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TE AO HOU: WHAKAPAPA AS  
PRACTICAL ONTOLOGY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND



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*Special issue*

TE AO HOU: WHAKAPAPA AS PRACTICAL ONTOLOGY

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Cover image: Apirana Ngata and Te Rangihīroa (Peter Buck) with tukutuku panel, outside the Bungalow, Waiomatatini, 1923. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, ref 1/2-007887-F.

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### *Contributors to this Issue*

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*Conal McCarthy* is a Professor and Director of the Museum and Heritage Studies programme at the Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington. He has published widely on museum history, theory and practice, including the books *Exhibiting Māori* (2007), *Museums and Māori* (2011) and *Museum Practice* (2015). In 2017 Conal was one of the authors of *Collecting, Ordering, Governing: Anthropology, Museums, and Liberal Government* (Duke University Press), and co-editor of a volume of essays in memory of Jonathan Mane-Wheoki (Victoria University Press). His next book is a comparative analysis of indigenous museology in Australia and Aotearoa for Routledge.

*Wayne Ngata* is Chief Advisor Te Ao Māori at the Ministry of Education. He is the former head of Mātauranga Māori at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and former chair of the Māori Language Commission Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori. He has long been an advocate for te reo Māori 'Maori language' and mātauranga Māori 'Māori knowledge and wisdom' as platforms for helping Māori to contribute constructively to the advancement of New Zealand society, particularly in the education and museum sectors. His research interests include revitalisation of indigenous languages and knowledge as future models of best practice.

*Natalie Robertson* (Ngāti Porou, Clann Dhōnnchaidh) is a photographic and moving image artist and Senior Lecturer at Auckland University of Technology, Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). Robertson's research terrain and artistic practice draws on historic archives and tribal oral customs, engaging with indigenous relationships to land and place, and exploring Māori knowledge practices, environmental issues and cultural landscapes. Recent exhibitions include the 2016–17 multi-venue group exhibition *Politics of Sharing* in Berlin, Stuttgart, Waitangi and Auckland; *Before is Now—Ko Muri ko Nāianeī* in Kenosis: XIV Fotonoviembre International Biennale of Photography, Tenerife, Canary Islands (2017); and *To Make Wrong / Right / Now: Honolulu Biennial 2019*. Robertson photographed extensively for the multiple-award-winning book *A Whakapapa of Tradition: One Hundred Years of Ngāti Porou Carving, 1830–1930* by Ngarino Ellis (2016), which won the Judith Binney Best First Book Award for Illustrated Non-Fiction at the 2017 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards.

*Amiria Salmond* is an independent researcher whose interests include Māori weaving (whatu and raranga), artefact-oriented ethnography, cultural and intellectual property, digital taonga and the “ontological turn” in social anthropology. Her book *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (2005), based on her doctoral thesis, was published by Cambridge University Press. She co-edited *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically* (Routledge 2007) and *Pasifika Styles: Artists inside the Museum* (University of Otago Press 2008), the latter based on a ground breaking exhibition curated with artist Rosanna Raymond; and *Artefacts of Encounter: Cook's Voyages, Colonial Collecting and Museum Histories* (University of Otago Press, 2016). A former senior curator and lecturer at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge, she has also curated and designed exhibitions at the Tairāwhiti Museum in New Zealand.

*Anne Salmond* is a Distinguished Professor of Māori Studies and Anthropology at the University of Auckland. She has won many prizes and international honours for her writings on Māori life and on early European voyaging in the Pacific. In 1995 she was made Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for services to historical research. She is a Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences in the USA, a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy and a Fellow of the American Philosophical Society. In 2013 she was awarded the Rutherford Medal, New Zealand's top scientific award, and selected as New Zealander of the Year; and in 2018 she was awarded the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Research Award by the Humboldt Foundation for lifetime achievements in research.

*Paul Tapsell* is a Professor and Acting Director of the Australian Indigenous Studies Programme, University of Melbourne. He previously worked as an academic, curator and senior manager in a range of institutions, including Melbourne Museum, Otago University, University of Auckland, Auckland Museum and Rotorua Museum. His research career includes projects supported by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, National Science Challenge, Foundation for Research, Science and Technology, Marsden Fund and the Australian Research Council.



INTRODUCTION  
TRANSFORMING WORLDS:  
KINSHIP AS PRACTICAL ONTOLOGY

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**ABSTRACT:** The papers in this issue trace a particular set of Māori interventions in anthropology, arts, museums and heritage in the early twentieth century and consider their implications for iwi 'tribal communities', development and environmental management today. They follow Apirana Ngata, Te Rangihīroa (Peter Buck) and some of their Māori and Pākehā (European New Zealander) allies at the Polynesian Society through the Dominion Museum expeditions, on Te Poari Whakapapa (the Board of Maori Ethnological Research) and in a variety of community research initiatives. The authors explore how engagement with ancestral tikanga 'practices' and with western technologies and institutions allowed these scholars and leaders to imagine te ao hou 'a new world' in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through the analysis of surviving photographs, films, artefacts, collections and displays, as well as the extensive written archives that were produced through their efforts, the articles in this issue explore how relational concepts and practices including whakapapa 'kin networks' and tuku 'exchange of treasures (taonga)' were mobilised as practical ontologies, that is, as methods for bringing new things (artefacts, systems, concepts) into being. The lasting effects of these collaborative projects on museums, scholarship, government administration and tribal cultural heritage are investigated, showing the enduring relevance of this work in the present.

*Keywords:* Māori, whakapapa (relatedness, kin networks), ontology, indigenous anthropology, tikanga (Māori practices), Apirana Ngata, Te Rangihīroa (Peter Buck)

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I think it rests with you and I to gradually work up our own system of valuation and analysis by culling from our scientific friends the parts of their methods that can be used in the Polynesian field and taking no notice of their set ideas based on other races without testing them first. I have travelled a little way on the road to intellectual emancipation and refuse to accept an



indoor explanation of myself by outsiders no matter how high their status in the ethnological world. [Such a scholar] is a collector with bottles ready labelled and everything must go in one or other of these bottles, the bottles that have been labelled in the university class room and not in the field that the labeller never saw. No! Ma taua ano e wehewehe nga taonga, ma taua e whiriwhiri ki tewhea kete ki tewhea kete. Ma taua ano e raranga he kete hou mo nga taonga kaore e tika kia whaona ki nga kete tawhito. Ko wai o te Pakeha e maia ki te ki mai ki a taua kei te he ta korua patu i te kai nei. [Wiremu Parker’s translation: “It is you and I who must separate out the items [*taonga* ‘treasures’] and sort them into each basket. It is you and I who must weave a new basket for the items which it would be wrong to place in the [old] basket. Who of the Pakeha [European New Zealanders] would dare to say to us, ‘Your destroying of this food is wrong [i.e., you are wrong]?’”]

—Apirana Ngata, letter to Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa), Wellington, 1 August 1928 (Sorrenson 1986: 122)

What (and who) is anthropology for? The question has preoccupied practitioners since the discipline’s late-nineteenth-century inception, but has become pressing in a climate of cost-cutting in universities and an atmosphere of pessimism—about the future of liberal arts education, of politics, even of the environment that sustains all life—uncertainties characteristic of much public and scholarly life today. As arts and humanities subjects are downscaled in favour of those held to offer better employment prospects and more concrete routes to resolving urgent problems, as academic jobs dry up and departments are threatened with closure, the question of what a discipline contributes to learning and to society at large once again demands compelling answers.

While in this Special Issue the focus is held on a particular set of historical relationships and their present and potential significance, the people at the heart of our study had ready answers to the broader question of anthropology’s utility and purpose. Apirana Turupa Ngata (1874–1950), Ngāti Porou leader, land reformer, politician and scholar, and Te Rangihīroa (1877–1951) of Ngāti Mutunga (also known as Sir Peter Buck), doctor, military leader, health administrator, politician, anthropologist and later museum director, saw anthropology (or “ethnology”, as it was often called in the early twentieth century) as a valuable device, one of “nga rakau a te Pakeha” (the tools of the Pākehā) as Ngata himself famously put it (Higgins and Meredith 2011), in the quest to ensure better lives for their people and a brighter and more hopeful future for all New Zealanders. At the same time, they were very clear that this was a tool best held in Māori hands and wielded with deep insight into Māori ideas and aspirations, although allies could contribute useful skills and expertise to the struggle.<sup>1</sup>

Looking back on their time from a different perspective—one informed by the potent challenges to anthropology levelled by post-colonial theorists and by proponents of research driven by Māori principles and values (*kaupapa Māori*), for example—such optimism is hard to imagine. Harder still when reflecting on those aspects of present-day Māori experience, which Ngata and Buck hoped might be remedied through the judicious application of anthropological methods. Despite their ambitious and wide-ranging programmes, Māori continue to suffer disproportionately from poor health and higher mortality rates, the worst incarceration rates in the OECD (McMeeking 2017) and other ongoing inequities associated with poverty and with private and institutionalised forms of racism (Houkamau *et al.* 2017). How do we reconcile their optimism 100 years ago with this bleak situation in 2019? Were they simply wrong about anthropology’s potential to facilitate positive social and economic transformations, and the uses they made of anthropological ideas and approaches?

This is one strand in the argument brought against Buck and Ngata by scholars in recent decades, many of whom are sharply critical of their work and that of their Young Maori Party colleagues. The group are often painted as members of a privileged class of indigenous elites who used the social and political capital afforded by a Pākēhā education to their own, highly questionable, ends. Within anthropology especially,<sup>2</sup> their legacy has been handed down as one of political and cultural conservatism combined with a form of class- and tribally oriented nepotism that produced, it is said, a cultural assimilationist agenda (Webster 1998: 126), a stultifying “traditionalisation” of Māori creativity (Hanson 1989; Kernot 1998, 2004; Neich 1983; Sissons 1998; Van Meijl 1996; cf. Brown 1999: 242) and the entrenchment of inherited privilege among an undeserving tribal aristocracy (Webster 1998; Van Meijl 1996: 338). Their distinguished positions within imperial regimes of power and knowledge are held up as evidence of a betrayal of the interests of their people, and the institutions they established are criticised, not always implicitly, for fabricating and disseminating a “traditional” vision of Māoritanga/Māoriness judged inauthentic in its supposed backward-looking traditionalism, formalism and lack of innovation.

Based on research conducted during the Te Ao Hou project,<sup>3</sup> however, it seems that such accounts of the group’s work are selective, owing more to present political preoccupations, perhaps, than to the great volume of primary evidence available—in Māori as well as in English—of Ngata, Buck and their tribal associates and Pākehā colleagues’ actual thinking and achievements. This is not to say such interpretations are wrong, or to dismiss individual missteps and failures, or to ignore the biases and prejudices these men brought to the herculean task they had set themselves—no less than to

save the Māori people from extinction. Certainly, many schemes associated with the Young Maori Party's agenda, like Ngata's land reforms or the health practices implemented by medical doctors Buck and Pōmare (which entailed the statutory suppression of *tohunga* 'Māori healers'—at least those they regarded as "quacks") to give but two examples, had devastating consequences for many Māori, not all of which were anticipated.<sup>4</sup> And each undoubtedly, at different times, expressed views that lend credence to the contemporary critique, such as Ngata's glossary on the Treaty of Waitangi, which concluded that Māori signed away sovereignty in 1840 (Ngata [1922] 1963).

Yet, as the articles in this volume show, written by a multidisciplinary team of humanities, arts and social science scholars, these were complex characters working in contested territory within state structures, as well as outside them in their own communities, and sentiments expressed in their private correspondence should not be taken in isolation or at face value. These were people, moreover, with one eye always on the future: their words were written and their actions were carried out not just with a view to posterity but as part of an ever-evolving and constantly recalibrated plan, what they sometimes referred to as the "New Zealand experiment".<sup>5</sup> Instead of framing them one-dimensionally either as cultural saviours or as race traitors, then, these papers explore aspects of their broader intellectual and social milieu to place them more clearly in the international academic circles of which they were active and respected members. At the same time, they shed further light on the grassroots networks of intertribal relationships that shaped their research practice and gave form, substance and direction to their efforts.

In doing so we examine aspects of the practical ontologies that Ngata, Buck and their Māori and Pākehā collaborators developed in their quest to implement a particular vision of the future for Māori people and for the nation of New Zealand as a whole. By practical ontologies we mean the conceptual frameworks, practices, institutions and infrastructures they helped generate to realise new things (artefacts, systems, concepts, ways of being Māori). While engaging with a movement in anthropology and related disciplines toward taking the world-making potential of such constellations seriously, often referred to as the "ontological turn", we seek to reflect on the materials at hand in ways that invite these constellations themselves to illuminate the terms of our inquiry (Henare *et al.* 2007; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017). Instead of staying within a fixed set of externally given research parameters (for instance looking at the impact of "colonial education" on "Māori tribal elites" or the relation of "cultural dynamism" to "class politics"), we aim to foreground the research methodologies and terminologies which Te Rangihīroa, Ngata and their associates mobilised and to let these inflect (or infect) our research practice.

As Gad *et al.* (2015) point out, this kind of procedure contrasts with attempts to “go native” or to “see through the eyes” of one’s informants typical of earlier styles of anthropology. Whereas there the aim was to enter into a particular cultural or historical perspective *as such* (like Alfred Cort Haddon’s jokingly expressed desire “to become a Maori”—see Salmond and Lythberg this issue), the ambition of our team of Māori and Pākehā scholars is different. Rather than claiming the ability and right to describe another’s thoughts “from the inside”, the move here instead is both *prospective* and *generative*. Prospective because such an approach turns on remaining open to the unexpected, to things that might emerge from the research that could alter the very terms in which a question is imagined or a problem diagnosed. Generative because such openness demands a certain creativity, of the kind brought by a translator to an “untranslatable” word, phrase or idea, for instance—a kind of openness that allows new things and ideas to become manifest—the agency of ancestors, for instance, or the power of relationships to reshape the future.

The term “practical ontologies” is borrowed from current theoretical discussions in anthropology, but is used here to highlight the systematic and thoroughgoing application of distinctive ways of relating which Ngata, Buck and their allies mobilised as pragmatic as well as intellectual methodologies, and which we emulate in our work on this project today. There are strong resonances between this aspect of their oeuvre and recent writing in indigenous Pacific anthropology, which similarly places genealogical work at the heart of ethnographic practice (Tengan *et al.* 2010). Such work, like that of the earlier scholars discussed here, initiated by and conducted in collaboration with communities, offers hopeful, if guarded, visions for the future of anthropology and other disciplines that foreground ethnographic methods. It looks forward to a regenerated practice in which those whose lives are most at stake in ethnographic accounts and analyses take on leading roles as way-finders toward better ideas and descriptions, ones that relationally rework and refigure those too easily fallen back upon, not least the term “indigenous” itself (Tapsell 2017, 2019).

Like these Oceanic scholars, Ngata in particular saw *whakapapa*—most broadly defined as a framework of relatedness between all things—as warp and weft not just of Māori life but of all his strategic interventions, whether academic, artistic or political. Whakapapa was at once conceptual infrastructure, bodily substance and practical *modus operandi* for effecting meaningful material, psychological and spiritual transformation. In the letter to Buck quoted above, Ngata talks not just about using western categories but creating new *kete* ‘baskets’ into which *taonga* ‘treasures’ could be put, i.e., a Māori framework of analysis. As Wayne Ngata and Amiria Salmond note in their papers, while activating whakapapa in his practical efforts to ensure a

thriving future for his people, Ngata made significant steps toward deploying its key concepts to record and analyse the nation's history as well as Māori ways of living. In part, this enterprise was empowered by his engagement with anthropology, as he presented papers on what he called, after W.H.R. Rivers, the “Genealogical Method” at academic meetings and congresses. Ngata also wrote a substantial portion of what he intended as a doctoral thesis in anthropology, expanding considerably on these ideas. An extract of this remarkable treatise dealing with whakapapa is published here for the first time with an introduction by Wayne Ngata, a member of the extended *whānau* ‘family’ of Apirana Ngata and a leading Māori scholar as well as Raukura/Chief Advisor Te Ao Māori to the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

In their articles in this volume, artist Natalie Robertson, anthropologist Anne Salmond and interdisciplinary scholar Billie Lythberg similarly explore various ways in which whakapapa with its relational strategies shaped an earlier phase of Ngata and Buck's engagement with anthropology. Between 1919 and 1923, the friends supported and took active roles in a series of pioneering ethnographic expeditions into Māori communities organised and carried out with staff at the Dominion Museum (the national institution in Wellington that today is known as Te Papa). Inspired by Cambridge anthropologist Rivers's 1915 visit to New Zealand and his call for the Dominion “to undertake a full ethnographic survey of the indigenous races over which she rules” (Rivers 1926: 261), Ngata as a member of Parliament lobbied for records to be made of Māori traditional practices and music using new technologies like the cinematographic cameras and wax cylinders employed during Rivers's 1898 expedition to the Torres Strait. The Dominion Museum took up this challenge, and four ethnographic field trips were carried out, relying substantially on Ngata's support and networks and including Anne and Amiria Salmond's ancestor James McDonald, Dominion Museum artist and photographer. These articles both focus on the fourth and final expedition to the East Coast (Fig. 1) in 1923, where the team was hosted by Ngata at his home in Waiomatatini.

Robertson's familiarity with the communities and land at Waiomatatini and Port Awanui, where her maternal grandfather, David Hughes, was schooled, along with her membership of the Ngāti Porou kin group who hosted this expedition, has enabled her to trace lines through the close-knit fabric of whakapapa and friendships that determined the team's itinerary and the kinds of knowledge and practices they were encouraged to record. Exploring the active engagement of the *haukāinga* ‘home people’ in front of McDonald's camera and their generous *manaakitanga* ‘hospitality’ towards the team, Robertson draws out relationships and connections, including those forged between Te Rangihīroa—Major Peter Buck in the Great War's Pioneer Battalion—and local families, whose sons had died in battle. Her contribution

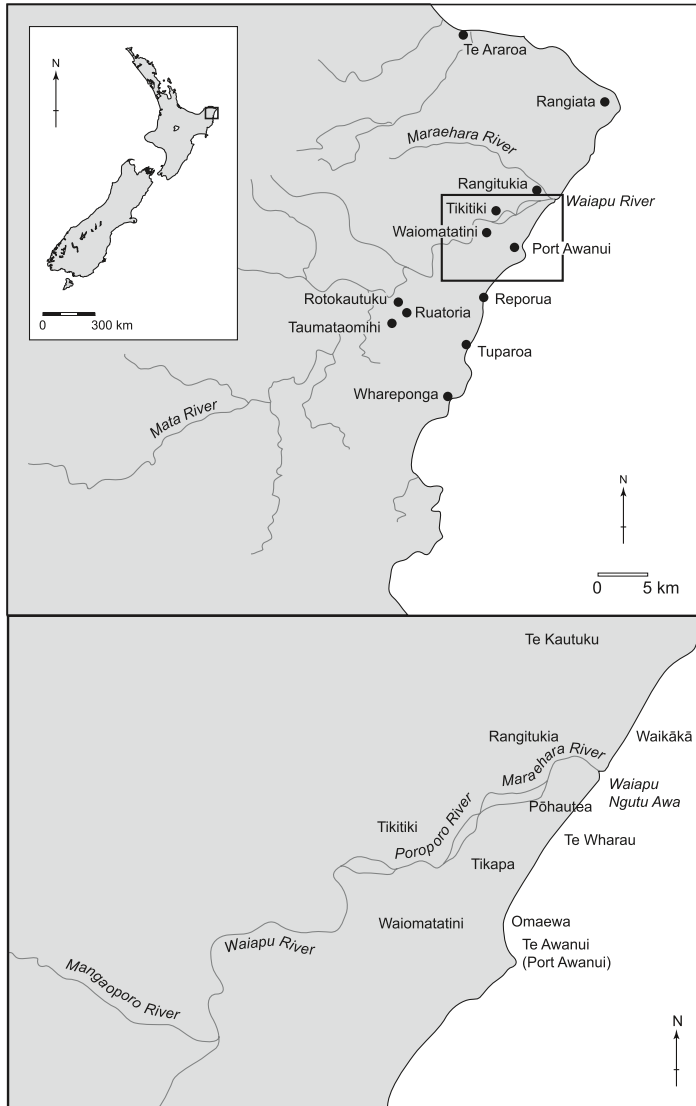


Figure 1. Localities along the North Island's East Coast that are referenced here and in the articles that follow. The lower map details place names and rivers of interest.

emphasises the different qualities of these relationships, genealogical and otherwise, and the ways in which they were acknowledged and maintained during the expedition, weaving around the films, images and archival fragments it produced—the taonga that it helped bring into being—a rich account of the expedition’s exchanges with her people, then and in the present.

Salmond and Lythberg show how this expedition in particular marked a turning point in Buck’s career, leading him “away from New Zealand and towards the international discipline of anthropology”. Armed with lantern slides and films taken a few months earlier on the East Coast, he attended a meeting of the Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Australia, meeting leading anthropologists of the day and being lauded for his contribution as a scholar and as a Māori. Soon afterwards he was invited by the Bishop Museum in Hawai‘i to join further ethnographic expeditions, this time to the Cook Islands and further afield. This was to be the beginning of a long and celebrated expatriate career as a professor of Pacific anthropology. For Ngata too, the expedition was a watershed, convincing the statesman that the way forward for Māori lay not only in recording ancestral knowledge from the past but in actively revitalising it in the present. The East Coast field trip lent momentum to the statesman’s subsequent extraordinary phase of activity, encompassing the foundation of a national board to direct and fund anthropological research, Māori land consolidation and settlement schemes, agricultural development initiatives, and nationwide initiatives to build elaborately carved meeting houses and to revitalise traditional Māori art forms associated with performance, oratory, crafts and architecture.

Conal McCarthy and Paul Tapsell’s contribution picks up this point, detailing the founding of Te Poari Whakapapa—established by statute as the Board of Maori Ethnological Research—soon after the Dominion Museum team returned to Wellington. Like Robertson, they draw attention to the seminal roles played in furthering what had begun as the Young Maori Party’s agenda not just by prominent Māori politicians and professionals like Buck, Pōmare and Ngata, but also by members of broader tribal networks that included ordinary Māori people as well as leaders in a wide range of communities and kin groups. Paul Tapsell, a leading Te Arawa anthropologist himself, pays particular attention to Te Arawa ethnologist Taiporutu Mitchell, a leader of his people at Ōhinemutu, who was a lifelong friend of Ngata’s and one of his closest research collaborators.

Mitchell was an important knot in the wide net that Ngata cast across the country of knowledgeable men and women who were paid or otherwise compensated by the Board for their contributions to ethnological research. He was instrumental in setting up the School of Maori Arts and Crafts in Rotorua, a nexus of activity for Ngata’s nationwide programme of artistic



and cultural revitalisation. Mitchell also routinely hosted the politician when he was in the area, facilitating his dealings with other local kin groups. As Tapsell and museologist McCarthy emphasise, the active support of such people, firmly anchored in their *rohe* ‘tribal territories’, was essential to the Board’s operations as it was to Ngata’s broader initiatives of cultural and economic advancement. It was through these face-to-face relationships as well as widely read and distributed Māori-language newspapers and magazines that a broad base of support for their activities could be cultivated. This article thus complements other recent writing about the Young Maori Party’s activities that detail the roles of one-time members and supporters less celebrated on the national stage than “the three knights” (Buck, Pōmare and Ngata), for instance Pei Te Hurinui Jones (Biggs 1998) and Frederick Bennett, Rēweti Kōhere and Timutimu Tāwhai (Carey 2018; Paterson 2007).

In the final article of this special issue, Amiria Salmond returns the focus to Ngata’s “genealogical” anthropology and considers how he mobilised it in the service of an ambitious programme of Māori artistic, cultural and economic revitalisation and how it serves as a powerful precedent for rethinking and reworking relations through ethnography in theory as well as in practice. Herself the great-great-granddaughter of Dominion Museum photographer James McDonald, who worked closely with Ngata, and an anthropologist like her mother, Anne Salmond, Amiria reflects on the implications of whakapapa in terms of recent discussions about anthropological methods and politics. Whereas critics of some “post-relational” approaches diagnose a lack of both political traction and practical application in efforts to investigate different modes of relatedness, she argues that Ngata’s example points to such experiments’ potential to help challenge and materially transform institutional and popular conceptions as well as the day-to-day living conditions of marginalised peoples.

In sum, the authors of this group of articles are inspired by Ngata’s use of whakapapa as practical ontology, as well as by recent work of Māori and Pacific communities and scholars, who mobilise Māori, ‘Ōiwi, Tongan and Sāmoan ways of relating both as methodological guides and theoretical way-finding devices for refiguring and regenerating anthropology. They seek to engage with these transformative ideas and to apply the lessons of this remarkable Māori-led early-twentieth-century social experiment to the early twenty-first century and its host of challenges. This Special Issue will be followed by a book that will examine the ethnographic expeditions more closely as well as further journal articles exploring the theoretical and historical significance of Ngata and Buck’s project to create “te ao hou”, which transformed worlds in Aotearoa New Zealand 1900–1950 and promises to do so again today.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank the wider Te Ao Hou team and research partners for their engagement with and comments on this Introduction. We thank Seline McNamee for drafting Figure 1 location map.

## NOTES

1. The anthropological *rākau* ‘tool’ has since been wielded by an impressive array of Māori anthropologists—beginning with Maharaia Winiata, Hirini Mead, Hugh Kāwharu, Bruce Biggs, Patu Hōhepa, Ranginui Walker, Pare Hopa, Pita Sharples, Robert Māhuta, Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku, Paul Tapsell, Merata Kāwharu, Lily George and Mārama Muru-Lanning, among others. For the most part we have followed current conventions in the spelling of Māori names, as established in *Ngā Tāngata Taumata Rau* published by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Wellington (1990–2000). *Te Ara: The Electronic Encyclopedia of New Zealand* (<https://teara.govt.nz/mi?browse=biographies>) has been consulted for biographical details and *iwi* ‘tribal communities’ affiliations. We have therefore used Te Rangihīroa, rather than the earlier variation of his name (Te Rangi Hiroa), which, as he himself explained in a letter to Johannes Andersen, was used in “youthful ignorance” when registering at Otago University and retained for convenience (Buck 1932). However with Apirana Ngata, we have followed the advice of Wayne Ngata (a former chair of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori / Māori Language Commission) in omitting the macron. In addition, although macrons have been used for Māori words throughout the articles, historical Māori text has been left as it was originally published, such as the quote at the start of this Introduction. Following the recently revised *JPS Style Guide*, Māori words are accompanied by a gloss and italicised only at first usage, as an aid to readers unfamiliar with the Māori language.
2. For overviews of their similar treatment in historical scholarship, see Paterson (2007: 27–28) and Carey (2018: 433); see also McCarthy (2012).
3. Te Ao Hou: Transforming Worlds in New Zealand 1900–1950 is led by Anne Salmond and funded by the Royal Society of New Zealand 2016–2020 (15-UOA-013).
4. On this point, however, see Stephens (2001).
5. See letter from Peter Buck to Apirana Ngata, 1 August 1928 (Buck in Sorrenson 1986: 123).

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# THE TERMINOLOGY OF WHAKAPAPA

APIRANA NGATA

Introduced by WAYNE NGATA

*Aotearoa New Zealand Ministry of Education, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga*

**ABSTRACT:** In the late 1920s and early 1930s Apirana Ngata wrote several texts based on his long-standing and extensive research into tribal genealogies or Māori whakapapa which, with the encouragement of Te Rangihīroa, were intended for a doctoral thesis on Māori social organisation. Although the doctorate was never completed, the fascinating fragments exploring the terminology of whakapapa brought together here, which survive in the Ngata family, the Alexander Turnbull Library and the Bishop Museum, stand as remarkable testament to indigenous scholarship in early twentieth-century Aotearoa New Zealand. In this rich and allusive text, Ngata explores the various material ways in which whakapapa is expressed in Māori language (te reo Māori), via meeting houses, weaving, twining and fishing techniques—a distinctively Māori view of kinship illustrating how whakapapa is employed as practical ontology, the subject of this Special Issue. In his Introduction, Wayne Ngata points out the value of this genealogical knowledge today and the ways in which it provides vital insights into traditional Māori ways of thinking and doing.

*Keywords:* whakapapa, genealogy, kinship, family, tribe, Ngāti Porou, knowledge, anthropology

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*He kura ka huna  
He kura ka whaakina*

Treasured knowledge is hidden  
And then it reveals itself

Kia tīkina atu ngā kupu o te oriori a Ngāti Kahungunu hei wāhi ake i tēnei kaupapa,  
“Pinepine te kura, hau te kura, whanake te kura i raro i Awarua.  
Ko te kura nui, ko te kura roa, ko te kura o tawhiti, nā Tūhaepō...”

Ko te kura i kōrerotia ai, e kōrerotia tonutia nei he āhuetanga whakaheke i ngā wānanga o Hawaiki mai, ka takitakina iho ki tēnei whenua kura e hora nei me ōna iwi. Kāti, he whenua, he whakapapa, he kōrero tonu e whakaorioritia ana hei oranga mokopuna, hei oranga tangata. Kei kōnei e āta whakaraupapahia ana e tō mātau tipuna, e Apirana, e tāea ai e tātau te whai kia mārama ai

tātau ki a tātau anō, kia mōhio ai tātau me pēhea te whakataū, te whakarite, te whakaū i ngā tūhonohononga i waenganui i a tātau, e tika ai tā tātau noho ki te ao. Kia whakamihia ēnei tūāhuatanga i tukituki e ngā momo whakawai o te ao hou i ngā tau roa, kei moa te ngaro, me tiaki.

