'deconstructive' (always accompanied by the 'perhaps') images showed themselves. Film is made up of flickering images, with much unseen in the steady flow of projection.

#### CASTING OFF

Writing between languages works between positions, shifting between generalities and particularities. Writing shifts also between first, second and third person, between singular and plural, between voices, between hands, between bodies. Mishearing, misreading, mistranslation is always already performing, either waiting in the wings of any communication or stepping out, communicating itself. It waits and awaits, betraying identity's proclamations, asserting an elsewhere of the "I" that

resists singularity, that is “the very form of resistance.” (Derrida & Ewald, 1995, p. 275) It is in the moment of grasping a mishearing that the thesis is born, and where a fragile relationship between a notion of self and other begins to unfold. This mishearing, mistranslation is the moment of warning, a calling to resist a belonging in the circumscribed “I” that in its extreme and in its potential can write out the other, a belonging that is also an unbelonging that threatens the writing out of war, of colonization, of genocide, of holocaust. Resistance comes through a remembering that there is always more than one in any “I”, re-membering the tūpuna of any “I” that speaks, that writes; re-membering the resistance in every writing/speaking of the “I”.

*By beating around an impossible thing which I no doubt also resist, the “I” constitutes the very form of resistance. Each time this identity proclaims itself, each time some belonging circumscribes me, if I may put it this way, someone or something cries out: Watch out, there’s a trap, you’re caught. Get free [dégage], disengage yourself [dégage-toi] (ibid).*

What might this say of belonging in the light of Derrida’s “very strong, very deep sentiment of belonging” (Simmons & Worth, 2001, pp. 26-27) experienced at? It seems, from the above citation, that there is a belonging outside identity, a belonging within the heart that does not circumscribe an “I” for identity, a belonging that speaks from the heart that does not proclaim itself but proclaims the “very strong, very deep sentiment of belonging.”

#### **TE HĀ O HINEAHUONE: BREATHING A MULTITUDE OF NARRATIVES**

Notions of writing in this thesis are closely bound to film and photograph, to mahi ngātahi - working together reading-writing on a screen of light and darkness, to a thin layer bled onto a surface, or breathed, kissed onto paper, each breath a reminder of the first breath, of the first human, of the tupuna Hineahuone, formed from red earth, breathed into life, whose breath translates the strength of woman, te hā o Hineahuone<sup>31</sup>.

Through te hā o Hineahuone writing no longer performs as unstable disseminated droplets cut into the surface, but sits, tears on the cheeks, water on a skin that already burns, already is burnt. Tear is also tear, a rip in a veil or screen, frayed textile, whose

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<sup>31</sup> For further reading on te hā o Hineahuone in extended discussion on Mana Wahine see ‘Echoed Silences’ (Waitere & Johnston, 2009)

tear is also fluid, moving, welling up and evaporating in light and fire. The watery film splits apart time, rending the veil of linear timelines between syllables, striking hearts-minds with its force – a film on the eye covering the eye – a tear (drop) as tear (rip) enabling sight. These tears are also laser-burnt into metal disks, disks that read, write and are written. Text is a film, a secretion, tears and droplets on fibrous and metal burnt skins, eaten into by Mahuika, the Tawhito of fire, in her hunger for the gifted fire.

Other flows of the body, other secretions assume significance in this thesis; tears and bleeding, breath, kisses, gaping mouths, blistered skin, lips breathlessly calling out for reading-writing. Other readings of a relation to the body of the Papatuanuku also work to resist, to put a stop to any attempts at severance of the threads of whakapapa. There is certainly an untangling, carefully performed to avoid severance. Eyes, ears, cheeks, lips, tongues call out. Burnt skin puts a stop to writing, writes a stop to this writing that severs, to any writing that threatens severance of whakapapa. “Stop writing here...” (Derrida, 2001b, p. 21). Derrida calls, recalling the holocaust, recalling the burnings that have stopped writing, the burnings that have obliterated whakapapa, obliterated ancestral carvings, at the same time calling over and over to be written and rewritten in the hopes of preventing a terrible rewriting. Writing to stop rewriting works to touch, to reach out and touch, to hold off beholding again through calling to behold. Writing also calls for a hearing, a reading of a style born from generations of oppression, a style that holds something for others.

In response to a postmodern environment under global capitalism and advancing new media technologies discussed by Sandoval (Sandoval, 2000), fragmented subjectivity is an overall condition. She stresses the need not for a writing out of the subject, but for new conceptualizations of the subject and of relations to power structures, which are now continually shifting and unstable. No longer is an enemy readily identifiable through a pyramid structure of power. The field has flattened and all “citizen-subjects” now face the same oppression from an unseen and unseeable enemy. There is nothing to behold. An enemy is like a sea, all around and within,

rising and falling on tides of power, unseen until its effects are felt, and then receding only to resurface elsewhere.

In the face of colonization Māori have exhibited creative solutions, creative and largely peaceful resistances and rituals of resistance<sup>32</sup> that have carried through to current instances of occupation of tribal lands and resistances to oppressive and damaging legislation. The role, for Māori of kaitiakitanga of the body of Papatūānuku, te whenua (land) and ngā wai (waters) has never been revoked, despite alienation from traditional lands, and is a driving force in contemporary resistance.

Response and resistance have become a way of life for Māori post colonization, if indeed colonization can be said to be over. In response to a question from Michael Peters outlining concerns around academic spaces for “the humanity of other cultures”, addressing particularly concerns for Māori in this country’s institutions, Derrida (Simmons & Worth, 2001, p. 263) predicts that other unimaginable “forms of violent repression of one culture by another” are approaching. Rapid onslaught of legislation giving increasing powers to governments in the name of national security further threaten resistance in Aotearoa-New Zealand. Many of the earliest injustices have not yet been dealt with, and more arrive daily. The battle is thus on ever increasing fronts, and in daily responses both inside the “citizen-subject” and without.

#### **AROHA (LOVE)**

How might it be possible to suggest a Māori translation of the Western texts *Joan* and *Silkworm*, albeit that both were written by in/outside to the site of production<sup>33</sup>? Such actions call for a knowledge of the ways in which languages work, treading dangerous ground where the slightest slip can bring disaster. Like laser surgery an

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<sup>32</sup> A contemporary example of rituals of resistance can be seen in the planting of pou whenua (posts marking tribal lands). Installation of these pou (posts) is accompanied by ritual karakia (chant) and waiata (song), where the process of installation gives significance to the pou themselves. Such rituals are seen to hold power in reversing and influencing court decisions, unsettling safety around working in areas protected by pou and as communication to those able to read the carved messages on their surface.

<sup>33</sup> The majority of Derrida’s texts are produced in France, a country that he sits both inside through work and habitation and outside through Algerian birth and Jewish parentage. Danish Dreyer produced *Joan* and other films in France, attracting much opposition in the making of *Joan* by a foreigner.



operator needs a steady hand and an openness of the senses, both to plant and to defuse, an openness to Hinengaro, an openness that operates through memory and acutely sensitive hearing, seeing and touch. This openness also involves the heart and could be seen as a process of aroha.

For me, aroha in the sense of openness to knowing, arrived with the very first viewing of Dreyer's film, aroha that has endured and survived a range of other encounters with film, with films of varied styles, colours, textures and languages. I have been aware that there was something happening between this film and myself, or rather that there was nothing between the film and myself. Some hymen was breached through the watching. This moment, as a first love, has never left me, has remained with me far beyond the duration of the film, beyond memory, beyond recall. It is the moment of the breach, of falling into an abyss, the moment of an open mouth, a calling that drives a thesis, a call to knowing this film in all of its intimacies, opening hearing, sight and touch to the delicate operation, the impossible operation of attempting to know what happened in that first moment.

For that is all this thesis is about. It is about aroha for a film and a text, with all that is contained within the framework of each, an aroha that works beyond any distinction between aroha wairua (spiritual love) and aroha tinana (physical love) (McLean, 1995), involving tinana (body), hinengaro (mind) and wairua (spirit).

#### **NGĀ MAHI TOI – ART MAKING**

As one thread in an interweaving of research through and into its title the research engaged in this thesis is written through a series of artworks, where aspects of research perform in exposition<sup>34</sup>. Robin Nelson (Nelson, 2010) highlights institutional accommodations between academic requirements and art praxis with some emphasis on the multimodal nature of such research. Nelson makes a clear distinction between Practice As Research, where "a substantial part of the evidence [of the research] will be the art practice itself" and Practice Based Research, "where the work may be about practice, but is presented in a traditional way." Both forms of integration of practice

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<sup>34</sup> Exposition is also French translation of exhibition, here used for its resonance with veils and unveiling, where what is unveiled is also a covering over of what is not exposed.

and theory work on the premise of establishing new knowledge, or “substantial new insights”, new ways of viewing what has gone before. Accompanying academic requirements for substantial new insights is the requirement for production of a durable record of evidence of research findings. This visual record of exhibition works, as produced in the form of a catalogue to accompany the exhibition, will be included as a chapter to accompany this exegesis and in a compact disc held within the back cover.

As can be read in the preceding paragraph, there is much conflation in academic requirements between vision and knowledge, a decidedly Western conflation, that has not escaped a Māori reading of the world. Scopic analysis and discussion on differences in vision and visibility gains increased importance in a current environment of visual bombardment, daily confrontation with advertising and media images that merge into backgrounds. It is necessary to continually question ways of reading image and to introduce and maintain difference in this ever more dense and homogenizing environment.

**TOI TE KUPU, TOI TE MANA...**<sup>35</sup>

From the outset I have resisted locating a methodological approach solely under the rubric of kaupapa Māori, which has become somewhat formalized through works such as Smith (1999) and risks homogenization. An attempt to work in liminal spaces woven between cultures and languages of inheritance resists confinement of method to one or another of those cultures. To name any one culture in a route undertaken suggests an erasure of others, a forgetting of tupuna. Just as the name Māori, coralling hapū and whānau into a manageable homogeneity, as is wont of a process of colonization, erases cultural and tribal difference, it can also work to erase dialectical and linguistic difference. I am wary of the extent to which I open Ngāpuhi, my tribal heritage, to an academic project of deconstruction, albeit of deconstruction of Western text. Violences that have formed this nation, as in the formation of any nation-state, set up a wariness, on the part of any indigenous people, of opening to yet another.

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<sup>35</sup> Endurance of the word enables endurance of respect. This whakatauki (proverb) continues ...toi te whenua (so land endures).

And yet this opening is the very project of the thesis, displacing in some very careful ways, a relationship between languages and sovereignties. This “other” that appears in the guise of Latin, is already at work in this displaced relationship, in the texts that make up a fundamental relationship between Māori and Pākehā in this country.

As Derrida suggests:

*I will state this principle summarily: there is no choice, and the choice that does not exist is not between one language and another, one group of languages and another (with everything a language entails). Every monolingualism and monologism restores mastery or magistrality. It is by treating each language differently, by grafting languages onto one another, by playing on the multiplicity of languages and on the multiplicity of codes within every linguistic corpus that we can struggle at once against colonization in general, against the colonizing principle in general (and you know that it exerts itself well beyond the zones said to be subjected to colonization), against the domination of language or domination by language. The underlying hypothesis is that the unity of language is always a vested and manipulated simulacrum. There are always languages in language and the structural rigor of a system of language is at once a positivist dogma of linguistics and a phenomenon that can be found nowhere (Derrida, 2002b, pp. 104-105).*

While the above statement seriously puts into question the subtitle of this thesis, regarding Māori as a singular language through which a reading of what appears to be an oppositional “Western” text may be possible, my particular struggle with deconstruction is sited here, coming together in this citation. Where *Ecce Wahine* works at grafting languages, challenging limits to any ‘one’ language, exposing some sense of a relationship between Māori and European, there is resistance within the structural rigour of each language system to inclusion of another language, another way of thinking. Derrida suggests, here, that languages be treated differently, that a multiplicity be played on and with, and colonization be treated as a principle, in general. For me, the generalities in colonization can only be approached through and alongside the particulars, that is, again, for me, through addressing the particular colonization in Aotearoa, and my own particular experiences in relation to colonization.

## **NGĀ AKORANGA – PEDAGOGIES AND DISCIPLINES**

My training is in the discipline of Ngā Mahi Toi (Art and Design), in particular Visual and Performance Arts with attention to thinking things through spatially and

graphically. I note, in writing this thesis, the ways in which this training is still at work, continuing to perform through the multitude of sketches, photographs and video performances operating in concert with the writing. Alongside this practice of photography, videography, preliminary sketches, of working drawings and performances, training in the discipline of Art and Design requires a making of an artefact, a fabrication that calls out to be seen. Training in a discipline, where accepted and rigorously attended to, holds a student in its grip.

Derrida, to whom this thesis continually turns, writes again of a memory, from 1956, recalling, through a photograph, travels with a friend to Normandy, where, though outside of the university he attended at the time, always still inside the discipline in which he had been trained. “[D]espite a sense of not belonging” he was still marked by an institutional pedagogy. He continues:

*The rest came along to complicate matters, but it is as if a certain grammar had been given for ever. Things do get sorted out later on, but you still preserve that legacy, however much you question and contest it. It is like a language you can denounce only in your own language, which is that same language. Even when I give the impression of transgressing, putting into question, displacing, it is always under their authority, with a sense of responsibility in the face of a certain philological morality, before a certain ethics of reading and of writing. (Derrida & Ferraris, 2002, p. 43).*

Along with Derrida, I still carry a legacy of training, in my case in Art and Design, in applied arts, in fabrication of visual artefacts. Thus writing also involves attention to its arrangement, its appearance and design on a page, to the thing that will translate (carry across) the thesis. Processes of working through of notions and aporia take place through a series of working graphics on canvas, walls and on video, that make up the exhibition aspect of the thesis.

#### **PĀNUI (TO READ, TO SPEAK ALOUD)**

Analysis of Western reading of image is discussed through Gillian Rose’s meanings and modalities as outlined in *Visual Methodologies* (Rose, 2005). Referencing such analysis is essential in noting those points where a distinctly Māori reading casts off from a dominant Western view. Rose’s analysis attempts to cover the range of critical readings of visual image through “the three sites at which the meanings of images are made: the site of production, the site of the image itself and how it is seen”. These

three sites are then further discussed by Rose in terms of technological, compositional and societal modalities.

Listing questions for each site of culturally constructed meaning in relation to the image, Rose asks what knowledges are being deployed and whose knowledges are excluded from this representation? These questions, operating alongside deconstructive analysis of graphic languages, go to the heart of this thesis, where a Māori reading seeks to enter discourses on Western arts. Having been brought into a Western art framework, with its own parameters of discourse, notions of Ngā Tawhito usually have been restricted to discussion around Māori artworks by Māori artists.

Māori Marsden, whose writings form a cornerstone in the construction of this exegesis and the accompanying artworks, defines culture as “the way of life accepted and adopted by a society” (Royal, 2003, p. 34). He goes on to state that:

*In Māori terms then, culture is that complex whole of beliefs/attitudes/values/mores/customs/knowledge acquired, evolved and transmitted by [] society as guiding principles by which its members might respond to the needs and demands dictated by life and their environment (ibid).*

Cultural meaning of anything encountered is constructed through these beliefs etc. enabling a view of the world that embraces a specific knowledge base, at the heart of which is a relation to Papatūānuku, Ranginui and Ngā Tawhito, their offspring, to whom each of us is related through whakapapa, through distinct and traceable threads that make up the fabric of being. A notion of identity, not as sameness or togetherness, but as belonging in what I suggest holds a different meaning for indigenous people, has to do with processes of relationships of all things.

These processes resonate through Kaupapa Māori methodology, where, as Cherryl Waerea-i-te-rangi Smith (2000) states “all things have a mauri or life aspect”, including a piece of writing, which, as much as anything else, any living being, writes a relationship with creation. Smith continues; “... as Māori academics we build thoughts/feelings (hanga whakaaro) and build discourses (hanga kōrero).” Such building requires care and precision, not only in what is said, but in analysis of the

very structure of saying. This care and precision is evident in deconstruction, which is never without attention to construction. Indeed deconstruction is fundamentally engaged with structure, with locating those aspects of a constructed Western text that allow its weaknesses to show, through identifying and constructing discussion around them.

Returning to Sandoval's (2000, p. 25) call for a movement between methodologies and Derrida's call for invention of a suitable mode of exposition, this project works between styles, engaging with deconstruction, Kaupapa Māori and visual methodologies in a process of critical movement towards decolonizing reading of Western image and text.

### 3. AROTAKE MATĀTUHI – LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the written material that has informed this thesis has been introduced through the previous chapter. While research has uncovered nothing that couples the particular film and text under analysis here, the literature engaged with in this review consists of;

1. Texts including visual artworks gathered around the thematics of the word 'Ecce' (under subheadings 'Ecce Behold', 'Ecce homo' and 'Ecce femina')
2. Māori relations to vision, visibility and the sign, and deconstructive associations with eyes ('Wahine', 'Ngāti Kāpo', 'Te ingoa and Tohu').
3. Review of three texts that discuss *Joan* in some relation to Derrida and deconstruction, firstly through the work of Dreyer scholar David Bordwell (Bordwell, 1981) with a response and extension from Sean Desilets (Desilets, 2003a, 2003b) and thirdly around issues of gender through the works of Libby Saxton (Carter, 2011; Saxton, 2010) discussions that, in many ways, are inseparable, and work to introduce other strands into the textile of this study

#### ECCE – BEHOLD

The imperative *Ecce* is about seeing, about asking, demanding perhaps that something be seen, a performative command or request, depending on intonation, which calls on the sight of the other, a karanga to the eyes. As such *Ecce* also has to do with blindness, with what is concealed, hidden, veiled. It is as much to do with performance of the veil as with performance of the eye, or the mouth, necessary equipment in voicing an imperative.

Its English translation Behold, also appeals to the hands, to touch. Through the Old English from *bi* – thoroughly or completely and *halden* – to hold, the imperative asks for a holding, a keeping or retaining through the eyes. Eyes are asked to perform as hands, to reach out and grasp what is named here. The most famous instance of *Ecce* – Behold happens when Christ is brought forth before the crowd a second time for judgement. An audience is asked to Behold, to grasp, to bear witness to the man – "*Ecce homo!*"

## ECCE HOMO

*1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him*

*2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put him in a purple robe,*

*3 and said, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him with their hands.*

*4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.*

*5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!*

*John, 19, 1-5 (The Holy Bible, King James Version: American Bible Society 1999, 2000).*

In a colonized Jerusalem under Roman rule, Jesus Christ is brought before the Roman Prefect responsible for justice and the collection of taxes under Emperor Tiberius. The Prefect, Pontius Pilatus (Pontius Pilate) is in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, a festival commemorating Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt and the establishment of the Jewish nation by Moses. Christ is brought before Pilate charged with sedition, with attempting to turn citizens away from the authority not of Israel, but of Rome. Pilate, after questioning Christ on his sovereignty and finding no fault, suggests to the assembled crowd from the Jewish community that he might be released following a Jewish custom of releasing one prisoner at the time of Passover. The crowd calls for the release of the thief Barabas. Christ is led away to be tortured and ridiculed. Crowned with thorns and adorned with a purple robe he is again presented to the crowd with the words "*Ecce homo!* – Behold the man!" perhaps in the hope that the sight of the suffering Christ might assuage the anger of the crowd.

Thus judgement of whether Christ be put to death for sedition against Rome is not decided by a community of Romans in whose interest maintaining Roman rule of Jerusalem lies, but by the colonized people of Jerusalem, challenged and horrified by the title "King of the Jews" that has been disseminated in discussion on Christ, whose intention is plainly stated in response to Pilate in John 18:38 "To this end was I born,



and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” Christ comes to earth to bear witness, a word whose whakapapa traces back to Sanskrit *veda* – knowledge and the Latin *videre* – to see.

One scene of many included in a cycle of the Passion of Christ, ‘*Ecce homo*’ introduces a vast range of responses in visual artworks. One of the earliest known bearing the title ‘*Ecce homo*’ is that of Antonello da Messina, whose 1473 work was the first of a series of paintings on the theme (Fig. 4).

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Figure 4 Antonello da Messina, *Ecce homo*, 1473, Collegio Alberoni, Piacenz, retrieved from <http://www.casasantapia.com/art/antonellodamessina/eccehomo.htm>

Oil on canvas, this painting is noted for the overwhelming sadness in the closeup of the head of the lone Christ<sup>36</sup>. Tears, sweat and blood drop from the tortured body, bringing a physicality to the biblical scene, reminding that this was a man. All is lost, in da Messina’s portrait, there is no hope. Like looking into the sad eyes of a lost animal, we are drawn into *Ecce homo* as a moment of utter despair.

