



TIHEI MAURI ORA: A CONVERSATION IN PAINT

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Mihi

Kia manawanui, kia kaha, kia kaha tonu !!!

Ma te whakaatu, ka mohio

Ma te mohio, ka marama

Ma te marama, kamatau

Ma te matau, ka ora.

By discussion cometh understanding

By understanding cometh light

By light cometh wisdom

By wisdom cometh life everlasting.

(Pa Henare Tate)

Whaia te iti kahurangi

Ki te tuoho koe

Me he maunga teitei

Nga Puhi ko te maunga Kaihu

For Waimarama Patuawa and Racheal Lenore Moore

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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, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgments.’

Sept 2006

80% Practical 20% Exegesis

This exegesis is dedicated to my children

Ryan Joseph Te Kopuru

Hannah-Mae Sipala Joan

And their children, and children's children...

These are the words of Sir Apirana Ngata, given as advice for coming generations.

I pass them on to you, Ryan, and to you Hannah-Mae and the many after you.

E tipu e rea mo nga ra o te ao

Ko to ringa, ki nga rakau a te Pakeha hei ara mo to tinana

Ko to ngakau, ki nga taonga a o tipuna Maori, he tiki tatu mo to mahunga,

Ko to Wairua ki te atua, nana nei nga mea Katoa.

Grow O tender one to fulfil the generation's destinies

Your hands to the skills of the Pakeha, a need for your advancement,

Your heart to ancestral gifts and culture of your people, wear them as a plume on your head.

Your soul dedicated to God, the creator of all things.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dante (14th century writer who wrote La Divina Commedia spoke warmly of ‘*an intellectual life filled with love*’.

“That beautiful phrase describes to me a life in which thinking [about people, about how we live, about life’s meaning for ourselves and for other people] is honoured but also suffused with love which leads to connection, to spontaneity of feeling and from there action if that should be appropriate. It is a phrase to describe a life which takes into account the needs and desires of others and balances them with your own. “

(Dowrick. S. pg 307)

The above passage has elements of the Maori life principle, *mauri*, which, with a mix of *aroaha*, can extend the intellectual journey as a whole endeavour undertaken at a certain point in time, rather than an academic discourse that leads to an outcome of attainment. An exchange of heart and mind has and is taking place, *te taha wairoa* and *kupu toi*. I acknowledge the aroha of my ancestors and their intellectual journey through my *iwi/hapu Ngati Whatua, Nga Puhi* and Clan Wardrop.

I acknowledge the active knowledge, guidance and participatory actions of my supervisors- Natalie Robertson and Frances Joseph - their support and advice has and is inspiring. To Dante Bonica at Auckland University, who is a guardian of the knowledge and understanding surrounding the kura kaupapa of kokowai, I am deeply grateful for his expertise and guidance. Roger Neich, Janneer Love, and Kipa Rangiheuea, at Auckland Museum. Many thanks for your time, sharing of knowledge, and expertise. Lucy Toku who stood with me and welcomed me home.

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ABSTRACT

This project engages with a new construct that recognises the concerns of indigenous shared knowledge's which not only privileges the *mahi* (work) produced, but shares the site alongside a dominant culture of reading, which has historically denied the autonomous voice of many indigenous peoples. It explores aspects of fixity, materiality, visual memory and a social/psyche of spiritual identity through a Maori epistemology in of Mauri.¹

My project seeks to initiate a dialogue within the site of *whakatokia* (*spiritual home*) from which the mahi starts and embraces the constructs of the wharenui, (physical imagery and the significance of the Poupou (wall supports within the wharenui, the meeting house or large house on the marae) that hold up the rafters (heke) and the whakapapa (genealogy) that accompanies them. The poupou and their significance will be discussed in this exegesis through Conversation 2, 2.3 and an exploration of Visual interstices in Architecture concerning the Whare Nui.

This project uses a painting practice to explore traditional painting (kokowai) techniques, Kaupapa Maori methodology and philosophical concerns through a series of conversations as well as moments of discovery within the project. This is relevant within a Kaupapa research methodology in which the incorporation of

¹ Mauri (Williams.H.W. 1992)(Mead S.M, 1997) intrinsically informs the pieces and is not concerned with representation, but rather that it is an integral part of my own process and how I understand its application. The manner in which I choose to express these concerns can be understood within the wider social/psyche or taha wairua (Maori spiritual values) from which Mauri acknowledges the visible and transcendent nature of the universe.

storytelling and myth are legitimate avenues of inquiry and place the projects contextual frame.

Locating the work through korero (talking) is also significant in positioning my painting practice. The terms of definition and reference are from a predominantly Maori worldview. This 'waka' will embark on a voyage of reclamation/restoration. I acknowledge the support of my ancestors and a number of voices that speak to the issues I wish to address in this paper.

PREFACE

Before I was three, I understood de- differentiation, although of course I would not have used that term. I understood the permanence of being, of existing in a non-linear, slightly sequential way.

In a known tangible time and space, there was a specific order and systems of existence, (meaning the universe, its particulars and my experience of it). This came in a deliberate if somewhat obscure way, that had little to do with who I found myself to be. Of course before three years of age, I didn't require existence knowledge. Questions about identity, who I was were irrelevant.

My journey, through the work I create, is a more informed notion of what it is to acknowledge my identity as a woman of Maori and European *whakapapa*. My paintings are for me an embodiment of *Mauri* which as a life principle, affirms and acknowledges the *taha wairua* (Maori spiritual values) surrounding my work.

The development of issues around identity - the relationship I have with the land here in Aotearoa (New Zealand) are concerns that my work explores. Later works deal with *Te Whare Nui* (the meeting house) and the questions that I wish to raise concerning indigenous

architecture. Issues of time and space and my expression of these phenomena within the works are part of this discussion.

My work is a restorative project, which is informed by Mātauranga Māori. The physicality and site of the Poupou are not constrained to a gallery context, rather they are a contribution to my Marae Taita and the issues surrounding the absence of painted or carved houses in the geographical location between Maramanui, Kaihu and Aranga on route between Dargaville and the Waipoua state forest. Many wharerunanga are in this condition. (See Simmons in Meeting house of Ngāti Porou O te tai Rawhiti, pg.11)

The integrity of materials reflect and communicate mauri, and during this project, the wood is predominantly recycled Kauri, Matai and Rimu with some Pinus Radiata. This is an important consideration as the wood has a whakapapa, as do the pigments. Their mauri is informing each piece. It is a slow and deliberate method of working when I consider each image in detail. This process is discussed in detail in Conversations, under Conversation III. Telling the stories of the paintings.

It is within a reflective *Kaupapa Māori* research methodologyⁱ and practise of sacred and non-sacred participation, that I have deepened the *whakapapa* or ancestral lineage of my works. Having a Western knowledge based theoretical map enhances my *korero* (talk) even more.

The premise is ontological (a branch of philosophical thought in metaphysics, concerned with the nature of Being) rather than an in

depth epistemological (the nature of Knowledge) route. Other indigenous writers have raised those systems of inquiry. Existential (concerned with relating to existence, particularly in relation to human existence, the self formation and individuation and how that is governed) and phenomenological (knowledge of the external world is limited to appearances, so that what we know is what we sense it is, or perceive it to be, not what they are in themselves), theories are an influence to be considered, particular surrounding the notion of Being. Being in a Greco – Roman sense of (ontos), and Being in a tikanga Maori sense in which deal predominant life principles emerge.

...The traditional Maori view of history did not distinguish between myth and history; instead the world of ancestors is ever present, providing the archetypal situations for explaining happenings in the present.

(Neich. R. pg 150)

The works in this project are the Pou that are wall supports within the wharenui (meeting house) and are a source of information. They underline social aesthetics, beliefs and conditions, (i.e. social contract and other genetic influences in the process of a consciously geared visual space) physiognomic conditions, memory and desire that are influences that are part of the whakapapa of Pou. I have chosen to work with Pou, to explore their materiality, traditional colours used in painted and carved Pou, their significance within the wharenui.

And so we begin.

In times long past, a sperm whale came ashore and spoke thus to the kauri.

Kauri! Come with me to the sea which is fresh and cool.

No! Said the Kauri, you may like the sea but I prefer to stand here with my feet in the soil.

All right said the Whale, then let us agree to exchange skins.

So that is why the bark of the Kauri is thin and full of resinous oil.

Te Tai Tokerau (Northern) Maori believed the Kauri to be the father of the sperm whale. Because of their huge size, both are regarded as Rangatira (chiefs) of their respective realms.

Moreover, their bark and skin show similarities of texture, while kauri gum is like the ambergris found in the intestines of the sperm whale.²

² Courtesy of Te Ao Turoa (Natural History of Maori Gallery) Auckland Museum, Te Papa Whakahiku.

INTRODUCTION

Conversations over time can have a profound affect on your life. These stories can be revealed in the most unexpected ways. They add to the multiplicity of seemingly invisible yet complex notions of identity and existence. A conversation at a certain time, which explores shifts in meaning, identity and restoring the importance of shared knowledges, gives rise to my practice and the project.

The Story of the Kauri and the Whale is the greater connection to an event that places my work and it's whakapapa.³

Maori travelled a world that was identified by genealogy and the stories that were placed upon the land and, in turn, grew from the land, shaped how they saw the world. This is utterly alien to most Maori who live in an urban environment, but the landscape was literally a collection of ancestors.

