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Keeping Taonga Warm:

Aotearoa New Zealand's

Museums

and

Maori *Tapu* Material.

A Thesis presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology.

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2003

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an interpretative viewpoint from a Aotearoa New Zealand *tauiwi*, of the importance of the spiritual meaning of *taonga* and their related concepts of *tapu*, *mana* and *wairua* to Maori, both in the past and today.

It is concerned primarily with how *taonga* and their *tapu* nature have been addressed by Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, historically and contemporarily, and by the anthropologists and archaeologists and ethnologists working within them. While related issues include all indigenous secret and sacred material, both tangible and intangible, I am primarily interested in how museum professionals, especially anthropologists and archaeologists working within New Zealand Museums, have incorporated the concept of *tapu* into their engagement with Maori *taonga*, and how they resolve their own beliefs with those of Maori. I am specifically concerned with how Maori *taonga* are kept spiritually 'warm,' by non-Maori museum personnel concerned with their physical care. This involves an analysis of museum traditions and past historical influences now affecting Aotearoa New Zealand today.

This discussion begins with an explanation of the author's ontological viewpoint and reasons for writing this, and sets the terms of reference for the following discussions.

Chapter One examines of the meaning of *tapu*, *taonga* and their related concepts, the way in which early writers and ethnologists have dealt with this subject historically, and the impact that this had on the current museological climate as well as interpretations by current writers including Maori and anthropologists.

Chapter Two shows how scientific interests took precedence over Maori *tapu* concerns in early museum practice, both in collecting habits, display and in the interpretation of Maori *tikanga*, by ethnologists and museum management.

Chapter Three discusses the recent changes in the management of some Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, the effect of professional guidelines and specific pieces of legislation on both Maori and museums, nationally and internationally. Recent changes include bicultural management within some museum management structures, *iwi* liaison committees within others, and current Maori initiatives in respect to the management of *koiwi tangata*.

Chapter Four examines the impact that the changing attitudes towards Maori issues by non-Maori staff have had in Aotearoa New Zealand's Museums, regarding Maori access to *taonga*, the handling of *taonga* by non-museum staff, conservation issues and what the situation is today and where it is going.

In the Conclusion I argue that, rather than a growth in understanding of Maori concerns regarding the care of and access to *taonga* held in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, and of their *tapu* regulations, and the implications of these to the current well-being of specific *iwi*, a process of 'managerialization' of *tapu* concerns has been instigated in all major museums in Aotearoa New Zealand, and with some variations, within some other smaller ones. This has resulted in the decision making passing into the hands of *iwi* or joint management committees, whereby individual curators, collection managers and ethnologists no longer need to understand these issues deeply.

Finally, I emphasise that only museums who actively pursue a co-operative relationship with their local *iwi* or *marae* will be visited by the local Maori community and continue to be allowed to continue to care for these important links from the past with the Maori of today. This should involve a repatriation of stolen *taonga*, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai* and retraining of museum staff in *tikanga* and Maori issues. It is not enough to 'pass the buck' and ignore the issues involved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt thanks to Patricia Henare and Vivienne Kopua of Ohakune for their beautiful sistership which inspired this thesis, their friend Maurice Cody for challenging me at every opportunity to be creative and original, and Patricia and Vivienne's beautiful *tamariki* who welcome me whenever I visit. Your inspiration is timeless.

Especially due is my humble thanks to past and present teaching staff in Anthropology Studies at Massey University who set high standards to aspire to. Both Professor Jeffrey Sisson this year and Professor Henry Barnard with last year's research project have contributed to my successful completion of this thesis. Both encouraged me when I fumbled but left me to get on with it when I was inspired and in the process taught me how to write and edit with clarity. Thanks also to David Butts in the Maori Studies Department for your positive encouragement in the early stages this year.

I couldn't have written this without my interviewees, and I sincerely thank Roger Fife of Canterbury Museum, Demitier Anson of Otago Museum and Karl Gillies of Southland Museum and Art Gallery for their helpful answers and comments.

A very special thanks is due also to my friend and past colleague, Maclean Barker, who, as Manager/Curator of Motueka Museum, showed me a new way of communicating with the Maori community and the local 'Te Awhina' Marae. My involvement with Maclean's inspiration and with the installation of the Maori gallery in its process of 'becoming,' is something I will always treasure.

A sincere thanks is due also to all the members of Wainui-a-Ono in Nelson and all the beautiful Maori people, both young and old, who I met there, that I now treasure as my friends,. This offering is a thank you for the humbleness displayed by the 'Whanau Ngati Kuia O Whakatu' at the centre, who may appear to be

overshadowed by a more vocal iwi in their own ancestral *rohe*, but who are an inspiration for all of us who know you.

Finally it must be acknowledged that without the support of my three beautiful daughters and my partner Matthew Thompson, who always believed in my ability to finish this, I could not have completed this project. Thanks is also due to Angie Farrow who helped me understand the “creative process.”

You are all a part of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis came into being because of a fortuitous meeting I had several years ago with Patricia and Vivienne, two Maori sisters in the midst of a Wai claim before the Waitangi Tribunal for land at Ohakune, originally named Makotuku. These sisters are descended from Ngati Uenuku, Ngati Tara, Ngati Hekeawai and Ngati Apa and regard Ruapehu as their *maunga* since their ancestor was once proud owner of all he could see from one side.

These two strong women, strong in their *wairua*, standing alone for their *hapu*, without visible male support, believe that they are “not strong” in their *tikanga*, since they are not native speakers of Te Reo Maori. Yet the visible presence in Patricia’s house of rocks from her ancestral *rohe*, and *harakeke* weavings in various stages of completion, make walking into her house seem like walking onto an ancient *marae*. Always open to visitors, Patricia refuses to fix up her well worn home, to remind her and her *tamariki* of the “old people,” whose interests they guard. Her intent is to provide a place to stand, and to build a *marae* where all their people can gather. As Patricia says “it is for the love of our *tupuna* and generations to come.”⁽¹⁾

Patricia told me how her “old” people came from the beliefs of the old Maori way to follow Ratana, and this is why they no longer have any *taonga* as heirlooms, since they were all deposited in the Ratana museum as relics of the past. She

particularly lamented the loss of the *pou*, which had stood outside her people's *whare*, and served as a focus for daily conversing with the *atua*. When I first discussed writing this thesis with Patricia, I was fascinated with sacred secret knowledge and the concept of the *whare wananga*, but had no awareness of the importance of *tapu*. At the time she wisely looked at me and cryptically answered, "There is always one woman who will break *tapu* to get her degree."⁽²⁾

When Patricia spoke her wise words I realized that I had no clear concept of *tapu*, and I could easily violate her trust unknowingly, through my inquisitive nature and anthropological inquiries. I was reminded of an unrelated occasion where a dinner guest of the host was a Maori *tohunga*, who was sitting near me. As he was also an Anglican Minister I was unaware that, despite his Christianity, his Maori self was of equal, if not more, importance. The conversation was focused on Maori spirituality and moved on to *wahi tapu*, and I made a comment regarding a *whare wananga* that had burnt down around the turn of the century, that I was familiar with, and asked him if he knew of it. His reaction towards my inquisitive question left me in no doubt that I had violated an unwritten code I was previously unaware of. The conversation abruptly changed, and I was reprimanded later by an observer who noted his discomfort. I was told that this subject was *tapu*, and I was left to wonder why. Yet despite my own belief system, years of religious studies, anthropological inquiry, museum studies and Maori studies, it took the writing of this thesis to understand what exactly I had violated.

Now I understand that not only was the ‘place’ of the *whare wananga tapu*, as well as the ‘subject,’ but we were still sitting at the table we had eaten at. We were combining food with sacred knowledge. Also, as a woman, I would not have been privy to such knowledge in the past, and even now would most likely not be, if I were Maori and not *tauiwi*. While I am now embarrassed to admit such clumsy ignorance, the lesson has been learnt and noted. My present understanding that I insulted him that day reminds me of the uncomfortable electric current in the air as I spoke. I might forget one but not the other. This was my first lesson in the way *tapu* works.

My second lesson resulted in two dual revelations. An ex-partner that I had once lived with in the Hokianga *rohe*, insisted on our parting that I keep the stone *patu* he had found nearby our camp site. While I was delighted with the gift, since I have a fascination with anything ancient, particularly made of stone, I had always felt strange when I held it, not only because it was, in my view, stolen from the people who it really belonged to, but I suspected that it had been used in warfare and had the blood of others on its stone. I was at the time unaware that, if so, it would have been *tapu* and definitely should not have been handled by a woman. In addition, as I was later to find out, it also violated the ‘Antiquities Act 1975,’ since it was found the year after.⁽³⁾

Several years later I attended a lecture by a Native American Elder of the Ojibwa people called John Two Birds. On meeting him again later I had a profound spiritual experience in his presence, which resulted in me becoming one of his

apprentices. Later, during a medicine lodge ceremony, I had a vision of the *patu* begging to be united with ‘his’ people, so soon after I took the *patu* home back to the Hokianga and gave it to someone whose memory came to me in the lodge. I’d always thought that this dignified Maori man who had lived near us then, was a wise *kaumatua*, and it didn’t surprise me that he opened the door with a smile and asked me how I was, as if he was expecting me. Then he took the *patu* in the *harakeke kete* I had made for it, without looking at it. I said that I believed he would know what to do with it and he said yes, he did. I felt a sense of relief on the way home, and was light hearted and cheerful for months. I recognized it as a lesson in the power of the *tapu* of Maori artefacts.

During this time, while searching for information through the internet on *wahi tapu*, I came across an article that was to change the course of my research and of my future life. Makere Harawira, in a criticism entitled “Neo-Imperialism and the (mis) appropriation of Indigenusness,” touched on two subjects which I had a profound interest in. Firstly, he referred to the publication of the ‘Song of the Waitaha’ by Barry Brailsford, and how Brailsford had then moved on to form Stone Print Books, take lecture tours, walk greenstone trails and (mis)appropriate Waitaha teachings and confidences.⁽⁴⁾ I had recently attended a lecture by the renowned man, but was uncomfortable with the homage and position of great honour given to him, as he talked of star-beings and great secret knowledge. It made me analyse my apprenticeship with John Two Birds and my reasons for following the Native American way.

Secondly, Harawira referred to the subject of cultural ‘appropriation,’ and the harm it does to native peoples. When John Two Birds unexpectedly, because of personal reasons, released his apprentices, some of my fellow ‘sisters’ and ‘brothers’ transferred their apprenticeship to a more senior follower. I understood then that, while the direct line between John and myself was a genuine connection, a secondary connection through someone else was not. This came within the domain of ‘cultural appropriation,’ which members of the ‘Dakota, Lakota and Nokota Nations’ speak out against.⁽⁵⁾ This is also what Harawira was accusing Barry Brailsford of doing. While Brailsford had initial permission to publish one book by the keepers of the knowledge who had entrusted him with it, he then abused their trust when he went on a path of his own. So, while I now continue to honour the lessons I learnt from John Two Birds and walk on the ‘Red Road’ as he taught me, I am apprenticed to no one, and I have resolved to avoid using the sacred knowledge I have acquired from both Maori and Native American research, for gain of my own, but to help me understand the lessons I have learnt. Thus my own experiences have contributed towards a profound interest in the issue of what constitutes cultural appropriation, and, where indigenous material culture is in the hands of non-indigenous people, what the implications are for both of them. This was the second revelation resulting from my experience in the medicine lodge. This was a lesson in the *tapu* of sacred knowledge.

Hence this thesis is not an another ‘*pakeha*’ attempt to re-interpret Maori spiritual culture. Nor is it intended to “sustain one group and disempower another,”⁽⁶⁾ by

appropriating another people's cultural practices." Instead it is an honest response to the challenge set up by Dr. Ngahuia Te Awe Kotuku to investigate the issues she raises regarding New Zealand's obligations to Article Two of The Treaty of Waitangi.⁽⁷⁾ This guarantees:

full and exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates, Forests, Fisheries, and *other properties* which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession.⁽⁸⁾

Of direct relevance to museums, and the right of indigenous peoples to retain these *other properties*, is the 1993 'United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,' Article 12, which includes:

the right to practice and revitalise cultural traditions and customs, *the right to restitution of cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free and informed consent*, and the right to ensure that indigenous sacred places, including burial sites, be preserved, respected and protected.⁽⁹⁾

Both of these pieces of legislation suggest issues regarding the loss of ownership by many Maori of their *taonga*, such as *whakairo* and other objects which are now residing in museums, how they have been treated, how they are now being cared for, and the right to claim them back. Despite these stated rights, issues of ownership are proving notoriously hard to solve, as the many years that the Bay of Plenty people had to wait before having the Mataatua *wharenui* returned to them

illustrates. So too are issues of museum conservation versus the desire of Maori to use their tribal *taonga* for life-cycle ceremonies, such as *tangi* and commemorative occasions.

Despite Article Two of the ‘Treaty of Waitangi’ many *taonga* arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums through unknown means, some gifted, some found, some stolen and some brought from Maori without the approval of the collective kin-group, *whanau*, *hapu* or *iwi*. Regardless of issues of ‘Who Owns the Past?’,⁽¹⁰⁾ access to *taonga* in Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums by Maori is an ethical obligation, which museums should provide today if they are mindful of the terms of the treaty and of the 1993 ‘United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.’ This is the physical aspect of caring for *taonga*, but what of the spiritual?

Elsdon Best reports how in 1853 the Taranaki Maori, who were diminishing in numbers, due to “introduced diseases and changes in habits and beliefs,”... “believed that it was their abandonment of *tapu* that was the cause of their misfortunes,” since old *tapu* objects and places, capable of rendering them harm, were still amongst them and not given respect.⁽¹¹⁾ Ceremonies were conducted to render *noa*, or free from *tapu*, objects and places, such as the buried material *mauri* of deserted *pa*. While the Taranaki Maori apparently neutralised their most powerful objects and places it is unlikely that all *iwi* did, and if not, what are the implications for museums today? Do these objects continue to have an affect on

the people handling them, on the museums concerned, on the ‘*pakeha*’ generally?
Do they have a detrimental effect on Aotearoa New Zealand?

To most Maori, unless alienated from their kin group, *taonga* contain a *wairua*, an ancestral spirit or a life force of their own, and people are protected from their power by *tapu* restrictions, traditionally defined by *tohunga* and now upheld by *kaitiaki*, in some museums. Since the “past is viewed as part of the living present” then all Maori pre-European artefacts are sacred to Maori people today, because of their implications for their continuation as a people and the connection with their heritage, as well as the *mana* that comes with their associations with those pre-contact times.⁽¹²⁾ This does not mean however that all Maori artefacts are considered beneficial, since, as Patricia explained, many Maori will not enter museums today because of the *tapu* nature of some Maori objects stored within them. “They won’t go there because people who come into contact with them are now *makutu*, and affected by witchcraft.”⁽¹³⁾

Many non-Maori anthropologists, archaeologists, trained curators and untrained volunteers working within Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums handle important Maori *taonga* in the course of their daily work. For some their university training, interest in Maori *tikanga*, friends and colleagues in the museum field, and participation in *hui* and *korero* with Maori elders, all contribute to their body of knowledge of Maori *tikanga*. Others simply perform their daily tasks and give little thought to the implications of their actions for the *taonga* and the Maori of today.

Hypothetically speaking, from the perspective of an anthropologist, if the power of *tapu* does not depend on a belief in *tapu*, and if *tapu* is as potent as believed, then our museums today and the islands of Aotearoa New Zealand are full of objects which are capable of rendering harm to people who disrespect them. For instance, women did not handle weapons of war and yet many museum curators and collection managers are women, and handle these in their daily work. The application of *tapu* applies equally to knowledge, previously the domain of the *whare wananga*. For instance, Elsdon Best discusses an “exceedingly *tapu* chant of the ‘cult’ of Io connected with the ceremonial initiation of [a] Matakite [or] seer.”⁽¹⁴⁾ Since Best collected all manner of chants, myths, and stories, if a particular chant was written down and then recited in a disrespectful manner by someone without awareness of what they were saying, can it cause harm to that person, or worse, to others? More importantly is it worth the risk?

These questions also apply to Maori items in museum which are not considered significant. I personally know of one museum, at which I have worked at, where Maori items not on display are stored in the only spare room, a room which also serves as thoroughfare, office, workroom and lunch room. This is common practice in many small museums who have a space problem and no disrespect is intended on the part of the non-Maori personnel. Hands are washed before handling Maori items, although it is usually only because of conservation awareness, but food is eaten in the same area without thinking about possible outcomes. To most Maori this would simply not occur, but many non-Maori,

even those normally culturally sensitive to Maori *tikanga*, wouldn't give it a second thought.

While *taonga* displayed and stored within museums are generally acknowledged as of a spiritual nature by museum staff, many non-Maori staff don't truly believe that they contain a *wairua* or life force or treat them as such. Non-Maori staff seldom display the same attitude of *wehi, ahi or wana*, the fear, awe and respect for the objects under their care, that a Maori curator would exhibit. A standard anthropological and museum approach is to suspend a disbelief of the power and energy of artefacts such as *taonga*, by pretending not to disbelieve, in order to accept another person's belief.⁽¹⁵⁾ If museum workers truly understood or believed in the *wairua* of these *taonga* they would acknowledge that such objects need contact with their people as much as their people need contact with them.

Stephen O'Regan emphasized that the "primary value of *taonga* derives from its association with particular ancestors - the *whakapapa* - and their histories," and that the "incorrect treatment of the associated *whakapapa* and history" can cause anger and dismay to tribal elders.⁽¹⁶⁾ Many museums encase large objects, such as a stone *rongo* or similar, within a glass case, allegedly for their own protection but in effect restricting the physical contact between local ancestral *iwi* and their *atua*. Apart from "the physical barriers of distance and glass cases," "foreign labels and bureaucratic hierarchies ... recontextualise them [the *taonga*] in Western culture" giving them legal, monetary and insurance values.⁽¹⁷⁾ *Iwi* concerns are sometimes acknowledged with the presence of a bowl of water for

washing their hands, but the understanding that such objects desire to be touched by their people and of the desire of their people to touch them, is ignored, since it is contrary to conservation practice. Ignored also is the spiritual knowledge that such *taonga* can never truly be owned by anyone.⁽¹⁸⁾ What then does the incorrect treatment of these *taonga* in museums create for Maori-Pakeha relationships?

If you are thinking that this is only the view of some ‘wacky’ psuedo-spiritual *pakeha*, consider for a moment that at least one other non-Maori museum professional has found herself questioning the same issues. Carol O’Biso, Registrar for the American Federation of Arts, had many reasons to seriously consider the power of important *taonga* when packing, accompanying and installing the exhibitions in the United States for ‘Te Maori’ in the 1980s. In her book about her experiences, *First Light*, she tells of how a stone sculpture owned by the Maori Queen refused to be photographed on many occasions,⁽¹⁹⁾ how O’Biso’s stomach hurt when the load shifted in the truck behind her, and ‘he’ was rubbing against the case,⁽²⁰⁾ of how indentations in the back of a large carved meeting house front piece, caused by display mounts, mysteriously disappeared,⁽²¹⁾ of how drills wouldn’t work when an unnoticed mount was loose on the bottom of a large wooden figure,⁽²²⁾ and how the lights of the trucks transporting the *taonga* failed at dawn but came back on at night.⁽²³⁾ Also the United States ‘handlers,’ who were moving the *taonga*, were amazed when she told them that the largest piece, which took twenty-eight of their men to carry, was carried by only eight Maori men in New Zealand.⁽²⁴⁾ She admitted also that

her experiences during 'Te Maori,' and the people she met, changed the course of her life and opened her eyes to a different way of looking at objects.(25)

O'Biso was asked by a friend: "Is it only Maori artefacts?" She replied:

Well right now it seems to be focused on Maori artefacts but I think that's only because these pieces have come from a living culture of people who still believe in them. I don't think the Egyptian pieces, or the Northwest Coast American Indian material or any art I've worked with, has had any less power or meant any less to the people who made it. It's just that no one has listened to those in along time.

They've been too long separated from anyone who will let them speak (26)

No one, however, has reported mysterious happenings around *taonga* in Aotearoa New Zealand museums. It may be because they are on their home ground and have no need to, but could it also be because they are being denied their right to 'speak' here, by a lack of contact with their people?

Hubert asked: "Is it, in fact, possible for people who have different religious beliefs, really to believe in the sacredness of the sites and objects that are part of another religion?" While O'Biso and I might say yes, the prevalence of ethnocentrism and prejudice displayed by non-indigenous people in post-contact societies towards indigenous beliefs, combined with 'Western' logic, would have to suggest no. If not, then, "what do we mean when we say that we believe in the sacredness of someone else's site? How far can we really believe in the

sacredness of sites which relate to beliefs that we do not share? Can we say that something is sacred to someone else but not to us? Is that not the same as saying that it is not sacred?”⁽²⁷⁾ Logic and honesty would have to say yes.

To further erode our comfortable compromise Hubert asked: “Could it be, on the other hand, that what is sacred to one person is in essence sacred?” From the viewpoint of suspended disbelief on the part of the current guardian on the one hand, and the loss of control of a sacred item from the descendants on the other, it is pertinent to ask: “If we treat something as sacred, is that enough?”⁽²⁸⁾ In the Aotearoa New Zealand situation, is a suspension of disbelief for the purposes of respecting another’s belief sufficient to neutralise *tapu* objects which have not been made *noa*, through oversight or dislocation from their original peoples? Also, do all museums respect these powerful objects in the manner in which they would be treated if a Maori museum worker was in control of their storage or display? Obviously not. What about transgressions made through ignorance? In practice however, it is irrelevant whether or not items are *tapu* or *noa*, they are sacred to Maori and if *taonga* are accepted as sacred then they would be treated in the appropriate manner, not as a non-Maori would treat their own sacred objects, but as Maori would treat them. Sadly this does not often occur.

Sacredness, as explained by Hubert, is a Latin term and “is defined as restriction through pertaining to the gods.”⁽²⁹⁾ In the Western tradition this means that the sacred object, person, or site, is given special significance with rules and restrictions and set apart from everyday use. She noted how it has only recently

been recognised that concepts of sacredness are different for all people and unique to individual peoples. Also, unlike in the Western traditions, spirituality for Maori was and still is for many, a part of everyday life, where sacred objects were not placed apart from the people or the land, but live amongst them, although often hidden. Although there was “no direct equivalence to sacredness in New Zealand Maori,”⁽³⁰⁾ as Mauss explained, the concept of sacred “is inherent in the notion of *mana* and derives from it,” since the concept of *mana* is more general than that of sacred.⁽³¹⁾

Yet while spirituality for pre-European Maori was, and still is for many, a part of everyday life, in post-‘Treaty of Waitangi’ Aotearoa New Zealand, many treasured items have become alienated from the Maori people who created them, and from the people who recognise their *mana* or *tapu* nature. With the coming of Christianity, *tapu*, according to R.S.Oppenheim, “came to be interpreted as sacredness,”⁽³²⁾ supporting Prytz Johansen’s view that “the *tapu* of rituals... can reasonably be called sacred, we may translate *tapu* by ‘sacred.’”⁽³³⁾ However for the purposes of this thesis it is helpful to view the concept of sacredness in Mauss’ terms, as inherent in all treasured aspects of life, all treasured items or *taonga*, and all treasured sites or *wahi tapu*, and in people, which Maori themselves consider to be sacred. It is not intended to imply a dualism in pre-European Maori culture, or a separation into secular and sacred.

Because no discussion regarding Maori issues, by a non-Maori person, can avoid political implications, I have been careful to avoid terms which I consider to be

negative statements between two people. Specifically I have avoided using the term '*pakeha*' and instead speak about non-Maori or *tauiwi*, unless it is relevant, or a direct political statement. This is because '*pakeha*' was a term applied to the new settlers in the nineteenth century, but is often assumed to be a derogatory term, by many contemporary non-Maori, whatever its original meaning, and it is sometimes said in a derogatory way by Maori.⁽³⁴⁾ In contrast, *tauiwi*, meaning "strange tribe," or "foreign race," does not seem have acquired the same negative connotations.⁽³⁵⁾ As a fourth generation Aotearoa New Zealander of mixed Celtic descent, (Scottish, Irish, Welsh and Cornish), with my children born here, I consider myself to be as much a part of this land as do the Maori people. This is 'my' political statement that, while I *am* from a "strange" tribe, I now belong here, there is nowhere for me to go back to, and I look to no foreign soil as home.

Secondly, because of my respect for the Maori people and their language, I acknowledge that while I too belong here, the Maori and the Moriori were here on these islands before my people. Thus this land is Aotearoa, as they named it. However it is also post-colonial New Zealand and has undergone major changes, and so I refer to it as Aotearoa when speaking about pre-'Treaty of Waitangi' times, New Zealand when speaking of early colonial days and of the early government, and Aotearoa New Zealand when speaking about government and museums in the latter part of the twentieth century, after Maori and English were declared official languages. Both political statements are intended to foster understanding and not dissent.

