Ka Mahuta, Ngāti Hauā and the importance of translation theory

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Abstract

In this paper, I provide an English translation of one Māori waiata - *Ka Mahuta* – a waiata of Ngāti Hauā, along with a discussion of the relevance of translation theory and of culturally appropriate translation processes that fully involve those whose guidance, support, knowledge and understanding are of critical importance.

Introduction

This paper reports on part of a research project that originated from a wānanga held on the 18th of February 2003 at Kai-o-te-Mata Marae in Morrinsville and involving Te Hauora o Ngāti Hauā and the Ngāti Hauā Kaumātua Advisory Panel. The aim of that wānanga was to establish a process which could guide and inform the translation into English of a corpus of seventeen Māori waiata, eight of which were recorded by the Te Hauora o Ngāti Hauā organisation and the Ngāti Hauā Kaumātua Advisory Panel, seven having been reclaimed by Ngāti Hauā from the archives of the Anthropology Department of the University of Auckland. I was, in consultation with the Ngāti Hauā Kaumātua Advisory Panel, given the task of translating some of these waiata. In the event, I also attempted to classify the waiata into types on the basis of a range of typological frameworks as well as examining their overall structure. However, this paper focuses on translation only, and provides only one example – the translation of the waiata entitled *Ka Mahuta* which was among those reclaimed from the University of Auckland. The primary aim here is to indicate why, in undertaking a task of this kind, it is important to pay careful attention both to translation theory and to the actual process of producing a translation. Other aspects of the research project are the subject of a paper that will appear in the next issue of this journal.

Rationale for the research

Waiata are deeply embedded in Māori culture and have great spiritual significance. They are used, for example, to bring people into the world, to farewell people from this world, to pass on knowledge, to overcome adversity and to honour triumphs. Furthermore, Waiata Māori contain a wealth of information about Māori society and culture, including spiritual beliefs and values. However, that wealth of information cannot always now be fully appreciated because the interpretation of waiata from the past involves a level of understanding of language, culture and history that some contemporary Māori currently lack. Thus, Ngāti Hauā determined that the seventeen waiata making up the corpus referred to above should be analysed and translated into English so that the knowledge embedded within them could be made more widely available. In making this decision, Ngāti Hauā elders fully appreciated that the analyses and translations would require research in a number of areas, research that would necessarily encompass the symbolic as well as the literal, the artistic as well as the prosaic, the spiritual as well as the practical. Maintaining records of that research would be of assistance not only to the people of Ngāti Hauā themselves, but also to other hapū and iwi, as well as to other indigenous people who wished to undertake similar tasks.

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The importance of translation theory

Translation theory is a vast and complex area which encompasses the study of language, culture, science, the arts, law, religion and spirituality, and, indeed, almost every area of human life and endeavour. My aim here is to examine some relevant publications dealing with translation theory, focusing on their significance in relation to the translation into English of Waiata Māori. This section is divided into four parts. The first of these looks critically at some of the ways in which translation theorists have defined the term 'translation'. In the second part, the focus moves to the process of translation itself, to different types of translation, and to the implications of text-type for approaches to translation. The third part focuses on what is involved in the translation of literary and artistic works. Finally, there is a discussion of issues of particular relevance to the translation of waiata.

What is Translation?

Although translation always involves, in some sense, an attempt to "cross boundaries and enter into new territory" (Bassnett, 1997, p. 11), the word 'translation' has different meanings in different contexts. Even so, many definitions of the word 'translation' are, at first sight, very similar. According to Zaky (2000, ¶1), translation is "an activity that aims at conveying meaning or meanings of a given linguistic discourse from one language to another…". For Houbert (1998, ¶1) translation is a "process whereby a message expressed in a specific source language is linguistically transformed in order to be understood by readers of the target language". Equally, Newmark (1995) defines translation as the "transfer of the meaning of a text . . . from one language to another for a new readership" (p. 5). For Benjamin (2000), the purpose of translation is that of "expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages" (p. 17).