(Dr Te Maire Tau in *Te Puawai o Ngai Tahu*, Christchurch City Art Gallery, *Te Puna Waiwhetu*) p.12)

A story helps locate (See Conversation 2,2.3 the Cradle of Mauri) and give us a sense of the time and space in which events occurred. My paintings are bearing witness of those time and space histories, that in turn bear witness to the Ontology of Mauri.

The relationship we have to the stories and memories guide us in our lives whether they are brought to our consciousness, and

³ Whakapapa is a predominant concept and vital to a full understanding and intrinsic knowledge base from which cosmologically speaking, 'to lay one thing upon another' (Barlow. C p 173) is the basis for organising a view of the Universe and subsequent mythology and development of primal human origins.

reconstructed according to our experiences, desires and beliefs about such instances. They remain with us as a social construct of knowledge, which we can choose to accept and reject in forming our identity.

By raising the level of consciousness in my work, I'm able to use Kaupapa Maori research methodology, as it is the most supportive and accurate method of assessing a Maori worldview. Like the Kauri and the Whale, there is an exchange-taking place. It is the ability to navigate the concerns I think the work engages with and the translation of ideas that take place within the Wharenui (meeting house) that sits within the marae space and how those social constructs influence my work.

*This narrative can then be analysed in terms of the four levels of the **geographic, the techno-economic, the sociological and the cosmological**. It is the cosmological level of the narrative that reflects and even helps to structure the participant's conception of reality. While myth has its logic, it is the mythic events that have established the world, as the teller knows it. Insofar as the meetinghouse history reveals its location in this mythic, ideal eternal dimension of reality, then we are justified to consider the relations between the cosmological level of the narrative and 'reality' (Neich.p.229)*

CONVERSATION I

1.1 A VISUAL MEME: A STORY IN MEMORY

When I turn to memory, I ask it bring forth what I want: and some things are produced immediately, some take longer as if they had to be brought out from some more secret place of storage; some pour out in a heap...

St Augustine

Stored and shared histories of collective memory may have a genetic disposition. The advocate of this thinking can be found in the work of 'genetic memes'. In 1976, Richard Dawkins advocated the idea of genetic memory. This theory proposes that a self-preserving gene for memory, which like DNA structure, holds specific sequences of memory recalling significant events passed down from generation to generation and it is this information that ensures communal survival.

As I begin to understand this theory, I have also encountered the idea of meta-patterns.

Do systems of shared knowledge, patterns of belief, traditions carry the seeds of continuity? Are there visual memes for verticality, negative and positive space and syncretic (iconic memory), which are perhaps part of a universal language within the medium of architecture? How do collective groupings of peoples from such diverse histories define their identity and social constructs without some recognition of visual memes? Is this a dynamic within the reflective attitude of a place of worship i.e. a

mosque, temple and church, or in the case of the Wharenui, the intrinsic, social identification with such a place and its placement?

The effecting experiences of buildings, cities or landscapes are frequently given as examples of involuntary memory, of memories that are more precious for arising unwilled. Buildings and places are commonly thought to provoke not only the recollections of the individual but a kind of collective memory, for example of the antiquity of culture. The power of stories of origin relies not so much on the facts of origin as the agreement to collectively remember, and thus transform. What then is the work of the architectural historian and the will to remember, or the architect who attempts to build within the memory structure of a culture?
(Oswald. M. p.57)

The question that arose from research into Mauri and its influence in my own work has lead to the idea of genetic memes. That there is a visual identity that on a subconscious level, guides your preference, leads in a phenomenological engagement with materials, that is supportive of the whakapapa you carry, that is yours and in a visual way is demonstrated time and time again. The origins of what this could conceivably be are a visual genetic meme.

THE WHAKAPAPA OF KAURI AND ITS CONSTRUCTS OF A SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Te Ao o Nga Atua

Papatuanuku

Tena koe me nga kaupapa tuku iho

Tuku iho I te kore

I te Po

Ki te Marama

Papatuanuku i whakatokia ki roto ia koe

I puta mai i te pouritanga o to tinana

Ki te ao marama, ko nga ahuatanga o

Te ao

Te Kore

Te po

Te ao

Te moana

Te whenua

Nga otaota

Nga rakau katoa

Nga ngarara

Nga manu

Te marama... Te ra... nga whetu

I takia mai e ratou ko te ao tuturu

Putu iho I to tinana

Ko Tangaroa

Ko Rongomatane

Ko Hamiatiketike

Ko Tanemahuta

Ko Tumatanenga

Ko Hinenuitepo

A, na Hineahuone raua ko Hinetitama

I hanga

...he tangata ...He tangata...he tangata

TE WHARENUI

In the architecture of the Maori wharenui, identity is expressed in carvings that communicate whakapapa. It is the dynamic relationship of the sacred and non-sacred in this space that I can locate my identity.

Identity, as well as being about identification and organisation is also about spatiality. In part, this means that identity involves an identification with particular places, whether local or national.

(Hetherington, pg 105)

Correspondingly:

Treating the whole marae complex as an architectural ordering of spatial relationships, Austin (1976:233) has phrased the regularities of marae orientation in terms of enclosure and openness. (Neich, pg 123)

In my practice, my tendency to take a particular view, as a guide or anomaly when grappling with a suitable method that allows the works to be seen in a ‘cultural’ way, can be seen as a cultural memes.

“In the same way the ‘rush of self-similarity’ under conditions of closed evolution prompts the cultural selection of open memes because open memes- such as customs and rites of passage- are permeable to time, and temporal events have particular saliency in deeply iterative worlds.

This doesn't of course explain why as evolution fluctuates between open and closed form, the art/science relationship so dramatically inverts. But this can only be because the sticky meme of art is intrinsically open and time-permeable- and (as the history of Western art clearly demonstrates) is forced into increasingly recessive mutations when the cultural selection landscape favours the closed meme. And conversely, it seems, the meme of science- the rational meme – is intrinsically closed, and therefore achieves its natural dominance when evolution is open, but is driven to such shifts as astrology and medicine magic when evolution is closed, and open memes are dominant.”

(Tresilisan, pg 70)

This sticky memes of art openness that Tresilisan is suggesting, I find of interest as an avenue of potentiality within my works, that allows for traditional cultural motif and visual development to expand its origins, to change and grow. As a theory it attempts to bridge the contradictive nature of genetic memes. The interpretation and experiences I bring, the memories and desire, I work with within my practice are allusionary. They are evolving, shaped by my whakapapa.

Transitions of cultural change, in the case of the Wharenui, came in the form of figurative pictorial images, which portrayed the immense social and political changes taking place within Aotearoa mid 18th early 19th century.

The systems of memory, i.e., storytelling incantation and ritual, and the motifs of tradition that pass from generation to generation, then become symbolic and monumental, and are a vast and interesting reserve similar to a park in which we can sit and reflect, observe and decipher and indeed replicate and unpack at will. Perhaps all that is left is the reinvention, a bringing back in a new way in order to move forward, hence retro speculative landscapes and urban identities.

Stories reflect the interchange between reality and imagination and are an important component of Kaupapa Maori research methodology.

Memes are stories, songs, habits and skills, inventions and ways of doing things that we copy from person to person by imitation. Human nature can be explained by evolutionary theory, but only when we consider involving memes as well as genes. It is tempting to consider memes as simply 'ideas' but more properly memes are a form of information.

Mauri is a life principal and belief system that operates on a conscious and subconscious level, the actuality of being, of choosing.

This inquiry is relevant to my own interpretation and perceptions of cultural knowledge that is relevant to this project.

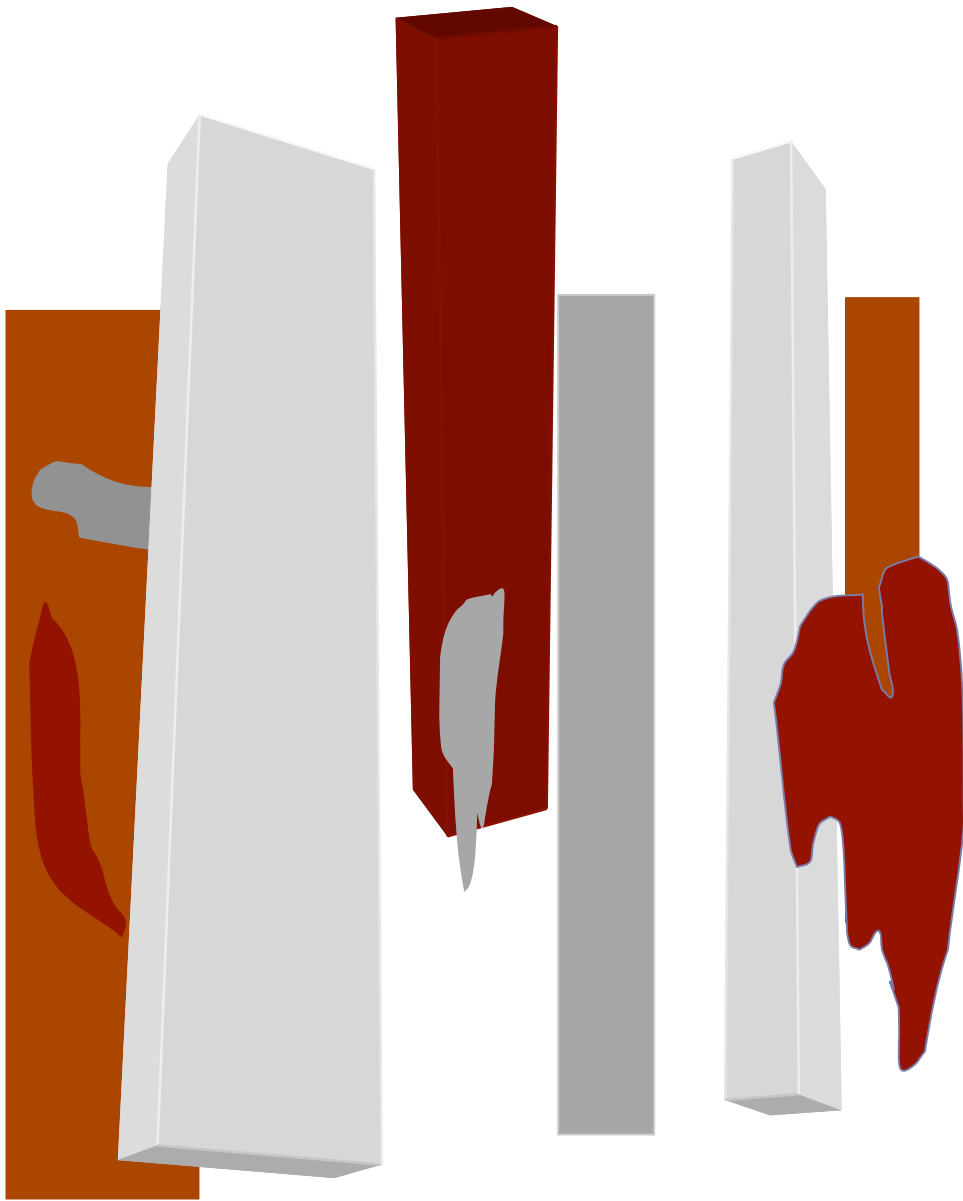
Kaupapa Maori research methodology is a suitable vehicle as it acknowledges the ethos of Maori cultural knowledge and identity.