Readers will notice that lower case Maori words are written in italics. These words, which are unfamiliar to many non-Maori, can be found in a 'Maori Glossary' at the end of the 'Conclusion.' For the sake of readability, commonly used Maori words or Maori names, both personal and collective, are not italicised. In one sense, this use of italics is also a political statement, intended to bring awareness that despite 150 years of colonisation many non-Maori are still unfamiliar with the Maori language.

In order to understand the ethics of anthropologists, archaeologists and other trained museum personnel, working within New Zealand Museums and engaging with Maori material, I have used both primary and secondary sources in my methodology. I have combined both historical and contemporary literature and undertaken interviews with personnel in relevant museums. My methodology begins with this 'Introduction,' explaining why I have undertaken this research, the issues under discussion, a general analysis of what I perceive to be the attitude in museums today, and a definition of terms of reference used. Chapter One, 'Anthropological Interpretations of Tapu,' firstly examines the literary representation of Maori *tapu* by early New Zealand explorers, missionaries and settlers, then the early ethnographers/anthropologists of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century and finally later writers, including both Maori and non-Maori. Wherever possible an explanation of their ontological viewpoint is given and comparisons are made with each other. The second chapter also investigates literary sources, using them to analyse the conflict between science and *tapu* in 'Early New Zealand Museum Practice.' A summary of the major people involved

in the development of Aotearoa New Zealand's museums is given, as well as several case studies to illustrate the way museums enhanced their collections to the detriment of the Maori people.

The third and fourth chapters are based on contemporary sources, including both literature and interviews, to examine current practices by management and non-Maori anthropologists, archaeologists and curators working with Maori material. This involved interviews with some of these specialists at their home museums in order to understand their position and concerns and current attitudes to *tapu* issues, as well as drawing on my own experiences while working in South Island museums. 'Chapter Three' examines the growing 'managerialization of *tapu* concerns' and of *taonga* management, as decision making for these concerns is coming increasingly under the domain of local Maori committees and/or Museum Management. 'Chapter Four' considers access to *taonga*, the ritual handling of objects by museum personnel and future directions for the museums discussed. In the conclusion I give my view of how I see the future of museums for Aotearoa New Zealand, and of Maori-Pakeha relations, developing.

In the process of writing this, I have chosen not to interview Maori museum staff, because this thesis is not speaking for Maori people, but for non-Maori museum personnel, especially those with anthropological and archaeological and backgrounds, engaging with Maori *tapu* material, with which I identify. However, as some excellent studies have been written recently by Maori staff, both published and unpublished, I have included their material where appropriate.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that this study will inspire others, both Maori and non-Maori, to investigate the issues that arise, and make changes where necessary, in order to benefit the future of Aotearoa New Zealand and of Maori-Pakeha relations both within and outside our museums.

CHAPTER 1

Anthropological Interpretations of Tapu

This Chapter on ‘Anthropological Interpretations of *Tapu*’ begins with discussing the concepts of Maori *tapu* and *taonga*, followed by the specific literary representation of *tapu* by early New Zealand explorers, missionaries and settlers. In order to eliminate misconceptions and misrepresentations, only authors writing from first-hand intimate knowledge of the Maori, and not those based on short visits or second-hand knowledge are included in this section. For this reason I have not included journals from Captain James Cook’s voyages, written either by Cook or Joseph Banks, although I have included some comments about Cook and some comments from the Rev. Samuel Marsden’s journals and letters for comparison with later writers.

Most of these early writers did not attempt to understand the concept of *tapu* and its relationship to *mana*, or its place in Maori society, but merely described occasions where they observed the application of *tapu* and these accounts were often prejudiced by the opinions of the observer. The representative selection given here included those, in chronological order, who have clearly illustrated important aspects of *tapu* and its application, relevant to this thesis. This is followed by a summary of some of the early ethnographers/ anthropologists of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, influential members of ‘The Polynesian Society,’ then prominent later-twentieth century writers, both

anthropological and historical. Where applicable this includes both Maori and non-Maori writers. This review also includes a comparison of the ontological viewpoint of each author and of their interpretation of *tapu* with both my viewpoint and that of each other.

EARLY WRITERS ON *TAPU*

Introduction:

Tapu as a concept, for a *tauiwi* in Aotearoa New Zealand, is not easy to understand. It is not helped by the changes affecting Maori people, collectively and tribally, since colonisation, including several syntheses of Maori and Christian beliefs, (E.g. Ratana, Ringatu etc.), the effect of past legislation restricting Maori spiritual practice (E.g. ‘The Tohunga Suppression Act 1907’), and limited information regarding some concepts. Like the concept of *taonga*, the subtle meanings of *tapu* have changed with time, or so it seems from the different interpretations given of it during post-contact New Zealand. Whether or not the concepts of *tapu* and/or of *taonga* have changed, the perception of many non-Maori is that the application of *tapu* by Maori has diminished, rules and prohibitions have become “relaxed” and sometimes reinterpreted or adapted to changing times.

Since we are concerned here with the application of *tapu* to *taonga* in museums it is pertinent to define the term *taonga*, as defined by Maori. Paul Tapsell explains that “according to tradition, *taonga* can be any item, object or thing which recognizably represents a kin group’s *whakapapa*, or genealogical identity, in

and is passed down through the generations, its *mana* increases because each person who has been associated with it, people considered caretakers of the object, adds his or her own *mana* to the object.”⁽⁵⁾

Definitions of *tapu* also appear to have changed with time. *Tapu* has been explained by various authors in basically three different ways, depending on their ontological viewpoint, or the assumptions that they make about the nature of reality. Western anthropologists, with a leaning towards functionalism, such as Elsdon Best, described *tapu* as a system of laws which kept people in check.⁽⁶⁾ Later, anthropologists with a structuralist approach such as F.Allan Hanson and Louise Hanson,⁽⁷⁾ and Joan Metge,⁽⁸⁾ described *tapu* as a relationship between the binary oppositions of *atua*/human, men/women and *tapu*/*noa*. Some authors, such as Anne Salmond, described *tapu* as a manifestation of *atua* which required regulated responses to situations.⁽⁹⁾ Within these different explanations are some variations and combinations, such as combining a connection with the *atua* into a system of laws as has Salmond,⁽¹⁰⁾ or combining a connection with the *atua* with its binary opposites, as Raymond Firth has.⁽¹¹⁾ These are all discussed in detail following.

I myself support an interpretative viewpoint whereby I acknowledge that while I can attempt to understand *tapu* from an emic viewpoint, or from the (so-called) ‘native’ point of view, insights regarding *tapu* by *tauiwi*, such as myself, will always remain ‘interpretations’ of their reality. From this limited understanding I conclude that, while *tapu* does include both a system of laws and binary

oppositions, without its association with *atua* and the unseen, *tapu* would not have maintained its importance and still be acknowledged today. In contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand, when previously strictly enforced and collectively recognised *tapu* restrictions have theoretically been replaced by English common law, when many Maori people have embraced some form of Christian religion, and when the clear distinctions between the *tapu/noa* and male/female binary oppositions have supposedly become more relaxed, *tapu* is still acknowledged by many Maori people. This includes the respect given to *wahi tapu*, both as places in which *kōiwi tangata* are stored or buried or as places defined as *wahi tapu* for various reasons, restrictions during rituals such as the opening of *wharehau whakairo*, before and during *harakeke* weaving activities and *whakairo* and other carving activities. *Tapu* is evident through such protocol as, not eating food while in the *wharehau*, or while carving or weaving, beginning and ending such undertakings with a *karakia*, and not sitting on food tables or putting a hair brush on one. While *tapu* might not be specifically mentioned, its application prevails.

It was expected that with the conversion of many Maori to Christianity and the subsequent loss of *mana* by the *tohunga*, that all associated concepts with the Maori *atua* would be replaced by Christian beliefs. However in practice, Maori beliefs have formed a synthesis with Christianity in many different ways, *Io* has become synonymous with Jehovah of the 'Old Testament',⁽¹²⁾ and many *tohunga* became priests, (E.g. In the Ringatu faith),⁽¹³⁾ while today many Maori priests in the Anglican church are also known as *tohunga*.⁽¹⁴⁾ Also, despite earlier

predictions to the contrary, *tapu* as a concept has survived and is even accepted by the Aotearoa New Zealand Government and accommodated for in the many *hui* consultations with *iwi* and *hapu* which occur because of law changes and treaty claims.⁽¹⁵⁾ If *tapu* was simply a system of social laws, or even a complex relationship of binary opposites, it may have lost its mystique and been replaced by the English system. Instead, ancestral *atua* live on through ancient *whakairo* and weavings, through the *korero* told on the *marae*, through *waiata*, through *whakapapa*, and in places designated as *wahi tapu* for its association with an *atua*. The *mana* associated with *atua* both invites and demands *tapu* restrictions and they are given an honoured place in both history and contemporary life.⁽¹⁶⁾

An interpretative ontology, accepts that ancestral *atua* are still important to many of today's Maori people, that Maori *atua* may be sleeping but are not dead, and that what is sacred to a people, or has been sacred to a people, is indeed sacred, on their terms. Like Hanson,⁽¹⁷⁾ I maintain that women were, and still are in many ways, seen as capable of rendering sacred objects *noa*, because they had too much *atua* and hence needed *tapu* restrictions, to protect everyone, themselves included. If women were seen as polluting and unclean, they would not have the exalted position they still hold, as the one to call the visitors onto a *marae*, and as the first to enter a new *wharenui* in order to render it *noa*, nor would the Maori people of today have a Maori Queen.

Explorers, Missionaries and Settlers:

The first connection Europeans had with *tapu* was through the early explorers. Anne Salmond reports an incident that shows how little Captain Cook understood about the people he met in Aotearoa. On the morning of 18th November 1769, at Moehau (Cape Colville on the Coromandel Peninsular), Cook and his crew saw a crowd of Maori people gathered on “a remarkable bare point jutting far out into the sea ... who seemed to take but little notice of us but talked together with much earnestness.”⁽¹⁸⁾ A *mauri* had been placed on the small island off Moehau by a Te Arawa *tohunga*, and as it “was one of the most sacred stones of all,”... “the people must have been concerned to safeguard so intensely *tapu* a place.” After about half an hour the Maori took to sea in their canoes and pelted the ship with stones, presumably to make it leave. While they only stopped when “a musketball was fired through the hull of one of their canoe,” the ship did eventually leave, although not because Cook understood that he and his crew were violating a Maori belief, but because of the misunderstood aggression shown towards them.⁽¹⁹⁾

In 1772 the French explorers discovered that the violation of *tapu*, even if unintentional, could result in more serious consequences. Later explorers, settlers and others, came to understand that punishment for violation of *tapu* could vary from simple reparation to death, either inflicted or consequential, depending on the extent of the violation. At the time, however, it is unlikely that these French explorers realised that the reason that their navigator Marion du Fresne, and many of his men and officers, were killed by Maori people, was because they

transgressed a *tapu* place. This was either through collecting firewood from places designated *tapu*, as explained by Ward,⁽²⁰⁾ or as according to White, because they fished at a *tapu* bay.⁽²¹⁾ Whatever the reason, disregard for the *tapu* of a place, land or sea, was a very serious offence.

The Rev. Samuel Marsden left a large legacy of letters and journals of his missionary activities for the Church Missionary Society, detailing the seven visits he made to Aotearoa between 1814 and 1837 and the contact he had with the Maori people.⁽²²⁾ Marsden, like Cook,⁽²³⁾ viewed the Maori people as the ‘noble savage,’ worthy of ‘saving’ despite their cannibal tendencies,⁽²⁴⁾ as the following quote illustrates:-

“From my first knowledge of these people, I have always considered them the finest and noblest race of heathens known to the civilized world, and have ever been persuaded that they only wanted the introduction of the arts of civilization and the knowledge of the Christian religion to make them a great nation... .”⁽²⁵⁾

While on his ‘civilizing’ mission, Marsden observed many Maori habits and customs and regarded *tapu* as “a delusion” propagated by their “priests.”⁽²⁶⁾ He used the conversion of Pomare, King of Otaheite, as an example of how the “taboo” wouldn’t affect them after conversion, and would stop “their gods from killing them.”⁽²⁷⁾ To Marsden, “superstition” influenced the “minds of the people,”⁽²⁸⁾ and this included “a strong belief in witchcraft, which they call *makutu*,” with which they can kill.⁽²⁹⁾ This correlation of *tapu* with witchcraft has

persisted. Many Maori and non-Maori people in Aotearoa New Zealand today still equate the two as the same.⁽³⁰⁾

Several decades later, in 1863, the 'Pakeha-Maori' F.E. Maning experienced an interesting application of *tapu* which he wrote about in *Old New Zealand: A tale of the good old times*. This was when he inadvertently *tapu'd* himself by touching a skull on a path he was walking on. Maning considered the *tapu* restrictions imposed upon him to be an annoyance which he cheerfully cheated, by stealing back his knives and forks, and secretly smoking his pipe in the house, although denying to the Maori that he did so.⁽³¹⁾

In the same decade Dr. Edward Shortland wrote *Traditions and Superstitions of the New Zealanders: With Illustrations of Their Manners and Customs*. He was an employee of Governor Hobson and an astute traveler, Maori scholar and linguist who later became highly regarded for the accuracy of his work by S. Percy Smith and Edward Tregear of the Polynesian Society. While Vernon Wybrow described him as the "first anthropologist of the Maori," because of his detailed observations, Shortland was primarily interested in assimilating the Maori people into European society and civilizing them.⁽³²⁾ Towards this end he attempted to collect "Maori traditions and myths in the 'purest' forms possible,... in order to analyse the "true" nature of Maori society."⁽³³⁾ To him also *tapu* was a "superstition," which was better left behind in order to 'civilize' Maori.

In Shortland's opinion there were three kinds of Maori traditions. The first were those that "relate to the origin of the world and of man, have an intimate connection with their superstitious beliefs and practices and were held so sacred that even after Christianity had weakened the dread of trespassing on sacred subjects," [or *tapu* knowledge], "those best instructed had a great objection to communicate their knowledge to foreigners." The other two traditions were *korero tara* or fables, which were not restricted, and historical knowledge dating from the earliest times.⁽³⁴⁾

The word *tapu* according to Shortland was composed of two words, "*ta* - to mark, and *pu* - an adverb of intensity." *Tapu* therefore means "marked thoroughly," and its meaning as "sacred" or "prohibited" is a secondary meaning, "because sacred things and places were commonly marked in a peculiar manner, in order that everyone might know that they were sacred."⁽³⁵⁾

It was neglect of the law of *tapu* which lead to disease, intentional or otherwise and *ariki* had to be especially careful.⁽³⁶⁾ "The fundamental law" according to Shortland, "is, that if any thing *tapu* is permitted to come in contact with food, or with any vessel or place where food is ordinarily kept, such food must not afterwards be eat [sic] by anyone, and such vessel or place must no longer be devoted to its ordinary use; the food, vessel, or place becoming *tapu* from the instant of its contact with an object already *tapu*."⁽³⁷⁾ "One of the most important of the superstitious laws of this people, is that which makes the head and backbone of the human body *tapu*." "Hence it is a crime for a sacred person to

leave his comb, or blanket, or any thing else which has touched his head or back, in a place where food has been cooked, or even to suffer another person to drink out of any vessel which has before touched his lips.”⁽³⁸⁾ While his explanation appears to place the onus on the person designated *tapu* to avoid others, in practice *tapu* was a dual responsibility for all people, *tapu* or *noa*, to avoid any *tapu* transgressions, through maintaining appropriate rules of behaviour.⁽³⁹⁾

To this end Shortland noticed how a “New Zealander will never lean his back against the wall of a house,” and no matter how many people are present they will “always leave a little space between themselves and the wall.” This was because of a “dread of the mysterious influence of certain *tapu* objects, which have been thrust into the rush walls of dwelling-houses for concealment.” He also noted how “in former days, the huts used in travelling by sacred persons were always distinguished by their posts being daubed with red ochre, to prevent the law of *tapu* being inadvertently broken; and for the same reason, sacred persons painted their bodies and clothes with the same red substance, that they might leave a mark behind them where they rested. These practices still prevail to a limited extent.”⁽⁴⁰⁾

Shortland described everything not classified as *tapu* as “*noa*, meaning free or common.”⁽⁴¹⁾ He noticed that certain ceremonies could remove the restriction of *tapu* from any person or object and this could include the use of cooked food and *karakia* or “incantation to the god” in the ritual. His interpretation is that “as cooked food destroys tabu, the propitiation is at the same time a kind of pollution,

I.e. of the god.”⁽⁴²⁾ Shortland’s explanation for *tapu* included both binary oppositions such as *tapu/noa* and sacred/pollution, as well as *tapu* as a system of laws. In later years this would have been categorized as a structuralist-functional approach since he was concerned with the relationships between social relationships of different kinds.⁽⁴³⁾

Shortland also recognised the connection between *atua* and *tapu* and its importance for the people he met. He noted how “every tribe and every family has its own proper *atua*, namely, the spirits of departed ancestors.” This include the family heads, of both male and female line, who were “regarded by their own family with a veneration,”⁽⁴⁴⁾ “almost akin to that of their *Atua*.”⁽⁴⁵⁾ He observed also that “they form ... the links of connection between the living and the spirits of the dead; and the ceremony of releasing anything from the restriction of *tapu* cannot be perfected without their intervention.” It was the “neglect or infringement of the law of *tapu*, either willful or undesigned,” and “even brought about by the act of another person, [which] moves the *atua* of the family to anger.” The offender is punished by “some infant spirit” who is sent “to feed on a part of his body.”⁽⁴⁶⁾ The magnitude of the crime depends whether this is a “vital” part of the body or not.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Of particular relevance to this thesis and the importance of *tapu* connected with *taonga* stored in museums today, Shortland observed how some tribes, particularly among the Wanganui people, “preserve in their house small carved images of wood, each of which is dedicated to the spirit of an ancestor of the

family, who is believed to enter into its substance on particular occasions, in order to hold converse with the living.”⁽⁴⁸⁾ These “images” were not worshipped for themselves but, because they were the frequent temporary abode for an *atua*, they were strongly *tapu*. These “god sticks” as they are now known, appear to have been individual or family possessions, and did not belong to the *tohunga*. Many of these “images” have found their way, one way or another, into both New Zealand and overseas museums. From an emic interpretative viewpoint they, as well as the larger *pou* which were placed outside,⁽⁴⁹⁾ can be described as sleeping, awaiting an occasion when an *atua* is called to inhabit them again, while still retaining their *tapu* nature.

Shortland also described how members of a company of the 80th Regiment found an opening into a cave, which contained a large number of human skulls or bones. He was at the time absent at Maketu, but on returning, found that “some of the skulls had been carried away, and the rest displaced from their former sites. Fearing the desecration of this spot would give offense to the natives of the neighbourhood,” he recommended that “the entrance to the cave to be closed; but I soon found that the natives were already aware of the discovery, and appeared quite indifferent as to the fate of the bones. They did not belong to any of their tribe, nor had they even known of the existence of the place.”⁽⁵⁰⁾ From this we can infer that only the bones of their own kin were of importance and governed by *tapu* restrictions, while those of others were not. This was probably because to them non-identified tribes had no *mana* and hence no accompanying *tapu*.

Despite his obvious androcentricism and religious prejudices, the missionary Reverend Ward, who published his book *Life Among the Maories of New Zealand: Being a Description of Missionary, Colonial, and Military Achievements* in the 1870s, acknowledged that “the Maories [sic] were in a certain sense, a religious people,”... “for they never engaged in any important undertaking” such as a journey, fishing, planting or war, “without first uttering a *karakia* - some sort of prayer or incantation” and again on their return, under the guidance of a *tohunga*.⁽⁵¹⁾ He observed that the *tohunga*, was also employed in any unusual happening such as “the naming of a child, particularly the child of a chief, and at the internment of a corpse.”⁽⁵²⁾ He also noted that while “the Maori oracle was in much repute, the *Tohunga* was the medium through which it was consulted.”⁽⁵³⁾

According to Ward, “the observance of the *tapu* had a very strong influence upon all classes.”⁽⁵⁴⁾ Sacredness was its general characteristic. A person or thing made *tapu* was set apart for sacred or special purposes, which could not be violated on any account. ... A *tapued* person, in many cases, could not touch food with his hands, but submitted to the ludicrous, yet necessary inconvenience, of being fed by others.” Ward also noted how “those who handled a dead body were *tapued*, and could not touch food with their hands.”⁽⁵⁵⁾

While many other authors from this period wrote or commented on *tapu*, they merely reinforce the impression we gain of the importance of *tapu* in the early contact years, of the use of *karakia* and cooked food in *whakanoa* rituals, of the

role of woman in making *tapu* objects *noa* and the importance of the role of *tohunga* in both *tapu* restrictions and *tapu* removal. Also, despite the alleged decline of the exalted place of the *tohunga*, because of wide-spread conversion to Christianity, it appears that even in the 1870s the *tohunga* still held a crucial role in tribal society. While the connection between *tapu* and the *atua* was noted and the binary oppositions of *tapu/noa*, sacred/polluting, male/female, was discussed by authors such as Shortland, his view that *tapu* was primarily a social system of laws appears to have had the most prominence.

Christian Europeans, as well as some Maori, considered *tapu* to be of nuisance value and believed that through civilizing the Maori through Christianity, and debasing the *tohunga*, they would abandon *tapu* and would be better off.⁽⁵⁶⁾ This view was also propagated in the late-nineteenth century and early twentieth century, by politicians such as Maui Pomare, Apirana Ngata and Te Rangi Hiroa, (later Sir Peter Buck), in order to increase Maori health,⁽⁵⁷⁾ by Wiremu Ratana who saw tribal affiliations, the influence of *tohunga* and the restrictions of *tapu*, as something to leave behind,⁽⁵⁸⁾ and by the proponents of the 'Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907,' ironically instigated by Maori M.P.'s themselves.⁽⁵⁹⁾

The Polynesian Society: Its Influence on Beliefs About Maori.

In 1892 the Polynesian Society was formed by S. Percy Smith, Edward Tregear, Elsdon Best and W.E. Gudgeon with six other amateur anthropologists and historians,⁽⁶⁰⁾ "to promote the study and recording of Polynesian history and culture."⁽⁶¹⁾ Tregear seconded Smith's motion to form a society "to rescue from

oblivion the fast-fading knowledge of the past among the natives of New Zealand and the South Seas.’⁽⁶²⁾ While it was not intended specifically for writings on Maori it became a valuable source of information, although not always accurate, and a catalyst for studies on Maori society and culture. Through providing valuable contacts and four journals a year it became a venue through which ideas could be discussed, critiqued and disputed. Comparisons were made with other peoples’ social habits and traditions, both historically and contemporary and theories were propounded on all manner of subjects.

Prytz Johansen noted how early collectors of Maori material such as Best, Smith, Tregear etc., were more interested in myths and ‘nature mythology’ and historical traditions, than in rituals or their relationship to the myths,⁽⁶³⁾ which accounts for why there is less information from them on these aspects. Typical of the conjecture given as fact, in the ‘Journal of the Polynesian Society,’ S. Percy Smith discusses a legend where the unauthorized use of a *tapu* comb by Rua-tapu, Uenuku’s younger son, led to an incident known as ‘Te Huri-pure-i-atu,’ where many elder sons of chiefly families were drowned in Hawaiki, around 1200.⁽⁶⁴⁾ This particular example illustrates the combination of myth, history and social customs that permeated the early writings of the society. In the later part of the twentieth century Smith himself became notorious as the propagator of the ‘Great Migration Myth,’ which was exposed by David Simmons.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Despite Simmon’s evidence to the contrary this myth is still taught as fact in many schools today, and commonly believed as fact by both Maori and non-Maori.

Another influential member of the society was Lt. Col. W.E. Gudgeon, who, although he also was primarily interested in myths and legends, commented on Maori social customs. Of interest here, in one issue he noted how, “personal *tapu* might never be lightly treated or ignored, for common man have been known to die suddenly after using a pipe dropped by a *tapu* chief, or after eating the remains of food cooked for, and partly eaten by, such a man.”⁽⁶⁶⁾

The Rev. Williams, who also contributed to the Journal, discussed the building of important *wharenui* named after “some celebrated ancestor of the tribe,” noting how after due ceremony “the house is free from *tapu*, and people may sleep in it.”⁽⁶⁷⁾ These examples by Gudgeon and Williams show the application of *tapu* without attempting to explain the place of *tapu* in daily life, which was also typical of early writings in the Journal. However they also illustrate the continuing importance of *tapu* in late nineteenth century ‘New Zealand,’ after over a century of contact with Europeans and nearly a century of Christian missionary influence.