The definitions above, along with Benjamin's statement of purpose, are broad ones, which suggest an underlying assumption that it is possible to convey the same (or similar) meanings in two different languages. Whereas this may be the case where simple, transactional communication is involved, it is highly questionable in the case of culturally-specific and/or artistic texts. In fact, Newmark (1996, p. 5) partially acknowledges this in stating that his definition of translation does not take account of factors such as the context of the source text and the actual processes involved in the task of translation.

With reference to her study of the translation of an Irish epic (*Tain Bo Cuilinge*), Tymoczko (1983) notes that translation was "necessary if the material was to be made available, particularly outside Ireland" and that "even within Ireland by the middle of the nineteenth century much of the population spoke English and was cut off linguistically from native cultural heritage" (p. 7). Although translation is often necessary, and can assist in making culturally significant material more widely available, it is important, in undertaking the task of translating culturally significant works of art, to pay careful attention to issues that have emerged out of studies of the translation process. As Even-Zohar and Toury (1981, ¶3) observe, "the investigation of translation has turned out to be extremely fruitful for a far better, and more adequate understanding of the processes involved in interference between cultural systems…". For them, "the ultimate goal of translation is to detect the laws governing (the processes and procedures involved with) translation" (¶11).

Any attempt to provide an English translation of a Māori waiata must be based on a careful consideration of the processes involved and must fully acknowledge the complex issues associated with the translation process. At the very heart of the process is the question of 'translatability', a term that cannot be employed with equal validity to all text-types. Benjamin (2000, p. 16) defines 'translatability' as "an essential quality of *certain works*" (emphasis mine) which allows "a specific significance inherent in the original [to manifest] itself" in translation.

Translation, then, involves a complex process whose purpose is to attempt to cross linguistic, cultural and, often, historical boundaries in such a way as to open up the meanings and significances of texts written in one language to audiences who are not well positioned to fully appreciate the original and therefore require some form of representation of that original text in another language. Translation can never be an adequate substitute for the original text. It can, however, serve a useful function so long as its limitations are borne in mind and so long as the purpose the translation is intended to serve is clearly understood and that purpose is reflected in the processes undertaken and in the final outcome.

Translation theory and the task of the translator

Translation theory has evolved from being a study wholly located within the discipline of linguistics to a study in its own right. It involves a consideration of lexis, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociology, culture, history, law, politics, religion and spirituality, and, indeed, all aspects of language and most aspects of human life and endeavour.

According to Rosslyn (1997), the focus of the translator has shifted from an attempt to recreate greatness (to "reproduce the greatness of his [sic] original, by whatever means" p. 41), to an attempt to secure as high a degree of accuracy and faithfulness to the source text as possible. There is now "[a] preference for 'natural' sounding translation, and the presumption is that 'accuracy' is the essence of the translator's task" (Rosslyn, 1997, p. 41).

Bassnett, in an article entitled 'Intricate Pathways' describes the translator as a mediator between different worlds, and different moments in time (pp. 1-2). Thus, although accuracy is an essential part of translation, it is important to note that the "exact reproduction [of a text] is impossible since the worlds in which the original text and its translation are produced are inevitably different worlds" (Bassnett, 1997, p. 2). Therefore, according to Bassnett, the essential task of the translator is to find a medium in which the translation can exist between both worlds (p. 2). For Eugene Nida (2000), the primary purpose of the translator may be to provide information as to both content and form. Thus, although the main focus may be on accuracy and faithfulness to the original, this, for Nida, can involve much more than the attempt to provide information:

> A translator's purpose may involve much more than information. He [sic] may, for example, want to suggest a particular type of behaviour by means of a translation. Under such circumstances he is likely to aim at full intelligibility, and to make certain minor adjustments in detail so that the reader may understand the full implications of the message for his own circumstances (Nida, 2000, p. 128).

Therefore, according to Nida, part of the purpose of translation may be to "elicit an emotional response of pleasure from the reader or listener" at the same time as ensuring that "the message [is] clear so that there is no possibility of misinterpretation" (p. 128). This, according to Nida (p. 134), involves four basic requirements:

- making sense;
- conveying the spirit and manner of the original;
- having a natural and easy form of expression; and
- producing a similar response.