German Renaissance painter and printmaker Albrecht Dürer, who made several etchings of the *Ecce homo* (Fig. 5), where Christ, depicted as an older man, is

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<sup>36</sup> A resonance with Dreyer’s portrayal of Joan’s solitude and extreme grief through closeup and extreme closeup must be noted here.

surrounded by his tormenters. Durer also painted a highly controversial self portrait entitled *Ecce homo* in 1498 (Fig. 6). Though fully clothed and in no way physically mistreated, the portrait nonetheless speaks of pain and suffering. The well groomed Durer points to the site of suffering, the heart. Again the eyes are shown to carry the message of pain and emptiness, while it is the hand that locates the site of abuse.

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Figure 5 Durer, 'Ecce homo'. Retrieved from <http://www.art-prints-on-demand.com/a/albrecht-duerer/eccehomoder1512-2.html>

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Figure 6 Durer, 'Ecce homo', 1512 retrieved from <http://www.albrecht-durer.org/home-6-24-1-0.html>

The latter work (Fig 6), suggests a particular reading of *Ecce homo* adumbrating German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's 'Ecce homo' (Nietzsche, 1969), written in late 1888, a short time before his descent into madness. The last of his works to be published, the autobiographical *Ecce homo* works with the subtitle 'How man becomes what man is', ('*Wie man wird, was man ist*') or more commonly 'How to become what

you are', presenting himself as model for humanity whilst explicating and to some extent justifying his thinking. Becoming self through processes of overcoming self through identification of what is alien to a self constitutes a concept of '*amor fati*', a 'love of fate' taking into account all the necessary detours involved in self becoming. Creating a self between literature and philosophy, Nietzsche challenges the traditional *Ecce homo* as looking at Christ's suffering, condemning Christianity as 'despisers of the body' suggesting in its place a privileging of 'bodily wisdom' "through his preference for the workings of the digestive tract over the 'mind' or 'spirit'." (Large, 2007) Perhaps Nietzsche's notion of *tikanga* had more to do with preparation of *kai* than with writing or *whakairo*.

In *H. C for life, that is to say...* (Derrida, 2006) Derrida links Nietzsche's writing with that of Cixous, not only through the autobiographical style, through the *Ecce homo* (the double "I" of the author and the self writing together) where *Hinengaro* surfaces, and also through their shared blindness, their difference of vision. It is this difference of vision that underpins the thinkings of this exegesis and accompanying artworks.

It is difficult to discuss *Ecce homo* without reference to what has become the most notorious of all paintings of this Biblical scene. A 19th century painting entitled '*Ecce homo*' by Elias Garcia Martinez, suffering badly from decay, was altered by a well meaning local, Cecelia Jiménez, who has been notorized through her attempted restoration. (Fig. 7). Her attempt at translation, at carrying across something of the original, sadly added further destruction to the fresco.

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Figure 7 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/9491391/Elderly-woman-destroys-19th-century-fresco-with-DIY-restoration.html>

More recent photographic work of Evzen Sobek in his series *Ecce homo* (Sobek 2000) show a more contemporary thinking through of the conditions of man and perhaps of mankind. Exposure is evident, where an audience may perform inside and/or outside an image. A viewer is asked to pass judgement, to condemn or set free, with the condition of freedom and confinement on trial. An allegorical connection with the Passion of Christ through the title, suggests a time for review of what it is to be a man.

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Figure 8 Sobek, E (2000) 'Ecce homo'. [http://www.evzensobek.com/project\\_eccehomo.php](http://www.evzensobek.com/project_eccehomo.php)

It does not stretch things too far to suggest that any exhibition of any sort, any exposure to a public, retains and works with 'Ecce', an imperative to behold, to look, to see, to hold in vision a body of work that is as much autobiographical as it portrays something outside the self. Each work displayed is on trial. Each work also leaves a trace, bearing witness to a making, calling to be seen.

An inferred cohesion in the film *Joan* is attained through a similar allegorical connection with the *Ecce homo*, with that moment where Christ is led before the crowd for sentencing. Much of the cohesion in the film is extratextual, with motifs of cross, crown, book and written messages serving to underline this resonance. Such outside

aspects allow Dreyer to work differently with this film, differently in the sense of opening to experimentation, to the use of emotive framings such as unrelenting extreme close-ups, camera angles and movements and collapsed time. *The Passion of Joan of Arc* could equally well be entitled '*Ecce femina*'.

#### *ECCE FEMINA*

Several women artists have explored the notion of *Ecce femina* – Behold woman. Most notable amongst these is French photographer Sandrine Commamond, whose performances work with woman and her ghost, the spectre shimmering in the margins of 'woman' (Fig. 10).

Splicing time, bringing two moments into constellation, one becomes the ghost of the other, folding time to reveal the kēhua, perhaps the tupuna. We recognize these images. They are not too foreign to us. These kēhua flicker in the interstices of film, television, unseen and yet we know they are there, occasionally caught fading in and out<sup>37</sup>, or strategically retained for effect in fading in and out. These ghosts are familiar. They play in and out of recordings of performance calling for a witness<sup>38</sup>.

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Figure 9 Commamond, 2007

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<sup>37</sup> Similar kēhua can be found in interstitial spliced frames e.g. Figs. 1, 2, and 3

<sup>38</sup> For further discussion on ghosts operating in technology see *Ghostdance* (McMullen, 2006), Derrida, both film and book (Dick & Kofman, 2002, 2005) and Derrida and Steigler (Derrida & Steigler, 2002)

## Wahine

Many contemporary works by Māori women artists, among them Robin Kahukiwa, Lisa Reihana, Star Gossage, and Andrea Eve Hopins, deal with the notion and lives of wahine, often bringing together contemporary wāhine (plural) with Ngā Wāhine Tawhito (ancient women). In particular the photographic work of Reihana splices the ancient and traditional with contemporary, not in the sense of overlay of image, but through a splicing of time. Her images such as 'Pukohurangi' (Reihana 2001) and 'Mahuika' (2001) as part of the 'Digital Marae' series, show contemporary women in the roles of Tawhito, giving current relevance to the narratives attached to Tawhito.

As this thesis works with the notion of practice as research, earlier work produced informs thinking. Much early work, particularly in performance artworks, has been around te reo and wahine. Working through an heuristic encounter with materials, performances and recordings of performances have researched relationships between wahine and Ngā Tawhito, investigating threads of whakapapa, particularly focussing on the intimate relationship with the mother of Ngā Tawhito, Papatūānuku (Fig. 10). This work and others have been extended and developed for this study, working as reference points in researching ways in which the two Western texts might be translated, particularly in the sense of translation as a carrying across. In this sense the performative nature of translation can be glimpsed, and it is this that informs strategies of making employed in the exhibition works. Exhibition works also engage with three specific roles of wahine, as puna roimata (well of tears), kairaranga (weaver of textiles) and kaikaranga (caller), each relating back to aspects of the film and text under analysis.

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Figure 10, McNamara (1999) He aha te reo o te uku?

## NGĀTI KĀPO (THE BLIND)

For discussion around a Māori world view and Ngā Tawhito, the teachings of Māori Marsden (1992; 2003; Royal, 2003) perform as cornerstone and touchstone, a reliable reference to maintain tikanga Ngāpuhi throughout the thesis, where writing, in all its unveilings, is accompanied by karakia and performed with respect for those others who are writing with these hands. This is not a solitary task, and where the required disclaimer in the opening pages implies a singularity of authorship, a Māori point of view would deny singularity, or rather affirm that while written by the signatory, this is not a solo act, as would, I suggest, a deconstructive viewpoint.

Alongside this the writings of Patu Hohepa (P. Hohepa, 2010; Hohepa, 2007; P. W. Hohepa, 2010) have informed and guided, as has the work, both published and unpublished of Michael Shirres (Shirres, 1998). Tikao et al (Tikao, Higgins, Phillips, & Cowan, 2009) offer insights into Māori attitudes to blindness, not as a lack of sight, but as different ways of seeing through research into kāpo, much valued pre-colonization.

## DERRIDA AND DREYER

In the three editions of *Silkworm* (Derrida, 1997a, 1998d, 2001b) that are the focus of this study, a variety of images expose sites of engagement, involving an exploration of photography, through the works of Edouard Boubat and Sophie Daoud-Periac and drawing through the series of works by Ernest Pignon-Ernest.

The prolific work of Derrida and the interweaving of his style suggest that no Derridean text can be read in isolation from the corpus of Derrida's work. Each carries through ideas and references that also work in others. This is somewhat problematic when a singular Derridean text is the subject of a thesis, requiring an emphasis on other Derridean texts and in some ways trapping a reader-writer in an ever opening and connecting web. Getting lost in Derrida is a dangerous option. For the purposes of this project attempts have been made to restrict Derrida (the writer) to those texts working with image, particularly *Memoirs of the Blind* (Derrida, 1993), *The deaths of Roland Barthes* (Derrida, 2001a), *Copy, archive, signature* (Derrida, 2010c), 'Alētheia' (Derrida, 2010a), *Right of inspection* (Plissart & Derrida, 1989), and *Demeure Athens*

(Derrida, 2009), with slippages into other relevant texts where required. Again Hinengaro gives over an unveiling through connections between texts, connections easily accessed through Derrida's oeuvre, where thematics overlap and are interwoven.

It would be impossible to study *Silkworm* without referring to those works that touch on this text. Works such as John D. Caputo's *Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* (Caputo) and Cixous' 'The flying manuscript' (H.-. Cixous & Kamuf, 2006) offer insights into readings of *Silkworm* that have informed readings of the interstitial images.

A recent and very challenging engagement with Dreyer's film is the installation by artist Javier Tellez (Fig. 11), first exhibited at the Sydney Biennale in 2004. Entitled 'La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc' closeup scenes from Joan played out alongside a video made in collaboration with female patients in a psychiatric hospital.

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Figure 11 La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc, Javier Tellez (2004)

Intertitles in *Joan* were replaced with subtitles composed by Tellez in collaboration with the patients. Meanwhile, on screen in an adjoining space, the patients themselves spoke of their conditions and hospitalization. Tellez' work aimed at unveiling concealed aspects of society, taking those confined to prisons and psychiatric institutions into the gallery space alongside an iconic film portraying the last days in the life of a saint.

Further insight into *Silkworm* has been possible through Elizabeth Presa's installation, entitled "A silkworm of one's own" (Fig. 12), an installation of a colony of live silkworms, and writings from other Derridean scholars, whose thoughts interacted



with the gallery space addressing the active silkworms. These texts were woven into the exhibition on the walls, threads of writing towards the devouring larvae. Presa's work suggests ways that text might open a gallery space, a performative spatializing that could, in some way, work between marae and gallery; food for thought, and a reminder of distinctions between kai and whakairo, between the tapu and noa of tikanga as discussed in the previous chapter. This notion of the potential for text on walls to open a gallery space and ways in which a gallery may perform as marae will be worked through for final exhibition.

Presa's work also questions notions of authorship, of here and there, inside, outside, art and life, nature and culture, bringing into question a series of Eurocentric dualities around art and the gallery space. Engaging with this work raises questions of how these dualities might be translated, how the particular thinking of *Ecce wahine*, which also involves *Joan* might work in a gallery space to say something distinctly Māori, to translate into Māori.

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Figure 12 "A silkworm of one's own" (Presa, 2007) installation

## COUPLINGS

### **Bordwell**

David Bordwell (1981) discusses an impossible spatializing that occurs in *Joan* through a prolonged and relentless distortion of the basic rules of cinematic grammar;

continuity of framing and camera movement. Depth of field, establishing shots to contextualize and introduce, and stitching together of scenes are destabilized through a breaking of rules, a series of ruptures that identify the film. Identity, in this case as in deconstruction, is marked by difference, discontinuity, violent interruption, instability, rather than any homogenizing factors. Cinematic rules, still in play today, disrupt a reading of this film as a unity, as a coherent whole. Bordwell discusses Dreyer's rule-breaking style in *Joan*, a style that set the cinematic world of its time ablaze. This was and remains a difficult film to view, to read, a difficult text, breaking and altering rules of cinematic grammar and at the same place opening to a different way of reading.

Opening up the film through and to its own discontinuities, Bordwell discloses the unstable ground of *Joan*, where reference points are questioned, appearing and disappearing or distorting. Camera, lighting, direction and set design conspire to upset a reading of a narrative whose ending we know so well before entering the cinema. It is precisely this prescience that gives licence to disruption. In Catholic France, where Joan's story is part of every child's education, Dreyer must find a different way to show her trial.

*At once a surprising violation confronts us. Of the film's over fifteen hundred cuts, fewer than thirty carry a figure or object over from one shot to another; and fewer than fifteen cuts constitute genuine matches on action. Within the narrative cinema, this tactic constitutes a virtually unprecedented challenge to continuity editing (p. 78).*

*It is not just that in several scenes we can only infer the relative distances and positions of characters. More important, we can no longer assume that a constant, homogeneous set of spatial relations exists (p.79).*

Establishment of a coherent narrative space is denied throughout the film. There is not a consistent revealing of a narrative through visual continuity. Instead an audience is jolted, shifted into a different way of seeing that has little to do with revealing and concealing, and more to do with contradictions and tensions. There are, however, (of necessity, according to Bordwell) strategies in place to maintain some form of continuity, albeit strategies arising from a denial of grammatical rules.

Bordwell revokes a prior analysis of the film, where he had discussed subjectivity through the “film’s disparities (...) as representing Jeanne’s point of view”, defined through the two terms “Expressionist subjectivity”, where aspects of the film project a mental state, and “Impressionist subjectivity”, where aspects of the film project a seeing through the eyes of a character. He argues that such discussion around notions of subjectivity reduced the complexities of *Joan* (p.81). In this later reading and critique, “Expressionist Subjectivity” is recognized as an attempt to close down a reading, “to assimilate the film to a psychological-realist aesthetic” (p. 81). “Impressionist subjectivity”, a far more complex issue, already operates with a set of conventions, which perform sous rature in *Joan*. There is dissonance and heterogeneity in any notion of point-of-view. Confronted by this dissonance, an audience attempts to “naturalize” any film/text that upsets a stable reading. Thus the film resists any unified reading and particularly one that attempts to reduce the work through the dualities of im/expression.

### **Desilets**

In an article for *Camera Obscura* entitled ‘The Rhetoric of Passion’, Sean Desilets (2003a) acknowledges Bordwell’s chapter as “the most coherent, subtle, and rigorous attempt to treat the film’s stylistic eccentricity and its narrative as elements of an aesthetically coherent whole” (p.58). Taking over where Bordwell left off, Desilets moves from the dynamics of unity and heterogeneity in what is read as a coherent whole (Bordwell, Paul Schrader, Gilles Deleuze) to a discussion on the rhetoric of the film, of allegory and metalepsis through the scene of writing and reading. Moving from the aesthetic to the literary he takes us on a journey through Lacan’s *The Purloined Letter* and *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* and Walter Benjamin’s *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, playing with the threads that bind together beauty and truth, the “ability of beauty to displace critical consciousness from its path toward absolute destruction [analysis]” (p. 74) and the violence therein. He notes in a citation from Lacan’s *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*:

*The moving side of beauty causes all critical judgement to vacillate, stops analysis, and plunges the different forms involved into a certain confusion or, rather, an essential blindness.*

*The beauty effect is a blindness effect. Something else is going on on the other side that cannot be observed....”(p. 281 Lacan, p. 75 Desilets).*

Desilet's discussion of Lacan on Antigone plays out an allegorical relation with Dreyer's *Joan*, situating the problematic of dealing with the film in the unbinding of truth and beauty.

While acknowledging Bordwell's description as "shift(ing) the aesthetic valorization from Joan herself to the process of viewing the film" Desilets notes that this does not entirely do away with such valorization. Bordwell's attempts to hold *Joan* within a discourse of "cubist" space open, for Desilets, to Gertrude Stein's view of cubism "at the intersection of violence, history and the aesthetic", where this article also firmly locates Dreyer's *Joan*. "In the field of beauty, in fact, we will find the most striking manifestations of the brutal foreclosures that constitute reason itself" (p. 60). Desilets suggests through a distinction between "grammatical" and "allegorical" hermeneutics, that Bordwell's discussion on the film as writing can be categorized as allegorical hermeneutics, collapsing a spatio-temporal dislocation effected by historical change. Dreyer's focus on a the allegorical connection between *Joan* and Christ "evokes the ironic history of Christian representation" (p. 64), In the story of Christ, from the Middle Ages, continued through this allegorical connection, we have "the groundwork for what Walter Benjamin calls the Baroque vision of 'history as the Passion of the world,' which lies at the center of Western aesthetic tradition." To this Desilets might well have added a few lines earlier from Benjamin's text:

*Whereas in the symbol destruction is idealized and the transfigured face of nature is fleetingly revealed in the light of redemption, in allegory the observer is confronted with the facies hippocratica of history as a petrified, primordial landscape. Everything about history that, from the beginning, has been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful, is expressed in a face – or rather in a death's head (Desilets, 2003a).*

### **Saxton**

While giving credit to Derrida's discussion on spectrality and his multiple forays into film through *Ghost Dance* (McMullen, 2006), Libby Saxton attributes deconstruction's virtual absence or lack in the field of film theory to a disruption of vision, a prioritizing of language, and a continual return to thematics of blindness (Saxton, p.108), a seeming anathema to film studies. Her engagement with Derrida in this text

is performed through discussion around ethics and responsibility, around ethical obligations arising from the question of how decisions can be reached “when every responsible act involves neglecting other responsibilities, and (is) thus, in Derridean terms, a form of violence” (p.108).

Following a chapter entitled ‘Levinas, Ethics, Faciality,’ which might equally well be applied to a reading of Dreyer’s film, she reads an encounter with Derrida’s writings on ethics, through *The Gift of Death* (Derrida, 1995) and Dreyer’s films *Ordet* (The Word, 1955) and *Joan*. Saxton puts forward the suggestion that Dreyer’s films raise questions for Derrida around issues of gender in relation to responsibility, stating that “any responsible account of responsibility must take into account the gendered dynamic of its genealogy” (ibid. p. 118). Introducing a citation from Derrida’s *The Gift of Death* that raises questions around this issue, Saxton intimates that Derrida has not gone far enough in his discussions, that there is a distinct lack, partly through leaving the issue open. In discussion on responsibility and ethics through Abraham’s sacrifice of his son and the marginal role of woman in any account Derrida questions;

*Would the logic of sacrificial responsibility within the implacable universality of the law, of its law, be altered, inflected, attenuated or displaced if a woman were to intervene in some consequential manner? Does the system of this sacrificial responsibility and of the double ‘gift of death’ imply at its very basis an exclusion or sacrifice of woman? (Derrida, 2008a).*

The questions are certainly raised but Saxton is not satisfied that this is enough, suggesting that Derrida “leave(s) these questions ‘in suspense’” and that *Joan* “highlight(s) a need to rethink the gender conventions which underpin the logic of responsibility in *The Gift of Death*” (p.118).

There is no way back, no moment when this encounter with the performative can be erased or avoided, emptied either from memory or from a body as memory. Text and image uncovered in this review call out for translation, for wahine to appear and for a Māori reading. It is not only gender that Derrida leaves in suspense, but cultural difference, differences which, when knitted together, might have something else to say about seeing, about beholding, about language.



#### 4 WHAKAMĀORITIA: TRANSLATING *JOAN* AND *SILKWORM*

This chapter begins to translate extracts from *Joan* and *Silkworm* into Māori, beginning with a discussion on name and sign, then suggesting a Māori translation of ‘deconstruction’. Writing proceeds to the body, to face as close up, to arrive at a discussion on cultural readings of difference through hands and handiwork again through a scene in the film, where a Māori reading opens alternative translations of action on screen.

##### TE INGOA (THE NAME)

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Figure 13 Dreyer, *The passion of Joan of Arc*

*“En France on m’appelle Jeanne – In France I am known as Jeanne*

*“Dans mon pays on m’appelait Jeanette” – In my land I am called Jeanette*

The name, naming itself is a waharoa, a gateway, a long mouth (waha-mouth, roa-long), an opening through which we pass into language as the waharoa also situates as other, as manuhiri, as arrivant. Name is that through which we pass into being, and through which we pass without reminder in any communion with the other – the other as also both singular and not singular, each other with all her tūpuna, who have also passed through the waharoa into being. Name names difference and also connection, to tūpuna and to events connected to birth.