Of the founding members of the Polynesian Society only Elsdon Best contributed extensively to information regarding Maori *tikanga*, including *tapu* practices. Other members such as Tregear, who helped edit the Journal, despite his own reputation as one of the colony’s “most prominent, prolific, and at times controversial intellectuals, with an international reputation in Polynesian scholarship,”⁽⁶⁸⁾ drew on information from other members, especially from Best. He reiterated this information in the popular work *The Maori Race*, published in

1904.⁽⁶⁹⁾ However anything that Tregear said on *tapu*, Best and others had said before.

Elsdon Best and his Literary Legacy:

Of all the members of the Polynesian Society writing about Maori society, Elsdon Best (1856-1931) was the most influential because of his prolific writings, many of them published by the Dominion Museum and New Zealand Government and still in print today. A self trained ethnologist, Best, like Tregear and others of the society, became recognised as an eminent Maori scholar by other scholars, both within 'New Zealand' and world wide. While Best collected his information fifty years later than the first 'ethnographers,' such as Grey, White, Shortland and Taylor, his records "confirm in outline" but with much more detail and accuracy than they did.⁽⁷⁰⁾

Best worked at the Dominion Museum as ethnologist, for the last twenty years of his life, under Augustus Hamilton as Director. In 1954 R. A. Falla, the current Director of the Dominion Museum, stated that while, "he was in a sense an interpreter of ethnology from the Maori point of view," caution must be applied when accepting his historical information as facts, and suggested comparison with other writers such as Te Rangi Hiroa.⁽⁷¹⁾ This was because during the period after 1910 Best relied on an informant called Whatahoro, a *tohunga* trained in the *whare wananga*, "who had been a student of the last high priest of the Wairarapa district of Te Matorohanga" whose information was often contradictory to that of other respected *tohunga*.⁽⁷²⁾ While Best himself was initially cautious with

Whatahoro's statements, he was persuaded by his friend and fellow ethnographer, S. Percy Smith, to put more faith in Whatahoro's information than his own judgment suggested. With our more recent knowledge of Smith's generalized histories, it becomes obvious that Best's most useful work comes from the period before he met Whatahoro, or worked at the Dominion Museum, especially after he went to the Ureweras in 1895.

Although he was a self-taught anthropologist, Best understood that the key to understanding Maori spirituality and *tikanga* was through listening. No arm chair ethnographer, Best travelled to the elders who had the knowledge and then spent many hours and often weeks and months, asking, discussing and listening, while recording every word he heard in his own shorthand, often in Maori rather than English. While he may have collected information "without understanding it,"⁽⁷³⁾ the accuracy of Best's note-taking, in both English and Maori, made it easier for those studying his records later to verify them or reinterpret them, if necessary.

Rather than viewing Maori spirituality in terms of 'cultural relativity,' as many early anthropologists were attempting to do, Best followed the style of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, with his comments on the hierarchy of spiritual thought and comparisons to the beliefs of other people.⁽⁷⁴⁾ He believed that "religions follow the law of evolution: that they are subject to change, are developed, and ... built upon [one] another ... [and] are subject to decay."⁽⁷⁵⁾ In the manner of Social Darwinism Best described the Maori people as "barbaric peoples" of "inferior culture," as did the fourth century B.C

Hellenistic Greeks when describing people of “cultural and mental inferiority.”⁽⁷⁶⁾ However, although Best was an Evolutionist in theory, his approach was functionalist, like that of Malinowski. Best’s method was to focus on various elements of Maori society, (E.g. warfare), then describe each separate facet, such as types of weapons and their function, without incorporating them into a comprehensive pattern or an integrated whole.⁽⁷⁷⁾

In critiquing this methodology, Raymond Firth noted how Best’s evaluation of *tapu* was obtained by “considering the attitude of the native towards *tapu* objects, expressed in his behaviour.”⁽⁷⁸⁾ Also, Steven Webster asserted that while Best’s accounts were mostly based on observation, these observations were “inextricable from this rhetoric, evolutionist convictions that the Maori were an inferior race nearing extinction, and his fascination with battles and dramas of domination,” and that these were “derived from evidence presented to influence the decision of an official land titles commission, for which Best was secretary.”⁽⁷⁹⁾

It is possible, however, that Best’s information was accurate, and that the *tohunga* practices of some *iwi*, if not others, had already incorporated aspects of Christianity into traditional rituals, which would account for the different information from *tohunga* of different *iwi*. Whether or not these customs were *tuuturu*, or authentic in the traditional sense, does not however detract from their value, as Hana O’Regan has pointed out. She noted that both her *iwi* of Kai Tahu and of the Tuhoe who Best studied, “actively and knowingly pursued a process of cultural construction and reinterpretation of tradition.”⁽⁸⁰⁾ However, with regard

to the cult of Io, which only came to light in the 1860s, Best and Smith both disputed the interpretation that it was a post-missionary construct, preferring instead a 'diffusionist theory,' that "the Maoris had brought [it] with them and preserved an ancient religion from the Middle East."⁽⁸¹⁾ Best also used this 'evidence' of a supreme being as indicating the civilized nature of Maori people compared with other barbaric ones.⁽⁸²⁾

Jean Smith, in *Tapu Removal in Maori Religion*, quoted extensively from Maning, Grey, Shortland, White, Smith, Gudgeon and Best, but advised caution with "some of Best's material," because "Best thought more highly of the esoteric than of the exoteric aspects of Maori religion." While Best considered a belief in the high God Io, was limited knowledge, "Buck and others have shown that the cult of Io was definitely a post-European development, and the Creation myth involving Io, which Best published in *Maori Religion and Mythology*, certainly reveals the influence of the Bible. This is not to say that it is not a Maori myth. The Maori were selective in their borrowing, and what they borrowed they transformed." This applied also to a marriage rite that Best reported. ⁽⁸³⁾

Other recent writers, such as Bronwyn Elsmore, also agree that while 'Io' may have been restricted knowledge now released to the people, it is more likely a post-Missionary construct and a genuine attempt by influential Tohunga to understand Christian concepts and incorporate them into old ideas.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Yet despite a blending of Maori spirituality and Christian beliefs, Maori beliefs were not entirely replaced by Christian ones. Hence today Maori Anglican Ministers are

often known as a *Tohunga* to their people and will act as such when needed. They also speak of the related concepts of *tapu*, *mana* and *taonga* while acknowledging God or Io as if it were tradition.

It must also be remembered that Best's desire to "preserve" traditional Maori beliefs followed a period in his life where he had helped to suppress and annihilate Maori beliefs, as a member of the Armed Constabulary who demolished the Parihaka settlement in 1881 and helped arrest Te Whiti and Tohu.⁽⁸⁵⁾ His motives for learning Maori during this time and encouraging studies of Maori social and material culture are therefore ambiguous and should be deservedly subjected to strong scrutiny. In an introduction to Best's *Notes On The Art of War* Evans claims that despite this action "he apparently reconciled with his empathy for things Maori," a claim difficult to substantiate since Best himself never wrote of his earlier armed aggression towards the Maori people who he later came to investigate.⁽⁸⁶⁾

Contemporary negative 'Maori' responses to 'pakeha' scholars writing on Maori subjects,⁽⁸⁷⁾ directly conflict with the positive view which nineteenth century Tuhoe elders clearly regarded Elsdon Best. At his death Peehi, the "white *ruanuku*," as the Tuhoe called him, was mourned as an old friend by Maori and politicians alike.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Rather than seeking Maori teachings to dominate the Maori, it appears that, at least later in his life, Best genuinely sought understanding in order to foster good relationships between two different peoples. This desire to understand was recognised by many *kaumatua* and *tohunga* of his time.

Despite his shortcomings Best is New Zealand's earliest recognised professional ethnologist with many of his publications still available. Therefore it is imperative to consider his writings on *tapu* and related issues because of his influence on contemporary views.

Best described the concept of "sacred" as only a secondary meaning of *tapu*, since "prohibition" is its main characteristic⁽⁸⁹⁾. He explained *tapu* as a substitute for "a code of civil law," an "institution" which acted as 'a corrective and coherent power in his social life.' *Tapu* provided a "series of prohibitions ... which affected all crises of life - birth, marriage, sickness, death, burial, exhumation; all industries," such as weaving or net making, and "no person in the community was exempt from its stringent rules."⁽⁹⁰⁾ "*Tapu* represents the *mana* or power of the gods, and is not to be trifled with."⁽⁹¹⁾ "*Tapu* objects, or objects marking a *tapu* place, were often painted a red colour by the Maori," presumably to avoiding transgression of *tapu* laws.⁽⁹²⁾

Best also gave another meaning of *tapu* as "unclean," in the same way it is spoken of in "the Scriptures," or Holy Bible.⁽⁹³⁾ Pollution of anything *tapu*, a person, a place, or a house, will offend "the gods" until placated through a ritual or recitation. Women in this sense were *tapu* during the birth process, as were sick people.⁽⁹⁴⁾ Best believed that men only worked on tasks considered to be *tapu*, such as house-building, canoe-making, crop-planting, net-making etc.⁽⁹⁵⁾ This however ignores the fact that women also had *tapu* restrictions when they were weaving or gathering *harekeke* and that high born women could also be *tapu*.

Punishment for transgressions however were imposed not by man but “by the gods, either directly through sickness, death, or ‘demonic possession,’ or by having the god’s protection withdrawn. This latter consequence was extremely dangerous since a man’s *mauri*, or life-principle was then unprotected. A *tohunga* was then needed to reverse the situation, or death will often occur from ‘worry,” since “when a native believes that he is stricken, by, say, a spell of black magic, he is almost assuredly doomed, and will not last long.”⁽⁹⁶⁾ An inference from this last statement can be made that Best believed that it was the ‘belief’ in the power of *tapu* which gives its effect. It also indicates that Best recognised that *tapu* was not simply a system of laws but acknowledges the connection between *tapu* and *atua* in Maori beliefs.

In a method akin to Functionalism, Best discussed the importance of restrictions regarding the *ahi tapu* or ritual fire used in the *whakanoa* ceremonies,⁽⁹⁷⁾ the use of human bone as a flute, to help difficult childbirth, (“for they seem to possess much inherent *mana*”), or the use of a skull in a field to help crops, or in a tree to catch birds, but he didn’t describe what was done with these *tapu* objects after such ceremonies.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Best does however quote Nicholas who came with Marsden,⁽⁹⁹⁾ who, on observing a hair cutting ceremony, was not allowed to touch the obsidian flakes used in the process because they were extremely *tapu*. We can only assume that they were disposed of secretly and safely, where they could not be found.

Despite his profuse writings, which covered all aspects of Maori life, no information is available from Best on what concessions, if any, he made for *tapu* prohibitions, when working at the Dominion Museum with Maori material culture and *tapu* knowledge. We may assume, however, that Best would have been cautious in his dealings with *tapu*, because of his own careful nature.

THE FOLLOWING YEARS:

Many later writers also drew on Best's information for their writings, or like S. Percy Smith, used the same source of information for their contributions. Since the critique on Whatahoro's accuracy did not arise until more recently, most writers drawing on Best's material have unfortunately not distinguished between his early and later sources or between their own information and Best's.

One such writer is Makeriti or Maggie Papakura as she was also known amongst Te Arawa, although with her it was not scholarly ineptitude that caused this omission but her untimely death while writing her thesis, which was later edited and published posthumously. Born in 1872 at Whakarewarewa to an English father, Makeriti was "*Te aho ariki*," the first born from a noble line and was related to "seven of the eight canoes from which all of the Maori tribes are descended."⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Schooled by Maori elders before she went to school at ten,⁽¹⁰¹⁾ she was well educated and well read,⁽¹⁰²⁾ and "an active political lobbyist and prolific letter writer."⁽¹⁰³⁾ She donated a guinea to the setting up of a Maori court in 1902. She was strongly against alcohol and lobbied against it extensively, as the many letters and records of her prohibitionist activities show. She was also

active in publicly refuting '*pakeha*' misconceptions regarding "lewd" Maori dances.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Makeriti went to England to attend University and died in 1930 at Oxford while writing her thesis.

Contrary to the indifference or suspicion that most Maori viewed museums, and in keeping with her active political stance, Makeriti was one of the earliest recorded financial supporters of the Auckland Museum and Institute. She was also "part of a very conscious and angry tribal network that was attempting to stop grave-robbing and the illicit removal of *taonga* Maori, of greenstone, jade, whalebone, and other graveyard treasures, from the *urupa* or cemeteries around Rotorua." In a letter to a friend she described "how one night she mounted a horse and went and physically attempted to stop a group of grave-robbers."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ This shows that Maori did not passively accept the violation of their graves and burial places by Europeans and actively protested such actions.

For her thesis Makeriti drew heavily on Best's books. A newspaper clipping from the *New Zealand Herald*, of 23rd of April 1938 is inside her book at Massey Library, and is entitled 'The Old-Time Maori: Maggie Papakura's Interesting Story, by V.F.F. (V.F. Fisher). It says: "Much of it is gleaned directly from the published works of the late Elsdon Best, for whom she had a great admiration. It is a pity that Makereti died suddenly in 1930, otherwise she would have given acknowledgment where appropriate and readers would then have known which portions contained her own original observations."⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ However she didn't, and the editor gave no indication of this either, although her close contact with

eminent anthropologists in England does indicate the influences they had on her, and later writers were able to trace her sources more clearly.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

One interesting observation from Makeriti has contemporary relevance. She emphasized how Maori in ancient times were “taught not to desecrate *tapu*, and especially the *tapu* of burial places, a most important thing not to do.”⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ They were taught especially to never to put their hands over the head of a *tapu* person, or pass food over the head of a chief, a *Tohunga*, an older member of the family or anyone else who is *tapu*, and if they did the food had to be thrown right away or buried. Also that hair should never be put in a fire or the fire must be put out at once to prevent the person whose hair it was from dying. Her editor Penniman noted that Makereti herself observed the laws of *tapu* carefully, and “never allowed the genealogies to be consulted in a room where food was kept.”⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

While this was a relatively new innovation of *tapu* restrictions, and was self-imposed, it was clearly related to the earlier practice of only reciting genealogies at the *whare wananga* under strict *tapu* conditions. Jeffrey Sissons more recently also noted how a Ngapuhi elder he discussed *tapu* knowledge with, never consulted his written genealogies in a room where food was eaten in, or allowed Sissons to. In fact, in order to allow Sissons to work in the living room with the genealogies, they were taken out of the window from the room where they were kept and around the back of the house and passed in to him, to avoid the kitchen.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

These earlier writers influenced the attitudes and knowledge of their contemporaries about Maori spirituality and consequently influenced, both directly and indirectly, museum practice at the time, as well as later writers on this subject.

LATER WRITINGS ON *TAPU*:

Like earlier writers, many later twentieth century and contemporary writers, made, and still make, the mistake of taking all of Elsdon Best's writings as reliable, without distinguishing between the two phases of his work. Regarding their authenticity, authors discussing *tapu* can be fitted into three groups, those using unreliable secondary sources unquestionably, such as from Best's later phase, those writing from a Christian viewpoint and therefore biased regarding the information they interpret, since they are looking for Christian analogies, and those genuinely attempting to understand *tapu* either through its social role as regulator with rules of conduct, through connection with the *atua*, or through the related concepts of *tapu/noa*, *wairua* and *mana*.

However, it is more relevant to this thesis to group anthropologists into categories based on their ontological viewpoints. Few recent writers, except Jean Smith,⁽¹¹¹⁾ have followed a strictly functionalist approach, like Best did earlier, and some like Anne Salmond,⁽¹¹²⁾ followed an interpretative approach by describing *tapu* as a manifestation of *atua* which required on-going response to situations, according to an inherited system. Structuralists such as Hanson & Hanson,⁽¹¹³⁾ and Metge,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ described *tapu* as a relationship between the binary oppositions of

atua/human, men/women and *tapu*/*noa* but with some variations on their interpretation of women's place in the system while Structuralist-Functionalists, like Raymond Firth,⁽¹¹⁵⁾ described *tapu* as a system of laws which kept people in check, while also emphasizing its binary oppositions.

Referring to *tapu* as a manifestation of contact with the *atua*, and following Best's functionalist approach, Jean Smith quotes Te Matorohanga, (the elder to Whatahoro, from Elsdon Best's less reliable phase), as saying that "*tapu* was all important - the first of all things; without it none of the powers of the gods were available." She comments that "*tapu* was not in itself an object of much speculation on the part of the Maori. The concept was involved in many different fields of practical concern, (Eg. status relations, the explanation of misfortune, the preservation of property), and it may be an unwarranted assumption that there was something significant in common between all the different uses of the concept, apart from the ultrahuman sanction which was ultimately involved."⁽¹¹⁶⁾

Other writers who drew heavily from Best include R.S. Oppenheim and Eric Schwimmer. Oppenheimer explained *tapu* as "a special kind of relationship between people which is expressed through appropriate behaviour, but which arose from the belief that the persons or things in that relationship were *tapu* because of their contact with the supernatural."⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Schwimmer interpreted the word *tapu* as corresponding to what we would call "the holy," except that "the objects set apart as *tapu* are very different from those we would expect. Almost

any object could be *tapu*. A clump of flax could be *tapu* because it was believed a supernatural being had sat on it.”⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Cleve Barlow noted that despite *tapu* lifting ceremonies “nothing can ever be totally free of all *tapu*.”⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Barlow described *tapu* as sacred or set apart.⁽¹²⁰⁾ He acknowledged however that many meanings and conditions are associated with *tapu*. “First and foremost, *tapu* is the power and influence of the gods. Everything has inherent *tapu* because everything was created by Io (Supreme God), each after its kind or species. The land has *tapu* as well as the oceans, rivers and forests, and all living things that are upon the earth.” Barlow, however, as a Mormon, was influenced by his world-view, like other similar writers such as Michael Shirres who was, and still is, a Christian minister as well as a Maori *tohunga*.⁽¹²¹⁾ Both sought Christian analogies in Maori ritual rather than seeking anthropological inquiry.

Marshall Sahlins, like Jean Smith,⁽¹²²⁾ believed that it is “the aggressive relation to divine beings” which “helps explain why contact with the sacred is extremely dangerous to those who are not themselves in a tabu state,”⁽¹²³⁾ Anne Salmond explained it slightly differently. While identifying *tapu* as a set of ‘laws,’ she interpreted these laws as setting “apart those people, times and places where the gods were present and in communication with the human world.”⁽¹²⁴⁾ She also explained that “people learnt to call on those gods who looked after particular aspects of their daily lives,” by “using rituals and *karakia*,” ... “taught to them by senior relatives or in the schools of learning.” These “summoned the gods,”... “to

lend their *mana* ... to human pursuits.” *Atua* could be “remote ancestors who controlled whole areas of life, such as Taane for forests and the birds, or Tangaroa for the sea, but quite often they were family ancestors who looked after their direct descendants, communicating with them through priests, mediums, dreams or omens, or coming to rest in particular animals, or in their skulls which had been kept and cherished by their successors.”⁽¹²⁵⁾

In recognizing the difficulty of understanding the meaning of *tapu* from the different interpretations given by a range of authors, F. Allan Hanson and Louise Hanson, in 1983, commented how the different meanings given have ranged from ‘forbidden’ to ‘sacred’ to ‘polluting’ and ‘unclean.’ They commented that Prytz Johansen, probably out of frustration “by the range of meanings and determined to leave none of them out,” “defined *tapu* simply as ‘requiring consideration,’ which unfortunately included aspects which were clearly not *tapu*. They concluded that “whatever else we may say of it, it is clear that *tapu* is a particular state of being.”⁽¹²⁶⁾ To them *tapu* is something that an object, person, or place can *be*, but not have. They maintained that *tapu* is more easily understood by exploring “the circumstances which produce the condition of *tapu*,” since “something is *tapu* when it is under the influence of the *atuas*,”⁽¹²⁷⁾ something which both Shortland and Best recognised.

A general proposition given by Raymond Firth, followed what he called ‘Economic Anthropology,’ categorized as ‘Political Economy’ by Ortner,⁽¹²⁸⁾ whereby “the economic organization of any community is very closely bound up

with the social structure in such manner that each serves to reinforce the other.”⁽¹²⁹⁾ *Tapu* to Firth meant both “unclean and sacred, both different aspects of the same state,”⁽¹³⁰⁾ which created a “mingled attitude of respect and avoidance.”⁽¹³¹⁾ *Tapu*, he explained was “concerned with natural resources, the highly valued cultural objects, and men himself.”⁽¹³²⁾ Firth agreed with Radcliffe-Brown whereby “the *tapu* of material culture accessions ... is a recognition of their “social value.”⁽¹³³⁾ Radcliffe-Brown, as a Structural/ Functionalist, was concerned with the contribution that parts of beliefs, such as *tapu*, have in maintaining social integration as a whole.⁽¹³⁴⁾ In this vein Firth also noted that *tapu* “assisted the maintenance of law and order.”⁽¹³⁵⁾

While Joan Metge drew heavily on Firth to explain *tapu* through its relationships with other concepts in structuralist binary relationships, unlike Hanson and Hanson, she wrote from an etic stance or an outsiders point of view. Speaking of the inadequacy of describing *tapu* as “holy” or “sacred,” Metge stated that *tapu* is only understandable in relationship with *noa*, hence what is not *tapu* is *noa* and vice versa.⁽¹³⁶⁾ Something “may be *tapu* in one context and *noa* in another and the “*tapu-noa* relation is often used by Maoris as a pattern or model to describe the relation between other contrasted categories, such as ‘man’ and ‘woman,’ traditional knowledge and non-traditional knowledge, etc.”⁽¹³⁷⁾ This can also be illustrated by the contrast between formal social relations and informal ones, as in the contrast between a welcome ceremony and the meal given afterwards. Metge emphasized that, “although opposites, *tapu* and *noa* are not negations of each

other,” but are “complementary opposites, pre-supposing and completing each other, incomplete and meaningless on their own.”⁽¹³⁸⁾

Another author who discussed the relationship of *tapu* to other concepts was R.S. Oppenheim. As well as noting that *tapu* rules arise from contact to *atua*, he showed how some things, such as all males, blood and faeces, are permanently *tapu* as were all things connected with the dead, such as bodies, bones, their property and burial places.⁽¹³⁹⁾ Everything else is *noa* and has no special restrictions except for women and cooked food, both of which could be used in rituals to negate *tapu*. Women needed to take care not to undo the *tapu* of activities such as canoe building. However, things that were *noa* could also be made *tapu*, including crops, lands, personal property and people, especially men through deeds and reputation. It was the increase in *mana* which increased a man’s *tapu*. Conversely a man could lose his *mana* and therefore his *tapu* through actions such as capture in battle. Thus a slave’s or an enemy’s bones could be used to make artefacts but those of one’s own people needed special care.

One later writer careful to identify where his information came from is F. Allan Hanson, who aligned himself with both Edward Shortland and “certain passages” from Best. While Hanson’s approach is structuralist, based on binary oppositions,⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ it is a more interpretative approach from a Maori perspective or an emic viewpoint. For example, women have too much *atua* and hence need *tapu* restrictions. He stated that he understands “something to be in a *tapu* state

when it is under the influence of the *atua*. Maori therefore would call gardens *tapu* because *atua* were there stimulating the growth of crops, and pregnant women were called *tapu* for a similar reason. Likewise sick persons, warriors in a battle, artists engaged in tattooing or wood-carving, and persons of elevated rank were under the influence of *atua* and therefore *tapu*.”⁽¹⁴¹⁾ He noted also that “*tapu* could be readily communicated” and that it was a mixed blessing, since “while the animation of *atua* was essential to a number of processes vital to human well-being,” such as the examples given above, sometimes the “influence of badly intentioned *atua* was decidedly detrimental.”⁽¹⁴²⁾

Hanson’s contribution is useful to help understand the different approaches to *tapu*. He described the viewpoint of Best and Jean Smith, who regarded women as polluting, and therefore able to be used in *whakanoa* rites, as a “repellent thesis,”⁽¹⁴³⁾ since they removed *tapu* by repelling the *atua*. Smith saw *whakanoa* ritual as based on “separation,” and a “desire to keep the gods out of human affairs.”⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ In my view, if this were true, then why did Maori have ‘god-sticks,’ to call the *atua* into, to help with human affairs? Hanson’s view, however, is that “women remove *tapu* by attracting it,” which he called an “affinity thesis.”⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ This explains, according to Hanson, the reason why women are useful in both removing *tapu* and in increasing *tapu*, such as when a warrior, experiencing fear, had a woman step over him to restore *tapu*,⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ and why some high-born women can be *tapu*, like a high-born man.

