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RECALIBRATING THE MUSEUM: THE POLITICS OF STEWARDSHIP AND THE PHYSICAL/DIGITAL REPATRIATION OF TE HAU-KI-TURANGA

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY OF ART AND VISUAL STUDIES

by

Brinker Ferguson

June 2018

The Dissertation of Brinker Ferguson is approved:

_____
Professor Soraya Murray, chair

_____
Professor Elisabeth Cameron

_____
Professor Peter Probst

_____
Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Table of Contents

List of figures……..……..iv

Abstract…….....….vii

Acknowledgements……...……..……..…….....ix

Introduction……1

Chapter 1: Contemporary Issues Surrounding Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: Politics over Control and Cultural Memory.....……...…15

Chapter 2: "Contact Zones" and the Entanglement of Rongowhakaata/Pakeha Influence in Te Hau-Ki-Turanga ……...…….……39

Chapter 3: A New Museology: Issues Related to Bicultural Contact Zones and Indigenous Agency at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa……...….100

Chapter 4: Rongowhakaata and Cultural Development: New Models of Indigenous Agency Inside/Outside the Museum Institution….……..……..….126

Chapter 5: Decolonizing National Museums: Expanding the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Case Study to Other Indigenous Communities …….166

Conclusion: Walking Backwards into the Future……..194

Appendix……...…….210

Glossary…….211

Bibliography……..……213

List of Figures

1.1 Rongowhakaata bring their *taonga* into the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to signal the start of their *iwi* residency. The *taonga* will be on display as part of the *Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow*. Photograph by Waateanews.com, 12 June 2017.

2.1 Map of *Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow* exhibition on the fourth floor of Te Papa during its planning stages. Photograph by Brinker Ferguson, 2016.

2.2 Pacing *kakahu* (cloaks) over the Māori skeletal remains recently repatriated to New Zealand. Photograph by Kate Whitley, Te Papa, 2016.

2.3 Collections manager Lisa Ward holds a model *tauihu* (carved canoe prow) in the Māori collection at Te Papa. She is a *kaitiaki* (guardian) who cares for *taonga* (ancestral treasures). Photography by Te Papa, 2011.

3.1 Māori and European population numbers, 1840-1881. Graph by Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2012.

3.2 Poupou (carving) from Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, Colonial Museum, used as a *cartes de visite* in 1880s. Image from Alexander Turnbull Library Mundy PA I-F-039-32.

3.3 Interior of Colonial Museum, 1870. In the front of the image is an extinct Moa bird (extinct in New Zealand around 1300 A.D.) surrounded by Māori cultural heritage. Image from Alexander Turnbull Library Sebley PA4-1063.

3.4 Apirana Ngata leading the *haka* (traditional Māori war dance) in front of the meeting house Te Tiriti I Waitangi at the Centennial celebrations, Waitangi, 1940. The *haka* (still used today by New Zealand's national rugby team, the All Blacks) along with other Māori heritage like the *wharenui* (meetinghouse) would become visual icons for which Ngata hoped to unite a large Māori voter base. Image from Alexander Turnbull Library PAColl-3060.

3.5 Māori carvers and weavers in the Sydney Street shed, Dominion Museum, 1936. Photography by Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1936.

3.6 Tukutuku (weaving) panels for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, under construction by the School of Māori Arts and Crafts, Wellington, 1936. Image by J.T. Salmond, MONZ reg. no. B5368.

3.7 Waitangi Day Protest, Auckland 1989. Photography by Gil Hanly, 1989.

3.8 Meetinghouse Te Hau-Ki-Turanga being moved to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa from the National Museum on Buckle Street. Photography by Phil Reid, 1996.

4.1 Photographer Michael Hall leads a workshop for the outreach program National Services Te Paerangi at Hawke's Bay *marae*, 2004.

4.2 "Treaty of Waitangi Signs of a Nation: Te Tiriti o Waitangi Nga Tohu Kotahitanga" exhibition space on the fourth floor of Te Papa. The exhibition is placed directly between the *Mana Whenua* galleries (to the left), and *Passport* galleries (predominantly Pakeha history in New Zealand-to the right). Photography by Te Papa, 2012.

4.3 Aunty Marj, an elder of Ngati Mutunga, speaks at a museum conference in Te Papa in 1998. She waves a white feather, a symbol of the teachings and philosophy of Parihaka (a community in the Taranaki region of New Zealand). Image by Te Papa 1998.

4.4 Dr. Arapata Hakiwai talking with the Rongowhakaata *iwi* inside Te Papa about present and future involvement. As Te Papa's *kaihautu* (Māori co-director) he stated that the museum was committed to working with Rongowhakaata *iwi* to assist with the restoration of their *wharenui* (meetinghouse). Photography by The Dominion Post, 2017.

5.1 Waitangi Day Protest, Wellington 1986. Photography by Gil Hanly, 1986.

5.2 Waitangi Tribunal at Orakei *marae* 1986. Photography by Gil Hanly, 1986.

5.3 Photogrammetry training with the Rongowhakaata *iwi* on the *marae* in front of Te Mana o Turanga *wharenui* (meetinghouse), Gisborne. Photography by Brinker Ferguson, 2017.

5.4 Photogrammetry training on the exterior of the *wharenui* Te Mana o Turanga with the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, Gisborne. Photography by Brinker Ferguson, 2017.

5.5 Māori language petition being delivered to Parliament 1972. Image from the Archives New Zealand.

5.6 Te Reo Māori demonstration outside TVNZ studios at Avaton, Lower Hutt, 1977. Photography by Dominion Post, 1977.

5.7 Erica Jones, producer of Te Whare Korero o Rongowhakaata video series. Photography by Brinker Ferguson, 2017.

5.8 Video still from Te Whare Korero o Rongowhakaata video series, spoken in Te Reo (Māori language) with English subtitles. Image from Māori Television, 2017.

5.9 Lewis Whaitiri speaking to Rongowhakaata carved ancestors at the British Museum. Photography by Brinker Ferguson, 2017.

5.10 Video still of *Poutokomanawa* ancestral carving animation created by use of 3D data collected at the National Gallery of Australia in 2017. Image by Brinker Ferguson, 2018.

6.1 Derek Lardelli, Rongowhakaata *iwi* member and professor of Māori knowledge and development at EIT in Gisborne, speaking at the *Ko Rongowhakaata* opening *pohiri* (ceremony) Te Papa, September 2017. Photography from Te Papa, 2017.

Abstract

Meredith Brinker Ferguson

RECALIBRATING THE MUSEUM: THE POLITICS OF STEWARDSHIP AND THE PHYSICAL/DIGITAL REPATRIATION OF TE HAU-KI-TURANGA

In July 2012, New Zealand's Parliament passed the Rongowhakaata Settlement Act, which returned ownership of the Māori meetinghouse Te Hau-Ki-Turanga from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa back to its indigenous *iwi*, Rongowhakaata. The transfer of title set in motion several important developments for both New Zealand's bicultural government and the intangible and tangible redress of Māori cultural heritage. This dissertation is an inquiry into the politics of stewardship, or care of cultural heritage, and related issues, concerning in particular, the control of conservation and interpretation at the local, national, and international levels. The history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's creation, preservation, and display constitutes an important case study through which to address core questions that explore New Zealand's history of struggles with power, control, and indigenous self-determination. Key questions include the following: How are New Zealand's indigenous communities challenging and contesting the very definition of a museum and its role in modern times? Can indigenous self-determination exist within a Western museum infrastructure? Can such a museum ever be truly post-colonial?

Through three Te Hau-Ki-Turanga projects taking place between 2017 and 2020, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* is working both within and outside the New Zealand national museum to develop alternative models for reconnecting the meetinghouse

with *iwi* descendants and disseminating information to the public on the *iwi*'s own terms. By looking at the case study of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, we can begin to uncover the entangled power relations between New Zealand's bicultural government and its Pakeha and Māori populations from the early nineteenth century to the present day.

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Introduction

On June 12, 2017, to commemorate the beginning of their time as *iwi*[1], or tribe, in residence at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, thirty Rongowhakaata representatives traveled from Gisborne, New Zealand, to the national museum, located in the capital city of Wellington. With them, they carried over one



Figure 1.1 Rongowhakaata *iwi* bring their *taonga* (treasures) into the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to signal the start of their *iwi* residency. The *taonga* will be on display as part of the exhibition *Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow*. Photograph by Waateanews.com, 12 June 2017.

hundred *taonga*, or Māori cultural treasures, onto the museum's *marae* (the open area where formal welcomes are made and issues are debated), directly adjacent to the meetinghouse Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. These *taonga*, including Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, would be part of the *iwi*'s three-year restoration and exhibition project *Ko*

[1] The word *iwi,* literally translated as "bones," is the Māori word for "peoples" or "nation" and is often translated as "tribe." Each *iwi* contains a number of *hapu* (sub-tribes). *Iwi* is used for both the plural and singular word use.

Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow. June 12 also marked the day that the Rongowhakaata meetinghouse was first accessioned into the collection of the Colonial Museum, Te Papa's predecessor, exactly 150 years before.[2]

Currently, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, illuminated by museum spotlighting, is elevated on a platform in a prominent and central position within the national museum's Māori gallery. It is the centerpiece or jewel of the *Mana Whenua* exhibition, which "explores and celebrates Māori *Tangata Whenua* (original people) of Aotearoa, New Zealand."[3] Placed to the left of the meetinghouse is a plaque that reads:

> Greetings to all our visitors! We, the Rongowhakaata people of the Gisborne district, welcome you to our great house called Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Te Hau-Ki-Turanga celebrates our history and our links with other tribes and nations. We invite you to enter to join us in sharing our past achievements and our hopes for the future! Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was built in 1842 at Manutuke, just south of Gisborne, by our most famous carver, Raharuhi Rukupo, in memory of his late brother Tamati Waka Mangere, a chief of the Ngati Kaipoho subtribe. Its name, which means the "Breezes of Turanga," alludes to the many influences that all the families and tribes of our district have in common. This house was acquired by the government in 1867 and was one of the first meetinghouses carved entirely with steel adzes and chisels. Our love for our ancestors and their heritage keeps alive our interest and involvement in this house. Today, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga symbolizes the proud identity of Rongowhakaata, our contribution to the nation, and our commitment to a bicultural partnership with Te Papa Tongarewa, the Museum of New Zealand.[4]

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[2] Leo Horgan, "Rongowhakaata Taonga and Stories to Be Exhibited at Te Papa," Māori Television, 12 June 2017, available at https://www.Māori television.com/news/regional/rongowhakaata-taonga-and-stories-be-exhibited-te-papa (accessed 23 June 2017).
[3] *Mana Whenua*, *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, available at https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/visit/whats-on/exhibitions/mana-whenua (accessed 25 November 2016).
[4] Previous English text from the plaque adjacent to Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

This text, written jointly by Te Papa staff and representatives of the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, betrays little of the deeply contested history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Ever since it first arrived in Wellington in the mid-nineteenth century, this meetinghouse has been controversial, and its acquisition has been the subject of three government inquiries and several Rongowhakaata requests for its repatriation or physical return.[5] In 2012, as part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlement between the Rongowhakaata and the British Crown,[6] the New Zealand government officially apologized for the forcible removal of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, stating that the meetinghouse in fact belonged to the Rongowhakaata *iwi*.[7]

Since its opening in 1998, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, or Te Papa for short, has firmly established itself as a "post-colonial museum in a country with a complex colonial past and much divided present."[8] Te Papa (roughly translated as "our place") is an officially bicultural government institution of New Zealand with the mission to "be a forum for the nation to present, explore, and preserve the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of the natural environment."[9]

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[5] Kasaia Waigth, "'Stolen from Its People and Wrenched from Its Roots'? A Study of the Crown's 1867 Acquisition of the Rongowhakaata Meeting House Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," thesis, University of Wellington, 2009, 1.
[6] In 1975, the New Zealand government established a tribunal as a permanent commission of inquiry to redress claims and make findings regarding breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi.
[7] "Turanga Tangata Turanga Whenua: The Report on the Turanganui and Kiwa Claims," *Waitangi Tribunal Report* (Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2002).
[8] Marilena Alivizatou, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum: New Perspectives on Cultural Preservation* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2012), 50.
[9] "Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Annual Report," *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* (Wellington: New Zealand Government, 1992), 1.

In New Zealand, the term biculturalism applies to the coexistence of Māori and European cultural principles, protocols, and understandings,[10] as well as to the sharing of political power, to varying degrees, between its two "founding" peoples, Māori (indigenous) and Pakeha (settler New Zealanders of European descent). This dual power dynamic has guided official government policy since the signing of the nation's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi, on February 6, 1840. While biculturalism remains very much the mandate of the state, there is considerable dispute over its use and benefits, and over whether it actually helps to perpetuate a settler-colonial divide between Māori and Pakeha peoples, rather than promote the unity of the nation and acknowledge its history of their entanglement.

For New Zealand's government institutions, including Te Papa, biculturalism and its "equal representation"[11] principles are intended to inform everything that the institution does, from the planning of its exhibitions and administration of the institution to its employment opportunities and handling of objects. Arapata Hakiwai, Māori co-director of the museum, outlines the intellectual framework informing *taonga* care in New Zealand's bicultural governmental institutions in a publication titled *Museums and Māori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice*.[12] He notes that Te Papa focuses on partnerships, and especially on the active participation of New Zealand's indigenous communities, to cultivate a sense of

[10] For more information about the history of biculturalism's use in New Zealand, see Chapter 2.
[11] Ibid.
[12] See Conal McCarthy, *Museums and Māori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2011).

cultural well-being and community empowerment. However, staffs' respective understandings of biculturalism's "equal partnership" are seldom equivalent, leaving Te Papa's mission open to interpretation. For example, Lucy Authur, who worked on Te Papa's bicultural team from 2004 to 2007, cautions, "When the museum was conceived as a bicultural institution in the early 1990s, that was a very new way of looking at museums in New Zealand. But having this foundation . . . does not really mean that everyone in the museum knows what biculturalism is."[13]

In addition to biculturalism, the museum explicitly endorses *mana taonga*, a practice that recognizes "the spiritual and cultural connections of *taonga* with their people," and allows different Māori *iwi* to "care for their *taonga*, to speak about them, and to determine their use by the museum."[14] Addressing the local press at the aforementioned June 12 event, Hakiwai emphasized, "The *powhiri* (welcome ceremony) . . . starts a new chapter where past injustices can be recognized and pathways of reconciliation and healing advanced. We look forward to working together with the Rongowhakaata *iwi* and actively assisting them with their cultural heritage aspirations."[15] Such a statement raises certain questions, however. What roles might the Māori *taonga* at the museum play in addressing historic Māori grievances, contemporary tribal self-determination, and the advancement of Māori

[13] Alivizatou, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum,* 66.
[14] Dean Sully, *Decolonizing Conservation: Caring for Māori Meeting Houses Outside New Zealand* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007), 53.
[15] Horgan, "Rongowhakaata Taonga and Stories to Be Exhibited at Te Papa," Māori Television, available at https://www.maoritelevision.com/news/regional/rongowhakaata-taonga-and-stories-be-exhibited-te-papa (accessed 30 June 2017).

development and identity? And how are New Zealand's indigenous communities challenging and contesting the very definition of a museum?

For the past twenty years or so, many New Zealand museums, including Te Papa, have tried to represent biculturalism (in theory, at least) by drawing upon both Māori and European cultural principles. What emerges from this complex situation, however, is a pressing need to articulate actual levels and hierarchies of action, authority, and agency at these institutions. The museum's conservation and interpretation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga therefore represents an important case study through which to address the questions above and explore New Zealand's history of issues related to power, control, and cultural self-determination.

Within this fraught and fascinating museum context, the story of the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga meetinghouse says much about the history of relations between the New Zealand government—and, by extension, the national museums—and its indigenous populations. Questions about the fate of the meetinghouse shed light on the deep-seated grievances still felt by the Māori today and demonstrate the value of the treaty-settlement process as a means for the Māori to tell their stories and seek redress for past injustices. At this time, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga represents a living repository of Rongowhakaata local history and identity, but it is also a famed national icon, as well as an important aspect of New Zealand's unique cultural identity for an international audience. Since its construction, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga has been coopted as a "contact zone" between Māori and Pakeha, and the Rongowhakaata *iwi* has now forced a reckoning with the viability of post-colonialism in this modern museum context. Yet

the politics of recognition and presentation that are at the heart of this reckoning ultimately beg other questions: Can a museum ever be truly post-colonial? And how will this alignment impact the fate of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga?

This dissertation is an inquiry into the politics of stewardship, or care of cultural heritage, and related issues concerning the control of preservation and interpretation at the local, national, and international level. By looking at the case study of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga as a history of contact zones in a country with a legacy of settler colonialism, one can begin to respond to questions about applying similar strategies in other nations with this same legacy, as well as evaluate the potential for post-colonialism in government-controlled institutions around the world. Thus, this project focuses on the amalgamation of cultural heritage, indigenous agency, and museums. Given its scope, this project has implications for a number of scholarly fields, including visual studies, museum studies, historic preservation, and indigenous studies. It may also resonate with individuals and organizations outside of the academy, including those involved in the maintenance and presentation of cultural heritage, and with local or national heritage institutions. Museology is a discipline that looks at the history of museums and the politics and processes involved in their operations, including exhibitions and display, conservation, education, and engagement with diverse communities. In more recent times, the museum discourse has extended to the examination of relationships with source communities, alongside such issues as repatriation, governance, and representation. Museums form an important part of society and have often been associated with power and politics, as

well as colonialism.[16] Recent studies have investigated indigenous people's voices and interests as crucial aspects of a better understanding of how heritage has been defined, and what its importance is for the maintenance and ongoing development of cultural identity. It is this area of scholarship, which straddles museum studies and indigenous studies, that provides the context for the present project, which revisits museums specifically from the indigenous community's perspective.

It is my hope that this research will spur renewed consideration at heritage institutions of the ways in which objects of cultural patrimony are represented, conserved, and interpreted. Can other museums both within and outside New Zealand learn from the case study of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and apply systemic changes regarding indigenous policy and practices to their own institutions? How will Te Papa sustain this type of indigenous self-determination moving forward, as it addresses similar issues with other *iwi* in New Zealand? What role will Te Hau-Ki-Turanga play in sustaining the intergenerational continuity of *iwi* culture and the "connectedness" of *taonga* to the Rongowhakaata, wherever the meetinghouse finally rests? If Te Papa and other institutions do not continue to study these lessons, they risk obsolescence in the future, or they will come to serve only the narrow needs of a particular community and audience. The present research seeks to provide new directions for working with cultural heritage and building upon those lessons.

[16] Arapata Hakiwai, "He Mana Taonga, He Mana Tangata: Māori Taonga and the Politics of Māori Tribal Identity and Development," thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, 7.

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters, with the final chapter departing slightly from the previous ones, in that it focuses on opening up the case study of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to other nations with a settler-colonial legacy around the Pacific Rim. The goal of the first chapter, "Contemporary Issues Surrounding Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: Politics over Control and Cultural Memory," is to introduce the reader to contemporary issues surrounding the ownership shift of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and the three corresponding strategic projects that have happened or are happening between 2017 and 2020. The three main themes addressed in this chapter involve the politics of stewardship (or care) in relation to the control of preservation and interpretation; the physical/digital repatriation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in relation to the control of intangible and tangible heritage; and the politics surrounding cultural memory at local, national, and international levels. In *Uses of Heritage* (2006), Laura-Jane Smith writes that there is no inherent value inscribed in the object; instead, objects are assigned value by contemporary communities. This chapter will address the ways in which those who are in control oversee the preservation and interpretation (that is, the "value") of heritage, which, in turn, directly impacts the representation of a nation's indigenous communities.

Chapter 2, "'Contact Zones' and the Entanglement of Rongowhakaata/Pakeha Influence in Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," will provide a historical perspective on Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and its contact zones between its Māori makers and its Pakeha caretakers. From its initial construction to its current location within the walls of Te Papa, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga has been at once influenced by and influential upon the two cultures

it has straddled. This chapter extends the idea of the contact zone, first introduced by scholar Mary Louise Pratt and expanded upon by anthropologist James Clifford, to be a site of entanglement, one that goes beyond the "us versus them" legacy of settler colonialism and instead looks to the intricacies of asserting agency, even if this agency is subversive, or simply reactive, with regard to colonial powers. By gauging the impact of the political history of New Zealand on the meetinghouse, one can begin to understand how its cultural heritage has come to be presented on a local, national, and international stage.

Chapter 3, "A New Museology: Issues of Bicultural Contact Zones and Indigenous Agency at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa," looks at the birth of the new national museum as part of a "new wave" of museum practice—one that was influenced by local indigenous politics and global museum discourses that challenged the legacy of European institutions designed to sustain a particular cultural hegemony. But even with its new "bicultural mission," whereby Te Papa attempts to divide and otherwise share power from its top levels down through every department, challenges remain for these relationships. At the end of the chapter, I consider, along with New Zealand scholars Conal McCarthy, Bill Oliver, and Carwny Jones, whether biculturalism should be seen as a product of a specific period in New Zealand's history that has perhaps now passed, and, relatedly, whether the contact zone or dialogical space created by biculturalism simply represents the latest manifestation of settler-colonial control over New Zealand's history and cultural property. The chapter's core questions concern whether there is a better concept or strategy to

enable the *taonga* to reclaim their social life and function from the confined relationships enabled within the museum, and I look to actor-network theory as the start of a possible framework for addressing these issues.

Chapter 4, "Rongowhakaata and Cultural Development: New Models of Indigenous Agency Inside/Outside the Museum Institution," turns these questions on their heads and asks whether institutions like Te Papa are even necessary for the empowerment of indigenous communities any longer. Currently, New Zealand museums are on the threshold of a major period of change, and *iwi* such as the Rongowhakaata are wondering whether the only way to finally disrupt settler-colonial legacies is to go outside the institution and find venues and strategies that allow *iwi* to have full control of the care and interpretation of their cultural heritage. Currently, Rongowhakaata *iwi* members are working both inside and outside the museum to achieve their goals. These various projects serve as experiments in alternative models for reconnecting *taonga* with their descendants, as well as getting Rongowhakaata stories about Te Hau-Ki-Turanga out into the public on their own terms. From Māori scholar Aroha Harris's *Hula Hikoi: Forty Years of Māori Protest*, one learns about a history of *rangatirantanga* (the Māori notion of self-determination) via a long line of indigenous movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through interviews with Rongowhakaata *iwi* members, the notion of *rangatirantanga* is uncovered in several specific projects driven by the *iwi*.

The final chapter, "Decolonizing National Museums: Expanding the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Case Study to Other Indigenous Communities," is an attempt to look

beyond New Zealand to see if similar strategies of indigenous agency used by the Rongowhakaata could be applied to other nations. Through interviews with Ruth Phillips, museum historian and author of *Museum Pieces: Towards the Indigenization of Canadian Museums*, Amy Lonetree, history scholar and author of *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, and Jenny Newell, co-curator of the East Pacific Collection at the Australian Museum, I explore the unique situations surrounding First Nations people in Canada, Native American communities in the United States, and Aboriginal communities in Australia. At the heart of these discussions, I wonder if similar strategies used by the Rongowhakaata *iwi* could work to propel other museums, or other venues involved in the intangible and tangible care and interpretation of indigenous heritage, to develop strategies enabling both self-determination and cultural redress?

This dissertation draws upon two principal research methodologies, the first being primary research, including archival research and interviews with key stakeholders[17], and the second being practical or technical research, which was conducted through three separate research trips to New Zealand over the course of eighteen months. My archival research took me to Te Papa and the New Zealand National Archives for an in-depth study of how Te Hau-Ki-Turanga has been conserved and interpreted over the 150 years since its confiscation. In addition, I undertook qualitative interviews with key people working inside the museum, with

[17] The term "stakeholders" is purposely used as it relates to "an individual, group, or organization, who may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project," ((Project Management Institute, 2013).

Māori cultural heritage experts, and with Rongowhakaata *iwi* members. The interviews were semi-structured, including both specific questions and free-flowing discussion. The interviewees' responses to my dissertation questions were critical to the argument developed in this thesis.

Practical or technical research was also a large part of my study. Over the course of two years I had opportunities to work alongside Te Papa museum staff and the Rongowhakaata *iwi* for portions of the three Te Hau-Ki-Turanga projects taking place between 2017 and 2020. Consequently, in addition to researching the projects, I also became an active participant who helped shape and mold them through certain technical decisions. These decisions were made during the two years that I worked under the direction of Karl Johnstone, the lead Rongowhakaata liaison with the museum, to document the meetinghouse as it currently stands in Te Papa for its archival records. I also traveled with Rongowhakaata *iwi* members to visit Te Hau-Ki-Turanga ancestral carvings in museum collections abroad, both to document their reawakening by *iwi* members and to capture the 3D surface geometry of the carvings for a digital repatriation and archives project. Finally, in the summer of 2017, I spent a week with the *iwi* on the *marae* in Gisborne teaching a three-day workshop on scientific imaging techniques for the future *iwi* leadership roles around the care of the meetinghouse.

This unique part of my dissertation work resulted in an attempt to be as transparent as possible in the interests of informing future researchers, archivists, and *iwi* members about the ways in which several technical projects were carried out. This

is done primarily through the inclusion of personal information and a description of my role in the project as part of the imaging's metadata information. I also included footnotes in the text, where appropriate, to inform the reader of my involvement. Inserting myself into the record is not a way to take ownership of the content but rather as a way of giving crucial information about decisions made at particular points in time, with their various conscious or subconscious limitations. I have combined these efforts with secondary research involving more theoretical scholarship concerning heritage, indigenous agency, and museum studies.

My thesis is not about museum practice per se, but rather about expanding the discourses of museum studies and heritage studies with respect to the development of an active contemporary Māori culture. The shift from seeing heritage as evidence of the past to recognizing the contemporary value of heritage to living cultures informs the work of scholars Rodney Harrison, Christina Kreps, and James Clifford. I likewise embrace their broader aim to restore, rejuvenate, and revitalize contemporary cultural identities and processes. The acknowledgment of the way in which objects function as part of the larger and more dynamic flow of culture also serves to liberate those objects from their static positioning in the museum.

Chapter 1: Contemporary Issues Surrounding Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: Politics over Control and Cultural Memory

In July 2012, New Zealand's Parliament passed the Rongowhakaata Settlement Act, which returned the title of the meetinghouse Te Hau-Ki-Turanga from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to the indigenous *iwi* Rongowhakaata. During the related parliamentary hearings, representatives of the *iwi* described this meetinghouse as integral to their identity and heritage.[1] To the Rongowhakaata representatives, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga embodied the *iwi*'s *whakapapa*, or iwi history and ancestors, and served as a physical and symbolic reminder of its integrity as an *iwi*. The transfer of the meetinghouse's title set in motion several important developments for both the New Zealand government and its policies concerning the intangible and tangible redress of Māori *taonga*. During the 2012 Treaty of Waitangi negotiation period, six strategic points arose that would underpin an enduring Rongowhakaata resolution for the new ownership of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: (1) *retell*—to retell the history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga according to the Rongowhakaata *iwi*; (2) *restore*—to fully restore the physical meetinghouse to its former glory; (3) *repatriate*—to repatriate all the missing pieces of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga; (4) *return*—to return the meetinghouse to Rongowhakaata possession; (5) *review*—to create a body of information for the preservation, care, protection, and development of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga; and (6) *relationships*—to introduce and

[1] Dean Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Wharenui," *New Zealand Historic Places Trust* (Wellington: Te Papa, 2013) 17.

cultivate Rongowhakaata leadership roles regarding the meetinghouse for the future.

All these specific points are addressed by three projects set to take place between 2017 and 2020. The first of these, is a three-year physical restoration project intended to "remove the inauthentic elements of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and restore its authentic character."[2] This particular project responds to points (2) *restore* and (5) *review*, though its political ramifications are rather more complex. The decision to restore the building to a purportedly "original" state in order to enhance its cultural heritage value has a specific consequence: the "inauthentic" carvings and weavings added to the meetinghouse by other Māori artists or museum staff while it was in the national museum's care during two earlier restoration projects in the 1860s and 1930s will be removed and replaced by "authentic" new components made exclusively by Rongowhakaata artists.[3] The operative notion of "authentic" here does not evoke actual original elements, then, or even materials from the founding group of eighteen 1840s artists, but instead carvings and weavings made exclusively by Rongowhakaata descendants with insider knowledge of their *iwi's* artistic legacy. In terms of the restoration project's "review" aspect, museum records of the meetinghouse's restoration history, along with current conservation condition reports, have been gathered over the past year and a half and added to the *iwi*'s own records. This data is digitally stored and managed by an online database owned by the Rongowhakaata Trust. The museum's conservation reports encompass measured drawings, written

[2] Ibid., 32.
[3] The museum has recommended that all removed elements of the meetinghouse be preserved within the museum's collection as a record of institutional conservation and the meetinghouse's history.

analyses and descriptions, 3D surface geometry data via photogrammetric and laser-scan documentation, and the results of other scientific imaging processes, such as ultraviolet, raking light, and x-ray.[4]



Figure 2.1 Map of *Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow* exhibition on the fourth floor of Te Papa during its planning stages. Photograph by Brinker Ferguson, 2016.

The second project involves a three-year exhibition that encourages visitors to Te Papa to learn about the history of the Rongowhakaata and Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, as told by the *iwi* itself. The exhibition responds specifically to points (1) *retell* and (3) *repatriate* from the Rongowhakaata Settlement Act. One of the first tasks, for example, was to update the existing panel with a new historical narrative developed

[4] Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document," 34-35.

by Karl Johnstone, the lead Rongowhakaata liaison with the museum.

> Te Hau-Ki-Turanga is the oldest surviving whare whakairo (carved meetinghouse) in the world. For Rongowhakaata, it is a physical record of our histories, the gathering place of our tupuna, the embodiment of our spirit, and a symbol of our inspiration. Built in 1840 by Raharuhi Rukupo, it serves as a memorial to his elder brother Tamati Waaka Mangere, who had been killed in battle. The carvings of the whare capture a high point of innovation for our Rongowhakaata carvers. It illustrates the influence of our environment on our carving traditions. It is a style defined by the interplay of light and shadow, reflecting the dramatic effect of changing light on the landscape of Turanga (Gisborne Region). In 1867, near the end of the New Zealand wars, government troops confiscated Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, dismantling and removing it from Orakapa, near Gisborne. The whare was shipped to the colonial museum, Te Papa's predecessor. For generations, we petitioned for its return. In 2012, as part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlement between Rongowhakaata and the Crown, the New Zealand government apologized for the forcible removal of our whare, stating that Te Hau-Ki-Turanga belongs to Rongowhakaata. The museum made extensive changes to the house in the 1920s and 1930s. Rongowhakaata are now developing a plan to restore it. Once day this taonga will return home.
>
> "Our prized possession, our valued carved house has been taken from us by the government without just cause. We did not consent to its removal."
>
> —Raharuhi Rukupo, Petition, 8 July 1867[5]

The new exhibition, which has taken over much of the existing fourth-floor *Mana Whenua* exhibition space, was developed by Johnstone and other Rongowhakaata representatives, with Te Papa museum staff taking on a role that involved facilitation rather than oversight, in keeping with previous *iwi* residency exhibitions and Te

[5] English text from the plaque adjacent to Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in Te Papa. Please see the introduction to read the previous text written by Te Papa staff and members of the Rongowhakaata *iwi*.

Papa's bicultural mandate. What is perhaps different from those earlier exhibitions, however, is that *Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow* directly confronts the challenges faced by the *iwi* of being physically separated from Te Hau-Ki-Turanga for so long, and of remaining separated from several original ancestral carvings from the meetinghouse that have surfaced in the collections of the British Museum and the National Gallery of Australia. This emphasis in the exhibition project speaks to point (3) *repatriate*. Though the title for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was legally turned over to the Rongowhakaata, and the vote to decide its final resting place will take place in late 2018, these legal actions do not presently extend beyond New Zealand's borders, meaning that the ancestral carvings made by Rukupo and his team for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga that have ended up in collections abroad might never physically return to the meetinghouse and the *iwi*.[6] One of the goals of the restoration project, however, is to reinstate the correct genealogical order of all the ancestral carvings within the meetinghouse, so that it can become a teaching tool for younger generations concerning the history of the *iwi*. Thanks to multiple restoration efforts that took place over the course of a century within the different national New Zealand museums, many of the carvings were moved or shifted to suit various museum layouts. In the words of Te Aturangi Nepia-Clamp, a Rongowhakaata *iwi* leader, "it is like the encyclopedia of our iwi's history is out of order; all the pages have been jumbled around, [and] we want to put it right again."[7] Given the improbability, at

[6] Arapata Hakiwai, personal interview, 15 February 2017.
[7] Te Aturangi Nepia-Clamp, personal interview, 20 July 2017.

least at this time, of the dispersed ancestral carvings' actual return home, an alternative solution (though one with many issues of its own) has been proposed: a "digital repatriation" project. In this instance, "digital" refers to 3D digital capture, through photogrammetric or stereo-imaging techniques, and "repatriation" refers to the return of this data, via an accurate 3D model, for the iwi's records, as well as a 3D printed surrogate to be added to the restored meetinghouse as part of the *Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow* exhibition. [8]

The third project involves the strategic plan for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's long-term preservation, restoration, and care. This ongoing, iterative process addresses the final two points in the Rongowhakaata Settlement Act: (4) *return* and (6) *relationships*. As mentioned above, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* will vote late in 2018 on the final resting place for the meetinghouse following its three-year restoration and exhibition at Te Papa. Currently, there are three options: the meetinghouse could be returned or repatriated to its original location on Rongowhakaata's *marae* in Gisborne; it could be gifted to a local Gisborne museum for its care and protection by museum staff and the local Rongowhakaata *iwi*; or it could remain where it is and be gifted to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, to be perpetually looked after by museum staff and visiting Rongowhakaata *iwi* members.[9]

Regardless of the ultimate placement of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, representatives of the Rongowhakaata *iwi* have stressed that the most important aspect of this long-

[8] Please see Chapter 4 for a complete analysis of the Rongowhakaata's digital repatriation project.
[9] Karl Johnstone, personal interview, 10 February 2017.

term strategic plan is a strong desire to develop leadership roles for future generations of Rongowhakaata *iwi* members through the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga preservation and restoration projects.[10] The *iwi*'s policy recommendation is to construct a plan to develop professional capacity in the fields of museology, heritage research, traditional *wharenui* (meetinghouse) arts, conservation, project planning, building science, and architecture, in order to ensure the future sustainability of the meetinghouse and strengthen its relationship to its people. This plan would be an integral part of its long-term care, wherever it ultimately resides.

The Politics of Ownership Is about the Control of Preservation and Interpretation

To date, over 80 percent of Māori *taonga* are held by four large metropolitan museums in New Zealand, with Te Papa boasting the largest collection. There are also well over 180,000 Māori *taonga* held by more than 160 museums elsewhere in the world.[11] Each year, the internal repatriation team known as Karanga Aotearoa at Te Papa is inundated with hundreds of repatriation requests.[12] The institutionalization of these cultural objects represents a complex situation, to say the least: what many museums define as appropriate standards of care and interpretation of Māori cultural treasures, or *taonga*, may often directly contradict the convictions of their source

[10] Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document," 37.
[11] Dean Sully, *Decolonizing Conservation: Caring for Māori Meeting Houses Outside New Zealand* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007), 46.
[12] "Repatriation Karanga Aotearoa," *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongararewa*, available at https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/about/repatriation/repatriation-maori-and-moriori-remains (accessed 1 November 2017).

communities regarding their meanings and significance.[13] For many indigenous peoples, tensions arise around object care, and especially decisions made about preservation or conservation, as well as around ownership—tensions that derive from a community's dislocation from and subsequent alienation regarding its cultural treasures. While conservators at Te Papa have attempted to integrate their professional practices into a Māori cultural context, it is an uneasy balance that has been struck. Debates between indigenous people and museum representatives about proper care and issues of ownership are often exacerbated by indigenous critiques of the categorization, management, preservation, and storage of objects in ways that are not only extraneous to indigenous communities but also potentially offensive or even threatening to the objects.

