



*Master of Philosophy, 2016*

RMI Pouwhare MPhil.

2016



*He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*

The bird is small - the story is epic.

Robert Marunui Iki Pouwhare  
MPhil. 2016

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Robert Marunui Iki Pouwhare,  
Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Development, 2016.  
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## Karakia

*Hoki mai  
 Ki tō urunga  
 Ki tō moenga  
 Ki te pae pae tapu a Tāne  
 Hoki mai!  
 Te manu ora  
 Ki te maunga  
 Kōia e!<sup>1</sup>*

Return  
 Come back  
 To your resting place  
 To your sleeping place  
 To the sacred threshold of the god Tāne  
 Welcome back!  
 The thriving birds in your multitudes  
 To the mountain  
 Let it be so!

1. This ancient karakia left to us by our grandfather Te Iki-o-te-rangi Pouwhare, is an invocation calling the kereru (native wood pigeons) to return in their multitudes to populate the forests in order to sustain the people. It is a metaphor I employ for the return of the Māori language.



## Mihi

*Taku hei piripiri*  
*Taku hei mokimoki*  
*Tōku reo ahurei*  
*Tōku reo ohooho*  
*Tēnei te mihi ki a koutou*  
*Ngā tohunga*  
*Te aumangea*  
*Ngā kai pupuri i te mauri o te reo.<sup>2</sup>*

My pendant of scented fern  
 My pendant of fragrant fern  
 My unique language  
 Is re-awakening  
 Greetings to you  
 The experts  
 The proponents  
 The protectors of the life force of  
 the language.

2. This mihi is an acknowledgment to those who strive valiantly to maintain the Māori language.



## Abstract

This thesis\* explores storytelling as cultural expression, and creatively considers the concept of bowdlerisation, and its role in sanitising Māori stories, as an aspect of colonisation. It is formatted as a creative output and a written exegesis.

The creative component comprises a film, based on an ancient story of Māui and his quest for immortality that was foiled by the Tirairaka (fantail). The thesis is contextualised by an early iteration of the work that was produced for a children's production by the researcher in 2006. This was aired on Māori Television as part of its Māori language revitalisation strategy. The filmic work, *He iti te manu he nui te korero*, involves a renegotiation of the original animation and its underlying narrative, so that a deeper understanding of ancient knowledge and its cultural paradigm, may be accessible. Methodologically, this renegotiated text was refined through a process of reflection on practice and feedback.

In the retelling of this story, the narrative is sourced from the oral traditions of the researcher; specifically the way his kaumātua once transmitted stories and knowledge. Thus, *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* is informed by their epistemological and ontological frameworks that have arguably not been bowdlerised by the colonial experience.

The practice-led thesis has three objectives.

First, it utilises the potentials of digital technology to design and assemble a Māori-language teaching resource.

Second, it considers and creatively responds to the concept of cultural narrative bowdlerisation.

Finally, *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* operates as the first phase of a more expansive, multitiered project that will form the creative core of the candidate's practice-led PhD.

\* The thesis is divided into two parts. The first is a body of practice called *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*. The second is an exegesis that contextualises the practice.



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

*Robert Pouwhare*

*29th February 2016*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Pouwhare', written in a cursive style.



*Figure 1.* Te Iki-o-te-rangi Pouwhare

## Acknowledgements

### *Dedication*

This work is dedicated to Te Iki-o-te-rangi Pouwhare (1880-1963), the fount of Ngāti Haka history, political and cultural knowledge. He provided access to the power of the word, the power of knowledge and the uniqueness of the ancient Māori worldview.

I am indebted to Dr Ella Henry, my primary supervisor, who is a master wordsmith and an outstanding researcher. Her assistance and guidance has been invaluable. I also would like to express my deep appreciation to Professor Welby Ings who has been inspirational, kind and generous in guiding me through my creative and exegetical journey. I would also like to acknowledge the generosity of Associate Professor Hinematau McNeill for believing in and supporting a remedial student barely technologically literate. She has helped me navigate and decipher the mysteries of academia. I also wish to express sincere gratitude to Professor Pare Keiha from Te Ara Poutama who propelled me into this late foray into academia.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge those who have hitherto championed the indigenous voice, creating a place in the academy for diverse human stories.



## Intellectual Property Declaration

I retain copyright of all story design and images produced and presented as part of this thesis apart from the following material that is the intellectual property of others:

Images in the creative work are used under the AUT provisions of the Screenrights licence.<sup>3</sup>

Cover Image of Fantail. With permission from Ngā Manu Images. Wellington, New Zealand. <http://www.ngamanuimages.org.nz/contact.php>

*Figure 1.* Photograph Te-Iki-o-te-rangi. Private collection of the author.

*Figure 2.* Beech trees in the mist Te Urewera. Used with permission from Craig Potton.

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*Figure 4.* Photograph of the Te Reo Māori Society (1978). Private collection of Joseph Te Rito.

*Figure 10.* Photograph of Hine-nui-te-pō (Waikotikoti marae, Te Whāiti). Private collection of Hinematau McNeill.

*Figure 11.* Hine-nui-te-pō depicted on the pare above the doorway. Private collection of Rāpata Wiri.

*Figure 12.* Interior of Hine-nui-te-pō whareniui at Te Whāiti, 1930. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23070749>

*Figure 17.* Māori wood carving of the goddess Hine-nui-te-pō and Māui. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22708288> .

*Figure 18.* Poupou from the interior of the roro of the whareniui, Tama-te-kapua. Private collection of Rāpata Wiri.



# *1.*

Introduction and Overview

***Figure 2.* Beech trees in the mist, Te Urewera rainforest, photograph by Craig Potton.**

Te Urewera rainforest is the ancient homelands of my people Tūhoe, the children of the mist. My hapū, Ngāti Haka, descends from Ohāua-te-rangi deep within this forest. In times of peace we settled at Kūhāwaea (the Galatea Plains) at Te Houhi. Te Urewera was alienated from us last century. We were dispossessed of our lands at Te Houhi through fraud and we were later evicted at gunpoint.



*Pou hihiri, pou rarama  
Tiaho i roto, mārama i waho  
Wānanga i roto, mārama i waho  
Tēnā te pou, te pou ka eke  
Te pou kai i a koe na  
Ko te pou o ēnei kōrero.<sup>4</sup>*

Instil in us the desire, we pray for enlightenment  
Shine a light within us, let it sparkle to the outer world  
Give us deeper understanding of ourselves and the wider world  
The highest standard and excellence we must attain  
You already have in you the ability to achieve  
To obtain this elevated knowledge.

4. Karakia, an invocation from Te Whare Pūrākau (The House of Stories).

This project is designed to capture the essence of Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) and Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge). The natural world and the environment inspire the narrative artefact. As such it takes cognisance of Te Ao Māori, and this gives credence to the use of a Kaupapa Māori model as a philosophical and ontological framework for the research and its outcomes (Henry & Pene, 2001).

Henry and Wikaire (2013) state that Kaupapa Māori is a philosophy and worldview based upon a number of Māori concepts, such as tika (truth); whanaungatanga (kinship); kotahitanga (solidarity) and wairuatanga (the spiritual dimension). They articulate Kaupapa Māori principles that can be applied, measured and tested, as outlined below:

- By, with and for Māori
- Validating Māori language and culture
- Empowering Māori people
- Delivering positive outcomes for Māori people, language, culture and society (Henry & Wikaire, 2013, p. 1)

### *Thesis concerns*

This thesis is concerned with both language revitalisation and addressing a form of narrative bowdlerisation that has occurred as part of the colonising process of Aotearoa. Bowdlerisation refers to the sanitising of stories by removing language or content especially when this act undermines the tone and emphasis of the original work. The term draws its origin from the work of an English editor who published an expurgated edition of the works of William Shakespeare as *The Family Shakspeare* [sic] (1818) and later a similarly expurgated version of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1826).

In this thesis I creatively revisit the story of Māui's quest for immortality. The creative component contains a filmic rendition of the story called *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*. This film is prefigured by an animatic I designed for television broadcast on Māori Television in 2006. This version of the story operates as a point of departure for the thesis. It is an example of what happens to deeper narratives as they become reconstituted for less culturally critical consumption.

The second work is a pitch document.<sup>5</sup> It repropose the story as a deeper narrative and suggests ways that we might link layers of deeper meaning to a rich story through a process of interaction.

*He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* is designed to do two things:

First, it narrates the story in a manner closer to those told in the wharenuī where I grew up.<sup>6</sup>

Here stories were not folk tales or “legends”, but ways of explaining values and complex relationships between the esoteric, the physical and the ethical. Second, it draws on richer and sometimes less familiar Māori vocabularies as a way of expanding te reo and its application in contemporary media texts.

5. I use the term pitch document to describe a preliminary animatic that contains sound, narrative and indicative treatments. Such a document pitches an idea for an interactive text to a producer or funding agency in anticipation of attracting development finance to pay for a higher level development of the work.

6. For instance, many recent renditions of the Maui story avoid mentioning him invading Hine-nui-te-pō’s vagina.

*He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*, the creative component of the research, reveals a narrative imbued with complexities of language vocabulary and use, story design, sound and indicative imagery.

### *The central narrative*

The thesis creatively explores potentials within the ancient narrative of Māui and his relationship with Tīrairaka and Hine-nui-te-pō. The story is taken from the Māui cycle and is familiar throughout the Pacific (Westervelt, cited in Nunn, 2003). In the story, Tīrairaka was instructed by Māui not to make any noise, whilst Māui embarked on a journey to conquer death by entering the whare tangata (vagina) of Hine-nui-te-pō. He believed that if he could enter those sacred portals and exit through her mouth he would gain immortality for all humans. However, during his endeavour the Tīrairaka erupted into raucous laughter of disbelief. The bird awakened Hine-nui-te-pō, who crushed Māui between her thighs.

This Māui story was related at the traditional Ngāti Haka Patuheuheu Tūhoe tribal wānanga (houses of learning) that were held at Waiohau marae in the early 1970s. These wānanga were designed to acquaint younger hapū members of the history of the clan and the tribe. The recounting of the stories orally, was a spectacle in itself. The listeners were absorbed into what was thought to be a simple story about a bird who appeared to be cheeky, mischievous and disobedient. It was about a bird that made peculiar sounds and squeaks—the birdsong and its dance were re-enacted to demonstrate tīrairaka's prowess at flight and quick movement. The audience was instructed to study carefully the movements of the fantail which revealed the rudimentaries of all the military movements associated with Māori weaponry and warfare. These manoeuvres could also be witnessed in the actions of the haka and the wero (the challenge of a warrior). Observations of the bird in action and its flight, confirmed tīrairaka's prowess at aerodynamics as it appeared to change direction in midflight.

The story the old people told (upon which this thesis project is based) was a simple and elegant explanation of death. However it was the use of te reo, of words that were onomatopoeic, of phrases that mimicked the bird, the sound effects, the psycho-acoustics that accompanied the story, that entranced and entertained the audience. This was not storytelling in the western tradition but something distinctly Māori. The story was multilayered and rich in esoteric knowledge and allusion. Tīrairaka flies with a wealth of history, knowledge and power on the tip of its wings and fanned tail.

### *Practice-led inquiry*

This thesis is a practice-led, artistic inquiry. Candy (2006) says that;

practice based research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice, whereas practice-led research is concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice. (para. 1-2)

Because this thesis involves generating a new form of layered narrative that involves a *process* of designing, reflecting and redesigning (of language, sound, content and imagery), the final outcome is unknown and shaped by the development of the research. Therefore the thesis may be understood as both artistic and practice-led.

As a story designer and linguist I seek to reclaim and design approaches to storytelling and content through practice. This practice generates a prototype of how we might use imagery, language, typography and sound to delve into deeper levels of meaning and understanding, and to unravel hidden knowledge that might enable us to move from the unknown to the known.

### *Structure of the exegesis*

This exegesis contextualises the creative project. It contains five chapters and a set of appendices. Chapter One provides an introduction and overview to the thesis. In Chapter Two I position myself as the researcher by placing the present inquiry in the context of my previous work as a linguist, media producer and negotiator. This chapter also positions the research in relation to recent Māori interactive storytelling in the field. Chapter Three discusses the project's research design with emphasis on its paradigm and methods.

This is followed by the most extensive chapter that provides a commentary on the creative work in relation to critical ideas that underpinned its gestation and development. In this regard Chapter Four draws into a symbiotic relationship both theory and practice. The final chapter, He Kupu Whakatepe, offers concluding remarks on the thesis.

The thesis' appendices contain material relating to, or expanding upon, issues raised in the exegesis.





## 2.

Positioning the Researcher and the Research

*Figure 3. Tama-ki-Hikurangi whareniui at Waiohau marae.*

This is my family marae. This ancestor predates the arrival of the waka Mataatua. One of his distinctions is that he returned to Hawaiki to obtain the kūmara, the sweet potato. He returned as the navigator on the Mataatua canoe guiding it into the present day Whakatane.



*Tōku reo tōku ohooho  
Tōku reo tōku māpihi maurea*

My language is my awakening.  
My language is the window to my soul.

### *Positioning the Researcher*

#### *Forerunners*

I am a descendant of Toi-kai-rākau, the eponymous ancestor of the Bay of Plenty region of New Zealand. I am also a direct descendant of Tama-ki-Hikurangi after whom our ancestral meeting house is named. When the Mataatua canoe came into our area from the Pacific, the people on it intermarried with the tangata whenua (people of the land) and it is through these intermarriages that our other ancestor Tūhoe was born. He was the grandson of Wairaka, the daughter of Toroa, the captain of the Mataatua canoe. Our grandfather Te Iki traced his whakapapa unbroken over a thousand years, to these illustrious ancestors. As a young child I, along with a female cousin, was taken by my grandparents and made to sleep with them at night. We lived in a remote village in the Urewera where there were barely roads, no electricity and just a flicker of radio. At night our grandparents would sing ancient waiata. Some of this sung poetry retold ancient histories, and for them, the contemporary battles against the white man, the evil colonisers who came to steal our land. As youngsters we had no understanding of what the chants meant. All we wanted to do was sleep.

