

## Plenary: The legacy of museum ethnography for indigenous people today - case studies from Aotearoa/New Zealand

*\*Arapata Hakiwai \*\*Paul Diamond.*

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### Introduction: The past in the present

The following plenary took place at the seminar 'Reassembling the material: A research seminar on museums, fieldwork anthropology and indigenous agency' held in November 2012 at Te Herenga Waka marae, Victoria University of Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. In the papers, indigenous scholars and museum professionals presented a mix of past legacies and contemporary initiatives which illustrated the evolving relations between Māori people, and museums and other cultural heritage institutions in New Zealand. Whereas most of the papers at this seminar, and the articles in this special issue, are focused on the history of ethnology, museums, and government, between about 1900 and 1940, this section brings the analysis up to the present day, and considers the legacy of the indigenous engagement with museums and fieldwork anthropology for contemporary museum practice. What do the findings, which show active and extensive indigenous engagements with museums and fieldwork, mean for indigenous museum professionals and communities today?

In the ARC-funded project which generated this research, the aim was always to explore a past/present strand that would identify the bearing of those historical and comparative components of the project on the relations between museums and the cultural policies and politics of difference in contemporary post-settler nations such as Australia and New Zealand. In addition, the last phase of the research involved the dissemination and publication of the findings, and dialogues with relevant stakeholders and institutions to bring the findings to bear on contemporary policies and practices concerning the relations between museums, Indigenous cultures and questions of cultural difference more generally. As the papers by Jacknis, Dibley, Cameron and McCarthy in this volume demonstrate, the archival research in the US and Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific revealed significant evidence of a spirited and enthusiastic engagement between indigenous communities and individuals, including artists, politicians, intellectuals and anthropologists, with western practices of ethnographic research collecting, and display. Though sometimes Māori people today are not always aware of the details of their ancestors' assertive dealings with anthropologists and museums, they are rarely surprised to learn what they did, and often just assume that they were as proactive and strong willed as they themselves are now. In that sense, the history of indigenous agency is not as much of a revelation to descendants as to academics studying cultural encounters in the colonial period and after. Nevertheless, a greater understanding of what native leaders achieved historically can inform and underpin current practice, particularly the distinctive indigenous museologies which are springing up in the Pacific Rim as a result of the intersection of western museum methods with non-western ontologies and ways of preserving and maintaining cultural objects, knowledge and practices.

In this section of the seminar, indigenous speakers addressed issues in the present with reference to the past. Phil Gordon, from the Australian Museum in Sydney and convenor of the Indigenous Advisory Group for the project, discussed the history of Indigenous involvement at the institution where he has worked since 1981 in his paper 'The Australian Museum, anthropology and indigenous people'. He talked about the ups and downs of Aboriginal staffing and exhibitions, progress with repatriation, and the problems with Keeping Places since the 1970s, and concluded that digital media was an important avenue for museums to explore in future.

Several Māori speakers discussed the complex historical relationships between museums, collectors and Māori tribes (*iwi*) and what they meant for museums and Māori

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today. University scholar and former museum director Professor Paul Tapsell gave a paper on Gilbert Mair, the Pakeha government official who was 'adopted' by the Te Arawa people of the Rotorua area, and the ways in which this close and mutually beneficial relationship has framed negotiations between the tribe and Auckland Museum since the 1990s. He posed an interesting question: did Mair use Te Arawa through his collecting as is often assumed today, or, in fact, were *they* using *him* - ie was Mair their 'Pakeha' (European), a useful foil for dealing with the state. The outcome of Tapsell's research was an innovative travelling exhibition *Ko Tawa* (Tapsell 2006), which relocated *taonga* within ancestral landscapes, acknowledged the *kaitiakitanga* (stewardship) of tribal communities and thereby turned the museum inside out. *Taonga*, said Tapsell, have always been 'expressions of agency'. Now the tribe was forging a vision for its own cultural centre, which may contain collections but was also a 'knowledge centre'. Interestingly, in this paper and the ones that follow, the past and present always seem to be inter-connected in the Māori perspective, because, as Hakiwai explains below, time is continuous from the past to the present-becoming-future.

### 'The contemporary tribal perspective'

#### Arapata Hakiwai

*Kia ora ano tatau!* (greeting). This morning, we got welcomed on to this *marae* (community centre), which is probably the ideal venue for our discussions... The songs that we heard, the *waiata*, are ancient. They recount history, the names of cloaks, in some cases the names of meeting houses and carvings. Now, look around you in this *wharenuī* (meeting house), these carvings are the ancestors, whose history stretches back over about a thousand years. These ancestors represent our ancient voyaging traditions, as well as more recent figures of the 1800s, 1900s. So we have a carving representing Te Rangihīroa (Peter Buck) there, over there we have Āpiranga Ngata... I want to acknowledge them.