This is by no means a simple or straightforward task. There will inevitably be occasions when there is a conflict between the requirements of form and those of content. On such occasions, "translators are [in general] agreed that, when there is no happy compromise, meaning must have priority over style" (Nida, 2000, p. 134). Even so, this raises issues relating to the question of whether it is ever possible to translate an artistic work in such a way as to capture the creative essence of the original, an issue that is particularly relevant where the target languages are very different (belonging, for example, to different language families, as in the case of English and Māori), and artistic forms are embedded in wholly different cultural practices. Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising to find that Houbert views the task of a translator as "often [involving] a great deal of creativity, as well as a wide range of communication skills" (1998, ¶9). Nevertheless, he observes that "a full understanding of the source text and accurate rendering in the target language usually prove enough to give the client [target audience] satisfaction and make the task of the translator an intellectually gratifying one" (¶11). In relation to the issue of creativity, he introduces a cautionary note: "As with all other communication skills, creativity is best appreciated and yields the best result when used appropriately" (¶11). What may be considered appropriate in one context, may not be considered appropriate in another. So far as the translation of Māori waiata into English is concerned, the danger in seeking to produce a text that is artistically satisfying in English is that it may be falsely assumed that what constitutes artistic creativity is the same in both languages.

According to Houbert, the task of the translator is to communicate the message to the target audience's satisfaction, whilst remaining faithful to the source text. A critical issue is whether the target audience will be satisfied with a translation that is as faithful to the original as possible without attempting to be artistically effective in its own right. This, in turn, raises a further issue: If the translated text is not artistically satisfying in its own right, will readers assume that the source text lacks artistic qualities? This raises, once again, the importance of clearly specifying the purpose of translation at the outset. It also suggests the need to ensure that readers of the translation are fully informed of the purpose of that translation and of the constraints imposed on the translator in seeking to comply with the guiding statement of purpose.

The attempt to remain faithful to the original text does not necessarily, according to Zaky (2000), involve the translation of meanings in any direct way. Rather, it may involve determining the values of utterances in context (i.e. their functions) and then seeking to find a way of expressing these functions in the target language. Thus,

instead of, for example, translating the exact form of a greeting, a warning, or a compliment, a translator may seek a way of expressing these functions that is appropriate within the context of the target language:

> [The] translator ought to translate the communicative function of the source language text, rather than its signification. A translator must therefore, look for a target language utterance that has an equivalent communicative function, regardless of its formal resemblance to [the] original utterance as far as the formal structure is concerned. In other words, translation should operate or take place on the level of language use, more than usage. It has to be carried out in the way the given linguistic system is used for actual communication purposes, not on the level of the referential meaning or the formal sentence structure. Conveying [the] textual effect of the original is the final objective to which a translator aspires, a text is a whole entity, to be translated as a whole (Zaky, 2000, ¶6).

There is here, so far as the translation of Māori waiata is concerned, a potential problem. If the function of the translation is to communicate as much as possible of the original text in order to make readers as aware as possible of the history and culture reflected in that text, it may be unwise to depart too far, or, indeed, at all, from the signification in the search for a way of communicating the textual functions appropriately in the target language. After all, the precise form in which a function is communicated (e.g. reference to the moon in a greeting) may have embedded within it important cultural information.

According to Piotr Kuhiwczak, there are two possibilities: 'domestication' and 'rule breaking':

> Translation theorists would say that in order to gain real standing a foreign text must be either entirely 'domesticated' – i.e. must create the impression that it is not a translation but written in the original language – or break the literary rules of the receiving culture [target culture] to such an extent that it acquires the status of an artistic innovation (1997, p. 83).

So far as the translation of the waiata considered here is concerned, 'domestication' is not an option. The translations are not intended to gain standing within the context of English culture. The alternative, that is, breaking the literary rules of the receiving culture where necessary in order to preserve authenticity, will be considered acceptable, even where such rule breaking does not result in the translation acquiring the status of an artistic innovation.

So far as this particular translation task is concerned, the function of the translator is certainly, in one sense, to mediate between different worlds and to communicate information and meaning. In so far as the intention is to elicit an emotional response, that response is more likely to be derived from an understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the original text than from the artistic merit of the translation as a work in its own right. The aim is not to create a 'domesticated' English text, a text in English that creates the impression that it is not a translation. Nor is it necessarily to seek to produce a text that will be seen as an artistic creation in its own right. Rather, it is to be as faithful as possible to the source text. If this should result

in a text in English that is satisfying as an innovative creative work, this will be a bonus. It is not something that is seen as a necessary aim.