But through the power of repetition the old people would drill this information into our brains even when we were in deep sleep. It was not until I grew up that I understood that the oriori (lullaby) was designed to inculcate tribal history, to enduringly educate us about tribal trajectories, ancient hostilities and enmities.

At 5.00 in the morning the waiata would start up again with morning prayers. These waiata were based on the teachings of Te Kooti a Rikirangi, the military strategist, prophet and religious leader. He was a political refugee who Ngāti Haka hid from the early colonial troops when they attempted to hunt him down. He was a guerrilla who galvanised the tribes to fight off colonisation, and his waiata exhorted the tribes not to sell land.

On reflection I now understand why, as I grew older I was able to sing these chants word perfectly. Now that I am an adult I thank them. I understand that this was an ancient pedagogy, a way of ensuring the transmission of knowledge through time.

The process also ensured that I spoke the language fluently and as I progressed to university I defended the reo fiercely even to the point of leading political demonstrations for the language. My grandfather was a staunch supporter of Tūhoe and never relinquished his idea of sovereignty over Tūhoe and Ngāti Haka lands. He absolutely forbade us to speak English in front of him and he stipulated that English was not to be spoken in the formal proceedings on our marae. That rule still applies today.

I studied Māori language at Victoria University and I eventually applied for a producer/directors' production course in television. The political agenda was to train and master the skills for broadcasting te reo with an ultimate aim of establishing Māori television. It took over forty years to achieve this aim but my life since the 1970s has been dedicated to both language preservation and revitalisation.



*Figure 4. Photograph of the Te Reo Māori Society (1978).*

I was the first president. I appear in the back row, second from the left. Photograph provided by Joseph Te Rito

In the 1980s I became part of the movement that laid a claim for the Māori language both in the Waitangi Tribunal and within broadcasting. This initiative culminated in the cases being heard at the Privy Council in London. Contemporaneously on behalf of Ngāti Haka Patuheuheu and Tūhoe I became the lead claimant for our tribe in the Treaty of Waitangi claims and negotiations for Kaingaroa Forest. These early experiences have contributed enormously to my worldview, my knowledge, psychological makeup, and the ideologies that motivate me.

*In relation to this thesis...*

In embarking on this thesis I find myself as a guardian and receptacle of knowledge. Some of this knowledge exists explicitly as recorded material and other is tacit<sup>7</sup> (Polanyi, 1967). I am propelled by a deeply rooted concern for language preservation and revitalisation because of the scare we

7. By tacit knowledge I refer to “what the thinking self knows” (Polanyi, 1967, p. 81) or personal knowledge that exists intuitively and cannot be made explicit in language. This knowledge is accrued over time and is used when one “senses one’s way forward” based on what might be broadly described as intuition.

faced when Benton’s research in the 1970s revealed that our language was on the brink of extinction (Benton 1997). This concern has driven me to explore diverse methods to engage younger generations who, I believe through contemporary media forms, might reconnect and reacquaint themselves with knowledge with which they are not familiar. At the heart of this lies Māori stories. These are not folk tales, they are myths.<sup>8</sup>

Walker posits that within these mythologies are embedded “myth messages” that serve as a charter for Māori society (Walker, 1990). As a researcher and story designer I find myself positioned against a distinct legacy born largely out of colonisation. I am speaking in this regard of the marginalisation

8. Etymologically the word myth may be traced to the French Mythe (1818), the Latin mythus and the Greek mythos, and in general it means speech, thought, story, or anything delivered by word of mouth (Harper, 2001). Harper claims that only from 1840 onwards, the general sense of mythology came to mean an “untrue story or rumour”. In terms of this thesis, Simpson and Roud (2000) offer us a more useful consideration that defines myths as, “stories about divine beings, generally arranged in a coherent system; that are revered as true and sacred” (p. 254).

of cultural narratives where Māori mythology has been reconstituted and reconceptualised as “puerile folk stories” and at worst the “works of the devil” (McLintock 1966).

Although a number of writers have concerned themselves with the relationship between colonisation and language loss (Anaru, 2011; Benton, 1997; Fishman, 1991; Grimes, 2000; Hohepa, May & McCarty, 2006; Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011; Krauss, 1992; Mahuika, 2008; Mikaere, 2005; Mutu, 2013; Smith, L., 1999; Smith G., 1997; Spolsky, 2003; Wurm, 2001), comparatively less attention has been paid to the impact of colonisation on indigenous storytelling in Aotearoa. Within traditional indigenous stories, language and ways of being and knowing are intricately entwined, so when language or story is bowdlerised or denigrated the other is also damaged.

I have approached this thesis with an agenda. I am seeking not only to critique but also to offer a proposal that demonstrates how we might creatively address a situation. *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* does not propose an absolute solution, but it suggests a provocation. It proposes that as Māori designers we might be empowered to contribute usefully to a reclamation and revitalisation of cultural narratives. Thus I am positioned within this thesis culturally as a Māori man, creatively as a designer, and politically as an advocate for the revitalisation of language and its interface with storytelling.

### *Positioning the Research*

In positioning the creative *practice* of this thesis it is useful to note what digital, interactive publications in te reo are operating at the vanguard of contemporary language revitalisation. Although there is an increasing volume of

print publication available,<sup>9</sup> there is a relative paucity of work that exploits the potentials of digital storytelling, although four bodies of recently published material are worthy of note.

The first are *Tieke*, *Mokomoko*, and *He wai te kai!* These are interactive apps written by Robert Pouwhare (the researcher) for *Tangata Whenua HD*. They were produced for the Ministry of Education in 2013 and were aimed at improving Māori students' engagement in literacy, maths and science. They won the Microsoft Award for Technology in the Taurawhiri Māori Language Awards (2013).

There is also a corpus of digital resources for children published by Rhonda Kite in Auckland. Kite's company, Kiwa Digital, is a leader in the field of digital book design and her narratives now

9. Of note here are: Stephanie Thatcher's (2015) *Hoiho Paku*; Rebecca Beyer's (2015) *Ta Daniel Hakari Matariki*; Sacha Cotter's (2014) *Nga Ki*; Keri Kaa's (2013) *Taka Ki Ro Wai: He Korero Purakau Mo Tetahi Hoiho*; Sharon Holt's (2012) *Maranga Mai*; Moira Wairama's (2012) *Nga Taniwha i te Whanga-nui-a-tara*, and Chris Sczekely's (2011) *Maori Language edition of Rahui*.

include bilingual options of te reo Māori and English.<sup>10</sup> These texts offer an interactive experience that encourages greater engagement for readers and learners. Some of these e-books are translations from texts written in English. However, the atua (god) stories are based on traditional narratives held by all tribes.

There are also a number of online texts like *He Manu Tuhituhi*. This is available as a pdf or as a boxed set of books. It is a resource designed to assist teachers of year 1–6 students learning to write within a Māori-medium educational setting, (specifically the *kōhanga reo* Māori language preschools, and *kura kaupapa* Māori language immersion schools). These resources are also used in Māori language immersion classes at state primary schools. They were produced by the Ministry of Education in 2008 and include four manuals for teachers and eleven teacher-student books.

10. Indicative of these are: *Ngā Atua Māori Book 1: The Beginning of the Universe* released in 2014 and *Te Rā ngahau mo te whānau i runga tereina/ Whānau fun day on the train* released in 2015.

Finally, boxed sets of multimedia resources currently on the market are *Te Huinga Raukura* which are available on the *Mātauranga Māori* website. These are online versions of the multimedia resources found in the boxed sets and are linked to each series of flipbooks that contain audio for students to follow.<sup>11</sup> This material was first produced by the Ministry of Education as part of the *Te Kete Ipurangi* series in 1998 but it was updated in 2010.

This thesis project (and its proposed development) is positioned in the territory currently being negotiated by these interactive works. It posits a first phase for a larger project and presents the narrative substrate (and ethos) from which interactive forays into parallel knowledge might be accessed.

11. <http://eng.mataurangamaori.tki.org.nz/Support-materials/Te-Reo-Maori/Te-Huinga-Raukura>



# 3.

## Research Design



*Tē tōia, tē haumatia*

Nothing can be achieved without a plan, workforce  
and a way of doing things.

*Research paradigm*

A research paradigm describes an over-arching philosophy or the “the philosophical intent or underlying theoretical framework and motivation of the researcher with regard to the research” (Mackenzie & Knipe 2006, p. 198). Paradigmatically this research is positioned within a Kaupapa Māori model. Accordingly, epistemologically and ontologically its design operates within certain distinctively Māori ways of conceiving and progressing creative problem solving. Being an artistic, practice-led inquiry, I employed an approach that may be likened to Nepia’s (2012) process of Aratika (to find the most appropriate way forward). However, in extending his thinking I have drawn upon the concepts of kōrero and raranga as distinct methods for accessing and combining knowledge.

### *Practice-led Research*

As a story designer and linguist I have sought to reclaim and develop approaches to storytelling through practice. This practice generates a prototype of how we might design for levels of meaning and understanding and unravel deeper, hidden knowledge that enables us to move from the unknown into the known.

Smith and Dean (2009) argue that both the work of art “and its process of creation constitute a form of research” (p. 7), and Candy (2006) describes practice-led research as practice that leads to research insights. Within this dynamic Nimkulrat (2007) argues that the roles of the practitioner and the researcher appear to be interchangeable because the research is essentially enmeshed with practice.

Thus, when I designed and developed *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* I was not producing a preconceived artefact. I had a purpose and a sense of what might be brought into being,

but as I researched, practice led me into realms of creative and technical possibility. Discerning the right pathway forward (Aratika)<sup>12</sup> occurred through reflection on emerging outcomes and identifying patterns that wove data into a coherent and cohesive narrative. The work may in this way be considered as a raranga (interweaving) where fibres were tested, arranged and adjusted in an effort to produce a cohesive and elegant container of ideas formatted as a filmic narrative. Thus, the fibre of sound was influenced by the colour of a sequence, the power of narration determined the editing style and iconography was effected by considerations of whakapapa and whenua. The interweaving and patterning of these fibres produced the final artefact.

12. Nepia suggests that in Māori practice-led, artistic theses one may be guided by a sense of an “appropriate pathway” (2012, p. 114). This may be seen as mapping on to the principles of kaupapa Māori research, specifically the principles of tika (truth) and wairuatanga (the spiritual dimension). By this I suggest that one may know one’s way forward both cognitively and spiritually. Nepia suggests that the tikanga for Aratika “is partly determined by kōrero, knowledge and perspectives that emanate from whānau, hapū and iwi” (p. 121).

### *Artistic inquiry*

Although practice-led, *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* is also an artistic inquiry. Klein (2010) asserts that the development of knowledge enhancement in artistic inquiries is based on the artist performing and reflecting on their work, using knowledge they must have acquired and therefore researched. Within this argument he notes, it is not the art itself that is research (i.e. the artefact), but the process of evolution underpinning its development. The term he uses for this is “Research as Art” (2010, p. 4).

Bolt, in her discussion of artistic inquiries builds on this idea when she distinguishes between artistic practice and praxical<sup>13</sup> knowledge. She suggests that within praxical knowledge our insights can induce a “shift in thought” (2007, p. 34). Her thinking arguably can be traced back to Heidegger’s (1996)

13. Praxis, popularised by critical theorist Paulo Freire (1993) to mean the dialectics of reflection and action, has been used by Bolt to assert that specific knowledge arises through handling materials in practice.

assertion that we come to know the world theoretically only after we have come to understand it through handling.

Considering these ideas this project employed praxical knowledge in the pursuit of an evolutionary development of thinking that led to an artistic artefact.

### *Methods*

The methods employed in this research project may be divided into three interwoven processes.

#### *Reflection on practice*

Reflection on practice (Schön, 1983; Bolton, 2010) is an unstructured or semistructured, self-regulated approach (Schön, 1983; Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985). This involves “paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining practice reflectively and reflexively.” This process Bolton suggests, “leads to developmental insight” (Bolton, 2010, p. xix). Thus, developmental insight accompanied an iterative

process where I experimented with interconnecting approaches to sound, narrative, iconography and typography. By reflecting on my practice as I progressed, I was able to work reflexively, taking action based on critique and, through this, refining my creative decision making. I became engaged in a process of reflection (thinking about) and reflexive (acting on in a circular relationship between cause and effect) experiments and patterns emerging from the inquiry.

#### *Kōrero: Expert Advice*

Nepia (2012), in his discussion of the tikanga for Aratika suggests that there is a significant role in creative research for kōrero (conversation, discussion, or meeting).<sup>14</sup> In this project I refined and extended ideas by speaking with, and listening to, experts in the fields of sound design, typography

14. In this thesis, I use the word kōrero to mean more than speech. It may embrace "narrative, story, news, account, discussion, conversation, discourse, statement, or information" (Online Maori Dictionary, para.2). Kōrero underpins an approach to creative inquiry where the story designer is not a discrete agent, but works co-creatively with other sources of knowledge that reside in living experts or potential end users of the composed narrative.

and filmmaking. Consultations were generally associated with specific issues arising in the work. For example, in constructing the sound design for *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* I engaged with two experts at distinctly different times. Victor Cham initially helped to create an audio texture for the work, operating primarily with foley (sound effects). However, as the project gathered cohesion I worked with Maree Sheehan so we were able to integrate Māori instruments and more complex harmonics in the work. This enabled me to create higher levels of dramatic tension and also produce a greater sense of indigeneity into the audio substrate of the film.

#### *Kōrero: End User Feedback*

As an extension of kōrero as a method, I also took iterations of the film to groups of potential end users<sup>15</sup> to elicit informal feedback on what was working and what warranted revisiting or refining. The resulting feedback enabled me to make strategic adjustments to the design of the work as it evolved.

15. These end users were tertiary students studying te reo Māori at AUT University.

Significantly, I was able to refine approaches to “teaching” language acquisition and understanding through the strategic placement of key words into visual and narrated action. The feedback also allayed initial anxieties I had about the explicit tone and content of the story and reinforced the need to reconnect Māori language learners with deeper, esoteric and genealogical aspects of Māori narrative.<sup>16</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The research design for this project may therefore be seen as located within a Kaupapa Māori model. As a practice-led, artistic inquiry it adapts Nepia’s (2012) notion of Aratika where a Māori practitioner senses his way forward drawing on explicit data, and the agencies of tika and wairuatanga.