The relationship between Apirana Ngata and Te Rangihīroa (Sir Peter Buck) is materialised in many things, including the letters and manuscripts they exchanged. Keith Sorrenson published 174 of their letters in *Na To Hoa Aroha, From Your Dear Friend: The Correspondence between Sir Apirana Ngata and Sir Peter Buck, 1925–50* (3 volumes). This paper publishes pieces of writing prepared by Ngata on the terminology associated with Māori genealogies, and sent to Te Rangihīroa during their long correspondence. This work, *The Terminology of Whakapapa*, has been lately uncovered in the archives of the Bishop Museum and the Alexander Turnbull Library.

Ngata had proposed to write a doctoral thesis on the “genealogical method”. In a letter dated 11 January 1931, Ngata mentions to Buck that he is “dishing up the whakapapa matter alongside Nga Moteatea for the Litt. D” (*Na To Hoa Aroha* vol. 2: 226) and cites Te Kooro Kiriahuru as his mentor. Though the thesis was never submitted, the tracts below outline an extraordinary framework for understanding how whakapapa works. Ngata explores the various material ways in which whakapapa is expressed in *te reo Māori* ‘Maori language’, via meeting houses, weaving, twining and fishing techniques—whakapapa as practical ontology.

Te Kooro Kiriahuru of the Tairāwhiti (East Coast of Aotearoa-New Zealand) was a noted genealogy expert of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was consulted by Ngata and others in matters of genealogical knowledge and practice, and belonged to a class of *tohunga* ‘experts’ who were being, and have now been, overtaken by western models of absorbing, retaining and utilising bodies of knowledge. Te Kooro was what I would consider to be a “tribal database and software program” of insight, wisdom and practice as it pertained to connecting the complex networks of relationships between people through and across generations, that recognised, highlighted and reinforced obligations and responsibilities of those relationships. Modern genealogy software programs and apps have and continue to paint the relationship pictures we may desire, but have resulted in the loss of our ability and capacity to harness the incredible potential of our own human memory and understanding that traditional indigenous practice had maintained for many generations. We are fortunate that Ngata and others were able to record experiences and learnings they gathered in the company of the likes of Te Kooro. We have much to learn if we are to gain even the smallest of insights into our own traditional ways of thinking and doing.

The manuscripts below were transcribed by Anne Salmond. The original texts did not include macrons and have been left as they were written. Notes in square brackets refer to missing pages or to insertions made by Ngata in black ink or by an editor in red ink, and highlight sentences that suggest that these manuscripts were written primarily for Te Rangihīroa's readership.<sup>1</sup>

Wayne Ngata

## THE TERMINOLOGY OF WHAKAPAPA

APIRANA NGATA

[MS SC Buck 6.02, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives]

In Maori various terms are used to define a pedigree or genealogy, or the act of tracing descent or setting out genealogically the relationship of persons or groups. A people such as the Maori, which had intense pride of race and a social system based largely on the family status of its members, would be expected to evolve a rich terminology relating to the preservation and transmission of pedigrees and the processes connected therewith.

### *Recitation*

The only process by which pedigrees were communicated and transmitted, and thus taught and preserved, was by recitation, before the art of writing was acquired from the English.

The act of recitation was described by various terms according to the figure present in the mind of the reciter. If he conceived of the line of descent as a line, cord or string along which in imagination the persons concerned in the pedigree were strung in proper sequence he would use words appropriate to the act of tracing the particular string or cord. The words he would commonly use would be "taki" or "hapai." Those words would also be applicable to the idea of leading or lifting either a song or chant or story, and the reciter would become the fogleman in a massed haka or peruperu. A closely allied figure is expressed in the term "kauwhata." A kauwhata was a stage or frame built on which to suspend fish or bundles of food, which were tied together in such a way that the bundles straddled the cross-beams of the stage. There was a horizontal and a vertical method in the arrangement and display. It was no great step mentally to use a term which emphasised order, display and even decoration. This was the term "tatai."

In the term "tahu" or "tahuhu" (the former Eastern and the latter its equivalent among other tribes including Arawa, Tainui, Aotea and Ngapuhi) we have two conceptions, according as tahuhu is used as the first weft in the weaving of a garment, thus allied to "taki aho" or "hapai," or as the ridge-pole of a house or as a stiffening rod. In the expression "tahuhu haere" the



reciter is literally tracing this first weft, picking out the eldest son of the eldest branch of a family. The second conception of a ridge-pole and of the tribe or sub-tribe or family as a house with its connected parts is the one which is more usually present in the mind of the expert genealogist.

In the word “kauwhau” (also kauhau and kauhou) we have the basic idea of a tying together. “Whau” and “hou” are interchangeable as in whauwhau and houhou, and mean a tie; and “kau” is an ancestor. It seems to be at once the oldest and the most formal expression for ancient legends and genealogies and for the act of proclaiming them.

“Whakapapa” is the term in most common use. It introduces another conception, that of placing in layers or laying upon one another. We shall develop all these terms and conceptions in detail.

(a) The line, string or cord.

Aho, kaha. Literally a line, string or cord. In relation to a pedigree or genealogy this is a figure that would naturally occur to a weaving, cord-making, net-making, fishing people. The reciter conceived a connected string on which the persons concerned in the matter of his recitation were strung along in sequence and by lifting the string displayed them prominently. The string was the aho or kaha. The act of tracing it along in memory was “taki”, and of lifting it “hapai”.

Ex: From the song of Te Aratukutuku, who boasted of the people of Taupo:  
 Hapainga te aho o to tupuna tama-wahine, i ariki ai ki te taniwha.  
 E kore e tau hei whai ake mo te taki aho ariki o te wahine maru kore.

Aho is most commonly used in the expression “aho ariki”. Takiāho is a cord on which fish or shellfish are strung, and also a line of descent.

Kaha is a rope, rauawa lashings, a line or boundary, the navel string &c., thence lineage or a line of descent, though in that connection now rarely used.

Ex: Ka hoki mai ki te whakataki i te kaha o Houmaitawhiti (T. 128)

“Taki” is to lead or bring along or to trace, and thus to recite in the days when recitation was the only method of tracing lines of descent, or history or traditions. We have it in taki tupuna, whakataki, takitaki and takiāho.

E taki ana i nga korero o mua  
 Ka takina te kawa.

Ka hoki mai ki te whakataki i te kaha o Houmaitawhiti, tae noa ki ana uri.

E kore e tau hei whai ake mo te takiaho ariki.  
Ka takitakina te haka,  
Takitakina ra, e Horo, te hu o te puoro.

“Hapai” is to raise or lift up and in the line quoted from the song of Te Aratukutuku is applied to lifting or raising the aho ariki so as to display it. It is used in the same sense as “taki” for leading or raising the tune or tone of a song or chant.

In both taki and hapai you visualise the reciters one at each end of a line, now one now the other leading or taking the lead from the other as was the custom in the whare wananga.

“Whakaaraara” contains the same idea of lifting up or raising, and of chanting. As a noun it is a chant to keep the watch awake or give the alarm in time of war. (cf. Whakaaraara pa). As a term in relation to genealogies &c. It means to recite or explain genealogies or other formal matter. The pedigrees or legends are visualised as a matua of component parts which experts in turn will arouse.

Ex: Ara atu ano pea etahi i mahue i a au, ma tetahi atu e whakaaraara atu.  
He nui nga mea kei waho atu i enei katoa i whakaaraaratia atu nei e au.

(b) The stage for display.

“Kauwhata” is to display as on a stage or frame in tied bundles, as of fish or articles of food, the elevation giving prominence. The figure is closely allied to that denoted by taki, hapai, aho and kaha.

Ex: E ora ana nga koromatua hai kauwhata i te riri (M. XCIX)  
Te kauwhata o te atua  
Ki te po wananga, ki te po kauwhata.

It is probably because in using these expressions, the reciter is seeking emphasis that we find them most commonly used in regard to ariki lines as in Takiaho ariki, kauwhata o te atua &c.

(c) The first weft and (d) The ridge-pole or stiffening rod.

“Tahu or tahuhu”. Reference has been made to the double conception denoted. We shall particularise here on the alternative figure of a ridge-pole or stiffening rod.

In the cult of genealogies, “tahu or tahuhu” has a technical meaning. It is the act of setting out or arranging the main ancestors (connected with a common ancestor) from whom you may derive the tribe or tribes occupying a more or less extensive area. It has the idea of a horizontal arrangement with connected suspended lines that fits with both the conception of a weft and of a ridge-pole. Both weaving and house construction are so primitive that it is idle to speculate which complex derived the term from the other. The expert reciter was he who could most vividly impress on his hearers the array of related ancestors so that he might at will follow down any strand or rafter or poupou with the connected details of kaho, covering thatch or decorative tupuni. From any side or angle the suspended or propped up tahuhu challenged you to obscure it.

Te Kooro Kiriahuru, from whom I gathered enthusiasm for the cult of whakapapa, was master of the art of setting out “tahuhu” in whakapapa. It was amazing with what ease and sureness he would, after tracing out subsidiary lines in detail to the most recent date, revert to the tahuhu a little further along it to pick up connection with the next line, and so on.

In these days when recitation has given way to the written record the expert genealogist is he who can select from voluminous notes the “tahuhu” that will most clearly display the genealogical connections of all the hapu or whanau in a territory. The Arawa canoe landed in the Bay of Plenty a crew, whose orally transmitted genealogies show them to have been of one family in the Awarua on Rangiatea from which they migrated. And so we have—

Ko enei tangata, ko Tuamatua raua ko Uruika, ko raua te tahu nui o  
Te Hekengarangi, te tino kawai ariki, ko raua te tahu iho, tae iho ki  
nga uri.

On the East Coast lines you have to set out such names as Paikea, Uenuku, Ruawharo, Paoa, Whiro &c. and connect them together either under Toi or the more distant Tawhaki, Wahieroa or Rata. After some generations in New Zealand these lines converge on Porourangi, Tahu, Ruapani, Rongowhakaata and Kahungunu; you thus get the local tahuhu.

And so in naming their superior houses after main or eponymous ancestors the tribes or tribe select their immediate ancestor from the tahuhu to form in turn the subsidiary tahuhu. The internal decorations, whether carved poupou or tukutuku panels may in turn follow down from the tahuhu commemorated in the name of the house or up to the main ancestor of the tribe, or you may as in Porourangi have both systems in operation.

In tahuhu you have the same conception as in aho kaha and kauwhata of something continuous, unbroken.

(e) Orderly arrangement.

“Tatai” is to arrange or set in order, and as applied to genealogies is related to tahuhu. The idea of order or arrangement is emphasised and also of adornment. It may fit in very well as the Maori equivalent of the classical expression of adorning a tale. Hence “tatai korero” and “tatai tupuna” are particularly applicable to the orderly recitation of a line of ancestry or of the history of a people. Thence it was applied to the thing recited, especially the line of descent.

Ex: Kia ata tatai i te korero, kei pokapoka, engari kia tuhono noa atu.  
Ka tukua te tangata ki te tatai i nga kupenga a Marutuahu (Join the component parts of a fishing net).  
Tatai kau ana te whetu i te rangi.  
Ka mutu taua tatai wahine a Tangaroa.

(f) Tying together of ancient things.

[*corrected in red ink: “tyeing”*]

“Kauwhau, kauhau, or kauhou” is to recite, proclaim or declare aloud legends, genealogies or traditions. I have given what I consider to be the philology of the term and its literal meaning as to the tying together of ancestors or legends.

The kau of kaumatua and of the expressions “Na ona kau i waiho”, “he korero huna na o kau” must be one of the roots; and hou, to tie, the other. If so then the basic idea is the same as in the expressions denoting a line or string or stage or weft or ridge-pole.

Ex: Kawhautia mai te kauwhau o te kino  
I pu ai te riri, i mau ai te pakanga.  
Whakaputa to reo ki te kauwhau riri.  
A raua korero e kauhau nei mo Rangi raua ko Papa.  
Whakaangi i runga i te kauwhau ariki.

(g) Layers.

“Whakapapa” is the term in most common use for the act of reciting a genealogy and for the genealogy itself. It introduces another conception in the reciter’s mind.

Among the many meanings of the word “whakapapa” as a verb we may select as most relevant to our subject ‘to place in layers or lay upon one another’. Thus “whakapaparanga” is a layer or series of layers, and thus a

generation or generations. Whakapapa is the act of reciting in proper order these layers or generations, whether the generation is composed of one individual as in the process called taotahi or tararere or of groups related along the one plane, as brothers, sisters or cousins to the nth degree and their wives and husbands.

Whakapapa opens up the widest scope of any of the terms used for the cult of genealogies. Where taki, hapai, kauwhata, tatai or tahuhu appear limited to special lines, kauwhau and whakapapa may comprise the most extensive relationships and involve the most complicated groupings.

Kauwhau probably had a wider vogue in former days, and is still the most formal expression, but whakapapa has almost ousted all other terms in these days, where its comprehensiveness covers much shallow knowledge and laxity.

Ex: Whakapapatia mai taua i to tipuna e korero na.

I haere mai ia ki te whakapapa i nga kauwhau o mua.

“Whakatakoto tupuna” is an expression related to whakapapa and with the same fundamental idea of laying down according to a plan. It is rarely used.

“Whakaparu” is a term that may be associated with whakapapa if as I believe it is derived from “paru”, the thatching of bundles of raupo leaves. The association is in the idea of layering. I have not come across any example of the use of the term in regard to genealogies. Williams gives “whakaparu wahine” as descent through the female line only.

The reciter of legends and traditions, of tribal history and genealogies thus visualises his act in turn as tracing incidents or personnel strung along strings or cords or suspended on the cross-beams of hakari stages or from the first weft of a garment or from the ridgepole of a house or from any rod used to stiffen an object, or as uncovering the layers of stored information or of thatching. In kauwhau he has the figure of ancestors tied together by blood relationship. Pervading all is the idea of order, sequence and arrangement, and in boastful mood there is a suggestion of dressing and adornment, a lifting of pedigrees from out of the ruck.

It is doubtful whether he visualised a pedigree as a tree, with its head embedded by the hairy roots in Papatuanuku and trunk and branches vainly reaching up to Rangi above. Though the word “peka” is used for a branch of a family or tribe as in “Patua te peka kainga, ko te peka tangata kia ora” or “Ka whakarauratia ko te peka tangata, ko te peka whenua ka whakamatea”. I can find no example that would support the idea of a pedigree being likened to a tree.

The fact that legends and genealogies could not be used, proclaimed or transmitted except by reciting them and that in practice this was done by groups of experts who passed the action to and fro drew into the terminology words associated with chanting and leading of tunes or chants.

*Methods in recitation*

(a) Taotahi or Tararere

If you pick up any family whakapapa book today, where the data was taken from the dictation of an elder towards the end of the eighth decade of last century it will reveal the following peculiarities:

1. It will give single names in each generation from the first ancestor recorded to the person then living, whose pedigree is the subject of the record.
2. If that person is also descended from a brother or sister of any ancestor after the first, the record will begin at the beginning and trace down to where the line will so descend.
3. When it happens that there is an intermarriage between ancestors in the divergent lines the reader is left to deduce the fact by noting that two ancestors traced on different pedigrees produce a child bearing the same name and having the same line descended from him.

The process of reciting genealogy in a single line of descent is called “taotahi” and among Ngati Porou “tararere”. It was the process favoured by the multitude, most easily cultivated and acquired. It enabled you to sort up lines with aristocratic repute and so establish bowing connection with chiefs, whom you respect – fully classed as your tuakana or tamariki or mokopuna.

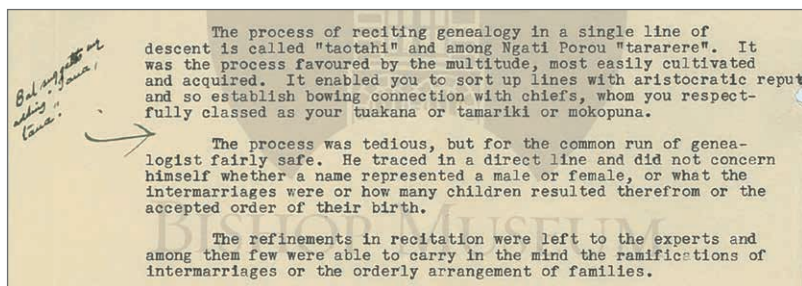


Figure 1. The note, in Ngata’s hand-writing, reads, “Bal [Balneavis] suggests my adding ‘Tatau, taua’.”

The process was tedious, but for the common run of genealogist fairly safe. He traced in a direct line and did not concern himself whether a name represented a male or female, or what the intermarriages were or how many children resulted therefrom or the accepted order of their birth.

The refinements in recitation were left to the experts and among them few were able to carry in mind the ramifications of intermarriages or the orderly arrangement of families.

(b) Whakamoe

This was the act of tracing a genealogy assigning wives to males or husbands to females. It multiplied the strain on the memory and the margin of error more than two-fold. There was the risk of juxtaposing the wrong names by quoting as that of mate a name from the next generation, above or below, or placing in the direct line of descent the name of a wife or husband. For the Maori it must be remembered was, before writing was introduced, memorising by ear and had not the further aid of memorising by sight.

Nepia Pohuhu and others of the Wairarapa whare wananga experts may be quoted as deferring to Te Matorohanga in the matter of reciting intermarriages. And we may quote Te Matorohanga himself:—

“Kaore au e pai ki te taotahi i aku whakapapa; me ata whakamoe ano ka pai ai au.”

(c) Whakapiri

This is the act of reciting parallel lines from a common ancestor in the taotahi style for each line so as to compare their length.

In planning a marriage “whakapiri” was used so as to keep the individuals concerned if possible on the same plane from a selected common ancestor, so that they would be tungaane and tuahine. If somebody called you by a relationship term, especially if it placed him a generation or so further than yourself from a common stock presumed to be in his mind, you would challenge him “Kei a wai?” so as to give yourself the opportunity by “whakapiri” of checking him.

(d) Tahuhu

This is the setting forth of ~~Maui~~ *[inserted in red ink: main]* sources of the lines of descent, those sources being connected with one another. Thus in regard to the progeny of a noted ancestor, especially the eponymous ancestor of a tribe, his various wives, if more than one, would be set out in proper order



either of seniority if of one family or of related families or in order of the forming of the connections if known to tradition, and the children of each marriage, and sometimes the intermarriages of these and their descendants down to points, where the genealogist may indicate the branching off of a line or lines leading to the establishment and growth of new tribes or sub-tribes.

This is the highest art and comes nearest to the modern method of constructing genealogical tables.

(e) Hikohiko

In this process the reciter deliberately skips names on the vertical line down and sometimes interpolates names on the horizontal plane—the object being not so much to trace a continuous line as to indicate the relationship of the descendant sought to be distinguished, with the outstanding ancestors of various lines of descent. This is a common feature in poetry. Rangiuiā's lament is a classic instance. In poetry too there is the factor of poetic licence in the selection of names that fit in with the lilt and metre of the song as well as its theme.

(f) Ure tane and whakaparu wahine

Tracing through male or female lines. The proudest descent was reputed to be in the eldest line through males. This was rarely achieved over many generations. Descent through males only irrespective of seniority, was termed “whakataki ure tane or ure tarewa.” It is said that the late Mahuta Tawhiao and his full brothers, as also his son Te Rata and his brothers, have their ure tarewa or ure tane in their line of descent through Pikiā, an Arawa ancestor. The converse, descent through the female line only was termed “whakaparu wahine.” And either may be an “ariki” line. Te Kani-a-Takirau boasted of a “whakaparu wahine” through “tapairu” or women of aristocratic lineage:

Ngunguruterangi  
I  
Hinematioro  
I  
Ngarangikahiwa  
I  
Te Kani-a-Takirau.

The tapairu were mated of course to consorts of the highest blood but not necessarily the eldest males, of the eldest branch of their respective families.

*Terms defining genealogy*

We have given the terms used to define the act of recitation and the various methods used by the reciter.

Limiting the subject of recitation to cosmogonies, pedigrees or genealogies the various terms used for these may now be given.

We have given

Aho  
Tokiaho  
Kaha  
Kauwhata  
Tatai  
Kauwhau (kauhau, kauhou)  
Tahu or tahuhu  
Whakapapa  
Ure tane or ure tarewa  
Whakaparu wahine

and indicated the ideas underlying them in the reciter's mind.

The list may be amplified thus:

Ara: ) Common expressions with the usual meaning.

Huarahi: )  
Takina mai to huarahi i a Mahaki.  
He ara tangata tonu no te kawai matua.

Kawai ) The figure is that of the shoot of a creeper or gourd, spreading from

Kawei ) the parent stem.

Takinga ou kawai, kia mohiotia ai ou tipuna.

Kaweka: Is allied to kawai, but suggests idling, rambling and digressing, therefore an indirect line of descent.

No te wa tauware, a stray shoot.

Hikahika matua: This is an unusual expression, and according to Williams is a direct line of descent.

*Terms for generation*

We have given one—"whakapaparanga", a term derived from whakapapa meaning a layer and thus in relation to genealogies a generation.

Other terms are—

Ahunga: From "ahu" to foster, fashion:

Ata whaia ki tenei ahunga tangata.  
Ko taua kuia no te ahunga i a kuoro.

Reanga: from "rea" to spring up, grow or multiply.

Whakatipuranga or whakatupuranga—from whakatupu, to cause to grow &c.

Ko tenei korero mo te whakatupuranga o nga tupuna o te tangata Maori.

*Terms for groups of descendants*

These may be classified into (a) General terms for descendants (b) Terms for tribal or sub-tribal groups.

- (a) Descendants are termed in a general way as uri, momo, aitanga, mokopuna, pori, whanau [*inserted in black ink, in Ngata's hand: "and iwi may be added"*]. An archaic form is ati, preserved for the most part in tribal appellations and words like mataati, and there are terms such as hoko, pu, waka, ngare, ure which fall properly into the next class. The word "whare" should perhaps be included in this class though its use in relation to descendants appears to be limited to the expression "whare ngaro", a line or family which has become extinct.
- (b) Tribal appellations are an example of how archaic forms may linger on in names (whether of places, persons or objects). The archaic "ati" figures prominently as in Ati-Rua, Ati-Toa from Ngati-Rua, Ngati-Toa and is the usual form in Te Ati-awa. Nga-ati and Nga-ai are contracted to Ngati and Ngai to which the final element of some ancestral patronymic is added. Sometimes however this element is a word used to commemorate some incident viz: Ngati-Kumara, Ngati-Horomoana &c. The difference in use between "ngai" and "ngati" appears to be one of euphony. The form "Ngai" is more frequent on the East Coast, whose dialect is prone to abbreviate or drop consonants. Thus Ngai-Tai at Torere is the name of the same tribe as the Ngati-Tai of the Western Hauraki Gulf.

The Arawa and Tainui folk pay more punctilious attention to syllables containing consonants ahau–au, tonu–tou, mata-whaorua–matahourua &c.

As tribal prefixes aitanga- (itanga), whanau, te ngare o, te ure o are in common use. It is remarked that these relate to the act of begetting and thus to those begotten. Ati in mataati, ati-a-toa, ika-i-te-ati relates to the young, the first procured or produced, the first fish, the young men in their first fight. Its use from time immemorial with tribal names suggests an original relationship with the act of procreation, unmistakably preserved in the form Nga-ai &c.

Te Ngare o- is a Tuwharetoa, probably a Tainui form, as Te Ure o- is distinctively Arawa. The other forms are universal but more common on the East Coast.

Te Whanau-a-Apanui  
 Te Whanau-a-Te Ehutu  
 Te Whanau-a-Maru  
 Te Whanau-a-Kaiaio  
 Te Whanau-a-Pararaki  
 Te Whanau-a-Tuwhakiriora  
 Te Whanau-a-Ruataupare  
 Te Whanau-a-Karuai  
 Te Whanau-a-Rakaihoea  
 Te Whanau-a-Tapuhi  
 Te Whanau-a-Hinetapora  
 Te Aitanga-a-Mate  
 Te Whanau-a-Rakairoa  
 Te Whanau-a-Te Haemata  
 Te Whanau-a-Iritekura  
 Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti  
 Te Aitanga-a-Mahaki  
 Ngai-Tai  
 Ngai-Tamanuhiri  
 Ngai-te-Rangi  
 Ngai-Tane.

The Ngati form is not frequent. We have Ngati-Porou, Ngati-Puai, Ngati-Horowai (these two from drowning incidents as recently happened with the Whanau-a-Apanui of Maraenui who became Ngati-Horomoana), Ngati-Rangi, Ngati-Hau, Ngati-Konohi, Ngati-Rakaipaka, Ngati-Kahungunu. It may be observed however that Aitanga and Whanau were applied formerly to subsections of a main tribe, whether this had been named or not and gradually developed into groups worthy to be deemed tribes.

The use of “waka” and waka names for tribes should, I think, be regarded as a recent development. Our people had the Horouta canoe but never used that name as a territorial designation until the establishment of Maori Councils.

Now it is not uncommon to hear some of the communities within the territory speak of themselves as Horouta—a use that may develop into the practice which has allowed Te Arawa to displace Ngaoho.

Lastly we have the word “hoko” associated with “ati” in the tribal names—Te hoko Ati-Rua, te hoko Ati-Puhi &c. This Hoko is connected with hoko the prefix used with the numerals 1 to 9 to signify 20 times the subjoined numeral, and there is a multitude. Hoko Ati—is then the multitude of the Members of such and such a tribe.

I have a note of “pu” meaning a tribe. This is the “pu” of apu—a heap or collection, not the pu meaning origin, source.

(to be continued).

### THE TERMINOLOGY OF WHAKAPAPA (continued)

#### APIRANA NGATA

[Ngata Papers, Micro MS 232, Folder 3/7, Alexander Turnbull Library; also in private collection of Dr Herewini Ngata.]

#### *Kinship terms*

The Maori kinship terms express both intimate or direct kinship, as true father or mother, or brother and sister, child and grandchild and collateral or indirect relationship. But it must not therefore be assumed that they did not in fact distinguish between near and distant kin. The vocabulary contains terms that separate the latter in definite fashion.

#### *Relatives*

The general term for relatives are “huanga” and “whanaunga”, the latter prevailing among the East Coast tribes, where huanga is practically unheard of in the colloquial. A rare term is “pakanga”. All terms denote blood relationship, descent from a common ancestor.

This common descent is called “puninga tahi”, and relatives will claim, “he puninga tahi matou” (we come of a common ancestor).

Near relatives are called “tautau huanga” (the figure represented is that of a string or cluster of objects). “Pakanga kiritahi” is also used to describe near relatives, probably closer in through blood than the former term. Distant relatives are called “epeepe”, literally small objects that are attached or cling to a main object, such as a rock. The distant relatives have parted so long or so far from the common stock that they have come cold or “mataotao”, they “awhi” or merely embrace those who have remained close to the common ancestor.

The terms however do not convey distinctions as between lineal and collateral descendants.

*Lineal and collateral descent*

The student must take care in seeking terms which may mark such a distinction to recognise that there may be a difference in conception between the Maori genealogist and the European sociologist, and that the former in defining relationships has a mental picture embracing on one canvas a much more extensive group than the latter. One stratifies mentally successive horizontal groups from a common stock and sees them lie equal distances from the common "pu", or "take" and therefore in the same relationship to one another along the common plane. His terminology thus tends to embrace all on that plane in relation to the common ancestor and to one another. The European sociologist on the other hand prefers what may be called the vertical view, and having selected a line, which for his argument he calls direct, distributes appropriate terms for the relationship of the individuals down that line. There are his terms to define kinship in the direct line, that is, linear descent. Those terms are used exclusively to define kinship in the direct line. As soon as you step to one side or the other of the direct line of descent the oblique relationships are described by other terms. Once a line is selected and called direct all others become indirect in relation to it, and all kinship of persons on those lines are deemed to be collateral in relation to persons on the selected direct line. His inherent individualism and his system of inheritance and succession to property engender not only preciseness in the terminology of kin but exclusiveness and rapid lopping off of receding relatives.

The Maori genealogist visualises vertical, horizontal, and oblique relationships as radiating from a common ancestor or a group of common ancestors. Perhaps it could be truer to picture his standing at a focus and defining the connection of all those round him whether above or below directly on either side of him or radiating to or from him as on a chart. Literally he is called upon to deal with a circle of relatives, all of whom appear intimate not only on his mental chart but in the everyday life of the area they inhabit. His traditional communal system, his system of inheritance, tracing on both the maternal and paternal side if both are connected with the ancestral stock whence rights and privileges or property is derived, the tendency of his race to embrace rather than exclude those related by blood conspire to make his terminology classificatory and apparently indiscriminating. It is not that he is not aware of the distinction between intimate and distant relationships, or that there is a basis of promiscuity which is best glossed over with terms of propriety. The Maori genealogist must in the nature of the case be precise and accurate. His social system demands that he should be polite and hospitable and the precise knowledge each family has of its detailed relationships is not sought to be overridden in any way by describing their connection with others outside themselves

by the same terms they apply inter se. No one is deceived and the expert is the last person to attempt to deceive by the use of terms which translated into another tongue appear to exclude whole groups of individuals.

Here is a catechism. A father Anglice (*sic*) [Anglicised?] says to his son “Karangatia atu to papa ki te kai.” The boy may ask “A wai?” and he might be told “A mea—hei tungaane hoki ki to koka.” The child may by questioning learn that it is some cousin of his mother that is meant, but not a real brother. He will get at the relationship to himself of many relatives by this process, whereby he first eliminates all not in the direct line, tino or tuturu, possibly also those who are not first or second cousins and so forth. He will still be interested in many more removed than the case of the European boy whose family circle is severely circumscribed by the social or economic system.