Approaches to translation and types of translation

Theo Herman, in the context of a study of the European renaissance in the sixteenth century, examines two main approaches to translation: 'Literalism' and 'Humanism'. He describes Literalism in the following terms:

> [Literalism is] a form of literal or word for word translation. Literalism constitutes the law of translation . . . [and] more than any other form of interlingual processing, embodies the dream of translatability as an exact matching of component parts without loss, excess or deviation (Herman, 1997, p. 14).

He describes Humanism in translation as a "tradition [which] brings rhetorical standards as well as grammatical considerations into play" (p. 15). In examining the two types of translation, he makes the following observation:

> The validity of the literalist idea is never uncontested and becomes increasingly marginal, an ideology in retreat. . . . the humanist-inspired translators and the literalist idea concerns of the more traditional translators are focused on exactly what constitutes the translator's duty, however, the explanation of this cluster of key terms together with their reverberations back and forth in time seems likely to take us to the heart of those debates. Insofar as literalism is associated with the 'law' of translation and the duty of the translator, it provides a privileged way into these discussions (Herman 1997, p. 38).

Nida, in his study of translation equivalence, refers to two types of translation - 'formal' and 'dynamic' - which can be related directly to Literalism (i.e. formal), and Humanism (i.e. dynamic). The formal approach seeks 'formal equivalence':

> Formal equivalence focuses on the message itself, in both form and content. In such translation one is concerned with such correspondence as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept. Viewed from this formal orientation, one is concerned that the message in the receptor language [target language] should match as closely as possible to the different elements in the source language (Nida, 2000, p. 129).

According to Nida, the formal approach to translation is one involving what he refers to as 'gloss translation':

> Gloss translation [involves an attempt] to reproduce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original. . . . Their [the target audience] needs call for a relatively close approximation to the structure of the . . . text both as to form (syntax and idioms) and content (themes and concepts). Such a translation would require numerous footnotes in order to make the text fully comprehensible. A gloss translation of this type is designed to permit the reader to identify himself as fully as possible with a

> person in the source-language context, and to understand as much as he can of the customs, manner of thought and means of expression (Nida, 2000, p. 129).

Translation oriented towards formal equivalence is "basically source-oriented':

> [It] is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message. In doing so, an F-E [Formal Equivalence] translation attempts to reproduce several formal elements, including: (1) grammatical units, (2) consistency in word usage, and (3) meanings in terms of the source context. The reproduction of grammatical units may consist in: (a) translating nouns by nouns, verbs by verbs . . . , (b) keeping all phrases and all formal indicators, e.g. marks of punctuation, paragraph breaks, and poetic indentation (Nida, 2000, p. 134)

In discussing what he refers to as 'dynamic equivalence', Nida makes the following comment:

> [Dynamic equivalence is] not concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source-language message, but with the dynamic relationship, that [is], the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message. A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete 'naturalness' of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his own culture; it does not insist that he understands the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message (2000, p. 129).

A typical form of dynamic equivalence is what Nida refers to as 'natural translation':

> [Natural translation] involves two principle areas of adaptation, namely, grammar and lexicon. In general the grammatical modification can be made the more readily, since many grammatical changes are dictated by the obligatory structures of the receptor language . . . shifting word order, using verbs in place of nouns, and substituting nouns for pronouns. The lexicon structure of the source message is less readily adjusted to the semantic requirements of the receptor language, for instead of obvious rules to be followed, there are numerous alternative possibilities. There are in general three lexical levels to be considered: (1) terms for which there are readily available parallels, . . . (2) terms which identify culturally different objects, but with somewhat similar functions . . . (3) terms which identify cultural specialities (Nida, 2000, pp. 136-137).