In activating this approach I draw on two distinct methods.

The first is raranga. Here elements and ideas are woven together in a reflective/reflexive process of trial and error so a composite, cohesively patterned fabric can be produced to hold and present the thinking. Underpinning and resourcing this process is the application of kōrero as a method of eliciting feedback and advice. This becomes part of the guidance towards Aratika, and as such part of the fabric of co-creation.

Having now outlined the approach and strategies taken to developing the project it is useful to consider the ideas and principles driving the work and the nature of my creative response to them.

16. This will be developed more fully and formally in the PhD phase of the research because it suggests a rich and attentive approach to the iterative development of interactive design.



# 4.

Critical Commentary



*He whakapapa he pātaka mātauranga  
He pūrakau he kōhihihiwi iwi*

Genealogy is the storehouse of knowledge  
Ancient narratives are the skeletal structures of the tribe

This chapter offers a critical reflection on the film *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*. In so doing it considers five distinctive features of the work and the formative ideas that underpinned its design and resolution. The facets of the film's construction I will discuss are:

Iconography

Cultural bowdlerisation

Design for language revitalisation

Typography

Sound.

### ***Iconography***

#### *The metaphor of land*

One of the distinctive features of *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* is its treatment of iconography.<sup>17</sup> Often animations of Māori narratives employ figurative depictions of the gods.<sup>18</sup>

However, in this work I adopted the unusual approach of emphasising the land and cosmos as living forces.

Thus, the gods in this story appear as manifestations of the earth and heavens (Figure 5). Only animals and men appear as figurative depictions (Figures 19 and 30).

The distinctive use of the earth and heavens as an iconographic theme in the work draws on specific Māori understandings.<sup>19</sup>

17. Visual images and symbols used in a work of art and their interpretation.

18. Indicative of this treatment are: Kiwa Digital's (2015) *Ngā Atua Māori*; Gossage's (2009) *How Maui Slowed the Sun*; and Animation Research Ltd's (2012) *Tales From the Mythologies of Creation, Maui and Aoraki*.

19. The underlying theme of *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* is the natural world. This informs collective histories, provides hidden knowledge and new truths, ancient concepts and words in contemporary contexts. In this sense the thesis is embedded within a kaupapa Māori philosophical framework.

Rangihau (1992) describes Māori cultural identity as the connection between *whakapapa* (genealogy) and *whenua* (land). Kinship is something that embraces the entire universe in Māori thought. Ranginui and Papatūānuku are the sky and the earth, and all the creatures that inhabit the earth are tied together in *whakapapa* (kinship or genealogy). These relationships are the essence of Māori culture and knowledge.

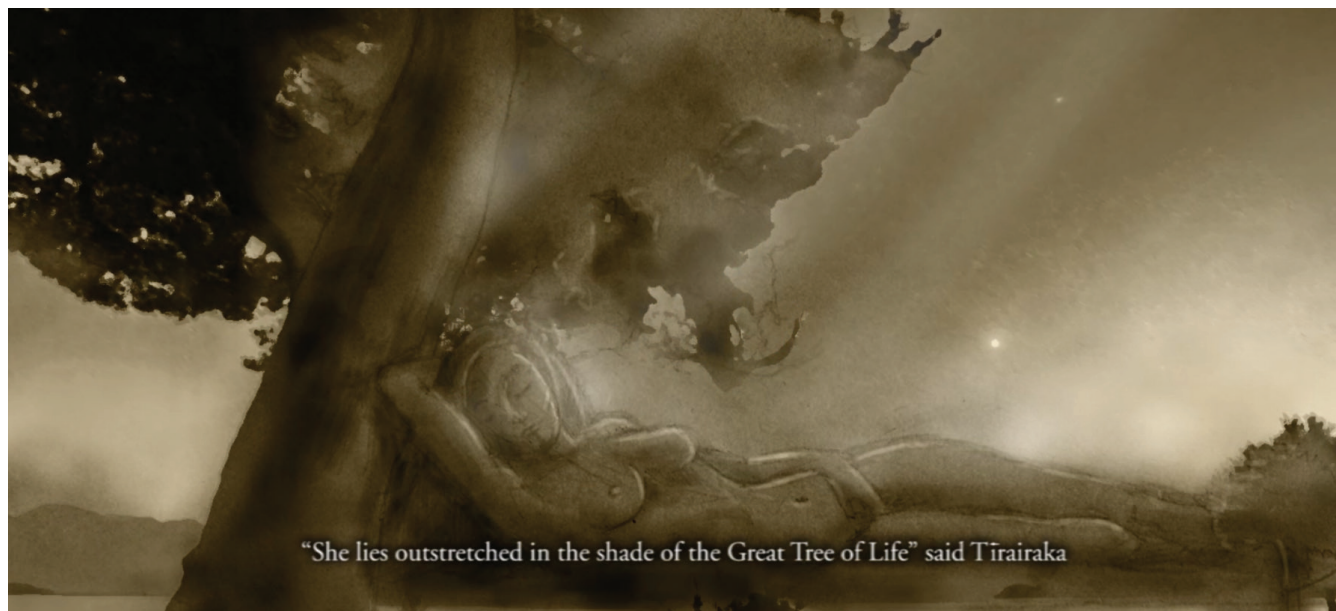
*He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* embodies both the physical and the metaphysical. It exemplifies a multifaceted, different reality; a world that is conceived as an integrated genealogical whole through the mythology. In this work *whenua* is treated as deeply dramatic (Figure 7). Its covering skies are unstable and time moves across and through the land in ways that are unfamiliar. We understand *whenua* as inherent power, rather than a landscape in which things occur.

*Papatūānuku* (Earth Mother) and *Ranginui* (Sky Father) (Figure 8), and the plethora of *atua* (gods) connect all animate and inanimate things together through *mauri* (the life principle).

*Figure 5. Screen grab of Hine-nui-te-pō's killing of Māui [4' 28"].*

Here the goddess of death is depicted as grinding earth. She first appears in the story as billowing ash clouds [4' 05"], then later as an exploding volcano [4' 37"], and eventually as the outraged cosmos [4' 54"].





**Figure 6.** Screen grab of Tīrairaka's story of Hine-nui-te-pō [2'31"].

This is one of the few instances where the great goddess appears figuratively. This is because she is spoken about, by Tīrairaka. However, whenever we encounter her outside of Tīrairaka's story, she is depicted in her full incarnation as whenua or eventually as the heavens.

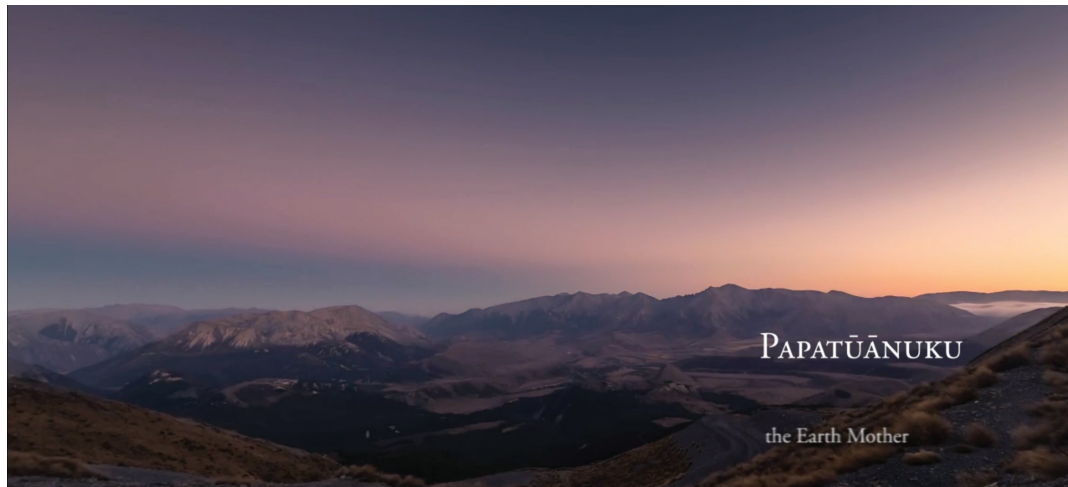
*Figure 7. The anticipatory land as Māui approaches Hine-nui-te-pō' [2'42"].*

Here colours are saturated, the skies move threateningly and Māui's journey is experienced as a fraught expedition.



**Figure 8. Screen grabs from the film's first encounter with the gods.**

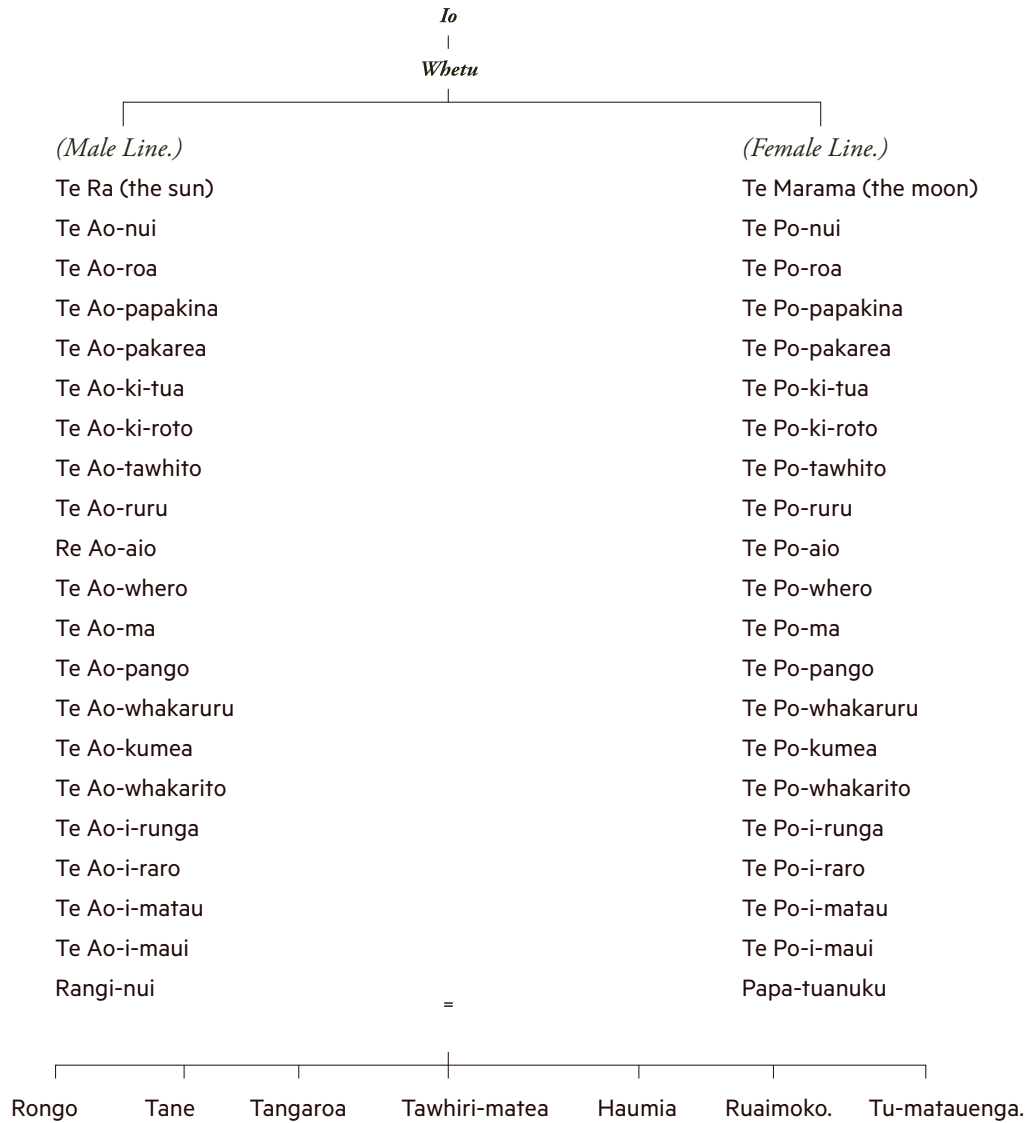
Both Ranginui [00'45"] and Papatūānuku [00'48"] are introduced to us in the same frame. We see them as part of the same idea. Ranginui has a cooler palette and Papatūānuku (because she gives birth to life) is gradually tinted in the warmer colours of the flesh. The typographical rendering of the Sky Father is positioned in the heavens but the Earth Mother's name is nestled into the land.



While each tribe has their own version of the cosmogony narrative, all concur that the land, Papatūānuku, is adorned with the offspring (flora, fauna) of Tāne, (her eldest son) with ancient ancestresses. It was Papatūānuku who instructed Tāne where to find the female essence. Humans came into existence when Tāne created the first woman, Hine-ahu-one. She was formed from the earth and is recognised as the great progenitor. Tāne and Hine-ahu-one had a daughter, Hine-tītama who also became Tāne's wife. When Hine-tītama discovered that her husband was also her father, she fled to the underworld to become Hine-nui-te-pō, the Great Goddess of Death, such was her feeling of whakamā (shame). It is this act that embodied the incest prohibition and foreshadowed another layer or myth message from the whakapapa.<sup>20</sup>

On another level Papatūānuku is the mother who nurtures us in life and Hine-nui-te-pō is the mother who consoles us in death. These positions are indicative of how narratives are used by Māori to describe deep philosophical ideas. These gods and goddesses form part of a highly complex, gendered genealogy that forms the substrata of Māori ways of knowing and being (Figure 9).

20. This story of incest and the values embedded within it will become an adjunct narrative accessed through a key word in later, interactive iterations of *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*.



**Figure 9. Whakapapa, a cosmogonic genealogy.**

This whakapapa traces descent from Io the Creator and originator of the stars, and was collected from the Waikato district by the ethnographer Elsdon Best (Best, 1924, p. 70).

