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Swirling currents emerge at the Waipapu river mouth: Lens-based witnessing, documenting and storytelling of slow catastrophes

ABSTRACT

This article considers how Indigenous stories and chants can tell us about our ecologies in the time of environmental emergencies. For Ngāti Porou of the lower reaches of the Waipapu river catchment in Te Ika-a-Māui, the North Island of Aotearoa (New Zealand), the slow catastrophes of twentieth-century colonial deforestation impacts, introduced pest-induced inland forest collapse and predicted twenty-first-century climate change sea level rise have converged as our most pressing environmental problems. Waipapu is home to Ngāti Porou Tūturu, coastal fishing people who value their relationships with fish species, notably kahawai. The mōteatea chant form acts as a guide to my photographic and moving image practice to visualize and voice the slow catastrophe of the river. In this article, I discuss how the Ngāti Porou mōteatea He Tāngi mo Pāhoe, which reveals nineteenth-century ecological knowledge, particularly of fish species, is reimagined as a moving image visual mōteatea. Through reframing the threats

KEYWORDS

Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa
Māori
Ngāti Porou
Waipapu
lens-based media
slow catastrophe
documenting
storytelling

as the current faces of our ancestors, this article proposes a shift in thinking from vulnerability into resilience.

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Ko Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa te moana,	Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa/Pacific is the ocean,
Ko Hikurangi te maunga,	Hikurangi is the mountain,
Ko Waiapu te awa,	Waiapu is the river,
Ko Raukūmara te ngāhere,	Raukūmara is the forest,
Ko Ngāti Porou te iwi	Ngati Porou is the tribe
Ko Pōhautea te maunga	Pōhautea is the mountain,
Ko Takā te awa	Takā is the stream
Ko Te Whānau a Hineauta, Te Whānau a Pōkai nga hapu	Te Whānau a Hineauta and Te Whānau a Pokai are the subtribes,
Ko Tīkapa-a-Hinekōpeka te marae	Tīkapa-a-Hinekōpeka is the marae

For the blue-water voyaging people of Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, known to the rest of the world as the Pacific Ocean, the world is fluidly procreative, always changing. Volcanoes birth in the ocean, creating new islands that are ever-changing. Kiwa, for whom the ocean was named, procreates with Parawhenuamea, the deity of alluvial fresh waters and floods, deluges and tidal waves. Creating land in a cycle of sedimentation, Parawhenuamea carries granules in her waters from the mountains to the sea. Her Hawaiian counterpart Pele-honua-mea is renowned for creating land with lava. The cosmos is understood through the lens of navigators for whom lands that emerge on ocean horizons are located through close observations of the natural world, following stars, clouds and sea birds. Te Riu-a-Māui/Zealandia, the continent of which Te Ika-a-Māui, the fish of Māui or the North Island of New Zealand, is a part, is still largely submerged underwater; and in deep time, moves around in the ocean (Te Pū Ao [GNS Science] 2019). We live on the island fish that Māui drew up out of the ocean, and it continues to swim, occasionally thrashing about when earthquakes strike. Periodically, the land rises up out of the ocean in some places, and subsides in others.

This is the world of my Māori ancestors who passed down narratives that connect us to our Oceanic history. Locative statements called pepeha situate a person in relationship to their tribal mountains, rivers and forests, to their subtribes and families. In this part of our oceanic fluid continent, Hikurangi mountain is the visible anchor stone for the many thousands of people who descend from the great adventuring navigator and tōhunga Māui. The Waiapu River is a genealogical ancestral mother, home to other spiritual beings such as taniwha ('guardian beings of water places'). The whenua ('land'), wai ('water') and rangi ('sky') including the celestial realm are in our stories; the stories are written in our land and water. A descendant of these ancestors, I am a