Thus, a dynamic equivalence translation directs attention more towards the target text (the translation) than towards the source text:

> [In the case of dynamic equivalence translation] the focus of attention is directed, not so much toward the source message, as towards the receptor response. A dynamic equivalence . . . translation may be described as one concerning which a bilingual and bicultural person can justifiably say, "That is just the way we would say it." It is important to realise, however, that D-E

> [Dynamic Equivalence] translation is not merely another message, which is more or less similar to that of the source. It is a translation, and as such must clearly reflect the meaning and intent of the source. One way of defining a D-E translation is to describe it as the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message. This type of definition contains three essential terms: (1) equivalent, . . ., (2) natural . . . (3) closest . . . (Nida, 2000, p.136).

Although the translation engaged in on this occasion aimed to be source-oriented (i.e. Literalist or formal rather than Humanistic or dynamic), it could not aim for formal equivalence on a syntactic level because of the very different structural nature of the two languages involved. Nevertheless, one aim was to preserve as much as possible of the original even where that might result in some degree of unnaturalness in the translation. Where it was felt that the requirements of the target language resulted in some obscuring of the sense of the original, a decision was made that the translated text would be glossed.

Translation and text-type

Newmark (1996, p.6) initially recognises three main types of text involved in translation: 'non-literary', 'literary', and 'poetic'. He sees the translation of *non-literary texts* as involving reality, facts, and objects. Literary texts "are concerned with the world of the imagination and are centred in human beings, sometimes reflected in their physical characteristics and their natural and climatic backgrounds" (p. 13). Their translation, according to Newmark, needs to take account of fiction, fantasy, multiple recursive and connotative meaning and society and individuals (p. 6). Finally, poetic text "calls on all the resources of language, and in parallel, these become the factors that the translator has to weigh up and prioritise differently for each poem, depending on its nature and function" (p. 13). The translation of *poetic texts* "makes use of all the formal resources of language (metaphor, denotation and connotation; metre or rhythm, rhyme, repetition, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia), where the tone of the human voice is the essence of the meaning" (p. 6).

In spite of these differences, Newmark argues that "[ideally], all should be closely translated . . . since in principle, non-literary translation can grasp more of the meaning of the original than literary translation, and literary certainly more than poetic translation" (p. 7).

Non-literary texts are divided by Newmark into four different categories: 'cultural texts', information texts', 'social texts', and 'legal texts'. In the case of cultural texts, he believes that "since a particular language group is being targeted, source language cultural expression and styles (now discourse) [should be] replaced by equivalent receptor language expressions and styles" (p. 9). Since an information text focuses on facts, "the purpose of the languages is to clarify them and make them agreeable to the readership"(p. 10). Social texts "require, as their aim, a full denotative translation, where all elements of meaning in the original are captured, but the connotative . . . factor is avoided, unless the text is designed to be suggestive and creative rather than straightforward and critical" (p. 11). Legal and official texts "are the tightest univocal and monosemous denotative texts, to such an extent, that the sense of their terms frequently has to be defined therein" (p. 12).

Neither the categories and sub-categories recognised by Newmark, nor the prescriptions he provides for translators in relation to these categories and sub-categories is particularly helpful in the case of the translation of Māori waiata into English. These waiata involve aspects of the literary, the non-literary and the poetic, as well as cultural, social and informative aspects. Therefore, the only advice that Newmark provides that has direct relevance in this context relates to the need for what he refers to as 'close translation'.

In considering the target audience of translations, Nida (2000) recognises four levels of what he refers to as 'decoding ability'. Two of these are of particular interest here. These are: "the capacity of the average literate adult, who can handle both oral and written messages with relative ease"; and "the unusually high capacity of specialists when . . . they are decoding messages within their own area of specialisation" (p. 128). In translating five waiata, my primary aim was to cater for a literate adult audience. However, because the translation of these waiata involved historical and cultural considerations, some of which required, for their full appreciation, a high level of historical and cultural awareness, comments that accompany the translations would be designed to accommodate the interests and concerns of those who are more deeply immersed in the cultural, historical and linguistic background out of which these waiata emerge than the majority of readers are likely to be. This has the added advantage of providing a resource for those who wish to develop their cultural, historical and linguistic awareness.