Steven Webster interpreted “the anthropological conundrum of *tapu* in terms of union, and *whakanoa* in terms of separation, between gods and humans,” as “suggesting that the “Maori world-view” is “dualist in the European sense of assuming a separation between mind (or spirit) and body (or matter).”(147) F. Allan Hanson, like, Smith also agreed that “existence for the Maori was divided into two realms - the physical or human world and the spiritual or “ultrahuman” world of the gods.”(148) While I agree that Hanson’s “affinity thesis” has merit, I dispute this dualist interpretation, since it appears that *atua* were a part of daily life, living with and all around the Maori people, which was why *tapu* was needed.

All authors however, both Maori and non-Maori, agreed that the potentiality for power or harm of certain items and actions caused restrictions to be put into place with very strict guidelines. *Tapu* arose because of belief in contact between people and the “supernatural,” or the *atua*.(149) All sources also agreed that certain states such as menstruation,(150) and death, were “surrounded by extremely powerful *tapu*.”(151)

Considering the various authors, and descriptions over time, it appears that while the domain of *tapu* may have changed slightly, to incorporate new previously unknown concepts such as writing, the basic meaning of *tapu* has not. It is simply described differently by the world-view of the author. Ranganui Walker summed it up in his simple yet comprehensive statement that even in modern times his “early childhood socialization implemented unquestioning belief in the power of

tapu. *Tapu* was of three kinds: sacred, prohibited and unclean.”⁽¹⁵²⁾ Walker’s emic viewpoint is akin to my interpretative one and agrees with my assertion that *tapu* included, and still does, a connection with *atua* (sacred), rules and laws (prohibited), and pollution (unclean) through misconduct, of that which is *noa* (common).

The Link Between *Tapu*, *Mana*, and *Taonga*:

Irrespective of the varying meanings given to *tapu* it becomes clear from the previous analysis, that it is the relationship of *tapu* to other aspects of Maori social life which gives it its importance. As previously illustrated, *tapu* is related to *noa*, a state of not being in *tapu*, and is also related to *mana*, and through it to the *taonga* owned or used by those in a state of *tapu*, which then become *tapu*. Mauss observed that all “taboo” objects, in both Melanesian and Polynesian traditions contain *mana* and that many “*mana* objects” are *tapu* or taboo.⁽¹⁵³⁾

Shirres discussed the link between *tapu* and *mana*, evident in writings of the 1840s and 1850s whereby *tapu* is not only “being with potentiality for power,” but also the “*mana* of the spiritual power.”⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ He emphasised that each tribe has its own understanding of *tapu* and that today some tribes use the term *mana* for what other’s see as *tapu*. Whether or not that is their explanation or his is not indicated.

Paul Tapsell, in discussing the return of the *taonga* from the ‘Te Maori’ exhibition which toured the United States of America, likened the return of

important *taonga* to the return of a comet.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ He linked the amount of *mana* that such a one has, as dependent not only on the *mana* of the ancestor who once owned it, but enhanced by its link to its contemporary *iwi*, its “seniority, genealogical antiquity, and the strength and number of living descendants.” The *mana* of such a *taonga* in turn relies on the “complementary presence of *tapu*,” in order to preserve it “for the benefit of descendants whom have yet to be born,” on the *korero*, its rituals, genealogical recitations, and historical stories, which link it to its living ancestors, and its *mauri* or life force which is awoken by *karakia*.

Tapsell also discussed how “under the right circumstances, which are not necessarily confined to *marae* rituals, *taonga* can exert *ihi* or spiritual power, *wehi*, fear, *awe* and/or excitement and *wana* or authority.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ In return *taonga* link their kin group to their associated lands and if separated from their people they lose their *korero*, while kin groups who lose their *taonga* become poor in resources. In a public situation on a *marae*, such as a *tangihanga*, *taonga* become a *here* or a guide, through assisting people to “focus physically, spiritually and genealogically,” on the crisis at hand.

Taonga were also used traditionally to seal a connection between one kin group and another and important “tribally-valued *taonga*” would be gifted from one group to another, symbolizing *utu*, or indebtedness, with the understanding that one day, maybe generations down the line, these *taonga* would come back to them. On such an occasion they would return as ancestors, and be welcomed back to their people. These were the *taonga* likened by Tapsell to a comet

returning to its people.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Not all *taonga* were expected to return however, because of the nature of their physical material, and woven items of great importance were gifted in similar circumstances knowing that they were transferred to another people.

Metge discussed how communally produced goods were used in common by the group who produced them.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ Individual ownership was recognised for objects made by individuals and only able to be used by one person at a time, including tools, weapons, ornaments, clothing, and materials used for manufacture. Objects could be borrowed, according to specific guidelines, if the owner wasn't using it, and would be returned when asked for. The recipient would also loan or gift an object in return. Gifts could include foodstuffs, *harekeke* cloaks, ornaments, stone, obsidian or *pounamu* for making objects. This did not include, however, either for loan or gift, heirloom weapons belonging to chiefly families and those associated with the head or back, which were regulated by *tapu*. Also, as Oppenheim showed, treasured items could be declared *tapu* by the owner.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ As Edward Tregear earlier explained, if an *ariki* or chief made something such as a canoe *tapu*, he would touch it and say, "This is my head." He noted also that this was only binding on "lesser men," since if someone with more *mana* came along, and hence with more *tapu* than him, he could take it, although "he might have to maintain such superiority at the point of a spear."⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

Grave goods, such as weapons, cloaks and combs were often placed with the bones. According to Angus, writing in 1847, *wahi tapu* were created to store *tapu*

items, including garments. These repositories could take several different forms including a form of a box or basketwork elevated on posts or as a double fence on the ground.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Tapsell discussed how, amongst the pre-Christian Te Arawa, *taonga* were stored by the *rangatira* families, often in highly *tapu* “elaborately carved *whare-koiwi* that were named after famous ancestors.”⁽¹⁶²⁾ These included, as well as the *taonga*, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai*. Like a tui, which comes and goes, these *taonga* would disappear from sight to be brought out for an important life-crisis. After Christianity these *koiwi* were buried, often with their *taonga*, although not permanently, since the *taonga* would be dug up when needed.

Not all *tapu* objects were venerated *taonga* or beneficial. *Tapu* objects could be used in *makutu* or witchcraft to cause death in “a kind of spiritual ‘poisoning’ of the victim,” and this was reported by a number of early writers such as Richard Taylor in 1870 and Colenso in 1880.⁽¹⁶³⁾ However *Tapu* objects could be “rendered *noa* by passing them between a woman’s legs,” or by the use of cooked food. ⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ Sahlins, adapting to Hanson’s ‘repellent thesis,’ believed that “the ritual value of the raw-cooked distinction,” in all Polynesian societies, including Maori, is based on the need to make root crops accessible through the process of cooking, by “destroying the divine in them.” ⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ If this was true it would explain why, when Christianity was introduced, *tapu* places, people and objects were deliberately made *noa* or common by such as actions and *tapu* transgressions as “washing the head in water heated in a cooking-vessel.”⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

It is significant however that Christianity has not totally replaced the *tohunga* and the *whare wananga*, as Barlow also shows: “In addition to my immersion in the local cultural setting from a very young age, I gained greater insights by being accepted as an initiate into a Ngapuhi *wananga*, or traditional school of learning, under the tutelage of the late Reverend Matu Makaiha.”⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

The importance of *karakia* in Maori rituals is also clearly evident today.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ The last comments on this should be those expressed by former Victoria University Professor Hirini Moko Mead, at the Taonga Maori Conference in 1991. Mead emphasized that “all objects that are called *taonga* have *korero* (stories) attached to them,” and “it is the *korero* that gives meaning and cultural significance to it.” Since “antiquity is valued because it implies association with the ancestors who form the foundation of Maori identity,” then “old *taonga* are very definitely given greater value than those produced very recently.”⁽¹⁶⁹⁾

Mead explained that “the most telling attribute of *taonga* is their spiritual essence or force,” and this is linked to their representation of an ancestor who is linked to a group of descendants by *whakapapa*. ... Thus when a *taonga* has high *mana*, as in the case of Uenuku, exhibited in the ‘Te Maori’ exhibition, it has great prestige and is very *tapu*, defined as “sacred and charged with spiritual power.”⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ This large amount of *mana* is linked to the *mana* of the *iwi* it is associated with, in this case Tainui, who are the *iwi* associated with the Maori Queen. *Taonga* associated with death, *whakapapa* and antiquity also have more *mana* and *tapu* linked to them than those that are not.⁽¹⁷¹⁾

Mead also made the point that “in a sense all Maori art has increased *mana* since Te Maori opened in New York, in September 1984.” This is because of the “international recognition” given to Maori art through the opening exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and through it more recognition in museums at home, as well as the increase in Maori staff in New Zealand museums. But it is also because the launching of each exhibition involved the “launching of Maori culture,”... “ceremonial, spiritual and social.”(172)

From the above discussion and explanations in this chapter the importance of knowing and understanding the *tapu* nature of all important *taonga* in New Zealand museums for future relations with Maori, collectively and tribally, becomes obvious. It has been discussed how *taonga* can never be removed entirely from their *tapu* state and how some *taonga* are harmful because of their *tapu* state, while some *taonga* are deliberately made harmful through *makutu*. With this *tapu* state comes *mana* for *whanau*, *hapu*, and *iwi* and this *mana* can be increased or decreased depending on the way the *taonga* is treated. It therefore becomes obvious that it is important that these *taonga* are treated in a manner appropriate to their *tapu* nature, whether or not the *kaitiaki* of these *taonga* believes in the concept of *tapu* or not, but out of respect for their sacred nature.

In the next chapter the topic of how *taonga* have been treated in New Zealand’s museums in the past will be discussed and what implications this has for museums of today. This includes the development of New Zealand museums and influential scientific and social attitudes on practices in these museums.

CHAPTER 2

SCIENCE VS TAPU IN EARLY MUSEUM PRACTICE

Any investigation of how contemporary museums in Aotearoa New Zealand regard the related concepts of *taonga*, *mana* and *tapu*, must include an historical analysis of how these museums developed. This includes their early museum practices regarding *taonga* and their awareness of, or lack of awareness of, *tapu* considerations.

Since New Zealand's museums have never been isolated institutions and have always been influenced by, and in turn interacted with, other museums in the international arena, this study must also include a global dimension, including prevailing public and scientific attitudes. Ongoing personal and professional connections between anthropologists, archaeologists and curators, with their 'homeland' and/or international colleagues, encouraged global exchanges of material culture, information and expertise, including current ideas and theories. This encouraged the alienation of *taonga* from Maori to museums, both within New Zealand and internationally, and created issues of display and interpretation for today's museums to inherit.

In addition, the conflicting process of destruction, preservation, appropriation, and neglect, towards Maori *taonga* from the New Zealand Government, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, affected the way in which national and provincial museums operated then and set the scene for today.

GLOBAL SOCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC INFLUENCES:

From third century B.C. temples, built to honour the Greek muses (goddesses devoted to the arts), to Roman repositories built to house the spoils of war, to private collections in fourteenth century Italy, museums have always signified the collecting habits of humankind.⁽¹⁾ By the late eighteenth century the 'Museum Age' had emerged, many collections became accessible to the public, and "the identifying and classification systems of the previous centuries" were refined, with "a closer examination of the relationship of human history and that of the natural world and the perceived place of humans within it."⁽²⁾ By the middle of the nineteenth century museums had "come to symbolize national pride," and serve the dual role of education and amusement, through satisfying both "public expectations" and "a newly professional scientific elite."⁽³⁾ It was in this climate that New Zealand's museums were first developed.

Maori artefacts were collected by early museum curators, allegedly to preserve remnants of a "dying race" of "noble and savage" people,⁽⁴⁾ while as private collectors of "curios," they recognised their monetary value. As well as collecting through "bequests, gifts, loans, purchases and exchanges,"⁽⁵⁾ some, along with the public, "looted, ransacked and pillaged burial grounds and other

sacred places,” to further their own end.⁽⁶⁾ In the role of education and through the study of “primitives” these new museum ‘curators’ reinvented both the past of themselves and of “others.” As David Butts commented, both traditional and contemporary museum displays, “convey more about European perceptions of an indigenous culture than about the actual culture” itself.⁽⁷⁾ National pride, public expectations and scientific pursuits were more important to colonial museums than understanding the real nature of Maori artefacts. In this climate, desecration of *wahi tapu* sites and the violation of *tapu* restrictions, in the pursuit of artefacts for display, was acceptable to museum personnel and to the public, at least amongst non-Maori.

Several scientific influences in the eighteenth century had a major effect on the development of all museums. Firstly, Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution provided “a rational framework” for natural history specimen collections. Secondly, the “taxonomic system of natural classification, developed by Carl Linnaeus in the first half of the eighteenth century,” was adapted by archaeologists like General Pitt Rivers in the 1880’s.⁽⁸⁾ Pitt Rivers’s two organizing principles of “form” and “functional affinities” became centered around “race” as a “determining element in human progress.” As well as material culture this included “cranial forms and skeletal remains.” This “taxonomic system of classification,” by Pitt Rivers, “influenced display and interpretation” in ethnological and anthropological museums around the world and still does.⁽⁹⁾

Roy Wagner, in *The Invention of Culture*, noted that “much of the earliest anthropology developed in museums,” and that museums “form the logical point of transition ... between the two major senses of ‘culture:’ they metaphorize ethnographic specimens and data by analyzing and preserving them, making them necessary to our own refinement although they belong to some other culture.”⁽¹⁰⁾ Globally, in the early part of the twentieth century, anthropology became focused on the importance of participation/observation in the study of ‘the other.’

In early New Zealand, museums transplanted these European models in order to “establish a sense of national identity,” by “defining themselves in relation to the ‘Other,’ the Maori.” An ethnocentric belief in the superiority of Western culture, and its inevitable assimilation of other less resilient cultures, created an urgency to record information about other cultures believed to be “dying out,” of which Maori were one of them. In the perceived race against time there was very little questioning of the ethical ‘right’ of anthropologists to study any subject they deemed interesting or worthy of further investigation, no matter how sacred or secret this information may be to the people concerned. Nor was there any awareness of the fact that anthropology was the science of the dominant or of the conqueror, as Jacob Pandian demonstrates.⁽¹¹⁾

Pandian explains that this is because anthropology is rooted in “Greek, Christian and Renaissance views,” and “Western cultural structures of meaning.”⁽¹²⁾ To him anthropological discourse is meaningless, “without reference to the prevailing philosophical, sociological, biological, and linguistic paradigms of

Western tradition.” One prevailing ‘tradition’ that must be acknowledged is anthropology’s early emphasis on gaining ethnographic knowledge through seeing or observation, and not through aural or oral teachings. As Johannes Fabian noted, this has resulted in its representation through symbols and models, and a denial of “coevalness to its Other.”⁽¹³⁾ This emphasis implies that only observed knowledge is truly authentic and has created an ambiguous dilemma within anthropology, whose aim to study indigenous cultures through participation often involved, and still involves, listening to oral teachings.

The practical result of this reliance, on seeing and not hearing, is that Western academics who write down information are often believed over indigenous oral historians, as Maori claiming recompense and repatriation of *taonga*, in the Waitangi Tribunal process in Aotearoa New Zealand, have found.⁽¹⁴⁾ Similarly, non-Maori writers about Maori sacred knowledge, such as on *tapu*, like those discussed in the last chapter were, and still are, often assumed to be more correct than the teachings of the Maori elders themselves.

With ethnocentric colonial viewpoints, Christian prejudisms and ambiguous messages from the new ‘science’ of anthropology, the turn of the century was a contradictory phase for the way in which museums viewed Maori beliefs. With biased understanding of the meaning of *tapu*, and of its importance to Maori, it is not surprising that it was not recognised in museum practice.

In addition the New Zealand Government added to that confusion. The 'Maori Antiquities Act 1901' supposedly recognised the importance of Maori artefacts through restricting their export, along with that of other articles or things of historical or scientific value or interest relating to New Zealand.⁽¹⁵⁾ However, with the passing of the 'Tohunga Suppression Act 1907,' which was consolidated in August 1908, and not repealed until 1962, it becomes obvious that the importance of these valuable artefacts was recognised for the advancement of the settler government, but not for Maori themselves.⁽¹⁶⁾ The idea that *taonga* were linked to *mana* was ignored and *tapu* was something to be suppressed.

The 'Tohunga Suppression Act 1907,' imposed penalties on persons professing to act as *tohunga*," and defined *tohunga* as "experts in Maori medicine and spiritual malaise."⁽¹⁷⁾ It was allegedly concerned with their inability to heal Western diseases using traditional methods. The act was also aimed at persons who:-

mislead or attempt to mislead any Maori for prophecy or pretending
to possess supernatural cures in the treatment or cure of any disease,
or in the foretelling of future events.⁽¹⁸⁾

Specifically the Act was directed against Rua Kenana who was allegedly violating *tapu* by allowing his people to take food into the meeting house,⁽¹⁹⁾ and known to be prophesying "about a Maori millennium, involving driving out European settlers from New Zealand." It was used to arrest and effectively silence Rua. It also had a detrimental effect on all *tohunga*, not just those perceived to be false, by outlawing "Maori methodology and undermining the legitimacy of Maori

knowledge in respect to healing, the environment, the arts and the links between the spiritual and the secular.”⁽²⁰⁾

While most New Zealand museums began decades before the passing of these Acts the same social and scientific attitudes were prevalent amongst their colonial predecessors, as early writers on *tapu*, discussed previously, have shown. These attitudes were transplanted from the ‘homeland’ by the creators of these museums.

EARLY BEGINNINGS IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND:

All four major museums had their beginnings with, or became associated with, a Philosophical Society or an Institute, modelled on the “learned societies” in England. These scientific and philosophical institutions were based on the “philosophy of the Royal Society founded in London in 1660,”⁽²¹⁾ or on the Mechanic’s Institutes, begun in Scotland for working men, and first formed in 1840 in New Zealand.⁽²²⁾ The passing of the ‘New Zealand Institutes Act 1867,’ established “an Institute for the advancement of Science and Art in New Zealand,”... “for the preservation and study of collections recording the plants and animals of New Zealand and the material culture of its original inhabitants.”

The first “collection of ethnographic material and curiosities” was formed by a Mechanics Institute in Taranaki, although the oldest surviving museum institution is in Nelson, originally planned in 1841 on the boat over, as part of the Wakefield Settlement.⁽²³⁾ Of the four major museums, the National Museum in Wellington

was begun by a Philosophical Society, which incorporated as an Institute on the passing of the 1867 Act. The Auckland Museum was begun over a decade before the passing of the 'New Zealand Institutes Act,' and then incorporated into a newly formed Institute a year after the act was passed. Canterbury Museum was begun by a Philosophical Society, while Otago was begun by the Provincial Council and given to the Otago University on the abolition of the Provinces. As can be seen by their origins, scientific organizations had an important influence on these major museums in their early development.

Individual Director/Curators had an immense influence on the future growth of their museums, especially through their own perception of the role of museums generally, as well as their collecting habits, which were generated towards furthering that aim. This included the collecting of *tapu* objects, such as *taonga*, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai* in dubious circumstances. Unlike the National Museum, Otago Museum and Christchurch Museum, who mostly sought British scientific expertise in their early history, the Auckland Museum appointed ethnologists or archaeologists as their Directors and/or Curators.

This early connection between ethnology and museums created a widespread tradition whereby, as noted by Stuart Park, "the four main museums have [all] had ethnologists since Elsdon Best." The "first professional museum ethnologists, next to Hamilton are W.J. Phillips and Dr. T. Barrow at the Dominion Museum, V.F. Fisher and Sir Gilbert Archey in Auckland and Dr. R.S. Duff in Otago."⁽²⁴⁾ Other contributors to the "body of ethnological knowledge

about the Maori,” include T.F. Cheeseman at Auckland Museum, Elsdon Best of the Dominion Museum and H.D. Skinner of Otago.⁽²⁵⁾ Many of the archaeological and ethnological studies that they published are still in print today.

To illustrate the legacy left to individual museums by influential scientists and ethnologists, and the influence of both scientific organisations and governmental attitudes of the day, the origins of Te Papa Tongarewa and of Auckland Museum are discussed in detail following.

FROM COLONIAL MUSEUM TO NATIONAL MUSEUM:

The New Zealand Society was formed in Wellington in 1851, but changing fortunes led to its small museum collection being transferred to the Colonial Museum on its formation in 1865 under Dr. James Hector, primarily to exhibit specimens from the New Zealand Geological Survey and other scientific specimens.⁽²⁶⁾ This soon expanded to “rocks, minerals and fossils,” “recent shells,” and “specimens of natural history including woods, fishes, wools, native implements, weapons, dresses etc.”⁽²⁷⁾ The Museum came under the property of the New Zealand Institute with an Act passed in 1867, joining the Wellington Philosophical Society’s library to the museum, although Hector with his staff continued to run the museum.”⁽²⁸⁾

During 1868 the Museum building was expanded, and in a new wing the “carved meeting house Te Hau-ki-Turanga,” from Manutuke, Poverty Bay, “was erected in the museum.”⁽²⁹⁾ Since scientific specimens were Hector’s field of expertise

there are little records of what constituted the ‘ethnological collection.’ Despite good intentions, and a knighthood for Hector’s scientific pursuits, a report given later in 1894 stated that the “presumed headquarters of the country’s scientific and intellectual activity, [are] the worst-managed institution of the kind, in probably the whole of the southern hemisphere.”⁽³⁰⁾ It was some time before this was to change, despite the asserted effort of its next director, Augustus Hamilton, to properly care for the collections he amassed, although he did influence both the development of Maori carving and ‘Pakeha’ perceptions of Maori art.

Augustus Hamilton:

Arriving in New Zealand in 1875 Augustus Hamilton soon began collecting Maori artefacts and moa bones, and through this hobby he helped form the Napier Museum from the local Institute’s museum. In 1889 he was engaged to arrange the ‘Natural History Court’ of the ‘New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition,’ from which he went on to become Registrar at Otago University and briefly the Curator of the University Museum, as well as being involved with the Otago Institute. In 1891 he was involved with Frederick Revans Chapman in the Shag River Mouth Excavation, and while they made some important discoveries, their excavations were more destructive than helpful to later archaeologists.

Based on his collections Hamilton began publishing information, and with the publication of ‘Maori Art’ in 1901 he acquired an international reputation. Attracted to Maori arts and customs, from “a Romantic attraction to the exotic,”

Hamilton displayed a eurocentric approach, which saw Maori art as “rude” or “primitive.” Elizabeth Pischief pertinently noted that:-

“the collections and the way they were made reveal a great deal about the attitudes of the Victorian scientists and collectors towards the new land and the indigenous people. Hamilton in the 1880s appeared to regard the burial and bones of the Maori in a similar way to ferns, butterflies and rocks: there to be taken by the observant collector.”⁽³¹⁾

Hamilton did attempt to avoid the missionary practice of “condemning Maori social practices,” by accepting traditional practices such as polygamy and slavery as “part of the traditional Maori way of life.”⁽³²⁾ Ironically, and despite his personal collecting habits and his sale of Maori *taonga* to overseas interests, Hamilton was a supporter of the Maori people. He followed the debate in Parliament regarding the introduction of ‘The Antiquities Act 1901,’ and supported James Carroll and S. Percy Smith in their proposal to set up a Maori Museum, through petitioning Members of Parliament. While their efforts were unsuccessful, recognition of Hamilton’s enthusiasm led to his appointment as Director of the Colonial Museum in 1903, when Sir James Hector retired.