As the Maori lad grows up he perfects his education in the loose terminology used round him. He finds any amount of mentors to swell the data he must carry through life.

If then the Maori terms for lineal and collateral descendants confuse the European investigator they provide no pitfalls for those who grow up in it and whose education in the relationship of actual individuals to himself appear to be the care of all interested in him. It is our common experience in visiting the settlements to be confronted every hour and at every turn with short courses on relationships even from those who delight to rank you on the plane of their grandparents.

Maori kinship terms may therefore be said not to emphasise distinction between lineal and collateral descendants. But the distinction is there nevertheless and the terminology suggests its presence. Terms denoting relations which in the English relationship terminology are collateral kui (*sic*) [kin?] may be given as follows:—

Keke. In a different line: from “ke” different. So matua keke: uncle or aunt, matua meaning someone on the plane of a parent, male or female; tamaiti keke, nephew or niece.

There are no examples of the use of the terms for more distant relatives, such as cousins of the parents or children. Papa keke: Male relation in the same generation as father and mother.

Iramutu: Nephew or niece. The word tamaiti would embrace these, but if the precise relationship is to be emphasise the word is used.

Turanga whanau: Describes the relationship of cousins. It is used to limit the terms “tuakana”, “taina”, “tungaane”, “tuahine” so as to remove all doubt whether these are intended to convey actual relationship through actual parents, direct kinship or something more distant.



*Terms denoting lineal descent*

At this point it should be stated that the Maori terms which correspond to the English terms comprise relations excluded by the latter. Translation would merely confuse. Yet a statement in English must use terms that appear to correspond, and require explanation to show where they pass beyond the accepted meaning of the English terms.

We must for the occasion defer consideration of terms denoting relationship by marriage or adoption for these will only add to the confusion.

It is necessary to remember that we must tabulate our terminology for an individual on the direct line from a common ancestor and to define his relationship (1) to those in the direct line to or from himself and (2) to those who are in a different line from that ancestor, and (3) of any of those persons to himself.

The English terms are—

Grandparents; Grand-father, grandmother  
 Parents; father, mother  
 Children; son, daughter  
 Grandchildren; grandson, grand-daughter.

The individual whose relatives we are seeking to define by appropriate terms, let us say, the son on the English table.

The corresponding Maori terms may be considered in detail.

## (a) Grand-parents.

The common term is “tupuna,” tipuna among the East Coast tribes. (Our people experience difficulty with “tupu”, “tupua”, “tupuna”, “tumu”, “tumuaki”, where the u in tu is short. This is one of the dialectal distinctions. I explain it in the characteristics of the two main divisions of the North Island. That which we may roughly describe as Taihauauru (including the Arawa people) were more formal and deliberate in their language, especially the ceremonial or marae language. This is evidenced in the emphasis and value given to each syllable in a word. It was necessary even to interpolate a syllable like “nge” to make the mouthful. The Tairawhiti man was not so careful; his was a “reo mama”, and he had a partiality for “au” instead of “ahau”, “tou” for “tonu”, and for the tripping “ti” instead of “tu”.)

Whereas the English term is restricted to the actual grand-father and grandmother the Maori term is applied to their brothers or sisters or cousins to the <sup>n</sup>th degree or to any person in the same generation as either of them or in any earlier generation and related to them from a common ancestor. Tupuna is in fact the equivalent of the English “ancestor”, including a grand-parent. [*Manuscript ends here*]

RELATIONSHIP TERMS

[more extensive draft]

APIRANA NGATA

[Ngata Papers, also Micro MS 232, Folder 3/7, Alexander Turnbull Library]

1. Denoting lineal descent

a. Grandparent or ancestor

Tupuna is the common term and form except among East Coast tribes where it is “tipuna”. (Our people experience difficulty with “tupu”, “tupua”, “tumu”, “tumuaki”, where the u is tu is short. This is one of the dialectical distinctions. I explain it in the characteristics of the two main divisions of the North Island. That which we may roughly describe as Taihauauru (including the Arawa people) were more formal and deliberate in their language, especially the ceremonial or marae language. This is evidenced in the emphasis and value given to every syllable like “nge” to make up the mouthful. The Tairawhiti man was not so careful; his was a “reo mama”, and he had a partiality for “au” instead of “ahau,” “tou” for “tonu”, and for the tripping “ti” instead of “tu”.)

Terms less commonly or rarely used beyond certain districts are:

Koroua: Arawa. This is also “Karaua”, an old man

Poua

Taua

[Note. It is suggested that the roots “tua” and “ua” relate to the same thing—the back or backbone. Compare “Papatuanuku or Papa-tua-nuku.]

In this connection one might mention “katua”—full-grown, the adult of animals. With some tribes (I specify my own) it means the parent, more usually the mother. Also “matua”. In “whakamatua” there is the idea of support or stiffening or mainstay. Matua and taua are connected in the military vocabulary and generally denote the main body of a war party. Our people would then in their lines of descent use primarily those words that stand for the “backbone”, and no doubt is left that the relationship terms denoting lineal descent were first applied to direct descent and later extended for the reasons you mention in your letter to collaterals, eventually embracing tribal connections no matter how remote. [*This sentence suggests that Apirana wrote this manuscript for Te Rangihīroa, rather than as a doctoral thesis per se.*]

The Arawa use of “koroua” is significant, as that tribe attaches the utmost importance to the “ure tane”—the unbroken descent in the male line. The male ancestor would be uppermost in the mind of an Arawa genealogist

whether on the marae or in the recitation of poetry. By the way the Tainui songs use the term freely.

“Kuia” is the sex equivalent of koroua, and is so used in poetry. But sometimes is used for “mother” especially when the woman is of advanced years. It is probably that it meant originally an “aged woman” and came to be applied to a mother of advanced age.

b. Parent.

The general term covering both sexes may be said to be “matua”, especially in the plural, “mātua”. I suspect though that originally “matua” was restricted in its application to the male parent, the father, and more often designates that today. With our people the male includes the female—the latter is an afterthought. Witness our table customs, the disinclination of the female to take her meal with the males—particularly the adult males of the family or at the same time. “Matua” and “whaea” are contrasted among the Tainui and other folk, as unconsciously as we should contrast “papa” and “koka” on the East Coast or “papa” and “kui” among Ngati Kahungunu.

“Papa” is perhaps a more intimate term than “matua”. A mother would use it conversation with her child. On the other hand the use in later days by children of “Papa” or “E Papa” introduces the greater intimacy of the Anglicised Maori child. Williams says that the Arawa “papara” is used only of the true father. That may be so, but I suspect that an Arawa gave that limitation, as I have heard Arawas speak loosely of “papara” in the sense that “papa” embraces collateral, or in the [*sentence ends here*]

Equivalents for “papa” are:—

Koroua: Arawa, Tuwharetoa, Tainui. Among Ngapuhi means the collateral papa.

Kohake: Waikato. In Moteatea (Grey) 31 is the expression, “Kihai whakarangona te riri a te kohake”. Ko is the root in “koeke”, “kotiro”, “koiwha”, &c. and heke is apparently the same as in “pahake” or Whanganui or Aotea peoples.

Matua: as above

Papara: as above

Whaea: As mother has a wider vogue than any other synonymous term—practically unknown on the East Coast until the early Maori catechists introduced it from the North, the Bible then broadcasting it with unfamiliar Ngapuhi terms.

In “whaereere” however the root “whae” was familiarly known to East Coast folk—where “whaereere” is the most common term for “mother or child-bearing ‘wife’” or the mother of one’s children—an intimate term complimentary to the factor of child-bearing.

Whaene: A euphonious variant in vogue chiefly among you Aotea folk. [*This again points to Te Rangihiroa as the recipient.*]

The glottal closure must have induced termination by a consonant on which emphasis could be laid as against the open and inconclusive “a”.

Hakui: The general N’ Kahungunu term for mother apart from its broad application as an elderly or old woman.

Kui: In the N’ Kahungunu district this is strictly applied only to a woman who is a mother. Apparently an abbreviation of “hakui.”

Kuia: More often heard in the Arawa district in the same sense as “kui” or “hakui”.

(Ku: would appear to be a root form. You have it in “kuao.” Probably originated in the crooning of a child. With us “E ku” is a term of endearment used by a mother to a loved baby and appears to [be] reciprocated by the child. “Kumama” is to desire or long for, used only of an invalid’s fancy for certain foods.)

Karawa: Strictly “dam” of animals, but sometimes used as “mother” among a section of N’ Kahungunu (Rakaipaka-Rongomaiwahine).

Koka: Is distinctively Ngati Porou and probably extended to Gisborne and the Whanau-a-Apanui in the same sense as “whaea”.

Kokara: Williams says “Mother or true mother only”; Whaea is used more loosely. See my remarks on “papara.” I have heard it only among Arawa.

Tia: A most unusual term, its use as mother or parent probably developed from “tia”: the navel or abdomen.

Tiaka: Derived from “tia” and like “karawa” is strictly the dam of animals as opposed to “kuao” the young of animals, but often loosely applied as “mother” of human beings.

Ukaipo: Is poetical for “mother.” Occurs frequently in East Coast songs—Williams quotes a Tologa Bay song “E hika, e ia, hoki mai ra ki au, ki te ukaipo o Tamakuhukuhu.”

In these intimate terms for the true mother or father two angles may be discerned:—

- i. That of the child towards the parent emphasised in the case of the female parent by endearing terms such as “ukaipo”, “haku”, “whaea”, “koka”.
- ii. That of the third party commenting on the relationship “kohake”, “tiaka”, “karawa”, “katua”. Neither parent nor child would use these.

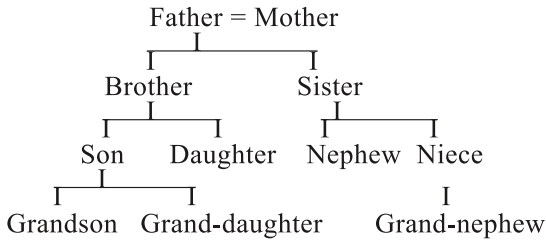
c. Children.

We should first deal with the terms denoting relationship towards the parents and not the relationship among children. The term of widest application is “tamaiti” (Pl. tamariki).

For the male child or son we may accept “tama”. But (collaterals apart) it is not distinctive. It raises in the mind of the hearer the question that possibly the eldest child is meant. So that “tama” while defining relationship to the parents and the sex suggests also seniority among male children. And “tama” in the “whakatauki” may merely mean a “child” as in the example quoted by Williams “Kua whanau tama a Rangi” or in the better example, the Whanau-a-Apanui pepeha concerning Apanui-mutu, “Kua whanau tama a Rongomaihuatahi, he tane”, “Rongomaihuatahi has borne a child, a son”.

“Tamahine” for daughter is less liable to confusion than “tama.” It does mean generally a daughter but in the proper context suggests the eldest daughter. In the plural there is no such liability to confusion.

By the way in your amended “Pakeha Pedigree” you make one mistake, viz:—



You have extended a generation too many. In tracing down the direct line of descent you must keep to the terms appropriate to the “tahuhu” or “aho”, and use those which describe the relationship up or down and not as between individuals on the same plane. It is difficult to set it out in a table in such a way as to make the relationship terms completely relative. You can

start out to describe the relationship between one generation and that which succeeds it and also the relationship of individuals on the same plane inter se. You would confuse parentage and childhood, with marital relationship or sex distinctions among children. You have only to add terms denoting order of birth (irrespective of sex) or seniority among children of either sex and you are in the soup.

#### NOTE

1. Editor's note: The structure and formatting of Ngata's original manuscripts are largely preserved in this published compilation.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# SPIRALLING HISTORIES: REFLECTIONS ON THE 1923 DOMINION MUSEUM EAST COAST ETHNOLOGICAL EXPEDITION AND OTHER MULTIMEDIA EXPERIMENTS

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**ABSTRACT:** In March and April 1923 the Dominion Museum undertook an ethnological expedition to the East Coast region of New Zealand’s North Island, which was initiated and hosted by politician and scholar Apirana Ngata. Along with researchers Johannes Andersen, Elsdon Best and Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa), the Museum’s acting director, James McDonald, took photographs and made films which recorded the cultural practices and traditions of the Ngāti Porou people. These traces in manuscripts, photographs and movies of the relationships that shaped the expeditions still travel through space and time, spiralling into the future as they allow contemporary and future listeners and viewers to reconnect with the past. Although these people have long since died, they live on in McDonald’s films and photographs, along with the many Māori people from the communities they visited, in documentation of ways of life which provide invaluable resources for cultural heritage and contemporary tribal development today. In this paper, McDonald’s descendant (his great-granddaughter Anne Salmond) and Billie Lythberg reconstruct the activities of the team on the expedition, drawing on a rich range of archival and other sources, and then reflect on the meaning of these “reflections” drawn with breath and light on wax cylinders, nitrate film and paper, as well as current digital technology. Whether present in these recordings or as the eyes through which we see and the ears through which we hear, these *hoa aroha* ‘dear friends’—McDonald, Ngata, Buck, Andersen and Best—cannot be disentangled from the archive, the people who hosted them, and the *whakaahua* ‘images’ they created together.

*Keywords:* Dominion Museum, ethnological expeditions, historical photography, *whakapapa* ‘kin networks’, East Coast, Ngāti Porou, James McDonald, Apirana Ngata

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On 10 April 1923 at Waiomatatini, on the East Coast of New Zealand, James McDonald, artist and photographer at the Dominion Museum, filmed an old man making a crayfish pot from young stems of the *mānuka* ‘tea tree’ (*Leptospermum scoparium*) and vines. As he heard the camera whirring, the old man addressed it, saying, “Oh machine, speak on, speak on. I shall go with the pictures to London, to Japan, to so and so” (Andersen 1923: 11).



This exchange took place at the Bungalow, as the home of Apirana Ngata was called, during the fourth Dominion Museum expedition, the last of a series of ethnological field research trips to visit Māori gatherings and remote communities to make records of *tikanga Māori* 'Māori ways of living'. Ngata, a leading Māori scholar and politician, had invited the research team—his close friend Dr. Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa), a medical doctor, former member of Parliament (MP) and soldier with a passion for Māori material culture; McDonald, pioneering cinematographer and the Museum's acting director (Fig. 1); Johannes Andersen, from the Alexander Turnbull Library, who studied Māori music and string games; and the distinguished ethnologist Elsdon Best—to visit his home district and record ancestral ways that he feared might be disappearing, as well as new agricultural developments.

For Ngata, the East Coast expedition was yet another step in a journey towards the cultural and economic renaissance of Māori people. As early as 1909, the Young Maori Party (an association that Ngata and Buck helped to found) had spelled out a programme for revitalising Māori communities



Figure 1. James McDonald and Johannes Andersen with the cameras used on the Dominion Museum ethnological expeditions 1919–23. Courtesy of Anne Salmond.

(see Amiria Salmond this issue). Although the notion that Māori were dying out persisted, the population was now known to be increasing after the demographic collapse of the nineteenth century, following decades of disease, musket fighting, colonial ambition, the Land Wars and the confiscation of most of their lands. In its manifesto, along with innovative initiatives in health, education and land reform, the Young Maori Party stated that it aimed to “preserve the language, poetry, traditions and such of the customs and arts of the Maori as may be desirable and by promoting research in the Anthropology and Ethnology of the Polynesian race to contribute to science and provide a fund of material which should enrich Literature and Art of the future” (Ngata 1909).

Ngata first heard of anthropology during his studies in arts and law at Canterbury University College, probably from Professor Macmillan Brown, who had a passion for Pacific cultures, and from Buck, who became interested in the discipline during his medical studies at the University of Otago. The spark that inspired the expeditions, however, was ignited in 1915, when W.H.R. Rivers, an ethnologist and former lecturer in experimental psychology from the University of Cambridge, visited New Zealand after attending a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Sydney (*Auckland Star*, 8 February 1915; Best 1915: 5).

In Wellington, Rivers delivered a public lecture, *The Peopling of Polynesia* (Rivers 1926; Skinner 1922: 87–88; Slobodin 1978: 51–53), and met Elsdon Best, whom he encouraged to produce a series of monographs on Māori life (Best 1915) and to join the Royal Anthropological Institute. Rivers must also have told Best about the University of Cambridge expedition to the Torres Strait that he had joined in 1898, led by Alfred Cort Haddon and accompanied by three other Cambridge graduates, including a photographer and a musician who knew how to make wax-cylinder recordings. He may also have met James McDonald, who had recently rejoined the Museum staff as its photographer and art assistant, and Apirana Ngata, who already had a lively interest in anthropology.

Buck was not in New Zealand at that time. In January 1915 he had enlisted as an officer in the First Maori Contingent<sup>1</sup> (later the Maori Pioneer Battalion), acting as their spokesman when they landed in Egypt with a passionate plea to the British military authorities that Māori should be allowed to serve as front-line troops:

The members of this war party would be ashamed to face their people on the conclusion of the war if they were to be confined entirely to garrison duty and not given an opportunity of proving their mettle at the front. We would sooner die from the bullets of the enemy than from sickness and disease—for

what says the Maori proverb? Man should die fighting hard like the struggling ururoa (shark) and not submitting like the lazy tarakihi [a fish, *Nemadactylus macropterus*], which submits without a struggle.

Though we are only a handful, the remnant of the remnant of a people, yet we consider that we are the old New Zealanders. No division can truly be called a New Zealand Division unless it numbers Maoris among its ranks (loud applause from the members of the New Zealand battalions who were looking on). (Buck quoted in Condliffe 1971: 127–28)

Buck went on to fight at Gallipoli and the Somme, winning the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and becoming the Battalion's second-in-command. On 17 May 1918 when he was sent to command the New Zealand Military Hospital in the United Kingdom, he met Sir Arthur Keith, president of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and the eugenicist Karl Pearson, who encouraged his interest in physical anthropology (Luomala 1952: 39).

As the war came to an end, inspired by the use of cutting-edge technologies on the Torres Straits expedition—including still and movie cameras, phonographs and wax cylinders—Apirana Ngata wrote to the Minister of Internal Affairs in September 1918 suggesting that phonographic records of Māori music and cinematographic recordings of *tikanga* 'ancestral Māori practices' should be made (Ngata 1918). He must also have discussed these ideas with James McDonald, acting director of the Dominion Museum, who soon afterwards wrote to the undersecretary proposing an expedition to Gisborne to record Māori songs and games as illustrations for the monographs on Māori life that were being prepared by the Museum's ethnologist, Elsdon Best:

The opportunity to secure phonographic records of Native songs and incantations and also moving picture films of Poi dances, haka ['posture dance'], etc., at the Maori gathering in March next is one of which every advantage should be taken. As the Hon. Mr Ngata truly says the elders are fast passing away, and the chances of securing such records are steadily diminishing. (McDonald 1918)

#### THE DOMINION MUSEUM EXPEDITIONS

The first Dominion Museum ethnological expedition set off for Gisborne in March 1919, when the Pioneer Battalion was formally welcomed home at the Hui Aroha, as the gathering was called. Ngata's private secretary, Te Raumoia Balneavis, helped to organise the expedition, which included Best, Andersen and McDonald but not Te Rangihīroa, who was still on active service. During their visit to Gisborne they collected a rich haul of photographs and films of action songs, string games and other ancestral arts, and wax-cylinder

recordings of Māori songs, speeches and chants. Later, Ngata asked McDonald to thank the Minister of Internal Affairs for authorising their absence from Wellington (McDonald 1919).

In April 1920, the second Dominion Museum ethnological expedition attended the Rotorua welcome by thousands of Mātaatua and Te Arawa people for the Prince of Wales, who was escorted by Te Rangihīroa (now Director of Māori Hygiene) as interpreter and equerry. Assisted by Te Rangihīroa, Best, Andersen and McDonald joined the tribal encampment where they collected more films, photographs and wax-cylinder recordings of ancestral arts.

In March 1921 the third expedition visited the Whanganui River to record ancestral customs and aspects of contemporary Māori life. On this occasion Best, Andersen and McDonald were joined at Korinitī for four days by Te Rangihīroa, who had begun a detailed study of Māori material culture, particularly fishing and weaving. This expedition yielded an extensive collection of photographs (over 300), film (6,000 feet), artefacts and recordings of songs and incantations (McDonald 1921).

Impressed by what the team had achieved, Ngata now decided to invite them to visit the East Coast to record the ancestral practices of his own people, Ngāti Porou. With his support, McDonald (now acting director of the Dominion Museum) wrote to William Herries, the Minister of Native Affairs, requesting funding for this fourth expedition including an Edison phonograph (McDonald 1922). By this time Te Rangihīroa's interest in international anthropology had been fuelled by a visit in 1922 by John Stokes of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Hawai'i, who met him to explore his work on Māori weaving (Te Rangihīroa 1922). James McDonald and Te Rangihīroa had also begun to discuss a British and American tour illustrated by films and photographic slides from the expeditions (Te Rangihīroa 1923c), and McDonald alerted Te Rangihīroa to the forthcoming Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Australia (Te Rangihīroa 1923d).

Once again, Ngata's secretary and friend, Balneavis ("Bal"), helped to organise the expedition. The team travelled to Gisborne on the *Arahura*, a coastal steamer; by motor car to Waipiro Bay; and then by buggy with Ngata to the coastal settlement of Whareponga, where they arrived on 18 March 1923. By now they knew each other well, Te Rangihīroa addressing Andersen in his letters as "Tarawhai," McDonald as "Mac" and Best as "Peehi", remarking to Andersen, "You see how I have to come to the Wellington triple alliance for comfort" (Te Rangihīroa 1922). After a ceremonial welcome on the *marae* 'ceremonial centre' and a lavish meal of roast meat, crayfish and onion fritters, jelly and plum pudding, the team got to work, sitting with local experts and recording ancestral songs on wax cylinders until late that night (McLean and Curnow 1992: 137–40). These *waiata* 'songs' included the

well-known lament “I hoki mai au i Kereruhuahua”, composed by Rāpata Wahawaha’s grandmother Hinekaukia for her son, who had been burnt to death near Waipāoa in the Gisborne district. This waiata came from Ngata’s own family (Rāpata Wahawaha was his foster grandfather), and this and other waiata included many references to local ancestors and landmarks (p. 139).<sup>2</sup>

Over the next three days the team recorded a range of other songs and chants, including a sexually graphic song traditionally accompanied by a flute, and a *haka taparahi* ‘ceremonial dance’ performed by Ngata himself (p. 139). As a finale Tuta Ngarimu and Maakere performed a chant to commemorate the arrival of Te Rangihīroa, Te Peehi (Best) and their friends at Whareponga, “hai taonga mā ngā uri whakatipu” (as a treasure for the rising generation) (p. 143). At the same time McDonald filmed string figures for Johannes Andersen; men fishing for *kehe* ‘granite trout’ and women diving for *kōura* ‘crayfish’ on the beach at Whareponga for Te Rangihīroa; men and women preparing food in an *umu* ‘earth oven’; and competitive hand games on the porch of the meeting house, including one that ended with a woman diving on top of the man (probably her husband) who had just defeated her. In these filmed episodes, the mood is exuberant and relaxed. Before they left Whareponga, a *poroporoaki* ‘speech of farewell’ addressed to the team was also recorded: “Hei kōnei rā koutou e te rōpu hopuhopu o ngā takenga a te iwi Māori” (Farewell until we see you again, the group who capture the ways of the Māori people) (p. 140).

After leaving Whareponga the team travelled to the Bungalow, Ngata’s home at Waiomatatini near the mouth of the Waiapu River. When they arrived there on 22 March, a bright, hot day, an old man, Riwai Miringa-o-rangi,<sup>3</sup> began making a *tāruke kōura* ‘crayfish pot’ for Te Rangihīroa, who was working on a study of fishing and netting techniques that he later published in the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* (Te Rangihīroa 1926). Over the next few days McDonald shot a series of still photographs of the process, while Johannes Andersen recorded a number of string figures in a notebook (now lost), many of which later appeared in his book on this topic (Andersen 1927).

On 24 March when Ngata was summoned to meet his close colleague Gordon Coates (the Native Minister) at Rotorua, he left his friends in the care of his wife, Arihia, and Dr. Tūtere Wi Repa, who like Ngata and Te Rangihīroa had attended Te Aute, the Anglican boarding school for Māori boys. The team visited Tikitiki, an inland settlement, where they stayed in the local boarding house and showed a film of their 1921 Whanganui River expedition to a crowded hall, aiming to inspire a competitive spirit in the East Coast people, as Buck had suggested in a letter to McDonald.<sup>4</sup> Although the film was silent and the lights kept going out, people called out to the people on screen, giving them advice and talking to them as though they were in the

room. One young man observed that although he had often heard of people fighting over *pā tuna* ‘eel weirs’, he couldn’t understand why until he saw the pictures of the impressive *pā tuna* along the Whanganui River. After the screening, Te Kani, Ngata’s son-in-law, played Chopin on the boarding-house piano while Elsdon Best, who had caught a bad cold, went to bed. According to Johannes Andersen, both the boarding house and the store at Tikitiki were owned by the tribal co-operative, one of Ngata’s initiatives and a source of great pride for the local people (Andersen 1927: 13–14). At Ngata’s suggestion, the funds from the screening were donated to the local village committee (McDonald 1923).

Over the next couple of days Buck and Andersen scoured local streams for *kōkopu*, a native freshwater fish (genus *Galaxias*), but found only one specimen. During these excursions, Andersen noted *kūmara* ‘sweet potato’ and maize plantations fenced with *mānuka*, and dozens of horses with saddles and bridles lined up along Tikitiki’s main street. He also recorded more string figures and visited the Tikitiki school, which was attended by about 140 children. He described the pupils as neat, clean and alert, and enjoyed talking to them about his articles in the *School Journal*, which many of them had read (Andersen 1923: 17). On 26 March when Buck, Andersen and McDonald travelled north to Te Araroa they stayed at the local hotel, while Best (who was still ill) returned to the Bungalow at Waiomatatini with Mrs. Ngata. That afternoon the team recorded three *karakia* ‘incantations’, and Andersen collected more string figures.

The next morning after Dr. Wi Repa welcomed them in front of the local meeting house, they recorded a series of classic Ngāti Porou waiata that Apirana Ngata later published with extensive explanatory notes in *Nga Moteatea* (Ngata [1928] 1959: nos 1, 2, and 209, among others) (McLean and Curnow 1992: 144–48). On 28 March Andersen collected a series of string figures, and McDonald took photographs of plaiting techniques and different types of netting for Te Rangihīroa. That evening they showed films of the Whanganui River and Gisborne, which Te Rangihīroa narrated to a lively audience at Te Araroa, while Andersen demonstrated a couple of string games and played a recording of Māori music. Afterwards they were given a supper of crayfish with *karengo* ‘a sweet-tasting seaweed’ and cake, before heading back to Waiomatatini the next morning.

On Good Friday, 31 March, the team stayed quietly at the Bungalow, writing up their field notes. Although Elsdon Best was now out of bed, he was still very weak. The next day Buck, Andersen and McDonald attended a church service conducted by one of the Kōhere brothers. Afterwards they climbed the hill behind the marae to look at Puputa Pā, an ancient fortified site then used as a burial ground, before joining the others for dinner in the meeting house. In the afternoon they went by buggy to the mouth of the

Waiapu River to film the netting of *kahawai* (*Arripis trutta*), a tikanga Te Rangihīroa (1926: 615) identified as “*kupenga kōkō kahawai*” (see details in Robertson this issue). In the evening, some of the party played croquet while Andersen played Te Kani’s songs on the piano and talked with one of the local girls about the team’s 1919 expedition to the Hui Aroha in Gisborne, the gathering to welcome the Pioneer Battalion back from World War I, which she had attended as a nursemaid for Ngata’s children (Andersen 1923: 27).

On 1 April when Buck, Andersen and McDonald travelled by horseback to Kōhere’s house, Andersen admired the garden with its citrus trees, grapevines and flowers. They stayed the night there, playing waiata on the phonograph. The next day when they returned to the mouth of the Waiapu River to film the casting of a kahawai net, the sea was rough, and although the net was cast, no fish were caught. On 3 April when they returned to Waiomatatini, Andersen and Buck helped to dig and stack kūmara, McDonald filming the process. As Andersen remarked, “Mrs Ngata is always cheery and laughing, so are her old woman friends; we younger ones began to be quiet as our backs began to protest against the unusual labour” (Andersen 1923: 31). That afternoon they recorded a *whakaaraara* ‘chant to alert a fortified village or settlement (*pā*)’ and a karakia.

In the evening a party from Te Araroa arrived at Porourangi meeting house to farewell the expedition team. When Buck and Andersen joined them, Andersen spoke jovially in English, ending his speech with a Danish song that Buck interpreted as expressing Andersen’s ardent desire to settle down with one of the local widows. As Andersen wrote in his journal, “They enjoy fun, and I enjoy seeing them enjoy it.” The night was clear and starry, and wrapped up in rugs and leaning on pillows, they listened to the speeches, which went on until after midnight. When they returned to the meeting house in the morning, the Te Araroa people had already left, so Andersen went up the hill and wrote a song of farewell, which he decided he would sing on his last night at Waiomatatini (Andersen 1923: 35).