An example of the threat to Māori objects can be seen in the international conflict surrounding *toi moko* (preserved Māori tattooed heads) in museum institutions around the world. Since 2003, the Katanga Aotearoa team has repatriated 420 ancestral remains from over 50 international museums and 52 ancestral remains from Te Papa itself.[14] One of the most difficult and lengthy negotiations to date was between the French government and several New Zealand *iwi*. In October 2007, the major of Rouen, Valerie Fourneyron, announced that Rouen's Museum of Natural History would return the tattooed head of a Māori warrior that had been in the

[13] Sully, *Decolonizing Conservation*, 45.
[14] "International Repatriation Te Whakahoki Tupuna Mai Rawahi," *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongararewa*, available at https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/international-repatriation (accessed 1 November 2017).

museum's collection since 1875 as an act of atonement for its colonial-era trafficking of human remains. However, the French minister of culture quickly stepped in, stating that, according to French law, it is illegal to repatriate works of art belonging to France's patrimony outside France. The minister felt that such a gesture "could set an unfortunate precedent for a huge swath of the national museums' collections."[15] The legal adviser for the Ministry of Culture likewise went on record to say, "There are other Māori heads, there are mummies, there are religious relics in France . . . if we don't respect the law today, tomorrow other museums or elected officials might decide to send them back too."[16]

On the other hand, France's bio-ethics law, and specifically section 16-1 of the Civil Code, announces that "the human body . . . cannot be the subject of a patrimonial right."[17] The issue before the court then became whether the *toi moko* was a work of art or a body part, and the Māori *iwi* involved in the discussion then had to suffer the French court's ruling that the heads were not ancestors but works of art to be used by French researchers to study Māori tattooing and design. Shortly after this ruling, however, French Senator Catherine Morin-Desailly and sixty of her colleagues co-signed a legal act for the repatriation of all Māori heads in France's museum. The law, unanimously adopted by the French Senate on June 29, 2009, declared, "starting

[15] Elaine Sciolino, "French Debate: Is Māori Head Body Part or Art?" *New York Times,* 26 October 2007, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/26/world/europe/26france.html (accessed 2 November 2017).
[16] Ibid.
[17] Nicole Atwill, "France; New Zealand: The Government of France Changes Its Position on Returning Preserved Tribal Heads to New Zealand," *Library of Congress*, 30 July 2009, available at http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/france-new-zealand-the-government-of-france-changes-its-position-on-returning-preserved-tribal-heads-to-new-zealand (accessed 2 November 2017).

on the date this law enters into effect, the Māori heads located in the museums of France cease to be part of their collections [and are] to be returned to New Zealand."[18] Soon afterward, twenty *toi moko* were returned to Māori *iwi* to be buried alongside their fellow ancestors, not only from the Rouen Museum of Natural History but also from the Museé National de la Marine, Museé du Quai Branly, Museé de Nantes, Museé de Lille, Museé des Beaux Arts, Museé des Confluences, Museé des Sens, Museé d'Arts Africains, Oceaniens, Amerindiens de Marseille, and the Université de Montpellier. This legal action had a pronounced ripple effect elsewhere



Figure 2.2 Pacing *kakahu* (cloaks) over the Māori skeletal remains recently repatriated to New Zealand. Photograph by Kate Whitley, Te Papa, 2016.

[18] Ibid.

in Europe as well, as other nations quickly followed suit and, by extension, gave even more agency to Te Papa's Katanga Aotearoa department as it continued to press international and domestic institutions regarding the return of Māori patrimony.

Since Te Papa's opening in the early 1990s, museum administrators have enabled its staff to invite Māori *iwi* into the discussion regarding the often-difficult Katanga Aotearoa repatriation claims, as well as the debate regarding what heritage is and how one should use and care for it. Te Papa's core mission from the start involved the democratization of the care and interpretation of *taonga*, and staff members have consciously attended to indigenous categories and curatorial practices. Yet ingrained Western concepts of professional conservation and care continue to perpetuate the colonial legacy of museum practice at the same time. Decisions about how to best "conserve" the past must therefore be made through complex dialogues among stakeholders who bring values other than Western ones to the table. Of course, many cultures preserve valued objects and develop structures and practices for the safekeeping of those objects, so the idea of a "museum" is not entirely unique to the West. The Māori meetinghouse could even be viewed as an indigenous museum in its own right—in addition to providing a ceremonial meeting space, it serves as a storage and display space for *taonga*, and as a visual library whose carvings provide genealogical narratives and pass on traditional knowledge.[19] Still, Māori communities such as the Rongowhakaata question the fundamental imperative of the Western museum concerning *taonga* preservation. They see their *taonga* as opportunities to

[19] Sully, *Decolonizing Conservation*, 36.

restore (in the sense of *realize*) their culture rather than simply as material remains of that culture—ancestral carvings, that is, are living entities, not dead relics.[20]

While Te Papa, as a bicultural institution, is trying to reposition itself not as a historical institution with a colonial past but as a space of contemporary reconciliation and social reform, there is a long way to go. According to Dean Sully, author of *Decolonizing Conservation: Caring for the Māori Meetinghouse Outside New Zealand*, even a hybridized approach to conservation perpetuates an imbalance inherent to the colonial relationship that has long overseen the control and interpretation of meetinghouses such as Te Hau-Ki-Turanga.[21] As a Western profession, object conservation is based on two main assumptions: the overriding need to preserve the integrity of the physical object and the belief in scientific imaging documentation as the basis for proper archiving. Science, then, is the dominant discourse of Western conservation, which still invests in the positivist notion that scientific language can be objective—that is, that the data collected on

[20] The identification of Māori carvings as living entities who communicate with their *iwi* descendants in the present recalls the debate about multiple temporalities and/or regimes of temporality. Traditionally, Western museums and colonial archives operate within a historical progression from past through present to future. Several modern theorists have attempted to replace the idea of linear and homogenous time with more complex and multilayered (or plural) notions of temporality, blending the present with the past in the future. See, for example, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1927; Edmund Husserl*, Analysis of Internal Time Consciousness*, 1964; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, 1991; Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, 2002; Francois Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, 2016; and Paul Basu and Ferdinand De Jong, *Utopian Archives, Decolonial Affordances: Introduction to Special Issue*, 2016. Alternative perspectives include Lynn Hunt, *Measuring Time, Making History*, 2008; Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, 2011; and Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 2012. In Chapter 3, I will return to this debate about "multiple temporalities" via the *Māori* belief in "walking forward while simultaneously looking backwards." This analysis will also open up new perspectives on the history versus heritage debate presented in Chapter 3.

[21] Sully, *Decolonizing Conservation*, 17.

objects is "raw" or "unbiased," and that it is the role of the conservator to collect enough data to inform his or her actionable steps regarding appropriate preservation treatments.

Scholars Lisa Gitelman and Lev Manovich warn us, however, that data is not actually neutral but instead collected, compiled, and interpreted by fallible individuals with their own sets of assumptions and predispositions.[22] Both Gitelman and Manovich write about the often hidden human intervention in computer software development and its manipulation of data information. Often, what most of us simply take for granted—for example, the ways in which software works to aggregate and visualize data—is actually the product of a series of decisions, often driven by profit, by the people and companies designing and developing the software. Historically, as well, these software development decisions have been dominated by white males, specifically from America or Europe. As it was for the nineteenth-century anthropologist or twentieth-century photographer, then, so it remains today: the person in control frames the process and product of the recording, collecting and interpretation of information or data. In the case of traditional or even hybrid conservation practices, one must begin to acknowledge that the processes of collecting and interpreting data on cultural heritage objects therefore continues to be shaped by a colonial legacy that acts to reinforce the authority of the Eurocentric academy. In addition, as mentioned above, Western museum conservation typically

[22] See Lisa Gitelman, *"Raw Data" Is an Oxymoron* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013), and Lev Manovich, *Software Takes Command* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013).

tends to focus on the tangible care of objects and cultural spaces. Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's own conservation history clearly reveals the impact of the various imbalances of power in past relationships involved in the long-term care of its tangible heritage that often ignored its corresponding intangible properties. However, there are current plans involving the restoration and exhibition projects of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga that will attempt to encompass both tangible and intangible heritage by viewing them as inseparable and integral—that is, along with the physical re-carving of the ancestral figures, for example, the work on the meetinghouse will include the transmission of cultural knowledge, skills, and practices to the latest generation of Rongowhakaata artists and scholars.[23] What emerges from it all, then, is a sense of action, power, and agency for the *iwi*, and heritage, in turn, becomes transformed into something vital and alive—the past used in the present for the sake of the future. In terms of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, the emphasis is not only on preserving and caring for its original 1840s carvings but also on intermingling them with contemporary carvings in a perpetual flow of *iwi* innovation. Linked to this operationalization of intangible heritage are notions of social engagement and cohesion, as well as *iwi* self-determination.

Rongowhakaata scholars are also raising pertinent questions around the topics of preservation, exploring whether there could be a way to upend the system from within the institution. For example, what would happen if Te Papa were to consider these *taonga* in the collection to be "kin," or actual ancestors, rather than "objects,"

[23] Johnstone, personal interview, 10 February 2017.

just as the Rongowhakaata do already regarding Te Hau-Ki-Turanga? Could these ancestors begin to speak for themselves about their wants and needs? And how would that new presence force changes to existing conservation and interpretation practices? As a case study, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga offers interesting possibilities related to decolonizing conservation and interpretation processes and liberating New Zealand museum practice from its Eurocentric constraints. In the end, self-reflective examination of this meetinghouse's past circumstances will inform both current and future understandings of all people's responsibilities toward these *taonga* and their source communities.

In this context, the process of conservation represents a means of understanding and managing an object's physical changes rather than merely arresting them. The impact upon community identity via this process, be it on a local, national, or international level, is also about the power to control its political identity as well. During this process, certain "values from the *iwi* might be retained, enhanced, or added to, while others might be diminished, altered, or removed."[24] Stakeholders would no longer view an object's meaning as either inherent or singular but rather as multiple and contingent on socially motivated negotiations. With regard to Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, the hope is to continue to develop strategies of restoration that not only upend traditional heritage practices of preservation and interpretation but also, through these strategies, serve as a framework for other indigenous cultural heritage objects outside of New Zealand.

[24] Sully, *Decolonizing Conservation*, 39.

Digital/Physical Repatriation: Control of Intangible and Tangible Heritage

As noted above, the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga case study raises important questions regarding the intersections between and merging of tangible and intangible heritage. In the guise of the *iwi*'s meetinghouse, these examples of tangible heritage have a corresponding and inherent intangible component made up of the beliefs, feelings, and practices that, according to Karl Johnstone, keeps the heritage, or ancestors, alive and vital.[25] Māori culture is oral, meaning that Māori knowledge and history are generally transmitted from generation to generation via the spoken word and song. Thanks to the Māori cultural imperatives of revival, reconnection, and performance, heritage is seen not as fixed or static but instead as dynamic and ephemeral—an expression of ever-changing identities that are rooted in tradition but stubbornly fluid and open to reinterpretation. Johnstone adds, "What [our meetinghouse] does is that it recognizes that the stories, narratives, and songs are part of the object."[26]

The problematic divide between tangible and intangible heritage is largely the product of Western heritage practices, and specifically UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In the early 2000s, the international committee coined the term "intangible" in order to address the problems associated with the focus of official heritage management on the material alone. The definition, which was provided in article 2 of the convention, states,

[25] Johnstone, personal interview, 10 February 2017.
[26] Ibid.

> Intangible Cultural Heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.[27]

Whereas UNESCO seeks to divide heritage into two distinct categories, however, many people throughout the world see these categories of heritage as integrated in a series of human and non-human entities.[28] The distinction between intangible and tangible heritage, that is, perpetuates a Western world view that emphasizes a duality between the material and non-material worlds. According to scholars such as Susie West, Rodney Harrison, and Laura-Jane Smith, as mentioned earlier, objects or monuments themselves contain no inherent value but are instead assigned value by contemporary communities. As such, all heritage is tangible *and* intangible, whether these values or meanings are symbolized by a physical site, landscape, object, performance, or oral history. In her 2006 book *Uses of Heritage,* Smith writes, "in defining all heritage as intangible the heritage gaze is directed to the *effect* of heritage rather than to the cultural object or event itself."[29] Te Hau-Ki-Turanga consequently

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[27] "The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, available at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/culture/intangible-heritage/convention-intangible-cultural-heritage/ (accessed 1 November 2017).

[28] This concept of object agency is addressed in greater detail in Chapter 3 in relation to actor-network theory.

[29] Laura-Jane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 64.

demonstrates the power of place to invoke emotion, memory, and belonging as ways of revisiting the tangible/intangible divide.

The revitalization of the Rongowhakaata *iwi* resides in the control of both tangible remains and their corresponding intangible interpretations. The physical repatriation and reinterpretation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga represents an embodied performance of heritage memory that allows the meetinghouse's *iwi* to retake control of its cultural meaning-making while re-inscribing the identity of the *iwi* and the *iwi*'s connection to its past. Put another way, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga is not necessary inherently valuable in itself, nor does it carry any innate meaning—instead, it is *made* meaningful thanks to the ongoing cultural processes and activities that are undertaken at and around it, and in which it participates. The three-year restoration project, coupled with the exhibition project, contributes to a political stance for the *iwi* in relation to the way in which it wants to control the memory and ultimate fate of the meetinghouse's tangible and intangible information.

Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and the Politics around Museums and Memory on a Local, National, and International Level

The three-year restoration and exhibition projects thus signify a dramatic rethinking of the right to control and use heritage to tell specific kinds of stories about the past on local, national, and international levels. The case study of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga touches upon what has been historically preserved in a museum, the form or state in which this *taonga*'s heritage can be conserved in the present, and the ways in which indigenous objects have been presented to the public. Again, these questions

do not stop at tangible remains or physical objects but encompass the intangible heritage of those social practices concerned with the realization or enactment of the collective community memory. Understanding the ways in which those who "control" heritage choose to remember or forget aspects of the past is the first step toward undoing assumptions of representation among individuals, communities, and partners in this nation-state.

Looking back at Te Papa's three national museum predecessors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Colonial Museum (1867–1924), the Dominion Museum (1925–1973), and the National Museum (1974–1992), one finds an investment in the preservation of a very particular type of Māori meetinghouse—one that fulfilled the mission of telling a distinct national story to future generations of New Zealanders. Fundamental to this work was the conviction that these objects could be organized and understood through research, and that there was an inherent (fixed and immutable) value to the object itself that needed only to be uncovered by the "expert," as opposed to being inscribed by the contemporary source community.[30] This presentation effort also introduced a divide between the objects on display, usually in a glass box or segregated area, and their viewing audience, and this separation from the object, coupled with the one-way dissemination of information about the object, gave most of the agency to the museum curator and conservator and their particular interpretations of history. As a result of the professionalization and

[30] Susie West, *Understanding Heritage in Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 130.

bureaucratization of heritage practices over the course of the twentieth century, laypeople and their communities were increasingly locked out of decisions about what heritage to conserve and how to conserve and interpret it.[31] Heritage scholars



Figure 2.3 Collections manager Lisa Ward holds a model *tauihu* (carved canoe prow) in the Māori collection at Te Papa. She is a *kaitiaki* (guardian) who cares for *taonga* (ancestral treasures). Photography by Te Papa, 2011.

such as Laura-Jane Smith have since examined the ways in which this dynamic arises and self-perpetuates.[32] When a privileged group in power arrives at generally unchallenged decisions about what is important, a very specific type of history becomes presented as fact to the public. These "facts," many times displayed in civic institutions, then become part of the history of the nation, propagating and

[31] Rodney Harrison, *Heritage Critical Approaches* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 223.
[32] Laura-Jane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.

maintaining the viewpoints of those groups in power, often for their political advantage.

For many countries with a colonial past, the new museology of the 1980s and 1990s attempted to deconstruct the discourse upon which the traditional Western nationalist museum was founded. In many new national museums such as Te Papa, museum staff and political leaders began to revisit the use of and access to their collections (and, by extension, archives and histories) in relation to *all* of the given nation's people. Te Papa then proceeded to realign its staff and resources to accommodate these new institutional priorities. One important aspect of the modern museum is its *dialogical* orientation to the relationships among people, objects, places, and practices. In terms of agency, the dialogical model, also known as a "contact zone" of heritage,[33] has radical implications not only for the study of heritage but also for the viability of the official divide between the "layperson" and the "expert."[34] Still, questions remain. Who has the final say on what the national narratives are, to whom they speak, and for whom they speak? Can these multiple narratives complement indigenous histories, or do they blur or dilute them? What hierarchies remain in the dialogical model? Does it, in fact, only obscure rather than eliminate asymmetrical relationships? The next chapter of this dissertation will address the political landscape over the more than 170 years that Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was first created, put on display at various national museums, and finally legally

[33] The concept of the "contact zone" will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2.
[34] Harrison, *Heritage Critical Approaches*, 4.

returned to the Rongowhakaata. This will provide a reassessment of who and what are involved in the process of making heritage and where the production of heritage might be located within contemporary societies.

Heritage, as mentioned above, is not a passive construct but rather an active and shifting perspective upon matters of local, national, and international cultural identity. Conceiving of heritage as a creative and dialogical engagement with the past and among stakeholders in the present enables those stakeholders to take an active and informed role regarding its production for the future. Along the way, one also begins to unveil the unequal power relationships that have worked to isolate and exclude particular individuals and social groups from such negotiations. The preservation and presentation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga within the national museums of New Zealand over the past century and a half foregrounds pressing post-colonial issues that are social, economic, and political in nature. The control of cultural identity is important to the development of indigenous politics, and especially so for a group like the Rongowhakaata, thanks to the dislocation and disruption of its cultural knowledge and practices that followed colonization, and the structural racism that is inherent in the bureaucracies of many New Zealand government institutions. Control over heritage is vital not only to the re-creation and maintenance of community identity but also to the overturning of colonial notions of indigenous culture in general. This control is particularly important to communities and populations that are asserting their right to self-determination and attempting to negotiate new ways of

being that deal with the traumas of colonial dispossession and their own perceptions of their history and culture.

Entangled Contact Zones and Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

The next chapter of this dissertation will frame the history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga as a series of contact zones, or situations involving shifting and entangled levels of power and control, between the New Zealand government, and by extension its national museums, and the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, as well as the evolution of Māori legal/social rights in New Zealand. In *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, scholar Amy Lonetree elaborates on Robin Boast's article "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited" as a basis for examining the issues surrounding the concept of the museum as a contact zone, including the fact that these museum contact zones often "[obscure] the glaring power imbalances that remain and thereby reduce the real potential to dramatically shift museum policies and practices."[35] Chapter 2 will unpack the history of these contact zones in light of how the notion of object *agency* opens doors to a more nuanced understanding of the complicated relationships between source communities and cultural heritage objects within the museum. By looking at a distinct type of colonialism, known as settler-colonialism, it will shed light on the layers of tension that surfaced upon the removal of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in 1867, and that remain a

[35] Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 24.

force to this day.

Chapter 2: "Contact Zones" and the Entanglement of Rongowhakaata/Pakeha Influence in Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

This chapter looks at the history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga as a contact zone between the Māori *iwi* Rongowhakaata and the Pakeha, or New Zealanders of European descent, from the meetinghouse's creation in the early 1840s to today. In her 1991 article ''The Arts of the Contact Zone,'' Mary Louise Pratt associates this concept with ''social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today."[1] The contact zones that Pratt went on to describe, expand upon, and discuss in her 1992 book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* were indeed deeply asymmetrical spaces where a dominant culture (in this case, European imperialism) would provide a ''negotiated'' space for the kinds of cultural exchange and transactions that were necessary to sustaining an imperialistic program. These highly selective, reciprocal, but unequal exchanges create a two-way dialogue that both "defines the colonial other and redefines the metropole."[2] Museum studies and anthropology have since appropriated the contact zone, thanks in particular to the work of James Clifford, including his 1997 essay "Museums as Contact Zones." These dialogical spaces often struggle to negotiate a pluralistic approach to interpretation and presentation, and it remains true, even to this day, that the

[1] Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991): 33.
[2] Robin Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited," *Museum Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (2011): 57.

intellectual oversight, care, and representation of cultural heritage largely continue to reside with those in control.

While issues of imbalance, inequity, and hierarchy arise whenever two cultures collide, they are particularly acute in the context of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. New Zealand, along with Canada, the United States, Australia, and South Africa, among others, represents part of the legacy of settler-colonialism, a pointedly distinct subcategory of colonialism in general. For one thing, settler-colonialism acts to supplant indigenous populations via an invasive settler society that, over time, imposes both its particular identity and, ultimately, its sovereignty. Essentially, settler collectives are "here to stay," driven by the hope of permanently occupying and asserting their control over indigenous lands, whereas colonial agents, such as traders or soldiers, are typically semi-permanent. Because of these designs, settler-colonial invasion generates a national structure, not an event as such, and one that "persists as part of an ongoing effort to assert state sovereignty and juridical control over land."[3] This means that "settler-colonial societies do not ever really stop being colonial when their political allegiance to the founding metropole is severed."[4] Unlike those types of colonialism where the goal is to maintain colonial control for fiscal gain, settler colonization ultimately seeks an end to the colonial difference, in the form of an absolute and unchallenged settler state and population. Scholars such as Lorenzo Veracini warn us, however, that this is "not a drive to decolonize but rather an

[3] Adam Barker, "Settler-colonialism," *Global Social Theory*, available at https://globalsocialtheory.org/concepts/settler-colonialism/ (accessed 10 August 2017).
[4] Ibid.

attempt to eliminate the challenges posed to settler sovereignty by assimilating indigenous peoples into a new national identity and asserting false narratives and structures around settler belonging."[5] In a sense, settler-colonialism does not really "end," so there can be no "post-colonial" in a nation with a settler-colonialist legacy, and this insight shapes Te Papa's current political role in projects such as Te Hau-Ki-Turanga.

In this chapter, I will argue that a particular type of "contact zone" emerged in New Zealand due its settler-colonial legacy—one that ultimately manifested itself through a nationally sanctioned "biculturalism." In fact, the very creation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga coincided with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, a document that has long been considered New Zealand's founding declaration and an articulation of a unique partnership between its two "founding" peoples, the Māori (indigenous) and the Pakeha (settler). [6] From the signing of the treaty onward, the idea of

[5] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler-colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 102.

[6] In the late 1830s Great Britain, France and the United States showed interest in annexing New Zealand. With the large number of British trade companies and migrants arriving in New Zealand the British government decided to act fast and annex the country to protect British subjects and secure their commercial interests. Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson was dispatched from London in August of 1839 with the task of securing British sovereignty over New Zealand and created a treaty that would serve as the national declaration between its two "founding" peoples, the indigenous Māori and British settler populations. On February 6, 1840, 40 chiefs signed the Māori version of the treaty and by September another 500 had signed copies of the document that were sent around the country. Some chiefs signed while remaining uncertain, while others refused outright. However, British sovereignty was proclaimed on May 21, 1840. The treaty of a broad statement of principles on which the British and Māori made a political compact to found a nation state and build a government in New Zealand. One of the biggest issues with the treaty is the translation of several terms from English to Māori, most notably the word "sovereignty" was translated as "kawanatanga" (governance). It is thought that many Māori chiefs believed they were only giving up governance over their lands while retaining the right to manage their own political affairs. In addition, the English version guaranteed "undisturbed possessions" of the chief's property but the Māori version guaranteed "tino rangatiratanga" (full authority) over "taonga" (treasures) including all of New Zealand's material wealth.

biculturalism[7] implied the presence of two different but equal cultures in the same country. It has described the official policy within New Zealand government departments and other significant public institutions for much of the twentieth century. Biculturalism, and the type of cultural contact zone that emerged from it, helped to emphasize the differences between Māori and Pakeha and draw a sharp line between the two. What is lost in such a process is an acknowledgment of what the two peoples share, or what Edward Said calls the "entanglement" [8] that connects them, especially when one confronts the politics of cultural production, as is the case with Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. This chapter attempts to look below the surface of this "us versus them" divide of Māori/Pakeha or Rongowhakaata/Te Papa to discern those unique spaces and places of entanglement, where the complexities of colonial history and its connections, as well as the oppositions between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized, are exposed. I ultimately argue that biculturalism, in fact, acts to keep the two "founding" peoples of New Zealand apart and, paradoxically, sustains the colonial agenda rather than helping the nation to move beyond it.

It is far too easy to "read" Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, then, from a colonial-history perspective of Māori assimilation and Pakeha control, and to overlook the entanglement of the meetinghouse as a different type of contact zone—one where the

[7] While "biculturalism" as a concept was first used during the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, most notably in the text "He iwi tahi tātou" (we are now one people) or (we two people together make a nation) the actual word "biculturalism" was not officially used until the 1970s. This was a result of Great Britain joining the European Economic Community (EEC), and Māori activism that raised issues around land loss and breaches of the treaty. Its use became popular in the 1980s as nationalism sored. This is also when the New Zealand government began to describe the treaty as New Zealand's founding document in court hearings and new legislation.
[8] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 36.

Māori played a role in their own political agency and future aspirations, even as their political power seemed to be fading in New Zealand. This entanglement is less about equality than about the uncovering of a more active Māori engagement with their Pakeha counterparts—one that complicates traditional narratives of colonial control and Māori subjection. In tracking the Māori resistance to, involvement in, and eventual retaking of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, this chapter attempts to represent an alternative to the settler-colonial history of the meetinghouse. Its narrative focuses on entanglement and problematizes the concept of biculturalism, especially as it is used today at Te Papa.

Revisiting settler-colonialism through this lens will also reveal much about what happened politically in New Zealand between the nineteenth century and today with regard to control over cultural heritage and, by extension, over the cultural representations and memory of the nation. I will unpack the accumulated layers of tension that first surfaced upon the creation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in 1843, and that remain a force to this day, all in the context of the present significance of this meetinghouse and its place in the legacy of settler-colonialism.

The Creation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and the Signing of New Zealand's Founding Document, the Treaty of Waitangi

It is only recently that the *wharenui*'s substantial rise in popularity in the mid-nineteenth century has been directly associated with the Māori response to the Pakeha

who were arriving and settling in larger and larger numbers at that time.[9] Western scholars in the first half of the twentieth century initially believed that the large *wharenui* such as Te Hau-Ki-Turanga were, in fact, an ancient form of Māori architecture—"a magnificent display of carving, weaving, and painting that represented everything that was unique and impressive about Māori art."[10] According to Ngati Pourou *iwi* leader, cultural expert, and politician Sir Apirana Ngata (1874–1950), when the British explorer James Cook (1728-1779) first made landfall on a beach in the Gisborne area in 1769, he and his men encountered "the carved war canoe, the fortified pa, and the carved and decorated houses of assembly[11]—all of them, he assured his readers in 1940, being "strikingly characteristic of New Zealand."[12] Ngata was not the only person to make this mistake. In his 1901 book *Māori Art: The Art Workmanship of the Māori Race*, amateur ethnologist and New Zealand Colonial Museum Director Augustus Hamilton (1853-1913) made a similar claim—while describing the Māori village as it existed before the arrival of the Pakeha, he noted that any settlement of importance had to have a *wharenui*. Nowadays, the consensus is that Cook did not see actual *wharenui* but rather encountered smaller structures, such as the chief's house.[13] The *wharenui* evolved out

[9] Mostly through the work of scholars Ranginui Walker and Damian Skinner.
[10] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 20.
[11] While *iwi*-versus-*iwi* warfare persisted during the 1840s, the larger groups of Pakeha settlers became a new and more formidable rival. This diverted attention and resources from such forms of *iwi* expressions as the *waka* (war canoe) to new gestures such as the expanded meetinghouse. Scholar Ngatino Ellis has written about the gradual abandonment of these carved canoes in the 1840s, despite their centuries-long cultural relevance as statements of group identity. In short, the decline in formal *iwi*-versus-*iwi* warfare, coupled with the growing availability of *Pakeha* boats through trade, made the war canoe obsolete and *wharenui* take precedence for *iwi* identity.
[12] A. W. Reed, *Myths and Legends of Māori Land* (London: Bradford and Dickens Press, 1946), 33.
[13] Ibid.

of the communal sleeping house, which had transformed, over time, into the chief's house, as new tools, including the steel chisels traded by Pakeha sailors in the 1830s, provided Māori artists with new and better ways of producing the large and intricate carvings on the interior and exterior of these buildings. These carvings symbolized the *iwi* chief's powerful status to the outside community and, importantly, to visitors of the *iwi*. Eventually, the chief's house turned into the extended meetinghouse structure, because, as scholar Roger Neich suggests, Māori groups needed a place to host traveling parties of other Māori, Pakeha officials, and missionaries; to engage in large discussions of *iwi* affairs; and to make a powerful visual statement about Māori identity and control to counter the Pakeha desire for more and more Māori land.

The interest in the meetinghouse's visual display of power really began during the 1840s, the decade in which Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was built. Prior to that, European settlement in the Gisborne area of New Zealand was light and generally limited to whalers, traders, and missionaries. During this time, starting in the early 1830s, the Pakeha were allowed to live in the area under the patronage of the Māori chiefs,[14] who generally recognized that the Pakeha were a means of acquiring material wealth, consolidating local power (specifically through trade for muskets), and enhancing local prestige. In the late 1830s, traders and shore-based whalers began building more substantial home bases for themselves along the Turanganui River in Gisborne, which became known as the Turanga area. According to local Gisborne historian J. A.

[14] Kasaia Waigth, "'Stolen from Its People and Wrenched from Its Roots'? A Study of the Crown's 1867 Acquisition of the Rongowhakaata Meeting House Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," Ph.D. diss., University of Wellington, 2009, 12.

Mackay, these early settlers were regarded by the Māori in the Turanga area mostly as "squatters."[15] In general, these Māori communities continued to believe they were in full control of their own affairs and did not see these new arrivals as a threat to their authority.

However, a shift came about in the 1840s, when large-scale immigration, predominantly from Great Britain,[16] brought a change in perspective to the Māori who were living in Turanga, including members of the Rongowhakaata *iwi*. While the number of Pakeha in New Zealand in the early 1830s was just over three hundred people, that population increased by 1840 to over two thousand people, and it would grow to around twenty-six thousand people by the end of the decade.[17] What became apparent to the Māori chiefs was that these European settlements were no longer taking place on their terms. Those Māori who lived near those settlements, such as the Rongowhakaata in Turanga, soon came to fear that their identity and customs might be "swallowed up by this mighty tide of strangers."[18]

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[15] Ibid., 13.

[16] New Zealand historian Michael King writes about the "push and pull" of settler-colonialism and what contributed to the massive migration of settlers from Great Britain to New Zealand in his book, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (2003). In it he attributes the push out of Great Britain to general European overpopulation, poverty, hunger, stifling class distinctions, and religious controversy. He attributes the pull to the promise of prosperity and prospects for social advancement outside of the brittle British class hierarchy, and, for investors in particular, the opportunity to increase one's capital through trade in New Zealand's bountiful natural resources. In the mid-to late 1840s, in particular, immigration was also encouraged by provincial New Zealand governments to entice new settlers, expand economic activity, and increase political influence in the regions.

[17] "Māori and European Population Numbers, 1840–1881," *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, published by the New Zealand Government, available at https://teara.govt.nz/en/graph/36364/Māori-and-european-population-numbers-1840-1881 (accessed 30 April 2017).

[18] Ibid.,179. This misgiving is evident in the establishment of the term *Pakeha*, which soon saw broad adaptation. As late as the end of the eighteenth century, the Māori self-identified only by *iwi* (tribe) or *hapu* (sub-tribe) name, not by the generic Māori (which roughly translates to "ordinary, natural, or fresh-water"). When foreigners began to arrive in New Zealand in greater and greater numbers, though, the Māori had to distinguish themselves from the newcomers (or "others," which is the rough Māori

For the settler-colonialists, land was paramount, and the acquisition of this limited resource became the source of much conflict well into the twentieth century. As a result of this struggle, Pakeha government officials soon found themselves in need of protection and sought a permanent and constitutional relationship with Great Britain.[19] The British government responded to these requests quickly, dispatching naval officer William Hobson from London in August 1839 with instructions to take "the constitutional steps necessary to establish a British colony."[20] Hobson was also told to negotiate a voluntary transfer of sovereignty from the Māori to the British crown, so that there would be no doubt under international law as to the validity of the annexation. The Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document, was signed into effect on February 6, 1840, by representatives of the British Crown and 540 Māori chiefs from both the North and South Islands. [21]

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translation of Pakeha), and the generic classification came into regular use. Māori oratory in those years also began to employ cautionary proverbs about the power of saltwater to contaminate freshwater.

[19] Great Britain also wanted to protect New Zealand's trade from encroachment by other nations such as France and the United States —the value of New Zealand exports to New South Wales and Tasmania was around twenty thousand pounds per year, a very large sum at the time.

[20] Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (New York: Penguin Book, 2003), 156.

[21] Hobson arrived in the Bay of Islands on January 29, 1840, to initiate what would be seen as the most important chapter in the country's history, but issues soon arose regarding the manner and speed with which the soon-to-be-governor drafted New Zealand's treaty document for British sovereignty. For one thing, Hobson was given no draft document prepared by lawyers or colonial office functionaries. Instead, he had to cobble together his own treaty, with the help of his secretary, James Freeman, and British resident James Busby, neither of whom was a lawyer. Hobson then recognized that a treaty in English alone could hardly be understood, debated, or agreed to by the Māori chiefs, so he recruited the missionary Henry Williams from Turanga, the younger brother of William Williams, and his son Edward to translate the English version into Māori. All of these arrangements took place over four days, with the Māori translation completed in one night on February 4, 1840. This translation, of course, would be the cause of numerous debates and lawsuits over the next 150 years, including the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga redress claim in the 1990s. For example, the Māori version of the treaty did not correspond to the English version in several important respects, including the fact that "sovereignty" was translated as "kawanatanga." *Kawanatanga* was an abstraction of the word *kawana*, itself a transliteration of governor; hence, it meant governorship. It is now thought that a more accurate translation of sovereignty might have been *mana*, or power. Future critics of the treaty thus argued that

When Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was built in the early 1840s, it thus represented a direct Māori response to the Pakeha encroachment upon the limited resources in the Gisborne area. Part of the meetinghouse's statement of indigenous dominion over the land on which it stood was its much larger size in relation to its architectural predecessors.[22] Its carvings of ancestors also increased in both number and size and migrated from exclusively interior settings to additional positions on the exterior of the building, such as the front porch and the apex of the roof, to demonstrate the *iwi*'s power and ancestral protection to anyone who ventured too close. As noted previously, these larger, more intricate carvings were the result of steel and iron chisels brought by Pakeha traders, which replaced their less powerful stone equivalents. The Pakeha tools allowed the Rongowhakaata master carver Raharuhi Rukupo to create even deeper undercutting and produce more vividly three-dimensional and elaborate carved representations of ancestors than had ever been seen before—carvings for which Te Hau-Ki-Turanga would become renowned on a local, national, and international level.

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the chiefs believed that they were retaining full power or sovereignty over their land and only giving away the right to approve or govern trade laws. This impression would have been reinforced by the Māori translation of article 2, which assured them that they would retain "te tino rangatiratanga o ratou wenua kainga me o ratou taonga katoa," or "the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands, village, and all their treasures." Critics would later argue that, by offering the Māori "te tino rangatiratanga," the treaty was in fact guaranteeing the Māori's right to continue to manage their own affairs without interference from British civil or military authority. Further confusion would arise over the phrase "ratou taonga katoa" in the treaty. It was translated as "other properties"—things that the Māori would be allowed to retain—but its implications came to encompass "all their treasures," and it would be used, in turn, to advocate for Māori rights to material and cultural resources, something that Te Hau-Ki-Turanga would evoke in treaty-related meetinghouse hearings 150 years later. This treaty, now known as the Treaty of Waitangi after the location of its signing in the Bay of Islands, was signed by more than forty Māori chiefs at this site.