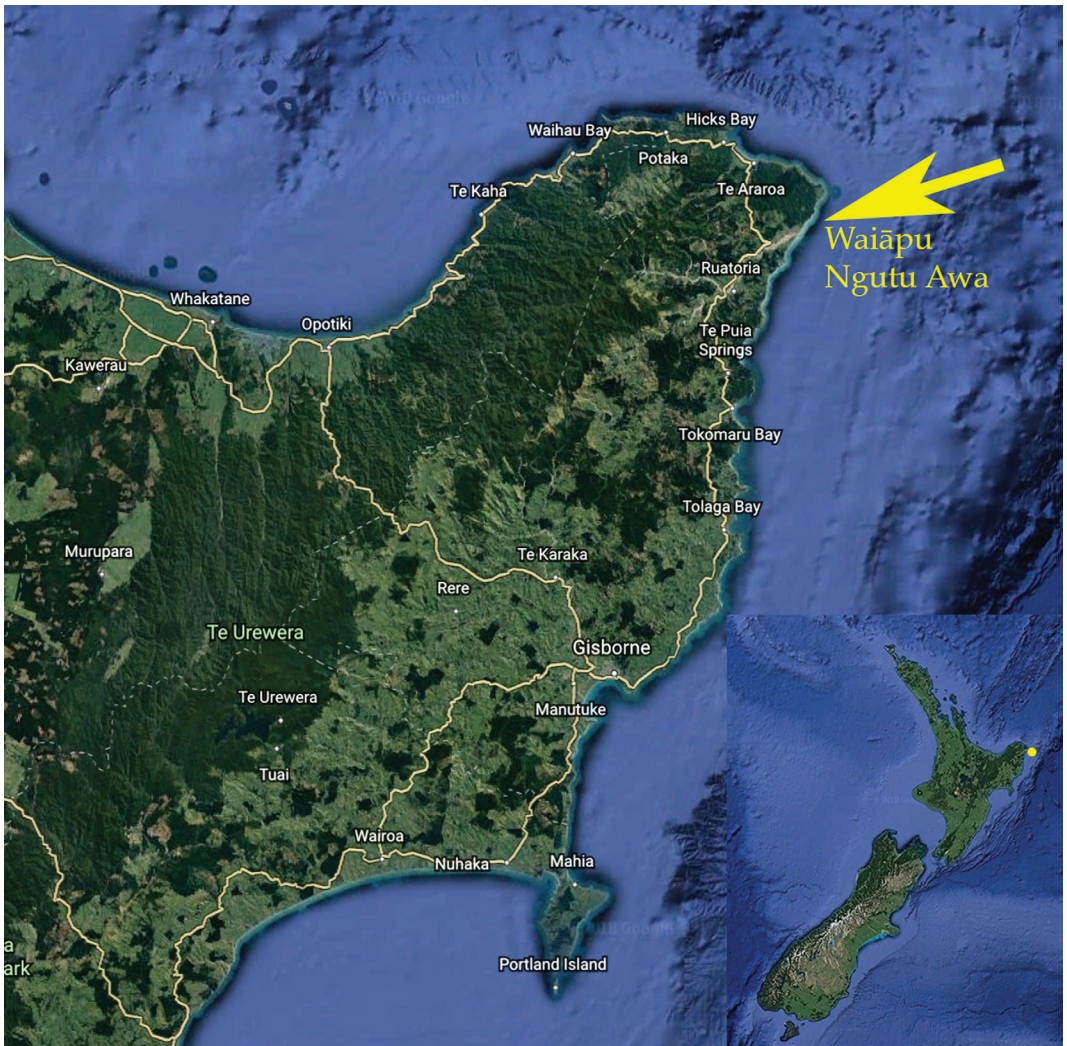


Figure 1: Oblique view looking Te Tairāwhiti (East Cape), Te Ika-a-Māui (North Island), Aotearoa (New Zealand), 2021. © Google Earth screenshot.

member of the marae-based communities of Te Whānau a Pōkai and Ngati Puai – subtribes of the lower reaches of the Waiapu River.

Our small sentinel mountain Pōhautea is at the mouth of the Waiapu River. Just below Tokatea, a rock on Pōhautea's headland is a cave, Te Ana-a-Mataura, which was once used for fishing. Later it became a burial cave, holding the bones of important ancestors Hinepare and Mataura, and possibly the ancient one Taho. Today, the cave is buried under sedimentary rocks, a casualty of deforested hills. In former times, Te Ana-a-Mataura could spit out tongues of flames from natural gas vents: not now though. The gas vents are sleeping. The water level has risen, a consequence of riverbed rise, caused by deforestation. Since 1890, colonial mass deforestation for pastoralism has led to irreversible changes to the Waiapu Valley and river.