Ranginui Walker (Walker, 1990) notes that iwi have their own narratives and cosmologies but many, if not all, share the same basic information passed down through the oral traditions over hundreds of years. He suggests that these story complexes are not “stand alone” narratives but are linked in a continuum that ties the speaker to the myth and validates his/her right and authority as a descendent to speak on the stories. He says;

The mythological origins of Maori society are laid out in three major myth cycles, beginning with the creation myth of Ranginui, the sky father, and Papatuanuku, the earth mother. The second sequence of myths deals with the adventures of the demi-god Maui, who fished up the land

and brought many benefits into the world for humankind. The third series of myths deals with the life of Tawhaki, the model of an aristocratic and heroic figure ... The central characters in the myths are gods, their progeny and their human descendants. The stories are narrated in prose form, with the notion of an evolutionary sequence conveyed by the storyteller linking the main characters through the traditional method of genealogical recital. Inherent in the genealogy of earth and sky, the gods and their human descendants is the notion of evolution and progression. (p. 11)

*Hine-nui-te-pō*

Thus, in my work, whenua is more than “land”. It is a complex conceptualisation of entity. It is a connection and a layering of meanings. Pivotal to this is the goddess who forms the central concern of this story, Hine-nui-te-pō.

The poupou (ancestral figures) in the interior of this house are the local people’s ancestors. The members of the tribe are direct descendants but by naming the house Hine-nui-te-pō there is a clear acknowledgement of their direct tribal relationship to her. In the house there is one poupou that is Hine-nui-te-pō. This pou not only references her namesake, but also alludes to the loss of so many of the tribe’s warriors to warfare.

In adopting whenua and the heavens as iconographic themes in this work I have been cognisant of the fact that for all Māori, the interplay between the realm of the gods and mortals is a constant in everyday life.



**Figure 10.** Photograph of Hine-nui-te-pō (Waikotikoti marae, Te Whāiti). Private collection of Hinematau McNeill.



*Figure 11.* Hine-nui-te-pō is depicted on the pare (lintel) above the doorway to the meeting house (which bears the same name). Private collection of Rāpata Wiri.



*Figure 12.* Interior of Hine-nui-te-pō whareniui at Te Whāiti, 1930. Ref: APG-1670-1/2-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

*Whakapapa*

Within the film we encounter distinctive examples of image layering. This not only occurs in episode transitions, but more distinctively in the construction of individual frames (Figure 13). This layering references the concept of *whakapapa*. While *whakapapa* may be understood as a layering genealogical device, it is in fact a paradigm that provides the basis for establishing human existence and the relationships between people and land, the natural environment and the place of Māori in the cosmos. Pūrākau is invariably made up of *whakapapa* (layers of meaning).





**Figure 13. Whakapapa or layered meaning through transitions depicting the death of Maui.**

Here we see three layers of incrementally decreasing or increasing imagery: The tail of mokomoko protruding from the vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō, [04'23"], disturbed foliage [04'25"], and the rupturing of the earth [04'26"]. Layering is used to emphasise relationships between beings and time. All imagery in the work is comprised in this manner, its layering either existing as mixes of sound and imagery, text and imagery or compositions of semi-transparent film.





*Figure 14. Maui's aspiration for immortality [02'12"].*

The desire of humanity is depicted as having insubstantial form, even though it challenges what exists. Thus, mankind is layered semi-transparently over the solidity of land. The incongruent imagery is brought into a singular relationship under a cyan palette. This is the colour used consistently throughout the film to reference the power of magic.

### ***Cultural bowdlerisation***

#### *The sanitising of cultural narratives*

Another distinctive feature of the film is the manner in which it addresses the visceral content of the original narrative. While *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* may use the land and heavens as iconographic themes, in it we also see Māui as te mokomoko (the lizard) attempt to crawl inside the vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō.

The early ethnographer, Elsdon Best deliberately used the Latin *pudenda muliebria* to describe Hine-nui-te-pō's genitalia (Best, 1996, p. 947).<sup>21</sup> The term archaically but unhelpfully translates the vagina as “skirts of women”. As such it replaces what is flesh with a euphemism. This reconceptualising of a revered idea in Māori as offensive or shameful, and thus warranting marginalising or removal, goes to the very heart of this thesis. In terms of colonisation processes this may be

21. Etymologically, *Pudenda muliebria* comes from the Latin *pudendum* (a thing to be ashamed of) and *muliebre*, the neutered form of *muliebris* (of a woman). Inherent in this Western framing of the vagina is the notion of shame.

aligned to the practice of bowdlerisation where passages considered vulgar are modified so they do not offend the sensibilities of the dominating culture.<sup>22</sup> The idea of sanitising cosmological narratives is traceable through many renditions of the story of Māui's quest for immortality and his fatal encounter with Hine-nui-te-pō. These versions all fall short of revealing the complexity and depth of the original narrative.

For example, Biggs (1966), while more explicit, fails to name the vagina directly and thereby presents a distorted view of the reality and undermines the meaning of this undertaking.

22. The term bowdlerise relates to the British doctor and “philanthropist” Thomas Bowdler (1754 – 1825), who published the first edition of *The Family Shakespeare* in 1820. His purpose was to censor Shakespeare's work so that it would be suitable for women and children, and thereby preserve Victorian family values. As a result of Bowdler's vandalism (of Shakespeare), the word bowdlerism became synonymous with the censorship of words or images deemed indecent, offensive or licentious.

Then he readied himself, winding the cord of his battle club tightly round his wrist and casting aside his garment. As Māui began his task, the cheeks of his watching friends puckered with suppressed laughter. As his head and arms disappear, one of his brothers—or the fantail—can't hold back no longer and bursts out laughing. The old lady wakes, opens her eyes, claps her legs together and cuts Māui in two. Now Māui has become the first being to die and, because he has failed in his task, all human beings are mortal. The goddess keeps her position at the portal to the underworld through which all humans must travel. (pp. 449-450)

Although these authors suggest that the goddess's legs kill Māui, Elsdon Best approaches the bowdlerisation in a different way. In his 1924 relating of the story he does not allow for any English translation of concepts that he finds difficult.

Maui now warned his companions to remain silent, and above all not to laugh at his actions. His aim was to extract

or destroy the heart of Hine, and to pass through her body, whereupon eternal death would be vanquished, and man would live forever. So Maui entered the body of Hine by way of the Paepae o Tiki, and passed into the *puapua*. The sight quite overcame the companions of Maui; Tatahore laughed outright, while Tiwaiwaka fled to the plaza and danced about with delight. But Maui of the many lands was doomed. Hine was startled and awoke; she felt Moko-huruhuru and slew him. Thus died Maui the hero, and so near was man to grasping immortality here on earth. (Best, 1924, p. 148)

Other commentators go so far as to substitute the wrong part of the anatomy. So Buckova (2012) completely removes any reference to Māui's journey by recounting the story thus:

Maui has an even worse fate. According to the Māori version, while trying to gain immortality for mortals, he dies at the hand of the goddess of death, Hine-nui-te-po. (p. 222)

In designing *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* my intention has been to reclaim ancient knowledge. Its treatment presents the pūrākau as an artefact produced without sanitisation (Figure 15). In Māori the vagina is complex as the transcription below from the Shortland<sup>23</sup> manuscripts demonstrates. The vagina has a distinctive whakapapa and each part is named and attributed to the gift of a named, senior, female ancestral figure. The significance of this specificity reinforces the status and power of women in traditional Māori society.

Katahi ka haere a Tane. Ka tahia te one ko Kurawaka, ka apohia te one. Kua tu te tinana, kua tu te mahunga, kua tu nga ringaringa, kua noho nga waewae. Katahi ka pakipakia a runga i te kopu kia ahua tangata, ka oti. Ka haere ki te ki atu ki tona whaea, 'Kua oti te tinana katoa o te tangata.' Katahi ka ki mai te whaea, 'Haere ki tou tupuna, ki a Mauhi, ko nga raho enei. Haere ki tou tupuna, ki a Wete, ko te

23. Edward Shortland was a colonial government official stationed in Maketū in the mid 1840s who reported to the Chief Protector of Aborigines. The transcript was dictated to him by Te Ngārara, one of many informants who related tribal narratives to Shortland.

timutimu tenei. Haere ki tou tupuna, ki a Tauakitemarangai, ko te paraheka tenei. Haere ki tou tupuna ki a Pungaheko, ko te huruhuru tenei.'

Ka tae a Tane ki ruawahine tupuna, katahi ka homai era mea ki a ia. Katahi ka hoki mai ki Kurawaka. Katahi ka whakanoho ia i nga raho ki roto i nga kuwha o te wahine i hanga ki te one, ka mau era. Muri atu ka whakanoho ia ko te timutimu, na Whete i homai, ki waenga i nga raho. Muri atu ko te paraheka, na Tuakitemarangai i homai, ka whakanoho ki te take o te timutimu. Muri iho ko te huruhuru, na Pungaheko i homai, ka whakanoho ki runga i te puke. Ka oti. Katahi ka tapa ko Hineahuone, ko te ingoa o taua wahine. (Shortland, pp. 15-16)

So Tane went. He swept up the sand at Kurawaka, mounded up the sand. A body was formed, a head was formed, hands were made, and feet put in place. Then he patted over the belly to give it the form of a human. That completed, he went and said to his mother, 'The body of a human



**Figure 15. Māui's approach and entry into the vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō.**

In this project, these images are still rendered as illustrations, although their colour palettes are preset. In a funded extension of the work these episodes would contain both filmic and illustrated elements. [03'35"; 03'28"; 03'57"]



is completed.' Then the mother said to him, 'Go to your ancestor, to Mauhi, there are the labia. Go to your ancestor, to Wete, and there is the vagina. Go to your ancestor, to Taua-ki-te-marangai, and this is the pubic mound. Go to your ancestor, to Pungaheko, and there is the [pubic] hair.' When Tane went to the senior female ancestors, they gave those things to him. And so he returned to Kurawaka. Then he placed the labia in between the thighs of the woman made of sand and those were set in place. After that he placed the vagina, which Whete [Wete] had given him, between the labia. And after that there was the pubic mound, which Tuakitemarangai had given him, to be placed at the base of the vagina. After that there was the hair, which Pungaheko gave him that he placed on the pubic mound. So that was completed. Then he named her Hineahuone; that was the name of that woman. (Translation by Robert Pouwhare)

*Reclaiming the essence of pūrākau*

With the agency of bowdlerising, colonisers reduce ways of conceptualising and understanding intricate cosmological

epistemologies to the level of fairytales or legends.

Across generations, as these stories come to replace oral traditions, they (and the dislocated values within them) become new “truths” that strip cultural understandings of their depth (Figure 15). To achieve bowdlerisation necessitates critically analysing the cultural and social determinants that have shaped traditional knowledges and turning the sacred into the profane. This metamorphosis from pūrākau to “fairytales” is implicit and discernable in the colonial experience in New Zealand.

But pūrākau are not children’s stories. Lee (2009) defines pūrākau as:

... a traditional form of Māori narrative, [that] contains philosophical thought, epistemological constructs, cultural codes, and worldviews that are fundamental to our identity as Māori. Pūrākau are a collection of traditional oral narratives that should not only be protected, but are understood as a pedagogical-based anthology of literature that is still relevant today. (p. 1)

**Figure 16. Edith Howes' illustration Sky Fairies Surprise Tawhaki from Maoriland Fairy Tales (1913, p. 45).**

In this image we see the colonising bowdlerisation of a complex Māori narrative of estrangement and mysticism with Europeanised depictions of fairies. The illustration and text reduced Tāwhaki and his relationship with Hāpai to a sanitised love story and her powerful people to effete, insubstantial maidens.



She suggests that the denigration of pūrākau was integral to the colonisation process in this country. She describes the importance of pūrākau, not just in terms of intrinsic knowledge but also in relation to establishing land ownership in cases against the Crown (and other tribes). Thus, she notes that in the Native Land Courts:

Histories preserved in pūrākau were told to make the case of a particular whānau, hapū or iwi connection to the land within specific boundaries. There are various examples of uninterrupted pūrākau narratives with detail and explanations of tribal events, stories of building alliances through marriage, reciprocity, family feuds and so on. (p. 3)

To understand why *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* has been developed, requires an understanding of the colonial influences that have contaminated indigenous language, cultural concepts, beliefs and practices. Here the work of Edward Said (1978; 1994), Franz Fanon (1967) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1986) provide useful insights.

The colonial experience has proved that the exercise of power has had devastating effects on indigenous populations and attitudes to their continued development. Indeed Newman in 1882 said of Māori:

Taking all things into consideration, the disappearance of the race is scarcely subject for much regret. They are dying out in a quick, easy way, and are being supplanted by a superior race. (Newman, 1881 p. 477)

However, despite colonialism's best efforts, Māori language and culture have not been annihilated although neither have they survived unscathed. Revitalising and reclaiming traditional knowledge is essentially a journey or exploration for te ara tika—truth. This begins with a critique of European usurpation of knowledge.

Edward Said (1978) argues that the globalisation of knowledge and Western culture constantly affirms the West's view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of "civilised" knowledge.

This form of global knowledge is referred to as “universal” knowledge available to all, and not really owned by anyone. That is, until non-western scholars make claims to it. When claims like this are made, history is strategically revised (again) so that the story of civilisation remains the story of the West. For this purpose, the Mediterranean world, the basin of Arab culture and the lands east of Constantinople were conveniently appropriated as the story of Western civilisation and Western knowledge (p. 63).

While the West’s claim to superior knowledge may be spurious, the effect of European Imperialism cannot be easily dismissed. It is very apparent that the sexual mores and norms of Victorian society are responsible for the desecration and bowdlerisation of both indigenous knowledge and language.

In writing and designing *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* my objective was to challenge the Victorian colonial filters that have distorted the original pedagogical intent of traditional mythology. Although associated with Victorian England,

Foucault (1980) argues that Capitalism influenced Victorian sexual mores throughout Europe and sexual repression was not confined to England. He suggests that Capitalism and Christianity were a toxic mix in 18th century Europe.