[22] Damian Skinner, *The Māori Meeting House: Introducing the Whare Whakairo* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2016), 21.

In addition to its size, the power or *mana* of the Māori *wharenui* also lay in its physical and metaphorical representation of the *iwi's* ancestors. Rukupo created the meetinghouse as a tribute to his formidable and recently deceased elder brother, the prominent chief Tamati Waka Mangere.[23] This powerful protection from ancestors was another Rongowhakaata response to the Pakeha attempts to establish control and jurisdiction over their land. The meetinghouse structure itself can be thought of as a powerful ancestor lying face down—the carvings on the gable at the front are the face, arms, and fingers; the porch is the brain; the door is the mouth, and the window, the eye; carved and painted elements on the inside roof of the building are the spine and ribs; and the interior pillars in the center of the meetinghouse represent the heart. Overall, the interior of the meetinghouse is often described as a womb where the people shelter.[24] The representation of the *iwi*'s ancestors through physical carvings on the interior and exterior of the meetinghouse serves several other functions as well. It is a didactic tool for teaching younger generations of *iwi* members about their families and, by extension, their community's genealogical history. The carvings also present a visual ideal—an embodiment of strength and power—for later descendants to emulate. Finally, each carving is a vessel for an ancestor's spirit and serves as both

[23] In addition to carved ancestor portraits, Rukupo also included a portrait of himself, the only ancestor portrayed who was alive at the time of construction. While it is clearly more naturalistic than the others, Rukupo's self-portrait still adheres to Rongowhakaata carving conventions, according to New Zealand scholar Roger Neich. We know it is Rukupo by the oral traditions passed down as well as the distinct tattoo or *moko* on his face, which indicated his prestigious position within the iwi.
[24] Adrienne Kaeppler, *The Pacific Arts of Polynesia and Micronesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 64.

mediator and communicator between the present-day community and the divine or ancestral realm.

In Māori myth, it was the human male named Ruatepupuke who was credited with bringing the art of communicative ancestral carvings to the world from Tangaroa, the god of the sea.[25] In Ruatepupuke's time, carvings spoke to one another freely beneath the ocean. One day, Tangaroa saw Ruatepupuke's son, Te Manu-hauturuki, and decided to take him to his underwater meetinghouse. Ruatepupuke, upon discovering that his son was missing, swam down to rescue him. On their return, Ruatepupuke used several carvings from the underwater meetinghouse as floatation devices. Once on dry land, however these ancestral carvings lost their ability to speak and instead had to communicate through the force of their presence alone.[26] The talking carvings, then, literalize the traditional Māori aesthetic ideal regarding the possibility of real connection and communication through the arts. Every carver wants his work to "speak" to the ancestral realm by successfully integrating aesthetic form and practical didactic function. Communication through the carved ancestors on the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga meetinghouse generates a particularly powerful and important type of Māori *taonga*. In all, the meetinghouse and its figurative carvings present an ornate and graphic genealogical plan or gesture of legacy, linking past and present for the community members who gather within the structure and making a visual statement about power to those who are invited inside.

[25] A. W. Reed, *Myths and Legends of Māori Land*, 107.
[26] Ibid.

The power marshaled in the carved ancestors of the *iwi*, as well as the meetinghouse's bigger size, helped the Rongowhakaata *iwi* feel equal in the negotiations with the Pakeha settlers and their new government land laws. This anxiety about claiming and demonstrating power was even reflected in the meetinghouse's construction process, which took place from 1838 to 1843. Rukupo led a team of eighteen male carvers from his *iwi*: Mahumahu, Hakaraia Ngapatari, Hamiora Te Uarua, Hopa, Reweti Tuhura, Matenga Taimaioria, Poparae Kemaka, Hone Tiatia, Natana Toromata, Werata Whakahira, Enoka, Pera Tawhiti, Himiona Te Papaapiti, Matenga Te Hore, Hirawanu Tukuamionmio, Paora Rakaiora, Heta Meha, and Rawiri Hokeke.[27] While Rukupo followed a traditional Māori *wharenui* post-and-beam structural system, he also innovated, using his Pakeha tools and architectural techniques, to make this meetinghouse truly unique among its kind. For example, he introduced local Anglican Church aesthetics and building techniques into the new meetinghouse.[28] The most apparent of these techniques was Rukupo's use of a multiple-beam roofline, which allowed Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to grow in length in relation to what was possible via a single-beam roofline.

[27] Dean Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Wharenui," *New Zealand Historic Places Trust* (Wellington: Te Papa, 2013), 8.

[28] The spread of Christianity from its introduction in the Bay of Islands throughout the rest of New Zealand, including Turanga, was greatly assisted by local Māori teachers and catechists. When the Church Mission Society (CMS) clergymen in New Zealand realized that they needed more priests than could be sent from England to evangelize a substantial indigenous population of around eighty thousand people, the Reverend William Williams, who was living in Waimate in the 1830s, began to seek Māori converts who would make good teachers. For many Māori on the North Island who had endured almost four decades of suffering and death due to the Musket Wars (a series of over three thousand *iwi* battles in New Zealand from 1807 to 1845) and vulnerability to European diseases, Christianity offered consolation when, perhaps, their confidence in their own prayers were waning.

Rukupo also sought to push the *wharenui*'s power even further by aesthetically incorporated biblical Roman typeface from both the Old and New Testaments. Christianity first came to Rukupo and the Rongowhakaata *iwi* when a group of seven missionaries settled in the Gisborne area on April 8, 1839, including six Māori Christian teachers from the Bay of Islands and the Reverend William Williams. Soon after their arrival, the first Christian Mission Church (CMC) mission station was built on Rongowhakaata land at Kaupapa in the early 1840s. Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's construction thus directly overlapped with the construction of CMC's church. Using this specific typeface found in the biblical texts, Rukupo and his team of carvers incorporated the names of each ancestor above the sixty-nine ancestor carvings in the meetinghouse.[29] These Bibles first came into the area with the missionaries who were tasked to distribute the complete Old and New Testaments, translated into Māori, to all Rongowhakaata *iwi* members.[30] Rukupo was among those who considered themselves Christian prophets. He taught at the Anglican mission stations around Turanga and even took the baptismal name of Raharuhi, the Māori translation of Lazarus, as his first name. It was thought by Rukupo, and others in the *iwi*, that, in addition to the protection provided by their ancestors, the assimilation of this powerful Christian book into the architecture could only enhance Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's general *mana*. So, as a complement to pre-Pakeha methods of orally

[29] Diedre Brown, "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 105:1 (1996): 10.
[30] In the late 1840s, at the time of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's construction, many Māori in the Turanga area counted themselves as Christians, though they had developed their own versions of Christian doctrine, in tandem with decidedly non-Christian interpretations of the Bible.

reciting each ancestor's name within the meetinghouse, the carved Roman lettering also gave additional power to the ancestor, derived from the Pakeha's powerful new book. Physically, then, the construction of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga embodies an entangled history of change and transformation in the growing presence of the Pakeha, as Māori communities continuously revised this innovative architectural form in accordance with the historical moment with which they were faced.

After Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's creation, however, New Zealand saw an even bigger political shift as the 1850s drew to a close. From this point forward, control over the entangled contact zone of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga would begin to grow more asymmetrical, all the way into the late twentieth century, as Pakeha forces moved into the Gisborne area and took more liberties with its land and resources. During this tumultuous time, a clear breach of the Treaty of Waitangi occurred: Rongowhakaata's meetinghouse was removed without consent by Pakeha troops and taken to New Zealand's capital of Wellington to reside for the next 150 years of its life.

Oppositions Caused by New Zealand's Settlement Act and the Confiscation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

In 1861, just a little over twenty years after Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's creation, the meetinghouse was dismantled and taken without consent by Pakeha forces.[31] At this point, as well, the concept of national biculturalism in New Zealand took a decided turn in favor of Pakeha political power. Using the treaty as a means to justify their

[31] In 1997 the Rongowhakaata Trust lodged a claim with the Tribunal for the "theft" of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. In 2002 the Tribunal released its report, *Tangata Turanga Whenua" The Report on the Turanganui a Kiwa Claims*, which stated that the meetinghouse was in fact "taken without consent."

"co-founding" of a nation, Pakeha New Zealanders pointed to the country's two "valid" populations, the *tangata whenua* (people of the land, or Māori) and the European settlers (Pakeha), though, in reality, they were never viewed as equal in status. The shaky foundations of Pakeha nationalist claims thus began to take on the rhetoric of the "civilizing mission" or the "survival of the fittest," as Māori populations diminished and their territory became more vulnerable to land grabs.

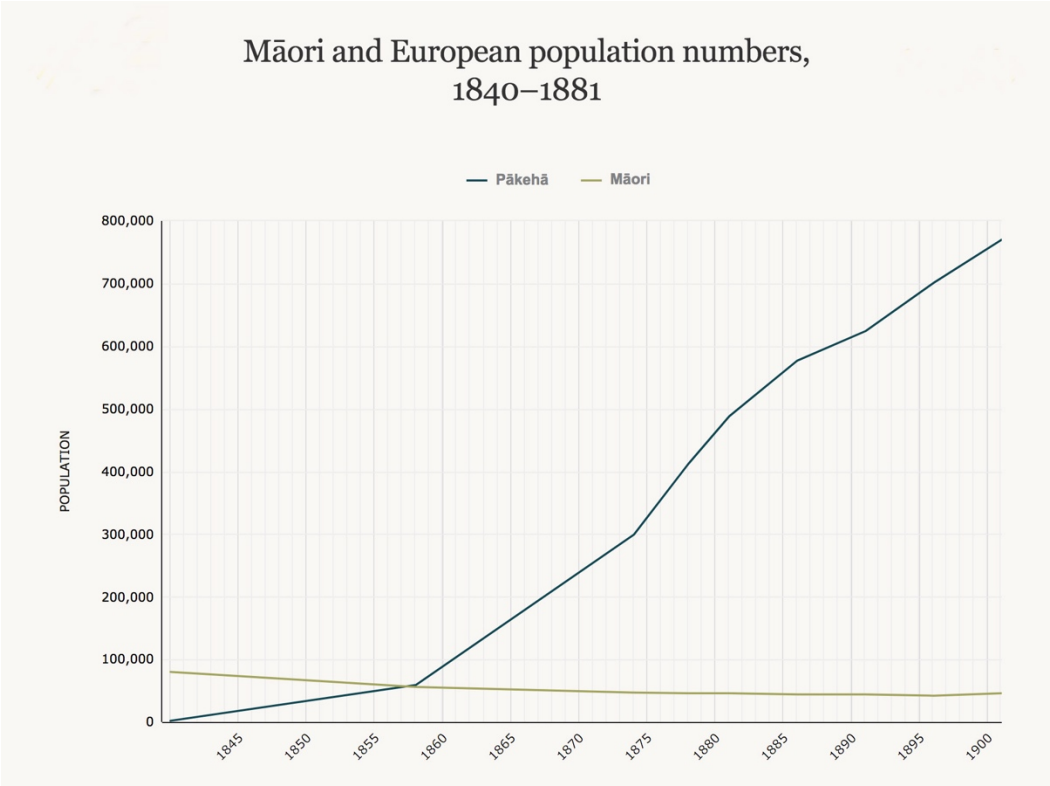


Figure 3.1 Māori and European population numbers, 1840-1881. Graph by Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2012, (cited footnote 32).

In the early 1840s, the Māori population numbered around eighty thousand people, whereas the *Pakeha* settlers numbered just over two thousand. By 1858, however, the Māori total had fallen to fifty-six thousand, due to war and an inherent vulnerability to introduced European diseases. In contrast, Pakeha population

numbers had steadily risen; by 1858, the Pakeha would outnumber the Māori for the first time, with over fifty-nine thousand settlers. When gold was discovered in several parts of New Zealand, including the Otago and Nelson areas, thousands of would-be gold miners flocked to New Zealand's shores, raising the Pakeha population count to well over two hundred thousand by the mid-1860s.[32] The alarming drop in the Māori population through midcentury, combined with the *Pakeha* population's rise and subsequent demand for land, would make the 1860s one of the most volatile decades in the nation's history. During this time, the Pakeha took it for granted that the Māori population would continue to decrease as their own population increased, and, as a result, that Māori land would become progressively more available to Europeans for development. The Māori, too, began to fear this outcome, and it became clear to some of the chiefs that their land, and certain *iwi* customs, would be in danger of disappearing unless they took active steps to preserve their resources. Several chiefs in the Gisborne area decided to ban all further sale of Māori land and presented this strategy in a series of meetings on the North East Coast of New Zealand in the 1860s. Unsurprisingly, land continued to be a source of tension between the new settlers and the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, and it was a huge worry for Rukupo, who wrote often to Governor Thomas Gore Browne during this time to request investigations of land claims in Turanga.[33]

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[32] "Māori and European Population Numbers, 1840–1881," *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, New Zealand Government, available at https://teara.govt.nz/en/graph/36364/Māori-and-european-population-numbers-1840-1881 (accessed 30 April 2017).
[33] Waigth, "'Stolen from Its People and Wrenched from Its Roots'?" 20.

As relations between settlers and the Māori became more and more strained, the British crown's use of force began to escalate, especially on the North Island. With these outbreaks of war arising just west of Turanga in the Taranaki and Waikato areas, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* grew more concerned about the possibility of armed conflict and the resulting loss of land. These fears were confirmed when the New Zealand Settlements Act was passed in 1863; it enabled the crown to confiscate any land and resources without compensation from a Māori iwi said to be in rebellion against Great Britain. As battles swept across the North Island, tensions heightened in Turanga, and the Rongowhakaata *iwi* became increasingly aware that those who fought against the crown paid the price for their "rebellion" with their lives, their land, and their *iwi*'s material wealth. For the British, land confiscation furthered a number of settler-colonial ends, including the deterrence of Māori in other regions from fighting against the government on land disputes, the punishment of "rebels," and the compensation of loyal military settlers via the repurposing of the offending *iwi*'s land. In Turanga, specifically, the arrival of New Zealand Native Minister J. C. Richmond in March 1867 sparked a series of events that eventually led to just such a fate for the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, including warfare, imprisonment of its members, and the confiscation of the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga meetinghouse.

When Richmond first came to the Turanga district in April 1867 as a politician and a settler, he was committed to the progress of colonization, or what he referred to as "opening up the country, and the need to overcome Māori obstruction to

it."[34] In Turanga, Richmond held meetings with local chiefs about further land sales and threatened to resort to more sweeping regulations if they did not cooperate. His efforts proved ineffective, and the negotiations stagnated. While on his way back from Turanga, Richmond came across what he later described as "a very fine specimen of native work, but I observed with regret that it was utterly neglected, the porch denuded of its smaller carvings, the roof defective in many places, the carved slabs which formed the sides rotten where they were slightly fixed in the ground."[35] After inspecting the house, Richmond determined that Ngati Kaipoho and Raharuhi Rukupo were its "owners" and asked them if he could take the house to Wellington. According to the accounts by Rukupo, he told Richmond no. Rukupo also reported that Richmond accepted his answer, but Richmond's account differs—he claims that Rukupo referred him elsewhere: "The property had gone from him, and [he] referred me to Tareha of Hawke's Bay, as a person to whom he had given the house."[36] Richmond then stated that he pursued the matter the next day at a large meeting of three hundred to four hundred local Māori, and that only one man objected to his plans.[37] This lone dissenter may have been Rukupo, but there is no evidence to suggest that there were any Rongowhakaata, the actual *iwi* owners of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, in attendance. After Richmond returned to Wellington, he asked Reginald Biggs, the captain of the militia stationed in Gisborne, to continue negotiations for the

[34] Ibid., 43.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Deidre Brown, "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," 12.
[37] Ibid.

purchase of the house. Briggs, in turn, arranged with James Fairchild, the captain of a government steamer in the area, to have the house physically removed "on behalf of the Crown."

The events surrounding the meetinghouse's withdrawal are difficult to pin down with precision, largely because surviving accounts of the transfer are all based on affidavits presented by Richmond, Biggs, and Fairchild to a commission of inquiry established in response to complaints from Rukupo and his *iwi* in the late 1860s and 1870s. The ultimate conclusion of the commission has not survived, but it was "unlikely to have been in favor of the Rongowhakaata."[38] In 1878, Fairchild told the Native Affairs Committee, a then exclusively Pakeha committee founded in 1858 to settle Māori/Pakeha disputes, that, while attempting to dismantle Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, he was confronted by a group of Māori who questioned his right to remove the house. He offered them one hundred pounds in an attempt to settle the final transaction, but they did not leave, and the house "had to be removed by force."[39] Contradicting Richmond's earlier statement, Fairchild also claimed that the house was in good condition. In the 2004 report of the Waitangi Tribunal, as well, it states that "evidence of ground decay on the original carvings at Te Papa appears to be limited to a small number of carvings. The damage is not extensive, given the number of carvings that would have originally been in contact with the ground."[40]

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[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 14.
[40] Ross O'Rourke, "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank," *Colonial Museum Account Book* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1994), 400.

It is unclear from the oral accounts offered during the hearing whether Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's removal was an act of retribution for Richmond's difficulty in securing the land sales. As the acting superintendent of the Colonial Museum, Richmond would also have had a genuine interest in preserving the *wharenui* for all to see and admire in Wellington.[41] The prestige associated with securing for the government such a large and magnificent "curiosity" of what was then thought to be an inevitably dying race may also have been what motivated Richmond to acquire it by any means necessary. In a private letter to his sister-in-law, written shortly after the removal of the meetinghouse, Richmond boasted, "So far my East Coast dealings have not had brilliant success. The only great thing done was the confiscation and carrying off of a beautiful carved house with a military promptitude that will be recorded to my glory."[42]

In 1867, Rukupo and eight other Turanga Māori petitioned the government for the meetinghouse's return. Rukupo died in 1873, and, in 1878, Wi Pere, Paora Kate (Rukupo's brother), Keita Wyllie (Rukupo's niece), and Otene Pitau again petitioned the government for the return of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, or for compensation for it. Primary evidence relating to the legal acquisition of the meetinghouse by either Richmond, Briggs, or Fairchild is scarce, and the minutes from the 1867 petition hearings and the second 1878 petition hearings, along with a few Pakeha newspaper articles, make up the bulk of the contemporary historical sources. However, the

[41] Waigth, "'Stolen from Its People and Wrenched from Its Roots'?" 56.
[42] O'Rourke "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank," 402.

continuous acts of protest by the Māori present at Orakaiapu Pa (location of Rongowhakaata's *marae*) from the moment Fairchild arrived until the moment he left, even after money was paid, as well as the two petitions for its return by several prominent members of the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, appear to confirm that the nature of the crown's acquisition of the meetinghouse was not related to a sale or gift. Thus, the removal of the meetinghouse and its reinstallation inside the Colonial Museum led generations of Rongowhakaata *iwi* members to conclude that its "trophy-like display"[43] amounted to both a physical and symbolic bounty of war for 150 years.

Since its completion in 1843, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga had stood at Orakaiapu Pa in Turanga for twenty-three years before its removal. After that removal, the meetinghouse was re-erected three times and housed in three different national museum buildings in New Zealand. In 1868, it was placed inside the Colonial Museum in Wellington, where it was referred to as "The Māori House." While it was there, museum staff added several *poupou* (carvings) to the structure from other meetinghouse materials in the collection, so that it would fit better in the layout of the museum gallery. In the mid-1930s, under the supervision of Apirana Ngata, the Māori minister of native affairs, it was partly restored and built into a concrete enclosure in the "Māori Hall" of the new Dominion Museum on Buckle Street in Wellington. Finally, in 1992, the meetinghouse was ceremonially dismantled and reconstructed at

[43] Conal McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display* (New York: Berg, 2007).

the new National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, this time assisted by the Rongowhakaata *iwi*.

The following discussion will track the history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga as a "contact zone" between the national museum—and, by extension, the New Zealand government—and the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, and its related changes in exhibition display, preservation, and interpretation from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century. I will demonstrate how the meaning of Māori objects in New Zealand museums has transformed over time from "curio" to "specimen" to various forms of "art and crafts" and eventually to *taonga*. But, as James Clifford reminds us, such taxonomic shifts require "critical historical investigation, not celebration."[44] Using a critical rather than celebratory approach, then, I will examine how Te Hau-Ki-Turanga has been interpreted, conserved, and presented to the public at the local, national, and international levels, in the company of the complex bicultural relations situated among the contexts of colonization, modernity, and nationhood in New Zealand. Despite the Treaty of Waitangi's promise to recognize Māori sovereignty, the indigenous population soon became marginalized in its own country and, by the end of the nineteenth century, had lost much of its land and political independence. It was within this fraught political arrangement that also gave rise to New Zealand's first national museum, the Colonial Museum.[45]

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[44] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 169.

[45] The 1865 New Zealand Exhibition was the first world's fair to be held in New Zealand. The Exhibition took place in the southernmost city of Dunedin, which was not yet twenty years old but wanted to show off the new wealth brought about by the Otago gold rush on the South Island. Just as the Great Exhibition helped launch the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1851, the New

The Politics of Contact Zones and the Preserving and Presentation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

The official accession date for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga is considered to be June 12, 1867, based on the day the meetinghouse first appeared in the Colonial Museum's account book.[46] The exact number of carvings, weavings, and painted rafters that made up the entire structure is unknown but was likely one hundred or so and included a *tahuhu* (rafter), thirty-two *poupou* (carvings), thirty-two *heke* (weavings), twenty *epa* (end-wall posts), and around twenty *papaka* (skirting boards that are placed between the *poupou* and the *epa*).[47] Except for four *poupou* from the porch, however, "the whare arrived at the museum without any of its exterior carvings, such as the *maihi, amo, koruru* (gable mask), *tekoteko* (figure on the gable), or

Zealand Exhibition launched the Colonial Museum in Wellington. One of the museum's key commissioners was Dr. James Hector, a relatively recent immigrant from Scotland who had originally been appointed as a geologist by the Otago provincial government. Later in 1865, he would become the Colonial Museum's first director. Hector was known as one of the most prominent scientists in the New Zealand government's service, and he made an impact on a number of areas through the Colonial Museum's activities, including the geological survey, the colonial laboratory of natural science, the botanical gardens, and the meteorological initiatives. In addition to Hector's exhibition material from Dunedin, the new museum brought together several collections from the Wellington Philosophical Society, a regional offshoot of the larger New Zealand Institute. Originally, the Colonial Museum's activities derived from the general colonial emphasis upon exploring, describing, and classifying the natural wonders of the country. For Hector, the museum would also be a library of natural specimens: "My desire is not to make an extensive and showy collection but to organize for the colony a complete typical museum of reference that will illustrate all the branches of its natural history and mineral resources" (quoted in R. Dell, *The First Hundred Years of the Dominion Museum* (Wellington: National Art Gallery 1965.)) Externally, the building design for the Colonial Museum reflected current trends in Victorian architecture. Early sketches and plans show a squat building with wide arches, quoins, and a grand colonnaded entrance, in keeping with museum buildings in Britain (for example, the British Museum's façade), though on a smaller scale. For European settlers in far-flung colonies, visual echoes of the old world in their stark new townscapes were "reassuring reminders of the roots of their civilization" (quoted in Conal McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display* (New York: Berg, 2007), 546.)

[46] O'Rourke "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank," 340.

[47] Ibid., 341.

poutokomanawa (central supporting posts inside the house)."[48] In his 1867 statement to the Native Affairs Committee, Richmond claimed that the porch had been stripped of its smaller carvings; it may also be that the larger carvings were either taken away or lost in transit.[49]

After Te Hau-Ki-Turanga arrived in Wellington in 1867, Sir James Hector, director of the Colonial Museum, decided that he did not want to reconstruct the meetinghouse right away, because he felt that the current exhibition floor would not allow the carvings to be seen clearly, and there would be no space left for "other exhibits."[50] Instead, he lobbied the colonial secretary's office for a new wing for the museum to house the meetinghouse's components, so as to "exhibit them to their most advantage as specimens of native carvings."[51] In Hector's plans for the display of the "Māori House" in the new wing, it is suggested that J. C. Richmond might be worth consulting about its restoration, presumably as its procurer and only local Pakeha person in Wellington to have seen the meetinghouse in its original state. No evidence survives as to whether Richmond had any input into the meetinghouse's reconstruction, but it was eventually assembled with several additional carvings from other meetinghouse materials in the museum's collection. Inside, the *poupou* (carvings) were elevated on a plinth that was seventy-six centimeters above the ground, so that the eye of the museum visitor was level with them, and he or she

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Several of the carvings are now located in collections abroad, such as the British Museum and the National Gallery of Australia. These carvings are part of the "digital repatriation" project discussed later in Chapter 4.
[50] O'Rourke "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank,", 341.
[51] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 23.



Figure 3.2 *Poupou* (carving) from Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, Colonial Museum, used as a *cartes de visite* in 1880s. Image from Alexander Turnbull Library Mundy PA I-F-039-32.

would not have to stoop down, as though sitting on the floor, to study them closely.

Without its porch, front door, or front window, the *whare* (house) was very dim

inside, so gas lighting was installed in August 1868, illuminating the interior for the first time. Hector also wanted to use Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's interior area to display other Māori exhibitions and brought in a variety of objects from the Māori collection. For New Zealand photographers of the time, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was one of the most popular exhibits to capture, and it would remain so for the rest of the century. Individual *poupou* from the house were removed from the structure and photographed outdoors with other *Māori* objects for several "cartes de visite," or Victorian postcards,[52] which often depicted exotic subject matter in a tourist-friendly format; the museum and other tourist centers then sold them in their gift shops.

Hamilton noted in his diary that his main objective as Colonial Museum director was to display Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in a more "authentic" iteration.[53] The *wharenui* soon became not a symbol of the actual Rongowhakaata *iwi* but a stand-in for Māori culture as a whole, before it disappeared altogether. In August 1905, the Colonial Museum consolidated this general approach by adding a plaque to the meetinghouse's installation with a short history of it that was written by Pakeha historian Reginald Biggs. The plaque was entitled "History of the Māori House," and it hung inside Te Hau-Ki-Turanga for over fifty years. A section of its text read as follows:

History of the Māori House

> This House was built by the Ngatikaipoho Tribe, at Tauranga, Poverty Bay (who were always noted throughout New Zealand

[52] Ibid., 26.
[53] Ibid., 23.

for the excellence of their carvings), as a monument to the memory of Tamata Waaka Turangere, the elder brother of Raharuhi Rukupo, the present chief of the tribe. The work was begun in October 1842 and finished in the March following. It was designed by Raharuhi Rukupo. The following is a list of the carvers employed:

Mahumahu	Matenga Tamaioria	Pera Tawhiti
Hakarain Ngapatori	Himiora te Papaapiti	Hopa
Hamino te Warus	Matenga te Hore	Hirawanu
Poparae Kemaka	Nataua Hira Toromata	Paora Rakiora
Hone Tiatia	Wereta Whakahena	Heta Meha
Reneti Tuuru Tuhura	Rawiri Hokeke	Enoke

The figure on the post on the right of the entrance represents Raharuhi Rukupo and the remaining figures are intended to represent the most celebrated ancestors of the tribe . . . At the close of the East Coast Campaign in 1866, this house was purchased by the Government, and, having been transferred to Wellington, was erected as part of the Colonial Museum in March 1868. This valuable specimen of Native art has been restored in such a manner that, while it is carefully preserved from decay by an exterior covering of wood and iron, its interior presents as much as possible the original character which its designers intended. The only marked innovation has been the elevation of the carved walls on a plinth 1 meter above the original level, so that the eye of the visitor, when standing up, may be at the same elevation as if he were sitting on the floor of the house in its original state, according to the usual Native custom. For the purpose of lighting the interior, the reeding which originally filled the space between the pillars at one end of the house has been removed and replaced by stained glass.[54]

Inside the Colonial Museum and far from its origins in Turanga, the Rongowhakaata's wharenui now ceased to exist as anything other than a Māori

[54] O'Rourke "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank," 503.

"specimen" (with the wrong *iwi* attribution) to be inserted into New Zealand's colonial history. This reintroduction as an artifact in another culture's heritage required a contextual change—in this case, from Rongowhakaata *taonga* to Pakeha museum classification. Through its presentation within the museum, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga became the yardstick with which the Pakeha could measure changes in Māori culture based on colonial concepts of "tradition," especially tradition as understood to be in the past and hence no longer a real threat to Pakeha communities living in different regions of New Zealand. In this iteration, then, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga spoke more to insecurities about control in colonial middle-class industrial life than to its Māori cultural heritage.

After the new north wing was erected at the Colonial Museum, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was known as the most important Māori "specimen" in the national museum's collection and was strategically placed in the central area of the gallery. In the early years of the Colonial Museum, as was the case with its peers at the time, the museum layout was based on British models with origins in the designs of department stores, arcades, and world's fair exhibition buildings,[55] all of which created dedicated spaces for the viewer (active) to look at the object (passive). Museum buildings were designed with large internal spaces that allowed visitors to walk past objects arranged in series inside rows of glass cases. This practice of "showing and telling" made visible, through the layout of objects in space, "discourses associated with the notion

[55] Ibid., 76.

of progress."[56] These displays reflected an organized society and were responsible for "ordering objects for inspection and ordering the public that inspected."[57] Mixed in with the mineral, flora, and fauna "curiosities" native to New Zealand, then, Te Hau-



Figure 3.3 Interior of Colonial Museum, 1870. In the front of the image is an extinct Moa bird (extinct in New Zealand around 1300 A.D.) surrounded by Māori cultural heritage. Image from Alexander Turnbull Library Sebley PA4-1063.

Ki-Turanga was likewise treated as an interesting diversion for the entertainment of museum visitors. This "trophy" style of display was common to the colonial exhibition era and owed its principles to the arrangements of killed and stuffed game and war booty that adorned the manors of successful career soldiers and wealthy collectors. Conal McCarthy, New Zealand scholar and author of *Exhibiting Māori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*, remarks that, during this era, the exhibition

[56] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995) 52.
[57] Ibid.

of Māori objects clearly implied the New Zealand government's possession of the indigenous people (who were thought to be headed for extinction) and their land. McCarthy observes, "These early colonial displays were triumphal and made visible the links between material culture and imperial power, and between object and subject."[58] McCarthy concludes, "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was displayed in Wellington during the New Zealand Wars as a trophy of colonial conquest."[59]

A "Tidy" History of Settler-Colonial Relations and Pan-Māori Identity through Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

In the early twentieth century, a new economic, political, and social "recolonization" of New Zealand brought about a shift in the national museum's culture of display, and with it, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's representation and interpretation. It was in this era, after much initial explosive development, that the colony's natural resources began to deplete, and, as boom turned to bust, a crisis in Pakeha settler/national identity followed. Eventually, the export of meat and dairy products to Britain became New Zealand's principal economic lifeline, and the relationship between the "metropolitan center and the colonial periphery of the British empire was renewed and strengthened."[60] Formerly a relatively independent colony, the country now became a loyal colonial outpost—the "better Britain of the South Pacific."[61] In

[58] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 45.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 39.
[61] Ibid.

1907, the colony of New Zealand became a dominion,[62] and, as a result, the Colonial Museum was renamed the Dominion Museum. This new status also graced the white settler colonies in Australia, Canada, and South Africa, as historian Michael King tells us, "where British models of gentility and hierarchy were energetically relocated and enthusiastically reproduced."[63] The dominion of New Zealand was even more closely allied to the empire than the colony had been. As politician and diplomat Sir James Allen put it in 1924, New Zealand saw itself as a part of England in the southern seas, and many Pakeha thought of themselves as British. In school classrooms, for example, New Zealand's children read "Our Nation's Story," despite the fact that it was a history of Great Britain.[64] Pakeha/Māori relations also demanded reconfiguration during this time, as it finally became clear that the Māori population would not simply disappear. The policy of "smoothing the pillow of a dying race"[65] transitioned to one of national rehabilitation and assimilation.

In a society that, as mentioned above, had long turned to myths of racial harmony to smooth over the violence of its colonial birth, it was telling (and unsurprising) that New Zealand museums displayed what became a "tidy history"[66] of Māori/Pakeha relations. There was a strong interest within New Zealand's

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[62] The Latin word "dominium" means property, ownership, or territory subject to a king or ruler. On September 26, 1907 the colony of New Zealand became a dominion within the British Empire. While the shift from colony to dominion was a change in name only, dominion status marked an important symbolic shift in New Zealander's perception of nationhood where (along with Canada) they wanted a distinct status that would not confuse them with "lesser colonies."
[63] King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, 340.
[64] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 64.
[65] R. Galbreath, "Colonization, Science and Conservation: The Development of Colonial Attitudes Towards the Native Life of New Zealand," Ph.D. diss., University of Waikato, 1989, 76–77.
[66] Ibid.

government in assimilating the Māori people into the modern state, as if to indicate to the motherland that Pakeha officials had everything under control—that the colonial enterprise was working and there would be no need to break its national ties. This visual agenda was furthered in early 1935, when, after years of lobbying, plans appeared for a newly constructed Dominion Museum on Buckle Street.[67]

The centerpiece of the new museum would be the Māori Hall, located in the middle of the building. When visitors walked in the front door, they would find themselves in an impressive foyer that ran east to west across almost the entire length of the building. Within it would stand Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, flanked by a *pataka* (storehouse) and several *wakas* (war canoes). With its lofty proportions, the meetinghouse would act as a central "shrine" for the whole museum—one dedicated to the nation's "priceless treasures."[68] In the 1930s, Māori culture was enthusiastically "collected, laundered, and embalmed by Pakeha savants in order posthumously to provide New Zealand with a rich past,"[69] one that organized a progressive history of Great Britain's colonial arrival as the driver of the nation. The Māori people and their culture, including Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, soon became objects of intense study and analysis that included dissection, comparison, and classification as part of a new colonial initiative derived from the fact that the Māori were no longer

[67] The new Dominion Museum was modeled after an "Antipodean Parthenon," and built as a memorial to the fallen New Zealanders of World War I.
[68] O'Rourke "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank," 511.
[69] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 40.

"the enemy" but a source of "distinctiveness" for the colony, one that added to the "flavor" of its colonial empire.[70]

Dr. W. R. B. Oliver would be the one to lead the museum through its new construction, directing the museum from 1928 to 1947. A botanist and ornithologist, he continued the campaign to modernize display techniques and further the museum's educational mission by, among other things, discussing "typical Māori artifacts" with visiting children.[71] One of these "typical Māori artifacts" was, of course, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, and the restoration that was underway showcased this prominent object in all its glory. In August 1935, one year before the anticipated opening of the new Dominion Museum, Sir Apirana Ngata, the then Minister of Native Affairs and an individual of Māori Ngati Porou *iwi* decent, approached the museum's director and informed him that he was "desirous of having the meeting house erected in true Māori style according to the customs of the east [coast] district."[72] Oliver embraced his proposal, and Ngata began to study examples of nineteenth-century East Coast *tukutuku* (weavings) and *poupou* (carvings) in the holdings of the museum. It appears that, shortly after the men signed their agreement, the museum effectively handed the reconstruction of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga over to Ngata and his team of carvers and weavers from the School of Māori Arts and Crafts. Their goal was not only to replace old weavings but also to add carvings to a newly constructed outside porch, and to

[70] Ibid.
[71] O'Rourke "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank," 321
[72] Ibid., 332.

extend the length of the meetinghouse by adding additional carvings to its interior as well.