Waharoa is the open mouth long before sound, before words, before language. It is the mouth-opening through which we pass in birth, in rebirth. It is also the open mouth crying for the breast. Before the cry, the first sound-announcement, naming is the gap between inside and outside, between darkness inside the whare tangata

(house of the people/ womb) of the mother and world of light. It is the long passage of birth, of coming-into-world, of arrival.

In the process of pōwhiri the waharoa joins all that pass through together, as one, passing through as one, as if they were one, born as one, as singular manuhiri (karanga calls to the singular, the unrepeatable of this manuhiri at this time), to be further separated through whaikōrero – speech acts, naming each separation and connection. We enter through the open mouth of the other, through the open lips of the (m)other, the naming. Waharoa is a reminder, a recall of any transition, of any and all becoming, of separation and reparation.

Passing through waharoa, the name and naming itself at the entrance to a marae, in a recalling to the moment of birth, erases name, erases singularity as it names and singularizes, erases for a moment any sense of identity with a passing through the name, through naming. Translation enters at the site of the waharoa, of the long mouth through which we all must pass to encounter the world.

#### TOHU (SIGN)

Alexander Garcia Düttmann (2000) writes of the name as always operating with an overflow, with an excess or surplus in the hidden, veiled folds that perform with language, with a word, with word as naming. “Because it names more than it names, the name is a promise” (Düttmann, 2000, p. 108) and further in relation to naming and translation in his engagement with Walter Benjamin’s ‘The Task of the Translator’ (Benjamin, 1992)

*From the very beginning there is translation... There would be no language and thus no origin without translation. To think translation, we must think translation as denomination and denomination as translation (Düttmann, 2000, p. 36).*

Here promise is intimately related with Hinengaro, with language and with memory and memories, with memory as intimately intertwined with vision and hearing, with a language of things. The word tohu, the title to this subchapter translates as both ‘promise’ and ‘sign’ and it is at the moment of collision between memory and promise, recollection and projection, that naming takes place.



Tohu translates the promise, any promise, gives name to the signing of what is happening at a distance as it is also translated as what happens at a distance. Tohu names what is happening elsewhere. Tohu calls out, provokes, steps out to name an event through coincidence, through a falling together in time, a breathing forth in time, an animation of memory that gives life to the promise of the other. The thing calls forth its name, its sign, that which signs for it, not as if, but as the breath that it calls on to call out its name, to call itself into being.

The name works in the way that kōwhai blooming is a tohu of fatness of kina (*Evichinus*, sea urchin), that the kina is ready for harvesting, at its best. And later as the pōhutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*, an indigenous tree) bloom signals an end to harvesting, the name operates at a distance from the event it names, falling together in time. It does not name the thing itself, but the arrival of the thing. Naming is not simply giving name to the thing, not simply speaking the thing, but hearing at the deepest level what the thing gives of itself to bring itself into being, a memory of relationships with other things. As Düttmann continues citing Benjamin's 'On Language in General and the Language of Man'; "...denomination depends on how things communicate themselves to man: 'rather the name which man gives to the thing (Sache) depends on how it communicates itself to him'" (Düttmann, 2000, p. 36)

*Ecce Wāhine*, a title in two distinct historic languages. A name performing an impossible coupling that binds two words, two worlds at a spatio-temporal distance; *Ecce* – Latin – Behold, and *Wahine* – Māori – Woman. *Wāhine*, the plural of *wahine*, made plural through the short line that sits above the vowel, is made up of at least four words; *wā* (time, season, interval, area and indefinite unenclosed country), *wāhi* (to break or split, lay open, disclose, part and portion, place and locality), and *hine* (maiden, female), used mainly in performative term of address; a title that writes divisions in its proximity, a title also exposing, from the moment of casting off, an incalculable revelation, an unveiling of the totally unexpected, since there is no way of estimating what might fall from such a title, from these two words whose coupling is hitherto unwritten. Each word in this title suggests an agenda, a problematic to be

worked through. The coupling of these words introduces the aporia that drive both the unravellings and weavings that fabricate the thesis.

'*Ecce Wahine*', or in its translation 'Behold Woman', gives to be seen. *Ecce* (Behold), performs as a gifting, an offering expecting a response, calling on eyes to respond. It also holds a promise that something is there to be seen, that this gift will be realized. *Ecce* announces a gift for the eyes. In its Latin form, untranslated, it still gives to be seen. Through its history and associations it announces a 'to be seen', a gift and a giving. It nominates as it donates. What is nominated here can be translated as woman, as many women and as an ontological sign for woman, and yet and at the same place is untranslatable.

Wahine (woman) performs as opening to a cultural and gendered difference, to a performative engagement with this difference through the question of location, a question that goes beyond the boundaries of both gender and culture.

*Ecce* (vocative, translated from the Latin as Behold, already performative, already calling as invitation and command, as call to eye and hand (hold). Already, before its entrance on the set of this writing, *Ecce* has staged a multitude of scenarios, from before the Christian Bible (Vulgate translation of John: 19.5), before any paintings or engravings of Christ's exposition, before Nietzsche's text.

In discussing the writings of German-Jewish philosopher and translator Walter Benjamin in relation to translation, Alexander Garcia Duttman suggests that;

*The nameless...is in some way anterior to the name. However it does not precede it. It passes through the name to be what it is. The name welcomes, engenders, allows that which has no name to appear. The name is the entry-way for the thing and its site.*

*Man must name what is nameless. Since it allows the nameless to appear, the name cannot be a name without being what it is not, what does not appear without it. The name must erase itself. That is why denomination is always over-naming. What is over-naming if it is not the erasing of the name? To name is to experience what is nameless, and this experience, according to Benjamin, is called translation (Duttman, 2000, p. 37).*

## WHAKAMIMITI (DIMINUTION)

Papatūānuku holds within her womb the unborn son, Rūaumoko, held within the body of his mother from the time of her enforced separation from the father. Rūaumoko, unborn Tawhito of earthquakes and volcanoes, writhes within the mother-body, at times deforming her skin to emerge through devouring, to touch with threads of fire outside the mother's womb.

This and any touch is also a trace, an ash, a cinder. It is no longer the touch of a sharp point that gouges, but stretched skin touching, pressing, syncopations casting fine threads of shadows on a white screen, blocking light. Light is written on and out. The white cloth, the shroud on which threads embroider without touching appears and disappears at the touch of a key. Touch is vital.

Light and fire introduce another word; whakamimiti, a word that also translates the word recalled in *Silkworm* from Derrida's childhood; to "diminish", the word that plays its part in introducing, in calling a reader into the text. "Diminish" is a woman's word, associating with the handiwork of women, with weaving, knitting, forming textiles. Whakamimiti translates diminish as a drying out, dehiscence of a seed husk, a burning that scatters seeds to disseminating winds, holding within it the word miti (to lick up, swallow, destroy. Also backwash or undertow).

Fire drying up water, whakamimiti also recalls the Ngāpuhi whakatauaki 'Ka mimiti a Hokianga, ka totō a Taumarere (When the Hokianga ebbs, Taumarere is overflowing'). This whakatauaki relates to the tides on either side of Te Whare Tapu o Ngāpuhi (the Sacred House of Ngāpuhi). When one tide is low the other is full and vice versa. It is a reminder for Ngāpuhi that there is always kai, always sustenance through a sharing of resources and relationships. The moving tide recalls times of famine and plenty and relationships, through a recognition of whakapapa, a recognition of the threads between one and the other; one providing for the other.

A holocaustic recall, whakamimiti in its extreme also leaves behind as it recalls the mass destruction wrought by war and colonization, reaching back to time before, before the burnings. Colonization in Aotearoa-New Zealand brought about massive

destruction through fire, destruction of houses, carvings of tūpuna, ngāhere, taonga (treasures) of all sorts. As the continually moving recall whakamimiti is yet another word in the line of signifiers that include 'diminution', 'deconstruction', 'hymen', 'pharmakon' etc. 'Whakamimiti' translates 'deconstruction', is yet another translation for deconstruction, coming before the call, contaminating language, as it announces both. It carries through the call and the silence; the loud and the silent call, an open invitation. It contaminates, infecting from both inside and outside all the multitude of calls of Western philosophy. Whakamimiti comes before Derrida, before Dreyer, rising from the body of the mother in a shimmer of heat. This is the shimmering heat that can destroy, can burn up the husk, reducing to ashes the protective shell.

TE MATA (FACE)

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Figure 14 Dreyer, *The passion of Joan of Arc*

The face in the image (Figure 15) is the face of Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc) as played by Renée Falconetti, an actor of whom Dreyer wrote "...in Falconetti, who plays Joan, I found what I might, with very bold expression, allow myself to call 'the martyr's reincarnation'" (Dreyer, 1999b). A veil covering her lower face in this particular still frame records the scars on film's emulsion as well as suggesting an itinerary of covering and uncovering of the body of Joan that will, on screen in a few moments, be

escorted, bound, to a pile of logs and burnt alive. Resonances between inside and outside, between a burning of the body of Joan and destruction by fire of the body, the physical structure of film, events off screen echoing events on screen, set this film apart as something quite different and in the same space further question notions of inside and outside in relation to film.

The woman, Joan, is on trial in France, the majority of which has been occupied by the English for over a hundred years. *Joan* performs as biography, living outside of itself, both inside and outside the trial to which it restricts itself. Joan's life, her commitment to France, her raising troops to fight the English, her prowess as a warrior and leader are written unseen into every frame. And yet here the face in the image stands alone in a trial where the might of church and university are pitted against her on charges of heresy<sup>39</sup>. The film operates as an intense reminder that movements against oppression of any people are performed on an individual level as well as on a level of solidarity with others. Inside and outside, community and the foreign, public and personal are on trial here not only on screen but also through the work of translation and translatability of any text (and film).

#### MAHI Ā-RINGA (HANDIWORK)

*And yet to define Hand-Werk, which is not a profession, one must think Werk, oeuvre, work, but also Hand and handeln, which cannot be translated simply by "acting [agir]." The hand must be thought. But it cannot be thought as a thing, a being, even less an object. The hand thinks before being thought; it is thought, a thought, thinking (Derrida, 2008b).*

#### ON ONE HAND

The above citation from Derrida's discussion of Heidegger through an extensive analysis of Heidegger's use of the word *Geschlecht* brings into question a Eurocentric praxis/theoria opposition through a return to relationships between text and textile, by drawing attention to an overlooked scene that works in the margins of Dreyer's film.

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<sup>39</sup> In some ways a trial for heresy by university in both its etymology with a notion of choice and in its accepted meaning as standing outside the currently accepted opens an interesting relationship with the requirements for a thesis within a university where certainly both 'choice' and to some degree a 'standing outside' operate.

Through the threads of introduction to an engagement with hands and handiwork in relation to translation and translatability, a short quote from Derrida insists that the hand “cannot be thought as a thing”, that the hand thinks. What is this relationship between hand and thought to be thought through here? The short lecture ‘Heidegger’s Hand (Geschlecht II)’ from which the above citation is extracted, discusses Heidegger’s thematics of the hand in questioning thinking. Following on from Geschlecht 1, where questions of gender difference and lack of discussion on gender difference in Heidegger are raised, Derrida traces the hand through Heidegger’s work, where

*at issue is an opposition that is posed very classically, very dogmatically and metaphysically (even if the context is far from dogmatic and metaphysical), between a man’s hand and an ape’s hand (Derrida, 2008b, p. 36).*

This distinction, where the coming together of finger and thumb, holding and carrying, giving, receiving and welcoming, is that which, according to Heidegger, distinguishes man “from every other Geschlecht”, from every other, here in terms of other to man, and in particular other beings, other animals (the German word Geschlecht also marks difference in gender, sexuality, kinship and race). The hand, intimately caught up in speech and thinking leads to a discussion of thought as man’s primordial handiwork, as that which separates human from every other. Heidegger weaves himself into the very metaphysics that he is trying to undo through this discussion, according to Derrida, who interweaves his own discussion on Heidegger’s hand with discourse on national socialism, animality and sexual difference, three sites of encounter with the word Geschlecht, a word that works with two sides of any duality.

Through fabrication of any text and textile there is, somewhere in the process, a movement, a work of hands, choreography of hands, alongside a movement of what Heidegger might regard as a singular hand in thinking.

What are hand and handiwork and do Māori notions of hand and handiwork differ in any way from Western notions? Concomitant with this question of cultural difference, and in some ways adumbrating, is the question of a hand, already feminine in French

and other languages where nouns are gendered, (*la main, die Hand, la mano, manus*<sup>40</sup>). Can the hand to be thought a-culturally, a-sexually, a seamless appendage lacking any interweaving with gendered and cultural difference through language? Is a ringa, a main the same thing as a hand and how might all three think and read the film and text under discussion?

#### AND ON THE OTHER...

An intimate involvement with fabrication of both text and textile implicates the hand and hands in both gendered and cultural differences in language and translation, from the hand of Mahuika, tearing out her fiery fingernails to give to her mokopuna Maui in response to his urgent demands for fire, to the hand of God taking human form to write on the wall at Belteshazzar's feast in Daniel 5, to Penelope's hand in delaying suitors through weaving and unweaving a shroud for Laertes in *Silkworm* (pp. 22, 56.) And from these hands to the hands of Dreyer in filming, in passing on the textiles considered here, textiles that both focus and disseminate discussion around handiwork.

Ringa works with cultural differences in the practice of hospitality in at least two registers; encounter between bodies and the importance of ringawera (literally hot hands) in a movement towards inclusion. Western custom of shaking hands translates to a Māori practice of hongi, of touching noses to intermingle breath, in acknowledgment of giving life, of animation of the first woman, Hineahuone<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> In a chapter entitled 'On the One Hand,' through an extension of Derrida's discussion of Heidegger's engagement with hand, Jonathan Goldberg points to a complexity in both Latin and Italian, where word endings would suggest a masculine noun, yet gender is feminine. He goes on to ask the questions "Is this a sign that confirms Heidegger in regarding the hand as primordial, virtually present in all language? Or is it a sign of the neutralization of sexual difference? Or a sign of difference that Heidegger cannot afford to recognize?" (Goldberg, 1990, p. 91)

<sup>41</sup> Tāne, having fashioned the body of a woman from red earth, sought to give life to the first human, the woman Hineahuone – 'womanfashionedoftheearth'. Pressing his nose to hers he breathed out, watching her lungs expand as she took in air. It is not stated how precisely this process was performed, how or if his breath entered her body, or if the press, the touch of the hongi was an example, a touch that drew forth a physical response in Hineahuone. Immediately she was able to breathe herself, drawing air in and out, filling her body with air to move, to animate the earth-body.

From that moment, the power and strength of woman is known as 'te hā o Hineahuone', 'the breath of Hineahuone', that which she shares with women. A well known whakatauaki

French language writes hand as always feminine with a masculine body (*la main, le corps*), a feminine extension of a masculine arm (*la main, le bras*). She (*la main*) along with the five male children<sup>42</sup> that she carries with her, (*le doigt* – finger, masculine) fine tune a gross movement, weave, write, knit, bind, tease apart, unpick and erase. She (*la main*) is also the site of betrayal in the etymological sense of betrayal as a handing over, of something passed from hand to hand, a site of treason, as she (*la main*) is the site of translation, of a carrying across, of holding and beholding.

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Figure 15 Dreyer, still image from *Joan*

In the margins of Joan's trial Dreyer places her alone in her cell, where she sits, weaving, introducing another face of the Joan on trial (Fig.16). Alongside the warrior is La Pucelle, the virgin, the Maid of Orleans. Here a young woman sets to weaving a head piece, weaving ahead, perhaps to death, perhaps to a coronation. Here, perhaps, death herself (*la mort*) is sovereign as Joan's hands weave and bind in preparation, perhaps, for her own departure. In what might be read as a countertext to the trial transcript Joan writes her own witnessing in the weaving, in moments that stand out in this film as brief fragments of introspection, gaps of silence in the juridical and

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(proverb) recites "Me aro koe ki te hā o Hineahuone" (Pay heed to the breath of Hineahuone, the strength of woman).

<sup>42</sup> Naming of fingers as children of a hand relates to the naming of fingers for the children of Mahuika, *tupuna* - ancestress of fire. Thus fingers recall Mahuika, and handiwork always involves this *tupuna*.



tortuous clamour of encounters with inquisitors from church and university. This thing that is woven here can be read through at least two languages, through at least two eyes; one Māori and one English.

#### THROUGH ONE EYE...

Joan has already, following God's directions, instigated a crowning of Charles VII. By her carrying across, her translation of directions, against all odds, she has acknowledged a sovereign God in clearing the way and choreographing this crowning. However this crown that she weaves here is different. This humble crown she weaves from scratch, as it were, with no evidence of voices instructing such a weaving, she weaves in the space to which she is confined. Perhaps she weaves herself a crown for time to come where she will be sanctified through a process of trial in absentia around her relationship with God. Perhaps this crown is a gift, an offering to her god, a sign of recognition of his sovereignty. For this world or the next? This world or the world to come? Joan's work hinges on this aporia. She is caught in a liminal space between the political and the religious, worldly and unworldly, at home and the foreign.

What is different here is that woman weaves a crown. It is not a gaggle of goldsmiths in a jewellery workshop, but woman alone in captivity who fabricates this metonym for sovereignty. Indeed the story of Joan stands out for the way in which this young woman has enabled the crowning of a king and her devotion to her sovereign, God. What would bring Joan, in her anguish and grief to weave this crown and for whom?

I would like you to bear with me as I attempt to patiently follow the path of Joan's handiwork in detail, tracing trajectories of the crown through Dreyer's text.

What is the text that Joan is weaving here, that Joan's hands are fabricating? At the time of the trial the crown of France has been claimed by Henry VI, King of England through laws of inheritance. His father, Henry V of England, had married Catherine daughter of Charles VI of France following an agreement signed at the defeat of the French at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. Charles VII, son of Charles VI (since

deceased) and brother to Catherine, had been disinherited through an oath taken by his mother, the Queen of France, confessing her infidelity and putting paternity in question. On the death of Henry V, his son Henry VI came to power in England, claiming France as his rightful inheritance. Nineteen year old Joan's mission, in fidelity to the visions that have appeared to her and the voices she has heard, was to deliver Charles VII to Reims where he would be crowned King of France, with the supplementary responsibility of raising an army to escort him and liberating France through defeating the occupying English en route, a mission which she has accomplished and extended to the time of her capture in May 1430, a year before her death.

In the clip from which the still (Figure 15) is cut, Joan takes up a weaving in response to a shadow on the floor of her cell, a shadow of bars on a window signing a cross. She weaves a crown from strips of flax-like leaf. Dreyer shows no origins of this fibre, no beginning to the weaving. We are unaware of both *whakapapa* and *kaupapa*, memory and promise in what is shown on screen, where the crown provides a prop for her jailors' tormenting antics. From Joan's weaving we next encounter the crown in a moment of ridicule, where her English jailors pick up the weaving with a sword, twirling and spinning the crown on the edge of a blade. Sword and crown, hand in hand. A singular sovereignty is never far from arms and sharp pointed objects, objects that cut and sever. Indeed any singular sovereignty is maintained through severance. From the point of the sword the crown is thrown between two jailors, transferred from sword to head, a fairly common route for crowns. Indeed this has been the route that Joan herself has followed in securing the crowning of Charles.

Through the jailors' ridiculous antics Joan undergoes a transformation. From a moment that stands out in the film for its difference, a moment of a young woman intent on weaving a crown she becomes helpless, robbed of any possibility of response. The jailors torment her, roughly placing the crown on her head and an arrow as sceptre in her hands. Her coronation shows woman defeated, incapable of response, irresponsible. The crown sits, crooked on the head of this lifeless Joan until

removed by one of the clergy, to be later swept up with her severed hair following another moment of degradation.

What is this crown and how does it perform in Dreyer's film? Apart from images of Joan taking up the weaving and the derisory usage by the guards there is also a question of a crown in an interrogation on the appearance of Saint Michael "Vous avez dit que saint Michel vous était apparu...comment était-il? (You have said that St. Michael appeared to you. . . in what form?)" (Dreyer, 1999a:09:30:13) "Portait-il une couronne? (Did he wear a crown?)" (Dreyer, 1999a:09:48:22). What is this obsession with crowns in pursuit of truth and perhaps what is this obsession with truth in pursuit of crowns? What might a head-piece or its lack signify?