Figure 2: Natalie Robertson, *Pōhautea at the mouth of the Waiapu river*, 2016.

In a 2014 report on *Climate Change and Community Resilience in the Waiapu Catchment*, the warm, temperate maritime climate is described as:

highly influenced by the El Nino/Southern Oscillation (ENSO), which is a naturally occurring phenomenon brought about by fluctuating ocean temperatures and climatic changes in the Pacific Ocean. La Nina events are characterised by an increase in major cyclonic rainfall events and El Nino in an increase in severe droughts for the Waiapu Catchment.

It is expected that under climate change the Waiapu Catchment will be warmer, dryer and, windier with a small increase in sea level at the mouth of the river.

(Warmenhoven et al. 2014: 18)

The river mouth is always dynamic, but human activities, particularly those of settler-colonial pastoralism, have inflicted immeasurable change through increased aggradation.

The Waiapu river is choking with sediment, destroying habitats for other species that do not have another home to go to. It is exceptional in that it has the highest sediment load of any river in New Zealand and is one of the worst in the world. What happens inland affects the river where it meets the sea. Grain by grain, collapsing hillsides are being transported as sediment downstream to the ocean.

In the face of both erosion and climactic change, community resilience is paramount for Indigenous futures. In response to iwi aspirations for a revitalized river, afforestation is key to securing our cultural heritage and our futures.



Figure 3: Natalie Robertson, *Ngutu Awa – Waiapu river mouth*, from Waiapu River Confluence to Sea 22 Kilometres, 2017. Video still. Drone cinematography: Pat Makiri. © Natalie Robertson.

In 2012, Ngāti Porou developed a vision and strategy called *Mana Motuhake Ngāti Porou mo ngā uri whakatipu* which translates as Ngāti Porou self-determination for the future (Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou Board 2012: 3). It includes caring for ‘the natural resources that affirm, nurture and sustain the physical, environmental, economic, intellectual, spiritual and cultural well-being of Ngāti Porou’ (Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou Board 2012: 3). One of the goals is the ‘management, protection, restoration, development, utilisation and enhancement of land, water (rivers, streams, artesian, ocean) flora and fauna’ (Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou Board 2012: 3). Since then, long-term economic, physical and complex work of restoration has begun, in particular, the Whakaoratia Te Mana o te Waiapu restoration project, which commenced in July 2019 with Crown support. The October 2020 *Mana Waiapu Report* summarizes the project:

Mana Waiapu is an overarching strategy to achieve both economic and environmental uplift for the whānau who are the intergenerational kaitiaki of the Waiapu. It is a program of work developed by ngā uri o te Waiapu to ensure whānau determine their own destiny as well as that of the lands which they occupy. We are determined to shift descriptions of those who live in the Waiapu from a conversation about deficits to one of abundance.

(Collier 2020: 2)

A major threat to Ngāti Porou restoration aspirations is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predictions that sea levels will rise significantly in the next 100 years (Church 2013). The riverbed rises, river waters rise, sediment settles in the ocean and the ocean rises. So too, must we rise to these challenges. The slow emergence of land from the ocean, a dynamic geomorphic

[GNS What is a slow slip event? 19 February 2019].

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgkz2BvdOgw&t=325>

forming that our ancestors described in *pūrākau*, or story, and *mōteatea*, or chant, now converges with the slow, incremental rise of sea waters.