In my PhD research I have case studies involving three tribes, and I'll talk briefly about them today, but first I just want to reflect on Paul Tapsell's (2006) views on what *taonga* (treasures) represent, like the carvings and other art works in this house. I think *taonga tuku iho* (treasures handed down) are fundamental to our understanding of the past, and present. Why are these *taonga* important today? I suppose it's that whole association that we have, through them, with time and space. You really have to look at the Māori word for the past, '*mua*' which means 'in front of', for example in the phrase *ngā wā o mua* ('times past'). This actually captures the distinctive Māori relationship with time, because we are actually looking at our past, it is in front of us and the future is behind us, opposite to the *Pakeha* (European) way of looking at it. You get a sense of this in the way we think about *whakapapa* (genealogies), and I agree with Paora (Paul) that *whakapapa* is the element that really defines the relationship between past and present. I define *whakapapa* in the broader sense...it's genealogy, it's relationships, it's histories, connections and relationships.

Now I want to mention something that happened with my *hapū* (subtribe), Ngāi Te Upokoiri and Ngāti Hinemanu, at Omaha *marae* in Hawkes Bay in April 2012. We hosted an episode of 'Marae DIY' on Māori Television, which was screened in July (MTV 2013). For those who don't know, this is when a television crew come to your *marae*, and film the process of restoring the buildings and grounds. The *marae* subsidises the work, and MTV provides the opportunity for the community to do maintenance work, whether it's repainting, landscaping or whatever, to do restoration work on the carvings etc. We had old carvings in storage that belonged to our earlier *marae* of 1901, which we took out, and put them on our *waharoa* (entranceway). We recounted the history of those carvings, who carved them, what they represented—bringing them life. In our case six hundred members of our *hapū* (subtribe) came to our *marae*, and, we had four days of celebration. All our *tamariki* (children) composed a *waiata* (song) for the occasion, and that *waiata* will be remembered and honoured and sung to remember that occasion. Our *taonga* were brought out, and that's what it's all about, giving life to these things, and through them giving life to the people.

That project, in a tangible way, summed up the meaning of these *taonga* for me and my family. It is all about identity. In some cases, those *taonga* that we hold in museums are

absolutely fundamental to who we are as a people. All these things that we have talked about during this seminar, not just the artefacts but the photographs, the archives, the sound recordings and films, which have been collected and researched by Elsdon Best and others, many of which are held in overseas museums, they all touch the heart, they touch the spirit, and activate the mind. As the proverb says: *He toi whakairo, he mana tangata* (Where there is artistic excellence, there is human dignity) (Hakiwai 2005: 173).

At this celebration, I was given the task of speaking on the history of the *marae*. Omaha is probably the largest *marae* in Ngāti Kahungunu, and the meeting house was just packed, with young and old. It was challenging because our people have had a turbulent history with warfare and migration, and our relations with neighbouring tribes has often been difficult. So I went back to the beginning and talked about our ancestors, who they were, back to the founding ancestor of our *waka* (canoe) in our origin traditions etc. Then we started getting into the detail about how the *marae* was named, how it was located, who our chiefs were, and so on. We talked about our flagstaff, and when it was erected to honour those Māori soldiers from our area who fell in the First World War. There was even a submission on behalf of our tribe, signed by all three hundred of our people at the time, to welcome the Governor General to our *marae*.

When I presented this material to our community they were astonished to see it, because they didn't know about it. The reaction was really positive. When they saw the photographs and documents, I felt the spirit and the feeling of our people being uplifted...they were saying 'Whoa, this is our history!' There was a grounded-ness, a distinctively Māori reality shared by all the people there. And this is the interesting thing in relation to our discussions today. Where did that material come from? A lot of that information was held in archives and different repositories throughout the land, and was connected with the Board of Māori Ethnological Research set up by Ngata in the 1920s. The Board, and later the Māori Purposes Fund Board, was approached for grants to help with various projects.

Now going back to the museum world, there were some defining moments that shook our country. One was the *Te Māori* exhibition of 1984-87, which went to four venues in America, and then toured New Zealand (Mead 1984). It awoke the museum world, largely because Māori people were involved in representing themselves. Interestingly, not long before that, the National Museum toured an exhibition to China in 1978, but Māori were not involved, and we didn't know about it until it returned home. But that's the old museology, *Te Māori* was part of the new museology which initiated a number of things: Māori people were largely in control, there was recognition of Māori knowledge, *tikanga* (customs) and values. I think that exhibition exposed the real shabbiness of museum practice in this country (Hakiwai 2005). People sat up and took notice, and said 'Hang on, that's not right.'