This crown in the film bears some vague resemblance to images of Christ's crown of thorns through the works of painters such as Annibal Carracci (16th century), Guido Reni (17th century) and a host of other artists working with 'Ecce Homo' – Behold the man, paintings referencing the moment when Christ was presented to an audience, scourged and crowned with thorns (see Figs. 4, 5, and 7).

Dreyer weaves Joan's weaving with threads that recall that other passion, threads that instigate memory in an elaborate tracing of interweavings with the trial of Christ. Here Joan, in a translation of a translated transcript of her trial, plays out a relationship with God, a relationship from which the rest of man and womankind is excluded, having no other witness to the voices that she hears and the heavenly beings that appear to her. This relationship, between Joan and God, wherein responsibility for her actions lies, sets up a problematic in any formulation of justice, in any trial. This is not in any way to defend the actions of the prosecutors, whose decisions were already made, already fabricated outside the court and whose actions appear to follow a straight path towards a desired outcome. If the weaving that Joan undertakes in this frame is indeed a crown, the question arises for whom and for

what (pour qui et pourquoi<sup>43</sup>) she weaves, its only performance throughout the film appearing to be a setting up of similarities with a scenario of the Ecce Homo of Christ.

### ...AND THE OTHER

In a similar way, the hands of Mahuika, the Tawhito who gifted fire, continue to work long after her body has gone. Having been tricked by her mokopuna to pluck one after another of her fingernails of fire, in the way of grandmothers, she gives until all is gone, until her fire is exhausted, leaving all her fire with her earthly descendants. Les ongles, masculine, plural, extracted and handed over by a feminine hand, fueling a fire that traces her hungers and longings long past death. Tracings, shroud and fire interweave in this engagement with both *Joan* and *Silkworm*.

There are, at the very least, two ways of reading this thing that Dreyer's Joan weaves; crown and taua (wreath of greenery worn on the head for mourning). A somewhat similar crown or taua is woven by Ngāpuhi, to be worn when attending a huimate (funeral). This woven crown of leaves gathered en route to a marae, performs differently, perhaps, to the Western crown or woven headdress, weaving a veil that, with the shedding of tears, allows the wearer to glimpse the tupuna who gather to welcome their relation and perhaps see the spirit of the tūpāpaku (body of deceased) as she departs. The taua here opens to a relationship with the dead, with a view through a woven veil to what is spoken as "ki tua o te ārai".

### MATAKITE (CLAIRVOYANT)

To work further with this notion of Joan's weaving as taua is to betray the language in which the film is set, a language that, through translation from Latin of an original transcript, already works with betrayal. Joan is en route to a huimate. She has been notified of a death and stops to weave her veil of mourning that she will wear as she approaches the tūpāpaku and that will be placed at the feet of the tūpāpaku on arrival. There is a recognition here that Joan has already been notified, has forseen death and that this journey will end in an encounter with death, with a dead body. In this scenario or translation of the film, Joan is shown as matakite (seer). Here the body

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<sup>43</sup> A brief recalling to Derrida's obsession with difference between the who and the what, thing and event, ontic and ontological.

is the body of an other. Death has already taken place, has already taken, just taken, as it is within the three days following death that taua perform as part of mourning. She weaves alone in her cell. She is not, to all appearances and as would be customary, in company of others in this weaving. It appears that she alone, among those on screen will attend to the mourning. Dreyer's Joan weaves with the bittersweet intent of a prisoner granted leave to attend the huimate of a close relative.

Her taua is her crown, allowing her to view what others cannot. Her sovereignty is not to be of this world, but remains a sovereignty to come. What might a reading of crown, as mourning garment, acknowledging loss, have to say in relation to sovereignty? Written into any singular symbol of power is a notion of loss with an accompanying mourning. Any crowning is folded against the death of another, is intimately linked with death, particularly with death of a father. It has also to do with whakapapa, with lineage and a matter of inheritance. A relationship between crown and death is further outlined in Derrida's brief mention of Joan of Arc in an interesting association with Socrates, Christ and Al-Hallaj in *For What Tomorrow* (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004) where he suggests "In the figure of the monarch, the people, the president, the governor, etc., state sovereignty thus defines itself by the power of life and death over subjects." (p. 144)

The crown that works as symbol of sovereignty also works as a symbol of mourning the death of another, and of a "power of life and death over subjects", all of which meet in the figure of the sovereign.

*Pendant toute leur durée, un signe parfaitement visible donne le ton fondamental des Jours redoutables, c'est-à-dire ce qui fait qu'ils aspirent l'éternel directement dans le temps pour l'individu. C'est que l'orant revêt ce jour-là son habit mortuaire. Certes, déjà dans la vie quotidienne, l'instant où l'on revêt le manteau de prière – chlayde et toge de la tenue antique – rappelle l'ultime vêtement qu'on portera et la vie éternelle où Dieu enveloppera l'âme dans son manteau. C'est ainsi qu'il tombe déjà du quotidien et du Sabbat hebdomadaire, tout autant que la Création, un trait de lumière qui éclaire la mort comme couronne et but de la Création (Derrida, 1998c, p. 67).*

Translated as;

Throughout the duration, a completely visible sign sets the fundamental tone of these fearful days, namely, that for the individual, eternity is woven into time. The worshipper dons his funeral garment on such days. It is

true that in ordinary everyday life, the instant when one dons the prayer shawl – chlamys and toga of antiquity – that moment recalls the final garment to be worn, and the eternal life when God wraps the soul in his cloak. Thus falling from the weekday and the weekly Sabbath, as well as from creation itself, a shaft of light illuminates death as the crown and goal of creation. (author's translation, 2014).

Here death herself (in French *la mort*, feminine) is the crown, a crown towards which life strives. Earlier in this footnote Derrida writes of the problematic of the analogy that translates the tallith into its Greek equivalents chlamys (a short cloak made from a seamless rectangle of woolen fabric worn by men in ancient Greece) and toga (a similar garment to the chlamys but longer).

What, then, might be the relationship of crown, taua and tallith? The tallith, as Derrida reminds us, is a specific Jewish garment for the male exclusively, and women are forbidden from the wearing of men's clothing. Françoise Meltzer (Meltzer, 2001) suggests that with the figure of Joan of Arc "the Church has failed, as it were, in its attempt to accomplish Paul's dictum that with Christ there can no longer be Greek or Jew", and that the beginnings of nationalism arose with Joan's death. So complex is the interweaving of church and state, nation and allegiance that perhaps the taua operates in these severed spaces. Perhaps *la couronne*, the feminine crown, is woven to signify a mourning of the death of the notion of Christianity as a uniting force, or the death, for Joan, of a coupling of Church and Truth. Death here is a passing of innocence, a breach in the veil protecting that delicate notion of Christ's sovereignty as overcoming opposition between countries, between nations. God's voices and messengers have insisted that this maid, "*La Pucelle*", as she came to be known throughout France, work to restore France to French sovereignty, to a lineage through a male heir and not to the foreign consort of an heiress.

If Joan's voices are to be believed and the voice that calls her to action is the voice of God or of His angels, then it would be possible to translate events in the life of Joan as signifying that God opposes occupation of one country by another, indeed that He supports a battle against foreign hegemony in attempts to return a country to indigenous peoples. It would appear that God is on the side of preserving borders and boundaries, preserving a selvedge to any intrusion into lines of sovereignty. In

sanctifying Joan, does the Catholic Church implicitly condone any struggle, any war to drive out forces of occupation, forces of colonization? And is such struggle to take place only at a national level? These are questions beyond the scope of this thesis, but questions that are raised by a close reading of Joan, and thus warrant mention.

#### HE TOHU (A SIGN): SIGNATURES

Immediately following and interspersed with footage of Joan weaving, Dreyer cuts back and forth to a clip of a hand forging the signature of the king whom Joan had enthroned as rightful ruler of France, Charles VII. Figure 15 shows the spliced frame of Joan weaving, with the forged signature superimposed from the following shot. The second hand, here signs as Charles, forging a note to Joan in an attempt to elicit a confession from her. The splice brings together these two events in the film.

What is happening in the juxtaposition of these two clips? Where Joan weaves in the darkness of her cell, another weaving, another textile is being fabricated in another space. *La couronne et le faux*, crown and counterfeit, feminine and masculine (*la* and *le*), two separate works of the hand, of a hand that, we have learnt, thinks, is thought, are given currency side by side. Dreyer's sleight of hand plays between the two, a play that is held in place through unseen splices.

Cultural and gendered difference play out in these splices from both *Joan* and *Silkworm* and between the two, lifting veils on meaning, opening a text/film through translation. Such openings reveal spaces where Ngā Tawhito continue to perform, returning even a foreign text to memories both from childhood and from ancient times; to Hinengaro.

## 5 TE ĀRAI (VEIL)

Remembering that the work of deconstruction is to shake the foundations of Western philosophy, René Major's (1997) prefatory remarks to the *Contretemps* edition of *Silkworm*, entitled 'Voile'<sup>44</sup> brings together the diverse contributions to this edition, all of which, at the time of publication, rattled the foundations of Western thinking. A translation of his text seeks to further whakawiri (shake) those same foundations, displacing the veil through both translation and through Hinengaro, where what has been held in memory comes to the surface. In a spatial sense this does violence to a text, bringing it into the space of marae, of tikanga, reading it outside what might be considered its own ground. Instead of going out to a text, it is brought home, read in familiar spaces. Displacing a text, ex-posing its vulnerability is a dangerous task. Texts are constructed to maintain their ground through language and customary understandings. However this displacement is not always possible or to be desired. There are times when a text calls to be deconstructed through its own terms of reference, through an unveiling of those assumptions on which it is constructed, a tracing of whakapapa, and an unveiling of marginal writings, texts operating in the margins of a logical flow.

### NGĀ ĀRAI (VEILS): EXPOSITIONS

In Māori te ārai, first and foremost is that which separates, comes between, invisible fabric between life and death. Having two sides, one known, the other hidden, te ārai flutters its folds, allowing moments of longed for porosity. Te ārai conceals the long journey to Te Rerenga Wairua<sup>45</sup> and beyond, leaving no traces of footsteps to be seen, no evidence of the pathways taken by tūpuna on their journey. It is as if they fly, winged or with sails.

To situate this ārai alongside a Western veil exposes moments of resonance and dissonance, moments where each says something that opens a reading of the other.

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<sup>44</sup> Translations from Major's introduction are my own with assistance from Ena Manuireva. Page numbers are not included, as this introduction, resonating with the revealing/concealing veil, is folded into the journal cover

<sup>45</sup> The northernmost peak of Aotearoa-New Zealand, whence spirits depart on their journey home to Rangiatea



What follows is my translation, in collaboration with colleague Ena Manuireva, of a text by René Major introducing the journal that contained the first publication of *Silkworm* (Major, 1997) interspersed with a Māori-French-Irish-Scottish response, a response from my Hinengaro, where memory and hidden connections play out. Hidden in the folded cover of the journal, this text says something about *Silkworm*, something about the connection between the worm and the veil that calls for closer reading. What follows is another reading of translation, a translation itself, where the intimacy of engagement between languages prompts memory and connection through Hinengaro, where Hinengaro operates as conduit between languages, between languages that weave together in this writer.

*René Major: In scarcely veiled terms. Deliberately without article:*

*VOILE. Masculine or feminine. Le voile – the veil. La voile – the sail. Un voile – a veil, une voile –a sail. Or the verb: he veils, she veils (Major, 1997).*

Colonization's syncretizations have led Māori to interpret through Western eyes, to witness from the closest possible position to a Western point of view, to leave behind the pā (settlement), the marae, te reo and ngā mahi toi when reading texts in English and in particular when dealing with Western philosophical or literary concepts. Somewhat strangely, syncretization has taught us to keep separate the two worlds, to maintain a duality. And yet for those able to move between the two they are never far apart. When I read the word 'veil' I am on the marae at a huimate, approaching the tūpāpaku with tears welling in eyes and the green fronds of taua trembling with each movement of the body in mourning. I am thus reminded of a separation from tūpuna, of something between the living and the dead, a porous membrane wavering between life and death.

Veil, for me, is both and neither masculine (n)or feminine. It is what keeps my father from me, my grandmothers, my sister. It is what will one day be drawn between my tamāhine, my mokopuna and me. Paradoxically veil is also what allows me to speak to my tūpuna, to address them at will, unrestricted by time and place. Its translation, ārai does not perform as a verb. This veil covers nothing, conceals nothing. Like the

Jewish temple veil it hides nothing. Veil is one among many translations of ārai, a hyphen that holds together that which it separates.

When I read the word veil I am also at a hura kōhatu (unveiling), a ceremonial removal of a covering from a headstone, a gathering at the graveside, usually one year after the death. The sole purpose of this veil is for removal, for a revealing marking a life ended in this world.

*Fragment of fabric destined to hide: the face, nudity, a statue, a monument. Litham, haik, burnout, tallith, shroud. And everything that hides, envelopes, masks and unmasks, unveils, reveals. To wear the veil, to take the veil, to draw a veil (ibid).*

At hura kōhatu the ārai awaits its people, to reveal what has been written, text and image, photograph, artwork, artefacts, marks of a singular death. These markings also record relationships with whānau and wider communities, revealing readings of a life in relation.

*Strong canvas or other material receptive to the wind. Mizzen and stays. White sail or black sail. Of Theseus or of Tristan. To set sail, to drop sail (ibid).*

There is difference even in the shape of a sail, in the ways Tāwhiri-mātea (Tawhito of wind) is approached and worked with. Following tradition, Māori and other Polynesian sails position the apex of a triangular sail at the bottom, closest to the waka (boat). Woven or plaited sails enabled tupuna to journey vast distances with advanced knowledge of astronomy and the reading of signs.

*And the verb? To veil, to be veiled: face or aspect. To render invisible or secret. To lose its brilliance, its acuity, its sonority. The sun veils itself, is veiled (le soleil se voile), eyes veil themselves, are veiled (les yeux se violent). Voice also. Or to be deformed: a piece of wood, of metal, a wheel is deformed (ibid).*

Tamaterā (Tawhito of the sun) is veiled by clouds, formed from the rising tears of Paptūānuku. Eyes too, are veiled in order to see. Without a steady flow of tears, vision is impeded. As Derrida has stated, “Revelatory blindness, apocalyptic blindness, that which reveals the very truth of the eyes, this would be the gaze veiled by tears” (Derrida, 1993, p. 128).

### NGĀ PUNA ROIMATA (WELLS OF TEARS)

Tears of Papatūānuku, mourning separation for Ranginui are echoed in the vital role of wahine as Puna Roimata. This role plays out in each huimate, where the wailing and tears of women unveil an open grieving, allowing the pain of separation to show. There is a recognition of the danger of concealing, of withholding this pain and a recognition and respect for the flow of tears. Each huimate plays out the separation of Papatūānuku and Ranginui in this way, recognizing that without separation growth was impeded, and acknowledging the pain of such separation.

It is at huimate that the “truth of the eyes” is most aparent, not only through what is seen, as vision at this time can extend to take in those who have passed from this world, but also as site of tears, where that which enables vision is highlighted. This is a time when wahine is at her strongest, her tears being of vital importance as is often acknowledged in whaikōrero (formal speeches). This time of “revelatory blindness”, where life is disrupted, uncovers a truth known to wāhine, practiced by wāhine and passed down from generations.

### NGĀ KUPU (WORDS)

*Words themselves veil, transport, displace, deform and transform thought and desire. They trace and leave traces between truth and lack of truth, between the event and the memory, between past and present. They invent the present, remaking history but also writing in watermarks and transparencies to be read. Words keep watch on what they conceal (Major, 1997).*

I cannot read this, translate this without making an artwork. Major’s words make pictures, sculptures, perhaps. There is a karanga in these words, calling to make visible the hidden, to exhibit, to hold out for beholding. Exhibit, and hence exhibition, comes from the Latin *ex-* (out) and *habere* (to hold), calling for the hands to show this paragraph, to ex-pose (move out of position) these words, already carried across from French. In discussing the very words of which the discussion is made, further graphic encounters are called forth, where words hang in a gallery space, or any space, deforming what they are supposed to say. Like transparent written curtains these kupu are made up of kū, low inarticulate sounds (Moorfield, 2005) and pū, gentle

blows (ibid.). Traces of these veils, these sound curtains inhabit the spaces of any written language.

*Necessary equipment for embarkation. The painter paints a canvas that captures light on a veiled production. Reordering the folds of drapery that distribute light and shade like so many signs (Major, 1997).*

Major does not let us out of the gallery space. He insists on a Western space for this canvas. In a journey outside the gallery, I am reminded of lying on a mattress, gazing upwards at painted rafters, trying to follow the manawa line of the swirling kōwhaiwhai patterns above. Not written to capture light or to shed light on anything, these patterns record tribal narratives. Nicholas Thomas (1995) writes of the propensity of European commentators to liken kowhaiwhai to writing, an issue of translation, and, as Thomas puts it, “an issue in art history – or perhaps rather the issue, since that discourse has surely always been stretched between word and image, pretext and painting, caption and figure” (p. 94).

*To veil to obtain transparency, if however, transparency is not that which again veils and renders more assuredly opaque. To expose that which one exposes, is it not a better way of concealing what one hopes to conceal by exposing? A well-known political ruse. Politics could be moral if it didn't have to be political. The contradiction that haunts its apparent desire for transparency is that the political secret, which must be made public, can only be made in secret (Major, 1997).*

To expose. Here we are at the start, at the moment when the title *Ecce wahine* arose. I was speaking out loud a piece of writing, giving an address to an audience, one of whom heard the word ‘Ecce’ in an oral transliteration of the untranslatable French *exposé*. *Exposé* became eke pohe (eke - to climb or mount, and pohe – to be blind), a blind climbing and mounting blindness. ‘Expose’ takes this writing back to the start, to before the title, to the words that prompted the title, the words now veiled in their translation.

Transliteration opened a thinking to relationships between languages. Transliteration, in its etymological sense, implies a carrying across of letters, of ngā pū, the basic components of a word. A political ruse, where Taipari is translated into Barry, where John becomes Hone, and where Jeanne d’Arc becomes Joan of Arc, transformed into another cultural figure. The political secret behind transliteration in processes of

colonization needs continual unveiling, lest we perpetuate a process of taking power. Transliteration of the name can perform as gift, as gift of a name and inclusion. It can also perform as erasure, removal of difference in a drive for conformity.

*Veil covering the mystery, preserving it, enveloping it to keep it secret, or to secretly expose it to daylight. From Exodus:*

*You will make a veil (or a curtain<sup>46</sup>) of indigo and crimson, of vermillion, of fine linen: the work of an artist, adorned with cherubim. (...) You will place the veil (or the curtain) on hooks, and you will introduce, inside the veiled enclosure, the arc of the covenant: the veil will serve as separation between the holy and the Holy of Holies. Work of artist, embroiderer or inventor (ibid).*

My French grandmother sat, daily crocheting blankets for us, her mokopuna, for family and friends. People visiting with her would sit at her feet, with us, as colours spilled from between her fingers. Eagerly we awaited the announcement, to learn for whom the blanket was intended. Secretly I wished that each one was for me, and each one was, in some way, as I sat worked with her to unravel the garments that friends would gift her. After unravelling the wool was washed, genty pushed around in warm water, and hung to dry. On drying the two of us would wind the fibres around the back of a kitchen chair to form a skein. Then came my favourite part, where I held the skein between extended hands, while Nana rolled a ball from it. Backwards and forwards, left and right, the threads that connected us became visible until, each time with a sigh, she reached the end of her rolling; whakapapa.

*The promise of the veil and its interdiction. Veil incised, veil of openwork. Veil slit, torn. "L'interdit du voile" – "the interdiction of the veil": interdiction that wears the veil and interdiction on the wearing of the veil. Does one know all that is hidden and revealed by this interdiction, all that is kept in shadow? A veil of the body, of skin, of its colour. Veil of the foreign, of the different, of the same: of that which is foreign or that which is too familiar (ibid).*

Is there anything not covered over? Each time I leave the house I put on the veil, a veil that exposes me, covering nothing but hair and skin. Not to wear this veil would be, for me, now, a lie. White skin from my mother, moko kauae (chin inscription) from my father. The veil comes from neither, that I know of. It is something that this convoluted journey exposed me to, (in)directly, opening a heart to a different

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<sup>46</sup> Here the distinction is made by including curtain. In te reo Māori ārai is both veil and curtain.

understanding that is, at the same time, the same. The same and different. I cannot begin to tell of all the similarities and differences that accompany this veil. It is tapu and speaks of tapu.