Within the context of a Western centric academic arena, I have the kaupapa to navigate territories and sites, which engage new areas of research thinking and are seriously enjoyable.

Kaupapa Maori theory is a framework that both draws upon, affirms Matauranga Maaori as fundamental to Maori understandings. Kaupapa Maori theory is also multiple in its articulation and rather than exalt theory this thesis contends that Kaupapa Maori theory provides openings into analysis that can more readily explain and transform current inequities that face Maori people.

(Pihama,L. (2001) '*Tihei Maori Ora: Honouring Our Voices. Mana Wahine as a Kaupapa Maori Theoretical Framework*'.

Unpublished PhD, The University of Auckland.



Placeness, 2006

1.2 CONSTRUCTING REALITY - KAUPAPA RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I wish to discuss my theoretical approaches in relation to my practice, and relevant influences and issues that it raises within a Kaupapa research methodology. To do this, I start with my own whakapapa and acknowledgement of my ancestors who have called me to pass on past, present and future knowledge to the next generations.

To begin, on the inside looking out- is a deliberate way of engaging an audience and positioning its context (the work) is about power and the response. It is an acquiescence of traditional post-modernist theories, which attempt to bridge external aesthetic culture and internal dialogue, mainly through language, cultural materialism and psychoanalysis. The method is dialectical i.e. thesis, antithesis and synthesis. It is a powerful thinking tool in Western history and to my knowledge remains so. This theoretical methodology is at odds with a Maori conceptual framework or kaupapa. We are influenced and shaped by what we think, how we think and why we think about the way we think.

AN AUTHORITATIVE REALITY

“The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from it’s beginning, ranging from it’s substantive duration to it’s testimony to the history which it has experienced...And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.”

Walter Benjamin.

When I think of the authority of Western-centric thinking and operating systems of power which informs the very way in which theory is used, I think of my authority, my power, and the things that concern me as an indigenous artist, as an indigenous woman, whose time space history was not displaced or taken to some theoretical confinement to be brushed off and ‘discovered’ in a theoretical field in Europe or be analyzed with a rigour close to that of a shackled fighting dog. Opening the horizon of critical discourse is an engaging and attractive condition, and the concerns of this paper, will address that. If anyone could really come to grips with constructing a reality not based on Euro-Western centric epochs and define their research in their own terms, using their own methods and legitimate research then that is the primary intention of this work. Responding to a community and communities that not only actualizes their Being in this world, but beyond.

I am imagining

I am beginning

I am laughing

I am moving

I am talking

I am seeing

I am returning

I am

Our colonial experience traps us in the project of modernity. There can be no ‘post-modern’ for us until we have settled some business of the modern. This does not mean that we do not understand or

employ multiple discourses, or act in incredibly contradictory ways or exercise power ourselves in multiple ways. It means that there is unfinished business, that we are still being colonized (and know it), and that we are still searching for justice.

Coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. [To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things. Transforming our colonized views of our own history (as written by the West), however, requires us to revisit, site by site, our history under Western eyes. This in turn requires a theory or approach which helps us to engage with, understand and then act upon history. Telling our stories from the past, reclaiming the past, giving testimony to the injustices of the past are all strategies, which are commonly employed by indigenous peoples struggling for justice.

(Smith, 1999)

This account cannot be surpassed. It is as intentional as one gets to raise the issues that are of concern to me as an indigenous arts researcher using a Kaupapa research methodology. The sites of knowledge that construct a reality can be appreciated and deliver a very necessary and continuous dialogue for theoretical practitioners from a wider range of communities. Kaupapa research is and has an immersive quality, which can embrace a wide range of contexts.

‘Kaupapa Maori theory does not depend on Critical Theory for its existence. Kaupapa Maori theory is founded in this land, Aotearoa. Critical Theory is founded in Europe. A strong Kaupapa Maori

theoretical framework must be cognisant of our historical and cultural realities, in all their complexities.'

(Pihama, 2001, p.88)

Kaupapa Maori theory is driven by whanau, hapu, iwi, Maori understandings. Critical Theory is driven by European sourced philosophies and understandings

(Pihama, 200, p,103)



Kaupapa Maori is not a Theory in the Western sense: it does not subsume itself within European philosophical endeavours which construct and privilege on Theory over another Theory, one rationality over another knowledge, one World view over another Worldview of the Other. Kaupapa Maori Theory is rather Kaupapa Maori Praxis. My problematic continues. I de-construct the title further; what remains simply KAUPAPA Maori. (Walker, S, 1996, p.119).

My work is based in *tikanga Maori*, and relevant to a Maori ethos, ways of knowing and being in the world, and I find a kaupapa research methodology the most successful in addressing the concerns of my practice and the way in which I can raise the issues that my work explores and the problems that I encounter with it. An example of this would be in dealing with aspects of imagery that directly may have an impact on the authority of a piece. By that I mean, ancestors and acknowledgement of their mana and [or] their knowledge.

CONVERSATION II

2.1 THE CRADLE OF MAURI

*“ Fresh cut grass still tears me apart where will the butterfly land
Mower man can't you get your urges satisfied some other way
Unless you are the sea chopping shells into sand
This need that you have to control this land
Is a need I can't stand. ”*

Tracey Tawhiao, (2005)

ORIGINS

Te Putake

He timatanga to nga mea katoa.
 Nga ahuatanga Maori kua mau
 I te karakia e whai ake nei
 E taki ana I te putaketanga o Te Ao.

Mai I te kore, mai I te Po
 Ka hangaia to te putahitanga.
 Ka papa te whakapapa te puta ai
 Ko te whai Ao, ko te Ao marama.

Ina a Rangi- nui, a Papa-tua-nuku
 Nga matua taketake ka puta ia
 Te Aitanga-a Tini

All things have a beginning.
 Maori tradition as recorded in the accompanying chant tells first of
 the origins of the Universe.

Out of nothingness, out of darkness matter was created. Step by
 step, layer upon layer the Universe came into being.

Then Rangi-nui and Papa-tua-nuku
 The primal parents emerged, and had many children.(see
 Conversation I,1.1)

It is my premise that the secular (*noa*) and sacred (*tapu*) be acknowledged and affirmed and that this is a general premise of Kaupapa research methodology. Identifying the locus of any method of research is certainly to explore its philosophical roots, it's origins (Putake) development and maturation.

THE ONTOLOGY OF MAURI

The specific premise of Mauri is as defined in H.W. Williams, Dictionary of the Maori Language, the “ Life principle, thymos of man. (Human) And indeed all things - the breath, protection, vitality, mana fruitfulness, etc. of people, lands, forests. Certain karakia and incantations are specific in regard to the direct impact and association of Mauri. It is an integral acknowledgment of the essence of being and is derived from a non-material notion of life. It is existential, but unlike existentialism, it has a specific epistemology and ontological history provided through whakapapa (genealogy) and the relationship of korero. The mauri of an individual or of the land, plants, animals and oceans is addressing and acknowledging that existence.

Mauri and hau are both regarded as principles of life. Mauri is translated as the life principle and hau is the vitality or vital essence of a person (Williams 1957, p. 197) both are delicate, and an attack on one affects the other. Sorcerers were apt to focus especially upon the hau when they worked their arts of black magic known as makutu or sorcery (Oppenheim 1973, p.81-6). The

expected result of makutu was that the state of being well, hau-ora, would change to a state of near death, or *hau-mate*. Thus the role of the sorcerer was to negate *ora* (life) and convince victims that their life principles had been destroyed. If this is not halted, the mauri weakens, the spark of life loses its vitality and warmth, and the victim dies.