The other important development has been the Waitangi Tribunal hearings, which have been occurring since the early 1980s (Waitangi Tribunal 2013). At these hearings, tribes present evidence of breaches by the Crown of the Treaty of Waitangi, which of course was originally signed in 1840 but is now regarded as the foundational document of Aotearoa New Zealand. These hearings, at which *iwi* present historical evidence but also make speeches, sing songs and present carvings and other *taonga*, have had, and continue to have, a strong effect in this country. I'll talk about some of those Waitangi Tribunal hearings, because we Māori staff at Te Papa have worked through almost fifteen to date, in relation to *taonga* held in our collections (Te Papa 2013). The Waitangi tribunal hearings that I have been involved with - with *iwi* including Ngāi Tahu, Whanganui, Ngāti Porou and so forth - are all a testament to the notion that these objects are not just objects or things on paper, they are actually a part of us. Far from being negative occasions, with threats of repatriation or whatever, I find them really positive experiences. To me they are about reconciliation, about acknowledging past injustices, and actually working things through with the tribe. It is a process of healing, yes, but just as importantly it means asking: how might we help you going forward? And while it can be a painful experience hearing about the disruption and loss of the colonial period, you hear words like 'restoration' and 'revitalisation' all the time, a more positive view of the future rather than dwelling in the grievances of the past.

I am going to recount a couple of cases. First the Ngāti Porou hearing in 2010. When we first met with them, one of the negotiators, Dr Linda Smith, the well-known academic who wrote *Decolonising Methodologies* (1999), spoke to all the representatives of Crown research

agencies, Te Papa, National Library and Archives New Zealand. She said: Māori culture has been fragmented with 'bits and pieces all over the place' but what they wanted to do now was to bring them back together 'making us whole again'. Those words really had an effect on me. Later she told me, 'Arapata, all these things that you're talking about - archives, papers, photographs, and *taonga* - held not only in your museum, but museums overseas, well, we want them. They are not just about us. They *are* us. We want them home.' This really goes to the heart of issues about cultural heritage and indigenous people. In some ways it is a question of restoring a sense of justice, and the journey towards reconciliation, but, I think in other ways the main thing is how might we in museums help in realising positive cultural futures for indigenous people?

The Ngāti Porou negotiators were quite adamant in their submission, and expressed their view of the place of *taonga* in their tribal identity this way: '*Ko ngā taonga tuku iho o Ngāti Porou*' (Ngāti Porou *taonga*, an enduring legacy in perpetuity). And they added the words: '*Toi tu te mana atua, toi tu te mana whenua, toi tu te mana tangata, toi tu te tiriti o Waitangi*' (Hold fast to the power and authority of the gods, land, people, and the Treaty of Waitangi). In fact all the tribes we've dealt with have said that they want an enduring relationship with their treasures. They say that these treasures in museums, no matter how scattered, represent their ancestors, who are a part of them, part of their history, part of the landscape. They insist that this is not just a historical matter, but that they want their *taonga* back, so that they can progress, and move on into the future.

In some cases I have to admit it is quite difficult working for Te Papa, because straight away you get hit over the head. *Iwi* say 'Oh you are Te Papa, you have our treasures, in many cases you stole them, and we want them back!' The new museology is about actually turning around and saying: 'Well, how might we help you in your journey from here on?' For Ngāti Porou, they were quite clear: they want archives, records, photographs manuscripts and artifacts; all of it, regardless of media, because it's all *taonga* to them. Through the negotiations over their claim, they have therefore demanded that the national institutions - National Library, Archives New Zealand, and Te Papa - work together to provide access to their *taonga*. They regard these organisations and the things they hold as fundamental to their future imagining, to their future development. You can see this on the tribal websites, so, for example, if you go to the Ngāti Porou site, or the Ngāi Tahu site, or Ngāti Kahungunu, you will see that they all position heritage and the arts as the core or the 'soul' of the *iwi* identity. With Ngāi Tahu (another one of my own *iwi*), there is a very strong statement which frames their whole outlook in terms of social and economic development. It reads: '*Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei*'. This means 'for us and for our children and generations after us.' That's their '*kupu kōrero*' or key concept, the foundation of their Waitangi Tribunal claim settled in the mid-1990s, which addressed events going back 150 years ago, yet which to this day they use as a way of looking to the future (Ngai Tahu 2013).

Here I'm trying to convey a sense of how important these *taonga* are to Māori people today. As Tapsell has pointed out, our *taonga* have a *whakapapa*, they have a genealogy, they have a history, or relationships. Also *taonga* have a *mauri* (a life-force), such as *taonga* from the Te Arawa tribe collected by 'their' Pakeha Gilbert Mair in the late nineteenth century, many of which are now in the Auckland Museum. When we refer to a 'life-force', or *mauri*, it's not just a customary word or a concept: rather, Māori feel that we have to actively nurture this quality and develop it, and we have to respect it. Part of the *whakapapa* of *taonga* is our responsibility to our *taonga*, as *kaitiaki*, or guardians (Tapsell 1997). This is apparent at important occasions, such as *tangihanga*, or funerals, where the important *taonga* are brought out while the deceased is lying in state. There are certain obligations we have which are recognised through ceremonies that we perform to respect that process, and by doing so we are honouring the past.

