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UNDERSTANDING MATAKITE:

**A Kaupapa Māori Study on the Impact of
Matakite/Intuitive Experiences on Wellbeing**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-a-Karuwai

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KARAKIA

(Dedication)

*Ka tohia atu koe ki te tohi nuku, ki te tohi rangi
Kia hoaia koe ki te pūtiki wharanui, kia tiaia koe ki te manu rererangi
Te rau o tītapu, kia pai ai koe te haere i runga rawa
I rangahaua koe i te pō uriuri, i te pō tangotango
I rākaitia koe ki te piki kotuku, te rau o te toroa, te huia titama
Whākina ngā kupu o te riri, ngā kupu o tawhiti
He mea ka mau mai, ka kapiti runga e, ka kapiti raro e
He pokanga a nuku, he pokanga a rangi
He pou hihiko, pou rarama, tiaho i roto, marama i roto
Tēnei te pou, te pou tokomanawa, te pou o tēnei whare, te pou o ēnei kōrero
Hui te ora, hui te mārama
Whano, whano, haramai te mauri
Haumi e, hui e, taiki e!*

The above **karakia** was taught to me by Professor Kereti Rautangata, given to him by Dr. Pakaariki Harrison. It is used on special occasions, such as the birth of a child or the blessing of a student, and for other purposes. The general intention of such a **karakia** was to affirm the spiritual nature and origin of the person (Kereti Rautangata, personal communication, 2013). It has appropriately been used in recent years (with slight variations) as a dedicatory **karakia** for theses affirming a **Māori** worldview and spiritual understandings.

PEPEHA

Ko Hikurangi te Maunga

Ko Waiapu te Awa

Ko Te Whānau a Karuwai ki Maraehara te Hapū

Ko Te Rehu a Karuwai me te Hiku a Mahiti ngā Tīpuna Whare

E aroha hoki ana tōku ngākau ki te Whetumatarau, ki te Awatere,
tae noa ki ngā whare tūpuna ko Hinerupe rāua ko Rongomaitāpui

Ko Ngāti Porou te Iwi.

Kokonga whare e kitea

Kokonga ngākau e kore e kitea

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a response to expressions of concern from within **Māori** communities and also from within mental health that some **Māori** who are diagnosed as mentally ill are actually having spiritual experiences, which in the **Māori** culture are called **matakite** (among other terms). The thesis explores this issue from a **Kaupapa Māori** perspective, which enables a multi-layered, culturally resonant, exploration and analysis of the health issues that arise in relation to **matakite**. Thus, while exploring the nature of the experience, the thesis also explores the impact of social, cultural, political, and economic factors upon the wellbeing of people experiencing **matakite**, and which have hindered the use of the **Māori** spiritual knowledge-base as a health resource. It is expected that this thesis will increase understanding of the nature of the experience and its relevance within contemporary **Māori** society, and therefore contribute to the reduction, and ideally elimination, of the misdiagnosis of **matakite** as symptomatic of a mental disorder.

An exploration of the literature reveals a history of ignoring or misunderstanding experiences of a spiritual nature by mainstream Western mental health researchers, clinicians, and policy makers. However, new interest in this field is emerging, and attention has been turned to the development of bio-psycho-socio-spiritual models. Nevertheless, Western biomedical frameworks continue to dominate the discourse and practice in mental health, despite decades of calling for a more integrated approach from many health disciplines, researchers, indigenous communities, and mental health consumers.

The study reveals new understandings about the nature of **matakite** experiences, which may support efforts to distinguish between **matakite** and pathology. Multiple factors are identified as impacting upon the wellbeing and health of people experiencing **matakite**. The impact of social and cultural factors, as well as the politics of mental health, upon the wellbeing of **matakite** are identified, and possible strategies for enhancing and protecting wellbeing around **matakite** experiences are discussed. To this end the study challenges the norms and structures in mainstream Western mental health and highlights how traditional **Māori** knowledge about **matakite** can be used as a resource for mental health in **Aotearoa** New Zealand.

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Success is not the work of one, but the work of many

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