Hamilton is described by R.K. Dell as “the forerunner of a group of men whose major life work was to be devoted to this field and whose efforts, particularly in the museums, were to culminate in the preservation of an incomparable collection of the work of the ancient Maori.”⁽³³⁾ Pischief also comments that although “Hamilton was not the only collector of Maori cultural material in New Zealand,

... he was the only ethnological collector who was a professional museum person and representative of the classifiers, compilers and collectors, who dominated natural history during the nineteenth century,” and “were responsible for the growth of the “museum movement” which became so powerful during the decades leading up to 1900.”⁽³⁴⁾

In 1907, the Colonial Museum became the Dominion Museum, but still Hamilton’s attempts to obtain a new building were thwarted. In 1913 Hamilton reported that ‘the whole of the Museum building is infested with the boring-beetle,’ and that “leaks are the result of every heavy storm.”⁽³⁵⁾ As Pischief explains:- “The years in Wellington as the Director of the Dominion Museum were years of achievement, tempered by utter frustration for Augustus Hamilton. He managed to make a remarkable collection of Maori ethnological material for New Zealand.” However with only a “superficial” commitment from the Government, “there was a total lack of understanding of the need for adequate facilities for the ethnological material which had been collected. The Government and its bureaucrats seemed to be oblivious to the importance of caring for the objects in order to preserve them as long as possible.”⁽³⁶⁾

This neglect was “symptomatic of the underlying attitude towards the Maori culture and the people.” Firstly “they were ‘savages’ and it was anticipated that they would die out.” But also, “these objects were acquired as icons of the new Dominion,” because “the *Pakeha* settlers had a need for the past and a need for a sense of community which the original inhabitants were able to supply. Ironically

the *Pakeha* appropriated the Maori culture so as to establish themselves on the new land. They forged their unique identity separate from the motherland by using the culture of the repressed indigenous people who were expected to become extinct or at least be assimilated into a dominant European culture.”⁽³⁷⁾

Ironically, and in direct contradiction to governmental neglect of adequate facilities to care for the collections amassed, financial aid was given by the New Zealand Government to the National Museum in Wellington early in the twentieth century to help build up its “ethnographic collections.” Many of these collections had been amassed by “distinguished” New Zealanders near the end of the previous century. The T.E. Donne Collection of Rotorua carvings was acquired in 1907, and soon after the Lord St. Oswald Collection was donated from England. Other collections soon followed, including that by Reverend Hammond based on Taranaki Material, one by Sir Walter Buller based on weapons, the Augustus Hamilton collection, and that of Captain Bollons. Later, a part of the Edward Armytage collection of *heitiki* was bought,⁽³⁸⁾ and then in 1948 the W.O. Oldman Collection from London, followed by K.A. Webster collection which had already been placed in the National Museum on loan, but was acquired after his death on payment of the death duties.⁽³⁹⁾

Setting the Pattern:

With Hamilton’s sudden death in 1913,⁽⁴⁰⁾ a pattern was created with the appointment of scientific specialists as Directors of the museum. Yet despite frequent requests for new space it was not until 1929 that a new building was

approved and several more years after the passing of the 'Dominion Museum Act 1930' that it was even begun.⁽⁴¹⁾ Before the new building opened in 1936 the Director, Allan Thomson, was replaced by W.H. Oliver (1928-1947). By this time Elsdon Best had died, as had also the Maori carver, Mr. T. Heberley, who was in charge of carving the missing portions for the Maori meeting house.⁽⁴²⁾

Unfortunately, with the advent of W.W.II, and symptomatic of the low priority preservation of colonial history had with the government, the new museum building, which had been so hard to obtain, was taken over by the Defence Department. This resulted in major damage to both displays and collections, and the museum was closed for seven years.⁽⁴³⁾ Although the collections were not displayed, curation and research continued with a small staff. In 1947, another scientific specialist Dr. R.A. Falla was appointed as Director and under him, new museum philosophies were introduced, and new displays were installed with a greater use of colour in backgrounds, all influenced by changing overseas trends.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Despite this interest in innovation, it was to be another fifty years before any more major changes.

Meanwhile collecting continued and in 1971 a \$25,000 Special Grant was made available to the Trustees of the National Art Gallery and National Museum on an annual basis and was doubled two years later. This was specifically to purchase "historic and contemporary works" of scientific or historical importance and it enabled the purchase of several pieces from the Hooper Collection in the late 1970s. Because of "intense competition" for this significant collection, "inflated

prices”⁽⁴⁵⁾ depleted the funds available when the Ortiz carvings unexpectedly came up for sale in 1978. An extra contribution from the Government enabled the purchase of the lintel but the *pataka* panels became the centre of a legal battle that was not solved in favour of the New Zealand Government.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Growing collections, limited space and inadequate funds available for maintenance of the building or for purchases of significance *taonga* was the pattern set from the museum’s beginning.

AUCKLAND MUSEUM AND INSTITUTE:

The first Auckland Museum was opened in 1852, through the work of John Alexander Smith and with the encouragement of Sir George Grey, Ferdinand Hochstetter, Charles Heaphy and others.⁽⁴⁷⁾ With the departure of Smith in 1857 the original collections were neglected for a number of years and most of the collection lost.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Only the gifting of the building and contents to the newly formed Auckland Institute in 1868 saved some of the collections, and they were moved a year later to a new building, now known as the old Post Office Building.⁽⁴⁹⁾ From then on the Institute’s secretaries became the Curator and Director and these were generally long serving and committed to the collections.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Thomas Kirk who served as curator from 1868-1874 was followed by T.F. Cheeseman, who remained until 1924. Cheeseman was influenced by the new museum ideas emerging, which is now acknowledged as having an “underlying political motive,” through “reinforcing the view that Europeans were superior to

inferior races,”⁽⁵¹⁾ as well as by the ideas of Boas at the US National Museum. Maori material was therefore organized “according to type as an evolutionary sequence rather than geographically,” all in the same area of the museum. Despite moving to a new building in 1874 space was still limited, and this did not allow Cheeseman to make the “conclusive statement” about the “Maori race” that he aspired to, since he could not place them according to donor, or “classificatory relationships.”⁽⁵²⁾

Communication with international museums created a demand for collections for exchange and this “meant that Cheeseman’s collecting practices were not always reputable by today’s ethical standards.” In one documented incident:-

Around 30 crania were stolen by Cheeseman from burial caves in the Whangaroa district of Northland. Specimens were sent to Professor Henry Giglioli, Director of the Zoological Museum of Vertebrates in Florence, to Professor Joseph Henry and Professor Spencer F. Baird of the Smithsonian Institution and to Jean-Louis Armand de Quatrefages, a French anthropologist, among others.⁽⁵³⁾

Because of these “questionable collecting practices,” by the 1890s “the repatriation of human remains had become an issue.”⁽⁵⁴⁾ “In one instance a group of ‘Kawhia natives’ requested the return of ‘Maori preserved heads’ they believed were stolen from burial caves,” an accusation which Cheeseman denied. He asserted that these items “had been obtained from the Royal College of Surgeons in London and acquired as examples of tattooing practices.” In Cheeseman’s

view “collections were intended to provide evidence” of the pursuit of ethnological discursive practices, “which overrode all other social and spiritual considerations.”⁽⁵⁵⁾

It was therefore without consideration to Maori sensitivities that “burial chests from Waimamaku in the Hokianga” were put on display,⁽⁵⁶⁾ and later in 1922 another case showing “a series of bones of chiefs of high rank,” whereby “some are believed to be from 200 to 300 years old.”⁽⁵⁷⁾ These burials chests may have been the ones which were more recently the subject of a Te Roroa Claim through the Treaty of Waitangi Act. This records how, in 1902, James Morell and his friend Bougen came across burial caves at Kohekohe by chance. They contained “about 60 skeletons, six enlarged images and one wooden box with a lizard carved on it,” spread between “twelve caves or crevices.”⁽⁵⁸⁾ Although the local Maori people protested at their removal, the chests and bones were not returned to them. After several months of indecision they were given to Cheeseman, on his request to the Native Minister for the ‘Collection of Maori Curios.’ It was assumed that in Rawene, where they were bid “farewell” by the *tangata whenua*, “a ceremony was performed to temporarily lift the *tapu*, so that when the carvings were unpacked and displayed for view, they were not dangerous in any way.”⁽⁵⁹⁾

The claim also involved several other burial chests, some purchased by Augustus Hamilton in 1906-7 for the ‘Colonial Museum’ and for his private collection, as well as the Spencer Collection, but insufficient evidence, primarily because of poor records on the part of the museum as to the specific area that they came

from, failed to convince the Tribunal of their origins. Some of these chests, purchased by Hamilton, were also sold by him and now reside outside the country, in Melbourne, Australia and in Austria. (60)

Gilbert Archer, later to become knighted, served as Curator/Director from 1924-1964. In 1929 the collections were moved to the new Auckland War Memorial Museum building in the Auckland Domain, where they still remain. Graham Turbott who followed Archer was followed by Stuart Park in 1979 who remained until 1993. It was during Stuart Park's term that the "formal return of the *koiwi* to Waimamaku took place on 13 May 1988," and reburied at Te Ahuriri.(61) However, while the *koiwi* were returned, the *whakatupapaku* were not, because of reservations expressed by the Minister of Maori Affairs, Koro Wetere. He felt that he should "not abandon the principle that they would be preserved for posterity," and that they would be cared for better at the museum. But if the situation should change and a "modern museum, staffed and equipped for the task" was set up in the Hokianga, then a formal repatriation request could be made.(62)

In response to questions regarding the Te Raroa claim, Roger Neitch, current ethnologist at the museum, noted that it was "physically impossible for museum objects to be literally "not touched," they had to be brought into the Museum, preserved, and then several of the chests were placed in their display case,"... "they were then protected ... and ... never [have] been able to be touched by Museum visitors." While some of these chests remained on display until the

1980s untouched, museum staff allowed stored bones and chests to be handled for “study and research” under their “strict supervision.” The “boxes” were finally removed from display because of growing concerns regarding their ownership and because of renovations of *taonga* Maori displays generally.⁽⁶³⁾

Until 1996 the Auckland War Memorial Museum was governed by a Museum Council of 29 members, “elected by the contributing Local Authorities and the Auckland Museum Institute.” It operated under the Auckland Museum Endowment Act 1882 and the Auckland War Memorial Museum Maintenance Act 1979 and there was no provision for Maori representation on the Board or for the establishment of a Maori advisory process.⁽⁶⁴⁾

THE ALIENATION OF TAONGA TO MUSEUMS:

In order for the alienation of *taonga* to museums to occur collections of artefacts had to be amassed by someone. Having previously analyzed why these early curators collected artefacts for display in museums, this section examines how these collections were made originally and who these collectors were.

The earliest collections of Maori and Pacific Island material culture were made by Captain James Cook and his crew, during their three expeditions to New Zealand and the Pacific in 1769, 1773 and 1777. Some of the large quantities of artefacts amassed by trade “can now be found in museums and private collections all over the world.” Francois Marie de Surville and his crew in 1769 also discovered the “power of the musket trade,” as did the “U.S. Exploring

Expedition of 1838-1842 under Lt. Charles Wilkes.” Many of the *taonga* collected during this trip are now in the Smithsonian Institution at Washington D.C., since it was the large quantity of “natural and cultural history specimens,” amassed during these visits to over three hundred islands, that led to the museum’s formation.⁽⁶⁵⁾ American whalers visiting the Bay of Islands in 1806 and 1811 also made significant collections and these are now in the Peabody Museum of Salem in Massachusetts.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Initially the collecting habits of these early explorers “lacked any systematic effort to acquire either representative samples of a totality, or artefacts of particular kinds.” With the development of “anthropological discourse and ethnological theory,” along with colonisation, collecting habits became focused on “form and function,” or general geographical area. Because “personal and/or tribal origins of articles were ignored,” a lot of information in this earlier phase of collecting was lost. Links with the *iwi* or *hapu* of origin were broken and many *taonga* became dispossessed and alienated from their history and the people who produced them.⁽⁶⁷⁾ In addition, a tendency to collect weapons and ornaments meant an uneven growth of such collections, in certain directions.⁽⁶⁸⁾

The musket trade and population decline led to a large loss of *taonga* to overseas destinations by the middle of the nineteenth century. Population decline through epidemics and other causes also led to the loss of “many early tribal art styles,” which became modified for the tourist trade.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Alienation through trade, auction sales and exchanges, by the early museum curators, created large overseas

collections, both private and public. Gifts, too, were responsible for the loss of *taonga*, but whereas previously gifted *taonga* between *iwi*, *hapu* or *whanau* were expected to one day return, European perceptions of gift giving ensured that these *taonga* were claimed by the recipient and never came home as expected.⁽⁷⁰⁾

The confiscation of land following the New Zealand land wars was also accompanied by the looting and confiscation of *taonga* and cultural property, with the intention of forced assimilation.⁽⁷¹⁾ The Colonial Museum acquired the *wharenui whakairo*, ‘Te Hau ki Turanga,’ built around 1842 at Manutuke near Gisborne, after it was “taken by the Government in 1868 as war compensation.” Despite the protests of the carver Raharuhi Rukupo and his family, it was removed and deconstructed, reconstructed and decontextualized within a museum context.⁽⁷²⁾

Not all looting was done openly however, and some was both insidious and deceptive, as well as destructive. Andreas Reischek, a taxidermist and naturalist who arrived in 1877 from Austria, worked at not only the Canterbury Museum under Julius Haast but also at the Auckland and Wanganui Museums. During his decade in New Zealand,⁽⁷³⁾ Reischek looted stone and wooden artefacts from the Kaipara area, north of Auckland, “mummies” from burial caves in Kawhia,⁽⁷⁴⁾ and other items, totaling around 14,000 in all. Although the ‘mummies’ turned out to be desiccated corpses of the Tainui people, Reischek succeeded in making a name for himself and these items are now all stored in the ‘Imperial History Museum’ at Vienna.”⁽⁷⁵⁾ Rather than viewing looting and confiscation as theft,

the salvaging of objects through any means possible was considered justified to save the remnants of a “dying” culture.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Interestingly, other Europeans, living in the areas he stole from, avoided such actions themselves out of respect for the Maori custom of *tapu*.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Within New Zealand museum collections were expanded, as large private collections were bequeathed or purchased with public funds. In Auckland the Mair collections of Maori material, gathered between 1866 and 1890 by Captain Gilbert Mair, was purchased by Auckland citizens for one thousand pounds,⁽⁷⁸⁾ Wellington acquired the Turnbull, Buller, Hamilton and Hammond collections, while Otago Museum and Library acquired the Hocken collection. As noted by Clark (1998) “this practice of naming collections in honour of their Pakeha donors did little for the tribal identity of *taonga*,” with the subsequent result of the loss, over time, of the *taonga*’s name, “in favour of that of the *Pakeha* donor.”⁽⁷⁹⁾

Later curators added to these collections, through “purchase, exchange with other museums, or loan,” through “sponsored archaeological digs and fieldwork,” and through long term loans for safekeeping by Maori owners. For example, the *wharehau whakairo* ‘Hotonui’ was loaned to the Auckland Institute and Museum by its Ngati Maru owners. Human remains were also desired as the 1926 records at the Taranaki Museum, by the curator William Henry Skinner, show.⁽⁸⁰⁾

Increasingly over the twentieth century the New Zealand Government used legislation to control the movement of Maori 'artefacts,' both within and outside the country, as well as using national finances to bring back significant collections from overseas. The 'Maori Antiquities Act 1901' was passed, and later amended to the 'Antiquities Act 1975.' Later in the century a proposed 'Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Bill 1995,' and 'Maori Taonga Bill 1990,'⁽⁸¹⁾ attempted to safeguard Maori *taonga* for 'future' generations.

DISPLAY AND INTERPRETATION:

As previously alluded to, Museum classification schemes "emphasized the superiority of Western culture and relegated Maori to the domain of the natural world."⁽⁸²⁾ "Pakeha scholars, ethnologists, anthropologists, archaeologists, curators and scientists," became "experts and learned authorities on Maori lore and customs, producing vast amounts of anthropological and scientific literature."⁽⁸³⁾ It has been suggested that the tradition of portraying Maori people in a "timeless, romanticized past," can be attributed to the "role of archaeology within New Zealand museums."⁽⁸⁴⁾ Through this *taonga* lost their significance in Maori terms, and were classified and displayed in archaeological and anthropological terms as "artefacts and material culture."⁽⁸⁵⁾ The "individual stories behind the objects," and "their significance for the people who created them and for their descendants," was ignored.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Local variations were superseded by a generalized 'Classic Period of Maori culture' of pre-contact Aotearoa.⁽⁸⁷⁾

As Director of the Dominion Museum Augustus Hamilton was given responsibility for “setting up and constructing the Maori pa site at the International Exhibition at Christchurch in 1908.” Through his design, and by designating some Maori art as ‘pure’ or ‘true,’ unlike post-contact art which he believed had become ‘decadent,’ Hamilton influenced European perceptions of Maori culture, whereby pre-European carving styles became sought after as authentic Maori art, while innovative carving styles became denigrated. To him the “Maori race had passed its best days,” and aspects of this could now be seen in the museums, while the Maori race was improving through incorporating ‘desirable’ European characteristics. In Hamilton’s view artefacts had no place in a “living and changing Maori society,” but only as collectable relics of curiosity for intellectuals to acquire and admire.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Unfortunately he had no understanding of the importance of *taonga* to the Maori of his day, and the issue of *tapu* was not given any consideration, either in regard to their ancestral bones or of important *taonga*.

Museums were careful to remove any non-“traditional” elements from purchases they made for display. The Auckland Museum did so in 1894, with the *pataka* ‘Te Puawai O Te Arawa,’ and also in 1926 with the *whare runanga* ‘Hotunui.’ Similarly polychrome carvings were repainted “dark red flat paint,” on acquisition by museums, a practice instigated by Auckland Museum for the opening of its Princes Street ‘Hall of Ethnology,’ in 1892.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Literature produced on Maori art during this period also codified design elements into unchanging traditional patterns. Augustus Hamilton did this with his 1896 and 1901

publications of *Maori Art: The Art Workmanship of the Maori*.⁽⁹⁰⁾ This crystallization of Maori tradition has continued into contemporary museum practice. American museum curators for the 'Te Maori' exhibition of the 1980s were careful to select representative examples and included very few examples of "experimental" objects in their exhibitions.⁽⁹¹⁾

IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY:

This chapter has examined the alienation of Maori *taonga* to museums, both within 'New Zealand' and globally, and how *taonga* have been treated, displayed and interpreted, as well as the reasons for the conflicting process of destruction, preservation, appropriation and neglect towards Maori *taonga* from the New Zealand Government.

Museum development in New Zealand occurred in a global scientific context whereby *taonga* were viewed as physical matter and the spiritual aspect, which was, and still is, important to Maori, was largely ignored. In the process of collecting, destruction of *wahi tapu* sites was a part of the process, the *taonga* accumulated were appropriated for "Pakeha" control, and while the intention of curators was to preserve them for future scientific study, *taonga* were often neglected in the very museums that were committed to preserving them, because of a lack of funds and a lack of commitment by local and national government bodies.

Until after the 'Te Maori' exhibition little Maori opinion on the interpretation and display of their *taonga* or *koiwi tangata* was sought. Skeletons and *mokomokai* were on display in the 1900s,⁽⁹²⁾ right up until the middle of the 1980's in some museums. *Pakeha* scholars controlled *taonga tuku iho* and their mode of representation to "largely *Pakeha* audiences."⁽⁹³⁾ *Pakeha* scholars became the experts and affected the perceptions of, not only how non-Maori perceived Maori, but "tragically" how Maori themselves perceived their own culture and themselves as people.⁽⁹⁴⁾

In the later part of the twentieth century, however, global demands for indigenous rights has resulted in some legislative changes as well as ethical guidelines from scientific and professional organizations. Within Aotearoa New Zealand government involvement in the collecting and management of Maori artefacts has become more and more pronounced through funding, new governing legislation for the major museums, and support for repatriation of *mokomokai* from overseas back home to be buried. Within many museums there has been a visible process which appears as if local Maori are becoming more involved in their local museum management. Mostly, however, this involvement is focused on issues regarding Maori artefacts and display, without an holistic approach. Decisions are now being made at a management level regarding, amongst other matters, the care and conservation of Maori *taonga*, without involving the curators and/or collection managers who care for *taonga* on a daily level.

However, rather than an increasing understanding of Maori issues there appears to be a process of disassociation, through the creation of *iwi* liaison groups or Maori management committees. If the *tapu* of *taonga* was not understood before, it seems to be even less understood now. To illustrate this process of disassociation, and the different ways that Maori interests have been accommodated into various museums' management structures is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

MANAGERIALIZING

TAPU CONCERNS

Control of Maori artefacts, *taonga*, and human remains in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums is in the process of changing from *pakeha* dominated management to a partial sharing of responsibility and ownership with Maori. Since the four major Aotearoa New Zealand's museums were all been created through Provincial Acts of Parliament, legislative controls of artefacts, and hence of *taonga*, have had an effect on museum management, and led to an increasing managerialization of *taonga* Maori management and thus of *tapu* considerations. More recently, some *iwi* have become increasingly vocal in museum politics and through their own initiatives compelled some museums to accept their involvement in the management of their own *taonga* and that of other Maori. This includes management of *taonga*, as well as of *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai*.

The aim of Maori initiatives, and of changing museum management structures, in both large and small museums, has been to foster a better understanding of Maori *tikanga* and of the care and conservation of *taonga*, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai*, including concern for their *tapu* nature. However, the effect has been to 'pass the buck' onto a small group of Maori *kaitiaki*, often with a diminishing of understanding by museums professionals of these issues. This

chapter discusses how this situation has evolved, how it works in a practical sense, and the implications of this trend for the future.

AFTER 'TE MAORI:'

The 'Te Maori' exhibition was said by some scholars, Maori and 'Pakeha,' to be the turning point in Maori-Museum relationships in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through participation in initial planning, opening ceremonies and "The Returning Home,"⁽¹⁾ '*Te Hokinga Mai*,' Maori achieved a greater input into the care and respect given to their *taonga* than the whole of the century before. Maori culture, in the hands of museums, according to McManus, "suffered an ethnological fate," which has rendered it "lifeless and devoid of spirit." This approach should now be "rejected by museums," as "not relevant in a bicultural nation."⁽²⁾

A recent study on 'Maori and Museums' also states that "no analysis of the history of museum development in New Zealand would be complete without some reference to 'Te Maori.'"⁽³⁾ This is because of several changes it created for Maori-Museum relationships. Firstly, this was because, "whereas previously *taonga* had been displayed in dark and dusty museums in a cultural context," 'Te Maori' displayed these *taonga* as works of art in the most acclaimed Art gallery in America, the Metropolitan, next to those of the ancient civilizations. Maori art had been elevated to a new level of appreciation and pride.⁽⁴⁾

Secondly, because of the exposure given to Maori art, it "inspired a flowering of emotional and cultural identity amongst Maori."⁽⁵⁾ This also led to an increase in

interest amongst Maori to train in museum practice and created opportunities through funding and sponsorship for internships within museums.⁽⁶⁾ This has resulted in more trained Maori staff in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums and an awareness of the benefits of more Maori staff amongst museums. For Maori major questions began to be asked. "Who [does] Maori culture belongs to?" "Who has the right to control and manage the Maori heritage?" "Who can speak authentically for it?"⁽⁷⁾ As noted by Clark "'Te Maori' has been considered as the point at which the debate on cultural property with its underlying questions of control and interpretation went public in New Zealand."⁽⁸⁾

'Te Maori' also exposed inadequacies in Maori-museum relationships in its process. While *iwi* had the right to veto the inclusion of *taonga* in the exhibition and one *iwi* chose to do so, the initial choice of *taonga* was under American curatorial control. Secondly, while it was exhibited at New York's Metropolitan Museum it was in the section known as 'Primitive Art,' and at the Chicago Field Museum of 'Natural History.' Thirdly, only 'pre-classical' and 'classical' pieces were included, and no experimental pieces, thereby imposing European perceptions of what was 'traditional' onto Maori. As discussed earlier, these were superimposed categories encouraged by non-Maori during the colonial phase, ignoring on-going vitality in Maori art. Connected to this is the fact that no women's art was included, since wood, stone and bone were assumed to be the domain of Maori male, and women's fibre art was ignored as 'craft' and not 'art.'⁽⁹⁾

These issues however inspired a creative Maori response. Hirini Moko Mead, in attempting to “take control of the language of definitions and descriptions,⁽¹⁰⁾ redefined the development sequence of Maori art in Maori language for use by the Maori guides. Rather than ‘pre-classical’ and ‘classical,’ they spoke about the ‘Nga Kakano,’ (The Seeds - 900 to 1200AD); ‘Te Tipunga,’ (The Growth - 1200 to 1500 AD); ‘Te Puawaitanga,’ (The Flowering - 1500 to 1800 AD); ‘Te Huringa I,’ (The Turning - 1800 to 1900AD); and ‘Te Huringa II,’ (The Turning - 1900 to present). While it is true that these terms still incorporate “specific Western time periods,” this inclusion of both Maori and non-Maori terms is typical of the adaptation approach displayed by Maori towards Western ideas. ⁽¹¹⁾

Maori artefacts were also redefined in museological literature because of ‘Te Maori.’ Previously described as “artefacts or material culture,” museums began to exhibit an awareness of the term *taonga* with some understanding of its importance to Maori. However as one significant Maori academic has stated, museums “have yet to show that they are aware of the attached responsibilities they unwittingly accepted when they renamed their objects ‘*taonga*.’ Also, inaccuracies in the ‘Te Maori’ catalogue dismayed some Maori elders and did not help Maori-museum relations. Not surprisingly, despite the success of ‘Te Maori’ itself, Maori became aware of being “left out of the selection, design, and interpretation processes,” involving their *taonga*.⁽¹²⁾

On a positive note “the protocols implemented during ‘Te Maori,’ such as the consultation rounds and the dawn ceremonies,” were adopted by museums within

Aotearoa New Zealand, and active debate was encouraged within museums regarding the presentation of Maori material. Many Maori displays were redesigned with local *iwi* consultation. Along with an increase in Maori staff, “prominent elders were appointed to museum Trust Boards and advisory panels.”⁽¹³⁾

THE CHANGING CONTEXT:

Several other factors, as well as the publicity surrounding ‘Te Maori,’ have helped to change museum thinking, creating some awareness of Maori rights to involvement in the management of their ancestor’s *taonga*, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai*. This changing context, within which museums operate, includes ethical guidelines from professional organizations, a governmental push towards biculturalism in the 1980’s and 1990’s and international legislation in the 1990’s, which created a Maori response within Aotearoa New Zealand. This response included the ‘Mataatua Declaration 1993,’ and also in 1993 the ‘Ngai Tahu Whanui Policy on Human Remains.’ These are all discussed in this section.