(Mead.S M 1997,p 218)

Ontology is the theory of Being (Tarnas.p.10 1991) and therefore for this inquiry, the ideas that resonate from exploring Mauri, in turn lead to a understanding that there is a deeper level to my work, which leads me to question both the universals and the particulars. Mauri is a Maori concept of Being, and therefore a Maori ontology.

The transcendental aspect of Mauri is and could be an interesting philosophical debate in itself, as Plato took years to arrive at a knowledge of or possibility that ideas about Being in a human sense could surmise the possibility of a Divine Order of Universals. The Origins (putake) include concepts of Te Ao Marama, the light, revelation of Being.

Mauri is a special power possessed by Io which makes it possible for everything to move and live in accordance with the conditions and limits of its existence Everything has a mauri, including people, fish animals birds, forests land, seas and rivers' the mauri is that power which permits these things to exist within their own realm and sphere, No one can control their own mauri or life-essence...While a person cannot control their own mauri, it is

possible for someone to establish a mauri for some creation, such as a house. When a house is built, the mauri is established as the sacred heart to the building. This mauri is the power obtained through a covenant with the gods to take care of the house and to fulfil the wishes, desires, and hopes of the people who will use it for noble purposes. Likewise with the oceans, rivers and forests; when the food supplies become depleted it is possible to return the mauri through conservation (rahui) and appropriate ritual ceremony.

(Barlow.C p 83)

2.2 TE WHAKAPAPA O KOKOWAI

Exploring traditional known colours methods and techniques of application.

In Chapter One, I looked at the *whakapapa of kauri*, to acknowledge the integral cosmological and ontological relationships that with when approaching my work, with a sense of incantation. The sacred and non-sacred application concerning materials. The tapu (sacred) colours that carry implications according to their use, and the general realm of noa (common) which allows wider application by anyone.

As my project developed, the gap in knowledge I had about the application and indeed the pigments used in original carved and painted pou. Natalie directed me to attend a course at Auckland University. This course, as part of an art history paper, introduced students to Maori material culture and included was the the traditional kokowai making process. Dante Bonica invited me to join the Wednesday workshops held over the year. This was an invaluable time, as the environment in which I learnt was appropriate and conducive to kaupapa research methodology that contained immersive learning situations.

Dante showed me what sources the paints originated from and from where they were gathered. The crushing and pounding of rock, shell, clay and slate were done on a large flat rock, ground with a river stone suitable to be handheld, yet heavy enough to

ground into smaller particles ready for paint cakes. Another practical method is the use of a mortar and pestle, which grounds well. They were then baked in the hot embers of a fire. This process enhanced and bound the colours ready for mixing and application after cooling.

Currently I am working on a piece (pou) with a chiselled surface area, using shark oil with yellow ochre from Wynyard St, Auckland. Earlier in May, I completed a poupou using olive oil mixed with red ochre and rubbed into the wood.

The transition and reconstruction of many elements within the wharenuī, including the introduction of European based paints was profound. These shifts that took place within Maoridom mid 18th to early 19th centuries where the rise of figurative painting as a vehicle of translation (i.e. The social landscape as well as the physical), turned out to be a quick and fast way of keeping up with the enormous social influences of European ideologies.

These ideologies challenged the structure and ethos of a Maori worldview to an extreme although it was a relatively short period, with of courses its devastating long-term affects on Maori as an already self-governing society.

There have always been colours that were used as body paint, *whakairo* and ceremonial occasions, such as the marking of an area that was *tapu* (sacred) to a particular *hapu* or *iwi*. Anyone not observant in local protocol would inevitably suffer the

consequences invoked through the specific colour's symbolic power.

Various pigments come from a number of sources. Clays, rock and slate, plant and tree resins, such as Kauri gum. Shells also like pipi crushed, producing a fine bright white.

Horu / pigment (see appendix 1 p.80) Earth coloured red by iron oxide (kokowai) is burnt to procure a red pigment (horu). Mixed with shark oil, these ochre were used on objects as body paints and as an insect repellent. Blue (pukepoto), red and yellow ochre were all used for body adornment, but red is traditionally associated with things sacred or tapu.

The following ores can be sourced from specific areas.

(Blue vivanite): Wattle Bay, Manukau south Heads

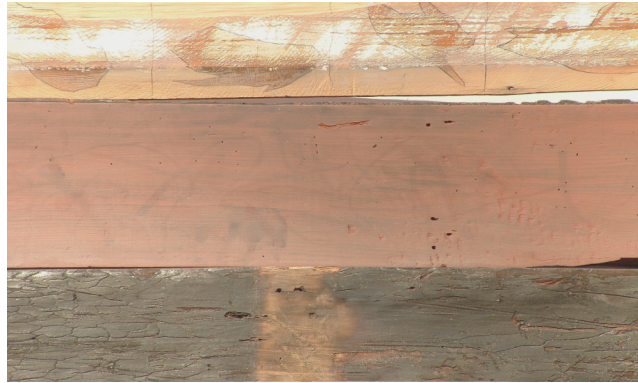
(Red haematite); Oruarangi

(Pale yellow jarosite) and (yellow) limonite

Oruarangi

Papa- kura

Scoria/red volcanic earth



A name personifying volcanic rocks, their widespread occurrence in Tamaki Makaurau is recognised in the place named Papakura. This example of red scoria is called Rangitoto; a name given to the scoria island of Rangitoto. Another example has a yellow tinge. The red earth is from Papakura Bay, Coromandel.

Red iron oxide deposits seep out of the ground forming red earth (ochre) and is identified where Taniwhaniwha (*Blechnum*), a hardy fern is found growing. Sources of this deposit can be found in Three Kings Quarry, Auckland.

Application of the ochre was with brushes of hair or flax fibres and feathers. Wood would be sized with sap expressed from the highly toxic Poroporo shrub.



Poroporo plant

Certain colours held symbolic power and according to certain ritual, warning colours announcing an area of tapu, were adhered to; otherwise the consequences would bring reparation. Kura in particular relates to whenua, with issues of birth, also as tribal markers to indicate territorial boundaries symbolised the tapu.

As an example of introduced colours Simmons outlines an example of the changes taking place with colour through Rongopai, built for Te Kooti, the prophet, and Ringatu.

Three colours were traditionally used on carving and kowhaiwhai. Red was for Rangi the Sky Father, and was a sign of high mana, while black was the colour of Papa the Earth Mother. Chiefs were referred to as whero, or red, while commoners were pango, or black, hence the proverb that when the red and the black worked together any task could be completed. White is the colour of light coming into the world, this world of light; therefore it represents knowledge coming into the world. On the East Coast in the late eighteenth century, carvings were coloured red and black.

Kowhaiwhai were red and black on a kahikatea (white pine) log. Te Kooti took the red, black and white then added his own colours: green for growth, yellow for the sun (representing light and knowledge), white for purity, and blue for the sky... Shallow carvings on thin, milled planks were painted in contrasting colours red, black, white, green, yellow, black and white, pink and white. Other tribal areas like Te Arawa Were also starting to use colours like the pink and cream used on Te Pokiha's pataka, or storehouse, Te Puawai o te Arawa. A Ngati Raukawa house at

Arohena was painted blue and yellow. These were available colours that were used without symbolic overtones.

(Simmons D.R. p. 32-34)

Combined now with a new knowledge of traditional colours, I started to experiment and incorporate a new palate. The following images document the development of pigments used in the painting of some of the pou.



Three pigments: from left to right. Crushed pipi (white) kauri gum resin (pango, black) and yellow ochre from Wynyard St in Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland).



Yellow ochre from Gordonton / Waikato



Grey slate, white clay pigment from Matauri Bay, Northland, yellow ochre from Wynyard St baked on glowing wood embers. Foremost piece of rock is '*alae*' *karamea* from Kauai, Hawaii, courtesy of Manulani Meyer, 2005.



Pigment is ground then made into cakes that are fired. This is an easy way to store them ready to mix with either shark oil, linseed oil, flax or olive oil. The cakes in this image were prepared by Dante Bonica, and were used in painting the pou presented in my thesis. The impact of the use of these materials was significant and is addressed later in this exegesis (Conversation 3.1)



Feathers, flax and hair were used in the application of paints.



Size of pigment cakes with author's daughter

According to Best's information, in Maori technical terms karamaea and takou are names of ochreous earths that were roasted and burned before use, while kokowai and hour are names of an ochreous sediment deposited by certain streams. Black paint was made by mixing shark oil with powdered charcoal obtained from certain resinous woods. For white paint, Taioma, or pipe-clay was burned, then pulverised and mixed with oil. Paintbrushes for covering larger areas consisted of a bunch of muka (flax fibre) tied to a stick, but for finer work, such as painting sketched patterns

and fine carvings, a tuft of feathers or even one stiff tail feather was used as a brush. In later times horsehairs made an efficient brush. The paint and oil mixture was often mixed and stored in a large paua shell. (Neich.R. p.26)

In conjunction with Toi Maori Aotearoa, the paint company Aalto collaborated to research into an authentic range of colours used in early meetinghouses. The project was commissioned by Helen Kedgley who curated the Pataka Museum to coincide with the opening of an exhibition, named The Koru and Kowhaiwhai at Pataka. Information provided here in this paragraph, has come from the swatch card showing full range of colours developed, including brief summaries of origin. Garry Nicholas, Sandy Adsett, Darcy Nicholas and Roger Neich worked with Aalto staff.



Page from workbook showing some of the traditional kokowai (colours) from the Aalto Toi range.