Christianity associated [sexuality] with evil, sin, the fall, and death, whereas antiquity invested it with positive symbolic values. Or the definition of the legitimate partner: it would appear that, in contrast to what occurred in Greek and Roman societies, Christianity drew the line at monogamous marriage and laid down the principle of exclusively procreative ends within that conjugal relationship. Or the disallowance of relations between individuals of the same sex: it would seem that Christianity strictly excluded such relationships, while Greece exalted them and Rome accepted them, at least between men. (Foucault, 1980, p. 14)

Foucault suggests that sexual repression was a European phenomenon because in China, Japan, India and the Roman Empire sex is seen as an art “Ars erotica”, rather than something dirty and shameful (ibid. p.6).

In pre-contact Māori society, narratives were often sexually explicit because sex was considered natural (Figure 17).

The carving (Figure 17), is in an early style and most likely from the Bay of Plenty. The poupou (ancestral carving) depicts pre-European Māori attitudes to sexuality; Māui's head is locked in Hine-nui-te-pō's vagina. The carving would have graced the wall of a whareniui (meeting house) as a natural part of the architecture. I say "natural", because the image would not have been perceived in any way as licentious. It would instead function as a credible source of knowledge and history. The image would have been a storyteller.

The impact of colonisation on Māori sexual norms and mores can be traced from the time of European contact. Once the colonists (and their religion) assumed hegemony over Māori tribal culture, Victorian attitudes began to permeate. Cultural bowdlerisation attacked pūrākau, but it may also be seen in the emasculation of poupou. The following excerpt from a petition to the Minister of Tourism and Health Resorts

in 1905 by the Reverend Fredrick Bennett and his Ngāti Whakaue whānau (of Rotorua) demonstrates the efficacy of colonisation on the minds of the colonised.

We the undersigned members of the Maori race residing at Whakarewarewa and Ohinemutu do hereby desire to call your attention to the indecent carving that have been erected ... in the interests therefore of ourselves and our children and of our pakeha visitors and of the purity and refinement of the community generally, we earnestly beg that you will have these objectionable figures removed as soon as possible. (New Zealand Government Tourist Bureau, 5 May 1905)

Sadly, as a consequence of the petition the "objectionable" figures were removed and replaced with "bowdlerised" versions. As a result many of the carved ancestral figures



*Figure 17. Māori wood carving of the goddess Hine-nui-te-pō, and Māui. Ref: PAColl-6585-10. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.*

throughout New Zealand are “emasculated”.<sup>24</sup> Even the most prestigious ancestors were subject to this treatment. The carving (Figure 18) is from Tama-te-kapua, a famous meeting house in Ohinemutu, Rotorua. Tama-te-kapua is Te Arawa’s eponymous ancestor who is widely acknowledged as the “captain” of the Te Arawa waka that came from Hawaiki and landed at Maketū. Although the emasculation process reflected the Victorian attitudes of the time, the mana of the ancestors remained absolute.

My treatment of *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* is both a homage to a former mode of storytelling and also a protest at what has happened to Māori narrative. My narratising of te mokomoko’s sniffing between the thighs of the great goddess as he edges close to her vagina is deliberate (Figure 19).

24. It is of interest to note that at the time that puritanical colonial attitudes were annexing Māori minds, the hypocrisy of the European bourgeoisie was also being challenged, by certain European artists. Indicative of this in 1866 was Courbet’s *L’Origine du monde* (Origin of the World). This painting of a European woman’s exposed genitals, Nochlin (1886) described as representing “the female sex organ—the cunt—the forbidden site of specularity” (p. 76).

Within this we encounter the viscosity of human scent, the immensity of scale and the trepidation at the power of women.

#### *The sexual as non-erotic*

Māori images depicting genitalia cannot be classified as erotic art. The reason is that sexuality was considered a natural part of life, and as such genitalia were intricately woven into pre-European Māori narrative. An illustration of this non-eroticising of sex is evidenced in the use of language, especially in place names in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Tarawera (hot vagina) is a volcanic mountain on the outskirts of Rotorua. Te Urewera (burnt penis) is the name of the great rainforests of Tūhoe. Pākotore (burnt arsehole) and Te Huruwahu o Topea (pubic hair of the ancestress Topea) are Tapuika place names (Bay of Plenty) and Rahotū (erect penis) is a Taranaki place name. These are not amusing monikers. Associated with each placename are pūrākau (tribal narratives) that tie the words to specific incidents and render them places of historical significance to the tribe.

Māori, generally find these place names highly amusing, when said in Māori, but I have observed kuia (old women) squirm when the words are translated into English. While anecdotal this observation might suggest two very different worldviews; a Māori one where sex is a normal part of life and a European view where sex is often repressed.

Foucault argues that speaking about sex is an empowering act.<sup>25</sup> In *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*, the act of empowerment is articulated partly through the retrieval of ancient words like puapua (vaginal lips). This deliberate incorporation of relatively obscure language is used not only to invigorate and revitalise the language, but also to renominate the power and distinctiveness of Māori storytelling.

25. If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom. (Foucault, 1980 p. 6)

The script introduces relatively obscure words like puapua (vulva) and pātāritari (provocative and challenging) to extend vocabulary and acquaint learners with what can easily become linguistically anachronistic (Figure 20). By emphasising repetition in the story, I seek to reinforce the physco-acoustics prevalent in oral renditions of these narratives so that learners experience an immediate sense of movement, drama and propulsion in the story.

### *Design for language revitalisation*

#### *The marginalisation of Māori language*

To understand the intention and design of *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* it is useful to position the work in its historical context.

During early colonisation, Māori were described variously as “wild animals” (Williams, 1867), “beastly” (as cited in Rutherford, 1940), and “inhuman” (Thomson, 1867). The beauty of their spoken language was described as “grunted” (Crawford, 1880), “growled” (Taylor, 1855), “roared” (Webster, 1908), “howled” (as cited in Selwyn 1961) and “screeched” (Polack, 1840).

*Figure 18.* Poupou from the interior of the roro of the whareniui, Tama-te-kapua (Property of Rāpata Wiri).



*Figure 19.* Screen grab showing te mokomoko approaching the vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō (03'25").





*Figure 20. Screen grab of the word pātaritari.*

In this screen grab [1' 58"], we encounter the relatively obscure word pātaritari (provocative and challenging). Māui is depicted as provocative and challenging. He is pitched against the power of rocks so that his determined gesturing provides a visual reference to the meaning of the word.

The legacy of the colonial experience continues to influence Māori existence. Even the concept of Māori as a cultural entity is a recent phenomenon. In pre-contact Aotearoa, Māori identity was embedded in tribalism and the sub-structures of iwi, hapū and whānau, (Ballara, 1998; Barlow, 1991; Moon, 1993; Mead, 2003; Te Rito, 2007). Each tribe, and even hapū, spoke their own dialect.

While many tribes aspire to revitalise their unique dialects, the prospects are daunting. The critical state of the language was recognised in the Waitangi Tribunal hearings on the Te Reo Māori Report (2011) that noted:

... there must be a deep-seated fear for the survival of te reo. The number of speakers is down in the key younger age groups, and older speakers with the highest fluency—whose language comprises the unique tribal variations of te reo—are naturally declining in number. For all the rhetoric

about forward progress, even the Crown's key witness conceded that there was still a need for 'life support'.<sup>26</sup>

The most recent Statistics New Zealand Report (from the 2013 Census) provides compelling evidence that the Māori language continues on a trajectory of rapid decline. The Census reports that, in 2013, 125,352 Māori (21.3 percent) could hold a conversation about a lot of everyday things in te reo Māori. This was a 4.8 percent decrease from the 2006 Census.<sup>27</sup>

26. (Waitangi Tribunal, 2011).

27. At the time of the 2006 Census, Te Taurawhiri reported its findings in *The Health of the Māori Language*. This Report documented a period of three decades that marked the end of intergenerational transmission of Māori language in the home. It found that, in 1913, 90 percent of Māori school children were native Māori speakers. By the 1930s Māori remained the predominant language in Māori homes and communities. However over time, the use of English began to increase, and there was continued support for English-only education by certain Māori leaders. In addition, by the 1940s Māori urban migration had become a distinctive social phenomenon (2006 Census, p. 5).

Fishman (1991) has incessantly argued that the key to reversing language shift (RSL) is intergenerational language transmission and he postulates a continuum of eight stages of language loss with Stage One being the closest to dynamic survival and the eighth stage being the closest to total extinction (Reyhner & Tennant, 1995, p. 281). According to this model te reo Māori is at the final and critical stage of language loss.

As an endangered language, Māori shares this dubious status with a significant number of other indigenous languages that face extinction unless successful interventions are implemented.<sup>28</sup> Given the declining numbers of Māori language speakers, it is obvious that innovative intervention strategies are needed for the language to survive. Banse (2012) argues that the solution could well be technology.

28. It is estimated that of the 7000 living languages in the world today, at least half could die or become extinct within the next 100 years (Krauss, 1992; Grimes, 2000; Wurm, 2001; Banse, 2012).

Minority language communities must fully embrace the media technologies as a way of dialoging with a globalized world. Television has already made considerable impact in the case of minority languages ... Media technologies bring new opportunities and challenges for Indigenous Language Revitalisation and Globalization. (O’Laoire, 2008, pp. 211-212)

As the technology has developed it has created an opportunity to design innovative learning tools that can be accessed and utilised by second language Māori learners. The conversion from television/film to smart phone and iPad applications demands different skill sets. The challenge that designers of language revitalisation media are faced with, is how they might balance the cultural and technical aspects of a project to develop an artefact that is rich in language and traditional knowledge content but also ensures that the sacred aspects of pūrākau are not compromised.

*Language use in He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*

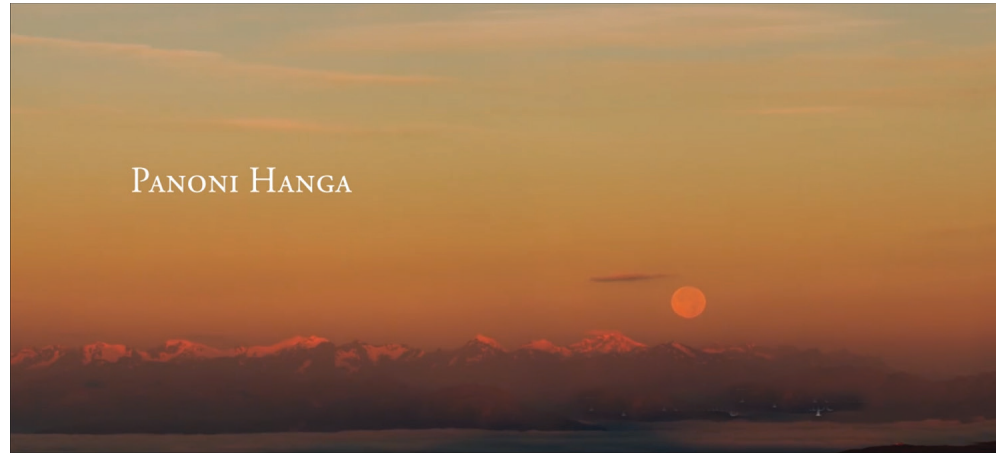
The creative output for this thesis may be seen as iterative because it is my intention to develop it into a PhD study at a later date.<sup>29</sup> The current version tells a story that nominates specific Māori words so they operate as written emphases over a spoken narrative (Figure 21). In the first version of the text there is no translation. This edition is designed for more fluent speakers. It seeks to extend language and contextualise it in a pūrākau that draws attention to complex relationships and values. At this level of engagement a Māori language learner who encounters *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* is introduced to a classical language style that employs whakapapa, karakia and examples of advanced vocabulary. In a future version, the language learner will be able to click on the key words that currently appear in the images and journey into a network of adjunct information related to characters, concepts or events.

29. To do this, however, the project will need to attract funding. Accordingly, this version of the text operates as an indication of the thematic and stylistic treatment of the work.

Thus, the pūrākau will open out into an interconnected network of stories and discussions.

The second version of the film submitted for this thesis provides English translations of the orated narrative (Figure 22). Although much of the feedback from end users suggested that they preferred not to use this version, I designed it so very early language learners could follow the story more easily. However, the English that we read is not a direct translation of what has been heard. This edition enables a language learner to follow the story while listening to the richness of the language. Feedback interviews indicated that the power of the work lay in its dramatic emphasis, the more visceral nature of the narrative, correct pronunciation, and the use of key words. These were all considered valuable assets to learning.

However, in the advanced, networked version, no link to advanced information will be activated off an English language translation.



**Figure 21. Screen grab from Version 1, demonstrating a key word that will become a live link [01'10"].**

In an advanced iteration of the design, by clicking on the words Panoni Hanga (shape changing), the reader will be transported to an adjunct sequence that fleshes out a discussion about how in other narratives Māui changes his shape from a human to a pigeon, or a hawk. He also changes his brother-in-law into a dog. The adjunct narratives that network out from the base line story of Māui and Hine-nui-te-pō will function as a connection of pūrākau that, in an interactive design, connect through a complex layering of stories, values and entities.

*Figure 22. Screen grab offering an approximate translation of Nō hea te mate? [01'24": Version 2].*

Translations always appear as secondary to te reo Māori, so the prominence of the language and its aural articulation remain dominant in the text. This said, the use of English translation affords greater levels of access to students who are still learning te reo.



*He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* goes beyond revitalisation of the language and seeks to capture the wairua (spirit) of te reo in the classical style. This, Morrison (2011) observes, is:

... a different kind of language. It's a language you don't hear that often. I believe our language initially belonged to the environment. It developed from the call of the birds and the rustling of trees and so when our ancestors spoke they used imagery and metaphor and simile and other devices in conjunction with the environment to describe their feelings. That kind of expertise is lost in the language now, where a lot of Maori speakers are just using the language to translate their English thought processes and that metaphoric language is lost. (cited in Silverstone, 2011, p. 65).<sup>30</sup>

30. Morrison recounts this in the book Shakespeare, *Trauma and Contemporary Performance*. Here he describes the language that Pei Te Hurinui Jones (1898-1976) used to translate Shakespeare.