Another case study concerns my other *iwi* (tribe) – Rongowhakaata, from the Gisborne region. For those who haven't been to Te Papa, there is a famous carved meeting house held there called *Te Hau ki Tūranga*, the oldest in the country dating from the 1840s, which was confiscated during the conflict with the Crown in 1867. The master carver Rahraruhi Rukupō and others immediately sent a petition to the government, protesting at its removal against their consent. Here are their words:

...ko tō mātou taonga nui, ko tō mātou whare whakairo, kua mauria uhua koretia e te kāwanganatanga, kihai mātau i whakaae... our prized possession, our valuable carving, our house; it has been taken by the government without just cause, we did not consent to its removal.

In many ways the meeting house has become not only a powerful symbol of the injustices that Rongowhakaata suffered by the Crown during the land wars, but also a symbol of a tribal future. More than 40 per cent of men from Tūranga (Gisborne) died as a result of government military action between 1865 and 1872. Many of our people were summarily executed, a large number after the siege of Ngāpapa in January 1869. During that time of conflict and disruption, *Te Hau ki Tūranga* was taken and displayed in the Colonial Museum in Wellington, the forerunner of Te Papa. In recent years, Rongowhakaata have settled their claim through the Waitangi Tribunal, which found that the *whare* (house) was taken illegally, and should be returned. Today this is happening through an ongoing relationship with the museum, so resolving the issue is about restorative justice, and how 'we' might meet our responsibility to help Rongowhakaata look after the house in future.

Many of the Waitangi Tribunal claims that Te Papa is involved with have similar 'transactions,' if you like, regarding *taonga*. Even for those *taonga* that haven't clearly been taken, there's a strong sense of displacement, dislocation, and alienation. Another side bar for this work is a research project that I'm involved with, which involves creating a digital database for Māori and Moriori (Chatham Islands) *taonga* held in overseas museums, which may lead to digital repatriation. I believe that the aim is connection and reconnection between *iwi* and their *taonga*, wherever they may be.

For Rongowhakaata, their cultural heritage aspirations are wrapped up in a wider vision for social and political development which is summed up in the six 'R's' which they frequently reiterated in their discussions with us. First was 'Relate': they wanted us to relate the story of *Te Hau ki Tūranga* in what they saw as proper terms, in other words to explain that it was illegally taken, to put the story right, as it were. The second one was 'Repatriation': meaning that we must return the *whare* and also align our management of it to their views, adhere to Rongowhakaata *tikanga*. We must restore the *mana motuhake* (sovereign reputation) of the *whare* and what the *whare* represents, the people of Ngāti Kaipoho. Another one was 'Restoration': we know that during the early 1840s, when there were many houses built in Tūranga, we had eighteen carvers, including the master carver Rukupō, so there was a vibrant artistic culture. Now we look around now and, well, it seems we've got hardly any carvers. The subject of restoration was as much about the reclamation of *whakairo* or the art forms of wood carving, and the knowledge that goes with it. Fifth was the 'Return': the return of the house to Manutūkē where it had once stood. Last was 'Relationships': reinstating and maintaining the appropriate relationships of the chief and master carver who had built the house, along with the other carvers, the relationships with the tribes of Tūranga, and the relationship with us at the national museum Te Papa. This is still in progress as we work through these things with Rongowhakaata, but overall the most important thing is relationships. Museums can no longer afford to sit back and engage with communities on their terms in a one-off transaction: rather, they have to commit themselves to ongoing relationships with people on their own terms and according to their own priorities. The question now becomes: how can museums get out there and assist *iwi* in realising their future cultural aspirations?

The issue of repatriation is always difficult (McCarthy 2011; 2014). However I don't think there is one model for everything, because some people say 'No we don't want *taonga* returned, but we want access and connection to them.' For some other *iwi*, yes, they do want them back. I'm reminded of the numerous debates we have had about this issue during the *iwi* exhibitions that we have at Te Papa—the six tribal exhibitions from 1998 to the present—where you get a tribe's view of their own ancestral *taonga*. When the current Tainui-Waikato exhibition opened with a dawn ceremony at four am in September 2011, we had about two and a half thousand Māori people there from that region. Interestingly, for that exhibition we loaned some *taonga* from the Reischek collection at the Natural History Museum in Vienna. Andreas Reischek, an Austrian, befriended Tawhiao the Māori King in the 1860s, and went through Te Rohe Potae (The King Country, literally the 'region of the hat'), taking away by stealth many

taonga including *kōiwi* and *tūpāpaku* (bones and corpses) (King 1981). In the course of co-producing this exhibition with Tainui they had requested that the museum loan these *taonga* for this occasion. We weren't quite sure how this would play out with the Austrian museums, but anyway we requested the loans and to our surprise they were agreed to. At the opening we heard the *kōrero* (talk) from the *rangatira* (leaders, chiefs) of Tainui-Waikato, and they all said 'thank you' to the Austrian ambassador who was there. Their words were: 'Thank you for sharing our history, our *taonga*.' 'It's been a long time', they said, 'and now the only thing we do ask is that we hope it's not going to be another 150 years until we see them again.' So, they made the plea. They were saying that they were aware of the history, but what they want to do today is set out on a new journey, renegotiate a new relationship for the future.