2.3 ARCHITECTURAL INTERSTICES WITHIN THE WHARENUI

“We need to conceptualise architecture which is no longer the art of occupying space by its enclosure, but the creation of situations that become movable and thus reflect major social tendencies. “
(Ole Bouman, 2002)

Shifts in a culture tend to happen out of necessity. The physical, economic and technological landscapes change as do the political, spiritual and psychic (emotional and mental) landscape evolve through new insight, knowledge and ideas about who we are and how that pans out relative to existing social structures.

The most obvious way in which this manifests itself is through our modes of shelter. We are architecturally conjoined to the ideas we have about ourselves.

As long as there are people, they will need shelter and this is in itself enough to guarantee the continued existence of an entire profession. But as a cultural carrier, architecture may indeed become superfluous. Culture may designate other carriers; people may satisfy their need for meaning elsewhere. On this score, architecture must prove itself over and over again, and precisely this makes it an art and an interesting cultural medium. How does the cultural relevance of architecture manifest itself? “
(Ole Bouman, pg 239)

I ask myself this question concerning the poupou. How does the cultural relevance of architecture manifest itself? The ideological and social constructs that make up the 'whare-runanga' concern the cosmological space of a Maori worldview. The whare runanga represents the body of an Ancestor and houses the home of many tribal ancestors and in particular an ancestor of distinction.

RECLAIMING AND EXPRESSING SOCIAL SPACE THROUGH THE POUPOU.

Traditionally, it is within the context of the *whare runanga*, the cosmology and ethos of a Maori world-view which is represented through a very psychically and metaphysical way, the concept of space/time moments where the past is indeed the future.

It is the location of ancestral recognition and historicity. It is a meeting place where local *hapu* can exchange ideas, gather strength, and discuss relevant issues affecting tribal *mana*.

The key to the Maori universe is Te Whare Runanga, the meetinghouse, on its marae. It is the focal point for the spiritual, ancestral, chiefly and tribal values of the marae. It is the place called the turangawaewae, a place on which to stand, where grievances are laid out and solutions found. It is a place where the dead are fare welled and the living praised. (Simmons, p.8)

There are common elements and protocols, which are observed, that communicate the social/psychic development and dimension of

tikanga Maori, the relationship of the past, present and future; acknowledgment of where you are, (*turangawaewae*) where you have come from and who you are; a place that welcomes *manuhiri* (visitors) specifically those from the ‘outside’ areas and regions, of other hapu and iwi. A place that is specific in experiences, memory and stories, *waiata* (songs) and *karanga* (calling forth and recognition of ancestors) specific to that marae. These would also include gifts and intrinsic values from that tribe’s history.

The meetinghouse is sometimes seen as a whare tipuna, an ancestral house, which is usually named for and embodies the ancestor of the tribe, hapu or family. The dining hall is often seen as the spouse, and the marae name will have a particular association with the tangata whenua or iwi tangata, the home people, and their history.

(Simmons, p.15)

This site, the place of tribal mana, is not an esoteric given. There have been significant changes in how the *wharenui* has developed, and in substance it has retained many traditional social constructs and insights. Of interest to my project, is the re-defining through architecture (specifically) structurally, the cultural diasporas and shifts in rethinking in the development of my cultural/spatial history. Transformations have taken place through discovery and initially, through my work, while there was clear evidence of this taking place, I wasn’t clear how or why which lead to a deeper level of philosophical inquiry, with *Mauri*. Now I have chosen to accomplish this with the architectural narrative of the *wharenui* as

a medium of exchange in an intellectual as well as spiritual processing, from a Maori perspective.

To broaden this continuum while navigating geo-cosmic and techno-social terrain, the architecture is transforming the work, whilst reclaiming social and spiritual space in sites of reference. The poupou is a site of reference that is both temporal and transcendental. It is alive. And by that, I mean alive in memory, and history, whakapapa and sign. It is alive because we talk. Embellishment of korero is what makes it alive. Poupou are the posts that support the body of the wharenui. They are about separation and support. They are the ‘children that separate Papatuanuku (Earth Mother) and Ranginui (Sky Father). There is the poutahuhu, front post support, the poutokomanawa, middle post support and poutuarongo back post support.

A building is like a human. An architect has the opportunity of creating life. It's like a human body – like your hand. The way the knuckles and joints come together make each hand interesting and beautiful. In a building these details should not be put into a mitten and hidden. You should make the most of them. Space is architectural when the evidence of how it is made is seen and comprehended. (Khan in Charleson, p.131)

My support is my family, (whanau) and like the pou that supports the ancestral house, I can make those connections within a physical site and social/psychic space. Its ‘placeness’ is derives from the trees and the ground from which they are carved and painted. This verticality is creating a space of being and

metaphorically perceived as empowering, the certainty of
 ‘mythological and legendary time’ (Neich. R)

When I think of the pou, they have an architectural site of reference, of space and time. They have a specific relationship with Tangata whenua (first peoples of the land), and my sense of this is when I go back to my whakatokia (spiritual homeland) in Kaihu, when I place my feet, one foot in front of the other, the impact of seeing wharenuī, without painted or carved pou, sends a telling message. A message that at some point, there has been a transformation that has taken place, like the ripping of flesh from the ribs of the moa (large flightless indigenous bird). The impacting socialisation of spiritual values that predominantly belonged to a Euro centric Christian ethos, led to misinformation and misunderstanding about the nature of the images, in fact the conversations taking place within the marae wharenuī, in general. This led to the absence of taonga, carved or painted, which in turn has led to my engagement with addressing these issues, in which a selected group of pou will be taken back to be presented for further conversations, as a catalyst to re-storing those stories, the kaupapa of the region. The pou’s potentiality realised.

Mabel Wilson in her essay ‘between rooms 307’ recognises the relationship we have with social/psychic space in history and architectural sites that content wise, contextual wise, have the power to translate into cultural currency and misinformation. These hold the key to readdressing and re-entering the discussion surrounding the absence of carved or painted pou in wharenuī.



Poupou 2006

'Fixity is a function of power. Those who maintain place are power brokers of the traditional. Rather than fixed in the order of cunning Grecian urns, their lineage is fluid, nomadic, transitional. Their appropriate mark is a crossing sign at the junction.'

(Houston in Wilson, p.25)

Participating in a new way, the poupou is essential, in transforming the potential for social/psychic context and understanding into a wider idiom. Not changing the essence of content, but preparing for future cultural contexts in which material and geo-technical concerns offer new alternatives in the way in which knowledge is passed on, retained and documented.

Translocation of the metaphysical and physical aspects of poupou is subsequent to the ability to no longer rely on a physical building as such.

The conjugal rights of the poupou's entity are secure in the knowledge and understanding of Maoritanga, and retain their mauri in the process. It's terms of reference a relational to a Maori ethos and not a 'Grecian urn' (Houston in Wilson).

Rethinking Identity

'Those who maintain place.' ... Mabel O Wilson

Within the elements of architecture are power archetypes. Power to inform, our relationship with a body of information and the kind of cultural currency need to identify with an object. It can be iconised, with no conclusive meta-narratives.

Maintaining identity through a visual medium is part of an intrinsic need to reproduce something of us for future generations. Within a visual meme, which is the dominant meme, gene, resides the meme for maintenance. This gene meme is necessary for stability and

reassurance. It is with this concept that ‘placeness’ rather than ‘placeless’ (Wilson) becomes of interest to me.

To identify with the land is to be a part of, and be with a holistic economy in terms of time and environment. Broadening a cultural continuum is also part of the architectural device of the wharenui.

Neich.R. pg 234

‘The Pantheon motif can be seen wherever authority, ecclesiastic or political, demanded a recognizable, stately architectural imagery.’

(MacDonald in Dixon, pg74)

The fact that I wish to present/reclaim is the need for these ideas to be identified and transformed on a meta-level of transparency which can support the notion of Being in another way other than Western philosophical discourse. As I explore this deeper – I can extend my work practice and celebrate the rigour of a work ethos that acknowledges alternative knowledge bases. I wish to do this as a visual artist (painter/writer) remaining open to redefining my own site of terrain, i.e. (spatial/time history).

The Poupou is the space, which addresses some of those conversations – particular here in Aotearoa and globally addressing the parenthesis of Indigenous research concerns.

Sources of reconstruction

Responding to Susan Dixon’s essay on Piranesi’s Pantheon, I am looking at locations; new locations of power, of the social psychic

rhythm and nature of humanity. Transforming the locality with the instrument of architecture as a medium, it's vernacular and urbanesque modems of thought.

Maintaining 'placeness' is a constitution. It has it's own set of rules and regulations that allow a sense of privilege. So when that place shifts, so do the institutions that govern it. As Dell Upton put it '*We racialise the landscape*'. And that brings a certain controversy that remains challenging to me. It is challenging because the conversation is one that extends my practice.

CONVERSATIONS III

3.1 TELLING THE STORIES OF THE PAINTINGS

On Hotere...here is a giant who has insisted upon a certain life and a certain conversation in this particular culture and he has been successful. What's more, he's constantly re-inventing the vernacular and he's re-inventing the way he talks to us. He will say, I'm going to play golf in America this year- and of course a show comes of it.

When you're sitting in Auckland and you are feeling, Oh God, I'm just not making progress, and you see someone who is in their sixties re-invent themselves or seemingly effortlessly move across boundaries of material and content, all the while playing golf- what that says to you is, Well, rise above what you are doing... it is that ability to draw the deepest sense of the particulars of life lived from that everyday experience!