The School of Māori Arts and Crafts was established in Rotorua, located in the central region of the North Island of New Zealand, in 1927 by a board of Māori ethnologists and the Te Arawa Trust Board.[73] Interestingly, both Apirana Ngata and many of the artists from Rotorua were of Ngati Porou descent, and this *iwi*, in particular, would have much to do with the long-term existential arc of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga (we will meet them again in 1974). The *iwi*'s interest in the meetinghouse dated back to the nineteenth century, when, according to J. C. Richmond, the New Zealand native minister who first sought to confiscate Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, Ngati Porou chief Mokena Kohere, laid claim to it as one of the spoils of his *iwi*'s victory in battle over the Rongowhakaata. Almost one hundred years later, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga found itself once again the subject of an inter-iwi rivalry, when the Ngati Porou *iwi* took the reins of its restoration, according to Ngata's vision of what an iconic pan-Māori meetinghouse should be. The renewal of this pan-Māori meetinghouse was central to Ngata's own political efforts to strengthen internal Māori relations and aggregate a viable Māori voting base for his political party. By making Te Hau-Ki-Turanga somehow applicable to all *iwi* (rather than one specific one), Ngata attempted to gather support around a single powerful Māori identity, one that could be used to rally political allegiance across the nation. The restoration of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in the 1930s was also the first all-Māori attempt to conceive, design, and

[73] Ibid., 346.



Figure 3.6 Apirana Ngata leading the *haka* (traditional Māori war dance) in front of the meeting house Te Tiriti I Waitangi at the Centennial celebrations, Waitangi, 1940. The *haka* (still used today by New Zealand's national rugby team, the All Blacks) along with other Māori heritage like the *wharenui* (meetinghouse) would become visual icons for which Ngata hoped to unite a large Māori voter base. Image from Alexander Turnbull Library PAColl-3060.

install an exhibition in a New Zealand museum.[74] As the Māori arts and crafts movement in New Zealand gained momentum, it therefore made possible the elevation of particular Māori political agendas in turn.

Ngata's own research, along with his work at the Dominion Museum, convinced him that the surviving portions of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga represented the best extant examples of Māori carvings, and the meetinghouse figured prominently in his

[74] Deidre Brown, "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," 13.

plans to reinvigorate this particular structure type in Māori communities all around the country.[75] The carving style established by Rukupo in Turanga thus became a model for carvers at the School of Māori Arts and Crafts, who made the most of their opportunity to study the meetinghouse at close quarters.[76] While they were based at the Dominion Museum, the carvers working on Ngata's restoration of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga reproduced carvings in the "Gisborne style"—that is, with deep three-dimensional cuts and great intricacy—but they did not depict actual Rongowhakaata ancestors. It is clear from the beginning of the restoration that the school's carvers were more interested in reinterpreting the carving style of the Rongowhakaata using modern materials, meaning that the school's definition of "tradition" was based on interpretations of essential elements of pan-Māori style, rather than on a faithful study of this *iwi*'s specific genealogical history.

The school's approach to the renovation clashed with the work on the same project by the Dominion Museum's resident carver, Thomas Heberley, the nephew and pupil of Te Ati Awa carver Jacob Heberley.[77] Thomas had started in 1926 and was the first Māori to work fulltime on the museum staff. He set up a workshop in a corrugated iron shed on Sydney Street, just down the block from the museum, to carry out the repair, restoration, and reconstruction of the large objects that would fill the Māori Hall in the new museum. He assembled complete objects using fragments

[75] Ibid.
[76] Ngata was particularly interested in capturing the designs from Te Hau-Ki-Turanga as an exemplar of indigenous Māori arts of New Zealand. It was held as the bench mark for artistic achievement and was emulated throughout the country including new wharenui projects at the Whare Runanga at Waitangi, Whitireia at Whangara, Manukorihi at Waitara, and Raukawa in Otaki.
[77] Deidre Brown, "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," 20.

and newly carved additions and produced replicas of missing objects based on other museum collections. Deeply involved in the reconstruction of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga,



Figure 3.5 Māori carvers and weavers in the Sydney Street shed, Dominion Museum, 1936. Photography by Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1936.

Heberley also repainted all of the *kowhaiwhai* ceiling rafter surfaces and created a number of new carvings to replace missing ones. Ngata did not think much of Heberley's carving work, though he acknowledged that it may have been more historically "correct"; instead, he favored the sculptural style of his team, which the school had adopted after reviving the use of the long-handled adze.[78]

For the weaving restoration work, which consisted of replacing forty-eight of the older woven panels, Ngata selected nine patterns that he regarded as "traditional"

[78] Ibid., 21.



Figure 3.6 New *tukutuku* (weaving) panels being created for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga by the School of Māori Arts and Crafts, in Wellington, 1936. Image by J.T. Salmond, MONZ reg. no. B5368.

examples of Māori style.[79] These translated as the relatively generic Māori motifs of *roimata toroa* (the tears of the albatross), the *mangoroa* (the milky way), and the *poutama* (a stepped pattern). Conscious of the Māori use of anti-loyalist colors in several meetinghouses built during the 1860s land wars, Ngata instead followed pre-

[79] Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Wharenui," 15.

1860s precedent in the coloring of the weavings, using black, white, and yellow pigment,[80] so as not to offend Pakeha officials visiting the museum. The work was undertaken in Wellington in a specially constructed shed on Sydney Street by a "Mrs. Heketa," her daughter, and six Otaki women who had previously been employed by the school on another meetinghouse project.[81] The team worked from March 1935 to January 1936, when Parliament returned to session and Ngata had to resume his official responsibilities there. The results of the project moved Te Hau-Ki-Turanga away from New Zealand's conflicted settler-colonial history and toward Ngata's ideal of a rigorously pan-Māori meetinghouse.

Ngata's aspirations brought other changes to the physical reconstruction of the meetinghouse as well. In October 1935, while taking the measurements for the new *tukutuku* panels, Ngata became concerned about the proportions of the house, noting that "the panel spaces appear wide in relation to the carvings . . . the impression of squatness is emphasized by the width of both carvings and panels."[82] To streamline the individual *tukutuku* panels, he decided to introduce two new carved wall slabs and corresponding painted rafters along each side of the house; he also advocated for the replacement of four missing porch-wall slabs, bringing the number of requisite new carvings to eight. Abandoning historical precedent, then, the now quite pragmatic Ngata sanctioned the inclusion of external elements and qualities that were not part of

[80] Deidre Brown, "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," 20.
[81] Thomas Barrow, *A Guide to the Māori Meeting House: Te Hau-Ki-Turanga* (Wellington: The National Museum, 1976), 24.
[82] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 87.

the original design, adding extra *poupou* and altering the dimensions of the replacement *tukutuku* panels. According to W. J. Phillipps, an ethnologist at the Dominion Museum at this time, the original wall slabs were too tall to fit along the new enclosure of the museum's gallery, so the Department of Public Works cut off their bases.[83] The discarded sections included the inscribed names of the depicted ancestors on the lower levels. In addition, this alteration, coupled with the rearrangement of the carvings, meant that the genealogical order of the ancestors became jumbled, and it would be over eighty years before they would be properly aligned again.[84] It is not clear whether this was a deliberate move on Ngata's part, but it did manage to enhance his efforts to reposition Te Hau-Ki-Turanga as a pan-Māori meetinghouse rather than a Rongowhakaata ancestral meetinghouse. Lastly, Ngata noted that the original ridgepole, the metaphorical backbone of the house, had been divided into four pieces, so he arranged for its replacement with a continuous piece of timber from Tokaanu in central New Zealand.[85] In 1940, just in time for the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition and almost one hundred years after Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was first created, the "new and improved" meetinghouse was introduced to the public as a fully carved *wharenui*.

The table below summarizes the 109 elements that were added to the original set between 1927 and 1937 (either as new elements or as parts borrowed from other

[83] Barrow, *A Guide to the Māori Meeting House*, 21.
[84] The realignment of the ancestral carvings are part of the "digital repatriation" project discussed later in Chapter 4.
[85] Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Wharenui."

wharenui in the museum's collection) from the restoration archives of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa: [86]

Element	**Notes**
Paepae	Originally carved for the 1906 Christchurch Expo by Tarawhai carvers.
Amo (2)	The two *amo* originally belonged to one of the two older Te Poho O Rawiri houses from Gisborne; they are of Ngati Oneone *iwi* origin.
Maihi (2)	The two *maihi* were carved by Dominion Museum carvers for the meetinghouse. The designs are replicated from *maihi* in the collection that belonged to one of the two older Te Poho O Rawiri houses.
Koruru	Designed by Thomas Heberley, a museum carver.
Poupou (4)	The four corner *poupou* were carved by Pine Taiapa and Charlie Tuarau and added to extend the depth of the porch.
Heke (4)	Associated and matched with the extra *poupou*. Carved by Wi Paddy, Henare Toka, Kohe Webster, and Charlie Tuarau.
Pane	The *pane* was designed based upon the original *pane* in the museum's collection. It was lengthened to help extend the length of the porch.
Pare	The *pare* was carved by Thomas Heberley.
Waewae kuaha	The *waewae* were originally from an unknown Gisborne house.
Window	The window frame was carved by Thomas Heberley. The side parts were designed based upon originals from an unknown Gisborne house.
Heketipi mahau (2)	Replacements of originals.
Papaka (37)	A number of these were carved to help complete the house.
Tahuhu (3)	The *tahuhu* is not original.
Poutokomanawa (2)	The two *poutokomanawa* belong to other Gisborne *whare*.

[86] Ibid.

Tukutuku (48)	*Tukutuku* panels were woven by Ngati Raukawa weavers under the supervision of Apirana Ngata.

In general, then, the restoration of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in the new Dominion Museum building involved significant modifications to the original carvings, weavings, and painting of the house. Together, these modifications masked the house's origins and created a pan-Māori *wharenui* that was both contained and controlled within the walls of the museum. When visitors walked into the new Dominion Museum, they moved through the foyer to the grand interior of the Māori Hall to encounter the centrally placed profile of what appeared to be the compete *wharenui* of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. The composite exterior and reconstructed interior presented an idealized concept of "classical Māori culture" and left out details of the substantial modification that had been involved. The *Dominion Post*, a daily newspaper based in Wellington, called it a "national icon of Māori artistry,"[87] and another Pakeha cultural critic recalled, "The first fleeting glimpse through the archways conveys the impression that here lies that heart of sentiment in New Zealand, the culture and romance . . . of a race steeped in tradition."[88]

Throughout the twentieth century, the meetinghouse remained one of the museum's most popular attractions. The *Dominion Post* reviewed the opening of the museum and its Māori Hall: "Preserved within the Māori Hall were some of the finest examples of the Māori treasures that were inseparable from the story of early New

[87] "Māori Hall Opens," *Dominion Post*, August 1, 1936.
[88] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 88.

Zealand and woven into the very fabric of the colony's pioneer communities."[89] The fetishizing of the meetinghouse laid claim to the essence of Māori culture and enshrined it in the nation's self-image: "The Dominion Museum," declared the newspaper, "has certainly given pride of place to the storied history of a proud race."[90] Reports of high attendance indicated that New Zealanders liked their new national museum, which must have buoyed the director's hope that the institution would become a source of national pride, including Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, "a wonderful carved house that is a prized exhibit."[91] New Zealand responded to the museum's display of Māori culture with enthusiasm: "From the past there is bequeathed to us a heritage—an art of abiding beauty peculiarly our own . . . it is for us today to see to it that in our national life all that is best in Māori art will be revivified to live again in a new and better age."[92]

The standing of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga within the museum's staff also improved; rather than referring to the "Māori house," the staff began to call it the "meetinghouse," a term that became common among Pakeha staff perhaps as a way of claiming their own stake in the cultural heritage and history of the nation. Māori material culture was thereby entirely removed from its *iwi* context and inserted into the settler-colonialist national story to serve as a prehistoric foil to inevitable

[89] *Dominion Post*, 1 August 1936 in O'Rourke, Ross. *Te Hau Ki Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank*. Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1994.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 88.

European history in New Zealand. In this way, the culture of display enshrined a Māori past as a prelude to the Pakeha present.

Tensions and Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: The Rise of Romanticized Biculturalism along with Māori Political Awareness

This display history was to remain relatively stagnate for several decades until the 1970s, when the UK joined the European Economic Community in 1973. During this time New Zealand was abruptly and unexpectedly left out in the cold, no longer able to sell its produce to a guaranteed market. After regarding itself as "a Better Britain" for almost a century, the end of its prosperous dependence on the mother country came as a "rude shock to the orphaned child."[93] Consequently, New Zealand society underwent yet another major crisis of identity, and what emerged from it was a romanticized form of race relations between the indigenous populations of New Zealand and its Pakeha settlers—one that denied many of the conflicts and injustices of the preceding century and more. In the face of the retreat of the mother country from her colonies and her realignment with Europe in the 1970s, the Treaty of Waitangi offered an alternative origin story that paved over the break with Britain. The Pakeha now recovered a new nationalist origin for themselves as one of the true two "founding peoples" of New Zealand, and the concept of the treaty partnership between Māori and Pakeha seemed to legitimize the Pakeha presence in New Zealand all over again. Though this partnership had been broken repeatedly during the process

[93] James Belsch, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Allen Lane, 1996), 67.

of colonization, Pakeha officials decided that, "if they recognize and do their best to repair these wrongs… the treaty guarantees their right to belong—Pakeha are the people of the treaty."[94] The rehabilitation of the Treaty of Waitangi as symbolizing, if not legislating, a partnership between the *tangata whenua* (the people of the land) and the European settlers underpins both the policies and the general nationalist orientation of New Zealand's biculturalism. And, upon this reinvigoration of biculturalism, the treaty saw itself elevated to the status of the nation's founding document once again. Even today, it continues to be seen as the basis of an ongoing social contract that can guide Māori/Pakeha relations, rather than as a purely historical relic.

The economic recession of the early 1970s also had a severe impact upon Māori communities, which saw many young Māori people relocate from their rural homes to urban city centers in search of better opportunities and jobs. Among other things, this shift meant that many Māori people began to visit the city's public spaces, including its museums, libraries, and parks, raising political awareness of the nature of these spaces and the audiences for whom they were intended.[95] Through organizations such as the New Zealand Māori Council,[96] leadership began to pass to a younger generation—a new cohort of educated urban Māori leaders who were acutely

[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] The New Zealand Māori Council was created by the Māori Welfare Act of 1962. The council has continuously exerted pressure on the New Zealand government to protect Treaty of Waitangi rights via projects that further partnership with and protection for the Māori. The council's defining feature is its statutory mandate to work for and on behalf of the greater Māori community.



Figure 3.7 Waitangi Day Protest, Auckland 1989. Photography by Gil Hanly, 1989.

aware of social and racial injustice and much more prepared to speak out than their elders had been. As social unrest began to increase, in turn, the mood swung towards activism, and groups such as *Nga Tamatoa* (the warriors) led protests that pushed Māori issues into the public domain.[97] Along with other simultaneous global civil rights movements, Māori demonstrations disrupted treaty celebrations at Waitangi in the early 1970s and were followed by the nationwide land march in 1975 and the

[97] *Nga Tamatoa* ("the warriors") was a Māori activist group that operated throughout the 1970s to promote Māori rights, fight racial discrimination, and confront injustices perpetrated by the New Zealand government, particularly violations of the Treaty of Waitangi. Nga Tamatoa emerged from a conference at the University of Auckland organized by the historian Ranginui Walker. The group consisted of mainly urban and university-educated Māori who were exercised by the continuing confiscation of land and degradation of the Māori language. The group was also inspired by international liberation and indigenous movements.

1977–78 occupation of Orakei-Bastion Point,[98] in the center of Auckland. Associated with these larger events was a generally more critical Māori response to national displays of harmonious racial histories between the Pakeha and the Māori.

Throughout this era, the Dominion Museum continued to present an idealized Māori past that, in effect, subordinated racial tension to a simplified anthropological construction of pre-European Māori culture as a precursor to the somehow inevitable and peaceful colonization of the island by the British crown. But, in 1974, the Dominion Museum changed its name to the National Museum, thirty-five years after New Zealand had given up its dominion status[99] and one year after the British had joined the European Economic Community. At this point, the Pakeha wanted to explore their unique national identity—to "recast their colonial past and [rekindle] their relationship to the land to give them a sense of belonging."[100] But the general Pakeha attempt to assimilate Māori populations into New Zealand national life as part of the decolonizing discourse of settler-colonialism was increasingly challenged by a Māori form of sovereignty that sought independence from proprietary Pakeha claims.

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[98] Bastion Point is a coastal piece of land in Orakei, Auckland, New Zealand. The land was originally occupied by the Ngati Whatua *iwi*, and, before the colonization of New Zealand, it was part of the *iwi*'s rich farming and fishing areas. The land was gradually confiscated by the New Zealand government for public works and development over a period stretching from the 1840s to the 1950s. In 1977–78, the Orakei Māori Action Committee organized an occupation that lasted for 507 days, during which 222 protesters were arrested. The occupation and the use of force to end it managed to highlight the alleged injustices against the Māori, and the occupation became a major landmark in the history of Māori protest and reform. In the 1980s, the New Zealand government returned the land to the Ngati Whatua *iwi*, with compensation, as part of a Treaty of Waitangi settlement process.

[99] In 1945 when Great Britain joined the United Nations, New Zealand officials were "told to change their letterheads to say 'New Zealand' but not to publicize the change." In 1974 (1 year after Great Britain joined the EEC) it was finally publicized and promoted publically both by the New Zealand Government and Māori activists groups (New Zealand History Nga korero a ipurangi o Aotearoa).

[100] King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, 566.

It was also during this decade that more Māori *iwi* began to articulate not simply their connection to what was on display at the National Museum but also their *ownership* of it. Scholar Deidre Brown explains that this response to *taonga* in museums was "sharpened by [the] cultural dislocation of these large groups of urban Māoris."[101] In 1975, as well, anthropologist Anne Salmond observed that the meetinghouse and the *marae* (the site just in front of the meetinghouse, used to welcome visitors) had become a sort of shrine or holy place of *Māoritanga* for young Māori in the city.[102] Scholar Edward Sissons adds, "Like many indigenous heritage movements, this should not be misinterpreted as simply nostalgia for the past but as a claim for the future based on a re-appropriation of traditional culture."[103] For the Māori people, history was clearly a means of negotiating modernity and their place within it.

In the process, the National Museum discovered that adopting the role of a truly national institution was going to be difficult. Already in 1974, for example, it found itself caught up in an inter-iwi dispute over Raharuhi Rukupo and Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. As recorded by the museum, a large group of Ngata Porou arrived in the Māori Hall, where they were welcomed by museum curator Charlie Tuarua and staff in front of the meetinghouse. The *iwi* presented a series of genealogical plaques establishing their link to the carver of the house. The plaques were duly displayed

[101] Deidre Brown, "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga," 23.
[102] The word *Māoritanga* is often used as an approximate synonym for Māori culture, with the Māori suffix "-tanga" being roughly equivalent to the qualitative noun ending "-ness" in English.
[103] Dominic O'Sullivan, *Beyond Biculturalism: The Politics of an Indigenous Minority,* 3.

inside the meetinghouse, only to be promptly questioned by the Halbert family of Gisborne, who insisted that the Ngata Porou representatives were mistaken, as Rukupo was *their* Rongowhakaata ancestor. Assistant Director John Yaldwyn stated that the museum was not a land court capable of adjudicating such claims but instead an institution of learning and a place for storing knowledge.[104] Whatever the truth of the matter, the meetinghouse was clearly attracting more Māori attention, and the incipient tug-of-war over the house's ancestry reflected its rising *mana* (power) and importance to various Māori *iwi*.

If the 1960s and 1970s laid the groundwork for Māori agency and change in the public sphere, the 1980s, and especially the exhibition *Te Māori*,[105] represented the catalyst for major shifts in how Māori were represented in, and consequently interacted with, their cultural heritage in museums. The exhibition, which toured the United States before returning home in 1986, proved to be a high point in Māori

[104] O'Rourke "Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank," 566.

[105] *Te Māori* was an international exhibition made up of objects from various New Zealand museums. It opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1984 and toured several American cities until 1986, before returning to several museums in New Zealand including the National Museum of New Zealand in 1986-1987. The exhibition's ultimate historical significance derives from the ways in which it resonated with indigenous communities. In the early 1980s, as *Te Māori* was being developed, a new generation of Māori leaders set out to use Māori culture for social and political ends. One such leader, Ihakara Puketapu, recalled, "One of the things that had to be made clear from the beginning . . . was that there was not going to be any Māori art exhibition unless Māori people are involved and agree. Now [this] is pretty critical. No government is going to allow any artifact to go overseas if there is any sort of political row going on in the country, and I'm pretty sure that [will] occur if Māori people aren't consulted." This process of consultation with the *iwi* was a crucial initiative that entailed approval from them before items in museum collections from their regions could travel to the United States. Initially suggested by Pakeha museum staff, the consultation was enthusiastically embraced by the New Zealand Māori Council and backed by the Department of Māori Affairs. In addition, delegates from several Māori *iwi* traveled to the different exhibiting institutions to take part in opening and closing ceremonies to awaken the ancestors and share their knowledge with different museum audiences. The resulting negotiations raised Māori consciousness about their cultural heritage and prompted their enthusiastic involvement in the ceremonies that accompanied the exhibition.

assertiveness on the international stage—one that shifted New Zealand's national focus from integration to biculturalism. At this point, as well, the word "*taonga*," previously used only within Māori communities who spoke *Te Reo* Māori, (Māori language), seeped into English usage among the Pakeha developers of the exhibition and the museum professionals with whom they came into contact. During planning meetings, the term (which literally translates to "cultural treasures") was heard often and recorded in minutes. The way in which *taonga* captured notions of its ownership in the political climate of the time was a key element in engaging the Māori *iwi* and reconnecting them with their ancestors. The fact that Pakeha developers adopted the term rather than resorting to an exclusively English vocabulary signified a shift in the museum as a "contact zone" and its connection to its objects' source communities. New Zealand scholar Moko Mead wrote that the rise of Māori *mana* (power) was the theme of the exhibition, adding that the Māori involved were no longer content to be silent partners but wanted to "speak for themselves and their heritage."[106]

Almost as soon as the Māori delegation returned from the exhibition opening in New York, the National Museum of New Zealand started to face pressure to move away from its Pakeha-aligned interpretations of Māori objects. Māori politicians demanded answers from the museum regarding the state of the collections and their interpretation and display, especially concerning Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, still renowned as the jewel of the Māori collection at the museum. And, in time, things did begin to change, though perhaps not fast enough for the Māori activists and politicians. In

[106] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 140.

1985, for example, acquisitions were listed with their Māori *iwi* in italics for the first time. This seemingly minor addition to the archival records had huge political ramifications for Māori *iwi*. Now, individual *iwi* could begin to trace where their *taonga* ended up, and regain, to varying degrees, authority around their care and interpretation inside the museum. Over the next few years, this change also resulted in a concerted effort by Te Papa to hire more Māori museum staff, in order to uphold the correct protocols concerning a specific *iwi*'s *taonga*.[107]

By 1990, the government-sponsored sesquicentennial celebrating 150 years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, public attention directed toward biculturalism reached its peak. In November of that year, the "Taonga Māori" conference at the National Museum heard numerous calls for control of their heritage. In the following decade, museums in New Zealand continued to receive much attention from an articulate Māori lobby that was making new demands regarding collections, their care, and their interpretation. From an international perspective, this degree of indigenous influence was extraordinary. The museum, once the legacy of a colonial—then re-colonial—past, had, in turn, become the locus of a "post-colonial protest," and its display had become a means of activism and renewal.

Nevertheless, at the National Museum of New Zealand in the 1990s, the presentation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga continued to owe much to previous cultures of display. It remained in the center of the exhibition hall as a supposed evocation of the Māori village arrangement of the pre-colonization period. Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's label

[107] Ibid., 140–141.

text did change, but only slightly, at this point representing the product of a collaboration between museum staff and Rongowhakaata *iwi* members that attempted to address the visitor from the point of view of the *iwi*:

> **Raharuhi Rukupo: The Craftsman**
> Te Hau Ki Turanga was built by one of the leading chiefs of the Rongowhakaata tribe, Raharuhi Rukupo (1800–1873). Modern carved meetinghouses owe their present forms mainly to the work of Rukupo. At a time when carving was in decline in many parts of the country, the Turanga school of Poverty Bay was at its zenith under the leadership of Rukupo, one of the greatest of all Māori carvers. He added a new dimension to Māori art by fully carving the first meeting house, Te Hau Ki Turanga, at Manutuku (south west of Gisborne) in 1842 with the help of Ngati Kaipoho, his subtribe of Rongowhakaata. The house was built as a monument to the memory of Te Waaka Mangere, the elder brother of Raharuhi Rukupo, who at the time of its creation was chief of the tribe. Sir Apirana Ngata described Te Hau Ki Turanga as "the finest flowering of Māori art." Rukupo and his pupils carved houses all over New Zealand. Today houses are still being carved in the style of Rukupo and the Turnaga school, more than 100 years after his death.[108]

In all, while the official discourse tried to enable a measure of Māori autonomy, it also sought to maintain control over Māori independence. But this would not last long. A new museology was beginning to emerge in the nation that sought to democratize the museum's audience, and it resonated with the Māori effort to address the historical alienation of their people from the museum. The politics of Māori cultural sovereignty called for a new approach to museum display—one that would include *iwi* in the process of developing Māori exhibitions. It was within this

[108] Ross O'Rourke, *Te Hau Ki Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank*, 288.

cultural climate that the New Zealand National Art Gallery and National Museum were combined to form the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in 1992. The museum officially opened in a new building on the Wellington waterfront in 1998. Its bilingual name staked its claim as a bicultural museum, as did its leadership structure. Alongside Cheryll Sotheran, who was appointed CEO of the museum in 1993, Māori artist and scholar Cliff Whiting became *Kaihautu*, or Māori director, in 1995.

One of the best examples of the museum's new partnership with Māori *iwi* was the process of relocation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga from the National Museum on Buckle Street to Te Papa's new location on Wellington's waterfront.[109] In 1989, the museum began to consult with the Rongowhakaata over its moving plans. The *iwi* agreed that Te Hau-Ki-Turanga could remain in Wellington as an exhibit, but, in return, the members asked to take part in its relocation and to have their proprietary rights revisited. Up to that point, the museum had acknowledged the Rongowhakaata *iwi*'s hereditary rights to the *wharenui* but asserted that it was legally owned by the museum. In 1990, a year after the museum's first outreach, the Rongowhakaata asked that the *wharenui* be symbolically returned to them before the opening of Te Papa, after which they would ceremonially entrust it to the nation and the museum's care. The Rongowhakaata believed that they needed only to grant custodianship of the meetinghouse to the museum, and that they still owned Te Hau-Ki-Turanga outright.

In 1992, Rongowhakaata *iwi* members gathered at the museum and stayed

[109] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 169.



Figure 3.8 Meetinghouse Te Hau-Ki-Turanga being moved to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa from the National Museum on Buckle Street. Photography by Phil Reid, 1996.

overnight in Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to discuss its future and the best way to handle its relocation. This meeting represented the first time anyone from the *iwi* had slept

inside the *wharenui* since it had been removed from the Orakaiapu site in 1867.[110] It was decided that a Rongowhakaata working group would be established to work with Te Papa to carry out the two-year project of dismantling, transporting, and reconstructing the *wharenui* at the new waterfront site. The working group would ensure that the reinstallation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was carried out in accordance with Rongowhakaata tradition. First, the *mauri* (life force) of the *wharenui* (meetinghouse) was laid in the foundation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga at its new site, before the actual meetinghouse arrived. A container of earth from the Orakaiapu site where Te Hau-Ki-Turanga once stood was presented to the museum by the Heni Sunderland, a prominent Rongowhakaata leader a the time. Later, in 1995, the meetinghouse was de-installed from the exhibition space in the Māori Hall on Buckle Street and, between September 1995 and July 1996, its 219 objects were cleaned and conserved ahead of their relocation in the new waterfront building.[111] The de-installation began with two men at a time extracting screws from the carvings on the porch—one man representing the Rongowhakaata, and the other, the museum. The reinstallation work was carried out between November 1996 and August 1997, guided by a conservation report prepared by Chris Cochran, conservation architect, and consultant engineer Don Thompson. The project conservator team was headed by Dean Whiting and included three *iwi* technicians from Rongowhakaata.

Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was to become the focus of a new exhibition area, called

[110] Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Wharenui."
[111] Ibid.

Mana Whenua ("the power of our place") at Te Papa. Its exact placement within the *Mana Whenua* exhibition was also determined, to a large extent, by the *iwi*. They wanted Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to be presented as a freestanding structure, facing north, in a prominent position in the space. In the finished exhibition, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was centrally positioned on an elevated plinth against a backdrop of stockade posts and accentuated by a set of steps. This dramatic elevated position, as though within a *pa*, (or fortified Māori area) on the crest of a hill, was intended to satisfy the *iwi*'s wishes to see it "uplifted," in order to give it *mana* (power). The redisplay of the *wharenui* inside Te Papa reflected the museum's new bicultural policy and productive working relationship with the Rongowhakaata. While it was still flanked by the *pataka* (carved structure that held food stock), as it had been in the Māori Hall, the *wharenui* now appeared much more prominently in the space. A plaque standing next to it, and a video playing at the foot of its steps, attempted to provide a link between the Rongowhakaata *iwi* and their *taonga*.

Arapata Hakiwai, then the conceptual developer for the exhibition and now the present Māori director of Te Papa, whose *iwi* affiliation is to the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, confirmed that the exhibition spoke with the authority of the people. Since Te Papa opened in February 2002, it has attracted unprecedented numbers of visitors, both national and international. The new museum exceeded its annual target of 700,000 people in just three months. One million visitors arrived within just five months, and over two million people came in the first year. Three and a half years

after opening, Te Papa boasted a total attendance in excess of 5.5 million people.[112] Immediately noticeable from such statistics is the fact that a broad cross-section of New Zealanders was visiting Te Papa. Its popularity with Māori visitors was, in fact, truly groundbreaking: the Māori population represented over 13 percent of the New Zealand visitors to the museum, and, during certain quarters, as much as 15 percent, which was equivalent to their proportion of the general population. The single most popular exhibit was undoubtedly Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, which was seen by 90 percent of the Māori visitors to the museum.[113]

However, in tandem with the celebrations and partnerships between Te Papa staff and the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's contested history resurfaced in 1997, when the *iwi* again lodged its treaty-redress claim with the Waitangi Tribunal for the theft of the meetinghouse. While previous decades had seen such claims resisted by the national government, the late 1990s brought change: the government revealed itself to be willing to take major steps in addressing longstanding disputes. It took the tribunal five years to finally address the claims, and, in hearings held in Gisborne in February 2002, *iwi* members presented evidence regarding the crown's unlawful acquisition of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Lewis Moeau, spokesperson for the *iwi*, stated that the Rongowhakaata's view of the acquisition was that it was a blatant theft, and further that the loss of the *wharenui* had remained a significant grievance for the *iwi*. It had also meant the disruption of a connection with the ancestors and the

[112] McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori*, 189.
[113] Ibid., 190.

iwi's past and identity. In his brief, Moeau also registered a number of complaints against the museum regarding the care and management of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. He claimed that the museum had let the *wharenui* deteriorate during the early twentieth century. He also expressed dismay that artists from other *iwi* were commissioned to produce the *tukutuku* panels and replacement carvings, and that the Rongowhakaata were never consulted or approached to complete this work.[114] What was important to the *iwi*, he explained, is that the *taonga* be brought home and reinserted into the physical location, history, and oral traditions of its people. When a *taonga* resides instead in a museum that is hundreds of miles from its home, the object and its associated *korero* (*iwi* stories or songs) are lost to its owners. If Te Hau-Ki-Turanga were to be returned home to Turanganui, it would enter a phase of reconnection to its *iwi*. It would be able to live among its descendants and witness and participate in their life cycles, and the Rongowhakaata would be able to exercise their full control over it rather than watch others do so.[115]

In 2004, several years after the de-installation and re-installation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in the *Mana Whenua* exhibition, the tribunal expressed the opinion that Te Papa did not legally own Te Hau-Ki-Turanga.[116] The Rongowhakaata *iwi* then entered into detailed negotiations with the New Zealand government regarding a settlement package that would include a crown apology, a correct historical account

[114] "Turanga Tangata Turanga Whenua: The Report on the Turanganui a Kiwa Claims," *Waitangi Tribunal Report* (Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2002).
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.

for the National Archives, and financial and cultural redress to the value of $59 million. The determination of cultural heritage legally shifted to that of the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, setting in motion lasting changes to the cultural legacy of indigenous collections in New Zealand's museums.

Modern Biculturalism at Te Papa and its Effects on Māori *Mana*

As we will see in the next chapter, the continuing gap between the rhetoric of equality and the reality of inequality in the "contact zone" of biculturalism has led some Māori scholars to reject the project of biculturalism outright. "Bi-nationalism" has instead been adopted by some as an alternative that more forcefully expresses Māori aspirations regarding self-determination and substantive political and economic equality. In contrast to biculturalism, which promotes equal representation of its two founding cultures, Māori and Pakeha, under one nation, bi-nationalism sees New Zealand as one country with two nations (rather than two peoples in one nation)—namely Māori and non-Māori. Māori scholars have criticized biculturalism for inhibiting the political self-determination and autonomy of Māori *iwi*. These scholars instead argue for "separate but equal" Māori institutions and political systems. For example, human rights lawyer Moana Jackson has argued for the establishment of a completely independent Māori justice system. Likewise, scholar Whatarangi Winiata has argued against the reformation of the British-derived New Zealand Parliament

and instead advocates for parallel institutions such as a "*tikanga Pakeha*" Pakeha House of Representatives and "*tikanga Māori"* (Māori House of Representatives).[117]

However, notions such as these tend to further bifurcate Pakeha/Māori communities and end up sustaining the settler-colonial agency rather than moving beyond it. The bicultural polities of the last two decades have arguably provided the space and some of the resources that help account for the dynamism of contemporary Māori cultural expression. Yet the rhetoric of biculturalism as it has operated over this period asserts the equality and separateness of Māori and Pakeha cultures in ways that, as I have demonstrated above, also facilitate the forgetting of colonial history and its aftermath. For both the Māori and the Pakeha, there is an obvious attraction to this historical amnesia. While the Māori wish to remember the injustices of colonel history to seek redress in the present, they also want to assert the ongoing strength and resilience of their culture despite colonization, not only to pursue a project of cultural wholeness but also to avoid challenges to their position within New Zealand society. Forgetting history is therefore paradoxically problematic to the project of moving beyond colonial relations via biculturalism or whatever else. In the next chapter, we will learn more about the issues associated with biculturalism today, as Te Papa grapples with the possible loss of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and the current redesign of its fourth-floor exhibition of the history of New Zealand.

[117] Dominic O'Sullivan, *Beyond Biculturalism: The Politics of an Indigenous Minority,* 3.

Chapter 3: A New Museology: Issues Related to Bicultural Contact Zones and Indigenous Agency at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

As we saw in the previous chapter, Te Papa, like many museums around the world, evolved out of a European institutional model designed to sustain a particular cultural hegemony and display "other" cultures as curiosities, specimens, arts and crafts, and art. In the 1980s and 1990s, Te Papa joined the "new wave" of museums that envisioned themselves as moving away from their colonial predecessors and refocusing their energies on promoting education, visitor engagement, and multivocality in exhibition displays. This new museology was neoliberal, in the sense that it took for granted an open exchange of information between museum staff and the Māori *iwi*, as well as open access to information.[1] During this time, museums underwent radical changes as they strove for greater recognition of alternative perspectives and approaches—an effort that led to a critical reassessment of some of the most fundamental concepts underpinning the interpretation, conservation, and representation of objects in museums. The balance of power in the collection, preservation, and representation of cultural objects then seemingly began to move from the singular museum voice to a plurality of voices involving the museum's communities as well. James Clifford described the change as a conscious "shift from a 'colonial' to a 'cooperative' museology."[2] At Te Papa, Māori *iwi* began to make

[1] Robin Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited," *Museum Anthropology* 34 (2011): 64.
[2] James Clifford, "Four Northwest Coast Museums: Travel Reflections" in Ivan Karp (eds) *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 212-254) 224.

their voices even louder, and they took more control over the management of their cultural heritage, or *taonga*, in the collection. In a new era of inclusiveness that continues to this day, Te Papa has attempted to use its collections and resources to reengage with the Māori *iwi* and promote cross-cultural awareness and appreciation. However, there has also been much debate and criticism (Conal McCarthy, Paul Tapsell, Robin Boast, and Amy Lonetree) over these "new" roles with regard to the more modern museum practice. This chapter addresses some of the issues around what scholars Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schatten Coelho call "empowerment-lite."[3] Despite good intentions, the participation enabled through Te Papa's bicultural mission is not always the democratic process it claims to be, and token consultations without authentic decision-making power, as well as relationships that disempower and control people, remain widespread within the museum arena. This raises questions around whether institutions such as Te Papa can ever be truly post-colonial, and how this position will impact the fate of Māori *iwi* involvement with *taonga* such as Te Hau-Ki-Turanga.