This was crucial, because some museums have Māori collections without having good relationships with the communities they come from. As Paora argues, meeting face to face, *kanohi ki te kanohi*, even in this digital age, breaks through the barriers and creates relationships, and then anything can happen. The thing that museum professionals have to remember is, these *taonga* are not just artefacts, they are living ancestors intimately connected to us, and not just to our past but our futures. That *whakapapa* is inter-generational and therefore our past is very much our future. So, if we can, why shouldn't we take the *taonga* out and let them move through the community again, revitalising those histories, kin relationships, links to land and so on? I can't see the point of letting these treasures be held in storerooms in museums without being on display or inaccessible to people. I'd like to see that at Te Papa, where they - the *taonga* - can have greater social agency, and can reconnect with their descendants. In my experience, great things happen as a result of that reconnection. *Kua mutu i konei āku kōrero. Kia ora* (I'll end my talk here, thanks).

### Questions and discussion:

**Dion Peita:** When you talk about repatriation and relationships with *iwi*, there are always complex questions not just about the willingness of institutions to co-operate when it comes to repatriation, but also conflicting views amongst Māori themselves, or ambiguous ownership of *taonga* or multiple *iwi* affiliations.

**Arapata:** Yes, these situations are not simple and negotiations can take a long time. I should explain that in the research project that I mentioned earlier, the database of *taonga* Māori, to date there's up to two hundred museums world-wide that hold well over eighty thousand *taonga*, that we know of anyway. That's quite significant. Unfortunately, I'd say that very few Māori have any idea they are there. Clearly, there's an issue there of information about the presence and location of *taonga*, which I really think should be mandatory for source communities. As I said earlier, Māori staff at Te Papa are involved with the Waitangi Tribunal hearings, and I would say that at all of them *iwi* have raised the question of *taonga* overseas. In terms of digital repatriation, it's absolutely fundamental that we support this desire for people to reconnect with their heritage, for the right reasons. There are thousands of cases like the one I told you about concerning Tainui *taonga* in Austria. Unfortunately because many of these *taonga* have no provenance, their histories are silent. Sometimes we've located their origins and traced their trajectories through collectors, exhibitions and so forth but you need intensive and on-going research, to try and find that genealogical link, the ties that bind objects back to people in the past and present. We should do this. We have to do this.

**Paul Tapsell:** *He pātai taku, e hoa* (I have a question, my friend). It relates to Rongowhākata. In regards to the aspirations of Rongowhākata, is it likely that the house *Te Hau ki Tūranga* will be physically returned to Gisborne and when?

**Arapata:** In September 2011, we signed the deed of settlement with Rongowhākata, which was the outcome of the Tribunal's report on the Tūranga claim. This was a very historic and emotional event which took place at Te Papa inside *Te Hau ki Tūranga*. And yes, the deed gives 2017 as the date the *whare* will be returned. So I will say that we are working actively and in good faith with Rongowhākata to see how we can assist them in this process. At the moment Rongowhākata are looking at 3D modelling. They have also signalled to us that not all the original carvings were acquired by the museum, so there may be some other original carvings held overseas—they have asked for our help with this. So we are assisting

by directing our knowledge, experience and resources towards realising their goals for the house, which may take the form of restoring the house within a tribal cultural centre, or some kind of relationship with the local museum. At this stage, from Te Papa's perspective is that we should do whatever we can to reconnect; and if it does mean repatriate, then so be it—though obviously that's a board decision. For some museum people, as soon as you mention 'repatriation' they get fearful, but I think there are real positives in it, because it is a way of building better relationships.

**Paul:** You know, I always worry about you getting branded as being Te Papa-ised because you are in this position of working for a Crown agency and yet being a tribal member at the same time. You can see more than one side of the situation, the Māori side and the museum professional, but that's a delicate balancing act, so maybe a publication or two on your retirement would be interesting, to see how you negotiated these different expectations?

**Arapata:** In reflecting on the long process with *Te Hau ki Tūranga* over 15 years or so, I have learned a lot. Te Papa has openly acknowledged that we don't own the house, it was taken by the Crown. Now it is Te Papa's responsibility to work through this, whatever it takes. Yes of course all this does get complicated as a Māori working in a government-funded museum, but I would say that for my colleagues, for the chief executive and the Board members at the time this was negotiated, we took the attitude that repatriation was not a loss, but the means to establish a valuable new relationship.