Andersen had taken a fancy to a young local girl, Mary Maxwell, and over the days that followed, he often went to see her. Te Rangihīroa was still determined to catch some kōkopu, and on 5 April he, Andersen, McDonald and Paratene Ngata, Ngata’s father, built a stone fish weir in a channel of the Waiapu River. Paratene was gloomy about their prospects, saying that it was the wrong night in the moon to set the net; and as they approached the river, when a dog urinated on the left side of the path and one of the horses defecated in the river above the weir, Paratene remarked that these were bad omens. Early the next morning when Te Rangihīroa went to check the net he found just a single *ūpokororo* ‘New Zealand grayling’ (*Prototroctes oxyrhynchus*) in the net, a very rare native fish that had not been seen in the Waiapu for at least a decade. Ever the optimist, he declared that it was worth



“a hundred kokopu” (Andersen 1923: 36). The following day, three more ūpokororo were found in the fish trap.

Still eager to catch kōkopu, on 7 April Te Rangihīroa worked with Andersen and McDonald to build another fish trap in the river with stones, mānuka stakes and brushwood. Ngata returned from Rotorua, and when they played the songs that they had recorded at Te Araroa on the phonograph, they found that Ngata knew all but one of them. Early the next morning when Te Rangihīroa and Andersen visited the fish trap, they were astonished to find 26 ūpokororo in the trap, leaving them there so that McDonald could photograph their haul after breakfast. As Andersen wrote in his journal, “It was something that the expedition should prove the existence of a fish that had not been seen by the elder people for from 16–20 years, many had not seen it at all. ‘It almost seems sacrilege,’ said the Dr. in the evening when they had the fish for tea, ‘eating a rare fish like this; they ought all be preserved for specimens’” (Andersen 1923: 41–42).

Over the days that followed, Te Rangihīroa studied local fishing methods and Best talked with local elders, recording snippets about customary practices in his notebook; Andersen recorded a series of string games; and McDonald photographed an elder, Iehu Nukunuku, playing a *kōauau* flute, in fact a 10-inch length of gas pipe with three holes bored at the lower end, while Andersen recorded the music on a wax cylinder (Andersen 1923: 46; 1933: 231). McDonald also shot film and photographs of Te Rangihīroa and Ngata on the lawn at the Bungalow as they worked on a *tukutuku* ‘latticework’ panel to decorate the walls of a local meeting house (Fig. 2), a local artist painting *kōwhaiwhai* ‘rafter patterns’ and Ngata working in the sheep yards on the family farm. In the evenings they played croquet, listened to Te Kani playing the piano or went visiting local families with Ngata, who enjoyed their company.

On 10 April when the old man, Riwai Miringa-o-rangi, finished his crayfish trap (Fig. 3), McDonald filmed Te Rangihīroa laughing as he walked a small black kitten into it, instead of a crayfish. Dr. Wi Repa also teased Riwai by pointing out an error in its manufacture and saying that his own people made much better *tāruke kōura*. This provoked Riwai to retort that at least the machine and its pictures would transport him overseas. When the filming was finished, the elder stood and sang a song over his trap (Andersen 1923: 10–11). On 12 April as they were about to leave Waiomatatini, Ngata presented Andersen with a thrummed cloak, and no doubt similar gifts to other members of the expedition (p. 54).

As Natalie Robertson explains (this issue), the network of relations that shaped the fourth and final Dominion Museum ethnological expedition reflected an intricate matrix of *whakapapa* ‘kin network’ links between Ngata and many local participants as well as his close friendship—“*hoa*





Figure 2. Apirana Ngata and Te Rangihīroa (Peter Buck) with tukutuku panel, outside the Bungalow, Waiomatatini, 1923. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, ref 1/2-007887-F.



Figure 3. Te Rangihīroa (centre) measures the tāruke kōura made by Riwai Miringa-o-rangi (right), 1923. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, ref. MU0523/006/0025.

*aroha*”—with Te Rangihīroa. These relationships had been forged at Te Aute and afterwards between Te Rangihīroa, Ngata and Dr. Wi Repa, and during World War I between Te Rangihīroa and the Kōhere and Kaa families. There were also longstanding relations of collegiality and camaraderie among the expedition team members—Elsdon Best, the most senior, increasingly frail but a renowned expert in Māori lore; Te Rangihīroa, convivial, amusing and a dedicated student of Māori material culture; Andersen, with a roving eye, but also enthusiastic and knowledgeable about string games and music, although he could speak no Māori; and McDonald, a skilled photographer and filmmaker, congenial and good-humoured. These relational networks interwove very different realms of experience, with Te Rangihīroa as the close link to Ngata, and the Kōhere and Kaa families in particular, and Ngata as the thread drawing together the team and East Coast communities.

During the expedition, these relations were both reinforced and tested. Best was ill much of the time, and less active than he had been on previous expeditions. Te Rangihīroa was in high spirits (although his wife was unwell), delivering amusing speeches and engaging in repartee and jokes with local people. Ngata and his wife, Arihia, galvanised local networks to extend warm hospitality to the team, marked by the final presentation of gifts. Andersen provoked laughter with his string games and songs, and a hint of mockery for his ardent pursuit of Mary Maxwell (who was only 15). McDonald went up to his boots in the Waiapu River, capturing photographs and films as needed, a resourceful, affable travelling companion. Local people went out of their way to help them, seeing their participation in the films and photographs as another gift, not just to the team but to future generations—and so it proved.

While recording various tikanga, whether in fishing, singing, chanting or painting kōwhaiwhai, Ngāti Porou people were activating their ancestors. They often welcomed their guests at the local marae, where the ancestors were present. As Pei Te Hurinui Jones, a Tainui scholar who also worked closely with Ngata, once noted, the double spirals carved into the portraits of ancestors or painted in the kōwhaiwhai on the rafters of meeting houses invoked the creation of the cosmos, with lines of descent unfurling from its earliest beginnings, encompassing all forms of life (Jones 1959: 232). At the same time, they forged links with their *manuhiri* ‘visitors’ to pass on down the generations, while reaching out to their own *uri* ‘descendants’, the inheritors of these ancestral treasures.

For both Apirana Ngata and Te Rangihīroa, the 1923 East Coast expedition was a turning point. For Te Rangihīroa, the journey led him away from New Zealand and towards the international discipline of anthropology. In June 1923 he delivered a lecture, *The Old Maori: His Arts and Crafts*, at the Auckland Institute, illustrated with films taken by McDonald during the Whanganui and East Coast expeditions, and was “heartily applauded at the conclusion of a most illuminating lecture” (*Auckland Star* 1923).<sup>5</sup> In August he applied for leave to attend the Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Melbourne

and Sydney, where he presented a paper on Māori clothing, showed some of McDonald's East Coast slides, including those showing Riwai Miringa-o-rangi making the crayfish pot, and gave a lecture on Māori migrations, the forerunner to his famous books *Vikings of the Sunrise* (1938) and *The Coming of the Māori* (1949).

At the Congress, Te Rangihīroa met leading scientists from around the Pacific Rim and eminent anthropologists including Alfred Cort Haddon from the University of Cambridge—describing him as “a delightful old man, with thick white hair and dark eyebrows, a somewhat hesitating speech, a fund of humour, and a don't-give-a-damn kind of manner”. As he also reported in a long letter to Ngata, Te Rangihīroa was lionised by his colleagues. He was given the honour of delivering the only public lecture during the Congress at Melbourne; and when he reported to the Congress on the bill that would establish the Board of Maori Ethnological Research in New Zealand, noting that “one of the Native Races of the Pacific is assisting in carrying out one of the objects of the Congress and furthermore the idea originated from within themselves”, there was deafening applause, and Haddon remarked that “he regretted he wasn't a Maori” (Te Rangihīroa 1923e).

When the Congress shifted to Sydney, Te Rangihīroa met a number of Australian and American anthropologists, including Professor Gregory from the Bishop Museum in Hawai'i, and showed McDonald's films in the Australian Museum. Another public lecture illustrated by slides from the East Coast expedition included an image of himself and “Hon. Mr. A.T. Ngata M.A. L.L.B.” weaving a tukutuku panel, “keeping alive the ancient arts and crafts”, to a rapturous reception. As he confided in his letter to Ngata, “On the whole, Api, I can honestly say we came out of the show more than holding our own. Whether the uneasy consciences of the Great Races are aroused or not, I cannot but say that anything to do with the Maori Race was met not only by the scientists but by the Australian public with acclamation” (Te Rangihīroa 1923e).

In 1924 these international contacts bore fruit when Te Rangihīroa was invited by Professor Gregory to become an associate at the Bishop Museum and join their expedition to the Cook Islands. This was the beginning of a long and distinguished career in Pacific anthropology that culminated in his appointment as a visiting professor at Yale University (1932) and director of the Bishop Museum (1936).

For Apirana Ngata, on the other hand, the journey was all about the revitalisation of *te iwi Māori* ‘the Māori people’ and his own people on the East Coast. Shortly after the fourth Dominion Museum ethnological expedition left Waiomatatini, a long article written by Tūtere Wi Repa appeared in the *Gisborne Times*, celebrating their achievements:

Regret was expressed by nearly all the elders of the Ngatiporou people that such a visit was not made years ago, before the real men of knowledge passed away. ... It will be seen that the visit of this party of ethnologists to the East Coast has resulted in the recovery of much material that was on the verge of being lost. From an ethnological point of view the mission was a success. But in other directions the expedition has borne fruit. The Ngati-Porou has suddenly been aroused from his indifference of many years to take an interest in his own life story as a section of mankind. (Wi Repa 1923)

The article went on, “After the elders who had recorded songs and chants have been ‘caught in the net of Taramainuku’ and their spirits have passed to the bright land of Te Reinga, their living voices will be preserved for the benefit of their relatives.” The star Taramainuku is the commander of a star *waka* ‘canoe’ that travels through the sky each night, his net sweeping up the *wairua* ‘spirits’ of those who have died.

From this time on, Ngata actively promoted ethnology not as just a way of preserving ancestral arts—such as *mōteatea*, *haka*, *karakia*, *tukutuku*, *kōwhaiwhai* and *whakairo* (chants, performing arts, prayers, woven panels, painted designs and carving), along with basketry and fishing practices—but also as a means of inspiring pride and active engagement in *Māoritanga* ‘being Māori’. The practice and preservation of ancestral knowledge increasingly became a key element in his programme to revitalise Māori communities, ensuring that Māori people would survive and thrive *as Māori* into the future.

Over the years that followed, Ngata pursued his programme “*kia ora ai te iwi Māori*” (to give life to the Māori people) with unflagging zeal. As McCarthy describes in this volume, in October 1923 he established the Board of Maori Ethnological Research (Te Poari Whakapapa), with Te Rangihīroa as one of its members.<sup>6</sup> In 1924 Ngata published a collection of 90 *mōteatea*, and established the Maori Purposes Fund Board to invest unclaimed funds from Māori lands in Māori and Pacific ethnological research, effectively taking over the discipline of anthropology in New Zealand. In 1926, inspired by Ngata, the Board of Maori Ethnological Research urged Auckland University College to include Māori as a bachelor of arts subject, and the Māori Arts and Crafts Act was passed, enabling the Schools of Maori Arts and Crafts in Rotorua and Tokaanu to be established and carved meeting houses to be erected in many parts of New Zealand. In 1927 Ngata was knighted, and in the following year he published the first volume of his four-volume collection *Nga Moteatea* (Ngata [1928] 1959); presented a paper, “The Genealogical Method”, to the Wellington Historical Association (Ngata 1928; analysed in this issue by Amiria Salmond); and was appointed Minister of Native Affairs.

While fostering ancestral arts and crafts, Ngata was equally determined that his people should master contemporary technologies and skills—in agriculture, horticulture, medicine, the law and other professions—and make a good living for themselves and their families. Over the next six years, as Native Minister, he led major initiatives in Māori education and land development, other lifelong passions, setting up scholarships and schemes in different parts of the country to foster sheep farming, cropping and dairying so that Māori could take care of their remaining lands, and arousing acute jealousies and resentment in the process.

In 1934, Ngata was ousted from Cabinet after an inquiry into the financial management of these schemes, although he was found not to have been personally involved in any irregularities. He remained an MP until 1943, when he lost the Eastern Māori seat, and for the rest of his life dedicated himself to fostering the artistic and cultural renaissance that he and Te Rangihīroa had helped to instigate.

After a long and intimate correspondence in which they often discussed the application of anthropological insights, in 1949 Sir Apirana Ngata and Sir Peter Buck were finally reunited when Te Rangihīroa returned to New Zealand for a visit, suffering from cancer but as eloquent, witty and charming as ever. Ngata died the following year, and Te Rangihīroa in 1951.

#### REFLECTIONS

Although Te Rangihīroa, Apirana Ngata, Elsdon Best and Johannes Andersen have long since died, they live on in McDonald's films and photographs, along with the many Māori people from the communities they visited. In the same way, the voices of many of those people still speak and sing, sometimes clearly and sometimes muffled and inaudible, from the wax-cylinder recordings made during these expeditions—recordings made by *hā* 'the breath of life' driving a stylus through soft wax. These traces of the relationships that shaped the expeditions still travel through space and time, spiralling into the future as they allow contemporary and future listeners and viewers to reconnect with the past.

This is the stuff of whakapapa: the layering of time–space coordinates so often reduced to “genealogies” but perhaps more aptly described as a “veritable ontology” (Sahlins 1985: 14; Salmond 2013)—a world patterned by intricate, dynamic networks of relations among people, living and dead, and between people and other life forms. These ancestral relations are embodied in material traces in the present. From pre-contact times until today, for instance, the *tekoteko* ‘carved figure’ on the apex of the meeting house, the carved wall panels and posts in the porch and interior, and often the ridgepole itself invoke particular ancestors, allowing them to be present in the same space–time location as their descendants. In historic times, photographs of

deceased kin-group leaders came to serve the same purpose, standing at the feet of the dead during *tangi* ‘funerals’ and hung around the walls between more remote ancestors. When a kin group gathers before or inside a meeting house and welcomes its visitors, their ancestors are activated and stand among them, joining in the ceremonies.

Photography in *te ao Māori* ‘the Māori world/worldview’, then, is not simply an art of representation. It gives presence to past people, events and places, allowing them to travel through space and time, helping to shape the future. Photographs—even those produced over and over as multiples or reproduced as poor copies, and more recently those digitised or “born digital”—have been embraced by Māori as holding something of the *mauri* ‘life force’ of their subjects. Robertson draws on Māori Marsden to explain:

Māori Marsden ... maintains that mauri is a form of energy that originates in Tūa-Uri, “the real world of the complex series of rhythmical patterns of energy which operate behind this world of sense perception” (Marsden and Henare 1992: 7, 8). Marsden illuminates the connection between whakapapa and patterns of energy, saying that mauri radiates outwards from Tūa-Uri into Te Aro-Nui, the world before us, the one apprehended by our senses. Comprehending mauri as a radiating energy clarifies how it might come to reside in inanimate objects, such as photographs. (Robertson 2017: 58)<sup>7</sup>

This concept of radiating energy seems especially applicable to photography and film, recording and absorbing light as it reflects off people, places and things in order to distil, be-still or—in the case of film—animate something of their presence. Indeed the word “photograph”, from its Greek roots, means ‘light recording’.<sup>8</sup> Photographic and filmic processes capture light; the light that touches the camera’s subjects is the light that activates and is absorbed by volatile chemicals on the surfaces of negatives. Glass-plate photography in particular, a medium used by McDonald and the Dominion Museum expeditions, was understood by Māori to produce not merely illustrations but also manifestations of people and places. Glass-plate negatives themselves emerged from the darkness of a camera’s body transformed, harnessing light to materialise presence (Lythberg 2016: 35).

Thereafter, prints and multiples could be made by passing light through these negatives and onto a substrate of photographic paper or cellulose in a process of activation and transformation; and bright light allowed films to be projected—every projection a light-driven animation. The Māori descriptor for the products of the camera is *whakaahua*, which conveys not only the physical outputs of photofilmic capture (‘to photograph’) but also their acquisition of form in the process of transformation (‘to acquire form, transform’) (Lythberg 2016: 35).



Such a recursive vortex is evident in the work of the Dominion Museum East Coast expedition team, who at once captured light *and* played it through the films they had already completed. Their screenings were lively affairs. As we have seen, at the Tikitiki screening of the 1921 Whanganui expedition the audience called out to the people on screen to try and influence their actions. Those being filmed, such as Riwai te Miringa-o-rangi, would have known exactly what they might expect their own films to be like and how they might be received. Later that same year, Te Rangihīroa's screening at the Auckland Institute and his showing of slides in Sydney in 1923 demonstrated the *mana* 'ancestral power' of the East Coast expedition's whakaahua, taking the light that had radiated from Riwai and his kin, land and waterways on the first of many voyages around Aotearoa and to distant lands.

In his 1928 paper "The Genealogical Method", written just five years after the expeditions, Ngata drew a contrast between the immediacy of such images and the documentary records of European observers including Captain Cook and his successors, remarking that although they "took more or less satisfactory literary photographs of the condition of the Māori tribes as they found them in the early days", these "do not carry conviction to those of the people they passed in review".

Here Ngata drew a distinction between the efficacy and potential for future impact of the *literary* photograph made with ink and paper and the "drawings with light" made by the camera. The ideas he was developing about whakapapa (and see Ngata and Ngata this issue) informed the Dominion Museum expeditions and their emphasis not just on written documentation but also sound recordings made with wax cylinders and light recordings made with film and photographic cameras. Not only was Ngata promoting the products of these recordings as more likely to "carry conviction" to those they reviewed, the expeditions he championed and the invitations he extended to McDonald and his cameras also "foresaw the genealogical value of photography to hold whakapapa and kōrero ['narratives'] for future generations" (Robertson 2017: 57).

In addition to carrying conviction for the descendants of the people "they passed in review", the efficacy of film, photographs and wax cylinders in capturing traces of mauri has been activated in evidence to the Waitangi Tribunal. In the Whanganui River claim, for instance, *iwi* 'tribal groups' used the Dominion Museum expedition photographs and films to support their claims about the intimacy of their relationships with their ancestral river. When the Whanganui River Deed of Settlement was finally signed on 5 August 2014 it concluded the longest-running legal case in New Zealand history, after 148 years. At the heart of the settlement was the legal recognition of the Whanganui River as a being with its own personality and rights. The life of the river in the 1920s, and its existential entanglement with the lives

of ancestors with their eel weirs and waka, was conveyed to the Tribunal in the photos and films made by the Dominion Museum expedition's team, vividly evoking the harm to the lives of both river and people caused by Crown decisions made since that time.

Today, these films and photographs still bring together descendants of those who made them and those who continue to appear in them. In 2010–11, directors Libby Hakaraia and Tainui Stephens led an expedition that produced the television documentary *The Scotsman and the Māori*, following three generations of James McDonald's descendants with a film crew on a voyage of discovery that retraced the expeditions. In this journey, McDonald's descendants (his great-granddaughter Anne Salmond, her daughter Amiria and Amiria's son Tom) came face to face with the uri of those whose *āhua* 'likeness' he had captured in still photographs and film. Welcomed onto some of the very marae where "Mac", Ngata, Buck, Andersen and Best had stayed, the team held "sheetings" of films and photographs from the expeditions: a projector bringing ancestors to life on a white cotton sheet suspended from the ceilings of meeting houses. Again, people called out while watching the films, naming ancestors and places and telling stories about them, giving voice to the silent films just as the *tāruke kōura* maker had predicted. Once again, cutting-edge technology of the day was taken into Māori communities, with photographs of ancestors being screened from a laptop while a portable printer allowed these to be printed almost as soon as they were identified by descendants—yet another demonstration of the efficacy of photography for transcending space–time distance, conveying the radiating energy of mauri to new generations, whirling from *te pō* 'the dark, invisible ancestral realm' into *te ao mārama* 'the everyday world of light' and allowing the team to exchange gifts with their hosts.

Some of the expeditions' recordings have now been digitised and enhanced by Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, a process that has restored extraordinary details captured by the original light and sound recordings but whose revelation was beyond the technologies then available to reproduce them in printed photographs, films and audio recordings for playback.<sup>9</sup> In the photography collection store at Te Papa Tongarewa, for example, our research team placed glass-plate negatives on a light box and marvelled at the fine-grained information they contain that greatly exceeds the scope of the printing processes of their time (Robertson 2017: 54). What might be revealed if iwi descendants were to give permission for these to be printed at a large scale?

Digitisation has also permitted these *taonga* 'treasures' and *tīpuna* 'ancestors' to travel as digital files via electromagnetic waves. In 2017 during the filming of the documentary series *Artefact* a digitised wax-cylinder recording of Iehu Nukunuku playing a *kōauau* in Waiomatatini in 1923—the first known sound recording of a Māori musical instrument—was played by



Anne Salmond through a mobile phone to a contemporary exponent of *taonga pūoro* ‘Māori musical instruments’, Horomona Horo, bringing Nukunuku’s hā-activated performance to new ears. Horo was also shown digital prints of the photographs of Nukunuku taken by McDonald made at the same time. In its turn this exchange was recorded in sound and film, and later screened and able to be watched by Nukunuku’s descendants in the *Artefact* series on Māori Television. As technologies for sharing sound and image evolve, the recursive lives of these records of Māori are activating new networks of relations.

Ngata, Te Rangihīroa, Best and on at least one occasion McDonald himself were also drawn with light into the Dominion Museum expedition photographs and films. These are part of their legacy as not only orchestrators and facilitators but also actors and agents, along with the relations they forged. As Merimeri Penfold once chanted, “He iwi kē, he iwi kē, titiro atu, titiro mai”—one strange people and another, looking at each other—who in the gaze of the other see themselves, and through recognising their differences see themselves and each other differently. Whether present on film or wax-cylinder recording, or as the eyes through which we see and the ears through which we hear, these “hoā aroha”—McDonald, Ngata, Buck, Andersen and Best—cannot be disentangled from the archive, the people who hosted them and the whakaahua they created together.

As Wayne Ngata reminds us—evoking Whakapaupakihi, the fishing net of his ancestor Hauti—the alliances his ancestor Apirana Ngata forged in his efforts to revitalise his people, and the ways those relationships entangled people in shared projects, are still unfurling in the present:

Whakapaupakihi, tuakana taina  
 Whakapaupakihi, tuituia!  
 Whakapaupakihi, the net that brings us together to work  
 towards a common goal!

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NOTES

1. Since Buck left with the First Maori Contingent for Egypt in February 1915, it seems unlikely that he was in New Zealand at the same time as Rivers.
2. The Kereruhuahua *mōteatea* ‘chant’ is properly called “He Tangi mo Tana Tama (Ngāti Porou)”. The first line, *E hika ma! I hoki mai au i Kereruhuahua*, is sometimes given as the title; see “E hika ma! I hoki mai au i Kereruhuahua” (Ngata [1928] 1959, no. 40: 134–35), which adds that Ngata “recorded some notes dictated by Materoa Ngarimu, but these notes were not found”.
3. His name was recorded in Te Rangihīroa’s 1923 field notebook: “Taruke: Riwai Miringa o rangi—maker of taruke koura at Waiomatatini” (see Te Rangihīroa 1923a).
4. “Dear Mac, ... It has occurred to me that if not entailing bringing of too much gear, how would it be if you brought the films along and we gave the Gisborne people a demonstration. They would also interest the Maoris at Ngata’s place and perhaps make them vie with one another to produce as good stuff to put on record” (Te Rangihīroa 1923b). “Dear Mac, ... I think the pictures shown at a lecture in each centre will be a good thing. The Maoris are nothing if not competitive. The sight of the arts, crafts and customs of their tribes will stimulate them to do likewise or do better if possible” (Te Rangihīroa 1923d).
5. Te Rangihīroa was appointed to the Auckland Museum Council as inaugural chair of its Anthropology and Maori Race section around this time.
6. Te Rangihīroa resigned in 1926 due to his post in Hawai‘i.
7. Robertson notes: “See Māori Marsden for a more detailed outline of the three-world view of Māori according to Tāne’s pursuit of the three baskets of knowledge obtained by Tāne and which were named Tua-uri, Aro-Nui and Tua-Atea [1992: 7–10].”
8. From the Ancient Greek *photo* (φωτω-) ‘to shine’, and *graphia* (γράφω) ‘recorded’. “Photograph”, the verb, as well as “photography”, are first found in a paper read before the Royal Society on 14 March 1839 (Schaaf 1979).
9. The newly digitised films are always given their first public screenings at marae, sometimes with fanfare. *Scenes of Māori Life on the Whanganui River* (1921), for example, was narrated by Lawrence Wharerau and accompanied by *taonga pūoro* ‘Māori wind instruments’ when it premiered at Te Ao Hou Marae in Whanganui in 2016 (Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision).

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“IMAGES STILL LIVE AND ARE VERY MUCH ALIVE”:  
WHAKAPAPA AND THE 1923 DOMINION MUSEUM  
ETHNOLOGICAL EXPEDITION

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**ABSTRACT:** The first major photofilmic record of the Waiapu River region of Aotearoa New Zealand occurred over a three-week period in March–April 1923, when the filmmaker and photographer James McDonald documented local cultural activities on the East Coast. McDonald was a member of the fourth Dominion Museum ethnological expedition from Wellington, invited to Waiapu by Apirana Ngata to record ancestral *tikanga* ‘practices’ that he feared were disappearing. Despite the criticism of ethnographic “othering” in the resulting film *He Pito Whakaatu i te Noho a te Maori i te Tairawhiti—Scenes of Māori Life on the East Coast*, this paper suggests that the fieldwork, from a Ngāti Porou perspective, was assisted and supported by local people. It addresses the entanglements of this event and delineates the background, purpose and results of the documentary photographs and film in relation to Ngata’s cultural reinvigoration agenda. This article also reveals the various relationships, through whakapapa ‘kin networks’ hosting and friendship, between members of the team and local people. Drawing on the 1923 diary kept by Johannes Andersen and on other archival and tribal sources, the author closely analyses these relationships, what Apirana Ngata calls *takiaho* ‘relational cords’, which are brought to light so that descendants can keep alive these connections through the remaining film fragments and beyond the frame. These kinship and relational networks were forged and deepened through education, politics, wartime experiences and loss, pandemics and health reform, as well as shared cultural understandings. This reflection on the *takiaho*, the cords of connection, demonstrates the complex relational logic that informed the Māori subjects in the films, enabling the “photo business” to be carried out by the expedition team, in the process producing a lasting cultural legacy for descendants. As Merata Mita memorably put it in 1992, “Images still live and are very much alive”.

*Keywords:* Waiapu, New Zealand, Ngāti Porou, ethnographic filmmaking, Apirana Ngata, James McDonald, Te Rangihīroa (Peter Buck), whakapapa ‘kin networks’, *takiaho* ‘relational cords’

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At home in Aotearoa, I greet the images of my ancestors verbally and speak to them as they come forth on the screen. For I know that while they have passed on, the images still live and are very much alive to me.

—Merata Mita (1992a: 73)

In the early 1980s, “a jumble of fragmentary images entered the world of light” (Dennis 1992: 61) in the form of nitrate film negatives shot between 1919 and 1923 as part of four Dominion Museum ethnological expeditions to Gisborne, Rotorua, Whanganui and Te Tai Rāwhiti. Four historic films were compiled from surviving footage, consisting of short segments centred on particular activities, with each segment commencing with an explanatory intertitle. These extraordinary and lively silent documentary images are *taonga*—‘treasures’ that are deeply valued by the Māori communities in which they were made. They carry the *wairua* ‘immaterial essence’ of the people and places, customs and practices documented. While it is now evident that some of the material had been shown in public, much of it had not. Since the 1980s, the films have been restored and returned through multiple screenings to the communities where they were created, changing the way in which film archiving is done in Aotearoa. The people in these films, disconnected by some 60 years and more from their living descendants, now communicate through the moving images. In viewing the films, we, the living, respond through speaking to our ancestors, addressing them verbally as if they were present in the room with us.

Yet much remains unknown or unrecorded about the contexts in which the films were made and the relationships beyond the frame. As Merata Mita (1992a: 75) has noted, “material divorced from the people loses its value, the people keep it alive”. This paper examines the Tai Rāwhiti film, aiming to shed light on *whakapapa* ‘genealogies’ and *whanaungatanga* ‘relationships, kinship, or sense of family connections’ between a participant in one of the film fragments, farmer and community leader Panikena Kaa, the filmmaker James McDonald, the instigator Apirana Ngata at whose home the team stayed, and his lifelong friend (*hoa aroha*), medical doctor, soldier and anthropologist Te Rangihīroa (Peter Buck). Drawing on the 1923 diary kept by Johannes Andersen, first chief librarian at the Alexander Turnbull Library, and other records, oral and written, *takiaho* ‘relational cords’ are brought to light so that descendants can keep alive these connections through the remaining film fragments and beyond the frame.

#### THE PHOTO BUSINESS

After breakfast we rode, taking the photo business in the buggy, to the mouth of Waiapu so as to see how the 14ft kahawai [*Arripis trutta*] net is used. A big Maori got into the shallow water where the river makes over the bar, holding the mouth of the net to the sea, & going with the current in a sweep along the beach. . . . The surf was very heavy today, & a strong wind was blowing off the land, so our man caught no fish. Once or twice the sea threw a wave up over the narrow spit where we stood, but the wash was only an inch or two deep, except one wash which went over McDonald’s boot-tops. (Andersen 1923: 28)

This entry pencilled by Andersen recounts the first film and photographic record of Ngāti Porou tribal netting for kahawai at the mouth of the Waiapu River. This demonstration appears in a compilation of filmed scenes that became *He Pito Whakaatu i te Noho a te Maori i te Tairawhiti—Scenes of Maori Life on the East Coast*, and in two quarter-plate photographic images. While Andersen does not name the “big Māori” who assisted the Dominion Museum team members, Te Rangihīroa identifies him as Panikena Kaa of Rangitukia in *The Maori Craft of Netting* (1926: 620). Kaa’s identity was further confirmed by his granddaughter Keri Kaa, who assisted the Film Archive when a print of the surviving original footage was made and screened in the 1980s. As well as getting his feet wet, New Zealand-born Scotsman James Ingram McDonald—the photographer and artist for all four ethnological expeditions—operated both still and moving cameras, documenting ancestral *tikanga* ‘practices’ such as fishing, making *tāruke kōura* ‘crayfish pots’ and related activities. During the Waiomatatini expedition McDonald focused on the “photo business” of recording, while Te Rangihīroa initiated requests for knowledge on how things are made or done, particularly regarding netting and fishing, Andersen collected information on *whai* ‘string games’ and ethnologist Elsdon Best gathered terminologies, histories and other information.