The language of the *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* draws on both the traditional and contemporary lexicon of te reo Māori to enhance innovation in language-use. For example, in the script, *Ka titiro a Tirairaka ka pakaru mai te pukukata* is translated into colloquial English as “The fantail looked, and unable to contain himself, burst out laughing.” However, while the work contains such fundamental translations, it also retains the essence and ethos of classical te reo Māori. This is evidenced in the opening use of genealogical recitation:

*Te Kore te whiwhia Te Kore te rawea ...*

The Void in which nothing is possessed ... The Void in which nothing is felt ...

Classical Māori also appears in the formidable closing karakia, ritual incantation:

*Ka oho Te Pō Ka rongō Te Pō ...*

The Night jolts awake. The Night hears the sounds.

### *Typography*

It is a challenge for a designer to interpret the esoteric. When ideas transcend the limitations of written words, yet must be referenced by them, one cannot resort to simply finding a typeface and rolling it out across a piece of work.

*He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* deals with genealogical recitation and karakia. It talks of worlds beyond the physical, of time before and after time, and of ontology beyond the Western cultures that developed writing as a means of communicating ideas. In designing the work it was always my intention to emphasise the oral origins and traditions of te reo Māori. Accordingly it is the *spoken* word and imagery that carry the weight and drama of the work.

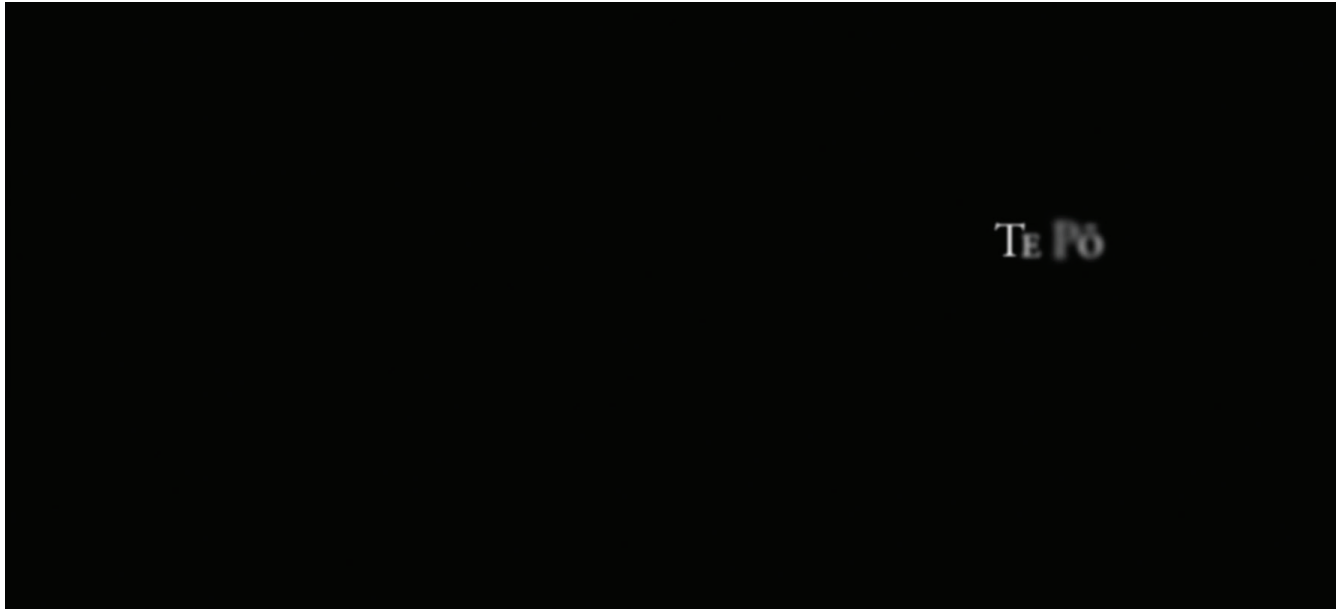
Because I was dealing with an oral language I decided to treat writing as sound. In other words, I considered how type might decay or transform in the manner of the spoken word. Thus, in the opening whakapapa there is no imagery, and type is very unstable. Words are present and then they decay into nothingness (the same way that sound does) (Figures 23 & 24).

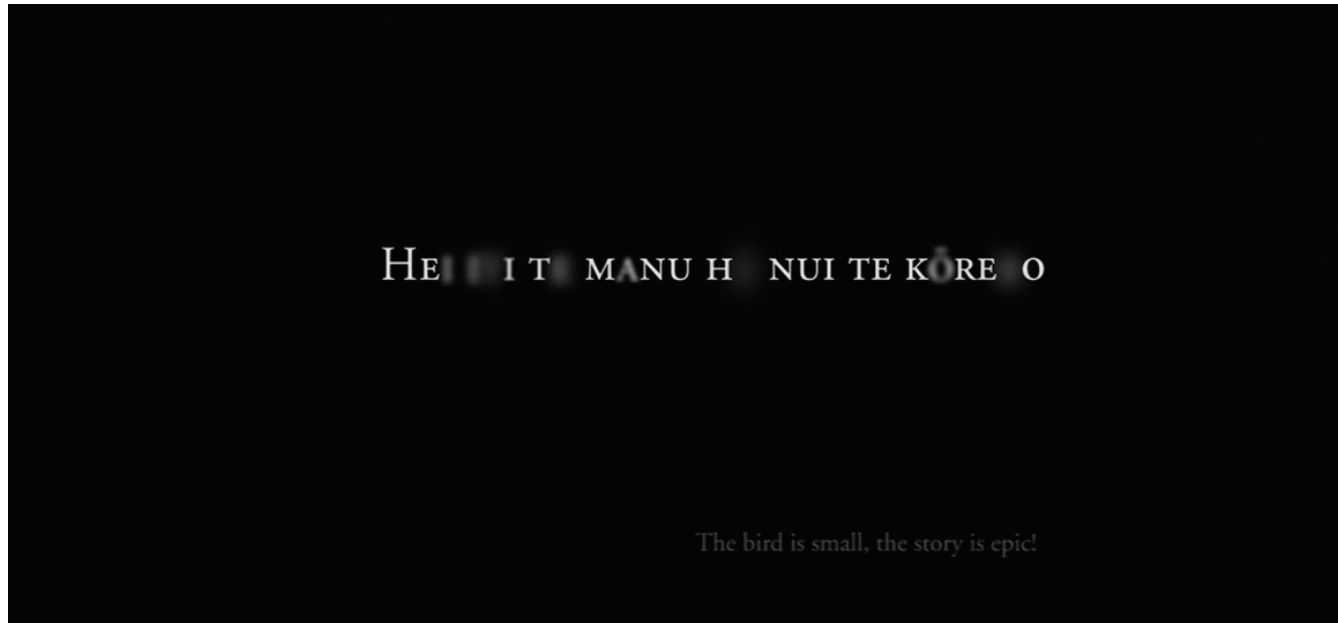
Keedy (2004) has argued that contemporary type design must reflect context and culture. Helfand posits that moving type offers a “new language, with its own grammar, its own syntax, [and] its own rules” (2004, p. 278). In designing *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*, we worked with a new version of the typeface Garamond (circa. 1510),<sup>31</sup> because I felt that its classicism gave a certain authority to the words. The typeface also has available a rich range of accents that allows it to be employed when specific additions to letter forms are necessary. However, in selecting this typeface I was also influenced by Māori use of serif faces in early print publication (Figures 25 & 26).

31. The new version was Adobe Garamond Light, designed by Robert Slimbach and released in 1989. The face has a distinctive small bowl of the “a” and eye of the “e”. It also has long extenders and its top serifs have a downward slope. The font family contains regular, semibold and bold weights that make it easy to work with in a variety of animation environments. These features, combined with a restrained variation in stroke, produce a flexible face that appears organic, authoritative and unadorned. Garamond faces like this have been a popular choice for many years when printing body text for art publications and highend literary works.

***Figure 23. Screen grab from the opening genealogy [00 23” 24].***

Here the words Te Pō are fully on screen for only a moment before the letterforms begin to vibrate and decay. In developing this treatment I worked with the designer and typographer Victor Cham. We created a spatio-temporal treatment that, while alluding to the classical, behaved in a contemporary “audio-graphic” manner.





*Figure 24.* Screen grab of the closing title [05'28" 24].

Here again we encounter an uppercase type treatment that, while referencing the permanence of inscribed letterforms, begins to vibrate and fall apart. The audio treatments developed for both the opening and closing sequences also draw attention to this sense of vibration and dissolve.

# TE HOKIOI, E RERE ATU NA.

“Kia mahara ra pea e nga kingi, kia akona e nga kaiwhakawa.o te whenua.

---

NGARUAWAHIA, HANUERI 15, 1863

---

*Figure 25. Mast header from the Tainui newspaper  
Te Hokioi e rere atu na (1862).*

Serif letters were dominant in Māori publications because they were the most common letterpress forms imported into New Zealand at the time. These faces came with the printing press that was brought back by Māori from Europe.



*Positioning of type*

Normally when work in a “foreign” language is presented for non-speakers, it is subtitled. Conventionally, this translation is centrally justified and displayed at the bottom of the screen. This information is normally created as a separate graphic or text. However, when I designed the translated Version 2 of *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*, English versions of the language were prerendered so they could operate compositionally with both the timing and visual construction of the imagery. This meant that the translations could respond to the rhythm and pace of speech. While in some instances subtitles are literal translations, my normal approach has been to interpret or summarise what has been said.

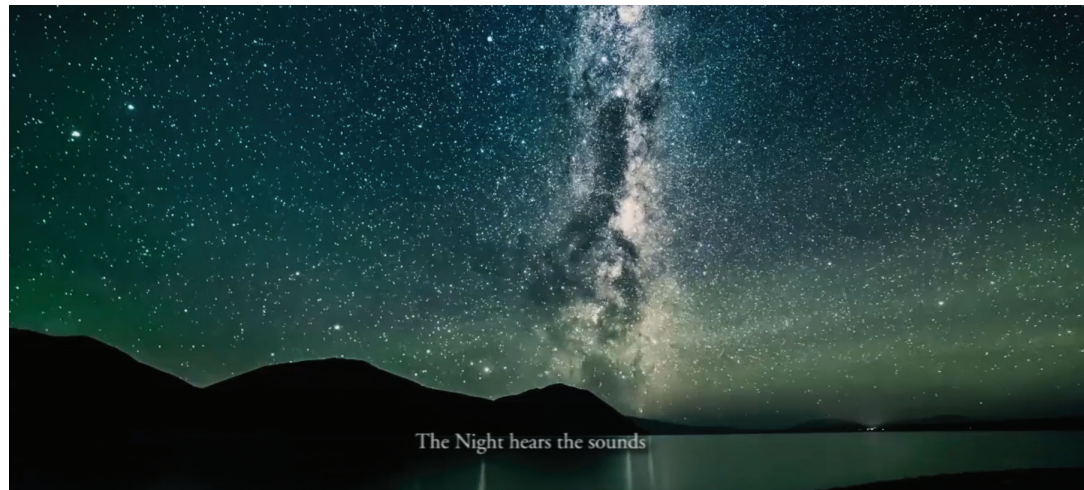
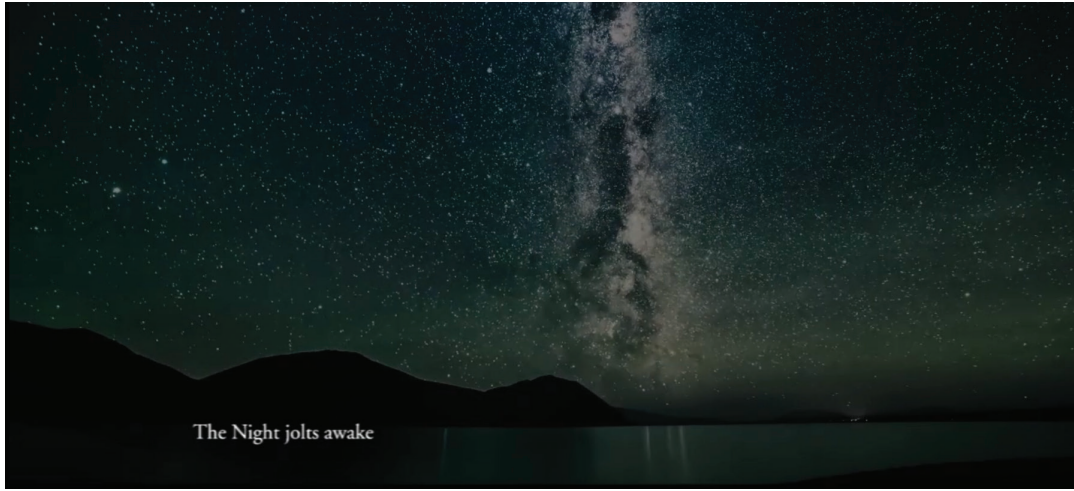
The positioning of type in *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* is distinctive, because it is used to emphasise hierarchies of power (Figure 27), or underscore rhythm (Figure 28).

These decisions serve to support the artistic nature of the work and the intention that all elements (as in whakapapa) operate in relation to each other. While the English translations may be in a smaller, italicised version of Garamond, they unfold across the frame or are positioned in a manner where they harmoniously interpret either key words or the narrator’s speech.



**Figure 27. Screen grab of the awakening of Hine-nui-te-pō [04'05"].**

Because of the power and authority of the great Goddess, the subtitling leaves its position at the bottom of the frame and speaks from the heavens. This placement anticipates eruptions of volcanoes into the skies and underscores the power of her outrage. It also prefigures what will occur with the translation of her *karakia* in the closing episode of the film.



**Figure 28.** Screen grabs from the karakia of Hine-nui-te-pō [04'52"; 04'53";05'10"].

As the Goddess' karakia begins, the translation moves from left to right in response to the rhythm and pace of her oration. However as her incantation builds, it is lifted up into the heavens so that the work's final denouement is positioned back in the cosmos from whence the narrative began.