The Birth of a New Bicultural Te Papa

Starting with its planning stages in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Te Papa made a concerted effort to be a bicultural institution[4]—one characterized by "active

[3] Bernadette Lynch, "The Gate in the Wall: Beyond Happiness-Making in Museums," in *Engaging Heritage, Engaging Communities*, 11-29, edited by Bryony Onciul and Michelle Stefano (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2017), 13.

[4] In New Zealand, the term "biculturalism" grew out of a settler-colonial legacy between the indigenous Māori population and the Pakeha settlers. During the 1840s, the Crown established a New Zealand government as a representative government between its two "founding" peoples, the British

Māori involvement, the development of a [Māori] trust, and observable characteristics such as Māori [staff] positions, *iwi* recognized as partners, regular consultation, [and] cultural training for all staff in observance of Māori customs."[5] Sharing power in decision-making was critical to the institution's core mission, meaning that Māori and Pakeha needed to forge a genuine partnership to further that mission. According to Te Papa curator Ati Tamarapa, "If this museum is to make a credible commitment as a bicultural institution, then tribal consultation must certainly be the foundation for cultural partnership."[6] To this end, the museum established several Māori consultant groups to advise on its policy decisions, including new exhibitions: "*Iwi* liaisons are our key to the future,"[7] Tamarapa noted. For the museum's Māori curators, the goal was not only to give Māori people the opportunity to tell their own stories and histories but also to reconnect the *taonga* with their people. Essentially to "make them live" and activate their "living life force," according to Arapata Hakiwai, co-director of Te Papa. Hakiwai also went on to state that "our mission [at Te Papa] was literally

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and the Māori. Whereas up to that time the Māori population had outnumbered the British significantly, in the decades that followed the settler population grew rapidly, and, despite the protections promised in the treaty, the government began to regard British settlers as the dominant culture. Through to the 1980s, New Zealand was seen as an unofficially mono-cultural government favoring its Pakeha population. As a response to issues around legal protection and representation, Māori protests grew stronger, and this renewed awakening regarding Māori rights also helped to spark a Māori cultural renaissance. It was also during this time that the government once again began to describe the Treaty of Waitangi as New Zealand's founding document. Recently, however, there has been some debate as to whether biculturalism serves the Māori agenda or instead helps to perpetuate further colonial divides between Māori and Pakeha populations. Bi-nationalism has thus emerged as a possible alternative to biculturalism. For more information about the history of biculturalism and bi-nationalism in New Zealand, see Chapter 2.

[5] Conal McCarthy, *Museums and Māori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2011), 144.

[6] Christina Kreps, *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation, and Heritage Preservation* (London: Routledge, 2003), 71.

[7] Ibid.

to break down the walls of the museum, reconnecting the umbilical cord between *taonga* and people, building two-way highways so that life could be given back to *taonga* that had been sleeping for years."[8] Another example of the biculturalism underpinning Te Papa was the fact that conservators at the museum were obliged to consult with the *iwi* on the proper care and treatment of their *taonga*. This resulted in, among other changes, a new classification system for storage that incorporated an object's *iwi* origins, correct name, and handling or display information—for example, notes Tamarapa "objects related to food and everyday functions are stored apart from sacred or ceremonial objects."[9]

The main driver of this new museum practice was the National Services Te Paerangi, the liaison and training unit situated at Te Papa that was established in 1992. Its mission was to give practical and strategic advice to strengthen Māori/Pakeha relations within the museum field. After two national reports on the state of those relations, the O-Regan report in 1997 and the Murphy report in 1999,[10] the National Services took a much more active role in driving what it called the "bicultural development" of Te Papa in the early 2000s. The unit dedicated itself to "working with *iwi* to ensure that they have the support, resources, advice, and opportunities to continue caring for their *taonga*, inside and outside the museum."[11] It attempted to achieve this objective by hosting workshops on *taonga* conservation,

[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 70.
[10] The two reports focusing on the state of museums and Māori community involvement were funded by the New Zealand government in the 1990s.
[11] McCarthy, *Museums and Māori*, 211.

distributing money through development grants to local museums, running partnership projects, organizing *hui* (social gatherings or assemblies), and commissioning *iwi* research.



Figure 4.1 Photographer Michael Hall leads a workshop for the outreach program National Services Te Paerangi at Hawke's Bay *marae*, 2004.

It also enabled *iwi*-led initiatives through which the *iwi* developed and managed their own art and heritage programs and objects. One of the most famous examples of this new relationship-building was the initial co-reinstallation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga by the Rongowhakaata *iwi* and museum staff upon the meetinghouse's relocation from the former National Museum on Buckle Street to the new Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa ahead of its official opening on Wellington's waterfront.[12] All seemed well, and indeed Te Papa and other large institutions in New Zealand have

[12] See Chapter 2 for more information about Te Papa's opening in 1998.

long believed that they are moving toward a truly equal bicultural state, but, as Robin Boast warns us, "moving too soon to celebratory narratives runs the risk of obscuring far more fundamental asymmetries, appropriations, and biases."[13]

"Becoming Bicultural": Reaffirming Settle-Colonial Divides in Te Papa

On the surface, Te Papa seemed to be making huge and significant strides toward a re-engagement with Māori communities. Both inside and outside the organization, however, trustees, management, staff, visitors, and stakeholders constantly revisited bicultural policies and practices and looked at ways in which they might be improved or enhanced. In interviews, Te Papa Co-Director Arapata Hakiwai has often described Te Papa as "becoming bicultural,"[14] taking neither an affirmative nor a critical position regarding the complexities inherent in the different cultural values and practices operating within the institution.

For at least a decade, as well, New Zealand scholars from different disciplines (Conal McCarthy, Avril Bell, Jill Smith, Aroha Harris, and Carwyn Jones) have pointed out the shortcomings of Te Papa's type of biculturalism, claiming that it divides Māori and Pakeha into two separate groups, despite their history of entanglement; that it "idealizes racial harmony within the museum, when outside all is conflict; and that it romanticizes and essentializes 'traditional' Māori culture, while

[13] Dean Sully, Decolonizing Conservation: Caring for *Māori* Meetinghouses Outside New Zealand (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007) 13.
[14] McCarthy, *Museums and Māori*, 143.

treating Pakeha culture as 'postmodern.'"[15] Many of these scholars also argue that biculturalism actually locks the two "founding" peoples of New Zealand in an "us versus them" relationship, thereby creating a very distinct bicultural "contact zone" within the museum.[16]

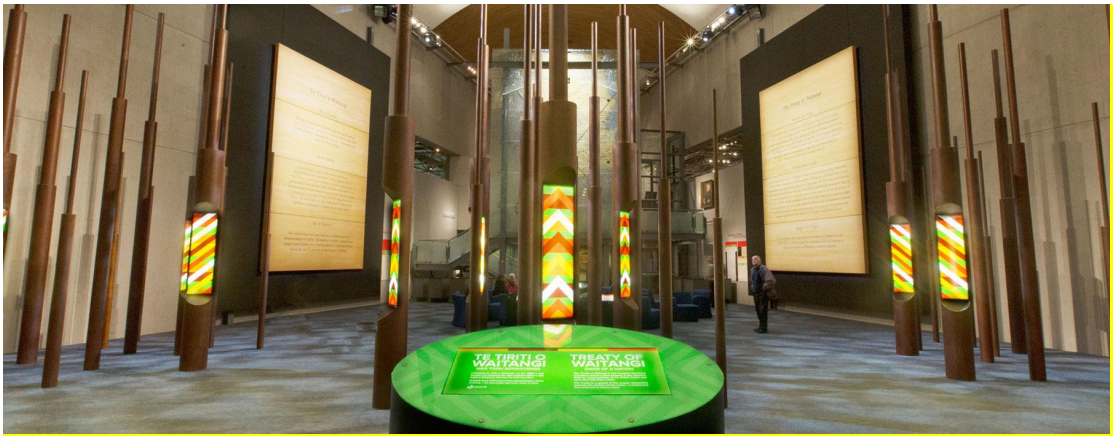


Figure 4.2 "Treaty of Waitangi Signs of a Nation: Te Tiriti o Waitangi Nga Tohu Kotahitanga" exhibition space on the fourth floor of Te Papa. The exhibition is placed directly between the *Mana Whenua* galleries (to the left), and *Passport* galleries (predominantly Pakeha history in New Zealand-to the right). Photography by Te Papa, 2012.

This idealized bicultural state, New Zealand politician James Gore concludes, overlooks not only the legacy of colonialism but also "the continuing inequality between Māori and Pakeha."[17] Likewise, when considering the paradigms of Māori/Pakeha relations, political science scholar Dominic O'Sullivan also finds that biculturalism is a "colonial relationship," whereas he sees a need for more "self-

[15] Ibid., 230.
[16] The concept of the museum as a "contact zone" between different cultures was most famously written about by James Clifford in his 1997 essay "Museum as Contact Zone." In it, he built upon Mary Louise Pratt's 1991 article "The Arts of the Contact Zone," where she associates this idea with "the social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths." For a more complete description of the contact zone, see Chapter 2.
[17] McCarthy, *Museums and Māori*, 231.

determination," which is "an expression of *tino rangatiratanga*," or absolute sovereignty, for the Māori.[18] He continues that, "biculturalism assumes a sharing of power but with Māori inevitably assuming the role of junior partner, while self-determination offers the opportunity for greater levels of autonomy and the residing of greater power within the *iwi*, *hapu*, and *whanua*."[19] Several scholars who look at these relationships in the museum, including Robin Boast, Amy Lonetree, Bernadette Lynch, and James Clifford, have noted that the overwhelming experience of these object stakeholders has taken the form of "token consultations without authentic decision-making power."[20] Even the most "progressive, well-meaning, inclusive, and engaged museum thus inadvertently continues to rely upon a center-periphery model."[21] Much participatory practice with indigenous communities has thus been found to be fundamentally flawed—it might provide an illusion of their participation, but, in reality, the institution driving this practice tends to coerce or otherwise rush through consensual decisions by virtue of its control of knowledge production and dissemination, or on the basis of its institutional agenda and strategic plan.

Scholar Andrea Cornwall points out that the sharing of authority is perhaps one of the greatest challenges for museums and their staffs, because it runs counter to the foundation of specialization and professionalization upon which these institutions are constructed. Anthropologist Michael Ames adds, "One of the consequences of the

[18] Dominic O'Sullivan, *Beyond Biculturalism: The Politics of an Indigenous Minority,* 207-208.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Lynch, "The Gate in the Wall," 14.
[21] Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 85.

increasing professionalization of museum work is that members of this developing profession begin to consider it their special responsibility and privilege to control and structure the relations between collections and the public. [Conservation staff] who hold this view present themselves as the necessary agents not only for the long-term preservation and care of the object, but also for the interpretation of heritage."[22] In general, then, biculturalism might be seen as the product of a specific period in New Zealand history that has perhaps now passed. Many Māori *iwi*, including the Rongowhakaata, feel that biculturalism fails to meet the challenges of social conditions in the twenty-first century, and new models and frameworks are needed to accommodate the changing state of Māori relations with the museum in the future.[23]

The Māori critique of biculturalism proceeds on two fronts. Some *iwi* complain that it simply does not go far enough—for example, museums such as Te Papa are able to deflect Māori criticism of their practice by evoking their bicultural credentials. As scholar Elizabeth Rata writes,

> Yes, there are lots of Māori people working at Te Papa, and yes, they are looking after the *taonga Māori*, but under whose rules? A museum is a museum, is a museum, and museums are full of Māori *taonga* that the museum owns, which they are generally speaking unwilling to relinquish to Māori communities, and that is the bottom line. If they want to be bicultural then they should be talking about joint ownership of those *taonga* in a real sense.[24]

[22] Michael Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 97.
[23] Karl Johnstone, personal interview, 10 February 2017.
[24] McCarthy, *Museums and Māori*, 231.

Likewise, the 2008 "Bi-Cultural Implementation Report" from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa concluded that, despite some progress on staffing, training, and research, the museum's goal of responding to the recommendations of the 1986 *Te Māori Wananga* seminar, which called for full museum partnership with the Māori, has not been achieved.[25]

The other main criticism of biculturalism—and one that recalls the academic critique of identity politics—is that it "prescribes rather than describes contemporary Māori identity."[26] Scholars have similarly voiced concerns about the ways in which campaigns of cultural restitution can paralyze and freeze Māori cultural heritage within what New Zealand historian Bill Oliver has called an "oppressive authenticity." Traditional Māori identity has become the primary marker defining what constitutes "correct" relationships with *taonga* inside the museum. Given the reality of the hybrid urban Māori identity that has developed in New Zealand since the 1960s, researcher Paul Meredith argues that biculturalism must be reconceptualized with a focus on "inclusionary and multifaceted identity politics"[27]—that is, as an alternative space that blurs boundaries and engenders new possibilities.

[25] "Te Hau ki Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank," *Colonial Museum Account Book* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1994).
[26] McCarthy, *Museums and Māori*, 233.
[27] Ibid.

Te Papa as Contact Zone: Uncovering Asymmetrical Power Relations in the Interpretation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

Through Te Papa's particular form of government-sanctioned biculturalism, a distinct type of "contact zone" has emerged between museum staff and the Māori *iwi*. These contact zones—or "spaces of friction" (Karp)[28] or "zones of awkward engagement" (Tsing)[29]—are spaces that facilitate the relationships or mediations between different stakeholders inside the museum. According to Te Papa curator Shane James, the museum currently "falls short"[30] of its ideal of equal power-sharing throughout the organization. Though staff and *iwi* share the dialogical space through the interpretation of Māori *taonga*, anthropologist Robin Boast calls our attention to the "inherent asymmetry" within the contact zone as well:

> The key problem, as I see it, lies deeper, deep in the assumptions and practices that constitute the museum in the past and today . . . the new museum, the museum as contact zone, is and continues to be used instrumentally as a means of masking far more fundamental asymmetries, appropriations, and biases. The museum as a site of accumulation, as a gatekeeper of authority and expert accounts, as the ultimate caretaker of the object . . . as its documenter and even as the educator has to be completely redrafted. Where the new museology saw the museum being transformed from a site of determined edification to one of educational engagement, museums of the twenty-first century must confront this deeper neocolonial legacy. This is not only possible but, I would argue, could renovate the museum into an institution that supported enrichment, rather than authorization or collection. To do this, however, requires museums to learn to let go of their resources, even at times of the objects, for the benefit and use of

[28] Ivan Karp, *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
[29] Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
[30] Shane James, personal interview, 13 February 2017.

> communities and agendas far beyond their knowledge and control. (NMAI curatorial staff person; interview by Boast [2001])[31]

While many who have been involved in the new museology over the past thirty years have advocated for a pluralistic approach to interpretation and presentation, intellectual control has largely remained in the hands of the national museum. This, according to Karl Johnstone, *iwi* representative and lead on the Rongowhakaata restoration and exhibition projects, has been the case with Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, at least up until its recent title shift. For example, previous text written about the meetinghouse for the museum's public was a joint endeavor between Te Papa staff and representatives of the Rongowhakaata *iwi*. However, as we saw in Chapter 1, this text betrayed little of the deeply contested history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and instead favored a friendlier tone for visitors meant to capture the point of view of a Rongowhakaata *iwi* member.[32] This is why, when the official ownership of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga transferred fully to the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, one of Karl Johnstone's first acts was to rewrite the meetinghouse's description. His main objective was to

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[31] Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 24.

[32] Previous English text from the plaque adjacent to Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in Te Papa, read as follows: "Greeting to all our visitors! We, the Rongowhakaata people of the Gisborne district, welcome you to our great house called Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Te Hau-Ki-Turanga celebrates our history and our links with other tribes and nations. We invite you to enter to join us in sharing our past achievements and our hopes for the future! Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was built in 1842 at Manutuke, just south of Gisborne, by our most famous carver, Raharuhi Rukupo, in memory of his late brother Tamati Waka Mangere, a chief of the Ngati Kaipoho subtribe. Its name, which means the 'Breezes of Turanga,' alludes to the many influences that all the families and tribes of our district have in common. This house was acquired by the government in 1867 and was one of the first meetinghouses carved entirely with steel adzes and chisels. Our love for our ancestors and their heritage keeps alive our interest and involvement in this house. Today Te Hau-Ki-Turanga symbolizes the proud identity of Rongowhakaata, our contribution to the nation, and our commitment to a bicultural partnership with Te Papa Tongarewa, the Museum of New Zealand."

"unmistakably align the *mana* [power] of the meetinghouse back to Rongowhakaata."[33]

Although they may represent the best of intentions, museum contact zones are, in reality, less sites of reciprocity "than asymmetric spaces of appropriation that are both in and for the center."[34] In terms of the present study, then, we must wonder whether the contact zone or dialogical space provided by biculturalism simply represents the latest manifestation of settler-colonial control over New Zealand's history and cultural property. As discussed in the previous chapter, settler-colonialism's ultimate goal is to assimilate indigenous populations into the larger dominant group. This helps to create a supreme and unchallenged settler nation via a narrative of "equality" for all its citizens; it "strives to eliminate the challenges posed to settler sovereignty by indigenous peoples' claims to land by asserting false narratives and structures of settler belonging."[35] According to scholars such as Lorenzo Veracini, settler-colonialism therefore does not really have an "end," and, in this sense, the current national museum's bicultural contact zone can be seen as a means of continuing colonial-settler agendas and avoiding "hard truths"[36] regarding unresolved grief and colonial injustice.

[33] Johnstone, interview.
[34] Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration," 67.
[35] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler-colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 20.
[36] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, 3.

Te Papa as Contact Zone: Uncovering Asymmetrical Power Relations in the Conservation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

In addition to the issues surrounding the asymmetrical relationships of interpretation in Te Papa's bicultural contact zone, another intrinsic concern surrounding this model has been the museum's legacy of conservation. Historically, this legacy has meant preserving objects as static, inanimate entities that represent a particular moment and culture in time. In general, the Western approach to conservation has, at its core, two main functions: to document changes to an object, usually through a variety of scientific imaging techniques, and to attempt to arrest that change—to essentially fix the object in its most ideal state, a state that is decided upon by those in power through their particular view of history and authenticity. This approach has always asserted a sharp line between past and present—one that tends to ignore an object's natural or cultural need for reform and to decontextualize the object through its "distancing" of the museum's care from the cultures represented in their collections. This distancing is both spatial and temporal, thanks to, first, the act of physically removing objects from their site of origin, and second, the consignment of these objects to stand for a particular moment in history rather than an evolving cultural practice.[37]

In many indigenous museums or community centers around New Zealand, including those in the Turanga area, on the other hand, there is generally no sharp division between the past and the present; instead, there are multiple temporalities.[38]

[37] Kreps, *Liberating Culture*, 149.
[38] For more information on the debate surround multiple temporalities, see Chapter 1.

This points to a core Māori belief system—that of *ka mua, ka muri* (roughly translated as, "walking backwards into the future"), where the past is used as a part of the present to help direct the future—and this overarching continuity and connection can be seen most prominently in the connection between ancestral carvings and their descendants inside the meetinghouse. Māori *iwi*, including the Rongowhakaata, perceive objects as animated by a living force or life energy, and this is "especially true of objects of sacred or ceremonial value."[39] For many Māori, then, cultural treasures are living entities with names, personalities, lineages, and spirits, and they treat them as such. These objects are active and present mediators between the past and the present, and between the dead and the living. In terms of their agency, these objects are bound up in a personalized relationship with the *iwi*, so that the Māori take care of their *taonga*, and the *taonga* take care of them. *Taonga* are vital links to the past that serve as guides for their *iwi* descendants. Māori scholar Moko Mead describes Māori *taonga* and their *mauri* (living force): "For the living relatives the *taonga* is more than a representation of their ancestors: the figure is their ancestor and woe betide anyone who acts indifferently to their *tipuna* [ancestor]."[40] If a museum were to acknowledge this condition—that is, that Māori objects possess social lives[41] and function as part of a larger, dynamic cultural connection across time—it would

[39] Kreps, *Liberating Culture*, 147.
[40] Ibid.
[41] The idea that objects contain "social lives" appears in Arjun Appadurai's 1988 book *The Social Life of Things*, where he examines how objects become part of different social relationships, often through commerce or ownership. In the above example, however, I do not draw upon Appadurai's definition but rather a Māori definition of the object as a living ancestor, communicating to contemporary *iwi* descendants about the past as a way to help them navigate the future.

help to liberate objects from a static western exhibition and conservation practice. The transformation of a carving into the mediator of an ancestor derives directly from the Māori creation myth whereby humanity first gained the ability to carve from Tangaroa, the god of the sea.[42] Every carving "speaks" to the ancestral realm by successfully integrating its aesthetic form with its practical didactic function. The notion of talking carvings underpins the use of these figures within the meetinghouse, as well as the larger role of art in Māori culture. Communication through the carved ancestors in Te Hau-Ki-Turanga therefore produces a particularly powerful and important incidence of *ka mua, ka muri*.

Even at Te Papa's inception, there was talk of rethinking core conservation practices so as to incorporate Māori systems of care; Dean Whiting, a Te Papa conservator at that time, (and eventual co-director of Te Papa from 1994-2000) argued in the early 2000s that "the conservation of *marae* structures illustrates the importance of broadening the concept of conservation."[43] But many Māori *iwi* feel that this initiative has not manifested itself in actual practice within the museum. This is why, when Karl Johnstone was planning the three-year restoration of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, he consciously used the word "restoration" rather than "conservation." To him, the restoration is a "recalibration of our *iwi*'s power relationship to Te Papa."[44] Restoration (verses conservation) of the meetinghouse, that is, also implies the active

[42] For more information about Tangaroa and the Māori myth of talking carvings, see Chapter 2.
[43] Dean Sully, *Decolonizing Conservation: Caring for Māori Meeting Houses Outside New Zealand* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007), 68.
[44] Johnstone, interview.

restoration of the *iwi*'s *mana* there. It is about not only preserving the tangible remains of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga but also revitalizing the *iwi* through different knowledge practices and skills: "By reframing the meetinghouse as a restoration project, this brings power back to the *iwi* . . . to reconnect with the ancestors in a way we see fit today."[45] Is there, then, a better framework than that of the contact zone to represent the shifting power struggles among various stakeholders in the museum?

Uncovering the Politics in Contact Zones: Extending Actor-Network Theory through *Ka Mua, Ka Muri*

An understanding of these Māori carvings not as inanimate objects but as ancestors of specific *iwi* opens up for the incorporation of the views of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's living cultural stakeholders. This, in turn, prompts a fresh look at the power structures that have historically been either bolstered or muted within the Western institution of the museum. Agency becomes contingent and emergent within social collectives involving both human and non-human actors—collectives that can take many different forms. Such a framework for renewed agency depends upon the relationships between people, objects, ancestors, institutions, and governments. One such model is actor-network theory (or ANT), which supplies a means of broadening the concept of the "contact zone" into a more interconnected, complex, and entangled mapping of stakeholders for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Essentially, ANT is a theoretical approach that states that everything in the social and natural worlds exists within a

[45] Ibid.

constantly shifting network of relationships. These complex networks incorporate human and non-human agents (such as objects, organizations, and structures) into a conceptual framework that assigns constantly shifting levels of agency. ANT was first developed by sociologists and scholars working in the field of science and technology studies in the 1980s as a critique of conventional social theory. Central to ANT is the understanding and visualization of relationships between objects and human actors. Where ANT fails, however, is that its model perceives social connections as "flat," so that interactional priorities can shift dramatically depending on the situation and agency of those involved in them.[46] ANT therefore does not go far enough in addressing the inherent asymmetrical power politics of interpretation and display. The problem of using this term for the heritage field then may be due to the fact that is was developed for the fields of science and technology. While decentralized networks of connection might be considered democratic online, this is not the case for human connections. This mirrors many of the critiques raised by scholars such as Robin Boast and Amy Lonetree with regard to the often obscured but prevalent a-symmetrical power relations involved with contact zones.

At Te Papa, Rongowhakaata (human) and Te Hau-Ki-Turanga (non-human or ancestral) are working together to re-create the iwi's past in the present through everyday networks of association. Thinking along these lines shifts the emphasis from what objects symbolize to what their affective qualities are, and it asks us to account for the ways in which material objects are involved in particular forms of interactions

[46] Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2013), 36.

that create social features. ANT, then, must add an additional step to its framework that addresses the inequalities or shifts in power, rather than assuming neutral flatness to these relations. A more complete framework could be achieved by adding an additional step beyond ANT—that is, an understanding that *heritage* is not an object but rather an active process of strategically using the past in the present for the future. This idea is echoed in the Māori concept of *ka mua, ka muri* looking to or using the past as a way to guide you [and your iwi] in the future.



Figure 4.3 Aunty Marj, an elder of Ngati Mutunga, speaks at a museum conference in Te Papa in 1998 to talk about iwi involvement at the museum. She waves a white feather, a symbol of the teachings and philosophy of Parihaka (a community in the Taranaki region of New Zealand). Image by Te Papa, 1998.

The ANT dialogical model, which derives from the relationships among people, objects, places, and practices, thus needs to incorporate the active process of heritage, or *ka mua, ka muri*, in order to address the political process of how objects

are used in power dynamics, and that process's capacity to isolate and exclude particular individuals and social groups depending on who has control of the contact zone. Since the meetinghouse's confiscation in the 1860s, the Rongowhakaata stakeholders of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga have been mostly silenced, dominated by the largely Pakeha voice within the museum that had taken custody and stewardship of it. This settler-colonial narrative of "New Zealand-ness" allowed those in power to silence *specific* Rongowhakaata narratives about the history of the meetinghouse in favor of a more peaceful and digestible colonial-settler/pan-Māori national history.[47]

To take this analysis a step further and work through the concept of the silenced Rongowhakaata carved ancestor, we might turn to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's work in the 1985 article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" There, Spivak engages with the subaltern, or one "of inferior rank," which, in a colonial context, refers to the colonized and peripheral subject who survives the process of colonization itself. She writes, "In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history, and cannot speak"[48]—that is, the subaltern is provided with no real equitable conceptual space outside of the control of the colonizer. In the case of Te Papa, that condition would extend to the museum's bicultural contact zone. Recent initiatives around the Rongowhakaata recontextualization of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, through the three-year restoration and exhibition projects, the "digital repatriation" project, and the possible

[47] See Chapter 2 for more information on how Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was used for political reasons to promote particular political agendas.
[48] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillian Education, 1988), 28.

physical repatriation of the meetinghouse to Rongowhakaata land, represent attempts to allow the subaltern—in this case, the *iwi*'s ancestors, to have new voice through their Rongowhakaata descendants' interpretations. For example, the descendants of the Rongowhakaata *iwi* have long sought the removal of all non-Rongowhakaata carvings that were inserted into the building in 1868 at the Colonial Museum and through Apirana Ngata's restoration in the 1930s at the Dominion Museum, so that the meetinghouse would consist of exclusively Rongowhakaata carvings and thus be consecrated as a whole and "authentic" Rongowhakaata ancestor. The related "digital repatriation" project represents an attempt to return, if only digitally, all Rongowhakaata carvings to the meetinghouse from collections in museums abroad in order to restore, abet virtually, the original positioning of the ancestral carvings for the first time since the meetinghouse's confiscation in the 1860s. Still, important questions remain. For example, how do we truly "interpret" the needs and desires of "silenced" carved ancestors? Does the heritage or *ka mua, ka muri* process actually shift the power dynamic, or does it simply introduce a new political debate around who gets to "speak" for the ancestors? And is this new model really a substantive and meaningful shift in postcolonial authority politics? In essence, can the agency of the *iwi* be fully felt within the confines of Te Papa, or would the physical repatriation of the meetinghouse back to the Rongowhakaata *marae* be the only way to truly give the *iwi* full control of its cultural heritage?

Can Museums Be Truly Post-Colonial? A Future Resting Place for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

When we consider the momentous 2018 vote on the final resting place for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, and the politics that envelop it, we must first consider what each potential location would mean for the long-term care and interpretation of the meetinghouse. If it were to remain within Te Papa, would all wrestle with the prospects for "decolonizing" an institution that has been so intimately linked to the colonization process? Scholar Amy Lonetree has dedicated her career to studying Native American involvement in and resistance to American museums. In her book *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, she states, "Museums are indeed very painful sites for Native peoples as they are intimately tied to the colonization process."[49] As we have seen with regard to Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, these colonial institutions created the ordered representations that contained, objectified, and mitigated the colonized culture to the advantage of the paternalistic imperialism that characterized the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lonetree believes that museums can reverse this dynamic, however, and serve the cause of decolonization in turn. They can be trained to recognize indigenous knowledge and worldviews and to challenge the stereotypical representations of indigenous peoples that were produced in the past. In time, they might even become sites of knowledge-making and remembering for *both* indigenous and colonizer communities, and they might examine the "hard truths of colonization in exhibitions

[49] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 1.

as part of an effort to promote healing and understanding."[50] According to Karl Johnstone, "If done correctly, the pros to this option [gifting Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to Te Papa] include having the resources and international stage to have Te Hau-Ki-Turanga be a living representative of the Rongowhakaata *iwi* in the nation's capital."[51]

Another option would be to place Te Hau-Ki-Turanga under the care of a local Gisborne institution, the Tairawhiti Museum. Physically, in this plan, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and its ancestral carvings would be closer to the *iwi*, but they would be within yet another (essentially Western) institution. During a *hui* (gathering) of the *iwi* in July 2017, several Rongowhakaata members remarked that while it might be physically closer the Tairawhiti Museum is "further behind Te Papa in terms of infrastructure to support *iwi*/museum relations ."[52]

The last option, of course, would be the return of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to the Rongowhakaata *marae*, where it might serve as a type of community center. *Iwi* members have argued that the physical repatriation and reconnection of their meetinghouse ancestors to their *iwi*'s land would not only ensure that the ancestors would be treated in a culturally appropriate way but also allow people to reconnect with them on a daily basis. Indigenously owned museums and community centers are not a new idea. When discussing their rise in popularity in the 1990s and 2000s, Arapata, the Te Papa co-director, was "sure they [local cultural centers] are going to

[50] Ibid., 5.
[51] Johnstone, interview.
[52] Ibid.

arrive in greater numbers in the near future and that museums should get used to the idea and actively foster their development or else risk becoming irrelevant to Māori."[53] Heritage scholar John Coster has observed related developments in community centers (versus state-run museums) for decades and thinks that, while a lot of good has been done, "the crucial change, which is yet to come but may be starting, is the handing over of power . . . based on principles of self-determination."[54]

New Zealand's museums, like its society in general, are transitioning from a colonial authoritative and centralized position to a radically different model of partnership devolution and co-management of cultural heritage with source communities. Yet, does this go far enough to truly decolonize Te Papa? Several *iwi* communities have called for a shift from biculturalism to bi-nationalism, or other variations upon self-determining autonomy. But does bi-nationalism help to create the same "us versus them" divides as biculturalism? These changes have informed government innovations, *iwi*-focused collection and exhibition projects, and, perhaps most obviously, the many *iwi* initiatives around *taonga* databases, cultural centers, and other programs. While Arapata thinks that a great deal has changed, museums have resisted going all the way, due to a "stifling museology."

> In twenty or thirty years, we're going to have a totally different landscape. Museums, whether they like it or not, will be challenged in a way they have not been before. *Te Māori* challenged museums in a very physical way in the 1980s, and I think museums will be challenged by *iwi* saying, 'Well, we want to know what you have right now, we want full access to our cultural treasures right now, and we want to be involved with them.' Museums will grow, but

[53] McCarthy, *Museums and Māori*, 209.
[54] Ibid.

only with the full involvement of *iwi*. Museums will continue to struggle if they remain as they are.[55]



Figure 4.4 Dr. Arapata Hakiwai talking with the Rongowhakaata *iwi* inside Te Papa about present and future involvement. As Te Papa's *kaihautu* (Māori co-director) he stated that the museum was committed to working with Rongowhakaata *iwi* to assist with the restoration of their *wharenui* (meetinghouse). Photography by The Dominion Post, 2017.

It would appear that museums in New Zealand are on the threshold of another period of major change, akin to that of the 1980s and 1990s. Museums and Māori are therefore at a crossroads, and unless there is resolution on some substantive issues, it is possible that the *iwi* will increasingly abandon mainstream institutions to construct their own cultural centers and other independent initiatives, as may be the case with the physical repatriation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga.

[55] Ibid., 210.

Working Inside and Outside the Institution: Rongowhakaata Cultural Agency

The 2018 vote on the final resting place of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga thus becomes a political performance focused on who has the power to make decisions surrounding the meetinghouse's long-term care and interpretation. This control is particularly vital to communities that are attempting to assert self-determination and confront the legacies of colonial dispossession, whether on an international, national, or local level. Since the 1980s, Māori *iwi* have demanded control of their own affairs, arguing that self-management based on Māori cultural values will succeed where foreign systems have failed. As this drive for self-determination increases in intensity, and biculturalism inevitably gives way to more autonomous forms of belonging within the nation, how will museums respond to the pressure of relevance within that same nation? Can Te Papa be a post-colonial space and place? Does the Rongowhakaata *iwi* even care about having their voices heard within the national museum, or do many of its members see this as irrelevant? Are there alternative models for reconnecting *taonga* with their descendants and getting the stories about Te Hau-Ki-Turanga out to the public? The following chapter addresses the plans for the 2017–2020 care and management of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, both within Te Papa but also via several projects currently overseen by Rongowhakaata *iwi* members that bypass the authority of the museum—and, by extension, the bicultural New Zealand government—completely.

Chapter 4: Rongowhakaata and Cultural Development: New Models of Indigenous Agency Inside/Outside the Museum Institution

In the last chapter, we asked what would be next for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga—that is, whether its placement in Te Papa or at another local museum in Gisborne would satisfy the *iwi*'s needs and legal demands for their ancestral meetinghouse, or whether the only way to fully disrupt the meetinghouse's settler-colonial legacy would be to go outside the institution of the museum completely and return the meetinghouse to its original location on the Rongowhakaata *marae*. We also considered whether indigenous self-determination can exist within a Western museum infrastructure, and, relatedly, whether we should upend the notion of "equal bicultural representation"[1] and find a more useful terminology that calls attention to or even exposes the notion's "inherently asymmetrical"[2] contact zone. This chapter takes a closer look at Rongowhakaata agency and cultural self-determination in the wake of several recent projects tied to the interpretation and preservation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. We have seen that Rongowhakaata *iwi* members are working both inside and outside the museum to achieve their goals. These projects serve as experiments in alternative models for reconnecting Māori *taonga* with their descendants, as well as getting Rongowhakaata stories about Te Hau-Ki-Turanga out into the public on the *iwi*'s own terms.

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[1] "Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Annual Report," *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, Wellington: New Zealand Government, 1992.
[2] Robin Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited," *Museum Anthropology* 34(1) (2011): 56.