In French taking the veil is taking on something already masculine (*le voile*, masculine). Wearing a male cloth, perhaps, to stretch this point to its limits, like Joan, is committing a sin against the biblical interdiction regarding women wearing male clothing. Te reo Māori resists this gendering of language, structuring words in relation to whakapapa, to threads of connection through a coming together of male and female.

*Nothing in language resists the veil. As word and as thing. All the figures of rhetoric put it to use: litotes, euphemism, metonymy, metaphor. Veil or sail as metaphor and metaphor as veil or sail (comme voile). Truth and non-truth drape themselves and play with so many veils and sails (de voiles<sup>47</sup>). As the deceit of virtue. Within the limits of language and outside of them (ibid).*

“Litotes, euphemism, metonymy, metaphor”, (mis)translation, transliteration. What is true and not true? Where is truth hiding behind what veil? And then there is the question of whose veil veils this truth.

My grandmother still sits, hands moving so fast with the crochet hook that they appear to be still, movement exposed only through the click of her bones and a rustle of wool. In and out the hook moves, throwing stitches into being, growing row after row of colour. Her audience grows, as does the whānau, each blanket bringing someone new into the fold. She does not speak of the blanket, of wool, of colour, of warmth. She speaks instead of love.

*To raise the veil on the veil. That remains to be seen. One wants: to see. To let go of blindness,. To move beyond myopia, to liberate the look. To touch. To touch to the limits of blindness. In waiting for a verdict (ibid).*

My father has died. I cannot touch him. I will never touch him and be touched by him again. Vision withdraws. These eyes no longer want to see. Within moments myopia makes itself known to me. I do not know its name, and yet it is with me constantly from the moment of the death of my father. Without touch, without touching the eyes

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<sup>47</sup> Voiles as both veils (*le voile*, masculine) and sails (*la voile*, feminine) – the plural is without gender.

are no longer for seeing, but for tears. And yet they were so before touch, before touching. Myopia searched for touch, longed for touch, separated from the whole world now by glass, by spectacles that hold the spectacular at a distance. Transparent veil that enables sight, these prostheses enabling vision set up a longing for touch that can only take place through the separating lens.

*Can the experience take place more than once? This time, and to begin, the encounter between fiction and truth is uncovered (an event in itself without unveiled truth), encounter – that's its fortune – fore-seen and unforeseen, unexpected and untimely (contretemps): the reading of one text by another text, reading of one by the other, of self by the other and the other by self. An encounter woven into the veil, from Voile as subject, knowing without knowing, veiled and blinding. I leave you to its unveiling and to the verdict that this unveiling holds in suspense (ibid).*

The veil flutters between languages, between cultural readings, always present though largely unseen. Sounds and shapes of words, phrases and sentences slip between encultured experience of the world, opening a text to other readings. The preface translates to open understanding through the inclusion of other readings, situating a reader and her tūpuna within a neverending translation that opens to all cultures, asks to see different veils, different sails, different thinking.

## 6 NGĀ WHAKĀHUA (PICTURES): INTERSTITIAL IMAGES

*Silkworm*, in its discourse between tallith and veil, is fundamentally about seeing, about differences in vision and veracity relating back to religion, culture, gender and memory through Derrida's encounter with veil and tallith.

Returning here to the thesis title, 'Ecce' both calls for and commands vision and veracity, depending on tenor. It asks for a witnessing, a seeing of something, for sight. Its call to vision as witness carries with it an accompanying blindness, an opacity of vision, or even a blink, where, in an instant, one is blind to the very thing that one was called to witness. Memory will later fill in the gaps, inventing what was not seen, what was blinked over or opaque. Clarity of vision is distorted, glimpsed through a cultural, experiential, social, linguistic veil that translates everything. To see, then, it is necessary to look first at the veil, and at sight and its lack.

Accompanying the three editions of *Silkworm* that are dealt with here are several drawings and photographs, passed over in any academic discussion around the text. This chapter discusses these through Derrida's reading of both drawing and photograph, as deconstructive texts, each containing its own deconstruction, its own discussion on text, drawing and photography. Discussion develops through a way of reading suggested by *Joan*, a way of reading silent film, where inter-titles translate something that is being said on or off screen and spliced images suggest more than the singular frame. Here still images that accompany the Derridean text offer an inserted translation on the movement of the series of still words, thin threads of darkness across which the eye rapidly moves.

## NGĀ MAHI TOI (ART WORKS): IMAGES OF SILKWORM

My training is in the discipline of art and design, in visual arts with its attention to thinking things through graphically, to making a series of drawings, of marks on paper before any work is undertaken in fabrication, to research ideas through continually making. I note, in writing, the ways in which this training is still at work, continuing to perform through the multitude of sketches discarded in the writing, the multiplicity of possible research directions that could have worked here, and that are



covered over in the version that you are reading. Alongside this practice of preliminary sketches, of working drawings, training in this particular discipline requires making an artefact, a fabrication that calls out to be seen. Training in a discipline, where accepted and rigorously attended to, holds a student in its grip.

Derrida (Derrida & Ferraris, 2002), writes of a memory, recalled through a photo, travelling with a friend to Normandy, where, though outside the university he attended at the time, always still inside the discipline in which he had been trained, “despite a sense of not belonging” he was still marked by an institutional pedagogy. He continues: “the rest came along to complicate matters, but it is as if a certain grammar had been given for ever..” (Derrida & Ferraris, 2002, p. 43) Along with Derrida, I still carry a legacy of training, in my case in art and design, in applied arts, in fabrication of visual research which remains as artefacts. Processes of working through notions and aporia take place through a series of working drawings, on paper, cloth and on video, that are included as part of this completed work.

#### DRAWING CLOSE

A cue, here, is also taken from the margins of ‘Un Ver à Soie’ and *Silkworm*<sup>48</sup>, from the little discussed series of drawings by Ernest Pignon-Ernest, subtly folded around and between pages of text. Though large, on the cover, and as double page graphics in both later editions of *Veils* (Derrida, 1997b, 1998d), these drawings are ignored in academic discourse, treated as illustrations of the text rather than as having something to say that works alongside this text, wrapping a body softly, or, perhaps softly wrapped with marks and fabrics that, nonetheless, convey a certain danger, a certain warning to a reader. What is happening with particular body parts is not clearly defined. A face is knitted into an eye. Where folds work to cover, what is behind the folds maintains an unsettling ambiguity that at once gives shape to the folds. A proficient classical style is betrayed in its de-completion, deconstructing both

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<sup>48</sup> The earliest publication of *Silkworm* (Derrida, 1997c) is also accompanied by several visual artworks by art photographer Edouard Boubat (pp.10, 21, 25 & 29) and psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, photographer Sophie Daoud-Periac (pp. 43, 47 & 51) to be discussed later in this thesis

a body/bodies and drawing itself. A hand reaches/withdraws, drawing for/from what? A single hooded eye looms looking into itself (Fig. 16).

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Figure 16 (Pignon-Ernest, 1998, p. 13; 2001, p. 5)

In Pignon-Ernest's drawings a reader recalls the role of memory in seeing, recalls also a relationship between drawing and text, a graphic relationship through reading and drawing<sup>49</sup>, where memory comes into play, where borderlines are in question, where an eye also draws and a hand sees. In Figure 16 the eye is sightless, predicting Derrida's later discussion on blindness and his selection of artworks for exhibition in the Louvre.

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<sup>49</sup> For further discussion on vision and drawing see Derrida, J. (1993). *Memoirs of the blind: The self-portrait and other ruins* (P.-A. Brault & M. Naas, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press

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Figure 17 Pignon-Ernest, 1998, 2001, pp 26-27

John D Caputo (1997) in a chapter entitled 'The Hypothesis of Sight' suggests that Derrida's analysis of drawing in *Memoirs of the Blind* hinges on what Derrida calls "a hypothesis of sight", a "counter-phenomenology of blindness" and that the writing sets out as an exhibition of the extent to which seeing is "inhabited by, indeed is constituted by blindness and hypotheses," where seeing is held in suspension before judgment because "[t]he judgment depends on (*suspendu à*) the hypothesis' [] about what seems to lie plainly before our eyes". What "lies plainly before our eyes" is put into question largely through emphasis on the eyes as site of tears, blinking, and blindness, bringing into question the notion of a truth through witnessing, through seeing with one's own eyes. When what is seen comes to be drawn, Derrida shows that the artist is blind to what is being drawn, has to look away to draw, thus performing a blind drawing. When tears and blinks are added to this moment of looking drawing is further removed from what it is wanting to say.

The images that are in(out)side the three editions of *Silkworm* that we are dealing with figure large in each publication, taking up whole pages and sometimes spread across two, interfacing. In no way insignificant, these images, which in a headlong reading of Derrida's text it is possible to pass over, highlight a spatial relation of the cut and the splice, spatialize the very notion of inside/outside through a stitching that has been passed over in academic discourse around this text. They situate and identify

blindness to both cut and splice, asking for a different reading of text and image, again putting into question ways of seeing “what is plainly before our eyes.”

As in film, frames flicker before our eyes too quickly to allow us to see the splice, the stitchings, which, in Joan, draw remarkable connections to *Silkworm*. We are blind to the multiplicity of collaborations “plainly before our eyes”, preferring, instead, to work with a notion of unity of Derrida’s text, of a unity which this text as all other Derridean texts, continually puts in question. In a headlong rush and perhaps in the complexity that demands a focussed reading of a difficult text, these works are bypassed.

From street artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest’s enveloping drawings that interweave through the English and French editions of the book to the photographs by renowned photographers Edouard Boubat and Sophie Daoud-Periac in edition of *Contretemps* entitled ‘Voile’ (1997), images figure large in any reading. If there is a movement beyond illustration, how might these images perform with a Derridean text that insists on inclusion of other points of view, where any notion of the ‘selfness’ of the text insists that others have already been stitched on (*piqués*), already injected into (*piqués*), and that he himself (*le texte*, masculine), stitches and injects? This text, as any other, is already contaminated and open to contamination.

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Figure 18 *Veils*, Pignon-Ernest, 1998 cover and pp 52-53

From the cover of the English edition Pignon-Ernest’s images draw us in. A graphic hand (Fig. 18), repeated on the centrefold of the book reaches out from the fold, threatening to leave the cardboard cover, escaping the confines of book, of text and

textile. Fingers extended, the hand holds nothing. It (or she *la main*, feminine) is en route, having cast off from within the darkness of the fold she moves to hold, to engulf, to cover. And yet, in and of this reading, we cannot be certain. The hand, caught in freeze-frame, allows no certainty of the direction of movement, of whether she is reaching out from the folds or withdrawing. Perhaps she has let go, released her hold (remember this is the hand's hold and neither the hand nor the hold of any gendered subject) and withdraws into the darkness of the fold. She (*la main*), on and out from the cover, gives notice of the very coverings she evades/enters, drawing attention to covers and coverings, while folds of textile, cut off at the edge of the cover, alert us to the uncertainty of what lies within.

This is not to be an easy journey. We are invited into the darkness of the fold, which we will encounter again and again, in echoes sounding between text and image, the hand and the fold, inside and outside. Pignon-Ernest's cover image, as with all his images, deceives the eye, reminding us of a blindness that goes with both truth and justice, of a darkness that is the depths into which any thinking must enter. A hand reaches out from this darkness of the fold or escapes into it. Is this the hand of friendship, of whanaungatanga, and/or is it the hand of violence? Of one thing we can be certain; the hand, uncovered, moves to touch and be touched.

Remarkably, Cixous (2012) has written about the work of Pignon-Ernest. In a chapter entitled 'Ernest's Imagic' she writes

*Son of the Virgin! Quick! Live! The time has come, twilight, the right time, the second hour or the thirteenth, Nerval's hour, Rimbaud's hour, smuggler's hour, the hour for pasting up, the best time for Ernest, in between time, time for the forever-bereaved-son to squeeze between the earth's knees, mother's knees, time to go back to the source for his mother.*

Pignon-Ernest, the Pignon-Ernest whose images in *Voiles* and *Veils* shout from the pages and yet are ignored in any serious discussion on the book, is a street artist, known for the quality of his work. Haunted by the traces of victims on the concrete of Hiroshima, he has pasted his life sized drawings on the walls of European cities. Unknowingly, Cixous draws a parallel with the trickster Māui, with his efforts to crawl between the legs of his tupuna Hinenuitepō in order to conquer death, to reach

and remove the heart of the Tawhito of death. It is impossible, for me, to read Cixous' words without making that connection, without Hinengaro rising to recall Māui, without Māui resurfacing in his quest, a quest that ultimately led to his death. Cultural memory immediately translates. A son attempting to "...squeeze between the earth's knees" immediately links back to Māui, translates into a Māori knowledge system.

Pignon-Ernest's work as a street artist mines the underground depths of a city's past, drawing the unseen to the surface. His work in *Silkworm* performs in a similar way, and it is read, or rather overlooked, passed by and passed over in a similar way. A drawing sketches in the folds alone, textiles gathered towards the title (Fig. 18), into which they disappear and are erased; the appropriated space of a title. The title demands to stand alone, in its position of power. Later textile will be stretched to breaking, but here it gathers strength, drawing itself into and stopping before the spaces of a title. Veils. Two names, of writers and then of a translator and an artist. Translation, Art and Writing stitched onto these Veils, Cixous', Derrida's, Bennington's and Pignon-Ernest's, stitched on with a capital V, the Derridean V of veracity, veradicty, verse, verisimilitude, virility, perhaps, and perhaps also a Latin numeral and a Māori notch carved into wood. V - the folded letter that touches itself like lips, like a mouth, the stitch that passes through and back through the (text)ile. The V parts in the later Pignon-Ernest drawing (Fig 19), rending textile as Derrida's accompanying words rend the fabric of Western thinking on vision and visibility.

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Figure 19 Pignon-Ernest, 2001, pp 14-15

## KARANGA – CALLS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

A relationship between Derrida and photography is longstanding and significant on many levels. However, three of Derrida's most significant texts on photography have only recently been published. Those texts that are specifically related to photography are: 'The Deaths of Roland Barthes' (1981), *Right of Inspection* (1985), 'Diaspora' (2003), *Copy, Archive, Signature* (2010), *Athens Still Remains* (2010), 'Aletheia' (2010)<sup>50</sup> and *Echographies of TV* (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002).

In the chapter in *Contretemps* (Derrida, 1998c) entitled 'Un ver a soie: Points de vues piquees sur l'autre voile', despite Derrida's advice to the contrary through numerous texts bringing into question an out(in)side to text, an out(in)side to writing, the written word dominates. It is difficult to read a photograph, to suspend a reading long enough to spend time with each image without referring to its title, which itself is already both inside and outside the image. Reading has been seduced and reduced by the importance of text, the dominance of words, confined to skimming over the seven photographs that are scattered through Derrida's writing in this, the first publication of *Silkworm*. The first thing that flashes when attempting a reading of the photographs in the journal edition, the first thing to make any connection between the images, between images and text, is a relation to time and place through the first four titles – "Betlem 1954" (pp.10,21), "Bruges 1954" (p.25), "Maroc 1974" (p.29): photographs by 'correspondent of peace'<sup>51</sup> Edouard Boubat stretching through the text like an trail through some foreign place, marking stations of a journey, of several journeys. Boubat's journey takes us from Betlem (Bethlehem) to Bruges (Belgium) and then to Maroc (Morocco). Back and forth, north and south, we are thrown between images of veiled women, what appear to be illuminated squid lanterns hanging on lines stretched between buildings, and more veiled women, faceless this time, sides

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<sup>50</sup> This text was first published in Japanese in the journal *Sincho* (March 1993), and was written in response and devoted to a book of photographs by noted Japanese photographer Kishin Shinoyama and his equally renowned model Shinobu Otake (Asashi Press February 1993). The essay was then published in French in 'Nous avons voué notre vie à des signes' (Bordeaux: William Blake & Co, 1996) English translation by Pleshette DeArmitt and Kas Saghafi

<sup>51</sup> Term coined by Jacques Prévert in relation to the photography of Edouard Boubat.

and backs to the lens. There appears to be a marked difference in the veilings between the different places, differences in lengths, and in what and who is covered over.

### (MIS)NAMING

Can we simply move from one page to the next, leaping past Boubat, following the thread of Derrida's text, ignoring the photograph written between? In some mistaken fidelity to the Derridean text this is how we tend to read, and yet *Silkworm* prevents this reading from the moment of its subtitle. We are warned that there are others here, other points of view contaminating the text. The silk-self stitches and is stitched on (piqué) the other veil:

*You're not even leaving anyone the right to claim that "veil" still has something to hide for you, and that it will suffice for you to have done with the veil to have access to that other Thing itself, that Cause safe and intact. You'd be merely repeating the scene you're trying to look as though you're saying farewell to, making us into your witness, from so high and so far..." (Derrida, 2001b, p. 40).*

Here, right here breaking into the above text, fracturing a sentence, is Boubat's second image of Betlem. Is this the 'that' of which Derrida speaks? Is this image of veils of drying squid, of things distinctly other, through whose illumination everything else is shaded, this uncanny lumière to which we have little access and yet which threatens to spill out from the photograph, is this his 'that'? Is she (la lumière) the Thing to which he seeks access?

The second of the images entitled 'Betlem' (p.21) announces confusion. In what appears to be a very Asian scene, with what looks, even to unfamiliar eyes, to be Asian text and bodies, the title 'Betlem' interrupts such reading. Looking to the title for a naming of place, one is provided, albeit one that then sets in motion a questioning of a cultural reading. Are the calligraphic markings on signs those of a people from the continent of Asia? Are the learnt visual clues at fault in reading this difference? Questions flood in, breaking open a cursory reading of both image and title.



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Figure 20 "Betlem 1954, photo de Edouard Boubat" (p.21)

Uncertainty prevails. Lost, in Bethlehem, though in a very different Bethlehem, this image-text relation sounds the call of the entirely foreign, the call of light illuminating translucent drying cuttlefish, strung on lines through a village. Paper lantern marine creatures are skewered by a woman to the right of the frame, while a young person bends to walk under. Light performs as *kaikaranga*. Light invites, shedding focus as it emanates from dead bodies as foreign and different, as lifeless, as lights. Light calls to whoever and whatever might come before her. In this image she (*la lumière*, feminine) is multiplied and multiplies herself.

Having given themselves over to death the creatures now shine, caught by and catching light. Uplifted from their watery homes they now radiate, netting beams from an overexposed setting sun, which touches little else. Like magnets these corpses attract light, holding it in their sacks. Their fringed pocket-bodies as if removed from a garment are pinned out to dry on the line. Light writes here, in this village, not on the faces of villagers but on death, writing on corpses like a massive textile, inscribing its notes on dead bodies. These corpses, like strung lanterns recall festivals, celebrations; the smells of death erased by a search for the familiar in memory, for making sense, in the way that memory attempts, of what is totally foreign.

The first *karanga*, calling from the image is the *karanga* of light. So inured are we to this *karanga* of light, so driven to follow her, that we do not notice her dangers. She threatens to dry us up, to ignite and burn both passions and bodies. In our ignorance

we see dangers lurking only in shadows<sup>52</sup>. It is only later, looking into the shadows, that a different writing is noticed. Then, for further clues, the eye goes to the title, where a second karanga sounds, calling for a review of the image.

At the moment text is introduced the image is lost, erased by the force of the text, blown out of the water. As if watching a film with subtitles, attention fixes on the word, seeking translation of an image. The title that accompanies this image seems to offer little in the way of translation; 'Betlem' gives no clue resonating with the Asian text that is just discernible on billboards. Everything seems to be out of step. Hanging yet another ghostly frame out to dry, the woman stands in darkness. The back of youth and the bodies of squid are the only things that light touches, rests on. The rays of this karanga reach outside the image, escaping the confines of the frame, falling down onto whatever and whomsoever awaits the call. All else is enveloped in half-light (la *pénombre*, feminine), in shadows.

*Twilights: just as the noun the dark can at the break of day, name, thus call the night, obscurity, invisibility, shadow, the dark continent of sex, the unknown of death, non-knowledge, be it learned ignorance but also the hidden eye of the camera (beneath its black veil like in the beginning of the century or today its coffin-box [boitier-cerceuil]), and as an adjective dark can describe all that, by metonymy, darkly conceals itself from the light and resists being seen; so in what is more than an opposition, light (which is preceded by no article in the title and could be an attribute or a subject, an epithet or a noun) comes to signify light (léger), certainly, but also the day, the light, and the visibility of the phenomenon (light, the daylight) (Derrida, 2010a, pp. 170-171).*

This twilight also plays out in the distance between the title and what the image holds. Further research uncovers an identical photograph, entitled 'Korea, 1987' (Boubat, 2004, p. 283). Obscurity and enlightenment, the misnaming of this image in *Contretemps* resonates with a Western drive for truth as enlightenment. In an obscure way this image performs, with its title, a phallogocentric privileging of text, a reliance on text for veracity, and an obscuring of image in this reliance.