Ethical guidelines from professional organizations, which museums pride themselves in adhering to, have helped change museum practice by changing attitudes towards indigenous rights. For example ‘The Association of Social Anthropologists’ of Aotearoa New Zealand, formerly adopted in 1987 a policy which acknowledges that: “Where research involves the acquisition of *material* and information transferred on the assumption of trust between persons it is

axiomatic that the rights, interests, and sensitivities of those persons must be safeguarded.”⁽¹⁴⁾ Archaeological, and Museological ethics also respect that right.

Also in the 1980’s and 1990’s ‘biculturalism’ became a catch word in New Zealand Institutions, including within the Anglican Church.⁽¹⁵⁾ Largely driven by the New Zealand Government, Maori “protocol and culture” was included in a range of government departments, often modified and lacking “respect for the more fundamental Maori values.”⁽¹⁶⁾ Mason Durie astutely noted a Maori concern that these policies “created an impression of responsiveness to Maori issues,” without any “demonstrable evidence that the Maori position was well understood.”⁽¹⁷⁾ This is true also for bicultural changes within Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums, which will be discussed later. However, while Western theory now supports Maori rights it is indigenous peoples globally, including Maori, who have turned theory into practice.

In addition, the year 1993 was declared by the United Nations to be the ‘Year of Indigenous People,’ and the decade following it was dedicated towards improving international indigenous rights.⁽¹⁸⁾ In this decade, however, indigenous peoples have themselves taken assertive steps to ensure that they have control over the way in which they are portrayed. In 1993 the ‘Mataatua Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples’ was formulated at Whakatane, New Zealand by over 150 delegates from 14 countries, including native peoples from the United States and Canada. This strongly worded document declares the rights of indigenous people to “self-determination” and

“exclusive” ownership of “their cultural and intellectual property.” It urges the United Nations and individual countries to implement various recommendations for protection of indigenous cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible.⁽¹⁹⁾

However the less strongly worded ‘United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,’ formulated by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Working Group 1999, appears to have had more impact than the ‘Mataatua Declaration,’ probably because of its international status and visibility. Of special relevance to anthropology and archaeology is Article 29 which states:

Indigenous Peoples are entitled to the recognition of the full ownership, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual property. They have the right to special measures to control, develop and protect their sciences, technologies and cultural manifestations, including human and other genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs and visual and performing arts.⁽²⁰⁾

Along with Maori involvement in the ‘Mataatua Declaration,’ and probably encouraged by the changing international context in which indigenous peoples were seeking human rights, the year 1993 was also the year that Te Runanganui O Tahu unveiled the ‘Ngai Tahu Whanui Policy on Human Remains’ at the annual MAANZTRHJT Conference. It states that “authority and control over the bones of our *tupuna* must be re-vested in the tribe and not maintained by museums,” that “academic research on *koiwi tangata* ... should continue where appropriate

but on terms sensitive to, and accountable to the tribe.” It also states that “*wahi tapu* ... should be formed in selected museums to facilitate the management and research of *koiwi tangata*. ” (21)

While Southland Museum and Art Gallery was “the first museum to respond positively,”⁽²²⁾ Otago and Canterbury Museums soon followed by creating *wahi tapu* for their *koiwi tangata*, with access restricted to selected people. At the time “an even bigger collection of Ngai Tahu human remains” were held at the Otago Hospital in the Otago Medical School. A long delay, caused by the University, “who took a long time to make a decision,” meant that it was two or three years after Otago Museum “signed up,” to Ngai Tahu’s policy that the University handed the “material” over. Finally in the middle of 2003 Ngai Tahu requested that it was brought to the Museum, with “ceremonies held in the Maori gallery,” to welcome them into the Museum *wahi tapu*. While there has been “talk of reburial,” it still hasn’t been decided what’s going to happen to them. Since Ngai Tahu have allowed the museums to use the *wahi tapu* for all their human remains, the Otago Museum also keep their Egyptian mummy in there as well.⁽²³⁾

In the North Island many of the major museums and some smaller ones also have *wahi tapu*. The National Museum of New Zealand in 1989 developed a ‘Policy on Human Remains’ which states that the museum will consider returning any human remains “acting in association with the appropriate Maori authority.”⁽²⁴⁾ The Rotorua Museum, Te Whare-taonga o Te Arawa, established in late 1960 by

Enid Tapsell, provides a *wahi tapu* for “tribally important *taonga*” which are available for use on short notice, by the Te Arawa people.⁽²⁵⁾

While all of the South Island museums who responded to Ngai Tahu still have non-Maori personnel taking care of the Maori collections within their museums, all three have resolved issues with local *iwi* regarding consultation with Maori concerning *taonga*. Within these museums, however, they differ considerably in the way in which it is implemented. Each of these museums and other relevant examples will be discussed in the following section.

MAJOR MUSEUMS:

Unlike many of the smaller museums in Aotearoa New Zealand, all four major museums were originally established by Acts of Parliament which have recently been updated. This section examines the new governing bodies of these museums and the implications that they have for their relationship with local Maori *iwi*, including what provisions they make for ongoing decision making regarding the maintenance of *taonga* and *tapu* material.

All four museum Acts have “been re-addressed” since 1992, creating ‘The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992,’ ‘The Canterbury Museum Trust Board Act 1993,’ the ‘Otago Museum Trust Board Act 1996,’ and the ‘Auckland War Memorial Museum Act 1997.’ These Acts, and the ‘Antiquities Act 1975,’ are the only parliamentary Acts that “relate directly to collections of *taonga* Maori or instruct any museums in their relationships with

iwi.” In “the wider heritage and arts environments within which museums operate,” ... “legislative issues for museum-*iwi* relations are implicit rather than explicit.”⁽²⁶⁾

The recognition provided for *iwi* involvement within these Acts vary, with Otago and Auckland Museum Acts allowing for one Maori appointee in Trust Boards of ten while Canterbury Museum allows for one in eleven.⁽²⁷⁾ Only the two South Island museum Acts specify “who shall appoint representation of Maori,” with Canterbury clearly identifying Ngai Tahu Maori Trust Board as the appropriate *iwi* authority able to nominate a member to the museum’s Trust Board. As O’Regan says: “Whether or not trustees are Maori, if they are not appointed by Maori interests, they will not necessarily be seen as representative of those interests.” Infact the small number appointed is “likely to be considered by some Maori communities as only a token inclusion in the decision-making at a governance level.”⁽²⁸⁾

Te Papa Tongarewa:

Despite its initial slow changes the National Museum was to change drastically with the passing of the ‘Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992.’ In a flow on effect, both from changing Government policies and from the ‘Te Maori’ exhibition, this Act was passed to create a “truly bicultural” museum institution, to give Maori the right to “define and interpret” their own “culture.”⁽²⁹⁾ Whaanga notes that despite its “very public stand on biculturalism” there is “no mention of it in its legislation, neither is there any reference to the

Treaty of Waitangi.”⁽³⁰⁾ While the first Chief Executive was appointed in 1993, it wasn’t until late 1995 that the Director of Maori Development was promoted to a new position of *Kaihautu*, theoretically equal to that of the Chief Executive, but not in practice.⁽³¹⁾ There is also “no legislative requirements for Maori representation on its Trust Board of the six to eight members,” “selected by the Minister of Cultural Affairs who advises the Governor-General.” In theory it is “possible that the Museum could have a totally Maori or non-Maori Trust Board. Selection is based “on management and academic ability” without “regard to ‘cultural competence.’”⁽³²⁾ In addition Maori staff within the museum are still in the minority.

The new museum “united the National Art Gallery and National Museum within one organizational structure,” although in practice it was organized into four departments of Art, History, Maori and Natural History. Its “primary emphasis” is “on collecting objects of national importance which will meet the needs of its public programmes, including its research programmes.” This is a major shift away from developing research collections, to developing collections which are primarily to meet the needs of exhibition and educational programmes.”⁽³³⁾

One of Te Papa’s major functions is to provide “national services” for provincial and district museums, and because of this one would expect it to have a major effect on the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums. National Services have been active in encouraging bicultural development nationally, through a *hui* held in July 1999 for approximately 100 representatives from the governance bodies

and senior management of museums, and from *iwi*. Since then it has supported dozens of partnership projects between “museums, *iwi* and related organizations,” ... “in areas of assessment, bicultural development, training of museum personnel and marketing and promotion.”⁽³⁴⁾ However, in actual practice Te Papa, as it is now affectionately known, with its modern approach and controversial exhibitions, has had less impact on the rest of the country than would be expected. It is often seen and spoken of in museum communities as so “radically” different to other museums that it stands alone as an example where many museums do not want to go.⁽³⁵⁾

Auckland Museum:

By 1995 “there were only four Maori in Senior Management” in Aotearoa New Zealand. Three of them were at Te Papa Tongarewa and one at Auckland Museum. This was the position of Manager Iwi Values, a difficult position since it had no official guidelines, no support structure, as well as resistance from some museum staff who felt threatened “by the change of direction that it heralded, as well as from some Maori who felt it was inappropriate for a woman to be appointed” in such a role.⁽³⁶⁾ This however was the “advance guard” to the next stage, when Auckland Museum legislated for the Taumata-a-Iwi, a Maori Advisory Committee to the Auckland Museum Trust Board, through the ‘Auckland War Memorial Museum Act 1996.’⁽³⁷⁾

Discussion concerning a new management structure at Auckland War Memorial Museum began in 1992 with “Te Rununga Matua, an advisory committee to the

Museum Council.”⁽³⁸⁾ A small working group was created in 1993 and in June 1994 a working draft of the Auckland War Memorial Museum Act which allowed for the provision of a Maori advisory committee, the Taumata-a-Iwi.⁽³⁹⁾

Despite protesting submissions the Bill was approved, with a new Trust Board of 10 members comprising of five representatives of local authorities, four from the Auckland Museum Institute and one from Taumata-a-Iwi. Internal Affairs and the Local Government Select Committee “declined to decide on the composition of Taumata-a-Iwi,” specifying only that it was to be not less than five persons.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Since in 1840 “Ngati Whatua o Orakei owned the area upon which central Auckland now stands,”⁽⁴¹⁾ they were consulted in regard “to the composition and establishment of Taumata-a-Iwi,” as “consistent with the Board’s legal obligations” and “the long standing relationship between the Auckland Museum and Ngati Whatua o Orakei.”⁽⁴²⁾ The final structure of Taumata-a-Iwi became three representatives from Ngati Whatua, and one each from Tainui and Ngati Paoa.⁽⁴³⁾

Since the new management structure was installed, Auckland Museum has been criticized for its apparent awareness of Maori values but disregard for Maori opinion in practice. On the positive side, the museum did support Taumata-a-Iwi’s inaugural decision on 24th July 1997 to repatriate the *taonga* Pukaki, as requested by the Ngati Whakaue and agreed to return it home on 2nd November 1997, the date it left for Auckland after being given to the Rotorua township. In recognition of the support given to their claim the Ngati Whakaue “confirmed and

completed,” ... “its gift of Pukaki to the Crown.” Ngati Whakaue, Ngati Whatua, the Auckland Museum and Representatives of the Crown, including the Aotearoa New Zealand Governor General Sir Michael Hardie Boys, and the Minister in Charge of Treaty Negotiations, the Hon. Douglas Graham, all signed a memorandum agreeing “to establish a trust to be called the ‘Pukaki Trust,’ which would act as guardian of Pukaki in accordance with terms yet to be agreed upon.”⁽⁴⁴⁾

However, when the Museum commenced planning for a refurbishment of its Natural History Gallery in 1996 it hadn’t even considered the Maori perspective until approached by Taumati-a-Iwi in 1997. Then, the unrealistic deadlines for a submission that Taumati-a-Iwi were given forced them to withdraw their interest, so as not to dishonour Maori by doing it inadequately.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Eventually the Museum Trust Board allocated one of the five Natural History galleries for a Maori perspective, appointing Dr Mere Roberts in early 1998 as Creative Producer for the gallery. Continuing problems of time constraints and under resourcing, however, did not stop the Maori Natural History gallery opening in December 1999.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Whaanga noted that misunderstandings between Maori and Museum expectations “demonstrated” that Museum officials “were unable to transfer the principles established in the Pukaki case to their general understanding of the management of *taonga*.”⁽⁴⁷⁾

Similarly the “refurbishment of the Pacific galleries” was begun in late 1996, and the deadlines were set long “before any consultation process had begun, and

before the Taumata-a-Iwi had been established.”⁽⁴⁸⁾ Hence the formality of the *powhiri* for the Pacific Islands Community was completed after the work had commenced on the Pacific galleries.” Once again the “consultation process was inadequate.” The Pacific Galleries were opened to the public in December 1998. Although Taumata-a-Iwi who had initially declined to attend the official opening in February 1999, “on the grounds of a serious breach of *tikanga*” whereby “the public were given access prior to the necessary ceremonies being conducted,”⁽⁴⁹⁾ ... “they did provide *tangata whenua* presence at the occasion.”⁽⁵⁰⁾

A further contentious issue between *iwi* and Auckland Museum involved the repatriation of two *mokomokai* held in the museum since 1883. They were of the Chiefs Moetarau and Koukou who were killed in battle in 1837, stolen from their burial site, and later exported to Britain before being brought back to New Zealand fifty years later, when they were acquired by the Auckland Museum.⁽⁵¹⁾ The repatriation to the people of Whatitiri took place on 2nd April 1999 at the recommendation of Taumati-a-Iwi. They had first been requested in 1989 and again in 1991 by Mr. Taipari Munro, when the Museum insisted on “proof of discussions with other tribal groups who may claim connections with the heads.” “Over a period of eleven years, he brought the matter up at every *hui* he attended throughout the Tai Tokerau region.” In 1998 Mr. Munroe again wrote to the Museum to re-open the dialogue, and this eventually came before the Taumata-a-Iwi with all the information relating to it.⁽⁵²⁾

This was followed by a visit from a delegation, where Mr. Munro and the Whatitiri Maori Reserves Trustees and representatives of the *hapu* Te Mahurehure, Te Parawhau and Te Urirotoi, for “two hours sang *moteatea*, recited *whakapapa* and tribal histories and gave moving personal accounts of their knowledge of the burial caves from which the heads were taken,⁽⁵³⁾ and the *kaumatua* who had over the years carried the task of persuading the Auckland Museum to return the heads.”⁽⁵⁴⁾ Upon recommendation from Taumata-a-Iwi the Museum Trust Board agreed to release them before Easter when the *whanau* were gathering for several unveilings. Due ceremony was conducted involving Ngati Whatua and carried to waiting vehicles and taken to Maungarongo Marae at Poroti by members of Ngati Whatua, the Taumata-a-Iwi, the Museum Trust Board and Museum staff. A *whare mate* in the form of a tent was erected initially and then another was specially built and dismantled after the *tangihanga*.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The heads were buried shortly before daybreak at the Waioira Cemetery. This cemetery was chosen as other *koiwi* had been buried there after the nearby burial caves were looted in the 1920s.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Although the museum viewed this repatriation positively, during the *powhiri* a lot of anger was expressed by the *whanau* at the time it had taken to return the heads, and at museum practices of research involving Maori remains. In addition, a serious breach of *tikanga* was made by the Chairman of the Auckland Museum Trust Board, Mr. Barry Turley, who, when he stood up to speak, was told, to his surprise, to sit down.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Several issues are highlighted by this case study. Firstly, that many *kōiwi tangata* still remain in museums, initially “stolen from burial caves and other *wahi tapu* and later given to museums.” Secondly, amongst Maori there is “strong anger that they are still in museums.” Thirdly, there is an expectation from Maori that museums will implement processes to inquire into the way *taonga* were obtained, and then address the issues that arise. Fourthly, since Maori expect to be involved in the management of their *taonga*, museums need to have issues heard in a culturally appropriate way, not through “the procedures and standards of validation of a non-Maori system,” which is insulting to those who are carrying out a task that has been handed down to them by their *tupuna*. Finally, it highlighted that “for some years now there has been a marked move amongst Maori to reinstate the *kawa* of the *marae* - that only Maori is to be spoken, and only speakers approved by the *kaumatua* may stand.”⁽⁵⁸⁾

Whaanga also noted that this “highlighted the Auckland Museum’s unfamiliarity with dynamic Maori culture and the activities of the *marae*,” as well as “the inability of Auckland Museum to respond adequately in Maori situations without Taumata-a-Iwi presence,” and its “lack” of “understanding of Maori issues, emotions and feelings.”⁽⁵⁹⁾ Auckland Museum’s unawareness of these issues can be related to its “structural difficulty” whereby “the ‘Auckland War Memorial Museum Act 1996’ places overall authority and power” for decision making, “with a Trust Board that is overwhelmingly non-Maori.”⁽⁶⁰⁾

Canterbury Museum:

Canterbury Museum has a similar liaison group to Taumata-a-Iwi. While O'Regan noted in 1990 how his "own tribal Trust Board [had] lobbied for years to be allowed to nominate a tribal representative to the Canterbury Museum," this request was finally responded to, although not in the way it was requested.⁽⁶¹⁾ In the last decade at the museum a group called Ohaki O Nga Tupuna has been formed, comprised of the Director, a staff representative and equal representation of a Ngai Tahu Trust Board Member and one from Nga Mata Waka, which is the other *waka* or *iwi* in Canterbury. While they meet regularly, usually monthly, and when required, on a day to day level the ethnologist takes care of post-contact Maori material, as well as the archaeological collections, until another archaeologist is appointed.

Well trained for the position, he is both a previous Museum Director and a Masters in Anthropology majoring in Archaeology. A very busy man, his position requires him to take care of material from the Pacific and other material as well as support the History curator and acting Antarctic Curator. With visits to the Antarctic, lecturing for the Canterbury Museum and Canterbury University he finds little time to publish his findings or research the collections in depth. While he, along with all Canterbury Museum curators submits a quarterly report to the Board and a major report every six months, he only consults the Board for issues which are outside of daily activities, such as requests for access to material etc. In return the Board visits all departments on a six monthly rotational basis to inspect what they have been doing and talk over any issues concerning them.⁽⁶²⁾

Otago Museum:

At Otago Museum, however, the situation is in a state of change. Initially, there was very little consultation with Maori but with the advent of the 'Te Maori' exhibition, which borrowed material from the museum to tour in the United States, a committee was formed to handle related issues. This committee remained in place after the return of the *taonga*, to help re-do the Maori gallery as items were put back into place. This relatively informal group became formalized over time into a Maori Advisory Committee which now works mainly with management, rather than with the curators. The Maori and Pacific Collections are currently co-curated by long-term staff, both trained in archaeology.⁽⁶³⁾

The Otago Museum Trust Board Act 1996 specifies that the *iwi* trustee is to be appointed by the '*manawhenua*' and while this is not clearly defined, it interprets the term as Ngai Tahu.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Currently a new position of a Maori liaison role has been created which is still becoming established. This is intended to act as an intermediary between the museum and Ngai Tahu, for a planned Ngai Tahu resource centre within the Museum, in that part of the building on the ground floor that was the first old museum building. It is intended that this will have its own staff and committee and more and more say in the Maori collections. Still in planning stages, it is as yet unclear how this will change the curators' duties in the future.⁽⁶⁵⁾

SMALLER MUSEUMS:

Since they are not restricted by legislation many smaller museums in Aotearoa New Zealand have a greater chance of creating a truly bicultural management structure than the larger museums previously discussed. While many smaller and medium sized museums, like Motueka Museum, still operate under a '*pakeha*' dominated Museum Trust Board, some, like Tairāwhiti Museum and Wanganui Regional Museum have recently changed their management structure to incorporate their large Māori populations, to the benefit of both museums and local communities. Others, like Nelson Provincial Museum, are in a state of change from an *iwi* liaison person to an *Iwi* Liaison Committee. A 'bicultural' management committee however does not appear to ensure that *iwi* concerns are being met or that non-Māori staff have a greater understanding of Māori *tikanga*.

Tairāwhiti Museum:

Tairāwhiti Museum opened in Gisborne in 1954 where half of the region is Māori. It holds significant collections of *taonga* Māori, archives and history objects, natural history specimens and fine art. Since its founding, it has fostered a relationship with the Māori community, through certain families who have maintained their interest and support for the museum into the present. In the mid-1990s the Gisborne District Council initiated a move towards a community representative model. The museum director, in consultation with members of the museum Māori Advisory Committee, developed a new governance model which proposed representation of each of the five *iwi* in the Tairāwhiti area. In an attempt to create a bicultural partnership a board of eleven members was

proposed having five *iwi* representatives, four 'Friends of Museum' representatives and two local Authority Representatives.⁽⁶⁶⁾

This new structure was endorsed by existing Museum Board and the Incorporated Trust was replaced with the new Trust with the proposed governance model. A new Director, Michael Spedding took over in 1997 and the Trust was formally constituted in late 1999 with *iwi* approval. The development of this new structure was helped by having half the local population in the Tairāwhiti region Māori and also by the close relationships between the museum and Nga Taonga a Nga Tama Toa Trust. This Trust represented the men and families of C Company of the 28th (Māori) Battalion which fought in W.W.II, and initiated contact with the museum, eventually resulting in the museum's permanent care of the C Company collective exhibition.⁽⁶⁷⁾

Butts states that the "Director has been proactive in building a close relationship between the museum and C Company and in increasing the number of Māori staff in the Museum. His support and involvement has been crucial to the process of implementing the bicultural governance structure." Of the fourteen current staff, half are Māori including the Assistant Director/Curator.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Wanganui Regional Museum:

Wanganui Regional Museum originally opened in 1892 and operated as an Incorporated Society. It now hold "significant collections of *Taonga Māori*, natural and human history and local history archives."⁽⁶⁹⁾ Growing involvement

of local Maori in the care, protection and use of *taonga* resulted in Members of the Society, including prominent Maori families and the Wanganui District Councils, encouraging a new management structure. In 1997 a Project Facilitator was contracted to manage a consultation process, involving meetings and a *hui-a-iwi* in 1998, at which a group of *iwi* representatives, Te Ropu Mahi mo Nga Taonga - The Tangata Whenua Working Party, was mandated to work with the Museum to develop a new model.

The *hui-a-iwi* developed a “bicultural bicameral governance model, known as the Mihinare model,” previously adopted by the Anglican Church of New Zealand, as the “preferred model” for the museum. Derived from ‘Treaty of Waitangi,’ and not the traditional majority driven democratic system, it is “based on the principles of partnership and ‘*tikanga-a-rua*’ or two peoples development,” each “able to operate and develop according to their own Tikanga.”⁽⁷⁰⁾

This involved the establishment of two houses, the Tikanga Maori House and the Tikanga Pakeha House which became renamed as Tikanga Civic House. The Tikanga Maori House included representatives of the *iwi* in the Wanganui Region while the Tikanga Civic House included representatives of the museum’s key stakeholders. Each individual house elects members to the Joint Council that is responsible for governing the museum. The partnership requires a consensus and if not present then the majority of members from both houses must agree for proposals to be adopted.