Rongowhakaata Agency: A Brief History of Māori Protest

The legacy of modern Māori activism includes a long line of Māori indigenous movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries designed to recover and reassert *rangatirantanga*, the encompassing Māori notion of self-determination, indigenous authority, and autonomy.[3] During that era, the British crown attempted to erode Māori *rangatirantanga*, despite the promises of *iwi* sovereignty in the Treaty of Waitangi. The cornerstones of Māori efforts to obstruct settler-colonialist control thus have historically been focused on three areas: (1) land use and *taonga* ownership rights, (2) the Treaty of Waitangi sovereignty promises, and (3) the revival of *te reo* (the *Māori* language).[4] Māori groups have contested and renegotiated the post-treaty policies of the New Zealand government, and especially those that continued the perennial push for bicultural assimilation and integration, in the hope of socializing (and absorbing) the Māori in the modern (Pakeha) world and the social and economic life of the nation.

In the mid-twentieth century, the New Zealand government's biculturalism, thinly veiled as the assimilation and integration of Māori *iwi* into the dominant Pakeha population, was taken up and vigorously pursued by the New Zealand

[3] Carwyn Jones, *New Treaty New Tradition: Reconciling New Zealand and Māori Law* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2016), 27.
[4] For more information from scholars who have written about and helped to define the rise of Māori political consciousness, see Donna Awatere, *Māori Sovereignty* (1984); I. H. Kawaru, *Conflict and Compromise: Essays on the Māori since Colonialism* (1989); Mason Durie, *Te Mana, Te Kawanatanga: The Politics of Māori Self-Determination* (1994); Kawariki Te, *Twenty Years of Protest and Action, 1979–1999* (1999); and Aroha Harris, *Hikoi Forty Years of Māori Protest* (2004).



Figure 5.1 Waitangi Day Protest, Wellington 1986. Photography by Gil Hanly, 1986.

government following the publication in 1961 of J. K. Hunn's[5] report for the Department of Māori Affairs.[6] In 1960, Prime Minister Walter Nash asked Hunn to do a review of the Māori Affairs Department, including a summary of the state of Māori life in New Zealand at the time. The report addressed the challenges facing Māori iwi members who had recently (and rapidly) migrated from rural communities to urban centers to seek work and other opportunities. Its comprehensive statistical analysis painted a grim picture of endemic Māori disadvantages with regard to health, education, employment, crime, housing, and land development. Many Māori people have since commented that the solutions proposed by the report were perhaps as

[5] Jack Kent Hunn served as the New Zealand secretary of internal affairs, secretary of justice, secretary of Māori affairs, and secretary of defense from the late 1950s until his retirement in 1965.
[6] Aroha Harris, *Hikoi: Forty Years of Māori Protest* (Wellington: Huia Press, 2004), 21.

disconcerting as the problems it revealed—namely, the report advocated for Māori people to be "turned into effective citizens, fully participating in the social, political, and economic life of the nation in modern ways."[7] The hope, that is, was to align them with their Pakeha counterparts,[8] but the report went even further, placing the burden of responsibility for integration on the Māori themselves. While the Māori were expected to fit into Pakeha society in the interests of better race relations, however, there was no inducement to the Pakeha to cultivate even a superficial understanding of the Māori world.

If modern Māori protest efforts began in the 1960s, precipitated by events and trends that highlighted incidents of racism and an ongoing failure on the government's part to respond to the underrepresented and largely marginalized Māori population, they reached a fever pitch in the 1970s and 1980s. As before, the thrust of the Māori argument was over the foundational Treaty of Waitangi—the Māori sought to secure the sovereign rights that the treaty guaranteed and regain control of Māori affairs and land.[9] In contrast, the Pakeha sense of the treaty, starting in the 1960s, was that it had been a gesture—at best, "a generic symbol of nationhood."[10] In this era,

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[7] Harris, *Hikoi*, 21.

[8] New Zealand—along with other nations, such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and South Africa—represents a legacy of settler-colonialism, which is, as discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2 of this thesis, a particular form of colonialism. Settler colonization ultimately seeks an end to colonial difference, in the form of an absolute and unchallenged settler state and population. Scholars such as L. Veracini, *Settler-colonialism* (2010) warn us, however, that this is "not a drive to decolonize but rather an attempt to eliminate the challenges posed to settler sovereignty by assimilating indigenous peoples into a new national identity and asserting false narratives and structures around settler belonging."

[9] For more information on the politics around the Treaty of Waitangi and its recent tribunal settlements, see Rachael Bell, *The Treaty on the Ground: Where We Are Headed, and Why It Matters* (2017); Nicola Wheen, *Treaty of Waitangi Settlements* (2012); and Carwyn Jones, *New Treaty, New Tradition: Reconciling New Zealand and Māori Law* (2016).

[10] Harris, Huia *Hikoi: Forty Years of Māori Protest*, 27.

Waitangi Day, the annual commemoration of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and the unification of Pakeha/Māori populations under the auspices of one nation, soon became an annual focus of protest activity for the Māori rather than a flag-waving day of celebration. Māori activism in the 1970s ultimately paved the way for successive New Zealand governmental parties to revisit the treaty and determine how to give it greater recognition while also beginning to develop the Waitangi Tribunal. In 1975, when Matiu Rata was the minister of Māori affairs, the Treaty of Waitangi Act established an independent commission of inquiry that was tasked with investigating and making recommendations about Māori redress claims related to breaches of the treaty.[11]

For the next ten years, the tribunal received little public attention, at least from the dominant Pakeha citizenry. For one thing, it was initially only able to consider claims that had arisen following its establishment in 1975 and could not address the many prior claims that dated back to 1840, when the treaty was first signed. In 1985, however, this changed, and the tribunal began to invite any and all redress claims.[12] It was promptly inundated with them, as various *iwi* vied to have specific injustices from the past acknowledged and then compensated for.

According to Aroha Harris, author of *Huia Hikoi: Forty Years of Māori Protest*, the business of articulating, negotiating, and settling longstanding *iwi* Tribunal claims proved to be a painstakingly slow process that has largely drained the

[11] Ibid., 28.
[12] Ibid.



Figure 5.2 Waitangi Tribunal at Orakei *marae* 1986. Photography by Gil Hanly, 1986.

energy of the Māori for nearly twenty years. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, for the Māori, the process is more like a battle of "us versus them" than a legal arbitration—"a courtroom and boardroom battle, but a battle nonetheless."[13] Despite their failings, however, the treaty claim hearings, coupled with the government's new tribunal policies from the 1980s, have been credited with contributing to the revival of *iwi* organization and activity that has occurred throughout New Zealand. During its years

[13] Ibid.

in operation, the tribunal has increased the public's awareness of Māori grievances, and it was in this environment, in 1997, that the Rongowhakaata Trust lodged a claim for the theft of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Seven years later, the tribunal released its final report, officially shifting the title of the meetinghouse from the New Zealand government and the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to the Rongowhakaata Trust. During the Treaty of Waitangi claims negotiation period, six particular points of negotiation contributed to the enduring settlement concerning Te Hau-Ki-Turanga and the push to give the Rongowhakaata full agency over the meetinghouse's heritage—that is, how it is now represented, cared for, and connected to its community.

One of the first points in the settlement act's negotiations was the right to return Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to "its former glory." From the outset, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* expressed a strong desire to restore the *wharenui* (meetinghouse), as best they could, to its original appearance, prior to the government's illegal acquisition of the building in 1867. The first step in this process, according to the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, was to remove the carvings, paintings, and weavings done by non-Rongowhakaata artists. The meetinghouse's current state, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, was the product of three discrete museum reconfigurations—in 1868, when parts from another meetinghouse were added to the structure; in 1936, during Ngata's extensive restoration; and in 1997, when the meetinghouse was relocated to its new Te Papa

location on the Wellington waterfront.[14] According to the Rongowhakaata Trust, each of these interventions subtracted cultural heritage value from the original *wharenui*. While it is not possible for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to be entirely restored to its pre-1860s appearance using only original 1840s materials, the idea persists that its carvings, weavings, and paintings must be done exclusively by the hands of *iwi* descendants of the initial Rongowhakaata artists, even if this involves contemporary materials and designs.

This particular version of an "authentic" Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, of course, carries with it the troubled politics of cultural purity and dismisses much of the meetinghouse's very real history of entanglement with other *iwi* and the New Zealand national museums. Still, the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, as absolute proprietary owners of the meetinghouse, argue that it is their decision to restore the meetinghouse as they and their ancestors decide. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this is part of the reason why the term "restoration" rather than "conservation" has been consciously used by the *iwi* throughout the project. It is not just about preserving the tangible remains of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga but about helping the *iwi* heal from past injustices and revitalize the passing of intangible knowledge and skills between its generations. To Karl Johnstone, *iwi* liaison and lead on the Rongowhakaata project, it is a "recalibration of the *iwi*'s power relationship to Te Papa . . . by reframing the meetinghouse as a restoration project, this brings power back to the *iwi* . . . to reconnect with the

[14] See Chapter 2 for more complete information on the meetinghouse's history of restoration and preservation.

ancestors in a way we see fit today."[15] The Rongowhakaata in general feel they have a right that has been denied to them for over 150 years to decide and envision a particular version of the meetinghouse to be used in the present as a political statement for the future of the *iwi*.[16]

Restoration of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga: Embodied Knowledge and Its Revival of Rongowhakaata Artistic Practices

Currently, there are plans for sixty-five interior and exterior replacement carvings to be completed during the three-year restoration project.[17] The wood for these carvings has been sourced from a local Gisborne mill and was shipped down to Wellington in the summer of 2017.[18] These sixty-five carvings will ultimately replace the twelve that were installed during the 1868 reconstruction (four *poupou*, four *heke*, and four *papaka*), which were from an assortment of existing meetinghouse carvings from the museum's collection that were gathered during the New Zealand Exhibition of 1865,[19] as well as the fifty-three carvings installed in 1936 under Ngata's supervision by Dominion Museum carver Thomas Heberly, along with other members of the Rotorua Arts and Crafts Institute. These non-original components of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga will remain the property of Te Papa and their Māori *iwi* and will be held in the museum's storage facility.[20]

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[15] Karl Johnstone, personal interview, 10 February 2017.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Dean Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Wharenui," *New Zealand Historic Places Trust* (29 November 2013), 23.
[18] Ibid.
[19] See Chapter 2 for more information about this exhibition.
[20] Whiting, "Conservation Plan," 23.

Presently, the person directing the development of the new carvings to be placed inside and on the front porch of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga has yet to be named, though it will most likely be a male of Rongowhakaata descent. With his guidance, the team will observe the correct Rongowhakaata protocol during the preparations for carving, the carving process itself, and each carving's consecration as a living ancestor, when the *paua*-shell eyes are inserted during the final stages of installation. All of this work will take place in a former children's education gallery in Te Papa adjacent to where Te Hau-Ki-Turanga presently stands. The area will be inaccessible to the public, but the team and their work will be on full view through a large Plexiglas window on the north side of the enclosure, and from the main open entrance area via a viewing stage.[21]

As mentioned, the handing-down of knowledge to Rongowhakaata apprentices and the embodiment of the renewal of the *iwi*'s artistic practices are thought to be equal in importance to the physical restoration of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, according to the "Conservation Plan"[22] for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Clearly, there is a strong interest in reviving rather than simply documenting this tradition. During the three-year restoration process, the meetinghouse's intangible heritage, or passing down of traditional methods of carvings, painting, and weaving, will be crucial to its "re-authentication." Erana Hemmingsen, Māori radio director and educator, observes, "We are an oral people." She continues, "For me, this is . . . something that you

[21] Johnstone, interview.
[22] Dean Whiting, "Conservation Plan—A Living Document Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Wharenui," *New Zealand Historic Places Trust* (29 November 2013).

cannot touch but is passed on from one generation to the next. Before the Europeans came, our meetinghouses were our books; the carvings and the panels tell the stories of our tribes."[23] This form of heritage emerges from knowledge that is passed on from generation to generation as a form of embodied memory. Accordingly, Awahina Tamarapa, curator at Te Papa, notes, "The tangible is what you can see and touch, but intangible heritage is a culture's spirituality, values, philosophy . . . This is why I think that the house building . . . is all about intangible heritage; it is all about reclaiming and passing on knowledge."[24]

The merging of the intangible with the tangible through the restoration of the meetinghouse is a means of reclaiming tradition and, as Tamarapa observes, of reclaiming identity. As such, *taonga* are regarded not only as works of art inherited from previous generations but also as a vital way to cope with the loss of cultural identity and reaffirm the *iwi*'s consciousness. Tamarapa states, "The spirit and life force of the *taonga*—the stories and knowledge carved on the wood—emerge as defining elements of Māori identity. The *taonga* are not dead museum pieces but sacred living objects that transmit Māori culture, and the museum must recognize them as such."[25] The active involvement of the Rongowhakaata in the restoration of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga underlines the respect with which *taonga* are treated as symbols of a cherished past and an ongoing tradition. In the context of the live performance of

[23] Marilena Alivizatou, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum: New Perspectives on Cultural Preservation* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2012), 71.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

physically rebuilding the meetinghouse, intangible heritage is mostly associated with the vitality of the *contemporary* culture, rather than with carefully preserved traditional practices and cultural expressions.

For the *wharenui'*s interior painted rafters, this portion of the restoration project is a bit more complex. For example, the nature and extent of the original painted designs, known as *kowhaiwhai* patterns, on those rafters are currently hidden by paint applied by Ngata's restoration team in 1933.[26] Images of the original surfaces are impossible to locate but, unfortunately, critical to understanding the design differences and condition of the rafter artwork prior to its repainting. In late 2016, a team of painting conservators and imaging staff members at Te Papa worked with Rongowhakaata representatives to apply various scientific imaging techniques and chemical analyses to uncover the original *kowhaiwhai* painting designs. Through these processes, it was discovered that eleven of the nineteen rafters featured unique, slightly more intricate designs that were approximately two centimeters beneath the top layer of paint and thought to be *Mangopare*, a Rongowhakaata design that derives from the hammerhead shark and represents strength and power.[27] These designs are similar in nature to the *kowhaiwhai* designs found inside the *wharenui*, a meetinghouse built by Rukupo in the 1870s right after Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was confiscated.[28] The Te Mana o Turanga *wharenui* resides on Rongowhakaata land and serves as a functioning meetinghouse for the *iwi* and its visitors today.

[26] Whiting, "Conservation Plan," 42.
[27] Ibid., 43.
[28] Te Aturangi Nepia-Clamp, personal interview.



Figure 5.3 Photogrammetry training with the Rongowhakaata *iwi* on the *marae* in front of Te Mana o Turanga *wharenui* (meetinghouse), Gisborne. Photography by Brinker Ferguson, 2017.

The conservation team at Te Papa has advised against removing the top layer of paint from the rafters, due to the chemical bonds between the different paint layers—it appears that removing the surface paint will not reveal the layers below but instead simply strip the wood of its color.[29] Currently, Rongowhakaata *iwi* members are evaluating their options, and a decision regarding how to address these underpaintings will be made by the *iwi* one year into the three-year restoration project.[30]

Finally, the third restoration portion of the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga project

[29] Whiting, "Conservation Plan," 44.
[30] Johnstone, interview.

involves the weaving panels located between each of the interior carvings in the meetinghouse. These weavings were the work of six women from the Ngati Raukawa *iwi* of Otaki, south of Wellington.[31] The women were commissioned by Ngata in 1936 to weave and install forty-eight new *tukutuku* panels during the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga restoration. At this time, these weavers produced nine separate *tukutuku* panel patterns, including the relatively generic *roimata toroa* (the tears of the albatross), the *mangoroa* (the milky way),, and the *poutama* (a stepped pattern).[32] Ngata favored these designs because they were representative of the Māori North Island area, though not necessarily the Rongowhakaata *iwi* in particular. [33] The designs chosen by Ngata thus evoke a more pan-Māori past in New Zealand, and the circumstances of the weavings' production, like those of the carving and *kowhaiwhai* work, have foregrounded issues of authenticity and integrity with regard to Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. It is also recorded that all of the materials used for the *tukutuku* were collected from local Wellington *harakeke* plants (rather than materials that would have been used in the eastern coastal region of Gisborne). The *pingao* plant, which is common throughout New Zealand, came from the vicinity of Otaki, and the *kiekie* plant came from the Bay of Plenty.[34] The new weaving work that will begin in early

[31] Recorded in the *Te Hau Ki Turanga: A Chronological Document Bank* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1994) these six women included Miss Kura Tahiwi, Miss Raiha Wiokham, Mrs. Matenga Baker, Mrs. Hopaea Te Hana, Miss Ngamata Riparata Te Hana, and Miss Ngarangi Pukuhu Paipa. All of the weavers were from Otaki New Zealand, and belonged to the iwi Ngati Raukawa.
[32] Whiting, "Conservation Plan," 56.
[33] Ngata's preference for pan-Māori weaving stories (rather than specific Rongowhakaata iwi stories) derived directly from his political efforts to strengthen internal Māori relations and aggregate a viable pan-Māori voting base for his political party. For more information on Ngata, see Chapter 2.
[34] Whiting, "Conservation Plan," 56.

2018 will most likely be headed by female also of Rongowhakaata descent. Her team of Rongowhakaata weavers will choose designs that are particularly associated with the history of their *iwi*. Like the timeline of the painting restoration, the weaving decisions will be made exclusively by the *iwi* one year into the three-year restoration project.[35]

The project of restoring Rongowhakaata agency involves challenging very specific aspects of the legacy of settler-colonialism, and, in this case, of the national museum's bicultural history of interpreting and preserving Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. It also involves a transfer of power from those who have cared for the meetinghouse for the past 150 years to those who created it, and, in the process, it starts a public debate about the control of particular heritage places or events, as well as the control of the cultural process of heritage itself. The ways in which Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was represented and preserved in the Colonial and Dominion Museums, and in the National Museum, as a trophy, as an arts and crafts object, and as a universal pan-Māori meetinghouse, made it more controllable or understandable for "experts" such as Pakeha anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists, as well as for the largely Pakeha visiting audience. In its current manifestation as Rongwhakaata cultural property, it activates the heritage dynamic that interests the Rongowhakaata *iwi* today—Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, that is, is not only about controlling community identity but also about controlling political identity, and especially the processes of remembering and the negotiation of cultural change. Agency in these matters is

[35] Johnstone, interview.

particularly vital to communities and populations that are attempting to assert self-determination and develop new ways of being that confront the traumas of colonial dispossession and challenge received perceptions about their history and culture.

Central to a movement like this is the assertion of a collective Rongowhakaata political identity—an assertion rooted in the ability to articulate the experiences of shared distinctiveness and resistance, and to perform these in a public space, including, in this instance, within the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. This act is intimately connected to memory, and especially to embodied memory—the performative, bodily, behavioral contexts in which memory is produced and reproduced. It occupies the fluid space between people and *taonga*, such as, in this instance, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* and Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Archaeologist Denis Byrne, drawing on Arjun Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things*, discusses the ways in which communities use heritage practices and social practices to sustain their connections to particular places, and to one another.[36] The Rongowhakaata's three-year meetinghouse restoration project asks members of the community to form a cultural collective of sorts—to acknowledge certain shared values and activate the connections mentioned above. Appadurai labels this work the "production of locality," and, in doing so, he positions locality as a relational rather than a spatial concept—"less a place where one lives than a space to which one feels connected and through which one feels connected to others."[37] People thus develop a sense of

[36] Tim Benton, *Understanding Heritage and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 243.
[37] Ibid., 243.

belonging to a community and a place through cultural practices, using heritage to produce the local by rooting particular practices in particular places, past or present. This restoration then suggests that the transmission of cultural expressions should be enabled not by the strict criteria and methods of measurement of government institutions but by the active and ongoing engagement of practitioners. Bridging the divide between material and living culture fortifies the changing relationships between objects and people. Through ideas of revival, reconnection, and performance, heritage becomes a realization of identity that is rooted in tradition but open to reinterpretation.

Kaitiaki: Acquiring Leadership and Conservation-Skills Training on the *Marae*

In addition to the restoration project happening within Te Papa, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* has also led a number of *marae*-based conservation projects over the past decade in the Gisborne area, including Te Mana-o-Turanga, Te Poho-o-Rukupo, Epeha, Pahou, and the Tokotoru Tapu church.[38] Central to these outside projects have been the development and support of *kaitiaki*, (leadership roles) for the *iwi* in overseeing project implementation. These efforts at developing *iwi* agency have helped to inform the long-term restoration strategy for the care of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. It was argued by the *iwi* during the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal hearings that the best way to ensure the future sustainability of the meetinghouse was to have

[38] Whiting, "Conservation Plan," 12.

the *iwi* involved at every stage, including planning, documentation, restoration, maintenance, and overall project management.[39]

Underpinning this approach is the idea that the best insurance for the long-term preservation of *taonga* is the leadership of the *taonga's* Māori *iwi* descendants. To date, Te Papa has not been involved in this specific training around long-term preservation practices. Instead, the *iwi* has located funding outside the museum[40] and worked with organizations such as the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (NZHPT) to gain the skills they think are necessary to complete this work.[41] Since the 1980s, these organizations have developed integrated programs to promote Māori skills and knowledge regarding both conservation science and traditional practices.[42] These programs initially concentrated on *marae* conservation projects, such as the restoration of the *wharenui*, and encouraged community talent, skills, and, most importantly, ownership of the effort. The founding hope of the conservation workshop program was to enable the Rongowhakaata community to sustain and develop their own maintenance programs and resources. There have been other examples of heritage training in different Māori communities to manage the work on their own *taonga* and meetinghouses in situ, which has often been accomplished in cultural centers. This approach has been especially successful when preservation

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[39] "Turanga Tangata Turanga Whenua: The Report on the Turanganui and Kiwa Claims," *Waitangi Tribunal Report* (Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2002).
[40] In the summer of 2017, the Rongowhakaata Trust secured two million New Zealand dollars in restoration funding from the New Zealand Lottery, a national grant agency for community-funded programs.
[41] Johnstone, interview.
[42] Dean Sully, *Decolonising Conservation: Caring for Māori Meeting Houses Outside New Zealand* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007), 77.

practices can be adapted to Māori arts and knowledge practices. *Iwi* cultural centers represent important supporters of this strategy and provide opportunities and resources through which to strengthen partnerships dedicated to successful and cross-cultural Māori heritage restoration. The restoration projects and corresponding leadership roles the project will engender along the way are clear examples of *ka mua, ka muri*—using the past in the present for future Rongowhakaata leadership gains.



Figure 5.4 Photogrammetry training on the exterior of the *wharenui* Te Mana o Turanga with the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, Gisborne. Photography by Brinker Ferguson, 2017.

In terms of the now ongoing Te Hau-Ki-Turanga restoration project, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* will complement its physical restoration work with its leadership in aspects of conservation documentation, in the interests of later monitoring its long-

term stability and future needs for preventative preservation work. This training involved a three-day workshop on photogrammetry, the technique of creating a scientifically accurate surface geometry of a 3D object.[43] The goal is for more leadership to emerge from within the *iwi* in the future, to develop restoration programs using Māori frameworks to support preservation practice from a Māori cultural base. In addition to the adoption of short-term preservation and documentation measures and action plans, this goal requires an acknowledgment of heritage as a much longer-term process than the physical restoration project.

Rongowhakaata Agency through the *Te Reo* Dissemination of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's *Iwi* Stories on Māori TV

Te reo Māori (Māori language) is another cornerstone of Māori activism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and, as such, has become an important aspect of the general Rongowhakaata interest in the interpretation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. According to Erica Jones, Rongowhakaata *iwi* member and liaison assistant under Karl Johnstone on the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga project, one of the important points of negotiation during the title transfer of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was "retell[ing] the correct history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga according to the Rongowhakaata *iwi*."[44] This was partly addressed by new interpretation panels written by Karl Johnstone of the Rongowhakaata *iwi* that were placed inside the museum this past year,[45] but

[43] In July 2017, I had the opportunity to lead the three-day workshop for ten Rongowhakaata scholars on how to acquire 3D digital documentation and archive data on the Māori meetinghouse in Gisborne, New Zealand.
[44] Erica Jones, personal interview, 25 July 2017.
[45] One of Karl Johnstone's first tasks was to update and revise the public plaque found adjacent to the meetinghouse. To read this text in full see Chapter 1.

additional *iwi* interpretative efforts will take the form of a series of video interviews with Rongowhakaata elders talking about the meetinghouse and its importance to the iwi. These videos have not been organized by the museum, even though Te Papa has its own in-house video/audio interpretation department, but by the Rongowhakaata *iwi* itself, enabling them to be storyboarded, directed, edited, and distributed exclusively by the *iwi* for Māori TV, a public channel in New Zealand. From the *iwi*'s perspective, this approach to content production requires personal access to *iwi* elders and an acknowledgment of and empathy with values and issues that many see as intimately tied to the storytelling process.[46]

Equally important is the decision by the *iwi* to distribute these videos on *Māori* TV, a nonprofit in New Zealand that promotes *te reo* language development whose content is produced, directed, and managed by Māori professionals. One cannot appreciate the impact and significance of Māori TV without understanding the larger history of the indigenous language struggle in New Zealand. Since the 1970s, the Māori language has been at the forefront of media activism. Māori TV has proven to be an important counterpoint to a television culture in New Zealand that has long been dominated by the BBC, the English language, and a largely Pakeha perspective. Acts of parliament such as the 1867 Native Schools Act made English the official language to be taught in all New Zealand schools; in the wake of that particular act, those who spoke *te reo* were often punished.[47] After World War II, and especially

[46] Jones, interview.
[47] Jo Smith, *Māori Television: The First Ten Years* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2016), 13.

during the 1950s and 1960s, an increase in urban migration by many Māori youths prompted a decline in the use of *te reo*. According to New Zealand Government records, the K–12 Māori demographic went from 90 percent fluency in *te reo* in 1931 to 26 percent fluency in 1953.[48]

In 1961, the year that New Zealand's first television broadcast took place, the Jack Hunn report was commissioned. As mentioned previously in this thesis, Hunn recommended that New Zealand move to "assimilation" and "integration," in order to finally become one people through the blending of two cultures. Hunn concluded in his report that, while "the fittest elements of Māori culture had survived, language, arts and crafts, and the institutions of the *marae* are the chief relics."[49] In contrast to this perspective, however, the 1960s saw a variety of Māori discussions occurring on the *marae*, at universities, and in homes about the decline in the use of *te reo*. A key political strategy that emerged involved educational and broadcast institutions promoting *te reo* in schools and at home. The Māori advocacy groups Nga Tamotoa and *Te Reo* Māori Society were significant drivers of change in this period. In 1972, for example, representatives from these groups, led by Hana Jackson and Lee Smith, formally submitted a petition to the government with over 30,000 signatories that called for the Māori language to be offered in schools.[50] This petition led to the institution of the first Māori language day in 1972 and the first Māori language week in 1975, the year in which the tribunal was established to answer Māori redress

[48] Ibid., 13.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 14.

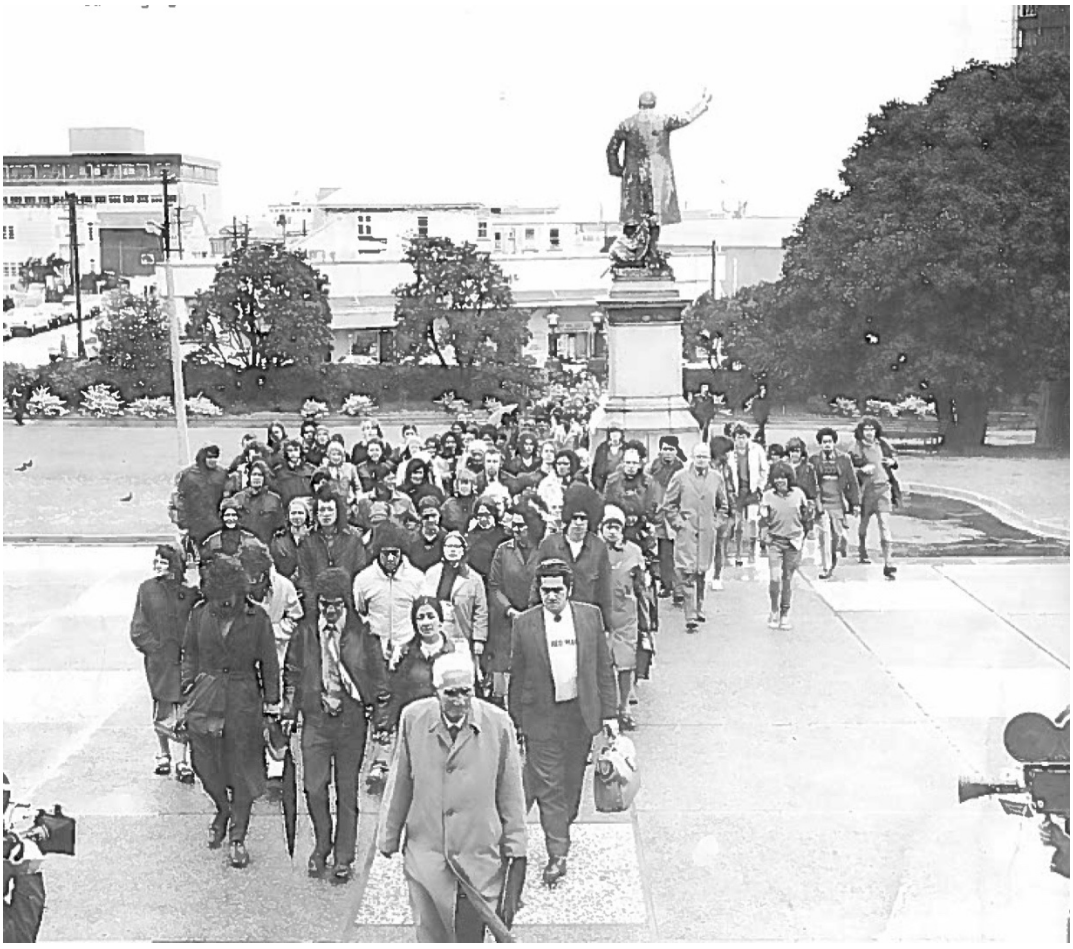


Figure 5.5 Māori language petition being delivered to Parliament 1972. Image from the Archives New Zealand.

claims. In 1986, that tribunal established that the Māori language is *taonga* under the treaty—the expression of the particular spiritual and intellectual concepts of the Māori. Tribunal members wrote in their report, "We are quite clear in our view that Article II of the Treaty guarantees protection to the Māori language, as we have said, and we are also quite clear in our view that the predominance of English in the media has had an adverse effect upon it."[51] The Māori Language Act of 1987 made Māori an

[51] Ibid., 17.



Figure 5.6 Te Reo Māori demonstration outside TVNZ studios at Avaton, Lower Hutt, 1977. Photography by Dominion Post, 1977.

official second language of New Zealand and allowed it to be spoken in any legal proceedings.

Bringing Māori language into the home was seen as an equally important aspect of its revival. It was thought that the best method of doing so was through television—bringing Māori speech, music, news, and events or performances into homes, schools, and workplaces. Already in 1980, Ray Waru, a Māori radio and television director and producer, had established the Māori production unit at TVNZ, which featured the first regular Māori program, a thirty-minute primetime show (in English) called *Koha*.[52] These early efforts led to the founding of an exclusively Māori television channel in 2004.

While one aspect of a decolonizing political agenda addresses the ways in which Māori TV contributes to the advancement of cultural and political representation, another addresses the ways in which Māori TV has created spaces (social and intellectual) within which to retell Māori stories in Māori ways, including the Rongowhakaata's "retelling" of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. This particular *iwi* television project, which aired in late 2017, includes twelve forty-minute episodes dedicated to the idea of "conversations around the *marae*."[53] Each video was shot on Rongowhakaata land with the goal of demonstrating how the Turanga environment influenced Rukupo and other artists to create Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, and how this meetinghouse of the ancestors is still very much tied to its original location. Producer

[52] Ibid., 8.
[53] Jones, personal interview.



Figure 5.7 Erica Jones, producer of Te Whare Korero o Rongowhakaata video series. Photography by Brinker Ferguson, 2017.

and Rongowhakaata iwi member Erica Jones notes that, at first, several of the elders were wary of sharing their family history about the iwi and Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, but they ultimately appreciated the *iwi's* "full control during the storyboarding, filming, and editing of the videos."[54] With the *iwi's* permission, as well, Jones and Johnstone have gifted snippets from several of the episodes to be used in the exhibition at Te Papa. They are in the Māori language but subtitled in English for the museum's audience, privileging the act of speaking in *te reo* Māori in a public setting.

[54] Ibid.



Figure 5.8 Video still from Te Whare Korero o Rongowhakaata video series, spoken in Te Reo (Māori language) with English subtitles. Image from Māori Television, 2017.

Projects such as these represent different models of heritage information dissemination that go beyond traditional authoritative models. As told, recorded, edited, and produced by an exclusively Rongowhakaata leadership team, this twelve-part episode project represents a taking back and retelling of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's history using entirely Rongowhakaata narratives. This privileging of not only *te reo* but also Rongowhakaata stories helps to assert a collective shared identity within the *iwi*. Likewise, the embodied process of reciting the meetinghouse's heritage allows Rongowhakaata members to articulate their own shared experiences of *iwi* memory, which in turn helps to ensure the preservation of these stories.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty and the Digital Archives of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

As part of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's restoration, content production, and research projects, a large amount of data has been recorded about the history of the Rongowhakaata *iwi* and the meetinghouse. Included in this data, as introduced above, is a full 3D data set of the interior and exterior surface geometry of the meetinghouse,

compiled through photogrammetry and laser-scanning technologies.[55] This databank is an invaluable resource for an understanding of the meetinghouse's institutional history and resonates with the fifth point of negotiation concerning the restoration project: "to create a body of [recorded] work for the preservation, care, and protection and development of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga." At present, records and image files are being consolidated and digitized to create a digital archive that can be accessed by both the Rongowhakaata and the Te Papa museum, ensuring that "all information on the meetinghouse is accessible to its stakeholders and up-to-date."[56] The goal of this trove is to capture, track, and enable the effective management of information about the meetinghouse as a whole, and the intangible heritage within it, for the *iwi*. Currently underway in the initial conversations about this databank are negotiations regarding the inherent and inalienable rights and interests of the two main stakeholders, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* and Te Papa, in relation to the collection, ownership, and control of this data about the *iwi*'s *taonga*.

These issues call into question the multifaceted nature of indigenous data sovereignty, which ranges from the legal and ethical dimensions of data storage, ownership, access, and consent to intellectual property rights and practical considerations regarding how data are used in the context of research, policy, and practice. The importance of data for indigenous self-determination and development has been emphasized by indigenous NGOs, communities, and tribes around the

[55] I had the opportunity to collect the photogrammetry and laser-scanning data from a research trip in 2017.
[56] Whiting, "Conservation Plan," 15.

world. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) has, for example, held a number of meetings and conferences to discuss data collection in 2004, 2006, and 2010.[57] At these gatherings, "indigenous representatives have raised concerns about the relevance of existing statistical frameworks for reflecting their worldviews and have highlighted their lack of participation in data collection processes and governance."[58] Despite these conferences, the collection of data on indigenous peoples is still viewed by nations as primarily in the service of government census information rather than indigenous people's data property.

For the Rongowhakaata, sovereignty over Te Hau-Ki-Turanga implies the ability to continue to manage information in ways that are consistent with the *iwi*'s collective decisions on access, control, and representation of that information—Te Hau-Ki-Turanga is, essentially, seen as a living *taonga* with strategic value to this *iwi*. Effective data management requires the development of indigenous expertise in the production and management of digital content, as well as the formation of governance arrangements that allow for indigenous oversight of research and data collection in indigenous communities. Many of these larger issues have already been explored from an indigenous standpoint by scholar Linda Tuhiwai-Smith in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2012), and more recently by Maggie Walter and Chris Andersen in *Indigenous Statistics: A Quantitative Research Methodology* (2013). Out of these conversations, the Māori data sovereignty network

[57] Tahu Kukutai and John Taylor, *Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Towards an Agenda* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2016), 2.
[58] Ibid., 2.