### *Sound*

The design of the soundscape in *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* serves several purposes. It is used to narrate (the voice overs of the narrator and actors), to emphasise dramatic episodes, and to allude to both Māori traditions (musical instruments) and the nature of the cosmological.

### *Narration*

I performed the primary narration. I sought to bring emphasis to traditional rhythms of storytelling, to correctly pronounce specific words<sup>32</sup> and to intensify the drama of a story that reclaimed power from beyond its injured, bowdlerised self. It took several iterations of recording, rewriting and kōrero with respective parties to reach the level of power and integrity required.

32. Critical to language revitalisation is the idea that the language must be correct, it must be fluent and it must come from a Māori headspace in order to transmit it into the future, otherwise linguistic errors can be perpetuated. This is an especially important consideration in work like *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* because it is designed to be used eventually as a teaching resource.

The performance was recorded in an acoustically fitted studio by Reece Howard (Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa), using a Yuti microphone fed into Garageband software. From there, material was rendered as MP3 sound files that were sent to Victor Cham so he could begin aligning them to the visuals in the offline edit.

I also performed Māui's part in the work but with a distinctively different inflection, so his voice was pitched at a higher level.

The character of Tirairaka was performed by Jamie Cowell (Ngāti Porou, Waikato), because her voice projected a youthful yet mischievous tone. Finally, the monologue of Hine-nui-te-pō was performed by Makarita Howard (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Wai), the senior woman, kai karanga of Ngā Wai o Horotiu Marae at AUT. The voice of the Great Ancestress needed to have power and a strong sense of gravitas. Makarita is an older woman fluent in the reo and experienced in the art of karanga. Her voice lends authority fused with age, anger and wisdom that was necessary in establishing the power of the story's outcome.

### *Soundscape*

The soundscape for *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* was conceived as a layered structure that might suggest multiple levels of reading. It was initially designed by Victor Cham as an “audio sketch” but later developed by Maree Sheehan (Ngāti Maniapoto-Waikato and Ngāti Tūwharetoa). She laid the music tracks and pūoro (ancient Māori instruments) and executed the final sound mix.<sup>33</sup> In discussing her approach she stated:

There has been a strong tendency in the aesthetics of this particular sound composition to emphasise the story narrative though the application of combining taonga puoro instrumentation and electronic synthesised instruments. The importance of the compositional structure is to provide an auditory narrative that enhances the story and visual narrative. This soundscape composition combines the acoustic and electronic instrumental timbre, tone and

33. Her detailed rationale for the design of *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*'s soundscape is provided in Appendix 2.

resonance to convey an auditory exposition-development-climax-denouement coherent with the plot of the story and visual representation. (see Appendix 2)

In *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* we encounter both acoustic instrumentation and the sounds of the taonga pūoro (traditional Māori instruments) (Figures 29 and 30).<sup>34</sup>

34. The taonga pūoro were performed by Mahina Kauī (Ngai Tahu) and recorded by Maree Sheehan. The taonga pūoro instruments incorporated in the soundscape were the porotiti (whirling spinning disc), the hue puruhau (gourd), kōauau (short end blown flute) and kōhatu, stones.

*Figure 29. Screen grab from 01'11".*

At this point in the film we encounter the sound of the kōauau. This represents the essential force of the humans being spoken about in the narrative. According to Nunns (2014, p. 56), traditional instruments such as the kōauau replicate the human voice; the aesthetic attributes of singing (ihi, wehi wana, wairua, hotu, tangi) and the vocal equivalent of wiriwiri can be found in their performance. Sheehan states that the introduction of the kōauau used in the composition at this point “acts to express the godlike, magical power and voice of these people at this time ... considering that the kōauau has been widely used in times of tangi (funeral) to express sadness and sorrow it was also embedded in the soundscape between 01'18” and 01' 35” to convey the sadness at the death of people” (Appendix 2).



**Figure 30. Screen grab from 01'41" shows Māui walking on stones.**

Accordingly in this sequence the sound of kōhatu stones being tapped together was used to emphasise the texture of image. This audio was combined with a distinctive style of playing the kōauau on the side of the mouth hole. This produced a dissonant, airy wind sound that alluded to Māui's deceptive intensions.



In the soundscape, electronic sound synthesisers<sup>35</sup> and drum samples have been employed to generate individual timbres that embody the ethos of the narrative and its visual interpretation.<sup>36</sup> Rather than just placing sampled synthesised sounds, Sheehan experimented in each synthesised part, using diverse musical chord structures. Added to the soundscape were diegetic Foley including wind, lightning, rumbling earth, human laughter and bird song. These were layered at specific times in the soundscape to accentuate the narrative episodes or to emphasise visual material.

35. The synthesiser pads used specific dynamics and sonic stimulus to provide either positive or negative valence in the soundscape. The bass or kick drum samples were used to emphasise the rhythmic patterns of certain visual sequences.

36. The synthesiser pads applied were from the Logic Audio library soundbank (Sunrise synth pad, Analog swell pad, Dark swell synth and Mercury raindrops synth). These sounds were created through the manipulation and experimentation of EXS24 II and ES2 synthesiser modulators, oscillators, LFOs and envelopes and filters.

*The sound of Te Kore*

*He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* opens in the metaphysical. This is te Kore ... the space before image, before things are possessed, before things are felt. In this environment we encounter genealogical recitation. The soundscape for this sequence draws upon the resonance of the porotiti (whirling spinning disc) (00'22") to provide a dark, soft humming that contributes to the low vibrational frequency underpinning an accompanying audio of wind. Sheehan suggests "the low tonality of the porotiti provides an auditory perception of expectancy but also signals the cleansing of the air" (Appendix 2). The use of the hue puruhau (gourd) (at 00'46"), provides a deep booming resonance along with the breath sounds and the word "ha". The way in which the musician plays with the hue and combines her breath and words, Sheehan suggests, produces an evocative sound representation of Papatūānuku (ibid.).

Moncrieff, Dorai and Venkatesh (2001), in their consideration of indexical signs in film audio, discuss the phenomenon of ‘expressive silence’. In *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* a form of expressive silence opens the work. Here Te Kore is not interpreted as emptiness but as the epoch of time where there was nothing. This is why I wanted an almost imperceptible sound under the black with the type keyed at 00’03”. The sound, or the perceived lack of it, was used to colour anticipation, and to add depth to a nonexplicit period, before time. I wanted to reinforce the idea that Te Kore was unknown and perhaps unknowable. It sits outside of Western cultural understanding because it draws upon a distinctly Māori ontology.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter I have critically unpacked some of the thinking behind the designing of *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero*. However, such a work is so complex that one cannot offer an adequate analysis of all of the creative decision-making involved in its creation.

In discussing the film’s iconography I considered the use of whenua as a metaphor and drew special attention to Hine-nui-te-pō as an iconographic construction.

I then unpacked the concept of whakapapa as it related to the layering of imagery within the work.

A consideration of cultural bowdlerisation and the historical sanitising of Māori narratives followed this. As an extension of this I discussed the nature of noneroticised genitalia in traditional Māori thinking. This was followed by a consideration of the marginalisation of pūrākau and the need to revitalise not only language but also the narratives that house it.

In discussing the design for language revitalisation in the work, I outlined the current fragility of te reo Māori in Aotearoa. This was then tied into specific approaches adopted in the creative work, including my choice of vocabulary, the inclusion of classical language and the distinctive treatment of translation in subtitle design.

In closing, I examined my distinctive employment of typography by considering typeface decisions, treatments and the positioning of words within the text. This led to a discussion of how sound was used in the narration and soundscape, (including the use of pūoro and the concept of expressive silence in interpreting the nature of Te Kore).





# 5.

He Kupu Whakatepe



*Ka ngaro reoreo manu, ka ngaro reoreo tangata*

When the language of birds can no longer be heard,  
so too will the voice of humans be silenced.

This epithet speaks to the fragility of language and the fact that diversity is the key to survival. The efforts to resist language loss are part of larger struggles for personal and communal wellbeing, self-determination and cultural survival. A community's language is a unique part of its culture, often connecting community with its ancestors or with the land, and making up an essential part of its history and how they sees itself. The Tejano poet Gloria Anzaldúa (Anzaldúa 2003) eloquently captures the inextricability of language, culture and identity when she notes, "Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (p. 159).

This statement resonates with second language learners (SL) struggling to revive the language of their ancestors. However, there is also a sense of pathos because of the enormous challenges SL learners face learning te reo Māori in a country where, despite Māori being designated an official language, English remains the dominant mode of address. For colonised peoples, their separation from their language is tantamount to cultural genocide.

Language revitalisation is central to this project, which was driven by a desire to reinforce and extend the Māori language. The pūrākau that I recall as a child, told in the hushed darkness on the edge of sleep, were rich in words and expressions that do not appear in children's picture books, or the emerging digital texts that are currently extending printed literature. The rhythms and flows of language, its curious pauses and sudden emphases were part of an oral tradition that *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* seeks to recover.<sup>37</sup> In this work we see and hear language. We witness the power of words and their candescence. When we encounter Hine-nui-te-pō's karakia at the end of the story, we understand the terror of words and the haunting power of language that has the ability to cross time. In *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* I have sought to present te reo Māori in such a way that it retains the essence of 'classical' Māori language, maintaining traditional allusions and metaphor.

37. Pūrākau capture the essence of the ancient Māori world, because they harness the richness and depth of the language and oral traditions.

To this end the script has used a "classical" language style employing oratorical devices like whakapapa and karakia. These are punctuated with ancient phrases and words. It is intended that the language used in the pūrākau will pique the interest of the most fluent Māori speakers. At the same time the intent is that the use of more familiar language will captivate, encourage and enthuse second language learners. I look back now over this thesis that is both artistic and political. I am reminded of roots that run far back into the Tama-ki-Hikurangi whareniui at Waiohau and to the hushed voices of the kaumatua and kuia ... then back further into the generations of my ancestors whose stories ornamented and gave meaning to life ... then back further again, through the cosmologies to Te Kore, Te Pō, before time accounted. All of these things are connected by and made evident through stories.

In writing and designing this thesis I have chosen to draw on the power of my creativity as a storyteller, because I believe that the artistic can touch the wairua, the essence of being,

in ways that the formal analysis cannot. This said, I draw upon the knowledge of scholars who have preceded me (both within and outside of the academy) ... and I am humbled by their contributions.

Although *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* situates its contribution in the realm of recent research, it situates its offering in a deeper idea, in a belief in the power of change and the agency of the artistic to effect this. It is my offering into a greater whole.

*Kai hea, kai hea te pū o te mate?*

*Kai runga, kai raro.*

*Kai te hikahika nui o Hine-nui-te-pō*

Where, where is the source of death?

It is above, it is below.

It is in the organ of Hine-nui-te-pō









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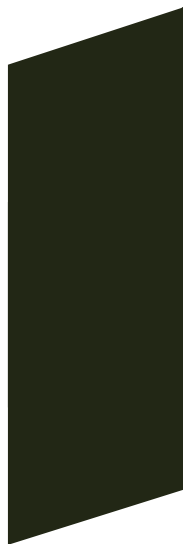
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# 6.

## Appendices



## Appendix 1

*Composed narrative for He iti te manu he nui te kōrero  
[R. Powhare 2015]*

*MĀORI*

I te timatanga ko Te Kore  
Ko Te Kore te whiwhia  
Ko Te Kore te rawea

Mai i Te Kore

Ko Te Pō  
Ko Te Pō nui  
Ko Te Pō roa  
Ko te Pō uriuri

Tihei mauriora ki te whai ao ki te ao marama!

Ina!  
Ko Ranginui  
Ko Papatūānuku

Tērā he wā he mana atua to te tangata  
I a rātau te mana makutu  
He mana panoni i o rātau hanga  
He mana nui to rātau  
Engari te mutunga ka mate rātau

Ko te pātai no hea mai te mate?  
I timata te mate mai hea?

Ko tēnei pūrākau tawhito he kōrero mo tētahi tangata mana  
atua  
Ko te ngako o te pūrākau ko te whai i te orangatonutanga

Ko Māui he tangata tinihanga  
He tangata parapara  
He tipua whakapātaritari

“He haerenga nui tāku ki te kimi i tētahi tipuna kei i a ia  
te mana o te ora—mai kore ka tāea e au ki te kapo i te  
orangatonutanga kia ora ai te tangata mo ake tonu

Kei hea te tipuna nei a Hine-nui-te-pō? He aha tōna āhua?”

“E tīraha ana ia i te ata o te Rākau-nui-o-te-ora” te kī a  
Tīrairaka

“Haere, whakaemihia o hoa. Engari kia marama, kua koe mo te  
hoihoi, kua koe mo te kōhimuhimu, kua mo te katakata!”

Ka tae ka whakaekia a Hine-nui-te-pō  
Ka whakatata atu a Māui

Kua taka kē a Hine-nui-te-pō ki te moe hōhonu

Ka whakapiri atu a Māui  
I reira ka mahi mākutu ia ka panoni i tona āhua hai mokomoko

Ka neke whakamokamoka atu ia  
Ka tata atu

Ka hongihongi te ihu ki waenganui i ngā kūhā o Hine-nui-te-pō

Ka hongki ki te taha matau

Ka hongki ki te taha mau

Ka hongki whakararo

Ka hongki whakarunga mai kore ka kitea te puna o te kakara

“Kei au te mana!” te ūmere a Māui. “Kei au te mana!” kua keka  
hoki ngā mahara kua rewaha kē ngā whatu

Ka titiro a Tīrairaka ka pakaru mai te pukukata

Ka oho a Hine-nui-te-pō

“Ko wai tēnei nanakia e whakaekia nei e pāwhera nei i te hōpua  
hōhonu o te ora?”

Ka titiro whakararo ia e, ko te whiore o mokomoko e tautau ana  
ki waho o ōna puapua

Ka kōpenupenuhia  
 Ka kōnatinatihia  
 Ka kotia a Māui kia mate!

