Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Māori culture at the digital interface:
A study of the articulation of culture in the online environment.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts
in
Visual and Material Culture

at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Nikolas Troy Brocklehurst
2014
Abstract

Once lit, the digital ahikā have burnt brightly for Māori. With the increasingly multimodal internet arguably becomes the first port of call for students, academics, and the general public alike. How Māori culture is articulated has never had to be considered in the face of such a potential global audience. This thesis examines Māoridom in the digital space, its central question is: How is the online environment being used to articulate Māori culture?

Examining three contemporary case studies of Māori online presence on websites that are either created and run by Māori or had significant Māori input and/or content, this thesis questions whether the case studies dispositions toward the online environment manifest themselves within the digital space. And whether this effects their articulation of Māori culture through that medium. With particular attention given to the specificities of the digital environ, as to how it alters or determines the effectiveness of this articulation, this study highlights specific Maori practices and how utilising the digital space in accordance with its own unique attributes is producing certain representations of Māori culture.

Moreover, taonga as uniquely active agents in Māori conceptuality and a common thread that runs across the sites examined, receive special focus with respect to their digital embodiments. Incorporating a comparative approach, attempts are made to explicate the intricacies of particular examples.

This research contends that embracing the specificity of the digital space enables those within it to produce a more effectual articulation of Māori cultural identity. More so, a failure to do so produces a questionable representation of Māori culture.

The results reveal an increasingly dynamic utilisation of digital media within Māori culture. But perhaps most importantly it is a timely reminder that in the rush to digitise and open museum collections to an increasingly skilful and astute online audience, the cultural sector of Aotearoa New Zealand needs not to forgo their intention of being forums of change and substitute quality for quantity.
Acknowledgments

Firstly, this is dedicated to my partner Kirsten. Even in challenging times she made me smile and only wanted me to succeed. Many thanks to my supervisors Kura Puke and Dr Marcus Moore, who without their valued time, feedback and words of encouragement this thesis would not have been achievable. I would like to give special mention to all those that took time out of their days to meet with me in person or engage in conversation through electronic means, the openness in your discussions reveal the level of care and consideration you have for your work and the objects in your care.
## Contents

Abstract ii  
Acknowledgments iii  
List of figures v  

Introduction 1  
  Literature Review: Culture of the internet 10  
  Bourdieu and the field of cultural production 19  
Methodology 23  
  Significance of Study 24  
  Limitations 25  
Chapter overview 26  
Chapter One: A taxonomy of taonga 28  
  Taonga as artefact 28  
  Taonga as art 30  
  Taonga as object 33  
  Alchemy, Aura and Virtuality 36  
  Māori, Deleuze and the Digital 41  
Chapter Two: Case studies. Māori culture in the digital environ 44  
  Te Papa and the Google Art Project 44  
  Puehu: Cultural Dust 67  
  Manatunga: The treasures left behind 88  
Chapter Three: Bourdieu and the field of Māori Culture online 106  
Chapter Four: Discussion. Taonga in the age of digitality 119  
Conclusion: Considerations for the future 130  
Bibliography 133  
Appendix One: Interviews undertaken by author 161  
Appendix Two: Te Papa website visitor analysis 162  
Appendix Three: Works cited 164  
Appendix Four: Ipurangi Māoritanga  
  Māori Culture Online Questionnaire 167
List of figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.</td>
<td><em>Art Project</em> [Screen shot from website]</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.</td>
<td>The Google Art Project has just launched in Paris. We are very excited to be invited to share our collection #gaptepapa [Link to Twitter]</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.</td>
<td><em>Te Papa</em> [Screen shot from website]</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.</td>
<td><em>Putorino (Bugle flute)</em>. (1700-1850) [Screen shot from website]</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.</td>
<td><em>Poi awe (percussive device)</em>. (1800) [Screen shot from website]</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.</td>
<td>Music to Māori ears [Screen shot from video file]</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.</td>
<td><em>Puehu: cultural dust</em> [Digital visualisation]</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8.</td>
<td>Maori and videogames [Screen shot from web log message]</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9.</td>
<td>[Untitled, Māori Hello Kitty and Stormtrooper] [Screen shot from web log message]</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10.</td>
<td>Riwai Pakerau's carvings and kowhaiwhai [Screen shot from web log message]</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11.</td>
<td>Riwai Pakerau's carvings and kowhaiwhai [Screen shot from web log message]</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12.</td>
<td><em>Native Affairs</em> [Screen shot from television broadcast]</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13.</td>
<td><em>Manatunga: Ko ngā taonga waihohanga atu ki te arawhiti / The treasures left behind in this realm</em> [Screen shot from online exhibition]</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14.</td>
<td><em>Kingitanga document (1878, May 16). A proclamation of principles from the King Movement</em>.* (1878, May 16) [Screen shot from online exhibition]</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15.</td>
<td><em>Kaikumea-taura – Puppeteer</em> (n.d.) [Screen shot from online exhibition]</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16.</td>
<td>Field of Māori cultural production online</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary of Māori Words