Yet, here lies a paradox: tectonic activity continues to slowly but steadily push up the coastline. Adjacent to the East Coast is the active Hikurangi trough subduction zone, where vertical land motion rates are uplifting the coastline approximately 3mm per annum from ‘accumulated seismic events including postseismic deformation and slow slip events’ (Denys et al. 2020). Over the past century, land is accreting. Sediment washed downstream settles on the beach. Trees washed down in storms, catch the sediment and hold it, building up the coastline. Sea level rise is mitigated by the catastrophic cargo of sediment coupled with vertical uplift. A predicted rise of 18–59 centimetres will still impact the significant relationship Ngāti Porou have with the river estuary (Warmenhoven et al. 2014: 19). Furthermore, slow slip events occur occasionally, through a sudden unlocking of tectonic plates. This gives rise to states of emergency, when Parawhenuamea threatens to swamp the land with tidal waves.

For a fishing people, the changing environment affects relationships with the river and fish species. In the Ngāti Porou Treaty of Waitangi settlement documents, the particular significance of kahawai fishing is also stated:

The Waiapu River has been a source of sustenance for Ngati Porou hapu, providing water, and various species of fish, including kahawai. The kahawai fishing techniques practised at the mouth of the Waiapu River are sacred activities distinct to the Waiapu.

(New Zealand Government Te Kāwanatanga Aotearoa 2010: 1)



Figure 4: Natalie Robertson, Uprooted tree at the mouth of the Waiapu river, from Waiapu River Confluence to Sea 22 Kilometres, 2017. Video still. Drone cinematography: Pat Makiri. © Natalie Robertson.



Figure 5: Natalie Robertson, *Tera te haeata e takiri ana mai! (Behold the first light of dawn!), Waiapu Ngutu Awa triptych*, 7 August 2020. C-Type photographic prints. 1000 × 790 mm each.

Here, Crown law recognizes that the relationship between Ngāti Porou and kahawai is part of a way of life to be protected. In 2015, one of the stalwarts of Ngāti Porou tribal fishing practices, Papa John Manuel, stated:

Along with Hikurangi and Whangaokena, the Waiapu River is one of the symbols of Ngāti Porou. Edging onto Rangitukia beach, the ngutu awa (river mouth) has been a kāpata kai (food cupboard) for the people of Rangitukia and Tīkapa since time immemorial, a ‘live fish market’ providing fresh eel, kanae (mullet), tuarenga (whitebait) and of course Ngāti Porou salmon – kahawai. Kahawai, which typically runs from November to March, is the most common catch, and the season still attracts many, locals and visitors alike.

(2015: 33)

As Ngāti Porou takes on the monumental task of turning back the tide of erosion, as a lens-based artist I am witness, documenter and storyteller.

In the chains of extractive industrial practices, Indigenous knowledgeable relationships with land, water and air, and with other species, are trampled on in immeasurable ways. These actions set off untold slow catastrophes, a term I owe to Rob Nixon’s concept of slow violence (Nixon 2011). Unlike spectacular crises, slow catastrophes unfold incrementally making them difficult to visualize or represent. When the effects of slow catastrophes become visible, changes may have occurred over generations. Over a lifetime, change is apparent, but in the daily schema, the declining state of waterways becomes normalized. The hinterland Raukūmara Ranges is nearing whole-systems collapse, now a silent forest, bird life decimated by invasive species and habitat loss.

SLOW CATASTROPHE IN A TIME OF EMERGENCY

Together, these are the most pressing environmental problems facing Ngāti Porou right now as my relation, conservation ranger Graeme Atkins reminds us, via a comment to a post that I put up on a social media platform about

[Forest nearing point of COLLAPSE, 22 February 2019, Gisborne Herald]

<http://www.gisborneherald.co.nz/local-news/20190222/forest-nearing-point-of-collapse/>

my recent exhibition *He Tātara e Maru Ana – The Sacred Rain Cape of Waiapu* (November 2020 to January 2021) at Te Tairāwhiti Museum.

This is our emergency.

Weather conditions are changing, bringing new challenges. In a crushing blow, a new scourge has added to iwi concerns. Due to climate change and cyclonic winds, the myrtle rust spores arrived on our shores just a few years ago, in 2017. Already, prolific evergreen myrtle shrub species like ramarama (*Lophomyrtus bullata*, family Myrtaceae) are facing extinction.