In 1998 the proposal was endorsed by the Museum Board and Museum Society but the Wanganui District Council asked the Museum to undertake further consultation with the community. In 1999 at the A.G.M. the Society again endorsed the proposal despite strong opposition from some local Pakeha, since many, including local Maori, supported it. Although the majority of the Wanganui District Council disapproved of it, the Museum Board decided to continue with implementation and in July 2001 governance was transferred to the new Museums Trust.⁽⁷¹⁾

Nelson Provincial Museum:

Many middle sized museums, like Nelson Provincial Museum, since 'Te Maori,' has accommodated Maori concerns by appointing an *Iwi* Liaison Officer whose role was to converse with a *kaitiaki* or guardian of the *taonga* in their museum selected from a local *iwi*. However with the advent of a new exhibition building due to open in late 2004 Nelson Provincial Museum has reorganized its Management structure, with reference to its Maori collection. A new *iwi* committee has been formed comprising of the seven *iwi* involved in the Nelson area, the five *iwi* who came Southwards with Te Rauparaha on a conquering mission in the eighteenth century and the two original *iwi*. How this is going to work with the development of new Maori displays or on a day to day basis is as yet unclear. Also, rather than consult with the *tangata whenua* of the region, the Ngati Kuia, the museum appears to be attempting, unlike Auckland Museum and its relationship with Ngati Whatua, to be appeasing all the *iwi* in the area, by ignoring the status of Ngati Kuia in favour of including the more politically

powerful, and more vocal, Ngati Koata, with whom the museum has had a long term relationship.⁽⁷²⁾

Ironically this is a situation that Ngati Kuia have had to deal with for some time in the Whakatu (Nelson) region. Recently, Auckland Point School acknowledged the *tangata whenua* status of Ngati Kuia by asking their *kaumatua* to conduct *karakia* at the school for the removal of a protected tree, that was it was considered necessary to remove. However, when “Maori artefacts” were found to be buried underneath the tree, the school then gave them to Ngati Koata instead of to Ngati Kuia, without consulting with them first, which they have since apologised for, but didn’t rectify.⁽⁷³⁾ Like Auckland Point School, Nelson Provincial Museum has ignored the true *tangata whenua* of the region, either because of existing alliances and political pressure, ignorance of the correct *tikanga*, by trying to please everyone, or simply through not thinking deeply enough about the issues concerned.

Southland Museum and Art Gallery:

At Southland Museum and Art Gallery the ‘Management Policy’ Document written in 1988 and its subsequent amendments, included the ‘United Nations Draft Declaration on Indigenous Rights.’ In 1993 the agreement made with Ngai Tahu was that they could keep all their human remains there. This includes “some non-Maori material, a study skeleton from India,” and “one or two non-Maori bones that have been handed into us over the years.”⁽⁷⁴⁾ As part of the agreement the museum is not actively collecting any more and while what they

have is maintained under Ngai Tahu control, it can still be used as a temporary repository for something that has been discovered, subject to internment and the identification process, such as through salvage work or accidental discoveries.

Their anthropologist, Karl Gillies, who wrote their 'Collection Management Policy' specialized in archaeology in Pacific history and pre-history and specifically in New Zealand pre-history and who was originally employed 20 years ago as their curator of Anthropology. While he is now their Collections Manager he is still the sole person looking after Maori artefacts.

In the last two years, a new *iwi* liaison committee has been formed which has representatives from the four main Southland *rununga* on it, who meet at the museum monthly and discuss issues relating to Maori, such as the discovery of artefacts, archaeological sites, display of material in the museum, and "if the question arose," on human remains. While the Collections Manager is not on the committee he makes recommendations to it, and the museum's Programmes Manager, who is the museum's representative, conveys feedback to other staff members. Unless something urgent has to be dealt the Collection Manager would write a memo to be tabled at the next meeting, or consult with the *iwi* representative on the Museum Trust Board.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Motueka Museum:

In contrast to the earlier examples, Motueka District Museum, situated in an historic school building in the main street, is governed by a Trust Board which

allows for five to seven members, of which one is elected from the Tasman District Council. Since an interest in the museum is usually sufficient to get elected, most of the committee members are also members of the Motueka Historical Society, which stores valuable literary and photographic material in its own back room and has a public room for its accessible archives. While some members of the Trust Board maintain a visible presence in the museum, others are content to attend Board meetings once a month and leave decisions to those more active. The Manager/Curator makes all decisions regarding care and maintenance of the museum, including those regarding Maori *taonga*, and provides reports and financial statements to the Board meetings.

No committee member is, or has been, Maori, on the Museum Board of the Motueka Museum and the museum has never employed any Maori staff. Reflecting this, the Maori *taonga*, prior to recent changes, were displayed in flat glass cases, along with British archaeological flint adzes, as ethnographic pieces. This situation changed with the new enthusiasm that Maclean Barker brought when she became Manager/Curator of Motueka District Museum in 1996. Drawing on her art background, in five years she completely changed the face of the museum, both inside and outside. She also changed Motueka Museum practice with her sensitivity to the rights of the local *iwi*.

Wanting to create a space in the museum solely for Maori *taonga*, Maclean approached the 'Te Awhina' Marae and explained her vision for a *taonga Maori* room to *kaumatua* at the *marae*. She was introduced to John Motu, the master

carver who taught a carving course at the *marae*, who subsequently provided a design for the project. The end result was a small compact space which resembled the inside of a *marae*. John Motu's contribution was a series of painted *manaia* to go around the door leading from the foyer into the museum, which were later replaced by carved ones, several tall square cases with *manaia* painted around the sides and two handsome carvings that had been lying in the grass from an earlier course waiting for a home, as well as a *tekoteko* carved by John to go in the middle up the centre posts. A *raupo* mat was adapted to line the roof and the whole area was like walking into a 'living' *marae* space. Maclean's touch was a *kanuka* balustrade lining the walls leading towards the house and a hole in the roof above the corner before it, which an unidentified *waka* went through to hide its damaged end. Fresh greenery was placed in the gaps between the *kanuka* posts which was replaced it when it was wilting.

In mid-1998, on the day that the *waka* was erected up the hole, I was fortunate enough to be working at the museum as Registrar on a part-time basis. Maclean had astutely enlisted a gang of Motueka Periodic Detention boys who were all local Maori boys, to install it, and the atmosphere was humorous and indulgent. To our delight, just as the *waka* was entering the space, a beautiful *waiata* was spontaneously sung by the worker's girlfriends, who had suddenly appeared to see how it was going. Unplanned and unexpected it nevertheless had the feeling of a blessing for an auspicious connection between the museum and the *iwi*.

Yet despite its fortuitous beginnings the museum display was largely ignored by the local *iwi*. In addition, all attempts by Maclean to cement the connections she had made with the *marae* for the museum, came apart when she left in 2001, partly because it was her energy and enthusiasm which ensured positive contact with the *iwi*, but also because misunderstandings arose regarding her genuine attempt to create a Maori liaison position.

Encouraged by her success with the *Taonga Maori* Room Maclean initiated a National Services joint Museum/Iwi project, in early 1999, to employ a Maori liaison person or *kaituhituhi* for six months “to *korero* between the local *iwi* and the Motueka District Museum about the best options for future joint partnership projects”.⁽⁷⁶⁾ It was planned that at least one of the projects would be underway before the end of the six month project. However, Maclean Barker’s experience with the project illustrates the difficulties encountered by museums attempting to create a relationship with local *iwi*, when there has been no tradition of such contact in the museum to support it, and little desire for it on the part of the *iwi*.

The project planning stage became two years of frustration. As Maclean said, “The application process was more like a lengthy negotiation, extended by the frequent changes of personnel with whom I dealt with in National Services,” which involved time consuming explanations of aims and progress.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Both her contact at National Services and the liaison people she dealt with at the *marae* changed during the two years the planning was underway. She would often

arrange meetings with someone from the *marae* and wait fruitlessly while no one appeared or change her plans at a moment notice to accommodate a new time.

Together with a senior *kaumatua* from the Te Awhina Marae Trust Board and of local Ngati Rarua descent, who took on the project, she attended the 'Wananga on Bicultural Development in Museums' in July 1999 at Te Papa Tongarewa on Museum/Iwi issues, which Maclean said, "cemented our mutual understanding somewhat."⁽⁷⁸⁾ Eventually the project was underway and the position was advertised, with the candidate to be selected by a panel consisting of the Ngati Rarua *kaumatua*, a Museum Trust Board member and the Manager/Curator. The successful applicant they chose was a long time resident of Motueka but not a local Maori, chosen for her qualifications and ability rather than for her contacts or status. While she was of Ngati Porou descent from Gisborne she did have some links to the Motueka Ngati Rarua iwi.

However because of initial resentment from the other applicant who was closely involved with the *marae*, the appointed liaison person had great difficulty getting co-operation for the project, and a lot of time was spent in the beginning, talking and meeting with local *iwi* to dispel suspicions and distrust regarding the project and herself. Despite its difficulties Maclean believed that the project was a necessary step towards building communication with the *iwi*:-

"In the end, the projects were not ready at the level we had hoped for, but the liaison process instigated *korero* and healing that will prove invaluable in the future."⁽⁷⁹⁾

The main project identified was for a data base of local Maori history to be held in the Museum. While Maclean Barker could see their worth the projects identified were shelved by the next Manager/Curator, who did not stay long, and two Manager/Curators later the museum has gone back to 'colonial' displays and no longer initiates contact with the *iwi* at the *marae*. Obviously it is not that easy to pass on the good will and respect which one Manager builds up, onto the next. It is not easy either to change preconceptions and old habits of Museum Management Boards. It is therefore not surprising that it has also proved difficult to change the attitude of suspicion that the local *iwi* regards the museum.

WHERE TO NOW?

A significant statement made by Gerard O'Regan in 1997 states that, despite alleged 'Biculturalism' in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, "most *kaitiaki* Maori do not consider the relationship their associated museums have with *iwi* is as advanced as the museums appear to think." This is because there has not yet been "a transfer of the management of significant Maori collections to Maori by Pakeha administrators." Nor has there been a reallocation of resources to foster that relationship, without which it will not occur. (80)

Mason Durie now speaks about "post-biculturalism," where independent Maori initiatives will replace the current situation where museums acknowledge Maori moral power while still retaining curatorial and interpretative control of Maori

cultural heritage in museum possession. (81) We can see this in the Nga Tahu Policy on Koiwi Tangata.

Not all responses by Maori, however, have been successful. Attempts to change the 'Maori Antiquities Act 1975,' from its designation of all newly found objects of Maori origin as *prime facie* property of the Crown and its representative, the New Zealand government, has as yet been unsuccessful.(82) The proposed 'Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Bill,' resulting from a 1986 review of the Act, recognised Maori ownership and custody of "newly found Maori and Moriori cultural property," as well as Maori involvement in "decision making about the export of important Maori and Moriori cultural objects." (83) Because of the contention caused by newly found objects coming under *iwi* ownership instead of Crown property, the Bill is still under discussion and has not yet been enacted.(84)

Ambiguity in the wording of the Bill failed to "recognise the complex issues surrounding repatriation when dealing with *taonga*, nor does it discriminate between human remains and *taonga*." It also failed to incorporate the 'Auckland War Memorial Museum Act 1996,' despite mentioning its collections. The Maori Affairs Select Committee, concluded that this Bill, like others received by them, "was seriously flawed" and recommended that it didn't proceed in its "present form." (85)

The ‘Taonga Maori Protection Bill 1996,’ introduced as a Private Members Bill by Tau Henare, was intended to protect “*Taonga Maori*” defined as “tangible treasures or property as defined by Maori and which include physical artifacts.” It proposed a major role for Te Puni Kokiri who would firstly “audit all state entities, (including state enterprises), to ensure the ongoing protection of physical *taonga*,” and “establish an inspectorate to ensure that multinational corporations, prior to establishment in New Zealand, illustrate to Te Puni Kokiri their “practical commitment” to the protection of *taonga* Maori in New Zealand, and also include in their annual reports mechanisms being pursued to protect *taonga*.”⁽⁸⁶⁾

Secondly, it proposed creating “a *Taonga Maori* register,”... “to record the location and history of physical treasures held off-shore.” While this would not affect ownership, “physical *taonga Maori*” would not be able to “be sold or alienated without prior consent of Maori, sought through consultation.” Thirdly, a charitable trust known as the ‘Taonga Maori Trust’ would be created to “assist in the administration of the *Taonga Maori* register in conjunction with the Minister of Maori Affairs,” to “assist in the return of bodily remains and other *taonga* alienated from *iwi*, and where repatriation was not possible, attempts to arrange the removal of those *taonga* from display,” and “work with Te Puni Kokiri to research the history of *taonga* where there was any dispute, and refer matters to the Maori Land Court where necessary.” It was suggested that the Trust would be funded “by contributions from Government agencies, corporate groups and individuals.”⁽⁸⁷⁾

Although the Bill was intended “as an adjunct to protective provisions already contained in the ‘Antiquities Act 1975’,” which was widely acknowledged as inadequate, the Bill was badly worded and not fully worked out. Unfortunately as a consequence it also was shelved for rewording and never resurfaced.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Looking at this legislation it becomes apparent that the stumbling block for Maori-Pakeha relations regarding Maori *taonga*, is the issue of ownership. Despite Government recognition of Maori rights through the official policy of ‘biculturalism,’ Maori have not obtained rights to their *taonga*, whether already in museum or government institutions or those newly found. ‘Pakeha’ appear reluctant to give ownership of *taonga* in government control back to Maori, no matter how these items were acquired. While the situation has changed somewhat from the previous century, when governments encouraged the increase of collections of Maori material with financial help, but neglected to support their care, today’s Aotearoa New Zealand’s governments are encouraging collection growth as well as supporting their care with financial help, but still maintaining that ownership rests with the ‘Crown.’

Museums too have mostly responded to Maori concerns, by creating a dual governance system, whereby management structures have separated Maori concerns from general concerns, addressing issues by creating a separate management structure for Maori to that of the rest of the museum. As the ‘*Taumata-a-Iwi*’ found at Auckland Museum, their existence does not necessarily mean that staff understand the need for a Maori component through all displays,

such as in the refurbishment of their Natural History Gallery. However, while 'Taumata-a-Iwi' are fortunate that deaccessioning issues regarding Maori *taonga* are now automatically given to them, deaccessioning issues in most museums are handled by the whole museum committee, or Trust Board. Generally, however, because of the function of museums to 'preserve for the future,' museums are reluctant to deaccession an item unless there are very convincing circumstances.

DEACCESSIONING RESPONSES BY MUSEUMS:

Contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand Maori, like the Native Americans and Australian Aboriginals, are demanding the "repatriation of their cultural heritage." Of the most importance is their ancestral remains held in museums and medical institutions around the world. Reasons given by forensic scientists, archaeologists and museum professionals for not returning these skeletal remains, and "sacred artefacts," include the value of "increased understanding of past cultures," which in their view "far outweigh cultural concerns." By holding these remains they can take advantage of the "possibilities offered by improved research methodologies, such as carbon dating, DNA analysis, and other as yet undiscovered techniques."⁽⁸⁹⁾ Some also argue that the age of the remains remove any "close affinity or relationship" to those people who request their return.⁽⁹⁰⁾

Another argument against repatriation is focused on the legality of who owns it and how it was acquired. Museums tend to ignore the spurious collecting habits of their prime donors and emphasis their current ownership, as well as museum 'Collection Policies,' which often disallow deaccessioning or permanent removal

from the museum. Related to this is the argument that these artefacts would have been destroyed by time and neglect if a 'benevolent collector' had not rescued them.⁽⁹¹⁾

All of these arguments however ignore the meaning of cultural treasures and skeletal remains to the people concerned. So too does the argument that native peoples have avoided dialogue with museums on these issues, and that this has resulted in some cases with the decision making power being "taken away from them," as in the case of NAGPRA, the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act 1990.⁽⁹²⁾ In early New Zealand, however, there is a history of protest against desecration of *urupa* with its accompanying removal of skeletal remains and important *taonga*. While the *tapu* of the site was respected by most Maori, it was ignored by many non-Maori, and resulted in many *taonga*, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai* stolen and traded, thereby going into private collections, mostly overseas.

With pressure from *iwi* and Maori politicians, the New Zealand Government in 1983 requested that the Marquis of Tavistock withdraw from auction in London, a *mokomokai*. This head was subsequently returned to New Zealand. In 1988 a *mokomokai* was again presented for auction in London. On this occasion Sir Graham Latimer, The President of the New Zealand Maori Council, "sought Letters of Administration from the High Court of New Zealand in respect of the deceased whose head was attempted to be sold." This satisfied the Court "that the deceased, though not identified by name or individually, was a Maori who had

died in New Zealand around 1820.” (93) A “grant of administration” was also made by the court, for “the purposes of commencing legal proceedings” in Britain and “granting the deceased a proper burial pursuant of Maori law and custom.” This sale was also prevented and the *mokomokai* returned.(94)

Because of such protests international auction houses no longer attempt to sell *mokomokai* and many such remains have been returned, initially to Te Papa Tongarewa as a holding repository, until identification has been completed.(95) The sensitivity of this issue has also lead directly to the withdrawal from display of such material by Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums. Since the 1980’s “most museums in Aotearoa New Zealand have returned Maori skeletal remains to the tribes of origin, where this is known.” The Auckland Museum in 1988 returned a large portion of the Maori remains it housed to Waimakaku, but there are still considerable numbers of *koiwi tangata* in the museums.(96)

Responses to Maori requests for repatriation of *taonga* appear to vary depending on who makes the decision. Generally individual museum policies have procedures which must be followed and this usually takes some time. Within Aotearoa New Zealand, some *taonga* have returned ‘home’ despite years of alienation in “*Pakeha*” hands. In these cases political pressure has usually been exerted on a particular museum to return the *taong*, and sometimes compensation has been given to the museum to enable the museum to replace the returned treasure. It has been illustrated how such requests to Auckland Museum only gained support once the Maori liaison committee was put in place. Otago

Museum reluctantly agreed to Mataatua's return only after an offer of recompense from the government. Korotangi was returned by the National Museum because it was requested by the Maori Affairs Minister and involved positive publicity. Individual attitudes towards repatriation however appear to be mixed and seem to depend on the individual circumstances rather than general museum policy. As can be seen from the following analysis both Korotangi and Mataatua were very convincing cases.

Korotangi, was believed to have come to Aotearoa on the Tainui *waka*. It was said to be the eyes of the *waka*'s captain, Hoturoa. It is depicted above the porch window of the ancestral *wharehau* Mahinarangi,⁽⁹⁷⁾ at the Turangawaewae Marae in Ngaruawahia. It was consulted as an oracle before battle and invoked for assistance and good fortune by the *tohunga* and "hence considered extremely *tapu*." Immortalized in local *waiata* it was said to have "made its home in a spring sheltered by a pohutukawa tree." Dug up by a local "Pakeha" in the 1870s, it was immediately recognised by a Tainui chieftainess who "bowed her head in reverence, knowing it to be the long-lost *taonga*, and sang a well-known song relating to it." ⁽⁹⁸⁾ Despite a request by King Tawhiao himself for it, Korotangi was sold to a Major John Wilson, and eventually given by the remaining family to the National Museum in Wellington in 1938. Similarly, despite the recognition of Korotangi by Tainui, "*Pakeha* scholars" denigrated its history through speculation and insisted that it must be of European origin because of its untraditional style and mode of carving.⁽⁹⁹⁾

In 1985, Amendments to 'Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975,' enabled the Tribunal to consider retroactive claims back to the 1840 'Treaty of Waitangi,' and to make binding recommendations regarding Maori and Moriori land transferred to government enterprises and other related issues. Since claims may also involve cultural objects, in 1995, as a part of the Tainui Waitangi Settlement, Korotangi was returned to the Tainui people by the National Museum,⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ on request of Sir Douglas Graham, as a "powerful good-will" gesture to seal the final agreement.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ After years of neglect its *wairua* and *mauri* is now treated with reverence and respect in keeping with its *tapu* nature.

Repatriation, while positive for *iwi*, can have a detrimental effect on the museum concerned. For Otago Museum, the recent history of losing their legal battle to ownership of the Mataatua Whareniui, which was central to their Maori display, seems to have left an uncomfortable space. It was in many ways the "life of the museum," and all important occasions happened within its walls or outside on its *marae* space.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Its checkered history however, which resulted in it being installed in Otago Museum reads like a comedy of errors. Built between 1872 and 1875 at Whakatane by the Ngati Awa, the government requested in 1879 to send it to Sydney for an exhibition. With some misgivings from its Maori owners it was dismantled and sent. However, after the exhibition, instead of sending Mataatua home, it was sent to London and stored at the Victoria and Albert Museum for the next forty odd years. In 1924 it was reassembled for display at the Wembley Exhibition in London and the year after returned to New Zealand for the Dunedin South Seas Exhibition. Again after the event, and despite

protests from the Ngati Awa, Mataatua was given on permanent loan by the New Zealand Government to the Otago Museum where it remained until 1996.⁽¹⁰³⁾

A formal request for the return of the *wharenui* to the Ngati Awa people was first made in 1983, when the iwi was advised to negotiate directly with the trustees of Otago Museum, who were considered to be its owners. The Ngati Awa were advised to include the house among their other issues before the Waitangi Tribunal, which did achieve the result they wanted. Eventually two agreements were signed by the Crown, one with Otago Museum for \$NZ 2.75 million, to compensate them for their loss, and one with the Ngati Awa for \$NZ 2 million, to help repair and reinstate the house, and build a modern protective facility. Full ownership was then admitted by Otago Museum to belong to Ngati Awa. However the reluctant Otago Museum Trust Board refuted that the return of Mataatua had set a precedent for repatriation of other parts of their collection, and questioned that the legal title to the house was conclusive.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

Interestingly, many attempts by the Bay of Plenty Ngati Awa to obtain the return of their *wharenui* were unsuccessful until it became a part of their Waitangi Tribunal Claim. Paterson notes the difficulty in predicting how the Mataatua case would have been resolved in the New Zealand courts, since rights based on the Treaty of Waitangi are difficult to enforce unless legislated for in parliamentary statutes.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Within Otago Museum, where Mataatua once stood, it is obvious that something is missing. On the back wall are now some *whakairo* representing the front of a *wharenui* and a side gallery designated as another part. The Ngai Tahu *taonga* are displayed in a long low roofed gallery to the left and all others to the right. The whole gallery looks distant and impersonal and exhibits an uninteresting approach. It looks obviously in a state of flux, waiting for the big changes to come.

Repatriation may also occur because of museum collection practices. In responding positively to a recent request to loan several *whakairo* from the Taranaki District to Taranaki Museum for an exhibition, the ethnologist suggested to the Canterbury Museum Director and the Ohakea Maori Committee that they should also consider deaccessioning a *whakairo* of unknown function. Although it had been added to the collection by Roger Duff, it was given to him during the Waitara swamp excavations, and no one as yet knew what it was for. The Ethnologist's reasoning was that since no one could identify it, the museum didn't know how to address its concept of *tapu*, and it would be better off housed in its home museum of Taranaki or wherever their Maori Committee decided. With due ceremony this was also included for the journey.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

Passing the Buck?:

From the previous summary, it can be seen that *iwi* involvement in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums has led to some Maori control of *koiwi tangata* and of some major tribal *taonga*. While this has not resulted in a sharing of legal

responsibility at a national level, and despite Government legislation still retaining ownership of newly found Maori artefacts and of *taonga* held in public institutions, such as in museums and universities, local *iwi* are assuming control of their own important *taonga* whenever possible.

In the major museums, the issue of *tapu* relating to tribal *taonga* has been taken out of the hands of individual curators, ethnologists and collections managers, and become managerialized in the hands of museum management *rununga* and *iwi* liaison workers. This development appears to be beneficial to both museums and *iwi* and is both encouraged and welcomed by museum personnel who previously had such responsibilities. For instance, at Otago Museum, despite the forcing of the conclusion of the Mataatua repatriation issue, but perhaps because of it, one curator feels out of his “domain” with regard to *tapu* issues and he is happy to be guided by the Maori Advisory Committee and let issues regarding *taonga* and *tapu* pass into the hands of *iwi* Maori.

It appears that rather than growing in understanding of the importance of *tapu* in relationship to *taonga*, many non-Maori museum personnel are side-stepping the need to understand by handing the responsibility back to *iwi*. How museum anthropologists and archaeologists in Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums regard Maori rights to access to their *taonga*, and the ritual handling of objects in public situations, is the topic of the final chapter.

CHAPTER 4

TODAYS ATTITUDES REGARDING ACCESS TO TAONGA AND THE RITUAL HANDLING OF TAONGA.

This chapter focuses on the need of Maori for access to *iwi* or *whanau taonga* in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums versus issues of conservation. While access is linked to keeping *taonga* "warm," and the ongoing ancestral life of *iwi*, including the ritual handling of important *taonga*, museum concerns involve the non-return on some *taonga* lent to Maori *iwi*, conservation for the future, and on-going care and handling of these cultural icons in the present. This also involves museum education and awareness of *tapu* needs, since without understanding the related issues of *taonga*, *mana* and *tapu*, museums cannot understand the needs of *iwi* today.

To understand these issues, in the process of this research I visited Canterbury Museum, where I interviewed the Ethnologist, Roger Fife, to Otago Museum, where I interviewed one of the curators of Maori collections, Demietre Anson, and then to Southland Museum and Art Gallery, where I interviewed Carl Gillies, the Collection Manager. I also approached three other museums, one in the South Island and two in the North Island, all of whom were unwilling to discuss the issues raised in this study and would not agree to an interview.

AWARENESS OF *TAPU*

Museum Traditions:

Just as the ethnological and/or scientific beginnings of many museums have influenced their collection and display habits, so too have significant curators, Directors and other professional staff influenced the attitudes of current staff towards Maori concerns.