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<sup>52</sup> For further reading on the dangers of a Western drive to light and enlightenment see Jun'ichiro, T. (1991). *In Praise of Shadows* (T. J. Harper & E. G. Seidensticker, Trans.). London: Vintage Books. And Lippit, A. M. (2005). *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.

*But each of them remains in its turn what it becomes: a funerary inscription with a proper name. Having to keep what it loses, namely the departed, does not every photograph act in effect through the bereaved experience of such a proper name, through the irresistible singularity of its referent, its here-now, its date? And thus through the irresistible singularity of its rapport with or relation to what it shows, its ferance or its bearing, the portée that constitutes its proper visibility? It thus seems impossible, and that's the whole paradox, to stop this metonymic substitution. There is nothing but proper names, and yet everything remains metonymic. That's photography: seriality does not come to affect it by accident (Derrida, 2010b, pp. 2-3).*

To misname, misquote, mistranslate. The entire thesis is about the mis-, the missed, what is missing in any Western reading. Without the proper name, without Korea or Betlem, one more appropriate than the other, we are in confusion. With confusion through these proper names, there is some idea of the way writing performs, the dominance and colonizing of image, of all that it touches, to give a note of mastery, of truth, of knowing. This dominance can, however, be displaced through a reading of those Tawhito, those others that haunt the image, veiled by a heavy curtain of black script.

Cutting images out from the text, and reassembling, extracting these photographs, these paragraphs of light and dark traces, we can begin to piece together the points of view, hitherto interrupted. We can begin, perhaps, to read what they have to say without the textile to which they have been so well stitched that we have been able to gloss over them. Indeed they have become mere patches, marginal notes subsumed by the power of the written word. Reading *Silkworm* has insisted on this gloss, this haste and continuation from one page of words to the next, seeking to follow difficult threads with as little interruption as possible. *Silkworm* has already, within it, so many of its own interruptions. A reader assumes that the images are simply illustrations, so accustomed are we to this way of reading. And yet this text of Derrida's asks, insists that the other be read, that the points of view that prick, stitching themselves into the veil be acknowledged. "Il n'y a pas de hors-texte" suggests that we read images alongside and with readings of other texts, material and process, suggests that we spend time with the grammato-graphic details of these prints that inhabit and threaten to contaminate Derrida's text, suggests that we find other ways of reading the montage before us.

Where in *Joan* inter-titles are overshadowed by the sheer weight of the visual image, *Silkworm* seems to perform in reverse. Images fade into the darkness of the folds that engulf them. How to begin reading these contaminants, these threats to the primacy and unity of a text, these intruders into the sacred domains of literature and philosophy? And if we insist on reading these images, might Veils then become, horror of horrors, a 'picture book', of much less gravitas than other Derridean texts where images do not appear (*Silkworm* is already, in some academic areas, given less gravitas, perhaps because of the images)?

In *Athens Still Remains* (Derrida, 2010b), Derrida 'photographs' a sentence, and reads as photograph the sentence "We owe ourselves to death". Following his trajectory, Gerhard Richter (2010) suggests that:

*The protocols of close reading and deciphering, analysing and translating, questioning and obsessive revisiting that deconstruction follows can hardly be thought in separation from the kind of prayerlike attentiveness and careful restless study that a serious engagement with photography requires. The place that the particular grammar of photography holds in his thinking, therefore, cannot be overestimated, as Derrida himself makes explicit in Right of Inspection when he argues that, taking "all differences into account, we would not be reducing the specificity of ... photography were we to find it pertinent elsewhere: I would say everywhere"*<sup>53</sup> (Richter p.xxii).

Photography says something about the sentence, the one that takes you by surprise, that holds you in its frame, not disappearing, the sentence that demands a patient meditation rather than a quick glance, rather than a hurried stopover between flights of urgency connecting texts. It is also, here, a journey, though far from home, into te reo Māori me ngā tikanga Māori. It is often only when far from home, that the strength and indelibility of the familiar come to the fore, insinuating themselves as readings of an unfamiliar world, much in the way that Derrida's writing on his tallith only happens en route to Tierra del Fuego, through the workings of Hinengaro.

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<sup>53</sup> Citation from Plissart, M.-F., & Derrida, J. (1989). *Right of Inspection. Art and Text*, 32, 20-98.

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Figure 21 Betlem 1995 Edouard Boubat *Contretemps* p. 10

The proper name in the title of the first of Boubat's photographs puts us on shaky ground, highlighting the foreign and an uncomfortable uncertainty. From Betlem in Mallorca or Tigray, Ethiopia or Prague or Bethlehem, Palestine the first karanga in *Silkworm* appears to be the call of two women, two wāhine, one suckling an infant at her breast (Fig. 21). One woman holds the edge of her veil to shield the child from the light outside the dwelling, from the burning of the sun's rays. The child's eyes and body are shadowed by the mother's veil, by the covering of her head that the Book insists on in Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11), which starts out

with a brief discussion on mimesis, as an injunction to copy Paul even as Paul copies Christ. Verse 4 then says;

*Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonours his head.*

And continues in the following verse;

*But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.*

And Verse 6

*For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.*

Verse 13 then admonishes the Corinthians to

*Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?*

Boubat's image suggests a woman's head covering has uses apart from prayer. Alongside a covering for the mother, it is also a covering for the child. It (*le voile*, masculine, veil) can be shifted to protect another. She can, through a series of shifts of position, cover others. The veil here gives shelter, and in giving shelter, calls attention to itself.

The karanga, however, comes from the mouth of the dwelling, a rough mouth, torn and rugged, frayed edges threatening to spear, to cut into or catch on to all that might attempt passage. Two women sit in Edouard Boubat's photograph; one inside the mouth, the other just outside. The woman inside looks guardedly at the photographer. Her gaze accuses, suspects, sentences and passes sentence on both photographer and viewer. From the internal shadow she defends mother and child, watching over the illuminated in the gaze of the lens. The veil protects that which is not protected by the mouth. There is a play, here, between allowing and not allowing of light. Between the shutter, veil and mouth falls the shadow. And yet mother and child cast no shadow, are totally in the light, a light that hides the other woman, the childless one, inside the mouth of the dwelling.

In this image we are already inside the body of the tupuna<sup>54</sup>, inside the camera that operates as the shelter, the body of a tupuna. A mouth opens to call from the outside, from the expanse calling to the inside, calling to the viewer in the shadows. Here we are called to come outside the house, outside ourselves into the light. Questions must arise as to the position of the photographer and the position into which any viewer is placed. How is it that we, alongside Boubat, are inside the dwelling while the young woman suckling her child is outside in the heat of the sun such that she needs to shade her baby? How have we placed them, the most vulnerable, outside? What rights do we have to observe from the shadows? This is an uncomfortable shot, uncomfortable and distressing. While we sit/stand before it a woman and child are outside on a rocky surface in the blazing sun. What is veiled here is not only the woman, but also the position into which we, through a photographer in a country to which he is foreign, are placed to regard them. We have no right to be here, to observe them from the shadows, no right to leave them outside in the light, no right to usurp their shelter.

As part of the text, as one or several of the points of view of *Silkworm*, this image is introduced before the main title, and yet, in the way of images that take up the space of a page, it unfolds alongside all the text on the facing page. The text takes us towards Buenos Aires, on the 24th November 1995, not long before the text *Athens Still Remains*, first published in French as *Demeure Athens* in 1995. Standing across from, facing the image, the opening lines “Avant le verdict, le mien, avant que, tombant sur moi...” (*‘Un Ver a soie’* p.11 ), “Before the verdict, mine, before, befalling me, it drags me down with it in its fall, before it’s too late, stop writing.” (*Silkworm* p.21)

What is said here that the image might open up? How might the image that continues to stare out at the facing text shed some light on what is happening in these opening lines? Before the verdict light falls on the veil, the veil of the mother giving her breast

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<sup>54</sup> Discussion here revolves around the Māori notion of Whare tupuna (ancestral house) as the body of an ancestor. While this translation is stretching the role of camera and of small hut, it also is intended to push a way of viewing and a relation to the body, to each body, with eyes that look out from a body that is not only singular, but already made up genetically from tūpuna.

to the infant, the nourishing mother. And yet light does not fall on either mother or child. The light that washes down the side of her body, caught by the very fabric of the veil, puts them both in shadow. She is in shadow with her child, in the shadow of the veil, adumbrated by the veil. She is made visible by what covers her; by the veiling text(ile). Attention is drawn to her through the veil, through the revealing-concealing text(ile). She awaits, with Derrida, the verdict that falls on them, the verdict that falls on them both, and yet is here and now in shadow. Sheltered by the veil the verdict awaits the veil's withdrawal to approach. Its touch lies expectantly outside the shadows, caught briefly the eyes of the woman sitting inside the shelter. Through her eyes the touch of the verdict enters the camera.

In processes of encounter on a marae, tikanga Māori establishes that one must wait for the sound of a karanga. In reading image, this tikanga can be called upon and applied to give a different reading, a reading that approaches a different way of encounter with image and text.

At first reading the karanga in this image seems to come from the two women. On closer reading the kaikaranga is light itself, which may, returning for a moment to the French, be the same thing. She (*la lumière*, feminine) is caught by and catches on to the textile of the veil, on which she rests. It is from this position on the veil that she calls, that wahine (*la lumière*) entices from outside the veil, extended to give shelter.

Outside Papatūānuku echoes the outline of the breast, a seemingly arid landscape that nonetheless gives sustenance. Outside the camera light falls on land and veil. Before the word, before befalling Derrida, her call, the call of Papatūānuku sounds. In this image, a rocky lower frame belies the ordered space of fertility of Papa (Papatūānuku), whose clothing has been organised in the swathe of bushes in a valley behind the women. The curve of the maunga (mountain) from whence both vegetation and whānau are nourished stretches to meet Ranginui in a gentle slope. The stony frame of the whare, with its woven roof, opens to oversee crops, to maintain a relationship with Papa, whose seeming dryness belies her fertility.



Te ārai, the veil is central, draws our eyes out to this fertility, fertility of the mothers, both the woman feeding her child and Papa, whose plantations give succour to the whānau. This image, then, is about sustenance, about a relationship between wahine and Papatūānuku, with the added role of wahine as kaitiaki in the figure of the sister, mother or aunt who gazes suspiciously back at the camera.

#### NGĀ AHO (THREADS)

We assume that Derrida's text has been edited and that Boubat's images have been inserted without any consent from Derrida, that this is not Derrida's intention so must not be read in that way. We have come to assume, in relation to image-text, that image is mere illustration, to be left in the margins of any serious discussion, to be flicked over in any serious reading.

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Figure 22 Bruges 1954, Edouard Boubat *Contretemps* p. 25

Looking from outside at the walls of the building to which they head, which however, remains outside the forest within whose walls a group of nuns are momentarily cloistered (Fig. 22). These trees perform as pillars to an unseen temple, a temple through which they move and in which they are forever confined through this photograph.

From amongst the shadows of tall trees a group of nuns turn their backs, like some strange group of crested birds they call retreat. Moving away from the camera, veiled heads bent, in reverence or contemplation of the path before them. Black and white they remind us of text, of nothing outside the text. They are a strong reminder that the photograph is text and text, perhaps, now and then, may perform as a photograph. There is no open door awaiting them. The sisters move in prayer beneath a canopy of sky and leaves, their veils catching alight while the building to which they move remains in dappled shadows.

Papatūānuku is lush, fertile, her fertility casting shadows on the house of these sisters, who, we can assume, from the title siting this image in Brussels, are Roman Catholic nuns, returning to cloisters. Fertility and celibacy intertwine through a reading of Paptuanuku, with fertility threatening to engulf the moving women. Faces concealed, as is usual in those images of Boubat selected to accompany this edition of *Silkworm*. At moments the bodies of the sisters appear to rise out of the earth, to exude from the body of the mother, an extension, perhaps. They may also bear some relation, through the extreme darkness of intersection with Papatūānuku, with Hinenuitepō, formerly Hinetitama (Dawn maiden) who, on discovering that the father of her children was her own father, departed for the underworld, where she became Tawhito of death. There is an aspect of this to this photo, a contrast where the only light in the women's head coverings, the veils that identify them as "brides of Christ".

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Figure 23 Maroc 1974, Edouard Boubat *Contretemps* p. 29

Three veiled women stand looking out to sea (Fig 23). Seeming separated from both foreground and background through the veil, they stare away from camera. We, the viewers, behind their backs, become their future. In the sense of *ngā wa o mua*, what lies behind them remains to come. With them we gaze at their/our past, a past that becomes ours through having seen the photograph. The sea and ships in harbour, could almost be a painting, a backdrop to the women. We know this is Morocco, an Arab country, and that most probably the women are Moslem.

An interesting relationship is shown here, between the women and the Tawhito Tangaroa, Tawhito of the sea. The women stand at the edge, looking out, onto a place that is not their ground. Strongly grounded on Papa's stoney banks, there is delineation between spaces for men, on the ships, at sea, and for women, at home, on *whenua*. This relationship between *wahine* and *whenua* plays out in the word 'whenua', land and also the afterbirth, the placenta that joins mother and child, nourishing the babies growth in *Te whare tangata* (the House of mankind, the womb).

As if standing before a painted seascape, the separation of the women from the scene is marked by light and shadow. All at sea lies in darkness, while the women's veils catch the last rays of light. They stand like statues, while birds soar overhead.

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Figure 24 Sophie Daoud-Periac *Contretemps* p. 43

The karanga of these three women (Fig. 24) is a reminder of difference, of a radical textual shift in movement from right to left. Image here proclaims difference, a radical difference that plays out in writing. Intentionally or unintentionally Daoud-Periac has these women move out of the screen to the left, where traditionally Western image moves, like writing, towards the right of the frame. Breaking some of the unwritten rules of the time, this image is akin to Dreyer's cinematographic breaches in *Joan*<sup>55</sup>, where the strength of what is being said comes through a difference of both camera direction and direction of movement, both breaching formalities of Western codes relating to image capture.

This is not to be an easy read. Meaning is both veiled and set free through a lack of title. We are released from this image as memory of something, or some place, to struggle to find our own reading, our own cultural, linguistic interpretation through which to make some sense of this image. Or, perhaps, not to make sense, to just look at, just see, just behold.

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<sup>55</sup> See p. 54

In Figure 25 land calls. It is the clear call of the mother, unencumbered, Papatūānuku calling from her desolation, her emptiness. The photograph allows us no signs of perspective, no relativity save what appears to be a metal drum or tin can, whose proportions we can only guess at. What looks like building blocks are neatly stacked in rows, drying in the light of Tamaterā (the sun, personified).

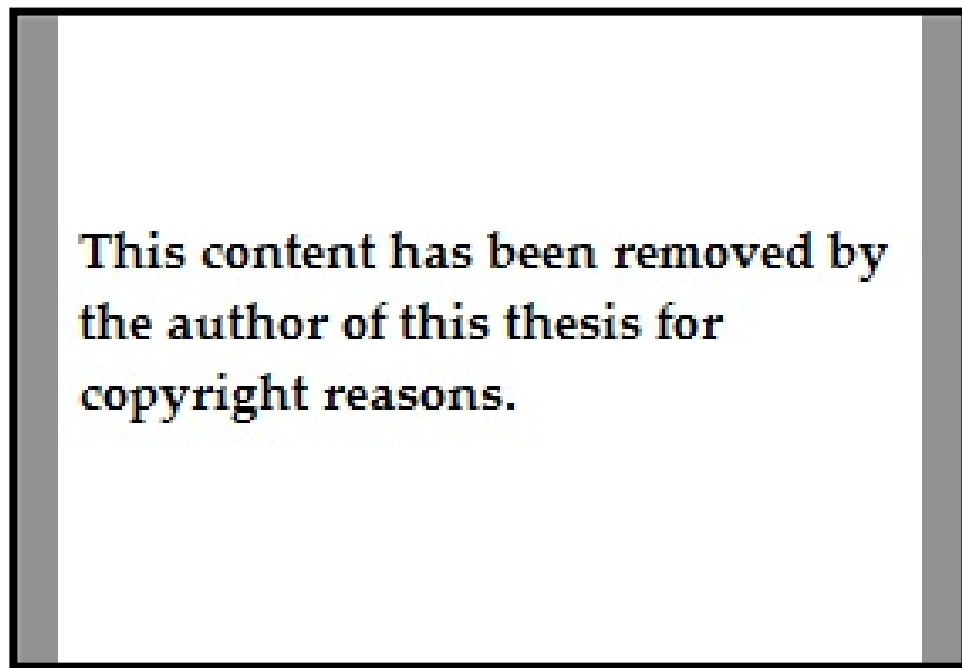


Figure 25 Sophie Daoud-Periac *Contretemps* p. 47

What and where is the veil here? To this moment we have found the veil in images of women, veiled, covered over. Here, through inclusion of this image, we are confronted with another woman, the semi-naked body of the mother, Papatūānuku, whose skin is shaped to form housing, perhaps, to protect to shelter, to give warmth and respite. We can only imaging what is happening here, only interpret from our limited knowledge what this image is and what it says, for Daoud-Periac gives no title, no clue in text to latch onto. In what are, perhaps, the ways of wahine, she leaves a reading open.

The karanga is muffled in Figure 26. She covers her mouth to call. Woman sits or stands alone, doubly veiled, an outer veil covering what is not already covered, covering all but her eyes. Her mouth and nose are shrouded by this extra veil, by this

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Figure 26 Photo de Sophie Daoud-Periac ibid p. 51

veil upon veil, white upon black giving space and place to each other. Senses are blanketed, textiled and entexted. Only sight and touch remain outside the textile. She covers her mouth, nose, body from the world and the world from her mouth, nose, and body. Alone she sits, distanced from it all, only hands and eyes remaining outside the veil.

Behind her, in the future against which she leans, a railing of a park bench. In the chapter of Hélène Cixous 'FirstDays of the Year' entitled 'Self- portraits of a blind woman', a certain "Story of Contretemps" begins on a bench. It begins on a bench – and it's also a scene of reading, a reading of sexual difference: between Separation and Reparation.

*Each one of the two words, Reparation and Separation, remains all alone.  
Each one all alone is a sentence, but that sentence is a question  
("Reparation? Separation?") (H. Cixous, 2004b).*

It begins on a bench. What is it to sit on a bench, a seat of justice, of politics, of work and leisure, also a seat of withdrawal? And more, what is it for woman, and a veiled woman what's more, to sit on a bench, to be photographed alone sitting on a bench? Clearly this bench is outside, in the open, exposed.

From the bench her eyes look to something outside the frame, something from which she protects her face with this veil on veil. These eyes see what we cannot see, what we are blind to, and witness what cannot be witnessed, again what we are blind to.

She exposes to the light and to the eye only eyes and hand. The rest remains covered over, hidden.

#### UNTRANSLATABLE TALLITH

Where myopia has been Cixous' lifelong companion, a constant changing veil whose loss she mourns, Derrida responds with discussion on the tallith, his own lifelong companion. Following Derrida in her *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a young Jewish saint*, Cixous (2004a) writes;

*Here, under the tent of the tallith an extraordinary hymn mounts to she who waits for him "hidden" in her hiding place at home him forever travelling she never voyages. I said she yes, not a slip of the tongue, I follow the signs of his.*

The tallith is, for Derrida and Cixous in his wake, both a Jewish prayer shawl and something apart from a Jewish man's prayer shawl, something feminine. In taking up the tallith, Cixous engages across gender, with "this masculine feminine thing" a thing that is unique among things in that it is Derrida's "very own". Not just his own, but his **very** own.

How is it possible to translate into Māori a Jewish prayer shawl? Where does one start? Deconstruction, the hymen, silk, the materials of which the tallith is woven, all these and much more can be (mis)translated into te reo Māori. The tallith resists even mistranslation. It is both garment and skin, this feminine thing that can only belong to a man.