So, in the face of forest collapse, a smothered river system and seabed, and now deadly diseases, what can our own Indigenous stories and chants tell us about our ecologies? As an artist, I can give voice to the issues and make images that give form to the slow catastrophes. As rivers gain legal personhood in Aotearoa, it is time to relearn how to listen to the voices of rivers, a skill once widely practiced in my ancestors, and those of river people. It was a way of being and knowing that was transferred inter-generationally. Mōteatea are customary chants, laments and songs that convey tribal lore, geographies and significant events. They contain cosmogonies, philosophies, geographic boundaries, ecological information and lessons, all told in a poetic form for oral transmission. Earth systems scientist Dan Hikuroa (Ngāti Maniapoto/Tainui) validates the application of both pūrākau and maramataka as rigorous systems of codified environmental knowledge. He argues that these can be ‘both accurate and precise, as they incorporate critically verified knowledge, continually tested and updated through time’ (2017: 5).

STRANGLER BY THE SWIRLING CURRENT, EMERGED AT THE RIVER MOUTH

Imagine the grief of the family of headstrong young Te Whanau-a-Hinetapora chief Pāhoe, once his body has been found bruised and broken, after he had entered the Waiapu river in flood conditions on a flimsy raft, despite being warned that it was too dangerous to go. These days, the Waiapu river mouth and the beaches to the north and south are covered in driftwood. This lament indicates the state of the beach at the Waiapu river mouth, back in the nineteenth century, offering a clue into the now widespread deforestation inland. The bleached and entangled driftwood lies like bones on the beach. Composed by Hone Rongomaitu in the nineteenth century, ‘He Tangi Mo Pāhoe’ (‘A Lament for Pāhoe’) was first sung at Ōrangitaurira, in the Tapuaeroa river valley that forms into the Waiapu river. The chant evokes danger signs of the river in flood. It was no doubt composed not just to lament this particular young chief, but to remind others not to enter rivers after floods.

Kei whea koe, e hika, ka ngaro nei i te ahiahi?	Where art thou dearest one, nowhere to be seen this eventide?
Tena ka riro i runga i te pokai kawariki.	Alas, (thou art) carried away upon a flimsy kawariki raft.
Te ai he mahara, ka noho mai i uta;	Heedless of all danger thou didst not remain ashore,
Ka tikina, e, takahia te au o te wai,	Thou wert overtaken by the rush- ing waters,
Ka pa kai raro, kai te pohatu; bed;	Dragged downwards to the rocky
Romia e te ia, ka puta kai te ngutuawa.	Strangled by the swirling current, emerged at the river mouth.



Natalie Robertson

18 January · 🧑



Two months ago, my solo exhibition 'Tātara e maru ana—The sacred rain cape of Waiapu' opened at Te Tairāwhiti Museum, blessed by Papa Morehu Boycie Te Maru. After the morning blessing, we viewed our Pokai kōruru, from Tikapa-a-Hinekopeka Marae, which was too weathered to go back on top of our whare tipuna after restoration. It was decided that the Pokai kōruru could be installed above my triptych centrepiece of the exhibition. I like to think our kōruru is looking across our whenua, above Waiapu and Pōhautea.

The kaupapa of the exhibition is to return the last four years of my photographic research to the nearest museum venue for Ngāti Porou. I have responded to the visionaries of dreamed of a revitalised river system and those who followed this through into law and policy. I hope I have honoured your visions.

There is also a single video, Te Rerenga Pouri o Parawhenuamea which debuts [Graeme Atkins](#) and his creative visions in Te Tairāwhiti, implemented with [Alex Monteith](#) and I.

The exhibition closes on January 31st.



Figure 6: Natalie Robertson, 18 January 2021. Facebook post. Screenshot 13 June 2021.

[Myrtle rust infection sparks concern for native plants, 10 December 2020, Radio New Zealand]

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/rural/2020/12/myrtle-rust-infection-sparks-concerns-for-native-plants.html>



Graeme Atkins

Thanks for the opportunity to collaborate on this kaupapa **Natalie Robertson** .

For those of us who live in the lower Waiapu valley passed Kaiinanga and the realities of living with the legacy of past poor land management it is very real. Our tribal whenua our economic base our cultural heritage is vanishing into the ocean every time we get heavy rain.