(John. Reynolds. *Winter Chrysanthemums* in Ralph Hotere, Black Light. p.8)





Painted pou-pou in my studio space, 2006

Painting Practice

Dealing with historically located and active sites such as the wharenui on the marae space, I've had to reinterpret the constructs of colonial Western-centric disregard for the spiritual mana and preconceived notions of marae and place.

Describing my practice, the imagery and ideas that influence its development are primarily sourced through material and cultural (*Tikanga Maori*) concerns.

I rely on in this exchange to explore the concepts around identity, placeness and developing a new construct that are sites which open up discussion around these things and transformation that may

take place. The location of my painting practice remains within a framework of Tikanga Maori.

It is the intention of this project to reclaim traditional methods of paint (its technical approaches, and specific colours) as a body of knowledge that has existed and exists prior to European settlement. Its application as a choice of medium, along with the ontological considerations it raises i.e. notions of the sacred and secular, are considered. The noa and tapu of materials, specific karakia and the images that exist using these colours, have been considered within my practice. The use of them in my own work has been applied within the genealogical framework and psychosocial discourse of kokowai (red-brown earth paint) whakapapa and its consequences for future generations.

Material concerns are predominantly recycled native timber as a medium - traditional kokowai - and my choice of colours is derived from research into technical and cultural knowledge. I also use acrylics with a combination of wood stains that are painted on, sanded back then reapplied. This happens over a period of time. The reason for this is that each piece has its own time space history and I am sensitive to the requirements that some wood has, otherwise splits can occur in the wood, and drying or curing is important for a lasting effect. The wood has its own integrity, which I acknowledge. This can take anything from approximately six to eight weeks and up to a year. All wood is weathered during a one to three year period, irrespective of its age. This is a deliberate part of the process. I undertake to consider each piece in the

making; it's proximity and the environment in which it will be made.

Mauri is relevant in terms of my practice. Mauri is a governing life principle that relates to all things, land, people, and governance both individually and as a group which guides the *mahi* (the work) I make. It is relevant specifically in relation to a broader understanding of *taha wairua* (the spiritual values) and cosmology contained within a Maori worldview, which include seven principles of existence. They are te oranga, (life) te wananga (learning), te ihi (power), te mana (authority), te wehi (greatness), te ihowai (rest) and te makurangi (perfection). *Mauri* is the guiding principal and ethos relevant to my mahi (work) and is manifest in the overview of related physical, i.e. *whakapapa* of material, for example the wood I use in my practice is predominantly Kauri/Matai and some *Pinus radiata*. The rocks, shells and kauri resin used in making traditional pigments, and appropriate *karakia* (prayers and incantations) that accompany the use and location of materials. This is part of my research and some of the pieces have had original ochre applied with traditional techniques. My ancestral home, Kaihu, is located in Northland, Te Tai Tokerau, just north of Dargaville including Maramanui, Kai-iwi lake district up to Waipoua forestland. My *whakatokia* (spiritual home) *Kai Mahara Koutoro* (meeting house) *marae*, *Taita*, is north of Maramanui, family *urupa* (cemetery) and *whare karakia* (church) are within proximity of 200 metres – to 400 metres of each other. This district is well known for the gigantic kauri trees that once were abundant in this area. So this is the background to why I use certain

materials and why it is necessary for this conversation, to explain the significance of the whakapapa of the poupou I paint.

Shared Knowledges

The *noa* (common) and *tapu* (sacred) knowledge is traditionally held in the realm of activities pertaining to the everyday occurrences of life and events such as birth, marriage and death. The creative act or *taonga*⁴ such as *ta moko*, *whakairo*, *tukutuku*, *mahi raranga* (flax weaving) *mahi whatu* (cloak weaving) and *haka*, *waiata* and *karanga*.



‘The relationship between human beings and architecture is no longer polar or dialectical, but ‘immersive’.

(Ole Bouman from his essay Hyper-Architecture from the 2002 Sarai Reader: The Cities of Everyday Life.)

This is an important point to me as it raises the possibility of transcendence. Immersion can be a process of transformation and renewal and I am beginning to see the potential for this in my work.

⁴ Williams’ Dictionary (1971, p381) defines *taonga* as ‘property, anything that is highly prized’. However, this is not very helpful except to emphasise a high value placed on such objects. In order to reach some understanding, it is necessary to introduce other Maori words, such as ‘*korero*’ and ‘*whakairo*’.... the Western work for This sort of talk is iconography. The *korero* is a valuable aspect of any *taonga* and it is the *korero* that gives meaning and cultural significance to it. (Mead, S, p.182)

Mark making is a celebration of life. Ancient *karakia* (prayer, incantations) and *waiata* (song) like the movement and song of the whale that make up the cadence and rhythm of life, a variation of simple upper tones, middle tones and then silence.



Poupou, Mt Eden villa, 2006

Cultural Transitions

An architectural dialogue or locus of social conjunction has been set up. *Mauri* is about that relationship among others that governs a core sensibility from a Maori perspective about the dynamic interplay of what it is to be in the physical world and spiritual world concurrently. There is the individual and the Us.

It is the *pou*⁵ that as individual elements, carry *mauri* with them and like the *whakapapa* (genealogy of ancestors) they manifest, together they are representative of the group. The notion of an individual is secondary to the overall concept of *iwi*.

⁵ Pou or Poupou, Poutahuhu and poutuarongo, are the wall supports for the ridge poles inside the wharenui (meetinghouse). They are usually carved or painted showing the specific genealogy of the area and hapu (tribal group).

The *poupou* are traditionally seen inside the body of the *wharenui*. Taking them ‘outside’ raises issues of appropriation - further dislocation- outside in a wider social context and discourse. The concerns however for me, are to do with fixity, materialisation and iconic-ness. Addressing the position or placeness of the *poupou*, is not a new or problematic concern, as new conversations engage the very real possibility of other shifts in adapting to environmental, political and technical territories which can shake the ‘norms’ of protocol in some instances. The *marae*, as we know it today, has been through immense change. If we are talking about location of tribal man, in the past it was the *waka* (canoes) that took precedence in identifying an *iwi*’s social constructs and in particular the metaphorical space which changed from a sea based economy, to a land based economy.

The *kowhaiwhai* painting that had been used on paddles and monuments already carried the connotations of inherited authority and genealogical *mana*, so it was clearly a logical step to transfer this connotation to the new symbol of identity emerging in the form of the meeting house. Hence the transfer of *kowhaiwhai* from paddles and monuments to the rafters of the meeting house can be understood as one element of the larger transfer of tribal prestige from war canoes to meeting houses.

(Neich.R. p.73)

SONG OF THE WHALE

But there was one mauri, so it is told, the last, which, when the whale rider tried to throw it, refused to leave his hand. Try as he might, the mauri would not fly. So the whale rider uttered a karakia over the wooden spear saying ' Let this mauri be planted in the years to come, for there are sufficient mauri already implanted. Let this be the one to flower when the people are troubled and the mauri most needed. ' And the mauri then leapt from his hands with gladness and soared through the sky. It flew across a thousand years. When it hit the earth it did not change but waited for another one hundred and fifty years to pass until it was needed. The flukes of the whale stroked majestically at the sky.

Hui e, haumi e, taiki e.

(Ihimaera.W p.13)

As stories are surrounded in karanga,karakia , the ability to be in the story and being with is just as important. That is how I understand the relationship and conversation surrounding my work. The nature of Whaikairo isn't simply to be an adornment or embellishment of memory of an esteemed ancestor. It was to be with them, their Mauri returning to those living. So when you sit in the wharenui, you sit in their presence. You sit with them. Then you sit, and you listen, and you sit some more and let their presence speak to you.

I return to a piece often. Am I being attentive to what the piece is about and how I engage with the marks I make? Have I considered the mana of the wood? The wood is the heart. The Kauri is the

heartbeat of Tai Tokerau. The pou is a vessel of communication which has a vertical resonance. The relationship on a visual level with the vertical is an earth, sky anchor. A visual memes of empowerment and connection. I know when an image has a sense of completion. Experience and trust in my process. The images are suggestive of the potentiality of mauri. My paintings reflect an essence of mauri.



Example of Poupou 2006

This gathering of pou include Kupu Toi (toi has many meanings, and for this project it refers to origins and kupu (word)) Song of the whale, and Nga Tohu (making a mark). Some are identified by a reference to the koru in kowhaiwhai patterns. They are signatures

that identify the pou. Other marks are more subtle, and speak of the signatures of ancestors who signed the Treaty of Waitangi. There is a layering and revealing, a coming forth with images that lay on the surface of the wood, and underlayering of woodstain that is penetrating the epidermal layers of the woodgrain. In all the pieces, the wood itself is a medium. The pattern of the grains, unstained and stained, tell the story of time and space. Holes that are left, nails that are bent and rehammered, or in some cases, sanded to reveal their shine again.



Nga Tohu is a fine piece of restored kauri, which is over hundred years and was found in a tavern in Hobson St, which burned down and according to the demolition company from which I purchased it, it was among a group of wall planks that had been boarded up and hidden by new modern building materials, so that when the tavern was finally demolished in 2005, here were all these kauri planks, slightly charred some more than others.

When considering this pou's whakapapa, I applied traditional horu (pigment) mixed with olive oil, with the subtle marks that resemble the Treaty of Waitangi signatories. For me, this piece affected me

emotionally. I felt the voice of my ancestors, and a deep sense of a process of restoring the mauri, that this pou was alive again and could speak once more for generations to come.