Ko te mutunga tēnei o te ora ki te tangata

Ka oho Te Pō  
 Ka rongō Te Pō  
 Ka oho Te Ao  
 Ka rongō Te Ao  
 Ka oho ki tua  
 Ka oho ki waho  
 Nau mai te mate  
 Nau mai te pirau  
 Nau mai te aituā!

Ko wai ka hua ko wai ka tohu

He iti te manu he nui te kōrero

*ENGLISH [Translated by R. Pouwhare]*

In the beginning there was the Nothingness  
 The Void where nothing is possessed  
 The Void in which nothing is felt

From the Void  
 Came The Night  
 The great night  
 The long night  
 The deep dark night

Behold the sneeze of life  
 To the first glimmer of light  
 To the bright light of day

Behold  
 Ranginui the Sky Father  
 Papatūānuku the Earth Mother

There was a time when people possessed the power of gods  
They had the power to create magic  
The power to change their shapes

However inevitably they all died

The question was where is death from?  
What is the genesis of death?

This ancient legend tells the story of a small bird called  
Tirairaka and a man Māui who possessed powers of the gods

The story concerns his quest for immortality

Māui was a trickster, gifted and clever  
A supernatural being that challenged convention

“ I am on a great mission to find an ancestress who possesses  
the power over life—perhaps I may even snatch immortality so  
that humans will live forever

Where is this ancestress called Hine-nui-te-pō? What does she  
look like?”

“She lies outstretched in the shade of the Great Tree of Life “  
said Tirairaka

Māui said to Tirairaka “Go then gather your friends but be  
warned, when we get there you are not to be silent”

Māui whispered, “No chattering and no laughing!”

They arrived and he began to creep towards Hine-nui-te-pō  
He edged closer  
Hine-nui-te-pō had fallen into a deep sleep

He inches even closer

...and in an instant he performs magic and changes his shape  
into a lizard

Carefully he creeps closer all the while sniffing between Hine-nui-te-pō's thighs  
 He sniffed to the right  
 He sniffed to the left  
 He sniffed below  
 He sniffed upwards

Trying to locate the source of the scent

“ I have the power! “ screams Māui. “I have the power!” so  
 intoxicated was he that he became cross-eyed

From high above Tirairaka the fantail looked down  
 She laughed out loud chirping in astonishment

And the Great Goddess awoke and shouted

“Who is this villain who dares to invade me who dares to  
 violate the deep spring of life?”

She glanced down and between her thighs was a horrific  
 sight—only the tail of the lizard was protruding out of the  
 external opening of her vagina

Enraged she crushed him between her thighs  
 mashing him to a pulp  
 slashing him to death

This is our explanation for why humans die

Hine-nui-te-pō's triumphant karakia (exhortation)

The Night jolts awake  
 The Night hears the sounds  
 The World wakes to a new realisation  
 The World now knows of my power  
 The Spirit world of beyond  
 The outer world know my power  
 Welcome Death!  
 Welcome Decay!  
 Welcome Catastrophe!



## Appendix 2

### *Rational for the Sound Design of He iti te manu he nui te kōrero [Maree Sheehan, 2015]*

#### *Introduction*

There has been a strong tendency in the aesthetics of this particular sound composition to emphasise the story narrative through the application of combining taonga puoro instrumentation and electronic synthesised instruments. The importance of the compositional structure is to provide an auditory narrative that enhances the story and visual narrative.

This soundscape composition combines the acoustic and electronic instrumental timbre, tone and resonance to convey an auditory exposition-development-climax-denouement coherent with the plot of the story and visual representation.

#### *The creative process*

The intention was to create a soundscape that incorporated all of these acoustic and electronic sounds being layered together and or in singularity to provide a contemporary soundscape that accompanies a contemporary narrative and visual

representation of the story of Māui and the Tirairaka. Bringing together the sounds of the traditional Māori instrumentation and mixing it with contemporary modern electronic synthesisers and sound samples creates emotiveness and auditory perception of activity, drama and emotive intensities through the tone, timbre, dynamics of the instrumentation within the soundscape. The soundscape was composed to provide a sonic vibrational energy that underpinned the narrative and visuals.

The process of composing this soundscape was initiated by just spending time listening to Robert Pouwhare's interpretation and vision for this Maui and the Tirairaka story. Robert had previously worked with Professor Welby Ings and Victor Cham to produce an initial soundscape. I was inspired by the story and the visual/sound representation of the story and wanted to support the project by composing a soundscape that incorporated both traditional Māori instrumentation with contemporary sounds. As a Māori woman composer it is important to me to firstly acknowledge the spiritual foundation

of my creative processes as my connection to *wairua* and existence of *mauri* that unifies all things. Hearing music initially comes through my connection to *wairua*, in an unconscious “arrival” of melodic, rhythmic and sonic ideas. I hear music, then “think” and “feel” the music with the narrative. The connection to *wairua* in both the unconscious and the conscious creative processes is a constant spiritual force that protects, inspires, and influences. My creative process involves listening, talking, experimenting, and reflecting, all of which go hand in hand. It is a conscious and an unconscious approach, which at times is automatic and spontaneous activity and sometimes a more focused direct approach. In addition, there was a collaborative approach to the final soundscape with the composer, Robert Pouwhare and Professor Welby Ings, that resulted in several minor sound edits to the soundscape. Each time these were submitted Victor Cham would attach the new edited version to the visuals for review.

The utilisation of acoustic instrumentation is distinguished through the sounds of the taonga puoro (traditional Māori

instruments). These instruments provide a unique, authentic Māori sound and voice to this soundscape. The taonga puoro instruments were performed by Mahina Kai (Ngai Tahu) and recorded by Maree Sheehan (Ngati Maniapoto-Waikato, Ngati Tuwharetoa). The taonga puoro instruments incorporated in the soundscape were the porotiti (whirling spinning disc), the hue puruhau (gourd), kōauau (short end blown flute), kōhatu stones.

Electronic sound synthesisers and drum samples were used to generate interesting and unique sounds with individual timbres that embody the tone and mood being represented in the narrative and visual creation. The particular synthesiser pads used specific dynamics and sonic stimulus to provide both a positive or negative valence at certain times in the soundscape. The bass drum or kick drum sample was used in the soundscape to emphasise rhythmic patterns at certain visual cues. The synthesiser pads applied were from the Logic Audio library soundbank. They were “Sunrise synth pad”, “Analog swell pad”, “Dark swell synth” and “Mercury raindrops

synth”. These synthesised sounds were created through the manipulation and experimentation of the EXS24 II and ES2 synthesiser modulators, oscillators, LFOs and envelopes and filters. Rather than just placing sampled synthesised sounds, the composer played in each synthesised part in various musical chord structures. Furthermore, electronic sampled nature sounds of wind, lightning, earthquakes, human laughter and birds from the Logic audio sample library were layered at specific times in the soundscape to accentuate the narrative and the visuals.

Silence was also an important sound device in the soundscape. It provided areas of space where only the visuals are seen, thereby creating periods of contemplation within the story and adding another sound dynamic to the soundscape.

*Taonga puoro*

The resonance of the porotiti (whirling spinning disc), heard at 00:22, provides a soft humming wind sound that contributes to the low vibrational frequency underpinning the natural wind

sound. The low tonality of the porotiti provides an auditory perception of expectancy but also signals the cleansing of the air. The use of the hue puruhau (gourd) was placed at 00:46 because it provides a deep booming resonance sound along with the breath sounds and the word ha. The way in which Kai plays with the hue and combines her breath and words produces a powerful sound representation of Papatuanuku.

The insertion of the kōauau sound at 01:11 represents the essential force of the human beings being spoken about in the narrative. According to Nunns (2014, p. 56) traditional instruments such as the kōauau replicate the human voice, the aesthetic attributes of singing—ihi wehi wana wairua hotu, tangi and the vocal equivalent of wiriwiri can be found in their performance. With this in mind, the introduction of the kōauau sounds in the composition act to express the godlike, magical power and voice of these people at this time. Considering that the kōauau has been widely acclaimed as being used in times of tangi (funeral) to express sadness and sorrow, it was also embedded in the soundscape at 01:18 – 01: 35 to convey the

sadness at the death of all of these people. At 01:41 the visuals show Māui walking on stones and accordingly the tapping sound of the kōhatu stones being hit together were used to synthesise sound with image. This is combined with the style of playing the kōauau on the side of the mouth hole entrance to produce a dissonant airy wind sound, which represents the deceptive intentions of Māui.

At 02:27 the rangi (melody) of the kōauau is played again to signify the voice of Hine-nui-te-pō. The kōauau is played in the manner of wiriwiri sound motif to add the drama of expectancy and the underlying deceptive nature of Māui changing into a lizard for the purpose of creeping up on Hine-nui-te-pō. It also provides a melodic motif that represents only mokomoko. At 05:01 the hue puruhau is used again, underlying the karakia. The sound symbolises the breath of wahinetoa, starting with Papatuanuku and, in this particular story, the breath and life force of Hine-nui-te-pō.

#### *Synthesised electronic sounds*

The sunrise synth pad is first played in the key of C# major at 00:41 and modulates between G major and C# major inversions to produce a positive feeling in order to emulate a soundscape of a “bright light of day”. The sunrise synth pad is created from the EXS24 II. The EXS24 mkII is used to play, edit, and create sampler instruments. It has been used to assign built in samples and sampler instruments to particular key and velocity ranges, and process them with the EXS24 mkII filters and modulators. This has enabled the creation of expressive sounds by using any sample as basic synthesiser waveforms. At 01:03 there is a change to the analog swell synth pad, which is produced by the ES2 synthesiser. The ES2 three oscillators have each been used to create different sonic flavours. These particular combinations of waveforms were used to interact together to create this multitextured sound. At 01:43 the dark swell synth sound produced by the EXS24 II and played in the key of A minor creates a dissonant sound and emotes the feeling of disharmony surrounding Māui. The sound of the mercury raindrops synth, produced by the ES2 synth module, is

played in at 03:04 in the key of E minor. This synth pad sound uses a LFO 1 built in envelope generator. By manipulating its positive values, it introduces a delay, so the LFO gradually increases in intensity. This LFO intensity is used audially to reflect the sounds of celestial lights that are seen on screen.

#### *Nature and sound samples*

The sound sample of the wind is the first underlying sound of nature to be heard. It is utilised to signal that there is a faint expectation of creation coming from Te Kore (the nothingness). At 01:35 is the sound sample of birds in nature that represent the Tirairaka and once again at 02:36. At 03:56 the narrative explains that the Tirairaka is laughing at the mokomoko; this is where the human laughing sound is placed. The sound of lightning is placed at 04:00 as Hine-nui-te-pō awakens and is furious to discover mokomoko (Māui) trying to enter her vagina. As the narrative and visual depicts the crushing of Māui between her legs, the sound of earthquakes and earth rumblings can be heard at 04:26 – 04:35.



## Appendix 3

### *Composition logic audio track list*

The track list below of the *He iti te manu he nui te kōrero* soundscape composition describes the names of each soundtrack and how it they were organised. Figure A illustrates the Logic audio arrangement window of the soundtracks.

Track 1: Voice over narrative

Track 2: Nature sounds (wind)

Track 3: Nature sounds (birds)

Track 4: Nature sounds (lightning)

Track 5: Nature sounds (wind)

Track 6: Porotiti

Track 7: Sunrise synth pad

Track 8: Hue and breath

Track 9: Analog swell pad

Track 10: Kōauau

Track 11: Kōhatu stones

Track 12: Dark swell synth

Track 13: Bass drum (kick)

Track 14: Mercury raindrops synth

Track 15: Kōauau (mokomoko theme)

Track 16: Earth rumbling sound

Track 17: Human laughing

### *Sound mix and sound effects*

There were 17 tracks mixed together in Logic Audio including the vocal narratives, nature sound samples, taonga puoro, synthesisers, and bass drum. Below is the tracklist of the session. A variety of equalisation (EQ), compression, reverb, delay echo, limiter, exciter, sub bass, space designer, chorus and tremolo were utilised on most of the tracks. The figure B illustrates the effects plugins that were used on each track.

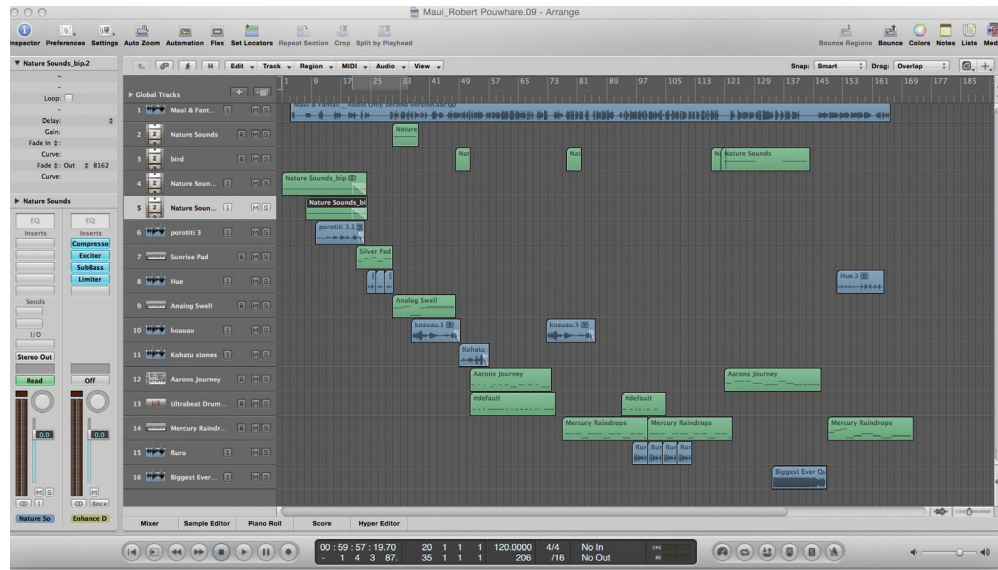


Figure A: Logic Audio arrangement window







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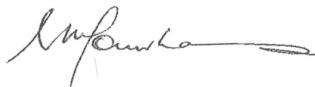
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