*Note: Translations are provided within the body of the thesis where Māori words appear for the first time.*

Translations of Māori terms have either been taken directly from the source discussed or from *Te Aka Māori-English Dictionary*.

- **ahikā**  burning fires of occupation
- **atua**  gods
- **hapu**  kinship group, sub-tribe
- **hau-ora**  breath of the spirit
- **hei tiki**  carved figure, a neck ornament
- **heke**  rafters
- **ihi**  spiritual power
- **iwi**  kinship group, tribe
- **kaitaka**  highly prized cloak
- **kaitiaki**  trustee, custodian, guardian
- **Kaitiakitanga**  trusteeship, custodianship, guardianship
- **kanohi ki te kanohi**  face-to-face
- **karakia**  recitation, incantation, highly ritualised prayer
- **kaupapa Māori**  Māori ideology, incorporating knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society
- **kaupapa nui**  main purpose
- **kawanga whare**  dawn ceremony
- **kete**  basket
- **korero**  oratory, to speak knowledge, orally transmitted knowledge
- **koru**  coil, spiral
- **kowhaiwhai**  painted scroll ornamentation
- **mahi**  work, practice
- **mana**  authority; power, prestige, status
- **Māori**  indigenous people of New Zealand
- **marae**  ancestral house
Matariki  Pleisades, cluster of stars in the constellation of Taurus. First appearance in the north-eastern sky indicates the beginning of the Māori year
mātauranga  knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill
mauri  life essence, life force, power of creation from the gods
mauri-ora  life principle
mihi  greeting
mōteatea  lament, traditional chant
Ngā kete o Mātauranga  the baskets of knowledge
noa  free from extensions of tapu, ordinary, unrestricted, profane
Pākehā  non-Māori, foreigner, New Zealander of European decent
pare  door lintels
pepeha  personal proverb
pounamu  greenstone, jade
pōwhiri  welcome ceremony on a marae
rangatahi Māori  youth
raranga  weaving
tāhuhu  carved ridge pole
taiaha  long handheld wooden weapon, used for close-quarter combat
tangata tiriti  people in New Zealand by right of the Treaty of Waitangi
tangata whenua  local people, indigenous people of the land
tangihanga  funeral
taonga  treasure, anything prized
taonga tūturu  authentic taonga
taonga whakairo  carved work
tapu  protect, sacred, prohibited, set apart
Te Ao Māori  Māori world
Te Kete Aronui  the world apprehended by our senses
Te Kete Tua-ātea  the world beyond space and time
Te Kete Tuauri  beyond the world of darkness, the seedbed of creation
teo  Māori language
tikanga  correct procedure, protocol
tūpuna  ancestors
utu  reciprocation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Māori</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>song</td>
<td>waiata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spirit, essence of being, soul</td>
<td>wairua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authority, class, unquestioned competence</td>
<td>wana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to strike fear, awe, to excite</td>
<td>wehi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal speeches</td>
<td>whaikōrero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photograph</td>
<td>whakaahua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genealogy</td>
<td>whakapapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proverb</td>
<td>whakataukī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family, extended family</td>
<td>whānau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship, kinship, sense of family connection</td>
<td>whanaungatanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marae, ancestral house</td>
<td>whe re tupuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dining hall</td>
<td>wharekai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meeting house</td>
<td>wharenui</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>