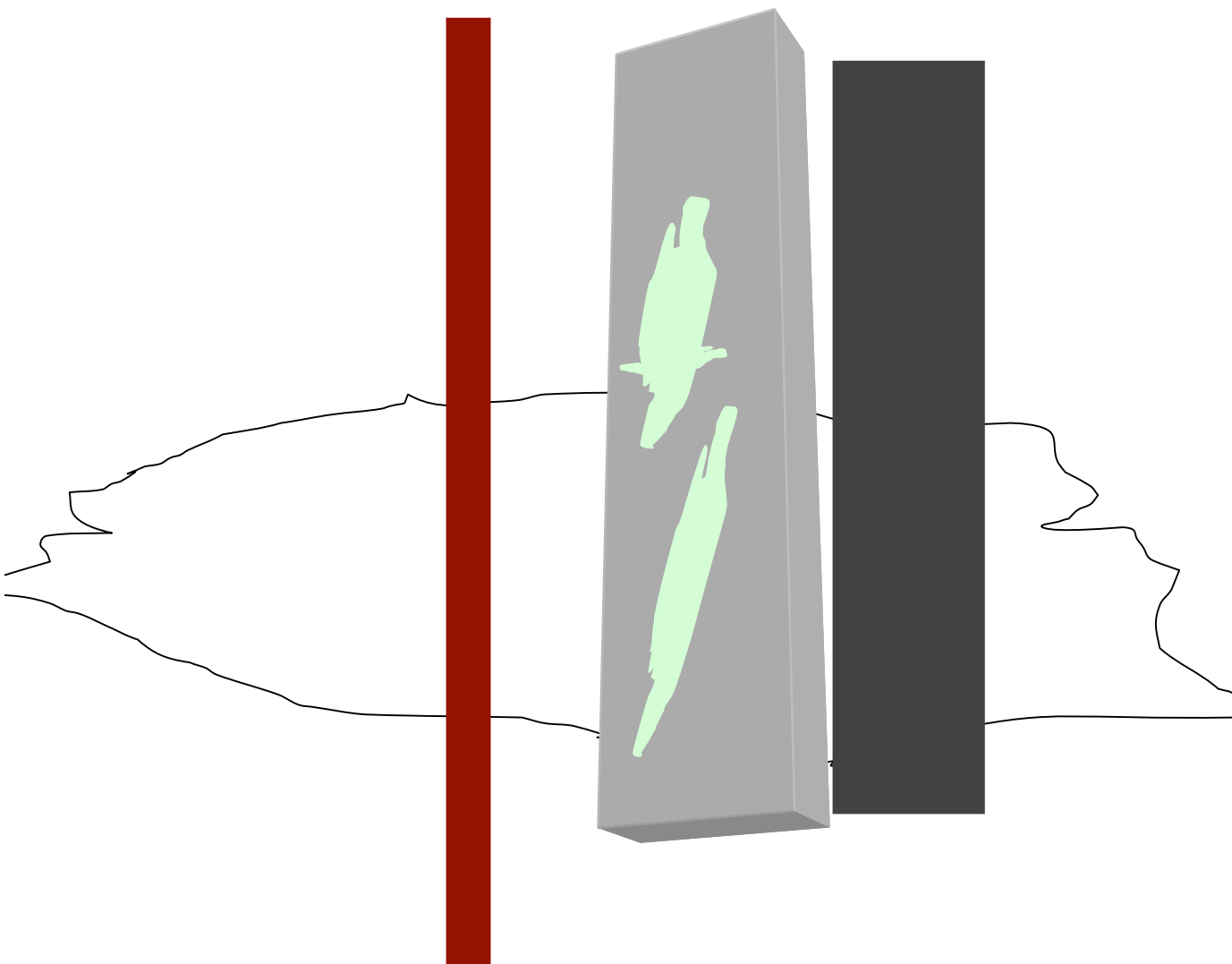
Conclusion

The epidermal nature of a culture in transition, indeed transformation, has resonance in the selective memorization of social artefacts that record and document significant cultural change. I am beginning to see, question and analyse my work as an exchange that can take place, between the materiality, fixity of an object and immersive process that allows for a social architectural site, which expands its original condition. It is in physical architecture, particularly the marae atea, the space between where transitions of sociological and cosmological experience are taking place, that these thresholds are crossed daily.

Mabel O. Wilson in her essay ‘ Spaces of Memory at the National Civil Rights Museum- says this,

“ Fixity is a function of power. Those who maintain place, who decide what takes place and dictate what has taken place, are powerbrokers of the traditional. The “placeless’ by contrast, are translators of the non-traditional. Rather than fixed in the order of cunning Grecian urns, their lineage is fluid, nomadic, transitional. Their appropriate mark is a crossing sign at the junction. “
(Wilson in Barton, p.25)

An invitation has been put out. An exchange is taking place.



Conversation, 2006

3.2 PRIVILEGING THE PRACTICE: A RE-VIEW

Lokko in Archispeak mentions below two authors who discuss the idea of gap, and this is of interest to me in my own work as the space between the poupou, and the space before the pou are sites of difference and potential translocation.

Like Ingraham, I belabour the point because the idea of the gap between objects or different states is powerful and, particularly in this instance, appropriate. As Jonathon Hill writes, “sometimes, when a place is empty, it is actually full of what we did not see. A gap is an opening, for a period of time, between other, seemingly more substantial conditions. A gap implies incompleteness, and invites completion, involving the viewer or user in the formulation of a work.” To start with, then, I offer these thoughts which, it would seem, have little to do with the topic of the conference, “Sites of Memory: Landscapes of Race and Ideology.” Bear with me on this. (Lokko in Barton. P.120)

Simulacrum is an image of something, a shadowy likeness, a deceptive substitute, an effigy. The term describes the extreme post-modernist conclusion advanced by the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard, who, in the early 1970's proposed that the representational image has historically passed through a series of phases from that of reflecting a basic reality to one of bearing no relationship to any reality whatsoever. Baudrillard further suggests that our reality has corrupted into a virtual adaptation of itself, i.e.

a simulated culture of the real in which the image itself generates a new reality.

The images, the pou, are communicating a new reality, a new level of conversation in which the pou 's potential as an architectural metaphor and way of transforming cultural identity, can be reclaimed in a non-traditional way, without losing its essence. Through relocation, communicating their significance in new ways. Creating a new relationship that doesn't diminish their mana. My ancestors dealt with the mass relocation of many Taonga, through many acts of disempowerment as captured artefacts and curios displaced in museums here in Aotearoa (New Zealand) and around the world. Their reality was in some cases, instant and for that time irretrievable. My paintings are dealing with those issues, and are attended to with a great deal of sensitivity and purpose.

Simulacrum, therefore describes this separate world in which the imaginary duplicates reality. In the *Anaesthetics of Architecture* (1999), Neil Leach describes this world in terms of advertising in which global companies have commandeered the term 'real'. This is the make-believe world of the 'real thing', of industrially manufactured 'natural' ingredients', where the concept of "authenticity"...becomes a suspect counterfeit currency.

This is the condition for which the term 'hyper reality' came to the fore in the late 1980's, i.e. a sense of living not in a world of work and corporeal objects but in a world of consumption, of hype and a sea of media images, of shifting surfaces and styles, a world where the real has dissolved into a place where all is simulacrum. If

simulacrum is arrived at when the boundary between representation and the reality to which it refers becomes blurred, then it occurs when we immerse ourselves in a movie and, indeed, in digital flythroughs and walkthroughs....This copy of a copy of the original represents a simulacrum. (Porter. P.170)

During the project I've had revelations that has brought it to a new level. Working specifically with *Poupou* in the 21st century brings new challenges, particularly when considering the space. And by space, I mean that which is multidimensional and exists as a concept, embracing memory and the desire conclusive of ones mana, socially, psychologically, spiritually, materially, and politically and I'm sure, of course there is more. There are many layers to the issues my paintings explore and there is a part of this whole process, which remains a mystery.

I definitely feel here in Aotearoa (New Zealand), that the space for carrying Maori issues and concerns, sorrows and joys, are needing a higher level of unilateral decision concerning the way in which taonga are perceived and in this practice, visual *taonga*. If I can bridge those discrepancies in anyway or bring them to attention, then I feel I will be contributing to pushing the boundaries of how we interpret our identity and look at the way in which those exchanges can take place. It is in the occupying that Mauri can guide, nourish, expand, protect and develop and therefore transform the space we own and the relationships that come out of them.

Setting up the dialogue of those relationships is a significant part of what I do and what I hope to have achieved in this project. The ‘Placeness’ is a key concept, the placing of in the mind, the memory and translation of space, of identity.



Multidimensional Taonga

In this exegesis I’ve gone into detail about the type of conversations that my painting practice is guided by, and the areas that it explores that are part of its development. I don’t want to enter into a ‘new versus old’ way of thinking about what exemplifies a way of visual imagery being a specific Maori image, but rather its ethos, its whakapapa is what is important to me, as this is a Kaupapa Maori practice. Those discussions are what this project is about. In the face of it, we live in an experiential age, not representative and the context that feeds those discussions about

what is a contemporary Maori *taonga* as opposed to a ‘*customary Maori taonga*’ (Borell, N. p, 2) can be brought to a new level.

This is what I am looking at and that is why the *poupou* becomes a site for incredible progress into understanding these things in a deeper more significant way.