In his unpublished paper “The Terminology of Whakapapa” (Ngata ca. 1931; see also this issue), Apirana Ngata described how in Māori, *takiaho* emerges as both a thing—a cord for stringing fish on—and an act of tracing relationships:

Aho, kaha. Literally a line, string or cord. In relation to a pedigree or genealogy this is a figure that would naturally occur to a weaving, cord-making, net-making, fishing people. The reciter conceived a connected string on which the persons concerned in the matter of his recitation were strung along in sequence and by lifting the string displayed them prominently. The string was the aho or kaha. The act of tracing it along in memory was “taki”, and of lifting it “hapai”. ...Aho is most commonly used in the expression “aho ariki”. *Takiaho* is a cord on which fish and shell fish are strung, and also a line of descent. (Ngata ca. 1931: 2)

Strung together, the film fragments are the most publicly visible trace of this historic expedition. Each sequence in the film can be conceived of as being displayed on this relational cord of connection. Similarly, photographic prints are pegged along a string in the darkroom for drying, which has become a crafted display method for viewing. In this paper, “*takiaho*” is used as a conceptual tool for tracing and recalling lines of connection as a way of understanding the social context of the Tai Rāwhiti ethnological expedition.



In particular, it demonstrates how kinship and friendship networks outside the frame have significance and bearing on the Tai Rāwhiti East Coast film, particularly this sequence with Panikena Kaa, revealing how the familial and social networks of Apirana Ngata, his *whānau* ‘family’ and those of Te Rangihīroa operated to ensure the success of the expedition. The connection between Panikena Kaa, Ngata and Te Rangihīroa reveals previously unexplored nuances in the non-familial relationships involving what appear ostensibly to be Pākehā-controlled camera technology and Māori subjects (the former being New Zealanders of European ancestry). In this sense, the analysis proposes a relational cord along which the persons concerned are traced and their connections displayed.

#### A SHORT RESURRECTION

They [the images] reply in many subtle and not so subtle ways; through the clothes they are wearing, the work they are doing, the ceremonies they are performing, the body language, the facial expression, and elements of their style ... and in that journey, on screen, from darkness to light, another life lives, short resurrections are made. (Mita 1992a: 73)

Mita’s statement here aptly describes the cultural knowledge embedded into these images. If one examines the film sequence involving Panikena Kaa, it becomes apparent that despite its brevity, the clip resurrects the *āhua* ‘appearance’ of an expert demonstrating an important cultural practice in a threshold place between the river and the ocean. The body of water is an ancestral being—Waiapu Kōkā Huhua, “Waiapu of Many Mothers”—and mother of many. This alludes not only to the great number of female leaders of the area, but also to Waiapu as a home to many species and beings. The Waiapu river mouth film sequence is just one minute long. It is preceded by a sequence of a woman diving for *kōura* ‘crayfish’ at Whareponga and followed by a fishing demonstration of the stone channel and net method at Waiomatatini. After the intertitle “Te hī kahawai i te wahapū o Waiapu Awa. Fishing for kahawai at the mouth of the Waiapu River”, Kaa enters the water, single-handedly wrestling the huge net in strong winds and the tidal currents of the river mouth. The wind is whipping the waves. Entering the frame from the right, he moves quickly with the current, water over his knees. After holding the scoop-net down in the water until the river meets the ocean waves, Kaa demonstrates the action of lifting the net up out of the water and onto his back. The intertitle uses the term *wahapū* for river mouth, whereas locally it is always referred to as the *ngutu awa*.

The changeable river mouth is a place governed by strict protocols, *ngā ture o te ngutu awa* ‘the laws of the river mouth’:

There are many ture (rules) to be adhered to at the ngutu awa and they were strictly enforced in earlier years. ... Nunu Tangaere said, “if you disrespected the rules, you’d see the sea change—becoming rougher. You could even get carried out to sea and nearly drown.” (*Nati Link* 2015)

The agency of the sea as a being that reacts to rule-breaking by becoming rougher is explained by the world view of the collective Ngāti Porou Tūturu *hapū*—a ‘sub-tribe’ of the lower Waiapu River. The river mouth is a dangerous place with strong tidal currents where *taniwha* ‘water spirits or creatures’ dwell, including my own ancestor, Taho. The act of catching kahawai is not just going fishing but an activity involving restricted knowledge, where any distractions can be life-threatening. The importance of kahawai fishing to Ngāti Porou is outlined in the Ngāti Porou Treaty of Waitangi settlement (New Zealand Government Treaty settlement documents, Ngāti Porou Settlement 2010: 1).<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1. Panikena Kaa, and possibly Riwai Raroa, Waiapu, 1923. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy Kaa family and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa ref MA\_A.004068/1 108 4260.

In the film clip, Kaa wears a white shirt as a gesture of modesty. If the camera had not been present he would have been naked, as that was (and still is) the cultural practice when kahawai fishing at Waiapu. Being naked was a pragmatic response to keeping safe when working with the nets in a river mouth with a strong current, where clothing could be weighty and restrictive. This is an aspect of the tikanga ‘cultural protocols’ of the river. There are two quarter-plate photographs surviving of Kaa with his 4.2-metre-long kahawai scoop-net. One, reproduced here (Fig. 1), was first published in Te Rangihīroa’s *The Maori Craft of Netting* (1926: Plate 105) and identified as “*kupenga kahawai kōkō*”. Te Rangihīroa was at pains to differentiate this method, “*kōkō*, with short vowels, which means to ‘to scoop’ or ‘scrape up’” (1926: 615), from the more common *kōkō* ‘prodding’ method, which involved use of a pole and pointed net (pp. 615, 620), the former being a speciality of Rangitukia Village (p. 622). Figure 1 shows a second man who is possibly Riwai Raroa, based on a pencilled note in Te Rangihīroa’s 1923 notebook, now held at Bishop Museum in Honolulu. The kahawai season usually runs between December and February, with the main schools of kahawai gone by March. Te Rangihīroa notes the significance of kahawai to the people of the river:

During the kahawai season, people camped on the beach, and while the men were landing the fish, the women would clean and hang them up. Two tripods of driftwood were set up to support a crossbar, on which the cleaned fish were hung up to dry—this was called the whata. Inland people would come down to the beach with carts, and drove them away laden with dried kahawai. (Buck 1926: 622)

The filming took place a month after the usual end to the season. Why was Kaa, fisherman, farmer and community leader, prepared to demonstrate on camera the art of “*kupenga kōkō*” (following Buck 1926) at a time when the kahawai runs were over? And knowing that he is unlikely to catch any fish, why would he be filmed—contrary to the local practice of naked net handling—in his white shirt? Certainly Kaa was an expert net handler. One of his descendants, Charl Hirschfeld, writes:

Physically he was strong of upright gait and possessed of deep blue eyes which made him stand out in a crowd of his immediate fellow-compatriots. In the prime of his manhood he was able to swim the channel between the tip of East Cape and Whanga o Kena (East Island), a stretch of water with powerful tides and currents. He gathered kai moana [‘seafood’] in abundance for his whanau and whanaunga [‘relatives’] and was respected for his prowess at fishing. (Hirschfeld 2013)

Scoop-net fishing at the river mouth is an activity restricted to men. Knowing that he had no control over who would see the footage in the brief resurrections of its screenings, Kaa's choice to wear his shirt indicates that he had considered how to mediate the rules of the river mouth. Although this is an ethnographic film in which the makers sought to record customary tribal ways, it is performed in a present-day manner, with the white shirt being a sign of refusal from Kaa to be filmed naked. It does not conform to the idea of the "ethnographic present" evident in other films of the times. It also is reminiscent of other more recent recordings of scoop-net fishing in the river mouth, for example, for the television show *Waka Huia* (2016) which used archival Radio Ngāti Porou footage of Waiapu River mouth resident John Manuel teaching young men—dressed in shorts and sports shirts—the *ture* 'laws' of netting kahawai. For Ngāti Porou, scoop-net fishing is a tribal taonga, a treasured practice worthy of sharing.

#### A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE

Prior to the 1920s, when the advent of automobile road transport changed the passage of goods, the main trading gateway for the northern East Cape was Port Awanui, located six to seven kilometres south of the Waiapu river mouth. About five kilometres inland is Waioamatatini, where the meeting house Porourangi is located. It is also where Te Whare Hou, known as the Bungalow—the home of Māori member of Parliament Apirana Ngata and his family—still stands today. When Ngata invited the ethnological expedition team to his home district to photograph and film the arts and crafts of Ngāti Porou, factors such as introduced diseases, warfare and environmental changes were compounding cultural losses of knowledge. Cultural hubs like Waioamatatini in the Waiapu Valley were slowly depopulating. Centuries-old systems of governance, education and social, cultural and familial relationships were being turned upside down, and a new order prevailed. Under Native Land Court legislation, collectively held land was divided and households individualised. Not all *tangata whenua* 'people of the land and sea' were able to sustain a living in the communities that had been at the heart of their tribal worlds. Some coastal communities like Port Awanui were economically declining, so leaving in droves, those families made their lives elsewhere. This swiftly transforming environment was the setting into which the ethnological expedition brought film and still cameras, wax-cylinder recording devices and notebooks as tools to document the cultural lifeways of Ngāti Porou.

In a noteworthy show of support from a Māori filmmaker, Mita wrote about McDonald's role in the recording of taonga:

By now there was an awareness by some Maori elders and scholars of the need to record and preserve, and McDonald's work was regarded a matter of considerable importance.

During this period he [McDonald] had strong support from Te Rangi Hiroa (Dr Peter Buck) and Apirana Ngata, and through the patronage of these two men in particular McDonald received the assistance of many influential Maori in the areas to which they travelled and recorded. (Mita 1992b: 40)

Mita also noted that the remaining record “stands as a monument to their labour and foresight. It is among the most remarkable and rare material of its kind found anywhere in the world” (Mita 1992b: 40). As McDonald’s great-great-granddaughter Amiria Salmond has pointed out (this issue), to a large extent the expeditions were Māori-led and Māori-supported enterprises, initiated by Te Rangihīroa and Ngata as well as McDonald. Earlier, in 1989 after viewing *He Pito Whakaatu*, the late Barry Barclay, a Ngāti Apa filmmaker and writer, supposed that McDonald’s camera was “a bit like an outsider peering into rural life as it was then” (Barclay 1989: 8). In an analysis of images of Māori in New Zealand film and television, Martin Blythe describes the films as occupying “a peculiar existence at the bicultural edge between a Pakeha-controlled technology and the Maori subjects of the film” (Blythe 1994: 56–57). The allusion to peering, perhaps through a window, is expanded as Blythe states: “In that sense, the films in the Eighties and beyond are a window into the past and the future, particularly for those Maori whose tipuna (ancestors) and tribal areas appear in them” (p. 57). Barclay goes on to say:

[T]he images have great beauty; they are priceless for ethnographers and very moving for the Maori community who can feel the presence of their immediate ancestors in much the way they sense their presence in carvings in the meeting house—which to many outsiders are nothing more than sculptures. (Barclay 1990: 97)

This is the only documentary filmic record of life on the East Coast for the better part of the twentieth century, instigated by Ngata, the most important contemporary leader of Ngāti Porou of his time. Yet, who are the immediate ancestors in the film? Is the camera an outsider peering through a window into rural life? Or was it a welcomed *manuhiri* ‘guest’? Is it the contemporary commentators who are the strangers? Very little is known of the people in the film and photographs, nor how they came to be included, despite the apparent willingness of the people to be participants. The tipuna who appear in the Tai Rāwhiti film are influential leaders and cultural experts: for example, the only remaining Iwirākau-style carver, Hōne Ngātoto, whom in 1908 Ngata had commissioned to carve the “Māori Room”—a formal study in the Bungalow (Ellis 2012: 268–69)—demonstrates *kōwhaiwhai* ‘painting decorative patterns for house rafters’ in the film.

With a 63-year gap between the making of the film and its first public showing in 1986, most people who had participated in the Tai Rāwhiti expedition had died. Even Port Awanui girl Mary (Meretuhi) Maxwell, named in Johannes Andersen's diary as the 15-year-old buggy driver for the crew, had passed away in 1983. By 1986, tribal recall of the events was scant. References to the local context in the literature are also brief, with a focus on the Dominion Museum team and the later reception of the film rather than on the people who participated in it (Barclay 1989; Blythe 1994; Kelly 2014).<sup>2</sup> Barclay's image of the filmmaker peering through a window was accentuated by Kelly (2014: 60) who wrote that while Ngata and Buck (Te Rangihīroa) lent *mana* 'authority' and prestige to this exercise, the Pākehā present (Elsdon Best, Andersen and McDonald) exerted more control over the filmmaking. Against this I argue that Ngata and Te Rangihīroa's roles in enabling the East Coast recordings are pivotal to the participation of the many cultural experts who appear on screen. The role of *iwi* 'tribal' hospitality has not been sufficiently analysed as an affirmation of the *kaupapa* 'purpose' of the expeditions.

Blythe asks what the McDonald/Best/Andersen expeditions wanted from these films. I see it as equally, if not more, important to ask what Ngata, Te Rangihīroa and—in the case of the East Coast—Ngāti Porou communities wanted from them. Barclay, Blythe and Kelly are responding to all four films produced from the Dominion Museum expeditions. Regional differences and the contrasts between the "event" films (Hui Aroha in 1919 and Rotorua in 1920) and the tribal films (Ngāti Porou and Whanganui) have not been sufficiently explored to draw out the differences in *iwi* engagement. Instead, they are treated collectively, with McDonald, the filmmaker, as the uniting factor in their production. There is no discussion of host–guest relationships during the filming, although these were pivotal in all cases. Indeed, Kelly (2014: 114) erroneously states that there was a "lack of active *iwi* involvement in the making of these films". This is despite the New Zealand Film Archive at the time noting that the team "had the help and sympathy of many leading Māori in the area who regarded the recording of arts and crafts and tribal lore a matter of considerable importance" (Kelly 2014, Appendix Four). On the other hand, Amiria Salmond draws out the significant role played by Apirana Ngata in aligning the expeditions with his *iwi* development agenda:

This was part of Ngata's explicit strategy to employ *nga rakau a te Pakeha* (the tools of Europeans) in the recording of old forms of knowledge and material arts—*nga taonga a o tipuna* or the treasures of the ancestors—for use in the Young Maori Party's programme of economic and cultural reinvigoration. (Henare 2007: 100)

Certainly for the East Coast expedition, the team was hosted at *marae* ‘ceremonial meeting places’ at Whareponga, Waiomatatini, Rangitukia and Te Araroa, and a screening was held at the community hall in Tikitiki. Here, the role of the *haukāinga* ‘local people’ should not be underestimated, nor should the cultural reach of Apirana Ngata and his whānau be disregarded. Between Arihia Ngata’s family in Whareponga where the Ngārimu family of Matoroa Reedy—a highly respected female tribal leader—also lived and the Kōhere, Kaa and Wi Repa families in Rangitukia and Te Araroa respectively, as well as many other contributors, *manaakitanga* ‘hospitality, sharing and care’ was offered across the district. Hosting Te Rangihīroa—Major Buck, a holder of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) who had been in Gallipoli, the Somme and Passchendaele alongside the sons of local whānau—was a matter of reciprocity, mana and tribal honour. The purpose of recording tribal knowledge, instigated by a local leader for his own people and not for a Pākehā audience, was also a matter of tribal pride.

#### HĀPAI: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAKAPAPA AND WHANAUNGATANGA

Despite colonial ruptures to the social fabric of Ngāti Porou, systems of kinship ties (whakapapa) as the dominant method of understanding connections had not diminished. Relationships between local Māori and Pākehā settlers, along with friendships with people of other tribes forged through education, war and trade, remain powerful instruments in a changing world. As Ngāti Porou tribal leader Apirana Mahuika wrote:

Like in all other iwi, the significance of whakapapa as a determinant of all mana in Ngati Porou cannot be discounted or overlooked. ... [whakapapa] survived post-European contact and continue[s] in existence today. (Mahuika 2010: 147)

This was despite profound transformations in life in the region, and across the country. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century on the East Coast and elsewhere, Māori systems of justice, trade and education were being usurped by Pākehā systems. In Ngata’s account of whakapapa terminologies, he notes, “‘Hapai’ is to raise or lift up and ... is applied to lifting or raising the aho ariki so as to display it” (Ngata ca1931: 3). The next section of this paper aims to raise up and display significant relationships in order to illuminate how non-familial friendships and *manaakitanga* resonated throughout the expeditions, thus expanding the function of kinship and whanaungatanga.

For many young Māori, growing up at a time when the Māori population was declining and Māori as a people were thought to be dying out, the opportunity of being educated with the tools of the Pākehā was sometimes



perceived as a kind of escape out of a downward spiral. In the process, new networks of relationships were founded. Many were already involved in the Anglican church, which had had a strong presence on the East Coast since 1834. Pivotal to these new networks were the friendships forged at Te Aute College (an Anglican boarding school for Māori boys), where bonds were established away from the tribal context of hapū, iwi or *whare wānanga* ‘ancestral schools of learning’. In this way, the concept of *whanaungatanga* ‘family-making’ expanded beyond hapū- and iwi-centred contexts into Pākehā systems of education, church, and later, the army. This was to have profound ramifications for Māori life in the twentieth century.

Early in the twentieth century, young men like Apirana Ngata, Rēweti Kōhere and his brother Poihipi, Tūtere Wi Repa and Timutimu Tāwhai from the East Coast, along with Māui Pōmare, Te Rangihīroa and Edward Pōhau Ellison from the West Coast and Frederick Bennett from Te Arawa, were returning from their studies at Te Aute to their home communities, earnestly railing against some Māori cultural practices. These included lengthy *tangihanga* ‘funeral rites for the dead’, customary Māori marriage systems, a reliance on what they saw as bogus Māori spiritual and medicinal advisors, described in a 1907 parliamentary speech by Ngata as ‘bastard *tohungaism*’ (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1907: 519; see also Walker 2001: 127)—instead preaching abstinence, sexual morality, health and land reform (Paterson 2007: 28; Walker 2001: 69–71, 126–28). Land reformation became intertwined with moral reform (Walter 2017: 104–5). Out of this context, the Young Maori Party (YMP) was born.<sup>3</sup> Fighting fire with fire, the evangelical zeal of the group aimed at meeting head-on the impacts of colonisation (disease, alcohol, land sales) using other colonial tools (religion, education and health reform). At the same time, they wanted to preserve language, arts and poetry as cultural practices seen as “desirable”, as outlined in their 1909 YMP Manifesto. After the flush of righteous youthfulness had passed, all these men proved to be leaders in their respective fields. Later, Ngata, Te Rangihīroa and Pōmare also recognised the uniqueness of Māori culture and set about recording songs, games, arts, ancestral stories and practices.

The important roles played by these Pākehā-educated young Māori would be vastly different from earlier Māori leaders. Nonetheless the ability to connect through ties and networks remained a crucial skill, used to their advantage throughout their political, religious and medical careers. A relational ethos based on *whakapapa* laid the groundwork for the Dominion Museum team, and their filmmaking and photography. Behind this too were the powerful networks of Te Rangihīroa and Ngata, and friendships forged at Te Aute. In 1898, Riwai Te Hiwinui Tawhiri, a Ngāti Porou student at Te Aute, had invited Te Rangihīroa—a *rāwaho* ‘outsider’ from Ngāti Mutunga,



Taranaki—to come to the East Coast after his preliminary medical exams and work at scrub-cutting. As guests of Anglican minister Eruera Kāwhia, they stayed at Taumata-o-Mihi marae in the Rauru meeting house. Decorated Ngāti Porou soldier Arapeta Awatere stated, “Here, during his school days at Te Aute College, Peter Buck was initiated by tohungas [skilled or specialist persons] into Maaori esoteric lore” (Awatere 2003: 24) while Buck’s biographer, J.B. Condliffe, suggested that this visit was instigated by Ngata as a way of bringing him into contact with a Ngāti Porou way of life. During the summer of 1898–99, when Te Rangihīroa fell in love with a high-born young Ngāti Porou woman, Matoroa Ngārimu, her people did not regard him as a worthy suitor (Condliffe 1971: 74–75). Twenty-four years later, on 6 April 1923, Matoroa—now the aforementioned Mrs Reedy—hosted Best and Andersen at her home, but not Te Rangihīroa, who on this occasion was accompanied by his Pākehā wife, Margaret. By this time, it was Te Rangihīroa’s army days and his close friendship with Ngata that fuelled his connections to the East Coast, rather than old flames.

#### KAUWHATA: ELEVATING ANCESTRAL PRACTICES

The Dominion Museum ethnological expedition, which lasted for about three weeks, commenced with a *pōwhiri* ‘ceremonial welcome’ at Whareponga Marae on the East Coast on Saturday 17 March 1923. Ngata’s wife, Arihia, was from Whareponga, and her family ran the local hotel. Her father, Tuta Tāmāti, had been a founding member of the Polynesian Society, and along with Paratene Ngata was one of the first honorary members of Te Aute College Students’ Association (TACSA) (Walker 2001: 75). Although Tāmāti had died many years earlier, it is likely that Arihia’s close relationships at Whareponga ensured that the hospitality was lavish, a point that Andersen makes in his diary. The leisurely and convivial process of *hui* ‘social gatherings’, along with the hospitality and support from various members of the Ngata whānau, brings into question Barclay’s positioning of McDonald’s camera as “peering in from the outside”. Blythe’s reading is more nuanced, acknowledging the substantial Māori input and Ngata’s role as instigator, at the very least, for the East Coast photographs and films (Blythe 1994: 56). In Blythe’s analysis of these films, he makes a point that that “the films are not simply ‘historical record’; they are also Home Movies—both literally and figuratively”; and he goes on to say that “they evoke neither a timeless eternal nor the historic past” (Blythe 1994: 57).

Taking another term from Ngata’s whakapapa terminology, the Tai Rāwhiti films and photographs might be understood as examples of *kauwhata*—“display[ing] as on a stage or frame in tied bundles, as of fish or articles of food, the elevation giving prominence” (Ngata ca. 1931: 3). Each vignette features

Ngāti Porou experts demonstrating ancestral practices, in this sense lifting each sequence to display their skill. Whakapapa and whanaungatanga were essential factors in the formation of the expedition, the choice of those who appear in the images and the practices that were displayed and given prominence in the film—fishing, netting and food-gathering practices, *tukutuku* ‘woven ornamental latticework’ and *kōwhaiwhai* for instance. The gender restrictions of scoop-net fishing activities means that unlike other film sequences from the same expedition that show women participating in making *hāngi* ‘ovens’, diving for kaimoana and working in the fields harvesting *kumara* ‘sweet potato’ (*Ipomoea batatas*), the trip to the Waiapu River mouth only features men.

Although plans to get pictures at the Waiapu river mouth are mentioned in the diary, there is only one surviving film sequence. It is likely that the first attempt with Kōhere on 30 March was unsuccessful. Andersen notes: “The gear was taken into Kohere’s buggy, & Dr Buck, McDonald & I rode on horses. We stayed at Kohere’s place for tea & for the night” (Andersen 1923). The Kōhere homestead is across the road from the Rangitukia rugby grounds, now called George Nepia Memorial Park after the famous rugby player who married Te Huinga, Hēnare Kōhere and Ngārangi Tūrei’s daughter. Today, a memorial stone for nationally prominent nineteenth-century tribal leader Mōkena Kōhere stands on the Hahau block, next to the house which replaced the homestead Tarata, once lived in by Poihipi Kōhere, minister for St John’s Parish. Situated across from Hinepare Marae, St John’s Church was largely built by Poihipi’s grandfather Mōkena Kōhere who—from the 1850s onwards—had ushered in a new style of chieftainship that, according to Rarawa Kōhere, needed to “socialise the wider aggregations of communities aimed at addressing new and emerging issues to deal with multi-faceted relationships” (Kōhere [1949] 2005: 207). In Rangitukia, the meeting between the community hosts and the ethnological expedition guests—with their technological tools for recording cultural practices—was an example of these multi-faceted relationships.

After dinner that night, the team relocated to “the meeting house”—Tairāwhiti, at Hinepare Marae. Andersen, a Dane who could not speak or understand Māori, commented that at the meeting house, “one or two long speeches having already been made, there was more speechifying” (Andersen 1923: 27). Given Hinepare’s location between the Kaa and Kōhere homesteads, it is highly likely that members of both families and other community people were present to formally welcome Te Rangihīroa and the other members of the team to Rangitukia. Buck had served as a medical officer in the New Zealand Pioneer Battalion during the Great War with Second Lieutenant Hēnare Mōkena Kōhere and Captain Pekama Rongoaia Kaa, who were killed on the Somme and at Passchendaele respectively. Kōhere lies

in Heilly Station Cemetery on the Somme while Kaa is buried at Kandahar Farm Cemetery, Nieuwkerke, West Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Since both of these men had died overseas, with no opportunity for their whānau to lament over their bodies, the Rangitukia people must have welcomed the opportunity to share their loss with Te Rangihīroa, who had been with Hēnare after he was wounded by a bursting shell in the trenches during the battle for the Somme in 1916. A letter dated 26 October 1916 written by Padre Hēnare Wainohu sent from France to Poihipi Kōhere may well have been read out:

Before he was taken to the dressing station that night he expressed a wish to see Major Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa). To him he said, “I ask of you that after I am gone to place my boys, all from the Ngati-Porou Tribe, under my cousin, Lieutenant Pekama Kaa.” Major Buck replied, “Yes, I’ll carry out your wish.” Then, looking up to the major and myself, he remarked, “I have no anxiety now, for I know the boys will be in good hands, and as for myself I shall be all right.” (Kōhere 1949: 75–76)

Hēnare died on 16 September 1916, aged 36, leaving behind three young children. On hearing the news of Kōhere’s death, Ngata had composed “Te Ope Tuatahi”, both a *tangi* ‘lament’ and recruitment song, including a verse mentioning Hēnare, and named his youngest son Hēnare Kōhere Ngata when he was born in December 1917.<sup>4</sup>

I haere ai Henare  
Me tō wīwī,  
I patu ki te pakanga,  
Ki Para-nihi rā ia.

Farewell, O Henare,  
and your ‘clump of rushes’  
who fell while fighting  
in France.<sup>5</sup>

Although the decision to promote Kaa was not Te Rangihīroa’s, he was no doubt influential in passing on Kōhere’s wishes to his commanding officers. Pekama Rongoaia Kaa, who took over from Hēnare Kōhere, was the second child of Matewa and Panikena Kaa, one of the well-known families of Rangitukia, and a generation younger than Ngata, Te Rangihīroa and the Kōhere brothers (Hirschfeld 2017: 1). Hirschfeld states that “Pekama’s father Panikena knew about the incident, referring to it in a letter (dated 21 September 1917) to Sir James Allen and in which he expresses his pride in his son being selected by Hēnare Kōhere to take charge of our [i.e., the Ngāti Porou] soldiers” (2017: 22). On 14 August 1917, almost a year after Kōhere died, a seriously wounded Pekama—who had refused to be shifted until his men were carried to safety—was lethally hit by a shell. (Pugsley in Hirschfeld 2017: 29). He was 22 years old. Possibly the first of their families to have travelled to the other side of the world, this wartime journey had proved fatal for both Kōhere and Kaa. Hirschfeld also notes:

Henare Kaa had also served in the Battalion; he was at sea going to Europe when Pekama fell in battle so did not see his brother alive. Obviously Buck knew Henare who survived the war and was at Rangitukia in 1923. Henare reached the rank of corporal. (Charl Hirschfeld, email to author, 12 July 2018)

At the time when the first Dominion Museum ethnological expedition attended the Hui Aroha to welcome home the Pioneer Battalion in Gisborne in 1919, which Ngata had organised and many of the local people had attended, Te Rangihīroa had not yet returned from service abroad. In 1923, during the fourth expedition to Tai Rāwhiti, the Kōhere and Kaa whānau had their first chance to host him on their own marae after the tragic deaths of their sons. Te Rangihīroa's personal relationships with both of these men are part of the backdrop to the visit to Rangitukia and the overnight stay at the Kōhere homestead. Bound together by war, this was also a gathering of old boys from Te Aute College, which both Kōhere brothers, Te Rangihīroa, Ngata and Kaa had all attended.<sup>6</sup> Together with Māui Pōmare and Timutimu Tāwhai, also Te Aute old boys, Rēweti Kōhere and Ngata had formed the Association for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Maori Race in response to an influenza outbreak on the East Coast in 1891 (Walker 2001: 69–70). Later, efforts by Kōhere and Ngata at health and cultural reform gave rise to TACSA in 1897, better known as the Young Maori Party (Wi Repa 1907). Both Rēweti and his younger brother Poihipi had become ordained Anglican ministers, although by 1921, Rēweti had returned to live at Rangiatā, on a farm near the East Cape lighthouse. In 1923, Poihipi Kōhere lived at Tarata, the homestead in Rangitukia where their grandfather, Mōkena Kōhere, had dwelt. This gathering reunited a group of men who sought to hold onto their cultural values, land and language while embracing Pākehā education. The women of the tribe, also community leaders in their own right, were also present to host these auspicious guests. These were educated, worldly people whose own agendas saw them participating in local and national politics, shaping the world around them in the face of rapid change.