*...By means of tallith and tongue he delicately introduces the theme of the liaison. He has a liaison with the tallith that is unique, qui est unique. Tunic by liaison (H. Cixous, 2004a, p. 211).*

She (tallith) allows Cixous to play a homophony between the unique and the garment, unique and "*est unique*" (is unique and is tunic), only possible when read aloud. Aloud the singular becomes clothing, textile produced for a body, to cover a body. How is this to be translated? What is this thing, tallith, and how to relate to it, as wahine, as Māori? A Jewish friend, Doctor Yael Klangwisan has offered her reading of the tallith in response to my sincere attempts to understand what this textile might mean and how it might be translated. It is impossible, for me, to leave the veil, for this wahine to turn to a tallith. The veil calls for remaining in(out)side an

(un)veiling, veiling and unveiling, continually to move between the two. As Derrida notes;

*To touch “that” which one calls “veil” is to touch everything. You’ll leave nothing intact, safe and sound, neither in your culture, nor in your memory, nor in your language, as soon as you take on the word “veil”. As soon as you let yourself be caught up in it, in the word, first of all the French word, to say nothing yet about the thing, nothing will remain, nothing will remain anymore (Silkworm, p 24).*

My mokopuna kneels with me in prayer, touches his forehead to his small mat brought back from Mecca. Perhaps one day he too will take the moko, his tupuna and God willing.

#### **MAI TE RANGI (FROM THE SKY)**

Crossing the Atlantic, already there has been a trial, a verdict, a sentence. Derrida is removed from whenua, removed even from Paptūānuku in his flight to Tierra del Fuego (land of Fire). The oceanic name ‘Atlantic’ over which he flies is a reminder of this sentence, recalls both sentence and verdict. Atlas has been found guilty of rebellion against Zeus and sentenced to hold up the heavens, to stand forever holding, to be holding, to be hold. Without Atlas/Tāne (who rebelled against the closeness of his parents’ hold on each other) there would not be a separation between, Rangi and Papa, heaven and earth. This ocean that Derrida crosses is named for the verdict, named as reminder, recalling, as liminal space between those that Atlas/Tāne holds apart, holds in separation. To cross this liminal ocean is to pass through the hands of Atlas/legs of Tāne, for Tāne stands upside down, pushing away the father (Ranginui) with his legs. Tāne and Atlas stand in reverse one of the other, as the other culturally inverted. Derrida passes over and through the verdict of one already condemned, one Atlantic.

Images from the three publications of *Silkworm* as discussed in this chapter have begun to further open a translation of the text, prompted by the subtitle ‘Points of view stitched on the other veil’. These written translations have been accompanied throughout by a series of artworks, each opening to the other, text to image to text.



## 7 TĒNEI ARA TOI – THIS PATH OF ART

From a series of spliced images to the exhibition work the relationship between writing and image making has worked to move thinking in a way somewhat reminiscent of te ara poutama, the tukutuku (pattern of binding holding together the walls of a whare), where each step on the path encounters the resistance of the Tawhito Whiro (Tawhito of darkness), in order to move upwards. Resistances in writing of research were dealt with through a turn to image and in image making through a return to writing. Thus the work is an interweaving, impossible to adequately restrict to paper in the complexity of its fabrication.

Many images emerged through the process, some, perhaps, more clearly unveiling the notions worked through. As the entire study is engaged with as a journey, the works selected for exhibition can reveal only the location of current thinking, not a definitive selection of works.

### WHAKATAU

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Figure 27 2010 Spliced image. Digital photograph with still from *Joan*

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Figure 28 (2010) Spliced image. Digital photograph with still from *Joan*

As Derrida has already been through a process of pōwhiri at Waipapa Marae there was already a connection between his writing and Aotearoa-New Zealand. This is not the case with *Joan*, whose screenings have not been on marae. There was, therefore, a need to whakatau (officially welcome) *Joan* before any reading or translation could take place.

Figures 27 and 28 are selected from the first digital workings, an attempt to whakatau (to officially welcome) this manuhiri (guest), this foreign film. Working with opacity, still images from *Joan* are overlaid on photographs from a ferry crossing of the Waitemata, bringing the image of Renée Falconetti as Joan of Arc to Tamaki Makaurau, where the majority of this thesis is written. Dealing with the foreign texts selected to engage the title *Ecce wahine*, a close reading, frame by frame analysis of the film, revealing images hidden in its projection, suggested the use of splice as a way to 'write' an initial encounter.

Attempting to work through dislocations of time and place the photographs expose a haunting that has held since the first encounter with this film and a connection

between wahine and whenua that informed later focus on Papatūānuku and distinctly Māori notions in reading image.

#### MAHI NGĀTAHI: 'COLLABORATIVE' PROCESSES

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Figure 29 McNamara and Emadi (2010) Stills from video *Now come, fire!*

In discussing mahi ngātahi I hesitate to translate into the largely accepted term of 'collaboration.' With all the connotations and notions of kūpapa (traitor) around the English word, it would seem unacceptable to suggest that processes engaged in this project had anything to do intentionally with betrayal, with giving over to the enemy. And yet on some level the entire project gives over to enemies, inherited, imagined and real through the use of English as the dominant language in which it is written and through the site of publication.

Figure 29 extracts two images from a video produced for exhibition, interrupting outtakes from the Dreyer film with video shot in concert with Iranian artist/performer Azadeh Emadi. Shots were interwoven with brief segments of film, playing between

closeups of body of Joan/Falconnetti and Emadi in positions not imitating Joan but suggesting a contemporary reading of the movement from the film. An audio work by From Scratch (1998) framed the rhythm of the work, suggesting editing decisions to coincide with audio.

Mahi ngātahi has been a fundamental aspect of this project through ways of thinking, producing, making, where as director of any work, direction has been performed in continual consultation, with respect for the input of participants.

#### **MAHI Ā-RINGA - HANDIWORK**

Stills from the video prompted a series of short poems, to date unpublished. These worked through some of the issues raised in the interweaving of the Derridean text with the film, opening to further discussion for exegesis. Stills emerged from close readings of both *Joan* and video work produced, performed as moments of opening. Each frame held potential to further open discussion and creation, poetic and academic, where blurring of boundaries between these sometimes formed dangerous grounds.

## Bound

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Figure 30 McNamara & Emadi (2010) *Now Come, Fire!*

Bound between hand and voice her unsung rhythms meld  
Twisting in an evergreen of fire about to come, Come coming  
Reaching through kōkōwai<sup>56</sup> to a separation  
Repeating itself in the rending of the veil.  
Hand held, pushed to sign,  
To mark confession.  
  
Other hands forge signature,  
forge a sovereign support.  
Her ghost remains  
Outside the steamy window

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<sup>56</sup> Red earth pigment used in traditional adornment of bodies, carvings, and painted rafters.

Outside the marked breath

Outside the quick sign on glass.

Outside always reaching in.

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Figure 31 2011 'Breathing in', digital image

## **Kēhua**

In the unseen frames

Where solvent sticks and dissolves

In the meld of two cut edges

Each ghosts the other, plays the kēhua,

Hanging about in the space of an other,

Faces write graffiti walls,

Clothing cuts into the throat.

Splices speak a violence,

Irruptions between worlds,

Migrating languages,

Unsettling the edges of reason.

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Figure 32 (2010) 'Myopia' Experimental video work

## NGĀ MAHI TĀ – DRAWINGS

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Figure 33 (2008) Indian ink on paper

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Figure 34 2012 Indian ink on paper

Gestural drawing has worked alongside the entire study as a way of breaking through moments of conflict, particularly where a sedentary processes of writing dislocated text from a body, from a physical engagement with notions under



discussion. As a form of unrestricted writing with Indian ink<sup>57</sup> on paper, these drawings were drawn with torn fragments of silk already digitally printed from a page of *Silkworm*, moments of a silk-self breaking loose from the restrictions, resisting a mind-body duality by physicalizing writing in an extreme way (Fig. 33)

Some of these drawings were later reworked to explore a Māori writing of signature (Fig 34), a signing with small marks from moko kauae inserted after the drawing was made, as part of the image. Such marks make reference to the signatures on Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840)<sup>58</sup>, where many of the signatories signed with parts of their moko kanohi (facial moko) design.

Fragments of silk used in making the gestural ink markings were later exhibited at the Geoff Wilson Gallery 2013 in an exhibition entitled Ngā Puna Roimata (Figs. 28,29)

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Figure 35 (2013) 'Tears for Jacques Derrida' Individual works

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Figure 36 (2013) 'Tears for Jacques Derrida' installation

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<sup>57</sup> Indian ink containing traces of fire, in the form of lamp black or soot was used to hold traces of burnings, tracing a burning of woman (*Joan*) and eyes (Cixous' laser surgery).

<sup>58</sup> A treaty between Māori and the British Crown, whose difference in meaning, through translation between the two languages (Māori and English), remains in dispute (see Glossary for additional notes)

Images of textile with accompanying short poems informed an exploration of text-textile relationship, particularly engaging with Derrida's discussion around the veil and tallith. In these works image performs in some ways as a title, in a reversal of the image- caption relation.

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Slow folds.

Two languages leaving her

Time moving through layers

With none.

Silk formed

Wordless breath of the father

Does she forget

His heart repeating

Childhood?

French/Māori

Lying on his heart,

Words – time folds.

## NGĀ WHATI (FRACTURES): INCISIONS INTO WESTERN ART CONSTRUCTS

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Figure 37 (2012) *Ngā roimata*. metallic marks from scrubbing and gouache pushed through holes in canvas.

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Figure 38 (2013) *Ngā mata*, Gouache on and through canvas

Physical working through of what was happening in the writing, where te reo Māori breached the taut fabric of Western philosophy involved a series of scraped canvases, pushing fluid and pigment through from behind, breaking into the surface tension and marking the rupture (Fig. 37). Somewhat reminiscent of Peata Larkin's technique of painting from behind the surface and in many ways working with a process that acknowledges the weaving of tukutuku panels, these works were later exhibited at Geoff Wilson Gallery, 2013, along with further works performing processes undertaken in writing (Fig. 38) in an effort to work through an aporia by showing.

## HE WĀHI WHAKAMĀORI (SPACE FOR TRANSLATION)

Extending the breaches caused through scrubbing canvas, a slit opened images to the wall behind, to what is conventionally covered over in painting (Figs. 39, 40). Referencing the eye, this series began to look at looking, to look back at a viewer through the shape of an eye. Sometimes read as female genitalia through a diagonal mounting, these works began to question positioning and arrangement of paintings, to work through ways of suggesting translation not through the work itself, but through patterns of mounting, working with gallery walls as a potential medium for performing translation. Research suggested potential for the gallery as a space for carrying something across (translating).

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Figure 39 (2013) *Ngā mata*, one of sixteen gouache on canvas

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Figure 40 *Ngā mata* installed

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Figure 41 (2013) *Text-textile* canvas, Indian ink on wood

Challenging and breaking apart the structures of Western art practice became an important aspect of this experimental work. Canvases were removed from supporting frames and interspersed with their Indian ink dyed frames to form coded text messages, citations from *Silkworm* (Fig. 41). The slow and repetitive process of taking these canvases apart while retaining intact both canvas and frame allowed much time for thinking through some of the assumptions and limitations of a whakapapa of Western painting, and construction of encoded text suggested further experiments needed in ways of saying through pattern of display.

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Figure 42 *Te ārai*, digital photograph

### **Whakapapa**

At the start of art I had a dream

Cave walls emerged from nothingness

Writing slim filamented light,

Solidity slowly up and down

Thread knitted cave, unshaded

Light's breath touching cheek

Slowly, in pain, a world spoken

Woven together - God's signature

## Te ārai

Halfway-between seeing

and not seeing

Te ārai flutters

Stretched veil,

Misshapen bulges

Drop lightly across her eyes.

Kēhua walk through open halls

Of thinking.

For it is here

Outside-in shadowy passages of  
academia

Fraught with danger-waiting holes

She moves. Hiding her white cane

Behind the glass she feels

Her way across one stage after another

Not noticing the pain on her lips.

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Figure 43 McNamara & Emadi 2010 digital image

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Figure 44 (2012) Shadow play

Elsewhere in the flickering light	Of many tūpuna
A veil appears	Here I see her
Shadow driven, unstable	No! There and there
Shape-shifting on screen-wall.	She and others
Now it's not the shadows I see	Flit across film-space
But strange light globes	Untouchable
Filtered light	For as soon
Light reviewed	As I reach out
Vaporous dancing	It is only the hand
Writing perhaps	I see.



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Figure 45 August 2013, Te ārai, digital photograph

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Figure 46 August 2013, Te ārai digital photograph

More recent photographic works (Figs. 45, 46) begin to play with threads, here threads formed by morning condensation of breath on glass. Initially attracted through the notion of ārai, on close reading of the images these threads showed resemblance to titiwai (glow worm, the larvae of *Arachnocampa luminosa*, the fungus gnat). Titiwai is one possible translation of a silkworm, secreting its sticky droplets from the mouth to weave a network of threads, luring its prey with a luminous blue-green light into its snare. This resemblance prompted research into this indigenous

being, whose light remains hidden until approached through entry into Papatūānuku, or into the hours of te pō (darkness).

#### NGĀ PUNGAREHU

Working through connections with materials, where whakapapa is identifiable and whanaungatanga with aspects of *Joan* and *Silkworm* are made visible, research with ashes as a medium for drawing and painting involved experimentation with media to carry the ashes, and a suitable ground on which to paint. Canvas was found to hold well when ashes were mixed with a gel medium. Rubbing dry ash into canvas also produced an interesting layering and veiling effect. These works (Fig. 46), though small, suggested directions for future work that worked with both *Silkworm*, through a discussion on veiling, concealing and revealing, and *Joan*, through traces of fire.

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Figure 47 (2013) *Ngā puna roimata*, ashes on canvas

These images need further working, with attention, perhaps, to moments where distinct pattern in korowai (cloak) can work to clarify the figures as Māori.

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Figure 48. (2013) *Ecce wāhine*, digital video

The video artwork *Ecce wahine* (Fig. 48) was made in response to increased attacks on our foreshore and seabed through the government opening for sale to overseas oil and mining companies. Starting out as a political response, editing to overlay close up shots with long shots and slowing the sequence provided introduced a veiling effect, where the action could only be glimpsed through the fluttering veil. Darkness of the fabric, when opacity of both shots was reduced, showed what was happening, with the light covering action in the other frame.

As in the spliced frames from *Joan* and in the work *Ecce femina*, by Sandrine Commamond (see p.48), the coupling of images in this way opens the ability of photography and videography to say more, to work between time frames and between cultural frameworks.

The works in this chapter have informed decisions for exhibition. The challenge is to further refine translation of *Joan* and *Silkworm* into Māori, through a series of visual and vocal artworks.

## 8 WHAKAATURANGA – EXHIBITION<sup>59</sup>

For my niece, Esther-Jordan Muriwai, our own Joan of Arc, whose battle against Bronchiectasis and recurrent lung infection (the enemy within) is sadly reaching its end. Ngā mihi, ngā mihi, ngā mihi.

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Figure 49 *Frayages*, floor installation, raw canvas

*Yet language is not everything. It is only a vital clue to where the self loses its boundaries. The ways in which rhetoric or figuration disrupt logic themselves point at the possibility of random contingency, beside language, around language. Such a dissemination cannot be under our control. Yet in translation, where meaning hops into the spacey emptiness between two named historical languages we get perilously close to it. By juggling the disruptive rhetoricity that breaks the surface in not necessarily connected ways, we feel the selvages of the language-textile give way, fray into frayages or facilitations. Although every act of reading or communication is a bit of this risky fraying which scrambles together somehow, our stake in agency keeps the fraying down to a minimum, except in the communication and reading of and in love. ...The task of the translator is to facilitate this love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the*

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<sup>59</sup> Further images from exhibition and the entire video artwork are included in the compact disc inside the back cover.

*demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay (Spivak, 1993, pp. 180-181).*

Working with the above citation, holding the translator and audience at bay, the artworks in this exhibition seek to translate the title of the thesis through the two texts engaged, *Joan* and *Silkworm*. Initially intended as a series of paintings, a practical exploration of Derrida's relation with Western text and of possibilities of deconstructive translation<sup>60</sup>, canvas is cut out, frayed to release threads (Fig. 48), folded back on itself, and then stitched to recall a writing specific to the role of wāhine in the form of tukutuku panels that hold together the walls of a whare.

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Figure 50 'Ngā Roimata' Installation. Indian ink, canvas thread on canvas.

These panels are traditionally constructed through a continual threading back and forth of fibre between two makers, writing meaningful patterns into the wall bindings. The process of making the artworks for this exhibition, a handiwork of wāhine; fraying, threading and stitching has been recorded on video and is set out as a separate yet integral installation (Fig. 52 & 53). Size and shape of the rolled canvas resonate with tī rakau used in the stick game tītītōrea. 'E papa waiari', a waiata much associated with this game, translates as follows:

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<sup>60</sup> For further discussion on deconstruction and translation see in particular Davis, K. (2001). *Deconstruction and translation*. Manchester Northampton: St. Jerome Publishing.

E Papa Waiari	O Elder Waiari
Tāku nei mahi	My work,
Tāku nei mahi	My very purpose
E tuku roimata	is the shedding of tears
E aue ka mate au	Alas, I am dying
E Hine, hoki mai rā	Hine, come back to me.

Sentiments of this waiata return us to mourning and the role of wahine as puna roimata, a thematic that has continued throughout the thesis. The tukutuku pattern for this exhibition is that of Roimata Toroa (Albatross tears) shed by the great bird on her journey across oceans, tears falling to mingle with the salt water of the sea (Fig. 50)<sup>61</sup>. From Dreyer's insistent close ups of Joan's eyes, often tearful, and Derrida's discussion on the eyes of Cixous, on points of view, seeing and beholding (*Ecce*) have threaded their way throughout.

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<sup>61</sup> This work has been made to adorn the walls of the office of the Bronchiectasis Foundation, set up by my niece in the months before her passing 5th June 2014.

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Figure 51 *Karanga* Indian ink and canvas stitching on canvas

Works in this exhibition bring together the X from *Silkworm* and from tukutuku stitches, including *Joan* through use of soot (indian ink) and charcoal directly onto the gallery walls. X also relates to the cross in Joan's signature, a sign that the signature was forced and the persistent reference to the cross at an angle in *Joan*. Here, perhaps more than anywhere in the thesis, languages are held together, different yet interwoven through the X, the kiss, letter and stitch.

X marks the spot, the stain the signature. She (la letter, French, feminine) brings together two lips ><, and operates in the gap between < >. She folds and unfolds, situates a past from a present (ex-) an outside from an inside (ex-). She holds together the walls of a house, where she writes stairways of knowing (poutama), constellations (ngā whetu) and tears of an albatross (roimata toroa), performing within a complex written language. At times she marks a limit to writing (signatures on a Treaty).

The algebraic X kisses her way into oblivion, to supplement (extra) and technology (x-box). Unknown and unknowable, she stitches her points of view onto a textile. In other places she laces edges of clothing, forms lattices and veils marking hidden treasure. Drawing from the very threads of the veil of language X is a meeting of roads, a dangerous site of collision.

Translation attempts to carry a-cross an annulment, a death or erasure of words. X crosses out, marking a mistake, a mistranslation. She warns and forbids, marks ways out (exit) when indeterminacy threatens to overwhelm.

X stitches together the book (cover of the trial in opening scenes of Joan), recurring throughout the film in tilted crosses, shadows from barred windows, camera angles setting a cross askew on a church spire. A mimetic sign, she offers points of view to be worked with in any stitching.

She appears in knots in a net for catching kai (food), binding on a snare or frame. She calls on Tawhito through crossing fibres (tiki wānanga), binding the ancient ones to wood, bone and stone.

Like 'wahine', X does not operate alone, but performs in a system of signs and is transported between systems. Transliterated ik's becomes eke; to climb to mount, the word whose mishearing prompted the entire journey of this thesis.

On her side she writes the letter t, a meeting of the vertical and horizontal, portrait and landscape. The cross-pole that holds the flag, a mast on a waka, she stands to open sails, veils and insignia to the breath of Tāwhirimātea, Tawhito of wind and storm. On a spire she announces yet another Passion.

X and t, the meeting place, the crossing of two, of any two. There remains only the E of TEXT. An aspirant E, she prefixes any address (E Hine...), breathing herself from a smile through open lips.



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Figure 52 Interior gallery

She, amongst all others, summons a childhood memory of moments in a Anglocentric education, where a waiata was learned in the form of a game, a play between two sticks, between many twos moving, coming together and apart, accompanied by sweet sounds.