Te Mana Raraunga (TMR) has developed a charter that provides the most complete expression to date of the basis for indigenous data sovereignty in New Zealand. The network recognizes that data form a living *taonga* and identifies six key ways through which to advance Māori data sovereignty:

1. Asserting Māori rights and interests in relation to data.
2. Ensuring data for and about the Māori can be safeguarded and protected.
3. Requiring the quality and integrity of Māori data and its collection.
4. Advocating for Māori involvement in the governance of data repositories.
5. Supporting the development of Māori data infrastructure and security systems.
6. Supporting the development of sustainable Māori digital businesses and innovations.[59]

In addition to the data sovereignty network, the Mataatua Declaration concerning the cultural and intellectual rights of indigenous people emerged from an international conference held in 1993 in response to indigenous concerns about the exploitation of their knowledge and resources online.[60] The declaration reaffirmed Māori rights to self-determination, recognized the Māori as exclusive owners of their cultural and intellectual property, and emphasized the importance of ensuring that the *iwi* would be the first beneficiary of indigenous knowledge and indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights. These ideals were then reinforced by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which collects historical indigenous grievances, indigenous contemporary challenges, and indigenous sociopolitical, economic, and cultural aspirations. Article 31 of the declaration speaks directly to intellectual property and indigenous control over data and information:

[59] Ibid., 15.
[60] Ibid., 18.

> Article 31: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies, and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports, and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. (UN 2007)[61]

As the Rongowhakaata *iwi* positions itself to control the digital repository of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga data, it seeks to ensure its access not only to utilize the new data networks and infrastructures but also to manage and control the content for the benefit of their community. Current negotiations between the Rongowhakaata and Te Papa have thus become rather heated, because restrictions to data use and dissemination rights interfere with Te Papa's desire to share 3D visualizations and digital assets with its museum public. To the Rongowhakaata, the title shift of the meetinghouse represents the first time that they have full legal rights to the tangible and intangible heritage of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. While these images have been used in the past by the national museum or Pakeha individuals to tell a particular New Zealand story about the meetinghouse, the Rongowhakaata are now developing their own views about the culturally appropriate management and use of this data, and they are establishing appropriate boundaries in relation to their own indigenous knowledge. [62]

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[61] Ibid., 165.

[62] For more information about Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's popularity as a subject of Victorian postcards or "cartes de visite," see Chapter 2.

Realigning Rongowhakaata Agency through the Digital Repatriation of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga *Taonga*

Another major request by the *iwi* during the transfer of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's title from Te Papa was the repatriation of all the missing pieces of the meetinghouse that have ended up in collections outside New Zealand, currently identified as including the National Gallery of Australia and the British Museum. However, because of these other countries'—and, by extension, their museums'—legal frameworks, it appears unlikely that these objects will be physically returned anytime soon. At present, the *iwi* and museums are willing to begin these repatriation conversations through a "digital repatriation" project that involves documenting the objects in 3D and "returning" this information to the *iwi* for educational purposes.[63] While it is not entirely clear how one can "return" something that has multiple copies,[64] the *iwi* is very invested in their use of this term, because, as stated by Arapata Hakiwai, co-director of Te Papa and Rongowhakaata *iwi* member, it announces the "return of information, the first step in the repatriation process, which we view as a very political act in itself."[65] The goal of this effort is to track all of the

[63] In 2017, I had the opportunity to travel to both museums and collect the photogrammetry data of the eight Te Hau-Ki-Turanga carvings.
[64] Originally, I referred to this process as the "digital reciprocation" or "digital sharing" of information because, within a more traditional museum discourse, the concept of "repatriation" often comes with the baggage of physical ownership rights. This baggage is even more complicated when one refers to a digital copy of a material object, because the data can be replicated many times over with minimal generation loss (that is, the eventual loss of quality between subsequent copies or transcodes of data) and shared and viewed simultaneously on a variety of platforms. However, I was promptly corrected on this during a Rongowhakaata meeting, when members adamantly stated that this return of information or data is the repatriation of their *iwi*'s knowledge base for learning from and reconnecting with *taonga* made by their ancestors.
[65] Arapata Hakiwai, personal interview, 15 February 2017.

carvings from the meetinghouse that ended up in collections abroad and "realign" these ancestors in an accurate genealogical history through an interactive visualization in virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) for the *iwi*.

For many museums around the world, repatriation is a controversial topic—a politically sensitive issue that is nevertheless central to the process of reconciliation between indigenous communities and cultural heritage institutions. Due to abiding nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century collection policies, however, most Māori *taonga* in collections abroad lack an accurate provenance—that is, information regarding origin and creator(s) or maker(s). For example, the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga ancestral house-support carving *Poutokomanawa*, currently residing in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, contains the following catalogue information:

> Sub-collection area: Pacific arts; object details: accession no. 81.1084, accession date 9/02.1981; collection status: permanent collection; place of creation: New Zealand, North Island, Manutuku, Polynesia; medium details: wood, natural pigments; measurement: 79.7cm (H) x 26.5cm (W) x 22.2cm (D); acquisition details: purchase, Entwistle Gallery, 1981.[66]

The documentation has no information about, among other things, what its Rongowhakaata ancestry is, how the ancestral carving was acquired by the gallery, or whether it came from a transaction in the museum or a third party. Likewise, at the British Museum, seven carvings were accessioned into the collection by Lady Ada Sudely in the 1890s. Sudely, who was a direct descendant of Lord Algernon Tollemache, a British politician, collected the Māori carvings in the 1870s after he

[66] "Poutokomanawa (Ancestor Figure)," *National Gallery of Australia Archive Record* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia) accessed 13 April 2017.

purchased several tracts of land in Nelson and Wellington from the New Zealand Company.[67] The catalogue entry makes no mention of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, instead describing the objects' ethnicity as simply "Made by Māori"; elsewhere, in a more recently added "comments" section added by curators Neich and Pendergrast in 2010, it states that it came from "Rongowhakaata/Poverty Bay, 1830s–40s."[68]

A crucial part of the "digital repatriation" project, then, is to "give the ancestors their history, and reconnect them to their *iwi* through identifying them by name and [virtually] realigning them with their kin."[69] Built into the 3D imaging process is the essential step of having a Rongowhakaata *iwi* member onsite at the British Museum and National Gallery of Australia to physically awaken or reconnect with ancestors in an opening and closing ceremony. After the capture is complete, this Rongowhakaata *iwi* member will take the data and upload this content into the *iwi*'s digital repository for its exclusive use.[70] This repatriation of data is seen as the return of the *iwi*'s specific and unique knowledge base for learning from and reconnecting with intangible *taonga* made by its ancestors. For example, Rongowhakaata carvers working on the restoration of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga have been very interested in measuring chisel depth and pattering, something that they can read in the 3D data through certain software programs. While *taonga* such as these are

[67] The New Zealand Company was a nineteenth-century British company that played a key role in the colonization of New Zealand through the selling of land developments to wealthy European capitalists.
[68] "House-board/figure," British Museum Collection Online, available at http://britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=507432&partId=1&searchText=Rongowhakaata&page=1 (accessed 18 April 2017).
[69] Lewis Whaitiri, personal interview, 13 September 2017.
[70] Ibid.



Figure 5.9 Lewis Whaitiri from the Rongowhakaata *iwi* speaking to carved ancestors at the British Museum. Photography by Brinker Ferguson, 2017.

unlikely to be returned at present, those objects that have been located are part of an ongoing dialogue between the Rongowhakaata *iwi* and these respective museums about ownership and custodianship.

With projects such as the one involving Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, it is ultimately debatable whether power is being returned to the Rongowhakaata in any meaningful way, or whether the project is instead perpetuating the community's dependence on the Western institution of the museum. For some Māori communities, including the Rongowhakaata, the ideal solution would be the physical repatriation of the *taonga* to their care, leaving a digital copy at the museums in the *taonga*'s stead. The "in-between" digital repatriation project therefore raises three important questions related to twenty-first-century cultural heritage practice. First, can online images or 3D data related to an object associated with cultural patrimony issues mediate its social context—in this case, the Rongowhakaata community that created, used, and assigned meaning to it—and its physical context—the collections of the British Museum or the National Gallery of Australia? Second, can the digitizing of Māori heritage within the "global mediascape" allow for the separation of this object from its "new" location and promote its reconnection with (and recirculation within) its original source culture? And third, can an online space or platform also be a post-colonial or indigenizing space?

The most important question when considering the cultural heritage potential of 3D digital models then becomes whether the inherent and essential qualities that give a *taonga* its meaning and significance are transferred to its digital information. If



Figure 5.10 Video still of *Poutokomanawa* ancestral carving animation created by use of 3D data collected at the National Gallery of Australia in 2017. Image by Brinker Ferguson, 2018.

the Rongowhakaata *iwi* deem this to be the case and conclude that the return of intangible digital data would be tantamount to the return of their *iwi*'s knowledge base for learning from and reconnecting with *taonga* made by their ancestors, then these technologies offer immense opportunities for people to recover and record their cultural heritage. The task then becomes how to successfully create and preserve digital history in such a way that it will be used and owned by the community from which it arose. Ownership in the digital realm, as discussed above, offers many challenges, but if the *iwi* had full control over restrictions on where a 3D model could be viewed and by whom within the core permissions of the given platform, then it could potentially create relationships to *tapu* (sacred or restricted) elements that impact the *taonga*'s *mana* (power).

In Haidy Geismar's essay "After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge," she emphasizes that the digital "is a process rather than a fixed materiality."[71] While it currently remains a challenge for the Rongowhakaata *iwi* to work within outside legal systems, especially as repatriation claims involved with indigenous cultural heritage can mean vastly different things in different nations, might the digital repatriation of information be viewed as the first strategic step toward physical repatriation? Put another way, rather than seeing "digital repatriation" as a failed endgame in the effort to physically reconnect and return ancestors to their *iwi*, we might instead see it as helping to place *taonga* on a map and activating existing museum resources to make data accessible to the *iwi* (and, along the way, replacing data entries with Rongowhakaata information). Where relevant national legal systems do not yet exist, this could be a way to circumnavigate authorized procedures and point to programs such as long-term loans, where the *iwi* would gain dual-ownership rights to their *taonga*, restore the union of ancestors and descendants, and work with the museums to establish contracts on use, care, and possession of the objects. It remains to be seen whether or not national museums could or would have the resources to scale case-by-case projects in relation to their larger indigenous collections. Of course, this approach could also be seen as continuing to tie indigenous communities to the management decisions of these

[71] Haidy Geismar, "After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge," Material World: A Global Hub for Thinking about Things (blog), 10 October 2014, available at http://www.materialworldblog.com/2014/10/review-essay-after-the-return-digital-repatriation-and-the-circulation-of-indigenous-knowledge/ (accessed 30 June 2017), 1.

institutions, thus perpetuating their "junior role" in these partnerships, as described previously by O'Sullivan.[72] Still, one thing is clear: the digital repatriation or digital return of *taonga* information to its *iwi* opens up a larger dialogue on the rights of tangible and intangible care, interpretation, and proprietorship of cultural patrimony.

Expanding the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Case Study: Indigenous Cultural Patrimony in Nations with Settler-Colonial Legacies

This chapter has outlined how the shift in ownership of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga from the national museum to the Rongowhakaata *iwi* has been a catalyst for larger societal changes in Māori agency, ultimately resulting in more control for the *iwi* over decisions about the long-term care, interpretation, and information dissemination of the meetinghouse. The final section of this chapter on digital repatriation, however, complicated this agency, as the legal frameworks in different national museums continue to stymie the *iwi*'s desires to return and realign all the ancestors in the meetinghouse. This begs the question of how laws in other countries impact repatriation claims between national museums and indigenous communities. Through interviews with scholars Amy Lonetree, on Native American communities and the National Museum of the American Indian; Ruth Phillips, on First Nations people and the Canada Museum of History; and Jenny Newell, on Aboriginal peoples and the National Museum of Australia, the next chapter explores these questions, among many others, on the rights of indigenous representation and conservation of cultural

[72] Dominic O'Sullivan, *Beyond Biculturalism: The Politics of an Indigenous Minority* (Wellington: Huia Press, 2007).

patrimony in other nations with a legacy of settler-colonialism. What threads itself throughout this global movement toward a post-colonial museology is that, despite mounting discontent, there is also increasing momentum toward using cultural venues as spaces of protest and debate regarding how indigenous communities choose to (re)connect with their cultural heritage and how their heritage is presented on a local, national, and international level.

Chapter 5: Decolonizing National Museums: Expanding the Te Hau-Ki-Turanga Case Study to Other Indigenous Communities

In the late-twentieth-century wake for the global push toward a post-colonial museology, many national museums came under scrutiny from domestic and international indigenous communities who sought more access to their cultural patrimony and associated collection information. These communities wanted to know where their cultural patrimony lived, how it was cared for, and what information about it was freely accessible to the public (if there was any culturally sensitive information that needed to be restricted in some way). Among these communities is the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, whose members, for the past ten years, have been researching and visiting collections all over the world to find out where their *taonga* settled. There are currently thought to be over twenty institutions that hold Rongowhakaata *taonga*, including eight ancestral carvings from Te Hau-Ki-Turanga.[1] But while, within New Zealand, the ownership of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga has shifted entirely to the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, the *iwi*'s purview, at present, does not legally extend to those eight carvings, which ended up in the collections of the British Museum and the National Gallery of Australia. While the Rongowhakaata have requested the return of these *taonga* from these foreign museums, abiding legal structures will likely forestall this possibility. A range of questions then arises. How do the laws of other countries impact the contact zones between a given country's national museums and indigenous communities? How are countries with a legacy of

[1] Johnstone, personal interview, 10 February 2017.

settler-colonialism alike or different in their legal structures regarding repatriation claims? Could what happened with Te Hau-Ki-Turanga also happen with Native American cultural patrimony in the United States, First Nations objects in Canada, or Aboriginal heritage in Australia, among other places? Put more generally, could the insights of this case study in New Zealand be applied to other indigenous communities, or does each nation have its own unique configuration of "contact zones" when dealing with indigenous cultural patrimony? What can other countries learn from the Rongowhakaata case study, and vice-versa? Might there be universal strategies for attempting to decolonize national museums with indigenous cultural heritage objects? While there is no doubt that the political landscape and indigenous politics of New Zealand are vastly different from those in the United States, Canada, and Australia, might there be clearly identifiable indigenous polities whose rights, including sovereign rights, have been established through different treaty processes to similar ends?

This chapter explores initiatives in nations with a legacy of Anglican settler-colonialism around the Pacific rim: the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. As we saw in previous chapters, Māori concepts have reshaped the ways in which collections are managed and exhibitions are developed in New Zealand's cultural institutions. Similar developments have arisen concerning Native Americans in the National Museum of the American Indian, First Nations People in the Canada Museum of History, and Aboriginal Peoples in the National Museum of Australia. For the past decade, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, the National

Museum of the American Indian, the Canadian Museum of History, and the National Museum of Australia have attempted to position themselves at the forefront of post-colonial museology. Jointly and separately, they have, through their own initiatives and policies, helped to guide their public and governmental institutions and agencies regarding the interpretation of laws related to cultural heritage and indigenous populations.

For each of these national museums, the new millennium started with a radically revisionist exhibition about the indigenous peoples of their respective nations. These exhibitions revealed as many old strategies as new ones, and there were a number of striking similarities in the themes and display approaches they adopted. These changes were part of a "global movement toward a postcolonial museology powered by the anticolonial activism of indigenous peoples, in an informal alliance with poststructuralist academic critics of museum presentations."[2] Yet important differences remained among these new national native institutions, including aspects of policies related to stewardship and representation, that derive from historically contingent differences in the relationships between indigenous peoples and the institutions and governments of New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and The United States, respectively. All four museums, including Te Papa, were opened soon after the period of heightened cultural activism of the late 1970s. One goal of this activism was to assist communities in their effort to address the legacy of

[2] Ruth Phillips, *Museum Pieces: Towards the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2011), 206.

unresolved historical grief by "speaking hard truths about colonialism and thereby creating spaces for healing and understanding."[3] Persistent power imbalances, of course, undermined this dedicated effort to dramatically shift museum policies and practices.

Today, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), the Canadian Museum of History (CMH), and the National Museum of Australia (NMA) are all exploring the complexities of new collaborative relationships between native communities and museums on a national and international stage. Through interviews with three scholars who study these relationships, I will explore whether the case study of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga has any useful applications beyond New Zealand itself, or whether there might be strategies that could apply to future efforts by the Rongowhakaata iwi and Te Papa. Crucial to this endeavor will be the ability of these museums to embrace their potential to become "sites of conscience"[4] and places of indigenization.

The National Museum of the American Indian and Native American Rights

On September 21, 2004, NMAI opened its doors to the public in Washington, D.C., becoming the fifteenth museum in the Smithsonian museum complex on the National Mall and "the first national museum in the United States dedicated exclusively to the history and culture of the indigenous peoples of the Americas."[5] Its

[3] Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 5.
[4] Ibid., 27.
[5] Christina Kreps, *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation, and Heritage Preservation* (London: Routledge, 2003), 100.

physical location on the National Mall is significant, as it stands beside other emblems of American identity, such as the National Museum of American History, the memorials to those who have died in war, and the monuments to past presidents. However, it presents a different character from that of its neighbors. Positioned within a site near an active creek bed, this curvilinear structure evokes a wind-sculpted rock formation that is meant to indicate "a living museum, neither formal nor quiet, located in close proximity to nature"; its celestial reference points include "an east-facing main entrance and a dome that opens to the sky."[6]

The creation of the NMAI has had a critical impact on Native American efforts to repatriate cultural property and gain greater control over the interpretation and care of their cultural heritage inside the museum. As part of its founding document, for example, the NMAI Act required the Smithsonian Institution "to inventory all human remains and funerary objects in their collections."[7] The act mandated that a special committee be formed to monitor and review the "inventory, identification, and return of Indian human remains and Indian funerary objects and to assist in the resolution of disputes concerning repatriation."[8] The NMAI Act was seen as an important guide to reinforcing NAGPRA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, "which was later cited by supporters during debates in the U.S. Congress."[9] The repatriation section of the act was meant to help with

[6] Viv Golding, *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections and Collaboration* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 16.
[7] Kreps, *Liberating Culture*, 101.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

issues of redress within the collections of NMAI: "The NMAI Act's repatriation provisions [are] aimed at rectifying 'some of the injustices done to Indian people over the years.'"[10] In addition, the NMAI Act acknowledged that objects of cultural patrimony violated Native American rights regarding freedom of religious practice, as "theoretically protected by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act."[11]

NAGPRA legislation has propelled much change through the repatriation of human remains and cultural patrimony to communities, and it is part of a series of laws passed since the 1960s that are designed to address the U.S. government's (and other institutions') long history of controlling Native American cultural and religious practices. When NAGPRA officially passed on November 16, 1990, scholars estimated that museums, federal agencies, and private collectors were holding anywhere from 300,000 to 2.5 million Native American remains and untold millions of cultural objects. In NMAI alone, there are estimated to be more than 825,000 documented objects, as well as vast photo, media, and paper archives representing over 1,200 indigenous communities.[12]

However, despite its best efforts to convey a native view of cultural heritage in a "native place," the museum has also been the center of much controversy among indigenous communities. As one Native American scholar writes, "It may speak with Native Americans; it's just not for Native Americans."[13] Much debate has arisen

[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 14.
[13] Ibid.

among indigenous professionals regarding how museums might come to operate according to Native American concepts and values. Amy Lonetree, historian and author of *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, has articulated a critical perspective on NMAI, as well as two other indigenously owned museums in the United States. While she acknowledges that indigenous groups have been and continue to be involved in the "complex and dynamic process" of developing exhibitions, she also sees many remaining challenges involved with their role, such as museums' failure to deal frankly with the "hard truths" of colonization.[14]

Since NMAI's opening at the turn of the twentieth century, the two biggest legal changes to happen between museums and Native American communities were (1) an amendment to NAGPRA through Act 10.11, and (2) the wide distribution of material on the legal rights of Native Americans, in consultation with museums and other institutions. The 10.11 Act required that collections of Native American remains held by museums or federal agencies no longer be catalogued as "culturally unidentifiable." This was significant, because museums had previously been able to avoid any legal responsibility to repatriate by simple labeling a collection as such. According to Lonetree, this strategy was quite prevalent among university museums in particular. When NAGPRA was passed in the 1990s, many people assumed that institutions would "do the right thing" and return human remains to their indigenous

[14] Amy Lonetree, personal interview, 17 October 2017.

descendants; however, this was rarely the case.[15] Upon the passing of Act 10.11, institutions that held Native American remains in their collections had to take steps to conduct in-depth research into where the remains came from, reach out to the relevant Native American communities, and return the remains to the tribes. It was only through much political activism that Act 10.11 was ultimately implemented and enforced.

The other recent legal change deriving from issues related to "contact zones" between museums and indigenous collaboration came about through the School for Advanced Research. In the past couple of years, this institution has made material on best practices for consultation available online. Many tribes in the United States are contacted by cultural institutions to "consult" on cultural patrimony objects, but these communities do not always understand their legal rights or the types of decisions or strategies over which they have jurisdiction. Through its online repository, the School for Advanced Research hopes to create more long-lasting and fairer relationships to better reconnect objects of cultural patrimony with their communities.

In the past ten years, there have also been some productive post-colonial transformations in mid- to small-sized museums. Professor Lonetree points to two such examples, involving the Abbe Museum in Maine, headed by President and CEO Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, and the San Diego Museum of Man, headed by Director Micha Parzen and Deputy Director Ben Garcia. These institutions are impacting the museum landscape because they are looking to decolonize the institution at a

[15] Ibid.

systemic level—that is, not only through individual exhibition and display practices, as has been the case for larger museums, such as the Smithsonian, but also through the day-to-day work that takes place at the museum, from the board level to the temporary or part-time staff level. For example, the Abbe Museum outreach department is now consciously creating new programs that reflect the inclusive practices of their local indigenous community.

At the San Diego Museum of Man, as well, a systemic "decolonization" project has been in the works since 2016. Funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the project enables the museum to seek legal permission from source-culture representatives to retain every item in its collection from an indigenous community. If such permission is withheld, the museum promptly undertakes the return of the item in question. For example, the San Diego Museum of Man had in its collection some ancestral remains from the Kumeyaay, a local indigenous community, that came from an excavation in the 1990s, when the new construction of the UC San Diego chancellor's house was revealed to be on top of sacred Kumeyaay burial grounds. When the Kumeyaay reached out to the Museum of Man about these remains, the museum immediately repatriated them. In contrast, the University of California at San Diego itself went through a major lawsuit brought by the Kumeyaay people regarding the repatriation of remains, which the university refused to do, stating that they were important to the Anthropology Department's research on campus. Museum staff also labeled the collection "culturally

unidentifiable"; however, once Act 10.11 passed, the courts ruled in favor of the Kumeyaay under the newly modified NAGPRA legal system.

Perhaps the biggest potential impact of institutions like the Abbe Museum and the San Diego Museum of Man may be the example of institutional decolonization that they provide for larger museums such as NMAI. Whereas the Smithsonian has long applauded a shift toward collaboration—that is, toward making the museum more of a forum for community engagement—Lonetree insists that "decolonizing is much more than that." She wants to push institutions to think about helping indigenous people deal with issues of historical trauma and enable community healing and empowerment by providing sites of conscience for our communities.

What NMAI and Te Papa share in their attempts to represent indigenous communities according to their national perspectives or viewpoints is their inability to deal with what Lonetree calls the "hard truths" of their colonial pasts. New Zealand's particular brand of biculturalism has long been criticized as representing an idealized version of Pakeha/Māori race relations. As discussed in Chapter 3, this biculturalism "idealized racial harmony within the museum, when outside all is conflict."[16] Scholars such as Aroha Harris, Dominic O'Sullivan, and Dean Sully see a need for more self-determination—an expression of *tino rangatiratanga* or sovereignty for Māori communities—so that they can begin to better articulate and advance specific political agendas, such as amending NAGPRA laws to include Act 10.11. This act

[16] Conal McCarthy, *Museums and Māori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2011), 230.

was viewed as a triumph of political activism pursued by and for those Native American communities who saw inherent or systemic issues with the ways in which NAGPRA was interpreted by different government institutions. Te Papa likewise has had issues concerning its interpretation of systemic biculturalism within the institution. The museum examples that Lonetree points to, from the San Diego Museum of Man and the Abbe Museum, might prove to be useful models for Te Papa in the years ahead.

Canada's Museum of History and First Nations Peoples

The First Peoples Hall occupies almost 35,000 square feet in the Canadian Museum of History (CMH), formerly known as the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Located in the country's capital of Ontario, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, founded in 1986, received a name change in October 2012 to reflect its new emphasis on "enhanc[ing] Canadians' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of events, experiences, people and objects that reflect and have shaped Canada's history and identity, and also enhanc[ing] their awareness of world history and cultures."[17] It was designed in the signature style of Douglas Cardinal, a Canadian architect of Blackfoot ancestry.[18] Cardinal's organic forms in the building reflect his deep respect for the topography of Canada.

[17] "About the Museum," Canadian Museum of History, Musee Canadien De L'Histoire, available at http://www.historymuseum.ca/about/ (accessed 21 August 2017).
[18] Phillips, *Museum Pieces*, 205.

The First Peoples Hall attempts to narrate the history and accomplishments of Canada's First Nations peoples. It is divided into three distinct areas: "An Aboriginal Presence," which looks at Aboriginal cultural diversity, achievements, and prehistoric settlements in North America; "An Ancient Bond with the Land," which examines the relationship between First Nations Peoples and the natural world; and "Arrival of Strangers: The Last 500 Years," which explores First Nations history from the time of European contact to today. According to the CMH website, "the hall is a result of a groundbreaking, intensive collaboration that occurred between museum curators and First Peoples representatives during the planning stages."[19]

Ruth Phillips, art historian and author of *Museum Pieces: Towards the Indigenization of Canadian Museums*, has chronicled the history of indigenous relations with national museums since the 1960s. She writes about how the major push for change in Canada arose in the 1980s, during the aboriginal boycott and ensuing national controversy around the exhibition *The Spirit Sings*. This high-profile "super show" of native art and culture, which had been organized for the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, catalyzed the creation of a national task force on museums and first peoples in Canada. The central recommendation of the task force's report, issued in 1992, was the establishment of a formal partnership between museums and First Nations to guide all future projects related to aboriginal peoples, including exhibitions, research, and collections care.

[19] "About the Museum," Canadian Museum of History.

According to Phillips, the most significant sign of progress in Canada between the government and the First Nations people since the task force was established was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which involved a multi-year investigation into Canada's indigenous residential schools.[20] From the late nineteenth through the late twentieth centuries, these schools were used for the forced internment of indigenous children, who were not allowed to speak their native language or practice any of their cultural heritage. The schools were intended to help erase indigenous knowledge and languages and to assimilate indigenous peoples into the mainstream Canadian population. This effort contributed to the traumatic history of First Nations people in Canada and has had lasting effects into the present. Though most of the schools were closed in the 1960s or 1970s, the commission's report commented on the ongoing impact of their legacy and included ninety recommendations for reparations and restitution, insofar as it would be possible, for the harm that was done. This report had a big effect on the country as a whole, to the extent that the future prime minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, stated during his political campaign that he would accept and implement all ninety recommendations if elected. Prior to the Trudeau government, however, Canadian museums and cultural heritage sites were managed in a very different way. For example, the administration of the more conservative previous prime minister, Stephen Harper, wanted to tell a particular kind of Canadian history—and present a particular interpretation of First Nations history in Canada—at the National Museum. These national stories generally focused on

[20] Ruth Phillips, personal interview, 21 September 2017.

evoking harmonious relations between the indigenous populations and the settlers while bolstering the white population by representing the colonizers as pioneers who were the somehow inevitable inheritors of the nation's land and resources.

According to Phillips, after the change in administration, there was a shift toward a fairer and more complete representation of First Nations peoples on the national stage. During this time, several First Nations committees were appointed to review and remake museum exhibitions and displays of indigenous history. So, in much the same way that Amy Lonetree spoke about important systemic changes in museums at this time, there is a shift in practice at those museums that are less focused on exhibition display and more on inherent institutional change. One scholar working on this systemic change is Wanda Nanibush, the recently appointed assistant curator of Canadian and Indigenous art at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, the second largest art museum in Canada. Nanibush has completed a number of major projects in the last few years and has publicly dedicated herself to profound structural change within Canadian institutions, rather than simply the furtherance of "consultation" with indigenous peoples. Her goal is to create "zones of sovereignty" (instead of contact zones)—places where indigenous communities have full control over the representation, conservation, and display of their heritage and history.

However, in Canada, there are relatively few examples of the enactment of legal repatriation laws between national institutions and First Nations peoples regarding their cultural patrimony. This might be due to the fact that Canada has never passed a law equivalent to NAGPRA; instead, Canada has its national task

force, whose aforementioned 1992 report was accepted by the Canadian Museum Association and the Assembly of First Nations. After this report was recognized in this way, every museum that was a member of the Canadian Museum Association had to abide by its guidelines in their specific processes and policies. Using these guidelines, most of the museums went on to create their own non–legally binding repatriation policies, which tended to look at claims on a case-by-case basis rather than develop a systemic protocol for best practices when working with indigenous communities and their cultural patrimony. The problem with this approach, according to Phillips, is that First Nations people "don't have any real legal case, in a sense—they can't show that something was illegally alienated or stolen, but instead hope that the museum will return it anyway because it's morally, ethically, the right thing to do."[21] While not often the case within Canada itself, we have seen several examples of museums abroad who have worked with First Nations communities regarding the physical repatriation of their cultural patrimony. One recent example was a negotiation between the Haisla community in northern British Columbia and the National Museum of Sweden. A Haisla mortuary pole was thought to have gone missing from its British Columbia site in 1929, and its location remained unknown for over sixty years, until it was discovered in the Stockholm museum in 1991. An agreement was quickly reached between the two parties in 2003 stating that Haisla artists would carve a new pole to replace the one in the National Museum of Sweden, in exchange for the return of the original pole. This arrangement began a relationship

[21] Ibid.

between the museum and contemporary Haisla artists that remains strong to this day. The museum's invitation to the Haisla community to create a new pole—one that used both traditional and contemporary materials and tools—helped to revitalize an embodied knowledge among Haisla cultural descendants and allowed them to innovate around new practices and knowledge relevant to their cultural practices today. This exchange may represent an interesting precedent for the Rongowhakaata *iwi*, which could look to this relationship between the Haisla community and the National Museum of Sweden as it navigates future repatriation conversations around the Te-Hau-Ki-Turanga ancestral carvings in the collections of the British Museum and the National Gallery of Australia.

Further resonance between Māori and First Nations communities can be felt in the way in which national exhibitions have served as political sites for change. In much the same way that the *Te Māori* exhibition in the 1980s was a national catalyst for transformation in indigenous representation in New Zealand, *The Spirit Sings*, an exhibition that also took place in the 1980s, was a huge turning point for First Nations people in Canada. Both of these public (and popular) exhibitions became sites for raising political awareness about the nature of these spaces and the audiences for whom they were intended, in turn challenging the very definition of a museum and its role in the development of contemporary indigenous identity. As discussed in Chapter 1, control over heritage interpretation is vital not only to the re-creation of indigenous identity but also to the overturning of colonial nations' reflection of indigenous culture in general. The main difference between these exhibitions, of course, is that

Te Māori was lauded as one of the first times that Māori communities were actively involved in the interpretation and storytelling of their *taonga* on an international stage, whereas *The Spirit Sings*, after its opening, was transformed into a site of protest, where First Nations peoples actively contested how they were represented. Each of these exhibitions generated new strategic national policies. For New Zealand, it was the National Services Te Paerangi,[22] whose mandate was to ensure and enable equal Māori/Pakeha relations, that directly informed Te Papa's bicultural museum mission. In Canada, the exhibition protests resulted in the national task force and its aforementioned recommendations around repatriation and representation of First Nations peoples.

The National Museum of Australia and Aboriginal Communities

The National Museum of Australia opened in March 2001 as part of a 100-year celebration of the founding of the Australia Federation. The institution's arrival had been predated by other institutional openings, such as the National Library of Australia (1960) and the National Gallery of Australia (1982). This long wait had a "significant impact on the final form of the museum, because it ultimately came into being at a moment when Aboriginal Australians had once again begun to occupy a central space in Australian political and cultural life."[23]

[22] For more information about the National Services Te Paerangi, please see Chapter 3.
[23] Ivan Karp, *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 468.

Along with the civil rights demonstrations happening in other parts of the world, the 1960s saw the significant emergence of Aboriginal Australians into the national political arena, with the 1970s and 1980s producing a fever pitch in activism. It was during this time that Aboriginal Australian culture, which had previously been rendered almost invisible, began to make a greater impact on Australia's general cultural life. The Australian government attempted to tackle many of the problems associated with discrimination and introduced land rights and native title legislation. The Native Title Act, which was passed by the Australian federal government in 1993, allowed for the determination of legal cases in which Aboriginal Australians might hold native title, which was defined as "a series of common law rights (such as the right to occupy, hunt, fish, and forage, as well as to fulfil ceremonial obligations) over particular parts of the landscape."[24] Although this was originally thought to be a landmark legal gesture toward land justice for Aboriginal Australians, many Indigenous activists and scholars find that it has proven to be a disappointment.[25]

In addition to the Native Title Act, the Australian government in 2008 also "issued a formal apology for the forced removal of Aboriginal Australians from their families and their land in the past."[26] While these issues were certainly not resolved as such, the national agenda has, since the 1990s, moved steadily toward a state of reconciliation through which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, by

[24] Susie West, *Understanding Heritage in Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 250.
[25] "New Encounters Conference," National Museum of Australia, March 2016, available at http://www.nma.gov.au/whats-on/events/new_encounters_conference (accessed 13 July 2017).
[26] West, 250.

acknowledging their differences and their history of injustice and indifference, begin to work together on a process of nation building.

Out of this political strife, as well, came the National Museum of Australia in 2001. The museum set out to engage with key Aboriginal issues as part of a wider political process of "reconciliation," including the repatriation of human remains, the hiring of Aboriginal Australian staff, and the sensitive handling of secret and sacred material in museum collections. However, there have been setbacks in recent years, particularly under conservative governments, and Aboriginal scholars and community members are pessimistic about the current prospects for change, despite the museum's ongoing best efforts. Reports such as "Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities" (2005) have made strong recommendations regarding what Australian museums should do, but much remains undone. This particular source of frustration has given rise to the opening of cultural centers throughout Australia, and with these organizations come alternative models for connecting communities to their heritage.

According to Jenny Newell, co-curator of the East Pacific Collection at the Australian Museum, many Aboriginal communities see museums in general as fairly colonial institutions, with a sad history of taking cultural patrimony away—especially that of ancestral remains.[27] Some improvements have been made—for example, a number of museums have designated committees, made up of core staff, that are working to decolonize themselves and collaborate with communities to try to redress

[27] Jenny Newell, personal interview, 26 October 2017.

past wrongs. But there remains "a lot of frustration about not enough consultation when the projects are being started or when an exhibition's being conceived of . . . There's often not enough checking in with either the staff here, the indigenous staff, or communities more broadly who are stakeholders in some of the collections that might be involved in that exhibition or program."[28] This seeming impasse has led many Aboriginal communities to dismiss the national museums and instead focus on building their own community or art centers. Newell states, "In a really strong cultural center, there'll be lots of intergenerational learning going on, and lots of storytelling . . . it's a meeting place, people come in and there are different types of arts and it's often a group thing."[29] Currently, the Australian Museum in which Newell works is looking at setting up its own cultural center as a combined research and community center under the management umbrella of its government institutions. Interesting questions then arise: If such an organization could be "independent" from the rest of the institution, might it be able to impact the relationships or contact zones between stakeholders? Could this hybrid help to sever the institution's settler-colonialism legacy, or would it simply perpetuate the same asymmetries in a different way?