The evening must have been emotionally charged, given the wartime experiences that had forged bonds of grief between Te Rangihīroa and the whānau of the men in his battalion alongside whom he had fought. In the absence of sound recordings of their speeches, one can still use whakapapa to stitch together a picture of the cultural fabric of the Waiapu, Ruawaipu and Ngāti Porou Tūturu hapū at this time. As Hirschfeld notes:

Although they probably had not met before this occasion Panikena is likely to have welcomed Buck as someone who was a part of the Whānau. Buck is likely to have given Panikena a recitation of Pekama as a man of ability in the field, well admired by his troops, brave and cool under pressure, dignified as an officer and a gentleman and as a natural leader of men. (Hirschfeld, email to author, 12 July 2018)

Although McDonald and Andersen left the marae around midnight to walk the short distance back to the Kōhere homestead under calm, starry skies and a moon that was almost full, it is likely that Te Rangihīroa stayed late into the night, talking with the families of his dead comrades. In his 1923 exercise book he names Panikena Kaa and Riwai Raroa of Rangitukia on the page opposite his drawings and measurements of the kahawai scoop-net. Raroa’s son William was another young soldier who had died and was buried abroad, in this case a possible victim of the 1918 influenza epidemic. It is seems highly likely that the Raroa whānau were also present.

The moon nearing full on 31 March bode well for the team’s plans to go to the river mouth the next morning to film fishing for kahawai. The relationship between Te Rangihīroa and the Kaa family meant that Panikena Kaa was willing to demonstrate this for them. The Waiapu River mouth is approximately three or four kilometres from the Kōhere homestead via road and then along Waikākā Beach. On their way, the expedition team passed by Hinepare Marae where they had spent the previous evening, then Rangitukia Native School (now called Tāpere-Nui-a-Whātonga after the whare wānanga

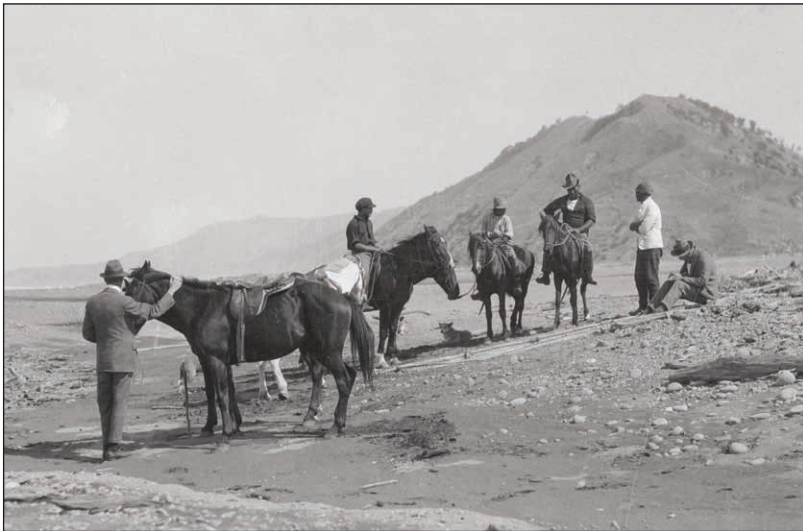


Figure 2. Arrival at beach, Waiapu, 1923. The group is on the north side of the Waiapu River mouth, on Waikākā Beach; Pōhautea is the hill behind them. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy of the Kaa family and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa ref MA\_A.004091/1 107 4293.

that was once the local “university” at nearby Te Kautuku). Less than a hundred metres after the school is Whataamo, where the Kaa whānau lived. The Taiapa whānau, famed as carvers, lived just along from them. This short stretch of the river, on both sides, produced some of the most influential people in Ngāti Porou during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These families had also sent their most educated sons to the Great War, many of whom never returned. Knowing that they had lost many of the inheritors of these ancestral tikanga may also have been a factor in agreeing to record them. Loss, grief, mutual respect, reciprocity and manaakitanga were all factors in these relationships, knotting them together, shaping the events during the Dominion Museum ethnological expedition, with Panikena Kaa braving the heavy surf to demonstrate kahawai net techniques for Te Rangihīroa and McDonald’s camera recording this tikanga for posterity.

Filmed from Waikākā Beach on the northern side of the Waiapu River, the camera faces the sea, without reference to any landmarks. It is impossible to know precisely where the ever-changing river mouth was at the time of filming, and therefore the brief sequence is unable to provide distinct



Figure 3. Arrival at beach, Waiapu, 1923. Te Rangihīroa is taking field notes, while Panikena advises him. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy of the Kaa family and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa ref MA\_A.004090/1 106 4292.

indicators about subsequent environmental changes. One of the two surviving quarter-plate photographs taken of the party arriving at Waikākā Beach shows Pōhautea—the sentry hill on the south side of the river mouth—stripped bare of trees (Fig. 2). The image includes Kaa, Te Rangihīroa, Andersen and three other people on horseback who have accompanied them to the river mouth. These were probably Riwai Raroa along with members of the Kōhere and Kaa whānau. In the other image the camera faces the sea, documenting Te Rangihīroa balancing his exercise book on his knee as he pencils notes from Kaa, with two men looking on, with the horse-drawn buggy carrying the “photo business” to the left of the frame (Fig. 3). This documentary photograph is one of only a few images from the Tai Rāwhiti expedition that demonstrates the sharing of knowledge from a local expert with one of the team, within the frame, on location.

\* \* \*

These historic film and photographic images offer vignettes to be lifted up for closer analysis. In this context the haukāinga had extended their manaakitanga to the team, hosting them at Hinepare Marae and in their homes. This enriching of connection and the respect accorded to the honoured guests is not visible in the short moments recorded in the film. Yet, understanding why the haukāinga chose to participate is crucial to understanding these images as more than ethnographic remnants. Together, McDonald’s flickering film fragments and still photographs, Andersen’s diaries and Te Rangihīroa’s notebooks reveal deeper connections with the haukāinga than are immediately apparent. As a practical method, whakapapa offers a way to make connections in the knots along the takiaho cord.

Hirschfeld’s account reveals the mutual trust and respect for tikanga and the role of the camera in this deeply Māori context:

Panikena was both a Maori modernist and traditionalist, something he lived out as part of his own life. In acceding to allowing Buck and McDonald to gather information from him personally and to permit himself thereby to be photographed was an expression of living the modernist-traditionalist contradiction. On the one hand it was about a tightly tikanga guarded centuries-old method and on the other hand about ethnographic and technologic media (writing and photography) presenting the verisimilitude of something intensely Maori. Without Panikena’s approval in a heartfelt way the Buck fishing expedition at the Waiapu is likely to have lacked the success that the record now generates as a historical piece of some significance. (Hirschfeld, email to author, 12 July 2018)



These kinship and relational networks were forged and deepened through education, politics, wartime experiences and loss, pandemics and health reform, as well as shared cultural understandings. This reflection on the *takiaho*, the cords of connection (a concept that could be used as an analytical tool in exploring other historic images in Māori contexts), and the *kauwhata*, the elevation of the practices of netting and fishing, indicates the complex relational logic that informed the Māori subjects in the films—enabling the “photo business” to be carried out by the expedition team.

For *Merata Mita*, at the conclusion of the short resurrection of connecting with an ancestor on screen comes the time of ritual acknowledgment of “our creator and our implacable link to the earth, its creatures, the elements and the seasons, the stars and the planets and the entire universe because that is what I have been taught and that is what those images continue to teach” (Mita 1992a: 73). Such a moment is recorded in the film clip of *Panikena Kaa* helping *Te Rangihīroa* and James McDonald to record the art of *kahawai* fishing at the mouth of the *Waiapu River*—*Waiapu Kōkā Huhua*, *Waiapu* the fertile mother.

#### NOTES

1. One of the Ngāti Porou Deed of Settlement Statements of Association confirms: “The *Waiapu River* has been a source of sustenance for Ngāti Porou *hapū*, providing water, and various species of fish, including *kahawai*. The *kahawai* fishing techniques practised at the mouth of the *Waiapu River* are sacred activities distinct to the *Waiapu*.” (New Zealand Government Treaty settlement documents, Ngāti Porou Settlement 2010: 1).
2. With its focus on audience and the Film Archive’s role in bringing the films to light, Kelly’s thesis discusses the pivotal experiences that Sharon Dell, of the Alexander Turnbull Library, and Jonathan Dennis, director of the Film Archive, had when first screening the films in the 1980s, and the audience reactions to seeing their *tīpuna*, mostly unnamed, on screen. Despite the many years in which the films were hidden away, they eventually found their audience of *uri* ‘Māori descendants’.
3. Young Maori Party member Ellison would later replace *Te Rangihīroa* as director of the Division of Maori Hygiene in the Department of Health (1927), and in 1928, marry my great-grandfather George Boyd’s youngest daughter, Mary Karaka Boyd.
4. Despite close family ties, Ngata and Rēweti Kōhere parted company politically with the rise of the Labour Party. In his 1986 essay, “Voting in the Māori Political Sub-system 1935–1984”, Robert Chapman (1999) explains that in the 1938 general election, Rēweti Kōhere stood against Ngata as an endorsed Labour candidate. A third candidate, Rātana’s Tiaki Omana, divided the candidacy, effectively splitting the vote. That year, votes for Ngata declined, but he held



his seat. It is beyond the scope of this paper to follow up on the social–familial implications of the political stand by Kōhere against Ngata.

5. First and second verses of “Te Ope Tuatahi” by Apirana Ngata, the 1916 recruitment song for the First Māori Contingent for the Pioneer Battalion. Full version available at: <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-CowMaor-t1-back-d1-d3.html>  
Song available at: [http://www.folksong.org.nz/te\\_ope\\_tuatahi/index.html](http://www.folksong.org.nz/te_ope_tuatahi/index.html)
6. Years attending Te Aute College: Rēweti Kōhere (1887–91), Apirana Ngata (1883–90), Poihipi Kōhere (1896–99), Te Rangihīroa (1895–98), Hēnare Kōhere (1895–98) and Pekama Kaa (1908–11), who had won the 1908 Te Makarini junior scholarship for those years (E-03 Education: Native Schools 1909: 10).

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TE POARI WHAKAPAPA: THE ORIGINS, OPERATION  
AND TRIBAL NETWORKS OF THE BOARD OF MAORI  
ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH 1923–1935

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**ABSTRACT:** In 1923 Apirana Ngata set up the Board of Maori Ethnological Research under Section 9 of the Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act. The purpose of the Board, also known as Te Poari Whakapapa, was the “study and investigation of the ancient arts and crafts, language, customs, history, tradition, and antiquities of the Maori and other cognate races of the South Pacific Ocean”. Ngata spoke in Parliament when the bill became law, exhorting his colleagues on both sides of the House to support the legislation to publish manuscripts awaiting publication for many years, “which the scientists of the world are clamouring to see”. Over the next 10 years this Māori-led and -funded body effectively took over the management of government research, and it exerted considerable influence on related bodies, the Department of Native Affairs, the Dominion Museum, the Turnbull Library, and the Polynesian Society and its journal. What were the origins of this remarkable episode in indigenous anthropology and museology? How and why did Ngata, Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa) and their parliamentary colleagues, tribal contacts and Pākehā ‘European New Zealander’ allies mobilise ethnological research in the service of Māori social, economic and cultural development? In particular we examine the scholarly connections with the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* and the tribal networks with Te Arawa traced through the work of Tai Mitchell.

*Keywords:* Māori, tribal networks, Apirana Ngata, Peter Buck, Tai Mitchell, Board of Maori Ethnological Research, indigenous anthropology

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*Whatungarongaro he tangata, toitū te kōrero*

Men come and go, but the words remain

Apirana Ngata used this *pepeha* ‘proverb’ to express his satisfaction at the establishment of the Board of Maori Ethnological Research (BMER), also known Te Poari Whakapapa, in October 1923 (*Dominion* 1923).<sup>1</sup> At the same time, his friend and colleague Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa) remarked: “As a result of setting up this research fund, New Zealand ranks high as a patron of ethnological research” (*Press* 1923). In a private letter to Ngata,

Buck had described the acclamation with which this news had been greeted by anthropologists at an international conference in Sydney (Buck 1923a; Skinner 1923: 183, resolutions 8 and 9).

Earlier that year, Ngata had established this new body under section 9 of the Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act. The purpose of the Board was “the promotion of the study and investigation of the arts, language, customs, history, and traditions of the Maori and cognate races of the South Pacific Ocean, the collection of records pertaining to any of the said races, and the publication or preservation in any way of any matter or thing in connection therewith” (Polynesian Society 1923). Ngata spoke in Parliament when the bill became law, exhorting his colleagues on both sides of the House to support the legislation to allow the release of manuscripts that had been awaiting publication for many years, “which the scientists of the world are clamouring to see” (Polynesian Society 1950). Over the next 10 years this Māori-conceived, Māori-led and Māori-funded body effectively took over the management of anthropological research in New Zealand, and exerted considerable influence on related bodies: the Department of Native Affairs, the Dominion Museum, the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), and the Polynesian Society and its journal. It is a remarkable story of indigenous agency unparalleled in the history of museums and anthropology in settler societies.

Despite the importance of this body, which lay behind many of the groundbreaking Māori initiatives of the 1920s–1930s in ethnology, museums, government policy and related fields, it is only briefly mentioned in the literature and little known or understood today by either academics or tribal scholars (Sorrenson 1982, 1992; Walker 2001; Webster 1998). Our own work has explored other early heritage developments at this time, and the consequences for “bicultural” museum practice in the late twentieth century, without realising that the Board and its funding made possible much activity associated with museum anthropology and tribal cultural development (McCarthy 2007a; Tapsell 1997). So, what *were* the origins of this remarkable experiment in anthropology? How and why did Ngata, Buck and their parliamentary colleagues, tribal contacts and Pākehā ‘European New Zealander’ allies mobilise ethnological research in the service of Māori social, economic and cultural development? What links did the Board’s work in Wellington have with Māori communities around the country in the interwar years? Here we examine the scholarly links between the Polynesian Society and the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, and tribal networks, especially Te Arawa as traced through the work of noted tribal scholar and administrator Taiporutu Mitchell.

## ORIGINS: “POLYNESIAN WORKERS THEMSELVES ENTER THE FIELD”

At the time those involved in Māori and Polynesian research did recognise the impact the BMER had made on their work. In 1928 Johannes Andersen, at the ATL, acknowledged the BMER as a “tower of strength . . . under the guidance of Sir Apirana Ngata” (Andersen [1928] 1969). Andersen also welcomed the emergence of Māori researchers who would supplant his generation, because “when the Polynesian workers themselves enter the field, as they surely will, we stammering, thumb-fingered pakeha may stand aside and rejoice in the day-dawn” (Andersen 1931: 6). Buck, who fulfilled this prophecy by becoming a world-recognised anthropologist of the Pacific, based at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Hawai‘i, recalled the BMER’s contribution in 1945. “The formation of the BMER, on the strong representation of the Maori Members of Parliament,” he wrote, “was a forward step in encouraging research and providing funds for publication” (Buck 1945: 116). Its support made possible his fieldwork in Aitutaki in the Cook Islands and the subsequent publication of a report, the recording and publishing of Māori songs edited by Ngata, and a revised and corrected version of George Grey’s *Nga Mahinga a Nga Tupuna* (originally written by Te Rangikāheke) for students of the Māori language, which had recently been proposed as a subject for the bachelor of arts degree (Buck 1945: 116; Ngata 1928, [1929] 1961).

As Buck stated, Māori members of the House of Representatives (MHR), both in government and in the opposition, were instrumental in setting up the Board in the early 1920s, but its roots go back further still. From the 1890s, Ngāti Kahungunu leaders at Pāpāwai marae near Greytown, the seat of the Kotahitanga ‘unity’ or Māori parliamentary movement of the late nineteenth century, showed keen interest in history, heritage and museums, and had links with Premier Richard Seddon, Minister of Native Affairs James Carroll (Timi Kara) and Augustus Hamilton at the Dominion Museum (McCarthy 2007b, 2016a). Māori men had been MHRs in four Māori seats since 1867, and while they remained a marginalised minority in national politics, there was an effort around 1900 to introduce some measure of regional self-government through the Maori Councils Act (Hill 2004: 44–47). Before World War I, the Young Maori Party, including Ngata, Buck and Māui Pōmare, espoused the value of ethnological research and agreed to research and write about various aspects of the Māori past (Gentry 2015: fn 88, 90; Ngata 1909; Sorrenson 1982).

Then, as Amiria Salmond has pointed out, the visit of famous Cambridge anthropologist W.H.R. Rivers to New Zealand in 1915 seems to have spurred local interest in field work (Best 1915; Salmond 2005, also this issue). We do not know whether Ngata met Rivers, but there is evidence that soon after his visit, the Māori politician’s attention and prodigious energies became focused on the question of how to record and maintain Māori cultural practices using the new technology employed by James McDonald at the Dominion Museum.

From 1917, J.A. Thomson, the director of the Dominion Museum and an Oxford graduate who had recognised the value of ethnological research, tried to buy “dictaphones” to record speech, music and birdsong (Thomson 1915).<sup>2</sup> In December 1918, Ngata and his Māori colleagues wrote to the Minister of Internal Affairs seeking funding for making sound recordings and films at the Hui Aroha in Gisborne in the coming year when Māori soldiers returned from the European war.

The Maori dances and *pois* [‘action song using round tethered weights’] may be described in writing but no pen-picture can convey a title of the vigour and perfect uniformity of the former or the grace and beauty of the latter. For the perfect record one must go to the picture film ... But no whole-hearted attempt has yet been made to record characteristic scenes from Native life. (Ngata 1918; see also Ngata *et al.* 1920)

At around the same time there were problems with the Polynesian Society, which had been struggling for a number of years with declining membership and a lack of funds to publish the backlog of material in Māori and Pacific languages. In 1920 the president, pioneer amateur ethnologist S. Percy Smith, appealed to Ngata, thankful for his “continual help and confidence in us” since he had assisted with the publication of *The Lore of the Whare Wananga* in 1913 (Smith 1920). The situation reached crisis point the following year with the death of Percy Smith, who had been running the Society from New Plymouth, raising questions about its future. Ngata and his fellow Māori MHRs tried to source government funds for Society publications and Dominion Museum ethnological expeditions through various ministers, with limited success. The breakthrough came in 1921 when, as Ngata later recalled, the Māori politicians discovered that the Maori Land Board held substantial funds derived from accumulated interest. They approached the Minister of Native Affairs (hereafter Native Minister), by this time Gordon Coates, who was sympathetic to Māori causes, and requested that funds from this source be “devoted to some purpose of utility to the race”. He agreed (*Auckland Star* 1923).

The way was now clear for Ngata to act, and by mid-1923 he was ready to take the next step. In his view, the problem of unpublished material required two things: “an adequate fund and a sympathetic organisation” (*Auckland Star* 1923). In a long handwritten proposal, Ngata outlined the parameters of the BMER. The “circumstances” that led to the “intervention” by parliamentarians included the appeal by the Polynesian Society for funds to publish its journal; the “ever increasing accumulation of valuable material awaiting publication”; the worldwide interest in “ethnic problems of the Pacific”, which New Zealand should be promoting; the existence of funds for Polynesian research; and the

“absence of any organisation sufficiently in touch with probable sources of assistance”. Ngata’s critical assessment of the Society and its current operation led logically to the suggestion that a new body should be established that would better source and use the funds available, managing and distributing them to support a wide range of ethnological research including field work in the “South Sea Islands”. Ngata added some particular “conditions” toward the end of the proposal about publishing in the Māori language, spelling out that “as the fund will be derived almost entirely from Maori sources, ... certain conditions may be attached on behalf of the race by its Parliamentary representatives ... Maori want access to published material on tradition and history, genealogical tables and song etc.” (Ngata ca. 1923a).

After the proposal was discussed in a meeting with Prime Minister (PM) William Massey held at Parliament on the 30 August 1923, Ngata moved quickly to frame the legislation, based largely on his proposal, and to see it through the parliamentary process (Balneavis 1923).<sup>3</sup> The purview and membership of the Board was described in the *New Zealand Gazette*. It included Gordon Coates (chairman and Native Minister, who also became PM in 1925), Māui Pōmare, Apirana Ngata, Tau Hēnare, and Hēnare Uru (the four Māori MPs), Judge Robert Jones (deputy chairman, chief judge of the Native Land Court, Māori trustee and an associate of Ngata’s), James Hislop (undersecretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, which oversaw the Dominion Museum), Archdeacon Herbert William Williams (the respected Pākehā clergyman and scholar of the Māori language), Dr Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa, then a Māori health officer), and H.D. Skinner (lecturer in ethnology at the University of Otago and curator at Otago Museum) (*New Zealand Gazette* 1923). The secretary was Ngata’s indefatigable private assistant, Henare Te Raumoa Balneavis (“Bal”) from Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa.

The mix of individuals, personalities and competing professional and cultural interests had to be carefully managed, and the correspondence shows how skilfully Ngata and Balneavis worked behind the scenes to run the Board, steering it to serve their own objectives. H.D. Skinner—whose father, W.H. Skinner, was a leading light in the Polynesian Society—was the country’s only professional anthropologist, but his lack of Māori language skills and focus on material culture/archaeology set him apart from Buck and Ngata (Cameron and McCarthy 2015). The relationship with the Polynesian Society had to be delicately handled so as not to give the impression that the BMER was “taking over” the Society.<sup>4</sup> The first “informal” meeting with the PM did not include a Council representative from the Society, and Ngata later wrote to W.H. Skinner to smooth ruffled feathers: “The meeting was very enthusiastic and will I am sure mark the turning point in the history of



Maori and Polynesian research work in this country. The following morning Buck and I met your son and also Dr Gregory of the Bishop Museum. They heartily approved the new movement” (Ngata 1923b). Meanwhile Hislop in the Department of Internal Affairs was jealous of the influence the Board wielded over the staff of the Dominion Museum, and there were concerns in other quarters that it cut across the newly formed Board of Science and Art that governed the Dominion Museum. When Department officials tried to obstruct Museum staff involvement in BMER publications, Elsdon Best resorted to various ruses to get his manuscripts completed and put into the hands of the Government Printer (Best ca. 1923a).<sup>5</sup> Best, who later joined the Board, told his friend T.W. Downes, the Whanganui writer, what was going on at its meetings and who was really in control. Pleased that his work was at last being taken “out of the hands of the moribund Museum department” and put into print, he told Downes “not to worry” about the Board:

It is Maori out and out. Williams and I were put on it by Ngata as an act of courtesy, but we have no mana [‘authority’]. It is controlled by natives. I am careful to say nothing at meetings. Skinner’s name was never mentioned even. He was admitted at the last moment by special mention of his father, who came down the coast to meet Ngata for that purpose. The Board does not want us Pakeha to control activities, but highly appreciates the work of the Polynesian Society. Our native friends are disgusted with the apathy and promises of the Govt. (Best ca. 1923b)

Section 9 of the Native Land Amendment Bill 1923 defined the purpose of the Board of Maori Ethnological Research. As summarised later by its secretary, the regulations included the publication, funding, subscriptions or direct purchase of Māori and Pacific material (“books, periodicals, manuscripts, drawings, photographs or articles”) as well as expeditions (Balneavis 1929: 5). As Balneavis explained, “The Board may organise or assist in equipping or paying for the expenses of any expedition to any part of New Zealand or to any Island in the Pacific Ocean, for the investigation and the collection of records regarding any matter or thing which comes within the objects or purposes defined by the said section” (Balneavis 1929: 6). This remit was, needless to say, very broad, allowing ample room for discretion.

It is important to distinguish the Board of Maori Ethnological Research from the Maori Purposes Fund Board that was set up in 1924, and with which it was merged in 1935. The purpose of this latter body was the more general health, education and welfare of the Māori people, but its funds and activities were interlinked with the BMER, leading to much confusion among politicians at the time and researchers today.<sup>6</sup> The Māori aims of the BMER can be discerned from the documentary record. The Māori title in the *Gazette* captures its specific tribal objectives: “Poari uiui i nga korero mo nga mahi

o nehera e pa ana ki nga iwi Maori” (Board to investigate accounts about the ancient work relating to Māori tribes). In the Māori newspaper *Te Toa Takitini*, Balneavis’s notice about the Board called it Te Poari Whakapapa, and emphasised the collecting, recording, maintenance and revival of cultural practices and traditional knowledge, including genealogies, and their wider dissemination (Balneavis 1924, and see below). Even the books, though of a more anthropological nature, were seen as serving the needs of Māori audiences. There was strong support from the Māori members of the Board for the publication of Best’s magisterial history of Tūhoe and for other tribal histories like it.<sup>7</sup> “As regards Best’s Tuhoe History,” wrote Buck to Balneavis, “I agree the publication of a series of tribal histories would . . . meet the needs of the Race” (Buck 1924b). “The Māori beneficiaries, whose funds have been made available for the Board’s purposes,” wrote Balneavis in a later report, “would probably regard these tribal records of greater value than the more extended scientific studies” (Balneavis 1927a: 4).

#### “PRACTICAL ANTHROPOLOGY”: THE BOARD AT WORK, 1923–1935

“I look forward to the first meeting of the board,” wrote Buck to Ngata from the Science Congress in Sydney in September 1923, “when we will get down to practical work” (Buck 1923a: 1). There was plenty to do. With the BMER up and running, there was a spate of activity over the next four or five years. Buck and Ngata, in their voluminous later correspondence, often referred to their New Zealand experiment as “practical” or “applied” anthropology (see Salmond this issue). Buck told Ngata that his land development schemes demonstrated their success as “empirical anthropologists advocating cultural adjustments” (Buck in Sorrenson 1987: 211; McCarthy 2014).

The first official meeting was held in October 1923 (*Evening Post* 1923). In the early years, the priority was to clear the backlog of unpublished manuscripts and provide financial support for the Polynesian Society. The minutes of meetings from 1923 to 1926 show the Board spent over £3,000 on grants to the Society alone (which allowed it to expand the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, include more images and publish a series of memoirs), and another £3,000 on the printing of Best’s Dominion Museum Bulletins and his *Tuhoe*, Williams’s bibliography of printed Māori-language publications and several other titles.<sup>8</sup> Files show that many other proposals were considered and rejected, including submissions by Pākehā scholars Herries Beattie and G.H. Robley, but also by tribal scholars.<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting three remarkable books in the Board’s own series: a well-known volume by Andersen on string games (1927); an overlooked study of Māori “artistry” by English expatriate William Page Rowe (1928), which was years ahead of its time in recognising Māori carving as art; and an innovative study in cultural adaptation, *The Changing Māori* by anthropologist Felix Keesing (1928), who worked closely

with Ngata before going on to publish similar work on Native Americans and Sāmoans (McCarthy 2016b).

As well as a full publication schedule, the Board “encouraged research work in other directions”:

There is also a tremendous amount of field work to be done, the survey of old pa sites in various localities, the recording of ancient place names, the collection and tabulating of genealogical, historical and other records of the various tribes, and the recording of *hakas* [‘posture dances’] and incantations. The Board has already directed its attention to the collection of designs of Maori carving, reed panels, and rafter patterns, data which will be of great value should a school of Maori art become practicable. (Balneavis 1926)

By 1927, Balneavis was able to report “splendid results” (Balneavis 1927b).<sup>10</sup> The published output was impressive. Nearly £3,000 had been spent on getting Best’s work into print: the Dominion Museum Bulletins (*Maori Religion and Mythology*, *Maori Agriculture*, *Maori Games, Exercises and Pastimes*, *The Maori Canoe*, *The Pa Maori*) and popular volumes (*The Maori As He Was*, and two volumes of *The Maori*), as well as *Tuhoe* and a reprint of his book on Waikaremoana. The Board had also assisted with Buck’s and Andersen’s publications (Buck 1924a). “Our aim is to make the recording of Maori Ethnology as complete as possible in every branch,” Buck declared in a letter to “Tarawhai” (Andersen) (Buck 1923b). “Ngata and Bal are doing great work [through the BMER] and all our combined efforts will result in an Ethnological record that few races will equal,” he said in a later letter (Buck 1924c). There were gaps, however. The Board had not been involved in any more field work apart from funding Buck’s trip to the Cook Islands and a planned Dominion Museum ethnological expedition to Taupō in 1926, the latter of which was postponed due to the weather and then cancelled when McDonald resigned (Director 1926). A subcommittee of the BMER (comprised of Pōmare, Ngata, Best and Buck) did meet in late 1923 to advocate for an expedition to the South Pacific using Navy vessels, but it came to nothing (Board of Maori Ethnological Research 1923). It would appear that the Dominion Museum expeditions were thought of as something of a rehearsal for a more extensive programme of field work that did not eventuate but rather, as we see below, later took on other forms.