**Paul:** When I worked on the project concerning *Pūkākī*, the well-known carved gateway which was returned from the Auckland Museum to the Te Arawa people in 1995 (Tapsell 2000), I was outside the system. Then when I got the position of Tumuaki Māori (Māori Director) at Auckland Museum, I found at that time it was much harder to push these things through within the institution, because I hit a wall.

**Arapata:** Really I've never considered it a conflict of interest, to me it's open and its transparent, you just sign the COI statement. At times Te Papa doesn't agree, the board doesn't agree, but I think with the new vision, from now on that's what we can do. These thousands of treasures that we hold in New Zealand museums, let alone the ones overseas, we need to reconnect *iwi* to them, and what better way to assist, than by actively developing that process of building relationships. It's not a passive duty of care. If we can help our communities to develop their own cultural aspirations, then the Museum can only benefit from it, as it repositions the Museum in another sphere as an agent of the community.

### 'Māori collections at the The Alexander Turnbull Library'

#### Paul Diamond

Today I want to open with an newspaper account of a visit to Alexander Turnbull's house in the 1900s, which later became the Alexander Turnbull Library (part of the National Library Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa) where I work as Curator Māori. Turnbull lived in an elegant red brick Edwardian villa near parliament, which was crammed full with his massive collections of books, but also Māori artefacts and other ethnographic material. When this reporter visited, Turnbull's sister let him into a room so full of objects that a wooden frame had to be propped up to relieve pressure on the door. Miss Turnbull exclaimed with a long suffering sigh 'There it is Mr Mills, what a conglomeration!'

So, what is the situation with this collection today, and what are the connections with Māori people then and now? Well, in talking to our staff about our collections, what I have found is that it actually is a story of engagement with Māori communities and Māori experts right from the beginning. It's interesting to recognize that the work we're involved with now, with things like 'the letters of commitment' between the institutions and *iwi* that we're only really carrying on a tradition of engagement that's happened over the years in different forms.

When Paora Tapsell gave his presentation about 'Tawa,' or Gilbert Mair, the Pakeha government official who had this intimate relationship with Te Arawa in the nineteenth century (Tapsell 2006), you might remember an image of Tawa sitting there with *korowai* (feather cloaks) and other things, and a very beautiful Māori woman standing behind him. That woman was

Makereti, who was also known as Maggie Papakura, a famous guide who lived in Rotorua. I've done some work on her (Diamond 2007), which shows that she was actively involved in all sorts of collecting and display at this time. Remarkably, she also organized her own exhibition and performing arts troupe who travelled to Australia and England before the First World War. Eventually she settled in England, married into the landed gentry and undertook an MA in Anthropology at Oxford University.

Today I am going to talk to you about some other work that's happening at the Alexander Turnbull Library in relation to contemporary Māori issues that echo this history of Māori participation in museums and ethnography that we are talking about. I'm not the first Māori specialist at the Turnbull by any means, we've had several Māori specialists, going back to Sharon Dell in 1979, a Pakeha woman who was the first in such a position in libraries and archives. Before that of course there were Māori experts who helped in the founding of the collections, like Archdeacon Herbert Williams. As our Chief Librarian Chris Szekely, who is Māori, likes to point out, the Turnbull Library and the National Library legislation contain the words '*taonga*' (treasure) and '*Mātauranga Māori*' (Māori knowledge), so it is actually a part of our statutory brief to manage and care for these things as *taonga*, and recognise that they are repositories of *Mātauranga Māori*. But this is something that I have been challenged on by former Māori staff. One person asked me: 'Is Turnbull interested in these things as objects, or the knowledge that's in them? Because, if you're only interested in them for the knowledge, why can't we have the objects back?' So that's an interesting issue that I've had in my mind ever since, because...for us it's both, it's the knowledge *and* the objects.

One of the big ideas behind digitisation and the opportunity that it represents in libraries and archives is the chance to reconnect, whether people are in Paremata or Paris, or wherever they are, they can reconnect with material that relates to them. When I first arrived at the Turnbull, the Curator of Manuscripts said to me that one of the projects we are doing is digitizing Māori language material, and we want you to have a look at it all. So I started looking through the material and came across one of the notebooks belonging to Elsdon Best, the famous Dominion Museum ethnologist who wrote many books on Māori culture based on his fieldwork. In many cases, Best had a close relationship with his numerous Māori informants, who worked together to preserve and transmit their knowledge of customary practices for future generations (Holman 2010). What made me laugh was this note book that was kept by a man from Whanganui – Kerehoma Tuwhawhakia. It really stuck me, this little phrase I saw. It starts off with Elsdon Best or '*Te Pēhi*' as he was known to Māori, giving this notebook to this man to write down what he knew about Māori lore. Clearly there's a whole history of interaction and engagement here, and I guess there's a commercial element to it as well. At one point this man wrote:

E hoa, e Pehi, tēna koe me ō hoa Māori, Pakeha hoki. I taku whakaaro me mutu i konei aku kōrero kei hōhā koe i te kino o aku tuhituhi, tērā pea koe e kore e mārama i ētahi o aku tuhituhi. Ka mutu ēnei kōrero. Greetings to you and all your Māori and Pakeha friends. I think I should really stop here in case I annoy you with the errors of what I'm writing, perhaps you won't understand some of my writing. Let us stop this talk.