This shows no sign of abating. In fact my work in the headwaters of all the Waiapu tributaries show that erosion rates and sediment loads are accelerating. Not just from the pastoral lands and commercial forests but increasingly from the many rivers which flow from the Raukumara ranges.

Troubling times ahead if we don't get this issue sorted.

Forums such as the exhibition are awesome ways to deliver subtle but powerful messaging to our community .

Thanks for the opportunity to open my eyes and uncover an untapped side of me that is keen to use the arts to tap into a whole new audience.

Planning to do something similar with myrtle rust and the loss of ramarama and other native myrtles from our ngāhere . Attention keen artists ..

Love · Reply · 24 w



Natalie Robertson

My heart breaks with the truth of your words, cuddie. You are such a visionary in my books but I know that it's hard to see any positive visions when the reality of species extinction is happening in front of your eyes. I will work with you on myrtle rust and encourage the collective realm of artists to jump right in to help you and our ngāhere, awa and moana. This is mahi tahi time, it's going to take all of us bringing our collective best skills to the kaupapa.

Like · Reply · 24 w · Edited



Figure 7: Graeme Atkins and Natalie Robertson, 20 January 2021. Facebook comments. Screenshot 13 June 2021.

Ngāti Porou scholar Rachael Ka'ai-Mahuta notes that '[a]ncient chants and songs that had survived generations were wiped out within a relatively short period of time as a direct result of cultural assimilation and language decline' (2012: 5). I take the mōteatea chant form as a guide to my photographic