Having cleared much of the backlog of publications by the late 1920s, the Board now turned its attention to publishing Māori-language manuscript material and to “field work”, not through the Museum but by direct engagement with the tribal homelands. By late 1928 Ngata had become Minister of Native Affairs, and Buck had left for the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Despite being very busy with government work, Ngata, ably

backed up by Balneavis and key tribal allies, continued to push the BMER's agenda, largely through his own interests and contacts, but also employing the machinery of the Department of Native Affairs (see below). The focus now was on visual and performing arts and other aspects of cultural heritage increasingly referred to by Māori in this period as *taonga* 'treasures', and regarded as an essential aspect of what was now being called *Māoritanga* 'Maoriness/Māori cultural heritage'. The *Evening Post* reported that:

The Board is preparing equipment for recording songs in several districts. As soon as the heaviest publications are out of the way ... the board will devote its attention to publishing Maori manuscripts in the original language, to the preparation of well illustrated books on Maori rafter and panel design, carvings, cloaks, floor-mats, and other features of Maori decorative art. (*Evening Post* 1925b)

In addition to an ambitious programme of recording tribal history and culture, the BMER's impact on the Polynesian Society was significant. Sorrenson has documented this, but in our view he perhaps underestimated what was effectively a *Māori* intervention into anthropological research (Sorrenson 1992). In sum, the support of the Board from late 1923 resulted in better funding, increased membership and a higher profile for the Polynesian Society, while the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* became larger and better produced. The Society and its library were moved to Wellington, where they shared offices in the Druids' building on Woodward Street with the Board, who paid the rent, not far from Parliament, the Dominion Museum and ATL. Despite some misgivings from the Polynesian Society's aging membership about the changes, most appreciated the "active interest and practical help" of the BMER and acknowledged that the now healthy finances were largely due to its assistance (*Evening Post* 1925a, 1928; Polynesian Society 1924). It is also possible to discern a subtle shift in the direction of the Society. While Pākehā such as Best and Andersen continued in key roles such as editing the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Pōmare, Ngata and Balneavis took leading roles on the Council and encouraged Māori membership.<sup>11</sup> From the mid-1920s the Polynesian Society gradually tilted away from its traditional audience of Pākehā amateurs towards greater engagement with both a younger readership, including professional anthropologists, many of them overseas, and Māori readers.<sup>12</sup> This connection with Māori readers was undoubtedly part of Ngata's wider plans for Māori social and cultural development. The BMER's influence peaked as this programme gained pace in the late 1920s and early 1930s, interweaving customary heritage with modern technology and reconciling top-down government bureaucracy with bottom-up tribal efforts to preserve and maintain their identity.

THE BOARD'S LINKS WITH TRIBAL RESEARCH:  
 “NGĀ KŌRERO NEHERĀ” (ANCIENT TRADITIONS)

Soon after the BMER came into existence and before its first official meeting, Apirana Ngata wrote to Balneavis from Waioamatatini during a parliamentary recess. Among news about farming and *whānau* ‘family’, he related his plans for the Board, which were clearly interconnected with his own research into Ngāti Porou history and traditions. On his way home he had stopped in Napier and seen “Fred” Bennett (soon to become the first Māori Anglican bishop), who duly applied for £50 from the Board in order to publish a monthly supplement of Māori songs and other material in the newspaper *Te Toa Takitini*, which he edited. Ngata aimed to “use the ‘Toa’ for advertising the Board’s work” and to invite contributions from readers. Ngata himself had already been writing short pieces in the paper on “Nga Korero Nehera” (Ancient Traditions), which had “created great interest” among Māori readers (Ngata 1923c). This supplement, particularly the *waiata* ‘songs’, became very popular and led eventually to Ngata’s own edited collections of *mōteatea* ‘song poetry’, which drew on the knowledge of many tribal experts from around the country.<sup>13</sup>

In September 1924, Balneavis wrote a short piece promoting Te Poari Whakapapa in *Te Toa Takitini*: “He inoi ki nga iwi, kia utaina te waka o te Poari ki nga taonga ano e rite ana: ki nga korero o nga tangata matau, ki nga whakapapa, ki nga karakia, ki nga waiata: ki te moni hoki, e taea ai aua korero te whakapukapuka, hei titiro ma te Ao katoa” (Balneavis 1924). This referred to the Board’s seal which showed a *waka* ‘canoe’ under sail, with the word “*utaina*” under it, a plea to the tribes to load on board “the precious freight”, “taonga” such as *kōrero*, *whakapapa*, *karakia*, *waiata* ‘traditions and stories, genealogies, prayers, songs’—not to mention money “to make it possible to publish this information, so that it may be seen by all the world”. Later issues of the paper praised the work of Te Poari Whakapapa as “he mahi rangatira” (chiefly work) (*Te Toa Takitini* 1924).<sup>14</sup> A review of Ngata’s first volume of *Nga Moteatea* was warmly welcomed as a true taonga published under the mana of the Board: “He tino taonga te pukapuka nei, he mea perehi i raro i te mana o te Poari Whakapapa” (*Te Toa Takitini* 1928).

Meanwhile Ngata and Balneavis were busy editing and publishing the Board’s own magazine, *Te Wananga*, which was also intended for a Māori readership, evidenced by the fact that articles in Māori were not translated into English. Balneavis described “a quarterly periodical with a memoir supplement . . . . The material for the latter is assured well ahead with the manuscripts of Te Matorohanga, Nepia Pohuhu and other priests of the Whare-Wananga [‘house of learning’]” (Balneavis 1929: 9). In the event, only a handful of issues appeared between 1929 and 1931, but they contained

a range of interesting material in English and Māori, from dairying and schooling to whakapapa and *whakataukī* ‘proverbs’. In the first issue a fascinating account written by Pei Te Hurinui Jones described the major *hui* ‘meeting’ at Ngāruawāhia in March 1929 when the Mahinaarangi meeting house was opened. Concepts such as *kotahitanga* ‘unity’ and Māoritanga were discussed, the latter in terms which were to be echoed in speeches on the *marae* ‘community gathering place’ for decades: hanging on to Māori customs and language, looking after traditional music, genealogies and other taonga, copying and learning (so as to retain) carving, painting and *tukutuku* ‘latticework panels’:

Ko te pupuri i nga tikanga Maori ...  
 Ko te pupuri i te reo Maori.  
 Ko te tiaki i nga waiata, patere, whakapapa me era atu taonga a te Maori.  
 Ko te whakatauirā me te ako, kia mau tonu ai nga whakairo, tuhi, tukutuku  
 a te Maori. (Jones 1929)

These published accounts were fleeting glimpses into the many complex networks that Ngata maintained with tribal scholars around Aotearoa, feeding into the work of the BMER, the Maori Purposes Fund Board, the Board of Maori Arts and Crafts, the Native Affairs Department and numerous related projects (Anne Salmond 1980; Maori Purposes Fund Board 1924–34). Ngata kept up a running dialogue with Pei Te Hurinui Jones about waiata and Tainui tribal history, for instance (Maori Purposes Fund Board 1924–34). Jones worked for the Maori Land Court in Auckland but clearly did much research work with and for Ngata in the Waikato region, which will be explored in future publications. He was not the only one. Files of the BMER and the Department of Native Affairs reveal a whole network of knowledgeable men and women who were paid for “ethnological research” of various kinds, including Henare Ruru, Rongowhakaata Halbert, Hemana Pokiha and W.M. Awarau (see for example Loose Papers 1933). The minutes of the BMER meeting in July 1926, for example, show payment of £14-7s in expenses to Ngakura Pene Haane, an “expert employed in rendering the text of and annotations of old Maori waiatas of the Nga Puhī tribe” (Board of Maori Ethnological Research 1926).

#### CASE STUDY: TE ARAWA AND TAI MITCHELL

One of Ngata’s closest collaborators was Henry Taiporutu Te Mapu-o-te-rangi Mitchell. Of the many tribal leaders in his network, Tai Mitchell was one of Ngata’s closest and most trusted, and has been underestimated as a scholar in his own right. Mitchell was born in 1877 at Ōhinemutu, of Ngāti Pīkiao and Ngāti Whakaue descent, the product of *taumau* ‘strategic marriages’

which made him a favoured son of Te Arawa (*Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* 1996). It is no coincidence that one of the centres of Māori cultural heritage was located in the area around the Rotorua lakes, where access to unlimited geothermal energy provided the resources for tourist attractions and the time to develop skills in visual and performing arts. Educated at a local primary school, and later at Wesley College in Auckland, Taiporutu also received instruction from his Ōhinemutu elders, Pango, Rotohiko, Te Paemoe and Te Taupua, especially in karakia, waiata, haka and *whaikōrero* ‘speech making’, as well as carving and house building. The private Māori boarding schools promoted youth leadership exchanges through sport and culture, and it was during these joint activities that Tai likely first met Peter Buck, Hone Heke Ngāpua, Māui Pōmare and Frederick Bennett. Mitchell had a lifelong friendship with Apirana Ngata, which probably began in 1905 when Ngata visited Ōhinemutu to test out his plans for Māori farming. Mitchell and Ngata worked together over many years to promote tribal land tenure in the Bay of Plenty region, incorporating lands previously fragmented by the Native Land Court, including those for Tūhoe in Te Urewera, Ngāti Kea/ Ngāti Kahungunu at Horohoro, Ngāti Whakaue/ Ngāti Pikiao at Maketū and Ngāti Pikiao/ Ngāti Tarāwhai at Tikitere.

Tai was a farmer, surveyor, land development officer and tribal leader, but also a scholar in his own right. As chair of the Arawa District Trust Board, he was intimately involved in a huge range of local community affairs from the 1920s to the 1940s and closely acquainted with people, places and events across the *rohe* ‘district’. His cultural work included organising Māori welcomes for royal tours in 1927 and 1934, the 1940 centennial, designing and building churches and meeting houses, the restoration of Whakarewarewa village in 1929 and the setting aside of scenic reserves. Not surprisingly, given its wealth of skill in carving, weaving and music, Ōhinemutu became central to Ngata’s vision of reviving Māori heritage. Significantly, Tai set aside land passed down from his mother on which the first carving school was established in 1926, and later in 1933 he and Fred Bennett provided the land for the Maori School of Arts and Crafts at the former Anglican church hall Te Aomarama (Neich 2001). Many more carving projects followed, and today’s Te Puia: Māori Arts and Crafts Institute at Whakarewarewa eventually evolved out of the Ōhinemutu carving school.

There is ample evidence of Tai’s involvement in Ngata’s ethnological research in association with the BMER. On the establishment of the BMER, Mitchell sent a telegram of congratulations; he provided its Māori name; and he arranged for financial support through the Te Arawa Trust Board. In return Ngata nominated Tai for membership of the Polynesian Society. On his many trips to Rotorua, Ngata stayed with Tai at his home, and Tai accompanied him



on his visits to local historic sites (Ngata 1926). Taiporutu's intricate tribal relationships within and beyond Te Arawa provided the networks through which Ngata's research in the Bay of Plenty was able to take shape. Taiporutu also gathered, analysed, wrote up and forwarded mōteatea, tribal histories and other material to Ngata in Wellington. For example, in Ngata's ethnological file in the ATL, there is a folder which includes a letter from Tai along with a proposed publication, "Te Ure-o-Uenukukopako kaupapa" and an unidentified page of verse (see Ethnological file and other papers 1923–31). We believe that this is just one example, in one region, of the tribal research networks that lay behind the work of the BMER.

Like Ngata, Tai was a tireless worker for his people in economic, political, social and cultural spheres, but he chose to operate on the ground amongst his community. Whereas Ngata, Buck, Pōmare and Bennett became high-profile leaders who were nationally and often internationally recognised, Taiporutu remained the Ōhinemutu anchor to whom Ngata in particular often turned for assistance, guidance and help behind the scenes in the Bay of Plenty. After a lifetime of service, Mitchell died in 1940 at the age of 67. But to his descendants he lives on, represented by the bell hanging on Te Papa-i-Ouru marae at Ōhinemutu. Every time his male descendants ring the bell it is as if Taiporutu is himself summoning Ngāti Whakaeu to gather: Ahakoa kua mate ia e kōrero ana anō (Although dead [Taiporutu] still speaks) (*Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* 1996).

\* \* \*

In 1931, J.C. Andersen paid tribute to the work of the BMER in documenting and disseminating tribal traditions, which demonstrated that Māori themselves wanted this heritage preserved:

[W]hat is the reason for the comparatively recent energy displayed by the Maori in putting on record the history and poetry of his own people? I do not particularly refer to the thousand page history of the Tuhoe tribe written at their request by Elsdon Best; but to the material being printed by the Maori Board of Ethnological Research; the original manuscripts of Nepia Pohuhu in *Te Wananga*, and the two hundred annotated songs ... edited by Apirana Ngata. These are all in the Maori tongue, and practically without English notes. Does this not indicate an ardent desire on the part of the Maori for the preservation of the best in his literature, and its preservation in his own tongue? (Andersen 1931: 13)

In late 1934 Ngata resigned in the wake of a government commission into the land development schemes run out of the Department of Native Affairs, and in 1935 the BMER was absorbed into the Maori Purposes Fund Board,



which had also received criticism over its financial arrangements and been referred to as an “Eastern Potentate” (*Auckland Star* 1934). While this scandal blunted Ngata’s political influence, it allowed him more time to get involved in arts and culture projects, and for his own research into whakapapa, tribal history and waiata. He was president of the Polynesian Society from 1938 to 1950, continued to publish in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, led the building and decoration of many meeting houses around the country through the School of Maori Arts and Crafts, and delivered numerous talks and lectures (Sorrenson 1996). In all this work, he articulated a vision of a new world based on historical arts, culture and heritage, much of which had been collected, recorded and preserved by or through the auspices of the BMER, which remains one of his many enduring legacies. The outcome of the Board’s work, led by Ngata and mobilising his tribal networks around Aotearoa, was an extraordinary cultural revitalisation project that was unique in the discipline of anthropology and unmatched in other British colonies in terms of its impact on settler society and its institutions.

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#### NOTES

1. This pepeha is an interesting modern reinterpretation of an older customary saying referring to land remaining when people disappear.
2. See the correspondence at Te Papa Archives (Wellington), filed under: Maori ethnology: Ancient Maori Chants (Wax cylinders), file 18/0/12, series MU2/058/0008.
3. Pōmare, Ngata, Hēnare, Uru, Hislop, Best and Judge Jones were present. H.D. Skinner may also have been present, though there is some doubt about this (Ngata 1923b). Though often in opposition rather than in government, Ngata wielded considerable influence in framing legislation.
4. See the correspondence in “Polynesian Society Further Records”, MS-Papers-80-115-04A/05A, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.
5. For government politics, see the correspondence between J.A. Thomson, the director of the Dominion Museum, and officials of Internal Affairs and Education: MU000001/017/0064 11/1/15 Maori Ethnological Board, Te Papa Archives, Wellington. For Best’s description of the interference, see Best (ca. 1923a).
6. The aims of the Maori Purposes Fund Board included education, scholarships, exhibitions, contributions to Māori secondary schools, contributions to the BMER and support of the Polynesian Society, or “such other purposes as the Native Minister may on the recommendation of the Board from time to time appoint” (see Maori Purposes Fund Board 1924: 5).

7. It was published in 1925 under the title *Tuhoe: The Children of the Mist*. Jeffrey Paparaoa Holman argues, due to extensive consultation and quotation, that this work was effectively co-authored by the tribal scholar Tūtakangahau (Holman 2010: 195).
8. For minutes of BMER meetings see “Maori Ethnological Research Board (drafts etc.) 1920–25”, ACIH 16068 MA51/2 22, and “Maori Ethnological – Reports”, ACIH 16068 MA51/3-23, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. By 1927 the Board had spent more than £2,700 on Best’s writings alone, hastened by Ngata’s observation of his “failing powers” (see Ngata 1927: 1–4). For appreciation of the Board’s publications see *Evening Post* (1926).
9. The rationale for rejecting manuscripts reveal the priorities, and biases, of the Board members, who favoured historical Māori-language material that they believed came from recognised *tohunga* ‘priests’ and *whare wānanga* ‘schools of learning’. See the correspondence with Eruera Hohepa Tauhuroa, from Tauranga, in 1931: MS-Papers-0189-B143 Correspondence, Maori Purposes Fund Board, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.
10. The money came from multiple Maori Land Boards, the Native Civil List, the Native Trustee and the Maori Purposes Fund, as well as from Māori beneficiaries (tribal trust boards); see Balneavis (1929: 9).
11. For correspondence about Māori subscriptions see “Polynesian Society Records: Correspondence”, MS-Papers-1187-215, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. See also the proceedings of the Polynesian Society in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1924–28.
12. Scrutiny of the contents of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* suggest that more Māori-language articles were published, probably with a Māori audience in mind. See for example two articles “collected” and translated by Best in vol. 36 (1927), and four East Coast narratives in vol. 37 (1928) based on manuscripts in the Alexander Turnbull Library written by Hēnare Pōtae and Mohi Ruatapu. It should be noted, however, that in the early years of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* much Māori-language material was provided by Māori authors and was translated/edited by Smith and Best (see Amiria Salmond 2007).
13. This was not unprecedented as Māori writers had used newspapers for decades to disseminate customary knowledge and debate matters of cultural identity and history (see Curnow *et al.* 2002, 2006; McCrae and Jacob 2011).
14. For the phrase “precious freight”, see Apirana Ngata, “He Whakamarama / Preface”, in Ngata ([1928] 1959: xiv). See also Maori Purposes Fund Board (1920–34).

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# COMPARING RELATIONS: WHAKAPAPA AND GENEALOGICAL METHOD

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**ABSTRACT:** While relational thinking is currently in vogue across the academy, the relations scholars have in mind are often of a certain kind. As anthropologist Marilyn Strathern observes, the idea of relations as connections has a distinct pedigree, one that can work to obscure different (kinds of) relations within and among different (kinds of) things. Here I discuss some implications of these insights by setting them alongside relational methodologies developed in early twentieth-century Aotearoa New Zealand by the statesman and scholar Sir Apirana Ngata. Ngata’s mobilisation of anthropology in the service of an ambitious programme of Māori artistic, cultural and economic revitalisation serves as a powerful precedent for rethinking and reworking relations through ethnography in theory as well as in practice. His advancement of ethnographic methods that deliberately mobilised perspectives constituted by whakapapa ‘Māori relatedness’ is brought into relation with recent discussions about anthropological methods and politics. In particular, whereas critics of some “post-relational” approaches diagnose a lack of both political traction and practical application in these efforts to investigate different modes of relatedness, Ngata’s example points to such experiments’ potential to help challenge and materially transform institutional and popular conceptions, as well as the day-to-day living conditions of marginalised peoples.

*Keywords:* Māori, indigenous anthropology, relational methodology, genealogical method, ontology

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*He iwi kē, he iwi kē  
Titiro atu, titiro mai*

One group and another  
Exchanging perspectives

—from a *haka* ‘action song’ by Merimeri Penfold

Imagine for a moment that anthropology, a discipline founded to advance Europe’s colonial ambitions, was taken over by a group of indigenous leaders early in its history. Instead of serving only imperial interests, anthropologists were put to work on projects designed to ameliorate the social and economic effects of colonisation. National museums seconded



research staff, provided state-of-the art equipment, made collections and generated scholarly publications in support of these aims. A board supervising anthropologists' activities allocated funding from indigenous sources for ethnographic fieldwork and for publications geared to informing cultural and economic renewal. The merits of different projects and theories, assessed by native authorities and their allies, were judged on their potential to advance colonised people's aspirations. Some of these leaders, well versed in anthropological scholarship, became prominent academic figures in the international discipline as well as politicians on the national stage. Their practical and theoretical work combined to materially reconfigure sociopolitical relations in their corner of Empire, while addressing kinship theory and Pacific migrations along the way.

This is what happened in Aotearoa New Zealand, between about 1900 and World War II, though it is largely forgotten in the annals of the discipline. A close-knit group of Māori intellectuals led by lawyer and politician Apirana Ngata became interested in anthropology, soon coming to regard the nascent discipline as instrumental to Māori cultural and economic renewal. Leveraging his position in Parliament, Ngata established a national Board of Maori Ethnological Research called Te Poari Whakapapa, as detailed in McCarthy and Tapsell (this issue) and took over publication of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, the scholarly organ of a group of amateur ethnologists with a distinguished international readership.<sup>1</sup> Members of the Society were appointed to the Board, which channelled funds from unclaimed Māori land rentals into ethnographic fieldwork among *iwi* 'tribal groups', work undertaken by museum professionals and students of ethnology, and resulting publications. News of these developments and research results were published in popular Māori-language magazines and newspapers, such as *Te Wananga* and *Te Toa Takitini*, which circulated in cities and towns and within tribal settlements around the country (McCarthy 2014). The Board also sponsored the research of select anthropologists further afield with a view to better governing New Zealand's Pacific colonial dependencies (Cameron and McCarthy 2015; McCarthy 2015). But its activities were primarily geared to supporting a domestic programme of cultural regeneration and economic development initiatives designed to re-establish the *mana* 'personal authority, efficacy', vitality and viability of Māori kin groups.

While some distinguished products of that regime's shepherding of scholarly talent are well remembered in disciplinary histories, among them Felix Keesing and Raymond Firth, even specialists in Pacific anthropology are seldom aware of the degree to which Māori leaders dominated the New Zealand-based discipline during the early twentieth century. In drawing attention to this exceptional constellation of events and personalities, the aim here is not just to correct historical accounts known to privilege the activities

of white European men. Rather, a primary hope is to draw out something of the substance of these indigenous scholars' contributions to fields in which they were active and well-regarded participants, and to look at how they bent anthropology to the wheel of their own ambitions, not least by offering alternative ways of thinking about relations between Māori and non-Māori and of challenging popular and scholarly ideas about indigenous culture and social organisation.

Ngata and his associates' deployment of ethnographic methods and theory to develop programmes of health reform, land consolidation, agricultural investment and artistic revitalisation had major impacts—largely positive but not unequivocally so—on Māori communities, on government and on the country as a whole, many effects of which still reverberate in the present. Throughout this work Ngata in particular applied anthropological methods and ideas reconstituted within *whakapapa* 'Māori genealogy'-defined perspectives in ways that recursively transformed the terms of the scholarly and governmental debates in which he participated. His reworking of problems of "race" and of "culture" into matters best addressed through *tikanga Māori* 'Māori principles and practices' were deliberately grounded in a distinct approach to kinship and relatedness (George 2010; McCarthy 2016) in ways that resonate with current "post-relational" discussions in anthropological theory, as explored toward the end of this paper.

In particular, Ngata's advocacy of the "Genealogical Method" developed by W.H.R. Rivers, which Ngata grounded in *whakapapa* 'Māori relatedness' and applied in theory and in practice to Māori social organisation and development (see below), was advanced as a potent alternative to theories of culture contact and assimilation that were in his time invariably framed in terms of race. Ngata developed these critical interventions in academia and in political discourse partly in dialogue with his friend and colleague Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa), a collaboration that continued after Buck moved to Hawai'i in 1927 to work as a professional anthropologist. While Buck and Ngata often resorted to race theory and terminology in their long-running correspondence—especially when diagnosing what they called "the Maori problem" and its potential remedies—it is clear that throughout his life, Ngata in particular continued to think about the postcolonial predicament of his people and what to do about it in the quite different relational register of *whakapapa*. Whereas Buck, a medical doctor, tended to see the merging of Māori and Pākehā 'settler' lineages as biologically inevitable (Sorenson 1982: 25), Ngata became increasingly convinced that Māori could and should retain distinct spheres of autonomy grounded in their traditional kin-based groupings of *iwi* 'tribe', *hapū* 'sub-tribe' and *whānau* 'extended family'. His practical work engaged Māori people on these terms, not those of race or biology.

Taken together, Ngata's development schemes as well as his correspondence with Buck and other writings offer rich insights into the depth of thought and experimental practice involved in their attempts to account for and ameliorate the problems Māori faced, which for a long time threatened their existence. Ngata's scholarly interest in anthropology, like Buck's, was motivated not least by the need for a *scientific* vocabulary to explain the Māori predicament to parliamentary peers and civil servants, one geared to attracting material support for their schemes from Pākehā colleagues who might have found an overtly *political* diagnosis of the situation less compelling. But these indigenous scholars' use of the discipline was more than strategic. They deployed its methods and concepts not only to help their people negotiate one of the most turbulent periods in imperial history, but also to enquire into new ways of thinking and being Māori that challenged old orthodoxies even while ensuring the persistence of *Māoritanga* 'Māoriness and Māori unity'<sup>2</sup> beyond the present. In so doing they helped lay the foundations and support structures of many institutions central to Māori society and culture today.

In calling into question the very terms in which socioeconomic problems were diagnosed, furthermore, and devising remedies based on different ways of relating, Ngata's work is relevant to current anthropological debates about the study of social relations, explored at the end of this piece. His correspondence with Buck and their practical achievements are indicative of the high stakes often involved in projects to challenge "commonsense" notions of what brings people together and what makes them different, while their efforts to implement solutions woven out of alternative relational modalities drawn from whakapapa speak to the discipline's potential to impact upon material conditions. Their example shows, indeed, that reconfiguring the very basis of how relations are imagined can be a matter of life and death. Yet their contributions to such enduring disciplinary quandaries were also intellectual. Buck and Ngata's praxis and reflections speak to differences between Māori kinship or whakapapa and biological notions of race in ways that are illuminating and important in their own right as well as in terms of their "real-world" effects. Of particular interest in this regard are Ngata's attempts to bring whakapapa to bear on kinship theory and on ethnographic practice.

#### THE "GENEALOGICAL METHOD"

In 1928 Ngata gave a talk to the Wellington branch of the New Zealand Historical Association called "The Genealogical Method as Applied to the Early History of New Zealand" (Ngata 1928a). In it, he argued forcefully in favour of using records of whakapapa or genealogies, preserved by Māori *tohunga* 'ritual experts' over centuries, as authoritative primary evidence of New Zealand's early history. By casting light on Māori life and habits

before, during and after the early days of colonial settlement, he maintained, these records—and the methods of research they enabled—could transform understandings not only of the past but also of the present predicament and future prospects of his own “race”, the Māori people.

In the title for his lecture, Ngata acknowledged a debt to the Cambridge scholar W.H.R. Rivers, a medical doctor and a founding father of British social anthropology who became an authority on the study of kinship in “primitive” societies through the “Genealogical Method” (Rivers 1910) he devised while participating in the University of Cambridge’s 1898 expedition to the Torres Strait. Rivers visited New Zealand in 1915 on his way home from an Australian meeting of the British Association of the Advancement of Science, and presented a paper in Wellington, “The Peopling of Polynesia”. He may have met Ngata, who was much stimulated by the Cambridge scholar’s published work and who conscientiously took up the challenge Rivers laid down in his lecture for New Zealand “to undertake a full ethnographic survey of the indigenous races over which she rules” (Rivers 1926: 261).<sup>3</sup> It was not least Rivers’s use of genealogies “to reconstruct the social organisation of the Torres Strait Islanders” that made Ngata think of whakapapa as both a method and a methodology that could facilitate his people’s sociocultural and economic renewal.<sup>4</sup> The politician indeed began writing a doctoral thesis on this topic (discussed further below) but ultimately dedicated himself to the practical and institutional application of his own genealogical method. What Ngata did in effect was take over the discipline of anthropology in New Zealand for a period, harnessing it to a wide-ranging and ambitious programme of Māori cultural and socioeconomic reinvigoration. In the process he developed, in dialogue with his friend and colleague, the professional anthropologist Peter Buck, a nuanced critique of the discipline’s workings. In place of an exclusively objectifying science, overdetermined by what they saw as European cultural assumptions and models, these Māori scholars offered an alternative. Their “home-made” anthropology (Sorenson 1982) insisted on the importance of being able to compare from within perspectives constituted by the relational fabric under study, as well as being able to look at it from different angles, objectively. Their anthropology turned, in other words, on an ability to *exchange perspectives*—to have an “inside angle” but also “to see ourselves as others see us” (Buck in Sorenson 1986: 48, 116)—a capacity fundamental to the workings of whakapapa or Māori relatedness.

#### BUCK AND NGATA’S ANTHROPOLOGY

Ngata’s interest in the discipline may be traced to his student days at Canterbury College in New Zealand, where he attended lectures by John Macmillan Brown, an authority on English literature and classics who in later years developed an intense amateur passion for the ethnology of the

Pacific. A committed eugenicist, the professor was outspoken—like many leading anthropologists of the day—about the dangers of race-mixing or “miscegenation” and the threat it posed to Europeans and their subject peoples. Ngata, like Buck, was highly sceptical of the older man’s idiosyncratic theories on Polynesian origins but was quite taken with ideas about the perils of “inter-breeding” and culture-blending. Soon after graduating Ngata gave an impassioned speech before a mainly Māori audience at the 1897 conference of the Te Aute Students’ Association in which he advocated resistance to the threat of racial amalgamation. Instead of merely contributing to “the all conquering, all devouring Anglo Saxon, a fresh strain of blood”, the young lawyer offered “a vision of a Maori race ... possessed of a strong national sentiment, conscious ... of a distinct and separate existence, but nonetheless subject to law and government, loyal to the flag that protects it” (Ngata in Sorrenson 1986: 17).