And he signs his name. But then...he keeps going! So obviously he changed his mind, and saw something useful in the correspondence with Best.

Another important collection that the library holds is the Atkinson Taranaki letters. It was a collection singled out by Sharon Dell as a significant collection. It comprises two hundred and fifty two letters between Māori people, written in Māori, which were taken from two pā, two villages that were destroyed during the land wars of the 1860s. One of the people who was involved with the destruction of those villages was Arthur Samuel Atkinson, who was a part of two very famous, interconnected families - the Atkinsons and the Richmonds - that played a leading role in politics and pastoralism in the early 'settlement' history of New Zealand. We have big holdings of these family papers, because they all married each other, and knew each other, and were interconnected; they were also great diarists, correspondents and recorders of their history. So these Māori letters were scrutinised for intelligence, to find out what these Māori in Taranaki are up to, where of course there was conflict between settlers and local tribes.



Atkinson was given the letters, and because he was a philologist, and very keen on the study of languages, he translated them and published them in a newspaper as Māori literature: it is quite interesting that he framed them in that context.

These letters date from the 1840s to the 1860s. Atkinson used them to study the Māori language, which feeds into the work of the Williams Māori dictionary, which was then being revised. Then they become part of the records of the Polynesian Society (founded in 1892), and finally the Turnbull library got them in 1961. At that point they got pulled out of that collection, and made part of the Atkinson collection. This caused a lot of confusion with people today. When we went up to New Plymouth in Taranaki to give a presentation on the collection, Māori in the audience thought they were Atkinson's letters - they didn't realise they were letters written *in* Māori, *by* Māori ancestors from Taranaki, and also people like the Māori King Tāwhiao as well. Well, after we got a growling from some *iwi* members who were also archivists, it occurred to us that as part of the process of digitising this material we should take the collection to the areas they were from before releasing them on the internet. That's another good lesson when you work in these places, that provenance is the big thing, you've got to really come to terms with all the dimensions of provenance. These manuscripts have had a confusing provenance really, which has been hidden. When I have explained to my colleagues what this means in Māori terms, I've said 'Imagine someone has ransacked your house, and stolen all the stuff from your office!' That's essentially what it was. The original owners of these letters would have written and received them, so what we've done is take them up to Taranaki and reconnect with the descendants of those people, so it's a circular thing...

Through this project, we've initiated a process of engagement and the community are extremely excited. Organizations like Te Reo o Taranaki, the Māori language revival group in New Plymouth, are excited about the potential of creating a thesaurus of words and using them. As you can imagine there are huge arguments about the history, that if it hadn't been for the destruction of those two villages, who knows whether these would have survived? Because they are very rare, there are very few collections like these in any other archives in the country. Most letters in Māori are from Māori to the Crown, Māori to the Government, the Government to Māori, not Māori writing to other Māori.

Arapata talked today about Te Papa's work in engaging with tribal cultural heritage projects as part of the Treaty settlement process. I've come to this more recently than Arapata, but the National Library also has letters of commitment. It's really amazing, that there is such diversity among *iwi*, such different approaches, every time you sit down to negotiate with them. Colleagues in the library sector are saying, 'Well you're lucky at the Turnbull, because your organization is being *forced* to engage with *iwi*, with what these things actually mean'. I think we *are* really lucky because these are not problems but opportunities for engagement. As my boss says, these negotiations via the claims process of the Waitangi Tribunal are not the *only* way we engage with *iwi*, but they are a major prompt. We have fifteen on the go at the moment, but in terms of our capacity to respond, we are a bit anxious about that. But overall I believe that responding to *iwi* is going to change our practices, and it's going to change to our benefit, to create more possibilities for all *iwi* that engage with the Alexander Turnbull Library.

I was really stuck by something that Hami Piripi (Chair of Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa, the tribal authority for the Te Rarawa tribe) said in a speech at the Museums Aotearoa conference in April 2012. He was talking about Te Ahu, which is the new combined information centre/library/museum/community centre in Kaitiāia in the far north (Te Ahu 2013). After the centre was opened, he said that their next focus is the archives, because they rely on the archives to educate our young people about who they are. I found that really surprising, because you sit in these institutions and we say we need to go out to *iwi* and find out what all this means. But it has to be a collaborative process because, as some *iwi* acknowledge, there are a fifth of us living overseas, and anyway the knowledge may not actually be in the the *wa kainga* (tribal homelands) anymore. It was interesting that he was looking to us to provide the resources, and that is what has happened, so Te Rarawa and the Turnbull are both learning from each other. Wayne Ngata from Te Aitanga a Hauiti, who was going to be with us today, was the first person I heard talking about digital repatriation. He told me recently that he is now talking about 'digital reciprocity'. I can see why—it is a reciprocal sort of thing, and these Atkinson letters are a clear example of that.