Part of my colonised thinking has been the inability at times to recognise the dichotomous thinking that has been a prized system of Euro-centric intellectual discourse in the past 500 years.

I have looked at reconstruction, and revisiting, as a retro-speculative concept, where images are seen from within and redeveloped.

We look for that which is familiar that hints at and confirms our sense of identity. As babies, that first image was linked to survival, the breast, smells and voice of its mother. These experiences and memories build on each other (whakapapa). The most immediate way in which that need is realised as we grow into adults, is through architecture. We attach generations of intrinsic symbolised meaning to land, seas and sky and the use of technology assists in that development. Our aesthetic development is no longer a method for survival or historical record. We can delight in an array of aesthetic dialogues and the imagined, visual memes, stories and conversations that the works in various ways, hold. Their ‘placeness’ and immersion of viewer to experience and be with the works, is similar to being with *taonga*. Being with, rather than, looking at.

... For Debord the alienation of today is that of the people from themselves. In the society of the spectacle, reality has been so obscured beneath an accumulation of images – of “spectacle” – that it is no longer possible to experience it directly. Late capitalism had spawned a society of alienated individuals who have lost all sense of any ontological experience.

(Leach.N. p, 56)

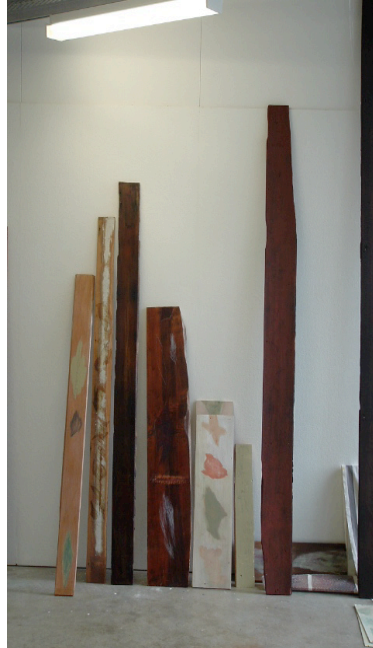
As the Ontology of Mauri deals with material and non-material aspects of a Maori worldview, it confirms that there is a conjunction in which a non –Western theory of Being is a legitimate source of theoretical critical discourse .The materiality of taonga is also changing and needs to be embraced.

3.3 CONCLUSION

This is the documentation of the final thesis exhibition.

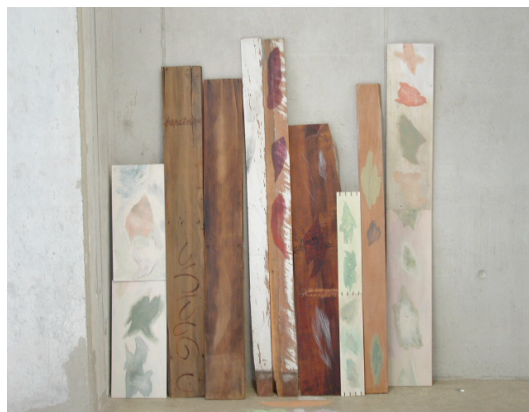
Re; Name given to the final exhibition and practical outcome. There where a number of things that evolved as the process of setting up and displaying the mahi (work) in the exhibition space and the engagement of scale and placement changed often. I was for this project working with new materials i.e. the kokowai (the learning involved with making and investigating the application of natural colours to the pou and a series of drawings on watercolour papers), as the more I investigated my work with the poupou, it lead to rediscovering pre-European colouring, their integral whakapapa with the wood, and that restorative process was the mauri, which was released through this process. Below is one of two poupou over four metres in length before its unpacking.





The photos on this page show pre-exhibition moments. Telling their story, as each pou represented my own whakapapa, and current whanau, (ancestors and history) and what were they saying in this space.

As Jonathon Hill writes, “sometimes, when a place is empty, it is actually full of what we did not see. A gap is an opening, for a period of time, between other, seemingly more substantial conditions. A gap implies incompleteness, and invites completion, involving the viewer or user in the formulation of a work.”
(Lokko in Barton p.120)





Re – M.A. exhibition, 2006

I was trying to achieve a sense of the marae atea, the space you enter as you walk onto the marae before entering the wharenui. Three of the pou were over three metres in height and were separated from the central pou that you saw when first entering the exhibition space. That decision was made on the basis that their size echoed the poutokumanawa, front, middle and back pou, within the wharenui. I wanted people to have a ‘close’ encounter with them. All three of these pou were completely painted in

kokowai, that I mixed with olive oil, pango made from kauri resin, (black), kura (red) from ochre clay (courtesy of Dante Bonica) and Hawaiian 'alae' karama, (courtesy of Manulani Meyer).

Various watercolour papers were painted on. I tried to achieve the notion of Mauri being spilled out into the world (like the mauri spears mentioned in Witi Ihimaera's book, *The Whale Rider*). The kete (woven basket) from which they poured was put at ground level. I then lent them against the wall without any specific order in mind, formally in a line leading up to the first set of pou. Their relationship with the pou and the project in its entirety had to do with materiality and my mark-making practice. How did the colours (the kokowai) resonant with the paper? As with the poupou, in the beginning I had used acrylic and woodstains, pencil and charcoal. Now with this new medium, and its significance in actualizing an ancient and specific restorative process, I could see the changes created. The interchange was interesting and the mark making created an intense dialogue and exchange that carried through to the pou. The signatories of moments, unmarked by time.





M.A. Thesis exhibition, 2006

This placement was suggested, as I had first hung the kete with the idea of each piece (mauri spear) cascading down to the ground. The latter tied in and perhaps on reflection offered the viewer to be lead in, rather than distracted by a centralized object (the kete), and the whole objectification of the work, which was not my intention.



The engagement of the whole environment was important, to incorporate the visual language of placement and placeness. The positioning of and hierarchal conditioning that comes with 'exhibition' that can become the prominent reading in the

manufactured role that exhibition spaces provide, was an opportunity for me to address these issues as I thought appropriate. The reading of my work was more deliberate as I considered these issues from a non-western perspective. I was satisfied I had achieved in the works themselves, the integral implementation of traditional kokowai and the role of mauri revealed within them.

Now my concern was the architectural interstices of the wharenui in which the pou was the focus of this project. How did I now unify the ideas that had revealed themselves during the project? Firstly it centred on relationship.



My first initial response was to have the pou close to each other, somewhat similar to an image of rafters possibly from Tolaga Bay, where the pou pou had been removed from a wharenui. (See Neich. R in Painted Histories, p.43)

However, I was also interested in stepping outside a traditional format that dealt with the space and spacing between the pou. The interchange of fixity and the reading that the viewer might undertake, the final placing of the pou is in groupings (some together, some single) with spaces between. This gave me the chance to think through the 'placeness' of the architecture and the visual memes that may be subsequently played out.



During this project, the discovery of traditional kokowai methods and technology, lead full circle to the restorative aspects of ancestral pou and the significance of its application alongside other paint mediums. Unifying this knowledge in a contemporary project provided a deeper resolve in understanding the whakapapa of materials and the acknowledgement of my own whakapapa. I felt the mauri was honoured. I had wanted to explore aspects of fixity, materiality, visual memory and a social/psyche of spiritual identity through a Maori epistemology and ontology in/of Mauri. I feel I have achieved this, and look forward to extending the elements of this process in further projects.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ariki - Chief or high status individual

Aroha –love

Hapu – sub tribe

Hauora – wellbeing

Iwi – tribe, social unit bound by a common genealogical links.

Karakia – prayers, chants

Karanga – ceremonial call

Kauri – indigenous tree found predominately in Northland

Kokowai- Scoria which produces a red pigment

Korero – talk

Kura Kaupapa – knowledge of and way of understanding

Mana-Influence, prestige, power

Marae- communal centre

Mauri- Life principle specific to Maori

Maunga – mountain

Nga Puhi- Northern tribe

Ngati Whatua – Northern tribe occupying Tamaki Makaurau

Noa - common

Papatuanuku – Earth mother

Poupou -Posts supporting the ridgepoles of a wharenui

Rakau - wood

Ranginui – sky father

Tapu - sacred

Taonga- treasure,

Tikanga –customs

Toi – knowledge, art

Tupuna – ancestor

Turangawaewae-Tribal standing/home ground

Waiata- Song

Wairua – spirit

Waka – canoe

Whakapapa – genealogy

Whanau- family

Wharenui/ whare runanga- Meeting house

Whenua – land; placenta

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Appendix 1: Rangi and Papa

Tane=Hine tu pari maunga/mountain/cliffs

Takaaho=Pu-toto=====Para-whenua-mea
Waters that spring forth

Tua-rangaranga

Nga Taniwha- aquatic insects

Makatiti=hine-wai-pipi kiripaka kara

Hine-muru-toka=Rakahore=Hine-uku-rangi Rangahua=Tu maunga
Kokopu clay cliffs

Koura Makatata=Hine-wai
Freshwater crayfish Rock/water

Nga powhatu Hine-maheni
Fine-grained grind
Stone

Kirikiri-tatangi
Singing gravel

Tuamatua=Wai-pakihi
Bedrock wetland

Whatu-aho
greymacke

Hine-tanira
sacred stone

Tamira-karapa Hine-tua-hoanga
Sand/grindstone

Ikaro=====Papa-kura
Shore reefs volcanic red earth

Nga Hoanga Rata-ancestor of Adzes

Taniwhaniwha Horu
Fern baked kokowai