Translating literary and artistic texts

Jacob describes the translator as someone "who has to analyse and grasp the thought that lies behind words before attempting to clothe that thought in a different language, using what he [sic] considers to be the most appropriate form of language" (Jacob, 2002, ¶21). He argues that:

> The [translator] should go beyond the words he finds on paper and make every attempt to understand the thought that gave rise to the words . . . try to understand the realities evoked by and found behind the words. In order to carry out his mission adequately, the translator also has to adapt the message to the target audience and use only what he considers to be the most appropriate solution in any given situation, the ultimate aim being to communicate as effectively as possible" (¶24).

In the case of literary and artistic texts, Xiaoshu and Dongming (2003) define the aim of translation in the following terms:

> Literary translation [aims] to reproduce the original artistic images in another language, so that the reader of the translation may be inspired, moved and aesthetically entertained in the same way as the native reader is by the original. . . . Such a translation is not purely a technical change in language, but it requires that the translator duplicate the author's process of artistic creation, grasp the spirit of the original, find the most appropriate expression of his own thought, feeling and experience, and reproduce fully and correctly the content and form from the original in a literary language comparable to the original style (¶6-7)

In relation to the particular translation exercise involved here, it was thought that attempting to reproduce the content fully and correctly could prove to be inconsistent with a search for a form of expression that would evoke a similar aesthetic response to that evoked by the source text. In fact, the aesthetic factors involved in the appreciation of Māori waiata are essentially different from those involved in the appreciation of an English song or poem, even where that song or poem is written for similar purposes (such as, for example, commemorative purposes). For this reason, no attempt was made in the translation of these waiata to create an English text that is aesthetically satisfying in its own right. Before such an exercise could be attempted, if, in fact, it is something that is useful to attempt, a more comprehensive account of the aesthetics of Māori waiata than is currently available would be required. A useful starting point here is a work by Steven August (2001) which provides a literary and linguistic critique of a Māori lullaby.

Xiaoshu and Dongming (2003, ¶18) observe that the translation of literary and artistic works is "not only a science with its own peculiar laws and methods, but also an art – an art of reproduction and re-creation". They note, however, that in the art of reproducing and creating, translators must remain faithful to the source language and culture so that a "resemblance in spirit may be achieved" (¶14). Thus, from their perspective the task of the translator is to approach the translation of literary and artistic works from two different points of view, one being a literary or macroscopic point of view, the other a linguistic or microscopic point of view. When approaching translation from a literary or macroscopic point of view, the translator must "turn his [sic] translation into a work of art which is in conformity with the thought, feelings and style of the original . . . [in order that] the translation . . . [is] as moving and vivid as the original work and the reader may be aesthetically entertained" (Xiaoshu & Dongming, 2003, ¶11). When approaching translation from a linguistic or microscopic point of view "the paragraphs, sentences and words should be attentively studied so that the best expressions may be chosen to satisfy the needs of reproducing the thought, feelings, and style of the original" (¶12). In addition, according to Karamanian (2001, ¶9) " [the] process should be focused not merely on language transfer but also . . . on cultural transposition". She adds that "[as] an inevitable consequence . . . translators must be both bilingual and bicultural, if not indeed multicultural"(¶9).

It is certainly true that a translator of a literary or artistic work from Māori into English needs to be bicultural. This is, however, equally true in the case of any translation from Māori to English or English to Māori. In all cases, the cultural context of the source text will be of critical importance. However, it is not necessarily the case that the translation of a text which has literary or aesthetic qualities should seek to reproduce these qualities, or should seek to evoke an aesthetic response. Certainly, there will be circumstances in which this is one of the aims of the translation. In this case, however, the primary aim of the translation was to make available to readers who would not otherwise have access to it, information about the meanings encoded in the source texts (along with associated cultural and historical information in the form of a textual glossary).

The translation of literary and artistic source texts requires an understanding of the source culture as well as the target culture. According to James (2002):

> The cultural implications for translation may take several forms ranging from lexical content and syntax, to ideologies and ways of life in a given culture. The translator also has to decide on the importance given to certain cultural aspects and to what extent it is necessary or desirable to translate them into the TL [target language]. The aims of the ST [source text] will also have implications for the translation as well as the intended readership for both the ST and the target text"(¶2).