At the Alexander Turnbull Library we've also got a couple of collections that are interesting because they are controlled by families. One of them is the 'Ngata' papers, which relate to Āpirana Ngata who was the person who was mentioned all through the papers today; and the other is the Te Whāiti collection which is connected with the family who was headed by the man Iraia Te Whāiti in the Wairarapa. In this collection, the manuscripts have become more accessible and open, but the photos currently are not, so we're working on a process with the family, to talk that through. An earlier Māori specialist, Tipene Chrisp, brought that collection into the library. There is only one person in the *whānau* (family) who is of the generation who can remember all these people in the photos from the early nineteen hundreds. Our idea was to go into the rest home with all these copies, the daughters would interview her, I'd go in with my oral-history gear, and that material would then go into our arrangement and description system, and then into the catalogue of information about the material. I'm just trying that out now as a way of collaborating with the *iwi* to get the history associated with the collections recorded.

Those two collections are on permanent loan to the Turnbull, but you can't access them without family permission. In my experience that only works if you have a good on-going experience with the family representatives. I've got colleagues in institutions around the country where the trustees have died and the collections are in complete limbo; so no one knows what to do with them, and researchers can't even know about the existence of them, let alone access them. But if things are working well and you've got this on-going relationship, and you're in touch with the trustees and they have a succession programme, it can really work well.

These issues of ownership and access, whether its archives or museums, are related to the contentious issue of intellectual property. Of course at the moment we in New Zealand cultural heritage institutions are all thinking about how to respond to WAI262, the so called flora and fauna claim to the Waitangi Tribunal. I don't think this has come up at all today in the *kōrero* (talk), but this is the claim on intellectual indigenous knowledge, with the Tribunal's findings summarised in the report 'Ko Aotearoa Tēnei' (2013). What strikes me is that, being at the Turnbull, its recommendations about partnership and co-management are not new. WAI262 says that on the one hand museums and institutions have a right to collect, but on the other hand there are *iwi* and Māori groups who have an interest in those collections - so it's about interests of guardians and of institutions, and balancing those two things.

Just to show that these ideas are not at all new, I want to share with you something sent to me by Dame Joan Metge, a well-known anthropologist, who has been a mentor of mine in a quiet way since the time I was working a broadcaster and journalist. This is a talk by Jonathon Dennis, head of the New Zealand Film Archive that he gave in Ottawa, Canada, in 1990 called 'Uncovering and releasing images'. It talks about the McDonald films, a remarkable series of short movies of Māori people in Whanganui, Rotorua and the East Coast taken by James MacDonald on the Dominion Museum ethnological expeditions 1919-23. In the 1980s Jonathon was very involved in the restoration and re-screening of these films, a process which involved the communities whose ancestors were captured on film. His words speak to me of the sort of journey we are embarking on at the Turnbull, along with other institutions like us, but really it's just a continuation of a journey that began a long time ago. This is how Jonathon put it in 1990:

For me personally this has been a deciding how to let go, firstly of other peoples' documented cultures. Initially this involved learning to regard these images not merely as ethnographic documents, but as living objects with their own *wairua* or spiritual energy and *mana* [reputation, power, authority]. How many times for instance have I watched Robert Flaherty's *Moana* [documentary film 1926] silently, respectfully, loving its beauty, that I am unconscious of its life. Then to see when we took it back to Samoa, where ironically it's been seen less than almost anywhere else, how the audiences loved it too, but laughed till they fell off their seats, and pointed and talked and engaged in complete communication with it. *Moana* ceased to be a film taken by Flaherty, but one he received from the Samoans.

For James MacDonald it is the same [Macdonald's films of Māori 1919-23]. Returning had by now come to mean for me not just the physical taking back

of the images to show in their appropriate context, but returning the dignity to the material, with the releasing of the power I was still maintaining over them. At the Film Archive I was so used to being one of the few people who really cared about saving this material, and with the best will in the world I was assuming that I knew I could do it all better, quicker, and easier. I have rarely felt so exposed as I did when returning or working with the Māori treasures in the archives collections, the generosity of my reception at places around the country never eased the vulnerability or the hurts and rejection that seemed to be part of the painful process of disempowering themselves. Without blueprints, the process of finding and providing some kind of adequate framework to empower others, is immensely slow and difficult, and the pressure relentless. But it can also be, if it is not abused, a time of real awakening.

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