E Papa Waiari	O Elder Waiari
Tāku nei mahi	My work
Tāku nei mahi	My very purpose
E tuku roimata	is the shedding of tears
E aue ka mate au	Alas, I am dying
E Hine, hoki mai rā	Hine, return to me

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Figure 53 Ngā Mahi ā-ringā ( Handiwork) video<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The work shown on this video was made at the hospital bedside of Esther, where we sat with her day and night over many months.

## KUPU WHAKATEPE (CONCLUSION)

To translate the required 'conclusion' as kupu whakatepe brings the exegesis back to the body, to a clotting and coagulation of blood following a wound, following an incision into the skin and layers of tissue. Not that the body and bodies have ever been left behind, have ever for a moment disappeared in the writing, though they have been sometimes veiled in writing. The drawing together of words to staunch the flow is an apt inscription on which to depart from this exegesis.

In writing kupu whakatepe here, at this site of incompleteness, where artworks are still to play out research findings, it must be noted that this is not a complete coagulation, that blood still seeps from wounds, that nothing is concluded here. And yet these kupu momentarily staunch the flow of a singular wound, opened in the writing of this exegesis. There is, as yet, and to my knowledge, no Māori equivalent to 'exegesis', to a word, that comes from the Greek *exēgēsis*, from *ex-* (out of) and *hēgeisthai* (to guide, to lead), a word that has come to cover interpretation and critical explanation, arising from the task of interpreting the Bible. A translation of how this might work for Māori is lacking, and each of us has to find our own way of understanding what we are doing in putting together an exegesis. For me this works as *whaikōrero*, a standing to speak, with the exhibition to follow as my *waiata*, extending what has been said.

## CULTURAL (IN)JUSTICES

In an interview with Thomas Assheuer, Derrida responds to the question of the hazardous relationship between cultural identity and concerns of social justice;

*But why should it be necessary to choose between these two concerns (cultural identity and social justice)? They are two forms of concern for justice, two responses to forms of oppression or violence between unequals. It is doubtless very difficult to keep them both on the go and at the same rhythm, but you can fight on both fronts at once, the cultural and the social, if I can put it like that, and you have to. The task of an intellectual is to say so, to make available discourses and elaborate strategies that resist any simplistic choice between the two. In both cases, the effective responsibility for an engagement ought to consist in doing everything to transform the existing state of law in both fields, between the two, from one to the other, the cultural and the social; and of inventing new laws, even if they always remain inadequate for what I call justice*

*(which is not the same thing as law, even if it has to guide the history and progress of law) (Derrida, 2005a, pp. 123-124).*

I am not dealing here with cultural safety. As stated this project seeks to plant delayed-action devices and de-fuse some already planted, scarcely a safe project. Hence I leave myself open to accusations from either side of a cultural divide, of being too Māori and too Pākehā, of focussing on cultural identity to the detriment of social justice, of focussing on social justice to the detriment of cultural identity, of betraying the one and the other through insisting on a double kaupapa and through an exhibition of artworks. Such working between a dominant and an alternative conception of the world is the not-possible with which, casting off from its title, *Ecce Wahine* performs... an aporia that has set this thesis on its way.

#### NGĀ WĀ O MUA<sup>63</sup>

Writing a thesis involves positioning, mapping and exposition both of threads gathered together through research and of paths taken in following particular threads. In the case of a thesis involving deconstruction or a thesis working with, alongside whakamimiti (which at the same time must deconstruct itself), this entails acknowledging who and what has had a hand in fabrication of those paths and a close reading of the ground that has been cleared in processes of fabrication. In shadows of the citation introducing this chapter a mapping of paths taken recalls those who have gone before, acknowledges their part as device planters also, as resistance workers in breaking ground to construct other railways, other transit routes. It is through attention to ground, to the body on which a reader-writer treads, alongside acknowledgement of those who have gone before both in preparing that ground and in planting incendiary devices to interrupt, to break through surfaces fabricating terrains that, for me, closely links whakamimiti with a notion of whakapapa and kaupapa Māori, suggesting a fundamental motivation for this thesis that proposes whakamimiti as a way of reading and working through political and cultural (if these can indeed be separated) issues in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

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<sup>63</sup> “Ngā wā o mua” translates literally as ‘times in front’, referencing the past, what has gone before and remains in front, differing from an English notion of the past working behind one’s back. This situates a different way of moving through time, moving backwards, where the future is behind and unseen while the past is held carefully in view.

Touched, interminably touched by both *Joan* and *Silkworm*, by two that are singular and multiple, each unable to be confined to a single author, this touched can and cannot be written as touché. At times it arrives through the point of a taiaha (spear), ornately carved with tongue protruding, perhaps even the points of rapier or stiletto. Touch is also an enfolding, a caress of light to draw a body into film and text. Touch calls, softly against a cheek, stroking the back of a head with light and sound. Yes, we have not forgotten sound. It is not left out of either film or text, which, if they unveil anything, unveil the relationship of sound and image continued through all films and all texts as a separation, an insistent division that disguises itself as continuity, as “truth” and “reality”.

“We all felt that truth in our throats and in the marrow of our bones...” writes Luis Bunuel in a chapter entitled ‘Carl Dreyer’s *The Passion of Joan of Arc*’ (Bunuel, 2000, p. 121). There are feelings, sensations of truth that I feel in throat and marrow of bones watching, reading, whatever verb might describe what goes on between this body and these texts; feelings of being touched, moved in the stillness of cinema, and shifted from the body on seat, acted on. Acted on by a verity that surpasses truth, betrays every sense of truth and truthing.

There are the sensations that come out from my body to *Joan*, to the light, to the screen, to touch her skin, her tears, her eyes. These second are the groping feelings, touching like fingers, to find a way through the blindness that is always watching film. Eyes that no longer see where I am, grope in the dark to find her, to find there, that place, that woman. A woman that I meet in the dark, unseeing, who sees me not. She does not know I am here, in the place of the blind, that I have been here, waiting for her as she has waited for me. She is blind to me. Blind to my waiting.

Awaiting a verdict, a verdict that must come following a handing over of this writing, these blind eyes touch her pain, confusion, sense of destiny, touch almost to her God, for they cannot touch her without touching on God. These blind aching eyes seek out her hopes, the small glimmers in an eye that suggest the ending might be other than

what is already known, other than knowledge, that knowledge and a suspicion that history might again have betrayed the truth and that she still might live, might walk unmarked from the fire. This touch strives to settle on these small signs of hope, strives to seek out another ending, another truth, strives to be released from this torture, imploring light and darkness to somehow not come together in this way.

*'Ecce Wahine'* I write, then search images for signs of what it might be to 'behold wahine', or rather I search out the question "where is wahine to be beheld?" Where in these unfolding margins might wahine walk, talk, sit and stand? Is it possible for her to read here and be read, to be heard? Where her karanga disrupts is it possible that she be there? Or is she always already there in any karanga? Is it possible that any call be without woman, without wahine?

There can be no conclusion, no complete closing off of the processes begun here. Having glimpsed Papatūānuku, Mahuika, and other Tawhito, and becoming more familiar with the rising and falling of Hinengaro, external and internal wāhine who continue to operate in writing and artworks, films and texts that the thesis engages with, they will not disappear. I can no longer view paintings, drawings, photographs, film and text, even thinking, in the same way. These Tawhito and internal maidens appear everywhere, touching every aspect of vision. Laser surgery has taken place, performed with pen, keyboards, brush and camera, where a form of cultural myopia has been and is further being eradicated.

I have found wāhine in the spaces of Western images, in Western texts, in the forms of Nga Tawhito, who, I suggest, are not restricted to Māori image and text, but call to be read, seen, touched, translated from every image and text.

We do not see light touching us, reaching out to warm skin and eyes. We are blind to the touch of light, blinded by darkness and light. Light does not make known her touch (*la lumière*, feminine). She approaches with stealthy speed, hidden, yet veiled by nothing. Hidden in that we are blind to her, blinded by her and blind to her approach. Te Rama (light), torn from the fingernails of Mahuika weaves her silken threads through darkness.

*Light is also knowing, truth, meaning. Now this light is no more than ashes here, it becomes ash, it falls into ashes, as the fire goes out. But [...] ashes are also of glory, they can be renowned and renamed, sung, blessed, loved, if the glory of the renowned and renamed is not reducible either to fire or to the light of knowing. The brightness of glory is not only the light of knowing (connaissance), and not necessarily the clarity of knowledge (savoir) (Derrida, 2005b, p. 69)*

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## GLOSSARY

This glossary, while offering the particular translation of words at work in this thesis, is also in some ways a disclaimer, claiming that each of these words is also untranslatable, (un)able to transport meaning across between languages.. In its very attempt to provide translation, a carrying across of meaning a glossary glosses over the impossible distances between languages, between tongues.

*We invent mastery*

*Of the scale where we disappear*

*The essentially broken one      poetry*

*Her green-eyed flare in the night*

*Still disturbs this scale*

*-observer observing a center*

*busy taking itself for a center*

*Glossary played by discarding*

*The fine approximations draw together*

*Slit breach slip he fences away*

*To submit to the hits              he de*

*Nominates                              he de*

*Ludes                                      he de*

*Flects the presentable*

*exhorting himself:*

*dis*

*a*

*vow*

*(Deguy 2005 p. 125)*

## A

Āhua – form, appearance, character

Akoranga – pedagogy

Ao - world

Ara - path, way, route, track.

Ārai – veil, screen curtain, blind.

Aroha – love

Atua – Commonly translated as “god” this indicates more than a god as entirely other, a relationship, a genealogical relationship that translates more accurately as ‘ancestor’, where the Atua as being is primordial, and responsible for a particular notion. This word is notable in its absence in this study, where Marsden’s reference to Tawhito (Ancient Ones) (Māori Marsden, 2003, p. 67) is employed to reference those kaitiaki - spirit-caretakers of the various realms of the world.

Awa - river

## H

Hā – breath, breathing

Hanga – to build, hangatanga (n) structure

Hapū – sub-tribe, clan, section of a large tribe. Hapū also translates as pregnant, conceived in the womb, with child. A relationship in what has come to be known as the ‘English’ language relationship, carried by the word ‘conception’, between fertilization and thinking, between representation (conception) and the fusion of egg and sperm (conception) differs somewhat from Māori resonances in the word ‘hapū’, coupling a splitting off through gathering together (sub-tribe) with the event of carrying a child inside a womb from fertilization (pregnancy).

Hinengaro – mind, emotions, heart. Literally the Hidden (ngaro) maiden (hine)

Hoariri – enemy. Lit. hoa – friend + riri – angry

Hui – coming together, gathering, assembly, meeting

Huimate – funeral gathering. Traditionally lasting over three days.

Hura kohatu – Unveiling ceremony where covering is removed from headstone

## K

Kai – food, eat, also used as prefix to indicate agency

Kaitiaki – caretaker/s, stewards kaitiakitanga – stewardship

Kapa – group, rank

Kapara – couple (transliteration)

Karakia – chant, prayer

Karanga – call. Part of role of wāhine on marae to call mauhiri and as manuhiri to respond.

Kauae – chin

Kaupapa – plan, scheme, groundwork

Karanimā – grandmother, transliteration used particularly by Northern tribes.

Kēhūa - ghost

Kina – *Evechinus*, sea urchin.

Kīngitanga – Māori royalty, both institution and movement for sovereignty.

Kōhanga Reo – Literally ‘Language Nests’. In a climate of rapid decline of Māori language, these preschool education hubs were set up to retain and transmit Māori language and customs to preschool children. Based on whanaungatanga relationships, Kohanga Reo continue to be run by whānau (families) committed to continuation of Māori language, customs and values.

Kōkōwai – red earth pigment, used in traditional painting and dying

Kōrero – speech, discourse

Korowai - cloak

Kōruru – carved figurehead beneath a tekoteko at the apex of a whare tupuna

Kōwhai – *Sophora tetraptera* and *S. microphylla*, tree with yellow flower

Kōwhaiwhai – Painted scrolling pattern particularly on rafters in whare tupuna. Both colour and shapes utilised in kowhaiwhai hold symbolic meanings.

Kura Kaupapa Māori – Lit. ‘School of Māori Grounding’, these primary schools rapidly rose in response to demand for continuation of what had begun through Kohanga Reo.

Kū – vowel sound

Kūpapa - traitor

Kupu - word

## **M**

Mahi – work

Mai rā anō – from long ago, for a long time

Manawa – heart, line traversing the length of kowhaiwhai establishing whanaungatanga of all elements

Manuhiri – visitors, guests, arrivants.

Māori – A name given to the combined tribes of first settlers in Aotearoa. Māori translates pre-colonization as normal, usual and ordinary, native.

Marae – meeting place. A marae consists of grounds, meeting house, kitchen, dining hall and ablution block for the purposes of events pertaining to a grouping of people.

Māramatanga – understanding

Mareikura – female attendants of Io (God)

Mata – face, eye

Matakite, seer, clairvoyant

Maumahara – memory/ies, memorial

Maunga - mountain

Mihi – formal and informal acknowledgement or tribute

Moana – sea

Mokemoke – longing, yearning

Moko – traditional tattoo

Mokopuna - grandchild

## **Ng**

Ngā – plural article

Ngāhere – bush, forest

Ngāpuhi – tribal grouping from the Northern regions of Aotearoa

Ngātahi – together, as one

## **P**

Pā – settlement, village

Papatūānuku (Papa) – Motherearth

Para – sediment, dust

Pepeha – proverb or tribal saying

Pōwhiri – ceremony of welcome

Pūkenga – expert, wise person

## **R**

Ranginui (Rangi) - Fathersky

Reo – Voice, tone, speech, language



Roto – lake

Ruahine – Old woman, particularly applied in ceremonies where ruahine performs lifting of tapu

## T

Tā – draw, paint, also strike, cut, carve

Taiaha – weapon, spear

Taitara – title (transliteration)

Tamāhine – daughter

Tāne Mahuta – Tawhito of the ngāhere,

Tangihanga – funeral (also huimate), cries of anger and mourning

Taniwha – water dragon, a guardian spirit who guides journeys, and protects

Taonga – treasure(s)

Tapu – under religious or ceremonial restriction, sacred

Taua – headdress, wreath of greenery

Tāwhiri-Mātea – Tawhito of wind and storms

Tawhito – old, ancient. Used briefly by Marsden to discuss the ancient beings who are often referenced as atua (gods)

Te – definite article singular.

Tekoteko – small carved figure standing at the apex in the front area of a whare tupuna

Te Tiriti o Waitangi – The Treaty of Waitangi 1840. Signed by representatives of the English crown and chiefs of several tribes of Aotearoa, Te Tiriti o Waitangi was to be the founding document of a relationship between the colonizing British and the indigenous people of Aotearoa.

Ti rakau – traditional game of skill using sticks

Tikanga – customs, ways of doing

Tinana – body

Titiwai – larvae of *Arachnocampa luminosa*, glow worm

Tohenga – resistance

Tohu – sign

Toi – art, craft

Tohunga – sage, medicine man/woman, person highly skilled in a particular art

Tuakiri – identity, person and personality; also the walls of a house.

Tuarua – second

Tukutuku – woven panels to bind walls of whare (house)

Tūpāpaku – deceased, corpse

Tupuna – ancestor. Plural tūpuna

## **W**

Wahine – woman, plural wāhine

Waka - canoe

Waharoa - gateway

Wahine – woman, Plural wāhine

Wai – water

Waiata – song, tune

Wairua – spirit

## **Wh**

Whaea – mother, woman of mother's generation

Whakairo - carving

Whakaaro – thinking, thought, epistemology

Whakaāhua – image, picture, likeness

Whakamāori – translate into Māori

Whakapapa – genealogy, literally making or becoming ground. The meaning of whakapapa is extended in this thesis to include whakapapa of all things, Māori and non-Māori, and relationships between things

Whakapau – bring to an end

Whakatauākī – proverb, saying

Whakawiri – shake up, make tremble

Whānau – family

Whare – house, whare hui – meeting house also whare tupuna – ancestral house.

Whare tangata - womb

Whāriki – woven mat

**APPENDIX**

**A TALLITH OF ONE'S OWN**

**Dr. Yael Klangwisan**

**Received 16th September, 2013**

... the tallith

folds

covers

veils

threads

known

and unknown

concealed in his palm

the palm of the great eye

flames, lamps

the shak'ed consumed by fire

feeble speech.

The life of a tallith; which is not mine, the tallith of death. I am condemned to weave it only, to touch my hands upon the threads, but once the weaving is done, I have lost it. It becomes his. Wait, I must finish it, and then secretly unravel it.

Weaving someone else's tallith. I as a woman can never wear it – it is not mine to wear. And yet in twilights, in secret grottoes, I place it upon, I hide in its warm folds.

Tallith, Chuppah. I stood under the Chuppah on my wedding day. The large tallith above me. The tallith around his shoulders. The small tallith never worn by my son but that is my son. I stand under it. It doesn't touch me.

The wedding day. The day of the tallith. A tallith made by the obscured women. Hidden weavers. I didn't see them. It wasn't my mother who made it. Yet she made it. Language, the shroud comes from her hand. The imprint of my face upon it as I hide there, lest I be found there. Each day then is Yom Kippur. I press into the holy of holies on that day, and my skin prickles because at any moment I may see God and die, at any moment I may eat the dust of the temple floor, drink it at the hands of the priests for my blasphemy, for my adultery (my dalliance with the tallith). Perhaps that is why I bought the book because they will never know that it was through the book I entered the most sacred place.

—Savoir ... she takes me. I see her in the double mirror. Perhaps she speaks true. I saw inside. They said there was nothing there. They were wrong. The heart of the universe and its eyes were inside, just beyond the veil.

I remember he wore it. Our wedding. Our second wedding also. The wedding of the night; then the wedding of the day. The wedding of the rams' horns; the wedding of the buffalos' bells. The wedding of the mother then the wedding of the son.

I see him now in my mind's eye. He had on the tallith, round his waist (it is never worn like this but he had not come from my tradition). I remember him striding down the country lane, walking towards my brother (this is my brother who is the tall one; the one who was bar mitzvah'ed at the wall of tears).

—Suddenly shame visits me. Shame covers me like an anti-tallith. I yearned for my own tallith to cover me with its corner: purest wool, woven, pure, without blemish. I only had my hair as a covering. It could not cover me whole.

What are its threads? What are the threads of my tallith? The tallith that is not mine, but I touch it and kiss it surreptitiously all the same as if it was my secret child, my

daughter. Because the tallith is feminine. It folds and closes. Touching itself and the one she loves.

I am not alone. I am covered by the tallith that is mine that he wears. It covers me, the corner, like Ruth on the threshing floor. And it is at these quiet moments in the night watches that I meet him there, in the silence, in the presence of the immortal trees. He becomes my tallith. A tallith woven in flesh and blood. I lie down and I am covered by his folds.

—Am I your tallith? Because you draw me over you in the night watches. I become your warmth, your cloak, the hand that is held over you, the hand that is held in your own. Am I your tallith?

He wore the tallith. One given to me like a taonga. This tallith came from Jerusalem with Jerusalem's dust still upon it. From the first moment I saw it, I knew it to be a wedding tallith due to its beautiful white and blue, blue of sky and sea, and the dust from Jerusalem's stones still upon it, as if it was torn from the wall of tears itself. This wedding tallith, a chuppah that would cover me.

But not for me—yet for me. I touched it, kissed it. Lay under it furtively, always looking over my shoulder, for the vengeful gods. I lay under it like a thief. Its goodness came to me. It covered me with the warm weight of a thousand generations: white, white and blue, with the dust of Jerusalem's golden stones still upon it.

C. wore it on our wedding day. Doubly veiled with tallith and matching kipa. I came in light, in gold, to the sound of horns. It was night, but around me was a radiant glow from the menorot: a swarm of candle flame. It was the full moon, but the secrets of the shadows beckoned me. It was winter's bone, but the gaze from his eyes was a raging fire that warmed me; inviting me to circle him seven times under the hand of the chuppah. The chuppah; triple veiling. The universe at the centre.

—Your people will be my people; your God, my God.

Wearing my tallith, and with my mezuzah affixed to the walls of his house. My kipa, my gift to him that returned to me for my son. Such a little kipa, white and the threads parting.

The white tallith. Inside are shadows, quiet, warmth, the infinite.

... The Tallith-katan

Many years later I returned to the wall of tears, to Jerusalem. I sighed with my forehead against the cold, impassive stone. For my son I bought a tallith-katan that he would never wear. And for myself I bought an Artscroll Song of Songs with the words of the Rabbis in small print. Why did I buy my son a small tallith that he would never wear; that I would never wear. I touched its fringes. He never wore it but it is the tallith-katan of my son.