At Canterbury Museum the current ethnologist considers the museum is fortunate with its relationship with local *iwi* because of its history and supportive staff. Their tradition of awareness of *tapu* issues dates back to Roger Duff, their Director in the early 1950s who spoke Te Reo Maori and set the tone for the museum. In fact on his death “at the insistence of the local *rununga* he lay in state” in the Canterbury Museum building, and “all things were visited and any *tapu* items were dealt with.” The Ethnologist spoke of him as “light years ahead of even current directors of museums.” It was Duff who established the *tikanga* whereby anything permanently *tapu*, such as *koiwi tangata*, was ceremoniously stored in the specially dedicated crypt or *wahi tapu*, by the *rununga* at a dawn ceremony. After the current Director, also very supportive of Maori concepts, arrived in the mid 1990s, access was given only with his approval and any technical checks are overseen by the Ethnologist. The principle guideline is still one of both “spiritual and physical avoidance,” wherever possible.⁽¹⁾

Otago Museum has an anthropological tradition which goes back to the mid 1965s, with H.D. Skinner, whose contacts with Maori were continued and

“passed on from curator to curator - it comes with the territory, it is one of the things you get taught - my predecessor did it, and I picked up when I started,” but it’s much more official than before. For Demietre Anson it was and still is a “learning curve,” since he came from “a classical archaeological background where you don’t actually have an indigenous race to think about.” To him the material “is research material and is sacrosanct because of that.” However the ‘Te Maori’ exhibition introduced him to a new way of looking at the *taonga* since people like Sid Mead were “coming down to brief people and saying there was going to be people handling *taonga* in the museum, and this was a big no-no for us to start with - it was unusual for us, ... to have people embracing material that we were trained to be very conservation wise with.”⁽²⁾

Current Museum Training in Tikanga and Te Reo Maori:

However a museum tradition is ineffective in a contemporary sense if current staff are not conversant with Maori terms and *tikanga*. One museum that is very aware of that is Canterbury Museum, where an ongoing induction process is given to each new staff member. Within the first 6-12 months they will have attended a ‘customary concepts’ *hui*, which includes what to do and what not to do, (E.g. Don’t sit on the tables etc.), and the principle that all Maori items are considered *tapu*, and although they are made *noa* for the purposes of an exhibition, they return to a *tapu* state when back in storage. They also attend a Treaty of Waitangi workshop and a Te Reo Maori course.

Questions raised by one curator included: “How do you decide how *tapu* something is?” This includes the concerns that a curator “might suddenly find something about its known history that makes it incredibly *tapu*, or what is *tapu* to one visitor may not be to another. Also things like, *kahu kuri* or dog skin cloaks are very very *tapu*, as are *heru* or head combs.” To be on the safe side, he therefore regards all items as under some sort of *tapu* restriction, until he is otherwise advised.:

“A box of cockle shells from an archaeological site will remain [*tapu*] to me requiring hand washing, all of those protocols, it will remain separate for other items. And there is good sound physical health reasons- for the health of the collection, you don’t want shells ... [with everything else] but at the same time it is possible that amongst that unanalyzed Maori archaeological material there may be something that is *tapu* ... I am certain of 99% but while there is 1% doubt it will be treated as such.”⁽³⁾

With regards to ongoing training of staff concerning *tapu* issues and *tikanga*, Otago Museum used to invite Te Papa for training sessions, until “Ngai Tahu took exception as to why should Northerners be coming here to teach about it, so they offered it instead.” One curator however, felt that this kind of training is waning and has regressed. He felt that “it was much more idealistic at a certain time with *pakeha* museum staff getting more involved. It kind of peeked around ‘Te Maori’ and a bit afterwards.”⁽⁴⁾

At Southland Museum and Art Gallery, with regard to raising staff consciousness about Maori issues and protocols, the previous Director, under the request of a staff member, organized a *hui* at a local Marae regarding “Maori issues about culture, *tapu*, how they see artefacts in the museum and belief systems,” but it has yet to be repeated. The Collection Manager acknowledges that, while he is interested in the whole concept of *tapu*, he doesn’t “fully have a working knowledge of it, not being a social anthropologist” himself, as he focused on archaeology and pre-history in his student day.

“But I do remember one of my professors, Athol Anderson who ... has actively been involved in archaeological projects down here with Ngai Tahu and I’ve been lucky enough to be involved in too,... and I remember Athol telling me some time ago, about some Maori ceremony, it was concerned with *tapu*, and he said that he had this long discussion with a *kaumatua*, ...and he said that you can’t actually lift *tapu* but ... you can nullify it in some way, ... it seems to me that once something is *tapu* it always is *tapu*, but you can make it easier to handle.”⁽⁵⁾

Interestingly none of the anthropologists/archaeologists at Canterbury, Otago or Southland Museum and Art Gallery, despite their close relationship with Ngai Tahu, had more than a basic/intermediate competence in Te Reo Maori, including only a basic knowledge of *mihi*. Mostly, this was because a lack of opportunity to practice what they learnt was a ‘stumbling block.’ For one however, it was because on one occasion, when getting up to speak in Maori at a *hui*, he was told to leave Te Reo Maori to the Maori and speak in English, something which left a

lasting impression and stopped his interest in Te Reo.⁽⁶⁾ Like Auckland Museum staff, at the returning of the *mokomokai*, a knowledge of local *kawa*, and an awareness of the current attitudes of Maori in the area, would have prevented any misunderstandings occurring. Unfortunately it does not appear that enough *tikanga* training is occurring in museums nationally in order to raise the understanding of non-Maori staff.

Resolution of Belief Systems:

The lack of Maori staff at these museums was not seen as an issue, since management systems and wide spread contacts, through having been in these positions long term, ensured that if advice was needed it was able to be sought. On a personal basis, however, they all displayed a 'suspension of disbelief, in order to believe,' whereby it was felt that if something was an issue they would be told, or find out, otherwise it was outside of their domain of daily activities and didn't need their attention.

While this was a subject that most curators are unwilling to discuss, one Collection Manager responded to my comment that archaeologists and anthropologists seem to be generally eclectic and humanistic. He readily admitted that despite studying comparative religion at Otago along with his anthropology course, as an atheist it reinforced his beliefs and he follows the Confucian advice to: "Study religion and politics closely and have as little to do with them as possible." However he didn't feel that being an atheist put him in

conflict with Maori belief systems.⁽⁷⁾ A suspension of belief, in order to believe appeared to be comfortable compromise with practical benefits.

Access To Taonga and Koiwi Tangata:

An issue that the archaeologists and anthropologists at these museums are not comfortable with is unrestricted access to *taonga*. All museums have strict protocol which they follow for any requests to research or loan *taonga* and while research is generally approved with *iwi* permission and supervision, loan requests to these *iwi* are often not. McManus explains one reason for that and its effects:-

A much publicized example concerning the Wanganui Regional Museum, which in 1987 banned the loan of any items after instances of abuse of its loan policy. Where several items were not returned. ... By doing so however, it has seriously affected its relationship with the local Maori community, and with honest and legitimate people who wish to borrow *taonga* in particular.⁽⁸⁾

At Otago Museum there are small research rooms where people wanting to do research on the collections can work, providing it is approved by the Director and the Maori Committee, and the requirements are that they work under supervision. It was intended originally that there would be more, but gradually the rooms assigned to research have been used for other storage. Any requests to the Collections Manager for access to Maori material would either be informally passed on by phone to the *iwi* representative at the Trust Board, or tabled as a memo at the next *iwi* liaison committee.

The current ethnologist at Canterbury Museum has spoken of treating all *koiwi tangata* with respect, no matter what nationality. When the museum needed to get their Egyptian mummy CT scanned at the Christchurch Hospital, to check its condition, they took it there, in non-public time, in the hearse that they use for *koiwi tangata*. Similarly when a Manchester Museum wanted to test all Egyptian mummies globally, for a fluke in the liver, the museum refused their request after consultation, because the advice given was that it was not necessary to probe all mummies for the study.⁽⁹⁾

Eighteen months ago Otago Museum had a request from a Ph.D. student from the Otago Medical school, who was “making a detailed study on the human remains of Polynesian skeletal material,” and a request to come down and do some detailed study in the *wahi tapu*. Because of the serious nature of it, this request was sent to the Director and then to the *Iwi* Representative on the Liaison Committee, who talked to various other Maori representatives and came back and approved her request. This was granted with the request that a detailed report was furnished on completion, which it was, and this was put on their computer data base and copies circulated to *iwi*, with the outcome to everyone’s satisfaction, *iwi*, museum and researcher.⁽¹⁰⁾

Despite Otago Museum’s close relationship with Ngai Tahu, requests concerning the loan items for use by the *iwi* are not usually granted. Several years ago at Southland Museum and Art Gallery, the Trust Board “finally approved the outward loan of a cloak for a *kaumatua*’s funeral” but such requests are usually

discouraged because it is felt that “the conservation values are compromised.” There are no provisions for local *iwi* to touch something, and while lengthy discussions have occurred regarding a *whanau* room, this step has not as yet been decided upon. Nor is there any “provisions for dipping your hands in a bowl of water yet,” something that is missing from all the museums studied. At Southland the “long overdue” need for an “overhaul” of the Maori Gallery, which is “probably our oldest museum gallery,” and the day to day task of trying to cover too many jobs with one person, over-ride issue of *tapu* and *noa* unless they are specific situations.⁽¹¹⁾

Southland Museum also has some aboriginal material in their collection, including a death bone, also stored in the *wahi tapu*. The staff are “careful not to point it at someone, it might be loaded, but also its not supposed to be handled by women. This “and a few other sacred stones,” are “from our what I would call our older collection,” which they have had for “decades,” ... “normally if someone offered that sort of stuff to us we would refuse it, as it is right out of our collections area.” He commented that their new History Curator is a woman, who “knows that it is not something that is appropriate for her to handle, but she is happy with that.” “All other *tapu* issues that we are fairly mindful of are simply:- we don’t bring food up into the storage area, which has a large section of Maori material. We wouldn’t bring food up there anyway, but for other reasons, but for that reason as well.”⁽¹²⁾

With the conflicting issues of access versus conservation, even within new 'bicultural' management structures, what does the future hold for Aotearoa New Zealand's museums? Museum Models developed overseas are slow to be adopted over traditional museum models but will this situation change?

FUTURE DIRECTIONS?

The ecomuseum concept, which originated in France and was adapted to Native American archaeological sites, has yet to be adopted in Aotearoa New Zealand.⁽¹³⁾ Clark suggests that this concept is particularly applicable to the interpretation of Aotearoa New Zealand's "related sites [*wahi tapu* sites] that are spread over a large geographical area."⁽¹⁴⁾ Neighbourhood museums and tribal cultural centres have also become popular in Mexico and Canada, as an alternative to a more conventional museum.⁽¹⁵⁾ Marae based museums appear to be the logical future direction for Aotearoa New Zealand, and one such museum has long been in existence on Turangawaewae Museum in the Waikato, to house gifts to the *kahui Ariki*, (royal family), and another at Ratana Marae, to house the medical aids and other objects including *taonga* discarded by converts and those healed there. Some recent interest has been shown in these concepts with the proposed Otago Museum's Ngai Tahu Cultural Centre, the proposed development of a "moa hunting site" by the Rangitane people at the mouth of the Wairau River based on the eco museum concept, and a *marae* museum planned at Koroniti, near Wanganui.⁽¹⁶⁾

All museum personnel I've spoken with are totally in favour of cultural centres and *iwi* based museums. They all support repatriation in principle, and fully in the case of *koiwi tangata*, although the current arrangement of *wahi tapu* within museums is felt to be working well. However, like other conservation trained specialists, they have some reservations in the case of some items. One ethnologist specifically doesn't like the thought of *mokomokai* or *whakairo* getting buried, since they will then be lost to future researchers.⁽¹⁷⁾ Another is not in favour of anything that will harm *taonga*, especially sensitive items such as *korowai* or *kahu kuri*.⁽¹⁸⁾

Despite an acute awareness amongst the non-Maori staff at Canterbury Museum, in dealing with Maori *taonga*, their displays currently give mixed messages. Canterbury Museum is clearly about to undergo a major renovation of its Maori galleries, under guidance from its Ohaki O Nga Tupuna Committee, and the dioramas which have long been a strong feature will be replaced with a new food area. The ethnologist is acutely embarrassed by the dioramas which greet visitors entering the museum. To him they display a picture, frozen in time, of primitive Maori people with some historical anomalies. As he pointed out, a spear held in a male models hand is conjecture about the way it was used, and the display is more about how the previous curators viewed pre-European Maori society than facts about how they really lived. It is an excellent example of the stereotyping which *pakeha* curators used when creating Maori displays, whether or not they were aware of what they were doing.

Other discrepancies also exist within Canterbury Museum's Maori Gallery. Some items are missing from the walls, as they are on loan to Taranaki Museum, and the empty spaces look neglected. More importantly highly *tapu heru*, probably from *ariki*, are displayed in a case labeled "Games and Other Amusements," a remnant of past curatorial insensitivities. More recently a burial box has been displayed, with *iwi* approval, in a cave in the wall, alone and imposing, with due regard to its *tapu* nature. These displays all reflect the changing approach to displays and the influence of various curators over time.

Several other South Island Museums are also in a state of change. Otago Museum is undergoing major changes. As previously noted, since the removal of Mataatua the Maori Gallery display has been treated in an ad hoc manner, since what will happen next is still unplanned. Otago Museum is about to acquire a Nga Tahu Cultural Centre within its building, which will both display their tribal *taonga* and include live performances, with artists working within the walls. It is hoped also that the Otago University will use the centre for field work, but this too is as yet undecided. How archaeology and cultural activities will blend with sensitive issues such as *tapu* has become Ngai Tahu's department. At Southland Museum and Art Gallery also major changes are planned. Despite relatively recent renovations it has yet to revitalize its Maori gallery, or plan when or how that will happen.⁽¹⁹⁾ All of these Museums however are open to Maori input, willing to listen and happy to either share or pass control of *taonga* over to the local Maori *iwi*.

Nelson Provincial Museum is also undergoing major changes with its exhibition galleries being removed from the main museum in Stoke to a refurbished building in the business section of Nelson itself. This is planned to open in late 2004. However the unwillingness of staff and management to talk about the issues of Maori involvement in the planning of the Maori Gallery or of their Maori collections, suggests either that these issues have not yet been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, or perhaps that there is some self-consciousness about the decisions that have been made and an unwillingness to be challenged.

CONCLUSION:

This thesis is concerned with the importance of, and neglect of, *tapu* considerations, with regard to Maori *taonga*, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai*, held in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums. This includes how *tapu* has been viewed in the past by non-Maori in Aotearoa New Zealand as a background to how contemporary museum personnel, especially anthropologists and archaeologists, have incorporated the concept of *tapu* into their engagement with Maori material culture in order to keep Maori *taonga* spiritually 'warm.' This queried how they could resolve their own beliefs with those of Maori, and investigated the meaning of sacredness, of *tapu* and of *taonga*. The physical aspect of caring for *taonga* was explored in order to find out about the spiritual aspect of what is required for guardianship.

In the process I questioned if these *tapu* objects continue to have an affect on the people handling them, on the museums concerned and on the '*pakeha*' generally, as well as on Aotearoa New Zealand as a nation. I applied this to *tapu* knowledge and queried whether a *tapu* chant recited in a disrespectful manner, by someone without awareness of what they were saying, can cause harm to that person and wondered whether it was worth the risk. I queried especially what the incorrect treatment of these *taonga* in museums do for Maori-Pakeha relationships in Aotearoa New Zealand. With respect to the *taonga* themselves I wondered why mysterious happenings which occurred around the *taonga* from 'Te Maori' touring the United States in the 1980s did not occur back home and wondered if it

was because they are on their home ground and had no need to, but wondered also if it was because they are being denied their right to 'speak' here.

I queried especially if the response of museum professionals in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums to another's belief, whereby they suspend their disbelief for the purposes of respecting another's belief, is sufficient when handling *tapu* objects which have not been made *noa*, through oversight or dislocation from their original peoples. This involved questioning whether or not all guardians of *taonga* in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums respect these powerful objects in the manner in which they would be treated, if a Maori museum worker was in control of their storage or display, and what effect transgressions made through ignorance have on Maori-Pakeha relations. I noted also that in practice it is irrelevant whether or not items are *tapu* or *noa*, since, if *taonga* are sacred to Maori and if they are accepted as sacred, then they would be treated in the appropriate manner, not as a non-Maori would treat their own sacred objects but as Maori would treat them. I commented that this is not always the case.

Through investigating the history of Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, it becomes obvious how the forced alienation of *taonga* to museums, the subsequent misrepresentation of another people's stories, the display of *mokomokai* and *koiwi tangata*, and of highly *tapu taonga* in public, the standardization of Maori art into traditional and pre-European art, and the limited access for Maori to important tribal *taonga*, has led to a attitude of suspicion and mistrust from Maori people towards museums. Of paramount importance is the

violation to *tapu* objects by non-Maori and the lack of awareness of the harm caused to the *mana* of *whanau*, *hapu* and *iwi* by such actions.

I discovered also that the related issues of *taonga*, *tapu* and *mana*, is inextricably bound to that of *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai* because many *taonga* came into museums with *koiwi tangata* that were stolen from their burial place or cave where they had been placed. While there is no denying that these thefts did occur, because of poor records in early museum practice, the proof of their origins has been lost, and many of these *taonga* have now become disassociated from the bones they originally came with and have lost their *korero*.

Today, with regard to *wahi tapu*, local Maori *iwi* now control the issues of policy, access, research and future directions of *koiwi tangata* within their *rohe*, at least in the major museums and in the South Island. Also, through the ‘managerializing’ of *tapu* concerns, the decision making process regarding conservation, deaccessioning and display of *taonga* is gradually passing into the hands of joint *iwi*/management committees in Aotearoa New Zealand’s National and Provincial museums. However, curators, collection managers and museum personnel need less and less to understand Maori concerns regarding the care of and access to *taonga* held in Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums, their *tapu* regulations and the implications of these to the current well-being of specific *iwi*. Instead guidelines are formulated by *iwi* liaison persons or committees, and decisions are being made without those who implement them needing to understand why. Within museums which have no *iwi* guidelines, consultation and

collaboration is sometimes sought with local *iwi* when Maori displays are changed but seen as unnecessary otherwise.

Through this investigation I discovered that, despite a growing awareness among some contemporary museum personnel of Maori *tikanga*, and contemporary issues regarding *taonga*, many non-Maori working in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, and engaging with Maori *taonga*, have only a basic knowledge of *tapu* and of its importance today. However, I also discovered that it is not a lack of respect for Maori beliefs, Christian prejudisms or even a 'suspension of belief' which is the reason for this lack of awareness, but a lack of training within the individual museums. A changing awareness within management of the need to consult with the local *iwi* is not accompanied by a greater understanding of Maori issues amongst all Museum staff, since museum management often appear to be too busy to ensure that all staff are aware of, at least, basic Te Reo Maori and *tikanga*. While some training is given in this direction, inconsistencies occur within museums and this is not a uniform process, internally or nationally, despite the intentions of the National Services of Te Papa Tongarewa.

Amongst smaller local museums, response to Maori issues of care of *taonga*, including *tapu* issues and display, access to tribal *taonga* by *iwi*, and consultation with local *iwi* vary, depending on the awareness or sensitivity of the Museum Boards, management and staff involved. This can vary from good intentions, but 'too busy to focus on these issues,' ignore it 'because it hasn't come up yet,' to attempts at consultation, but 'don't know how, or who to talk to.' It takes time to

find out who to talk to and to patiently wait for a response. Museums seem to forget that while museums are a work place for many non-Maori, for Maori it is a life issue bound up in their past and their future, they have time to wait.

Finally, I conclude with a reaffirmation of my initial concerns: that museums must foster Maori desires for physical contact with their *taonga* in order to fulfill their obligations to the Treaty of Waitangi and to improve Maori-Pakeha relationships in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. They must learn the correct *kawa* of their *rohe* in order to act correctly during Maori ceremony and find out the correct Maori *iwi* to consult. They must also fulfill Maori expectations by researching their collections of Maori *taonga* and return those that were obtained unethically, if they are serious about museum ethics. Most importantly, where they are known to have been collected unethically, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai* must be offered back to the *iwi* concerned for reburial, out of respect for human dignity, and awareness of the 'Treaty of Waitangi.'

Those museums who take these steps will create better relationships with their Maori communities and be way ahead of the rest. Those who do not, must change, or continue to be shunned by Maori as they are now. Most importantly, if museums use the term *taonga*, then they must embrace its full meaning and treat these sacred objects accordingly, with dignity, with respect, with understanding, for their *wairua*, for their *mana*, and according to their *tapu* nature. Non-Maori museum personnel must accept Maori beliefs as sacred and treat their sacred objects as if they were themselves Maori.

In addition museum managements must realise that the existence of *taonga* within their museums brings a responsibility to ensure that all staff understand the sacred nature of what they are holding. It is not enough to say, 'that is somebody else's decision,' and 'pass the buck' onto the committee concerned, there must be understanding from all who connect with these *taonga*. The process of compartmentalizing Maori concerns into a separate committee is creating more confusion and less awareness within Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, of both the *tapu* nature of these *taonga*, and of the Maori component to all displays relating to the islands of Aotearoa New Zealand. Whether or not one believes that any disrespect given to Maori *taonga*, by non-Maori, has a physical effect on Aotearoa New Zealand, it is indisputable that it has had a long term negative effect on *Pakeha*-Maori relations.

As Noeline Hemi from Ngati Kuia said, "They won't listen to us Maori, maybe they'll listen to a Pakeha."

GLOSSARY OF MAORI TERMS USED ⁽¹⁾

ahi tapu - ritual fire used in *tapu* lifting ceremonies

ariki - chiefs

atua - ancient protecting ancestors, gods

hapu - section of a large tribe, clan, secondary tribe

harakeke - flax

here - a guide

heitiki - ancestral shaped pendant, usually made from nephrite

hui - kin group gathering upon a *marae*

hui-a-iwi - meeting of all the tribes of the region

ihi - to feel the awesome presence of the gods

iwi - tribe

Kahui Ariki - royal family

kahu kuri - dog skin cloaks

kaitiaki - guardian

kaitiakitanga - guardianship

kaituhituhi - Maori liaison person (for museum)

kanuka - white teatree - kunzei ericoides

kaumatua - adult, elder

kawa - protocol upon the *marae*, rules

kete - bag, kit

koiwi tangata - human skeletal remains, bones

korero - speak

korero tara - fables

korowai - feathered cloak

makutu - bewitchment, witchcraft

mana - integrity, prestige, authority

manaia - carved beaked figure, seahorse, raft

marae - meeting area of whanau or iwi, central area of village and its buildings, courtyard.

Matakite - a seer

maunga - mountain

mauri - life principle, spiritual essence; a stone amulet, or repository of an *atua*

mihi - greeting

moa - extinct bird (*dinornis gigantea*)

mokomokai - smoked preserved head

Moriori - original Chatham Islander

moteatea - lament, to grieve

noa - state of normal, everyday commonness, non-sacred, profane

pa - Maori village, fortified hilltops

pakeha - non-Maori immigrant of European or Caucasian descent

pataka - storehouse

patu - weapon

pou - posts, carved ancestral slab of wood

pounamu - greenstone

powhiri - traditional welcome of distinguished visitors onto a *marae*

raupo - bullrush - *typa orientalis*

rohe - area.

rongo - a kumara god

ruanuku - wizard, old man,

rununga - assembly, council

tamariki - children

tangi - weep, cry, wail

tangihanga - death mourning ritual on marae

taonga - treasured possession

taonga tuku iho - legacy, relic, heirloom

tapu - sacred, forbidden

tauiwi - non Maori, person from a “strange tribe”

tekoteko - carved figure on the gable of a house

Te Reo Maori - the Maori language

tikanga - customs and protocol, customary practice

tohunga - expert, specialist, priest, artist

tupuna - ancestor

tuuturu - authentic tradition

urupa - burial place

waiata - song

wahi tapu - sacred site, site protected by *tapu*

whakairo -carvings, wood carving

wairua - spirituality, soul, ancestral spirit, which can manifest itself as *ihi*, *wehi* and *wana*

waka - canoe, descendants of historic canoe

wana - authority, unquestioned competence of an individual

wehi - strike, fear, awe

whakanoa - tapu lifting ceremony

whakapapa - genealogy

whakatupapaku - burial chest

whanau - extended family

whare koiwi - house to store *koiwi tangata* in after the *tangihanga*

whare mate - house of the dead erected for the *tangihanga*

whare - house

whare rununga - assembly house

whare wananga - house of learning

wharenui -large meeting house

wharenui whakairo - large carved meeting house

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