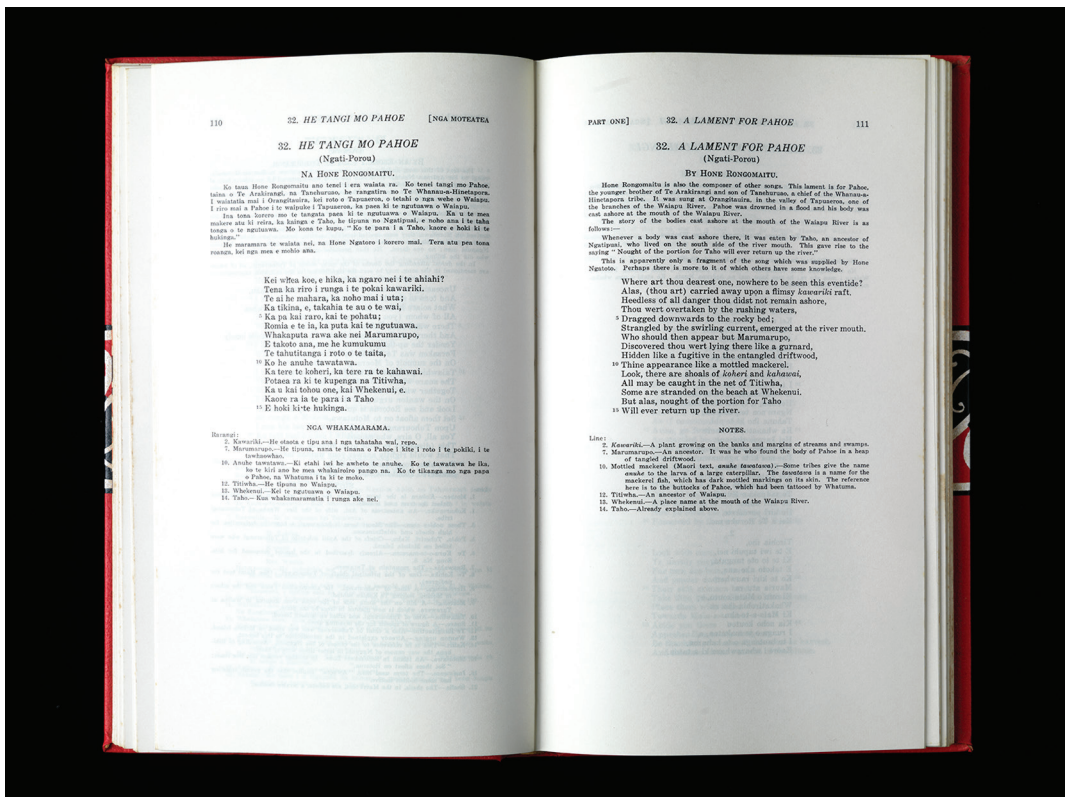


Figure 8: Natalie Robertson, *Waiata 32. He Tangi Mo Pahoe. Nga Moteatea – Nga Moteatea: He Maramara Rere No Nga Waka Maha. He Mea Kohikohi – Na Apirana Ngata. Part I (Song 32. A Lament for Pahoe. The Songs: Scattered Pieces of Many Canoes. Collected by Apirana Ngata. Part 1), 2016. Published for the Polynesian Society by A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1959, this version 1974. Mounted inkjet printed to scale. 380 × 320 mm. Original artwork adapted.*

and moving image practice that currently serves to visualize and voice the slow catastrophe of the river. As well as responding to the resultant eco-crises, this helps in Māori language revitalization alongside tribal river reinvigoration projects. This lament provides insights to Ngāti Porou Indigenous Māori thinking on the Waiapu River, on locally important fish species and on humans-turned-nonhumans who dwell in the river. This mōteatea discusses floods, driftwood, fish species, one human and the more-than-human tipua, Taho. Having been choked by the sediment-filled currents, Pāhoe emerges at the river mouth.

Whakaputa rawa ake nei
Marumarupo,
E takoto ana, me he
kumukumu
Te tahutitanga i roto o te taita,

Ko he anuhe tawatawa.

Who should then appear but
Marumarupo,
Discovered thou wert lying
there like a gurnard,
Hidden like a fugitive in the
entangled driftwood,
Thine appearance like a mottled
mackerel.

When his grandfather Marumarupō finds him, Pāhoe is likened to a stranded fish, hidden amongst the driftwood. For there to be driftwood at the river mouth is a sign of the loss of trees inland, washed away during storms in the nineteenth century. In narrating his drowning, fish species that are part of the māhinga kai – the food source, and economy of the river are noted.

Ka tere te koheri, ka tere ra te kahawai.	Look, there are shoals of koheri and kahawai,
Potaea ra ki te kupenga na Titiwha,	All may be caught in the net of Titiwha,
Ka u kai tohou one, kai Whekenui, e.	Some are stranded on the beach at Whekenui.
Kaore ra ia te para i a Taho	But alas, nought of the portion for Taho
E hoki ki te huinga.	Will ever return up the river.

Apirana Ngata wrote a note, stating that

[w]henever a body was cast ashore there, it was eaten by Taho, an ancestor of Ngatipuai, who lived on the south side of the river mouth. This gave rise to the saying 'Nought of the portion for Taho will ever return up the river'.

([1959] 1974: 111)

Taho dwelt on the south side of the Waiapu River, where my tribe lives today. In Māori thought, the once-human can transform after death into an entity that has agency and can act with intention. The malign influence refers to the role taniwha have in warning humans of unstable grounds or dangerous waters. This fragment then issues a warning that no person makes it back upstream without crossing the path of Taho, now in the form of a taniwha or tipua. Temporality is non-linear and therefore Taho as chief, ancestor and taniwha is spoken of as living now, with his own unseen life-force. The warning encapsulates the matter-of-fact manner in which Māori create no binary differentiation between past and present, nor between human and non-human persons. Taniwha as guardians are also often considered kaitiaki, the unseen forces that protect a place or people of a place. Their transmutable natures, shape-shifting into tohu, visible signs, are legendary. However, their role in tribal lore is not just as cautionary threats, but as powerful forces to be respected, who warn us of dangers in the current, and current dangers.

Today, the current danger is that climate change, storms and cyclonic weather events are increasing in intensity. As floods widen, often a kilometre bank to bank in the lower reaches of the Waiapu, erosion takes so much of land and with it, our physical, social and cultural capital. Now, the lament transforms into a lament for our river, our way of life and our ancestral relations who dwell in the river, including fish species.