One commonality between New Zealand and Australia, then, is that Māori and Aboriginal communities have expressed deep-seated frustration regarding redress policies conducted via government laws or acts. In terms of New Zealand and its

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

Treaty of Waitangi Settlements, much debate has arisen about how beneficial they are and whether they actually help the nation move beyond its colonial past, as opposed to simply perpetuating the colonizer/colonized or Pakeha/Māori division. In Australia, the 1993 Native Title Act attempted to provide some degree of reconciliation in the wake of the devastating Aboriginal land loss of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and included the acknowledgment that "Indigenous people have the rights and interests to their land that come from their traditional laws and customs."[30] In all, both intense dissatisfaction and growing weariness remain within indigenous communities and cast doubt upon ongoing attempts to fix things that may not be fixable. This frustration about representation has manifested itself in several ways, but most particularity through the use and management of the community centers, or of indigenously owned museums. National museums are taking note, however; Te Papa co-director Arapata Hakiwai is "sure they [local cultural centers] are going to arrive in greater numbers in the near future and that museums should get used to the idea and actively foster their development or else risk becoming irrelevant to Māori."[31]

Indigenizing National Museums

One thing that all four nations share is the legacy of a palpable shift in those museum practices that impact indigenous rights—a shift that started in the 1960s and

[30] "Native Title: An Overview," *National Native Title Tribunal*, available at http://bit.ly/2zPrCmc, (accessed 27 October 2017).
[31] McCarthy, *Museums and Māori*, 209.

1970s and continues to this day. Among the developments that have dramatically changed the museum landscape over the past few decades are the "emergence of tribally owned and operated museums, the transition of many mainstream museums from a 'temple' to a 'forum' model, the rise of collaborative partnerships between museums and their source communities and interested publics, the application of a more responsive museum practice that seeks to 'share authority' influenced by postmodernism and broader human rights issues, [and] an increase in research engaging with how the museum can serve as a social-service agency."[32] All four nations have also witnessed the formation of a coalition of indigenous communities around the world to advocate for a right to self-determination that is based on their inalienable authority over their cultural heritage. Indigenous activists have also sought to change museum practices by protesting stereotypical displays of indigenous history and culture within the institution and by pressuring institutions to repatriate cultural objects, human remains, funerary objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. All of these efforts have met with varying degrees of success.

A key question that arises, then, is whether there are in fact *universal* strategies for attempting to decolonize national museums with indigenous cultural heritage objects. Indigenous peoples in all these nations have grown increasingly impatient with aspects of the legacy of Anglican settler-colonialism and the contact zones that this model has engendered. Amid this growing discontent, there is increased movement toward distinctly indigenous solutions to the challenges of

[32] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 4.

managing cultural heritage. With this idea in mind, Amy Lonetree points to a word that is currently gaining more traction among indigenous communities, that of "indigenizing" heritage spaces, rather than "decolonizing" them.[33] "Indigenizing" as an active verb captures an emergent social and cultural transformation—a shift in positioning that derives from the fact that indigenous communities do not necessarily want to work within a space defined by its colonial legacy and those inherent power relations. Instead, there is a desire to work in a space that engenders sovereign principals and that could be governed by, and determined exclusively by, indigenous communities. While we have seen investments in a variety of experiments related to how best to achieve the goal of self-determination, there are abiding similarities among the four nations, such as cultural venues becoming spaces of protest and debate regarding how indigenous communities choose to be represented; national laws that are never complete or sufficient and must be further refined and articulated by the wants and needs of indigenous communities; and an ever-present need to develop and test alternative models and platforms for cultural representation to engender self-determination.

UNDRIP and Indigenous Communities in Settler-Colonial Nations

Another major factor that all four nations have in common is their respective government's rejection, at least initially, of the United Nations Declaration of the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The UNDRIP was adopted by the UN

[33] Lonetree, personal interview, 17 October 2017.

General Assembly during its sixty-second session at the UN headquarters in New York on September 13, 2007. A general assembly declaration is not a legally binding instrument under international law, but it does embody the dynamic development of international legal norms and reflects the commitment of the UN states to move in certain directions. The UNDRIP is an aspirational instrument that the UN describes as setting "an important standard for the treatment of indigenous peoples that will undoubtedly be a significant tool towards eliminating human rights violations against the planet's 370 million indigenous peoples and assisting them in combating discrimination and marginalization."

In terms of the present analysis, the UNDRIP is consistent with both the established and the developing law around international human rights, including the right to self-determination, as outlined in article 3: "Indigenous people have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development."[34] The UN declaration makes it clear that global first-nations communities have an inherent human right as indigenous peoples to determine their own identity and representation.

It is interesting to note, then, that while 144 countries voted in favor of UNDRIP in 2007, only four voted against it: New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States.[35] Since then, all four countries have moved to endorse the

[34] "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," *United Nations*, March 2018, available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html (accessed 20 October 2017).
[35] Ibid.

declaration in some informal way but not such that it might actually become binding in court. These four countries also expressed serious reservations about the final text of the declaration as it was placed before the General Assembly. In the United States, objections to the declaration centered around its failure to provide a clear definition of exactly whom the term "indigenous peoples" was intended to cover. In 2010, nevertheless, U.S. President Barack Obama stated that the United States would "lend its support" to the declaration.

In Australia, Minister for Families, Communities, Services and Indigenous Affairs Mal Brough called out the declaration's provision regarding the upholding of indigenous peoples' customary legal systems: "There should only be one law for all Australians and we should not enshrine in law practices that are not acceptable in the modern world." Marise Payne, the Liberal Party senator for New South Wales, elaborated on the Australian government's objections to the declaration, which derived from concerns about references to self-determination and their potential to be misconstrued, the "ignorance of contemporary realities concerning land and resources . . . the recognition of indigenous rights to lands which are not lawfully owned by other citizens"[36] and "the exclusivity of indigenous rights over intellectual, real and cultural property that does not acknowledge the rights of third parties—in particular, their rights to access indigenous land and heritage and cultural objects where

[36] "Matters of Urgency: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." *Parliament of Australia*, 10 September 2007, available at http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=(Dataset%3Aweblastweek,hansardr,noticer,webthisweek,dailyp,votes,journals,orderofbusiness,hansards,notices,websds)%20ParliamentNumber%3A%2241%22%20Context_Phrase%3A%22matters%20of%20urgency%22;rec=13 (accessed 16 November 2017)

appropriate under national ownership and use that can be accorded to indigenous people and the rights of third parties to property in that regard."[37] In October 2007, then Australian Prime Minister John Howard pledged to hold a referendum on changing the constitution to recognize indigenous Australians, if he were to be re-elected, and on April 3, 2009, the government formally endorsed the declaration.

Likewise, the Canadian government stated that while it supported the "spirit" of the declaration, it contained elements that were "fundamentally incompatible with Canada's constitutional framework."[38] In particular, the Canadian government had problems with Article 19, which appears to require governments to secure the consent of indigenous peoples regarding matters of general public policy, as well as Articles 26 and 28, which could allow for the reopening of any repudiation of historically settled land claims. On November 12, 2010, under pressure from the Assembly of First Nations peoples, Canada officially endorsed the declaration but without changing its position that it was "aspirational."

In 2007, New Zealand Minister of Māori Affairs Parekura Horomia described the declaration as "toothless" and added, "there are four provisions we have problems with, which make the declaration fundamentally incompatible with New Zealand's constitutional and legal arrangements." Article 26, in particular, he said, "appears to require recognition of rights to lands now lawfully owned by other citizens, both indigenous and non-indigenous. This ignores contemporary reality and would be

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

impossible to implement."[39] Māori party leader Pita Sharples retorted that it was "shameful to the extreme that New Zealand voted against the outlawing of discrimination again indigenous people, voted against justice, dignity, and fundamental freedoms for all."[40]

Last year marked the tenth anniversary of the UNDRIP and, as a direct response to New Zealand's continued delay in fully supporting the declaration, the Iwi Chair Forum (ICF), a coalition of sixty-eight *iwi* representing the governing bodies of all *iwi* in New Zealand, gifted a bronze *whatarangi* (upraised storehouse) to the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The *whatarangi* was selected for the gift to the United Nations as a symbol of the storage (and protection) of cultural knowledge, and the sharing of that knowledge with other indigenous communities. In addition, the storehouse also representations communal maintenance—in this instance, of culture and cultural practices, the very things the UNDRIP sets out to protect. Twenty Māori carvers from around New Zealand worked on the wooden *whatarangi* from which the bronze version was cast. This storehouse was gifted to symbolize the endorsement by a sovereign Māori nation of the UNDRIP, with or without the approval of the New Zealand government. While the New Zealand Government has since supported the UNDRIP, this project was established by the ICF to confirm direct and formal partnership between Māori *iwi* and the UN. The

[39] New Zealand Government, "Māori Party's head in the clouds New Zealand government press release," Scoop Parliament, 14 September 2007, available at http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0709/S00272.htm (accessed 13 October 2017).

[40] Ibid.

technical advisor and ICF liaison to the project, Karl Johnstone (the same Johnstone who served as liaison on the Rongowhakaata project at Te Papa), stated,

> It's more about Māori supporting the UNDRIP on their own terms. The principle for me was that a government should not—in isolation and without discussion with its indigenous constituents—support a convention like this. There was no discussion or consultation with *iwi*, and, at the end of the day, it is our rights they are discussing and protecting . . . It's ultimately about framing the discussion properly—self-determination needs to be determined by the people and communities who desire and demand it.[41]

The bronze storehouse will be placed in the UN's headquarters in New York sometime in late 2018 or 2019, and the original wooden *whatarangi* that it is based off of will remain in New Zealand, thereby symbolizing the opening of a direct line of connection and dialogue between the UN and Māori *iwi*. In the present context of this study, it is also interesting to note that the ICF chose a *whatarangi*, a storehouse similar to the *wharenui* in its structure and its role as a container of cultural knowledge. This building will act as an international symbol of Māori self-determination outside of the auspices of the New Zealand government. As a political move, the building could also be seen as an emblematic shift by the ICF away from national bicultural representation and toward a sovereign Māori population. The New Zealand government has not yet responded to this project publically.

[41] Johnstone, personal interview, 10 November, 2017.

Conclusion: Walking Backwards into the Future

Beginning at three in the morning on September 29, 2017, 220 Rongowhakaata *iwi* members gathered to recite the prayers for the blessing of the *taonga* at the opening of the exhibition *Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow* at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. These incantations reawakened and revitalized the *iwi*'s many ancestors while creating a sacred space to accommodate the multitude of people who would be visiting the exhibition over the next three years. This momentous event also kicked off the three strategic projects



Figure 6.1 Derek Lardelli, Rongowhakaata *iwi* member and professor of Māori knowledge and development at EIT in Gisborne, speaking at the *Ko Rongowhakaata* opening *pohiri* (ceremony) Te Papa, September 2017. Photography from Te Papa, 2017.

scheduled to take place between 2017 and 2020. The first project is the three-year exhibition itself, which encourages visitors to Te Papa to learn about the heritage of

the Rongowhakaata *iwi* and Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, as told solely by the *iwi*. These key exhibition concepts were developed over the course of two years, beginning with Rongowhakaata's grievance regarding their long separation from their ancestral house, continuing with its rightful transfer of ownership back to the *iwi*, and ending with the assertion of *te puna whakaata o Rongowhakaata*, or the Rongowhakaata capacity for creative expression and the pursuit of artistic excellence—that is, something thought to be inherent to the core identity of the *iwi.* It is reflected in innovative approaches to their traditional meetinghouse skills and conveyed in particular through Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. The second project, which is set to happen in tandem with the exhibition but begin later in 2018, is the physical restoration of the meetinghouse. For the *iwi*, "restoration" is a political act, whereby Rongowhakaata carvers, weavers, and painters will work to return the meetinghouse to its "authentic state" as the work of the Rongowhakaata leader Rukupo. This authentic state will be achieved not only through the conservation of original 1840s materials and the removal of "inauthentic" materials added to the structure by the museum in the 1860s and 1930s, but also by the creation of contemporary carvings, weavings, and paintings made exclusively by the Rongowhakaata *iwi*. The final project involves a strategic plan for the long-term care of the meetinghouse, which will be accompanied by the *iwi's* vote in late 2018 on whether or not Te Hau-Ki-Turanga should remain at Te Papa, be gifted to a local museum in the Gisborne area, or be returned to its original *marae* location on Rongowhakaata land.

However, no matter what the Rongowhakaata decide concerning the final resting place of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, the future control of the care and interpretation of the meetinghouse will remain entirely in the hands of the *iwi*. The entangled history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's representation and conservation under the control of the national museum and then the Rongowhakaata *iwi* thus supplies a productive lens through which to view the power relations between New Zealand's bicultural government and its Pakeha and Māori populations, from the early nineteenth century to the present day. Questions about the ultimate fate of the meetinghouse help to shed light on deep-seated grievances still felt by the *iwi* today. As we have seen throughout this dissertation, this recent shift in control and ownership has enabled the Rongowhakaata *iwi* to begin to develop alternative models for reconnecting *taonga* with their descendants, as well as sharing Rongowhakaata stories about Te Hau-Ki-Turanga with the public on the *iwi*'s own terms. Key questions that have framed this study of the history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's conservation and interpretation include the following: How are New Zealand's indigenous communities challenging and contesting the very definition of a museum and its role in modern times, in the interests of more involvement in the museum's affairs with regard to the development of their own identity and history? Can indigenous self-determination exist within a Western museum infrastructure, or is this particular bicultural museum "contact zone" inherently flawed—a settler-colonial legacy that can never be undone? In essence, can a museum like Te Papa ever be truly post-colonial? Finally, how will

these power dynamics impact the future of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga on a local, national, and international stage?

History of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga in the National Museums of New Zealand

This dissertation has considered how and why the interpretation and display of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga changed so dramatically from the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The meetinghouse has been seen at various times as a symbol of an *iwi* chief's *mana*, a trophy, a curio, a specimen, a model of arts and crafts, a national treasure, *taonga*, and, most recently, as Rongowhakaata cultural property. The history of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's conservation and interpretation then represents an important case study with which to address core questions that explore New Zealand's history of issues related to power, control, and indigenous self-determination. These issues deal with the politics surrounding control of both heritage (intangible and tangible) and cultural memory on a local, national, or international level. Throughout most of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's history within the confines of New Zealand's national museum runs the overarching issue of decontextualization, or the act of detaching objects from their original cultural contexts. In contrast to indigenous museums, objects in Western-style ethnographic museums such as Te Papa's predecessors, the Colonial Museum (1867–1924) and the Dominion Museum (1925–1973), as well as the National Museum (1974–1992), have been extracted from their original cultural contexts and recontextualized through the lens of Western scientific and aesthetic interpretative frameworks. Interpretation and

conservation strategies represent an attempt to recreate an absent culture from the decontextualized object, drawing on the museum's own frameworks—essentially, "to bring . . . dead specimens 'to life' through the theater of installation."[1] Decontextualization has been called into question in light of its increasingly clear contribution to the distancing of museums from the cultures presented via their collections—a distancing that is spatial and temporal (through the act of physically removing objects from their cultures of origin and consigning them to a "traditional" past) but also conceptual (through the imposition of Western systems of cultural interpretation and representation upon the objects in question).

We learned in Chapter 3 that, during the 1990s, the newly conceived Te Papa sought to break with this tradition and develop a uniquely government-sanctioned bicultural institution that boasted truly equal representation of its two founding cultures, Pakeha and Māori. This produced a distinct type of bicultural "contact zone" between museum staff and the Māori *iwis*. Although the museum administrators had the best of intentions, we have seen some of the inherent issues with New Zealand's biculturalism and its corresponding contact zones, which proved to be less sites of reciprocity "than asymmetric spaces of appropriation that are both in and for the center."[2] Today, Te Papa is undergoing another strategic review in the hopes of better reflecting the more integrated or intertwined populations and history of New Zealand.

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[1] Christina Kreps, *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation, and Heritage Preservation* (London: Routledge, 2003) 149.
[2] Robin Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited," *Museum Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (2011) 67.

This effort could bring in a new era in which museums will no longer rely solely on "equal bicultural representation" to solve institutional legacies of colonial power imbalances that continue in the present. An acknowledgment of the way in which objects have always functioned (and continue to do so) as part of a larger, dynamic flow of culture also serves to liberate them from their static positioning in the museum. Te Papa staff have acknowledged that, as more *iwis* call for direct ownership of their *taonga*, even if they technically reside within Te Papa, this could lead to arrangements whereby museums and indigenous communities become partners in the custodianship of certain objects, each accommodating the other's approaches for their safekeeping and preservation.

Ka Mua Ka Muri: Māori Recalibration through *Maturanga*

Since Te Papa's establishment in the 1990s, it has been clear to museum staff that Māori ancestral objects are not just representations but actual ancestors and their living spirits. It was thus part of Te Papa's founding creed that Māori *taonga* needed to be kept alive and their heritage continually reactivated by being touched, wept over, and discussed, and by being given a role in gatherings and ceremonies. Using the principles of actor-network theory (ANT), we can begin to expand and track these ever-changing relationships between living *iwi* descendants, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, the Rongawhakaata ancestors, and museum stakeholders. However, where ANT falls short is that it does not take into account how these relationships have often been asymmetrical, and, depending on who has had ownership rights or control over the

space, have generally featured power politics concerning interpretation and display. These issues are much the same as the ones address by scholars Robin Boast and Amy Lonetree with regard to the museum as a contact zone. We consequently need to add another step to the ANT model—that of taking into account the politics behind heritage as process. These politics see heritage not as an object, but as an active process of using the past in the present for the future. According to New Zealand scholar Conal McCarthy, this process is mirrored in the Māori concept of *ka mua, ka muri*, which roughly translates to "walking backwards into the future,"[3] or looking at and using what has happened in the past to guide you strategically as you move forward. When we align ANT with the concept of *ka mua, ka muri*, we apply a productive lens to the history of how objects are used in perpetually shifting creative and cultural practices.

Another realignment followed upon the title change of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, and the development of its three corresponding strategic projects: Rongowhakaata (and, by extension, Māori *iwis* in general) began to consider whether it wanted to take part in Te Papa's bicultural institution at all or instead go outside the institution and form its own sovereign cultural spaces and places. According to Karl Johnstone, Rongowhakaata *iwi* leader and main liaison between the *iwi* and the Te Papa museum, this is an effort by his *iwi* to revitalize what he calls *Maturanga* Māori, a desire to "speak back" to colonization, reassert the *iwi*'s identity, and restore its fluency with its distinct culture, language, and heritage. As stated by the Waitangi

[3] Conal McCarthy, personal interview, 18 February 2017.

Tribunal in the Wananga Capital Establishment Report in 1999, *Maturanga* Māori is "a way [of] studying the universe from a Māori perspective,"[4] whereas typical Māori studies have tended to focus on Māori society from a Pakeha perspective. Today, the notion has been expanded to include contemporary, historical, local, and traditional knowledge. In attempting to practice *Maturanga* Māori through the three strategic projects happening between 2017 and 2020, Johnstone found that, instead of trying to navigate the pre-existing power hierarchy of the museum's "contact zone," it was better to try to completely "recalibrate Rongowhakaata's position within the institution."[5] He has contributed to that effort by acknowledging Te Papa's authority with regard to particular aspects of museology—"unless you understand the landscape, you can't have equitable discussions"—but at the same time positioning Rongowhakaata *mana* or power "to influence the system and reframe the context."[6] For example, by strategically reframing the museum's *conservation* of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga as the *iwi*'s *restoration* of it, Johnstone shifts the focus from a Western preconception of what conservation means within the museum to the *iwi'*s sense of a revival of its intangible and tangible heritage knowledge and a reconnection of its ancestors to their descendants. A further example of Johnstone's reframing is the strategic shift represented by retelling the Rongowhakaata's *heritage*, not its *history*. Heritage is active; it is about using the past in the present to move forward into the

[4] Waitangi Tribunal, Wananga Capital Establishment Report (Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal, 1999), 21.
[5] Johnstone, personal interview, 10 February 2017.
[6] Ibid.

future. Heritage therefore fundamentally captures the role *taonga* plays in sustaining the intergenerational continuity of indigenous culture and informing and shaping *iwi* development in the future. This realignment is also about liberating stakeholders' thinking from the Eurocentric view of what constitutes an object, and of the museological practice of conservation in general, so that they might begin to recognize alternative approaches and convictions and support the effort to "transfer control of our heritage fully back to the *iwi*."[7] In this context, indigenous agency can come to be defined as heritage work done with, for, and by indigenous peoples, altering standard museum practice to suit their needs.

Expanding the Case Study of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga to other museums

In some ways, the Rongowhakaata *iwi* is still on the cusp of deciding how to move its cultural heritage aspirations forward as it considers their best option for the final resting place of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. There are difficult choices to be made, in light of deep and long-lasting changes in the relationships between *iwis* and their cultural patrimony. The *iwi* has developed models of reconnecting with its ancestors and revitalizing its *taonga* both within and outside the museum. In Chapter 5, I looked at expanding this case study beyond New Zealand and availed myself of the perspectives of three scholars—Ruth Phillips, Amy Lonetree, and Jenny Newell—regarding the prospects for shared strategies or legal policies between indigenous communities and other nations who have a legacy of settler-colonialism in Canada,

[7] Ibid.

the United States, and Australia. What emerged most strongly was both a growing impatience with the current asymmetrical power relations inherent in the museum contact zone and the desire to indigenize (rather than decolonize) new heritage spaces. Indigenous communities, in turn, are indeed going outside the institution to accomplish their key objectives, often through the use of cultural centers. As the National Museum of Australia embarks on a new project to combine the museum with a separate but still associated cultural center that is managed (though not financially controlled) by Aboriginal peoples, it will be interesting to see if this new hybrid venue can provide the same services as other cultural centers in the nation.

Next Phase of Te Papa and the Vote on Te Hau-Ki-Turanga

Te Papa is on the threshold of another period of major change, akin to what happened in the 1990s and early 2000s, and, if it fails to embrace it, it risks abandonment by indigenous communities in favor of their own cultural centers. In this climate, Te Papa is undergoing a profound conceptual revision over the next couple of years, drawing upon all levels of staff involvement to remake its fourth-floor galleries as it revisits its *Passports* (predominately focused on Pakeha history in New Zealand) and *Mana Whenua* exhibitions (predominately focused on Māori history in New Zealand), as well as its larger New Zealand historical narrative of Māori and Pakeha relations. In light of the burgeoning critique of biculturalism, the museum is grappling anew with its narratives of both colonial and indigenous pasts, and staff members are advocating for the development of "cross-cultural heritage

management" strategies or "entanglement" involving systematic research into the nature and function of heritage management systems through studies in comparative museology. There has also been talk about the museum returning official titles of *taonga* to Māori *iwis*, who would hopefully choose to "loan" their *taonga* back to the museum. The idea with this approach is that Te Papa and indigenous communities would become co-partners in the custodianship of certain objects. As the redesign moves forward, however, vital questions loom in the minds of the museum staff members: Will the oldest and most famous carved Māori meetinghouse remain at the Te Papa museum for the benefit of a national and international audience? Or will it return to the people of Turanga and play a different role—the model, perhaps, for a future revival of the Gisborne school of carving or a symbol of *iwi* independence within New Zealand?

One thing is clear—Karl Johnstone is adamant about not being pushed by Te Papa to conduct the *iwi*'s vote on the matter before they are ready. The vote is presently scheduled to take place in late 2018, with the possibility of being pushed back even further. Rongowhakaata *iwi* member Lewis Whaitiri notes that while he "would like to see the meetinghouse brought back to Turanga in his lifetime," the "*iwi* needs to sort out other pressing conflicts and issues before this can happen." He acknowledges that his *iwi*'s older members, in particular, dream of seeing the meetinghouse brought home—especially those who were strong advocates for this move in the treaty hearings of the 1980s and 1990s. The younger members are more cautious. They want to think realistically and practically about what it would cost to

adequately care for Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. Other issues, such as management of and access to the meetinghouse, have also been at the forefront of discussions on the *marae* and require resolution ahead of any commitment to the long-term care of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga.

Returning to the core question of whether the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa can be a post-colonial museum, it seems unlikely, especially if the museum decides to revamp its fourth-floor galleries using the overarching theme of *entanglement*. While the history of entanglement between Pakeha and Māori communities may set up a more complex and thus honest view of how objects have historically been made and used in the past for various New Zealand political agendas, it could also be seen as the last grasp of the settler-colonial urge to tie and thus solidify the two "founding" populations of New Zealand together. For example, if Te Hau-Ki-Turanga was to reflect its entangled history, would the museum decide to display the carvings from Ngata's 1930s restoration, or even carvings from other *wharenuis* as it was displayed in the 1860s, nearby? While Rongowhakaata iwi might technically own the meetinghouse and control over its display and interpretation, what other types of conversations could the museum decide to create by placing different objects or object histories around it? How would this muddle Rongowhakaata's key messaging? Thus if the goal is to create a truly indigenized cultural space, then this space will need to be conceptualized, managed, funded, and run by a sovereign Māori community. National museums funded and controlled by a bicultural government will always have ties to its settler-colonial legacy. No matter

what policies are put into place, or what display or conservation practices might change, the very foundation of the museum as we know it today remains attached to and for the center. Colonial interest in displaying and preserving "the other" have always been and will remain a way of understanding itself. Consequently, it may be more effective to view these national museums that have a legacy of settler-colonialism, (ones who desire to be "post-colonial"), not as ones that can be a fully decolonized or indigenized space, but rather a space that provides a lens with which to look at the entangled past and its ever shifting power hierarchies to understand how objects and object histories are being talked about and displayed in the present for the future.

Revisiting My Role While Working with Te Papa and the Rongowhakaata *Iwi* on Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's Restoration, Exhibition, and Long-term Care Projects

This dissertation project sought to understand the role that Te Hau-Ki-Turanga played historically, and continues to play today, within contemporary Māori communities in the context of larger issues of *iwi* self-determination and the advancement of Māori development and identity in New Zealand. Through Te Hau-Ki-Turanga, and Māori *taonga* in general, we come to see objects not as disconnected or decontextualized from the past but rather as enduring cultural symbols and markers of *iwi* heritage that act to connect the past in the present for the future. The fact is that *taonga* are powerful symbols that are actively associated with indigenous identity, cultural renewal, revitalization, and *iwi* development initiatives for cultural redress and future development.

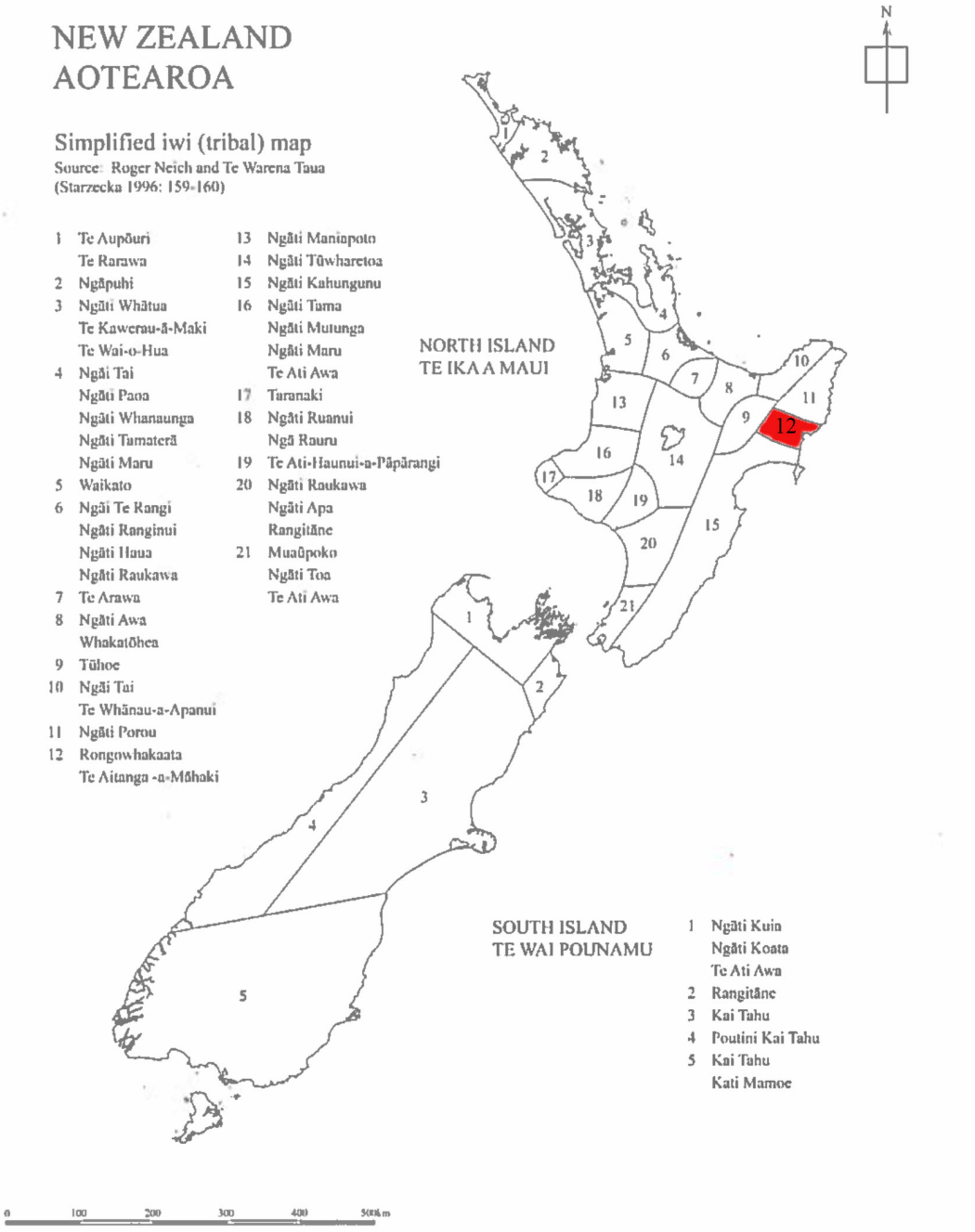
At the time of this dissertation's submission, the decision on the final resting place of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga is yet to happen. This is not an attempt to end on a cliffhanger, though it would be interesting to revisit interviews with Te Papa staff and Rongowhakaata *iwi* members after the decision has been made and the dust settled. One of the most exciting but also challenging parts of working on this project was that events were unfolding even as I wrote about them. In fact, over the course of two years, I had to change many dissertation drafts from future tense to present, and then to past. This is why I found first-person interviews to be as important as archival research to understanding the political and cultural ramifications of these projects. But in addition to this research, I was also an active participant in the three strategic projects involving Te Hau-Ki-Turanga after its return of title to the *iwi*. This involvement included the documentation of current conditions of the meetinghouse as it stands today inside Te Papa, for archival records; to teach a workshop for the *iwi* on scientific imaging documentation for leadership roles around sustainable preservation practices; and to document and visualize the meetinghouse structure in 3D with its carvings from museums abroad, for *iwi* records as well as for educational and interpretive projects. Thus, in the context of researching and writing about the history of how Te Hau-Ki-Turanga has been used and interpreted by different stakeholders, often for political reasons, it is important to acknowledge my own biases, particularly as a white Western woman. One who has been trained in a very specific way to record and read scientific image information about cultural heritage. Returning to the critique mentioned in Chapter 1 by scholars Lisa Gitelman and Lev Manovich, we

must always be aware of the fact that data is collected, compiled, and interpreted by fallible individuals with their own sets of assumptions and predispositions. For example, photogrammetry was the main imaging technology used for the capture of the meetinghouse at Te Papa, and its carvings abroad. Photogrammetry is based upon 3D data collected from 2D stereo imaging. By deciding to use this process this favors visual attributes of heritage over its other attributes. What does it mean then that only physical characteristics are archived (and corresponding intangible characteristics remains an afterthought, or an add on for the archive)? How am I perpetuating a particular "history" of the meetinghouse as I apply my knowledge and training from the Western heritage/museum field? Does my work continue to privilege a particular view of Te Hau-Ki-Turanga? What information, stories, and history has been ignored? In the interests of informing future researchers, archivists and *iwi* members about the ways in which these archives were created, my first step was to attempt to fully document my process and its proclivities in the archival record. This was done through the inclusion of personal information and text describing the reasoning behind certain decisions, which are contained within the metadata of the scientific imaging work. In addition, footnotes in the text were added to show the reader the degree of my involvement in each project. This was done not to take ownership of the content, but to better articulate personal conscious or subconscious decisions and limitations that were made and now reside as part of the archival records.

This dissertation has made an effort to unpack Te Hau-Ki-Turanga's own display, conservation, and interpretation history to reveal the impact of various

individuals or groups on how objects' pasts are used in the present for the future. The Māori proverb *ka mua, ka muri* is a way to remind oneself of all that has gone on before and how that information can guide us in the future. We cannot see the future, just as we cannot see where we are going when we walk backwards. But we can be mindful of how objects have been used in the present for different political agendas throughout history and how we could be contributing to a particular agenda today.

Appendix: Simplified New Zealand Aotearoa iwi map



Glossary

Amo	upright support posts at the end of gables on the front of a meeting house
Epa	small posts at the end wall of a meeting house between the pout ahu and poupou
Haka	war dance
Hapu	extended family group, subtribe or section of a large tribe
Harakeke	flax
Heke	rafter
Hiki tapu	lift the tapu, ceremony for opening houses currently used for exhibitions
Hui	gathering, meeting, assembly
Iwi	tribe, nation, people, also word for bone(s)
Kaiarahi	guide
Kaitiaki	guardian, caretaker, word designating Māori museum staff (literally 'one who cares')
Kaitiakitanga	guardianship, stewardship of Māori taonga in museum collections
Karakia	call of welcome to visitors in a powhiri ceremony
Kaupapa	Māori modern term referring to Māori -driven project or issues, self-determination
Kawanatanga	government
Korero	say, speak, talk, conservation
Koruru	carved gable mask of a house
Kowhaiwhai	painted pattern on house rafters
Maihi	carved gables on the front of the house
Mana	power, authority, prestige
Mana tangata	human authority, the power acquired by an individual based on skills in a particular field
Mana taonga	the power, authority and responsibility associated with the possession of taonga
Mana whenua	the power, authority, and responsibility arising from the possession of lands
Māori	indigenous to Aotearoa New Zealand, also Māori for 'ordinary, normal, natural'
Marae	space in front of a meeting house
Matauranga	Māori modern term referring to the Māori system of knowledge or world view
Moko	incised body adornment, tattoo
Mua	past
Pakeha	person of European descent, as opposed to Māori
Poupou	carved side of wall post or slab of a house
Poutahu	central post in front wall inside house

Poutokomanawa	central free-standing post inside a house supporting the ridgepole
Poutuarongo	central post on rear wall inside the house
Powhiri	welcoming ceremony
Rangatira	chief
Rangatiratanga	Māori notion of self-determination, chieftainship, chiefly authority, power or sovereignty
Ta moko	tattoo, practice of tattooing
Tangata whenua	people of the land, indigenous people, Māori.
Taonga	property, treasure
Tapu	sacred, special
Tekoteko	free-standing carved figure, usually at the front apex of a house
Te reo	Māori language
Tikanga taonga	customary Māori cultural practices employed in caring for taonga in museum collections, Māori collection care
Tino rangatiratanga	phase in the Māori text of the Treaty of Waitangi meaning absolute chieftainship or authority, today generally refers to aspiration for self-determination
Toi moko	respectful modern term for decorated, tattooed preserved human head
Waka	canoe
Waka tupapaku	burial chest for bones and human remains
Wananga	workshop, seminar
Whakapapa	genealogy, iwi ancestral history
Whare	house
Wharenui	big house, meetinghouse
Whare pupuri taonga	house containing taonga, sometime referred to as a museum
Whare	whakairo carved house
Whatarangi	upraised storehouse

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