Ngata’s hope that Māori would retain a strong degree of autonomy within the nation-state persisted throughout his life, though his confidence was often tested, and for many years he publicly advocated selective assimilation.<sup>5</sup> Together with fellow ex-students of Te Aute College, a boarding school that produced a whole generation of prominent Māori scholars, politicians and clerics, he formed an organisation called the Young Maori Party,<sup>6</sup> dedicated to advancing a distinctive vision of indigenous priorities and aspirations. These were made explicit in the Party’s draft manifesto in 1909, which asserted:

Since it is destructive to the self-respect of any race to suddenly break with the traditions of its past, it is one of the aims of the Party ... to preserve the language, poetry, traditions and such of the customs and arts of the Maori as may be desirable and by promoting research in the Anthropology and Ethnology of the Polynesian race to contribute to science and provide a fund of material which should enrich Literature and Art of the future. (Ngata 1909)

An early highlight of this campaign was the 1906–7 Christchurch International Exhibition (Fig. 1), where a model *pā* ‘fortified village’ proposed for inclusion by the Te Aute Students’ Association became an important nexus for artistic revival and diplomatic exchanges involving Māori iwi as well as visiting Pacific Island groups (Henare 2005; McCarthy 2009). An interregnum followed during World War I, which saw Buck away fighting and acting as medical officer for the Māori Battalion that he and Ngata had energetically helped recruit. On hospital duty in Britain, Buck met Sir Arthur Keith of the London Hunterian Museum and the eugenicist Karl Pearson, both of whom encouraged his interest in physical anthropology, loaning him instruments to measure the men under his command (Luomala 1952: 39). Returning to New Zealand with the Battalion in 1919, Buck just missed participating in the Hui Aroha (a large gathering of love and mourning) organised by Ngata

at Gisborne to welcome the soldiers and the spirits of their dead comrades home from the war. This event provided the occasion for the first of four ethnographic expeditions supported by Ngata and funded and organised by New Zealand's national museum (Henare 2005, 2007).

The Dominion Museum expeditions extended the Young Maori Party's programme of cultural revitalisation into the tribal heartlands of New Zealand's North Island, not least by encouraging iwi to "vie with one another to produce good stuff to put on record" (Buck 1923a). They also helped Buck and Ngata to make waves in international academia, aided by a series of films and lantern slides that were produced in the field along with publications showcasing their state-of-the-art ethnographic research, modelled on the Cambridge Torres Strait expedition. As with the model pā project, the national museum's staff played vital roles. Ethnologist Elsdon Best was the most experienced member of the core party of researchers, which also included the Museum's photographer and filmmaker James McDonald and Johannes



Figure 1. Gathering of people at the Māori pā, New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1906. Courtesy of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa MU0523/006/0025.



Andersen of the Alexander Turnbull Library, a keen amateur ethnologist with a passion for music and string games. Buck joined the team regularly in the field, and it was during these expeditions that he systematically developed his lifelong and later professional interest in material culture.

After the trip to Gisborne, where contacts among local people had been set up by Ngata via the office of the Minister of Native Affairs (commonly referred to as the Native Minister), the next expedition was to Rotorua in 1920 to record a large Māori gathering to formally welcome the visiting Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII). Ngata once again encouraged the trip, eager for Best, Andersen and McDonald to “continue their researches” (Gibbons 1992: 188). In 1921 the team set out up the Whanganui River, where they spent several weeks collecting records of traditional skills and knowledge as well as a number of artefacts. They were joined at Koriniti by Buck, eager to apply in the field the anthropometric techniques he had picked up in Britain. The fourth expedition of the Dominion Museum ethnographers was in 1923, when Ngata invited McDonald, Best, Andersen and Buck to his home at Waiomatatini on the East Coast, so that records could be obtained of the traditional skills and technologies of his Ngāti Porou people (Dennis 1996: 292). There the team was assisted by many senior *kaumātua* ‘elders’ of the district, who “considered the recording of their arts and crafts and tribal lore as a matter of considerable importance” (New Zealand Film Archive 1987; see also Robertson, and Salmond and Lythberg, this issue). At towns with electricity, films from the Whanganui expedition were shown to the locals (New Zealand Film Archive 1987). Buck had suggested this in a letter to McDonald as a way of stirring up intertribal competition, a strategy that was evidently very successful.

Ngata and Buck participated actively, demonstrating many of the ancient technologies and art forms that were, through their efforts, in the process of being widely revived (Fig. 2). Soon after the East Coast trip, Buck showed films and slides shot on the expedition at the 1923 Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Australia, to audiences that included Alfred Haddon of the University of Cambridge. Buck reported to Ngata that Haddon “paid high tribute to the ethnological work done in New Zealand” and expressed “a desire to obtain sets of slides illustrating Maori arts and crafts”. He added:

[I]n the public lecture I showed slides ... [of] the typical carved house, lintels etc., hekes [‘rafters’], poupous [‘carved figures’] and the tukutuku [‘latticework panels’] of Porourangi [Ngata’s own ancestral meeting house]. Then two slides showing two University graduates keeping alive the ancient arts and crafts. When I introduced one as the Hon Mr A. T. Ngata M.A. L.L.B., there was loud applause. (Buck 1923b)



Figure 2. Ngata and Buck (Te Rangihīroa) working on a *tukutuku* ‘latticework panel’, Waiomatatini, 1923. Photograph by James McDonald. Courtesy of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa A.4046.

In reaction to Buck’s emphasis on the active role played by Māori themselves in the expeditions, he noted Haddon even “said he regretted that he wasn’t a Maori!” (in Buck 1923b).

These ethnographic expeditions were part and parcel of Ngata’s strategy to employ “nga rakau a te Pakeha” (the tools of Europeans) in the recording of traditional practices and forms of knowledge (Henare 2007) which, as the other contributions to this special issue demonstrate, would have been impossible without his own deep knowledge and wide-ranging network of relationships with tribal scholars expert in the teachings and workings of whakapapa. The research provided material that was used in Ngata and Buck’s interventions into anthropological scholarship and toward the Young Maori Party’s efforts to refigure policies of governance while implementing grassroots programmes of reform and development. Many of the most important changes they sought to bring about required, as they saw it, not just physical work on the ground but also active engagement in scholarly debates and the reorientation of administrative policy. Ngata and his colleagues’



intellectual labours were thus an integral part of the material transformations they sought to effect, calibrated to inflect scientific orthodoxy with insights they understood as distinctively Māori. Their objective was to carve out political and scholarly spaces in which tikanga Māori could come to the fore, a *kaupapa* ‘project, body of work’ that self-consciously mobilised the constant exchanging of perspectives required to operate within whakapapa as both its method and its methodology (George 2010; McCarthy 2016).

#### RACE AND WHAKAPAPA

In 1928, the year of his address on “The Genealogical Method”, Ngata wrote to Buck expressing “deep interest” in the work of another English anthropologist by the name of Rivers, this time the then highly regarded Oxford ethnologist G.H.L.F. Pitt-Rivers,<sup>7</sup> whose writings Buck had recommended and who, Ngata noted approvingly, built a strident case against culture-mixing and miscegenation. Pitt-Rivers had also journeyed the Whanganui River in the company of Elsdon Best (just before the fourth and final Dominion Museum expedition to the East Coast), and his subsequent article, “A Visit to a Maori Village: Being Some Observations on the Passing of the Maori Race and the Decay of Maori Culture”, appeared in 1924 in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*. The paper was reprinted in the Oxford scholar’s book *The Clash of Culture and the Contact of Races* (1927), and it was this publication about which Buck wrote enthusiastically to Ngata.<sup>8</sup> In response, Ngata emphasised the importance of his own and Buck’s applied anthropological work to date in rebuilding a cultural base for Māori, one strong enough to resist the imposition of Pākehā “culture-forms”, which, he lamented, had already led to considerable degeneration. He drew support from Pitt-Rivers’s thesis for his own view that, instead of allowing themselves to be passively assimilated, Māori must strategically control the absorption only of those aspects of European culture they deemed useful into their own:

Such a work as that of Pitt-Rivers opens up a very wide field to chaps like myself, who are perforce immersed in the problems of today yet are desirous of touching bottom, of recovering from the phases that survive and persist today something of the polity of the pre-pakeha days. ... [We] must acknowledge that our hearts are not with this policy of imposing pakeha culture-forms on our people. Our recent activities would indicate a contrary determination to preserve the old culture-forms as the foundations on which to reconstruct Maori life and hopes. (Ngata in Sorrenson 1986: 123; see also Ngata 1928b)<sup>9</sup>

The “recent activities” to which Ngata referred included the Dominion Museum expeditions as well as Buck’s metamorphosis from public health official to professional anthropologist, newly appointed to the Bishop

Museum in Hawai‘i. Ngata’s own scholarly initiatives, including his paper on the “Genealogical Method”, and their application in government policy and legislation were also at the front of his mind. A crowning achievement of the Young Maori Party’s campaign had been the foundation by Act of Parliament of Ngata’s national Board of Maori Ethnological Research (BMER) in 1923, called in Māori “Te Poari Whakapapa” (The Whakapapa Board) (see McCarthy and Tapsell this issue). This body enabled Buck and Ngata to effectively assume control of the bulk of anthropological research and publication being carried out in New Zealand and to help fund Buck’s Pacific fieldwork (Cameron and McCarthy 2015; McCarthy 2014). The Board’s Māori name pointed not only to the importance of genealogies and oral histories as potent forms of evidence, as emphasised in Ngata’s Historical Association address, but toward Ngata’s vision of how whakapapa was to be brought to bear on the workings and structure of the discipline. As he wrote to the Native Minister’s secretary, Te Raumoia Balneavis, while setting up the Board: “I believe that an arrangement such as our whakapapa could eventually be evolved to show at a glance the relative position of each branch of research” (Ngata 1923).

In his correspondence with Buck, Ngata spoke of his Historical Association address as a “precis” of a much more substantial piece of writing he had been working on for some time, which applied the “Genealogical Method” to Māori social organisation. This work too, conceived as a prospective doctoral thesis, mobilised whakapapa as both primary evidence and methodological framework. Ngata had been collecting material relevant to the project for years and had made progress toward a synthesis, as he reported to Buck in 1928:

I am now fairly launched on an exhaustive treatise on the “Genealogical Method” . . . . On social organisation, amplifying the method and deductions used by Rivers in the Torres Strait studies, the whakapapas stand supreme. Traditions and historical notes woven round them illumine & are illuminated by them. You can take the whakapapa to pieces, arrange and rearrange them, much as you have used the material in the Evolution of Maori Clothing, and from the dissection get at the scheme or schemes of Maori social life. (Ngata in Sorrenson 1986: 114)

Ngata’s planned treatise never came together in the end, and, while many whakapapa of different families and other material he collected are held among his papers in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, it was long thought that none of his writing toward the dissertation had survived. In 2018, however, a short but brilliant tract came to light at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Hawai‘i, where it had evidently been sent to Buck for comment, along with some additional material in the Ngata papers at the Alexander

Turnbull Library, which had also remained in the Ngata family (see Ngata and Ngata this issue). These closely typed pages contain a fascinating and detailed discussion of whakapapa terminology and the different methods of recitation through which it was recorded and transmitted, and are published for the first time in the present issue. Ngata also delivered a paper applying his version of the genealogical method to Māori social organisation at the Anthropological Section of the New Zealand Institute Science Congress in January 1929, but the manuscript of this talk has failed to materialise, despite concerted efforts to trace it.<sup>10</sup>

Many enticing hints about Ngata's approach can nonetheless be gleaned from his correspondence with Buck and from writings surrounding the BMER's activities. Together these suggest that while in earlier years Ngata often seemed to speak of whakapapa and biological kinship more or less interchangeably, as time went on he increasingly sifted ideas of race, ethnicity and biology out from those he associated with Māori relational thinking and practice. The more evidence he saw of the capacities of whānau, hapū and iwi to overcome challenges on their own terms, the more convinced he became that the solutions to his people's predicament lay neither in resisting nor embracing miscegenation and cultural assimilation but in redefining the nature of these relations altogether.<sup>11</sup>

It would be disingenuous to deny Ngata and Buck's frequent use of and interest in race theory, or to finesse the unequivocally racist statements they (especially Buck) sometimes made about other Pacific peoples.<sup>12</sup> Yet there is another layer to these pronouncements, which is obscured by the anglophone terminology in which their correspondence was mainly (though not exclusively) conducted. From within the kinds of perspectives constituted by whakapapa, self-elevation of one's own kin group over others may be apprehended—in accordance with Ngata's own "Genealogical Method"—in terms of the workings of *tuakana/teina* 'senior/junior' kin relations. Buck noted "the importance of the status of seniority" among Polynesians and referred to "the satisfaction to the ego in being the tuakana, in having the prestige and name, in beating the other man" (Sorrenson 1986: 119, 121). The practice of whakapapa often involves games or even battles of one-upmanship between kin groups, each seeking advantage over others.

Just such an approach to Buck and Ngata's anthropology is indeed taken by Sāmoan historian Toeolesulusulu Damon Salesa (2000). In discussing their views on "half-castes" in Pacific colonies Salesa writes: "Ngata's observations, like Buck's, were genealogical, reminiscent of whakapapa." Noting that their opinions were "not dissimilar to a wider 'common-sense' view of inheritance shared by Europeans", Salesa nonetheless pinpoints a crucial distinction: "The main difference was that Ngata was emphasising the duality of [the] heritage [of the "half-caste"]", rather than fractionalising it

into halves and quarters, as Europeans tended to” (Salesa 2000: 108). Salesa’s contrast between a “duality” of perspectives and a “fractionalising” of ethnic identity underlines a signature characteristic of whakapapa that was crucial to Ngata’s anthropology, ultimately leading him to reject the divisive logic of race theory in favour of a prospective vision of Māori–Pākehā relations defined in terms of whakapapa.

As Ngata was aware, a person in whakapapa is composed as a concatenation of lineages, or—to adopt an indigenous analogy—as a knot binding different descent lines and relational substance in an all-encompassing fabric of relations. As a “living face” of their ancestors, people may render those ancestors present—depending on their own mana—for instance by assuming authority to speak at formal occasions on behalf of a group of a given ancestor’s descendants. Such presence is not considered partial (“fractionalised”) by virtue of the multiplicity of lineages of which the person is composed, but might be thought of as non-simultaneous. (For a particular line to be emphasised or brought forward, others must be momentarily eclipsed or suppressed while maintaining a kind of presence *in potentia*.) In speaking on *marae* ‘communal gathering places’, for instance, a person can switch from one ancestral “side” to another by foregrounding first one and then another of their many lines of descent (*aho tipuna* ‘ancestral threads’). They may thus alternately become the “living face” of different kin groups.<sup>13</sup>

There is resonance here with anthropologist Marilyn Strathern’s “dividuals”: persons seen as “the plural and composite site of the relations that produced them” (Strathern 1996: 53). Yet, as Salesa points out, whakapapa’s mathematics is non-fractional; its persons and kin groups are “more than one, less than many” (De la Cadena 2017) but are not divided into “fractions of one” (Strathern 2011: 93) *per se*. This distinction is crucial to Ngata’s anthropology, as it led him ultimately away from race theory in favour of whakapapa’s impetus toward extensive and generative encompassment (Salmond 2013). Whereas racial predictions foresaw that Māoriness would either be “amalgamated” into a superior, hybrid race or “bred out” through miscegenation—“half-castes” would become “quadroons”, “octoroons” and so on—Ngata’s whakapapa-based perspective assured that Māori could continue to be fully Māori while becoming in some aspects Pākehā.

#### COMPARING RELATIONS

Over the course of a long career, Ngata’s comparisons of race or biological relatedness and whakapapa altered from themselves (*sensu* Holbraed and Pedersen 2017: 294). Early on he often used whakapapa and genealogy interchangeably (whether in advocating Māori resistance or acquiescence to racial and cultural assimilation). Later in life, he became increasingly convinced that the best chance for Māori persistence and autonomy lay

in shoring up whakapapa against race theory's diluting divisions. Ngata's propensity to orient his thought and action down tribal lines and to orchestrate his interventions accordingly is perhaps the best evidence of this tendency, together with his insistence on upholding principles of tikanga Māori such as *tapu* 'sacred, restricted', *manaakitanga* 'hosting guests' and *whanaungatanga* 'relationships, kinship'. Though he may not, in the end, have finished synthesising his ideas on whakapapa into a comprehensive thesis, he did begin to render such distinctions explicit in many of his writings. In a 1931 report to Parliament on his Native Land development schemes,<sup>14</sup> for instance, Ngata cited both his former protégé Raymond Firth at length as well as Buck, before noting that Pākehā anthropologists—like his parliamentary colleagues—risked mistaking Māori selective appropriation of European habits and technologies for a wholesale abandonment of traditional values and social organisation. Instead, he argued forcefully, it was essential to recognise the underlying persistence and importance of tribal structures and chiefly authority—in other words, whakapapa relationships—in directing and facilitating successful economic and cultural adaptation.

In his writings on the "Genealogical Method" too, as we have seen, Ngata's vision of whakapapa as an ontology in every sense of the word becomes clear. And in correspondence with Buck, the question of how race relations might differ from those of whakapapa often becomes the object of reflexive observations, not least when considering how their approach contrasted with those of mainstream anthropology. Both insisted that being able to exchange perspectives—to see things *from within* whakapapa *as well as from without* its shifting comparisons—offered a different (and for them more scientific) way of approaching the kinds of questions addressed by ethnography than those reliant on the authority of a single and unified horizon of existential possibility. Seen in this light, Buck and Ngata's comparisons of whakapapa-based methodologies with those grounded in biological notions of race appear salient in regard to current anthropological discussions about relations.

For some time now, in anthropology as in other disciplines, scholars have extolled the virtues of *relational* modes of thought and action like whakapapa over those variously described as "modernist", "particulate" or "entitative." Tim Ingold, for instance, is among the most influential of a host of scholars who champion processual, embodied engagement within "a world that already coheres" over methods that assume "a world of disconnected particulars that has to be rendered coherent, or joined up after the fact, in the theoretical imagination" (Ingold 2008: 73). Ingold's polemical case that, contrary to received wisdom, "[a]nthropology is *not* ethnography", is an intervention that has helped stimulate an ongoing and vigorous reassessment of the kinds of relations on which anthropological knowledge claims turn. His argument

that ethnographic method, understood as the description of particularities, is just one aspect of a much broader philosophical exercise in “comparative generalisation” continues to provoke rich reflections on the relationship of anthropological “data” to “theory”, and how analyses might move from the particular to the general and back again. Crucial to Ingold’s case is a distinction between relations as *connections* (for instance between parts and wholes) on one hand, and relatedness as a generalised and universal condition of being on the other.

Ingold’s project is indeed one of a range of attempts, following the “science wars” of the 1990s and the rise of self-styled postmodernism, to rewrite academia’s ontological and epistemological constitution in ways that seek to elide modernism’s errors while conserving the affordances of scientific truth. In common with philosophers of science like Bruno Latour, Ingold seeks to craft a dynamic rapprochement of the arts and sciences grounded in ways of thinking about relations between things, people and other beings that are offered as alternatives to modernism’s binary, particulate logic. Such schemes are notable for being grounded in networks,<sup>15</sup> meshworks<sup>16</sup> or other kinds of fields pregnant with diffuse relationality. In certain offerings and readings, indeed, relations may furnish the very conditions of possibility for existence, while in others, like Ingold’s, “materials” have a presence prior to *social* relations, though not outside a phenomenological fabric of generalised relational immanence.<sup>17</sup>

Alongside and partly in dialogue with these attempts to rework the basis of academic knowledge and to build a better world is another quite different set of approaches taken by other anthropologists who also see the task of redefining their discipline’s aims and methodologies as urgent. One way in which this further body of scholarship has been characterised is as an “ontological turn” (Henare *et al.* 2007; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017) away from concerns about knowledge or epistemology and toward questions of realities or beings. Another nexus or thread drawing this work together in a much wider net, however, is the influence of Pacific ethnographers Roy Wagner and Marilyn Strathern.<sup>18</sup> Taken together, these wide-ranging discussions involve Pacific specialists and anthropologists of Amazonia, as well as many other exponents of especially the British, French and Scandinavian disciplines. Participants share long-standing concerns with how anthropologists think about “connectivity” and “materiality”, yet they address these more often in terms of *relations* and of *things*. What the “recursive” ontological turn (Salmond 2014) shares with other work inspired by Strathern and Wagner is what might be called a *subjunctive* attitude to the kinds of questions begged by ethnography, and a commitment to interrogating—not taking for granted—what it could mean to approach things relationally (Salmond

2016). In contrast to Ingoldian or Latourian analyses, in which attempts are made to *resolve* questions about how things are or should be related through recourse to new ontological constitutions or to new and improved ways of being, this work seeks to *hold open* questions posed by ethnography so as to admit unanticipated insights. Rather than seeing the job of anthropologists as being to establish, once and for all, the best way of being (or of relating), then, this work addresses questions like: “Were things to be as they appear ethnographically, what else could (come to) be (related)?”

What counts as a relation is a long-running theme in Strathern’s work, one that has been picked up by many inspired by her writing (Corsin-Jiménez 2006; Holbraad 2013; Lebner 2017a). Strathern herself has addressed this question concretely, in regard to changing legal definitions of parenthood demanded by the advent of new reproductive technologies (Strathern 1992), for instance, and in discussions of the etymology of the term “relation” in English philosophical discourse (Strathern 2017). Her ethnographic descriptions at the same time pose questions about the assumptions we bring, as anthropologists and as readers, to the apprehension of such accounts as well as of their artefacts—that which they help generate (for example the now commonplace legal distinction between social and biological parents). Strathern’s observation (e.g., 2011) that the very idea of relations-as-connections itself has a distinctive pedigree, one that can work to obscure different (kinds of) relations within and among different (kinds of) things, has proved especially resonant. Drawing on this insight, a powerful critique has emerged of the notion that “relational” thought and practice necessarily involves forging and leveraging connections per se. One area of these discussions interrogates assumptions about the kinds of entities that ostensibly require relations to become mutually involved, such as persons, materials, things, landscapes and other beings, while another draws attention to the qualities of different kinds of relations, including those of detachment, conflict, analogy, contrast and comparison (Corsin-Jiménez 2014; Jensen *et al.* 2011; Lebner 2017a; Yarrow *et al.* 2015). The challenges inherent in mobilising ethnography to open up different relational possibilities, in language that carries within itself a specific concept of the relation, is a recurring theme across much of this work.

Of special concern within these debates is what Strathern identified early on as “the problem of ‘comparison’” (1991: xxviii). This begins with the insight that conventional anthropological analyses rely on “a familiar mathematic”, defined by Ashley Lebner (2017b: 10) as one in which “‘individual instances’ (societies, traits) are counted and evaluated by an ‘entity’ able to abstract and uncover, or produce a ‘theory’ about, the meaning of their similarity and difference”.



One problem with this kind of *conventional* comparison, the Strathernian argument goes, is that it demands the very sort of thinking Ingold objected to above; it requires individual instances to be thought of, in his words, as “disconnected particulars that [have] to be rendered coherent, or joined up after the fact, in the theoretical imagination” (Ingold 2008: 73). Conventional ethnographic comparison, in short, requires relations to be imagined and realised as *connections*. This rule may be seen to apply within and across scales; it defines relations among parts and between parts and wholes, whether it is “materials”, “individuals”, “societies”, “cultures”, “structures”, “systems” or even “networks” that are at stake. And, at the same time, of course, such a distinctive mathematic encourages a particular way of imagining the relationship of ethnographic “data” to anthropological “theory”.

Whereas Ingold has sought to resolve this problem, as we saw, by replacing modernism’s particulate universe with a phenomenological field of generalised relational immanence, Strathern charts a different course of action. Instead of making space for other kinds of relations to emerge through recourse to a new and improved ontology—one in which relations are not (or are not only) connections—she holds the question “what counts as a relation?” open in such a way as to admit the unanticipated possibilities that can arise through exchanges of perspective. Her experiments with alternative modes of description and different comparative devices—not least the contrast between “analogy” and “conventional comparison” itself (Lebner 2017b: 9–15)—turn on maintaining a subjunctive attitude toward what relations, and thinking and acting “relationally”, might turn out to entail. Some inspired by Strathern see in this prospective stance a means of enabling difference to assert itself politically, and derive from her work methodologies geared both more and less explicitly to this end (De la Cadena and Blaser 2018; Holbraad and Pedersen 2014; Riles 2006; Street and Copeman 2014; Wastell 2001). Ethnographic (re)descriptions, the work of these authors suggests, could work toward changing the inadequate terms in which political and economic relations are conventionally negotiated and built into institutions and infrastructures, not just how they are imagined in theory. In doing so, it is ventured, ethnographic writing might assist in materially transforming such relations themselves.

\* \* \*

Setting these current ambitions alongside Ngata and his colleagues’ much earlier deployment of anthropology in the service of Māori cultural and economic renewal opens a range of different possibilities. Seen from within a third-person perspective, my own comparison of these different



anthropologies is conventional; it sets two examples side by side and proposes parities and disjunctures between them. Yet the materials brought together here are themselves comparative, and—as we have seen—comparative in different ways. Not limited by the terms from which the present discussion takes off, they draw momentum from different (kinds of) relations and are open to different fields of potential. The materials themselves thus work to reconfigure the terms of their own analysis, opening it up to insights not anticipated at the outset (or even the end) of this particular intervention, not least through their exchanges of perspective.

Comparisons have lives of their own, that is to say, and it is beyond the scope and intention of this article to *resolve* the question of the significance of Buck and Ngata’s work, in relation to ethnography, to Māori aspirations then and now, or to anything else, for that matter. Instead, by bringing their comparisons together with others—by comparing relations—I intend to invite further comparisons, ones that might, for instance, extend the kaupapa Ngata set in motion through his genealogical method. Readers will bring their own ways of relating—and their own particular relations—to the mix.

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#### NOTES

1. As Conal McCarthy notes, “the words anthropology, ethnology, and ethnography were often used loosely and interchangeably” in early twentieth-century New Zealand (McCarthy 2016: note 3).
2. Māoritanga was a term coined in the early twentieth century to describe a future-oriented vision of Māoriness and Māori unity (Sissons 2000). McCarthy notes that its history is often traced to the 1920s, whereas its earliest usage may in fact have been at a 1911 *hui* ‘gathering’ at the meeting house Te Tokanga-nui-a-Noho in Te Kūiti (McCarthy 2014, 2016).

3. In a letter to Buck dated 23 June 1928, Ngata writes: “Rivers’ estimate of the part that New Zealand should take in carrying out a full ethnographic survey of the native races under its rule should be acted up to” (Sorrenson 1986: 105).
4. Sorrenson describes Rivers’s article “The Social Organisation of the Torres Straits Islanders”, published in *Man* in 1901, as Ngata’s “model” for his paper on the “Genealogical Method” (Sorrenson 1982: 13).
5. Sorrenson (1986: 17) notes that “for some years Ngata doubted whether the Maoris could retain a separate ethnic existence but from the 1920s he became increasingly confident that they could”.
6. This was not a political party as such but rather a society which, like its predecessor, the Te Aute Students’ Association, was made up of a group of Māori professionals, intellectuals and politicians dedicated to ameliorating what they saw as their people’s socioeconomic and cultural degeneration in the wake of colonisation.
7. Despite his lack of higher academic qualifications Pitt-Rivers was an active member of the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) during this period, based at Worcester College, Oxford, from 1925–27. He received numerous speaking invitations, gave academic lectures and published several articles in anthropological journals, especially *Man*. Well regarded by figures such as Haddon and Seligman, he was an intimate of Bronislaw Malinowski, described by Pitt-Rivers’s biographer as one of his “closest friends and supporters”. The eugenicist and sometime RAI president Arthur Keith, who encouraged Buck’s anthropometric work during the war, was also “a lifelong friend and supporter of Pitt-Rivers’s work” (Hart 2015).
8. Best is thanked and Buck is credited in Pitt-Rivers’s preface with providing “data and comments”.
9. Where Pitt-Rivers himself was headed with his thoughts on “culture clash” and the avoidance of racial miscegenation became clear only some time after Ngata read his book, when the Oxford anthropologist formed an alliance with Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists and found himself interned during World War II for his vocal support of German national socialism.
10. Ngata’s paper was titled “The Genealogical Method as the Basis of Investigation into the Social Organisation of the Maoris” (Sorrenson 1986: 205 fn 19).
11. Jeff Sissons has also proposed that Ngata’s thinking became more radical as time went on, as reflected for example in his comments to the 1934 commission set up to investigate the financial activities under his leadership of the Department of Native Affairs (Sissons 2000).
12. For examples see Buck on Sāmoans (Sorrenson 1986: 72) and his comments about Aboriginal Australians in a letter to Ngata following the 1923 Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Australia (Buck 1923b). Carey (2014) discusses the influence of race science on Buck’s thinking in detail.
13. See Salmond (2014) for an extended discussion of whakapapa along these lines.
14. This document (Ngata 1931) is described by Sorrenson (1996) as a “masterpiece” and (1982) as Ngata’s “most important essay in anthropology”.
15. As in Latour’s Actor–Network Theory (ANT), to give but one influential example of the use of this figure.

16. The term Ingold prefers over networks: “My contention ... is that what is commonly known as the ‘web of life’ is precisely that: not a network of connected points, but a meshwork of interwoven lines” (2011: 63). This is a point addressed directly to Latour: “Although purporting to merge the politics traditionally reserved for human society with the ecology once limited to entities deemed natural into a single field of negotiation and contestation, [Latour’s political ecology] instead offers no more than a skeleton of the affairs of real human and nonhuman organisms, bound as they are within a web of life. Latour’s is an ecology bereft of energy and materials. He has nothing to say about them. This is precisely what distinguishes the ‘network’ of Latourian Actor Network Theory (ANT) from the ‘meshwork’ of my own account” (Ingold 2012: 436–37).
17. Indeed for Ingold, the point of “purifying” materials out of the relational meshwork into which they are otherwise bound (e.g., 2007, 2012) seems to be to emphasise their very indissolubility from that fabric.
18. These scholars were themselves profoundly influenced by David Schneider’s radical challenges to the anthropology of kinship from the 1960s onwards. Schneider’s insights into how kinship “data” and “theory” configure each other opened the way for the so-called New Melanesian Ethnography, a label strongly associated with Strathern and Wagner’s work.

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