SEARCHING FOR PĀHOE

The mōteatea as a vehicle for pūrakau – stories – is in and of itself a taonga – a treasured thing. In this instance, *He Tangi Mō Pāhoe* is a taniwha that shifts, transforms and warns of dangers. This understanding came to me in a dawn



Figure 9: Natalie Robertson, Waiapu River Confluence to Sea 22 Kilometres, 2017. Video. Duration 25:40 minutes. Aotearoa, New Zealand. Drone cinematography: Pat Makiri. © Natalie Robertson. Soundtrack: 'Mōteatea – He Tangi Mo Pahoe' ('A Lament for Pahoe'). Composed by Hone Rongomaitu. Performed by Rhonda Tibble, 2016.

dream that woke me sufficiently that I knew I needed to recall it in the light of day. The dream came on the dawn of the spring equinox 22 September 2019. As a taniwha, the mōteatea can shape-shift and change, revealing different information depending on delivery and audience. Although Pāhoe was found on the beach, I went looking for him in the chant, the area of beach he was located in, and the fish species. To date, I have not been able to locate a recording of this particular mōteatea. In 2016, this absence led me to collaborate with Ngāti Porou performer Rhonda Reedy Tibble who interpreted the song, bringing forth the ancestral sounds of the mōteatea. The raw emotions of sorrow and anger are communicated not through the words but through their delivery, expressing the lacerating grief of Māori women when lamenting the death of a dearly beloved.

Using drone cinematography, I created a new form of visual mōteatea, following Pāhoe's journey down the river. The camera drone perspective can be likened to that of Pāhoe's wairua, his spirit, or of an aerial search party. In this state, the camera travels down the river observing the conditions of the river that Pāhoe had entered up stream, noting slips, erosion and uprooted trees. Passing over flood plains, the camera flies above the sole remaining bridge pillar, a visual measure of the rising riverbed. The eroding bank of an ancient pā site passes on the right of the frame, then the vista opens up to the river mouth. The contours of the hillside of Pōhautea stand sharply against the ocean ahead. Taken in April 2017, a week after Cyclone Cook had passed through, driftwood logs are seen strewn on the beach. At the river mouth, coastal accretion and rising sea levels – twin threats to Ngāti Porou Tūturu ways of life and ways of knowing – meet, as Parawhenuamea and Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

For many years, we have witnessed brown plumes of sediment pour out of the Waiapu river mouth, altering the ecology of the coastal environment. Understanding these sediment flows as Parawhenuamea, a living ancestor, changed my thinking about the weight of the burden upon her, on the river and Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, the ocean. When we reframe the threats as the current faces of our ancient ancestors, how might we shift from vulnerability into resilience?

Kanaka Maoli scholar Noelani Goodyear-Ka’ōpua suggests that ‘looking to the ocean – or looking at lands from vantage points on the ocean – opens up visions for and practices of decolonial future-making’ (2018: 82). Without familiar landmarks, and the knowledge passed down through generations, we find ourselves ‘at sea’ – without our customary points of reference. Goodyear-Ka’ōpua proposes that looking from the perspective of the ocean towards land opens up visions and practices of making our own futures. The imperative, then, is to reimagine the hilltops and plains as our seafaring ancestors encountered and knew them – covered in trees. Imagining a future time when trees cloak the hilltops, when the plumes of sediment no longer come out of the river mouth



Figures 10–15: Natalie Robertson, Waiapu River Confluence to Sea 22 Kilometres, 2017. Video. Duration 25:40 minutes. Aotearoa, New Zealand. Drone cinematography: Pat Makiri. © Natalie Robertson.



Figures 16 and 17: Atkins, Monteith and Robertson, *Te ngutu awa o Waiapu sediment plume*, 2018. Video still. Drone cinematography: Sam Britten. © Atkins, Monteith and Robertson.

in truckloads, we can look back to understand the significance and interconnectedness of the ocean, land and trees and look forward to slowing the catastrophic avalanche of erosion in a time of emergence/emergency. Moving in deep time, this ancestral island fish keeps swimming in the ocean.

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