As Karamanian (2001) observes:

> We are not just dealing with words written in a certain time, space and socio-political situation; most importantly it is the "cultural" aspect of the text that we should take into account. The process of transfer . . . across cultures, should consequently allocate corresponding attributes . . . [to] the target culture to ensure credibility in the eyes of the target reader" (¶3).

Thriveni (2002, ¶5) states that "One of the main goals of literary translation is to initiate the target-language reader into the sensibilities of the source-language culture". Thriveni explores the act of transferring messages across cultural boundaries, arguing that "[cultural] transfer . . . is concerned with the author's relationship to his [sic] subject matter and with the author's relationship to his [sic] reader" so that "[the] translator has to transmit this special cultural quality from one language to another" (¶19). He advises translators to "look for equivalents in terms of relevance in the target language and exercise discretion by substituting rather than translating certain elements in a work"(¶22). It may be, however, that any attempt to use translation as a way of initiating readers "into the *sensibilities* of the source language culture" (¶ 5) (emphasis mine), or to discover the type of equivalents to which Thriveni refers is misguided. As Karamanian (2001, ¶5) observes, "culture expresses its idiosyncrasies in a way that is 'culture-bound': [involving] cultural words, proverbs and of course idiomatic expressions, whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned". Thus:

> [When] considering the nature of the text and the similarities between the ideal ST [source text] and TT [target text] reader, an important aspect is to determine how much missing background information should be provided by the translator . . . It has been recognised that in order to preserve specific cultural references certain additions need to be brought to the TT. This implies that formal equivalence should not be sought, as this is not justified when considering the expectations of the ideal TT reader. At the other end of Nida's scale, complete dynamic equivalence does not seem totally desirable either as cultural elements have been kept in order to preserve the original aim of the text (James, 2002, ¶39).

Where culturally-specific references are retained in the target text, understanding of these references may require background information that some readers lack. It may, in fact, be preferable to provide the necessary background information in the form of notes accompanying the translation rather than to attempt somehow to include them in the translated text itself.

In summary, it is not enough to thoroughly understand the lexis, vocabulary and grammar of a source text that is literary or artistic in nature in order to provide an adequate translation of it. Rather, a translator must be familiar with both the source culture and the target culture and must make decisions about (a) the extent to which it is desirable to attempt to produce a target text that is aesthetically satisfying, and (b) the extent to which necessary background information relating to cultural specifics of the source text should be incorporated into the target text itself. In seeking to make decisions of this kind, the translator must make reference to the primary purpose of the translation. In this case, since the primary purpose of the translation is to provide readers with an understanding of the meanings that the target audience of the source texts would have been likely to derive from these texts, the translations aim to be as close as possible to the originals and to include explanatory notes which function to provide relevant historical and cultural information and to highlight areas where there may be uncertainty as to the most appropriate way to translate particular textual segments.

Language and Style

In the creation of texts which have an aesthetic as well as a cultural and emotive function, the choice of language and style are of very real significance. From this perspective, as Xiaoshu and Dongming (2003, ¶22) observe, it is not only the semantic aspect, which "involves the global sense of the utterance" that must be considered, but also the selection of words and structures. The translator needs to attend not only to the denotative meanings of words (what they refer to), but also their connotative meanings (what types of response they evoke in readers by virtue of their associations). As Jacob (2002, ¶22), notes:

> [Each] word has particular connotations in a language and . . . the translator has to decide whether or not to translate such connotations. This choice cannot be made by the mechanical devices that are used to 'translate'. They can only be made by human beings, based on their knowledge of both the subject matter dealt with in the source text and the target audience.

Thus, the translator needs to consider not only which words in the target text will best represent the meanings of those in the source text, but also which words will not only convey these meanings, but also convey the values or associations with which the words in the source text are imbued. In doing so, the translator will be concerned with one aspect of the style of a text. There are, however, other aspects of style, such as, for example, rhythm, metre, and syntactic parallelism, that may resist the best efforts of a translator. Even so, Xiaoshu and Dongming (2003, ¶1) argue that "style is the essential characteristic of every piece of writing" and that "a translation should reflect the style of the original" (¶4).

In critiquing Fowlie's translation of Rimbaud's poetry from French into English, Walker (1998, ¶1) notes that although Fowlie was successful in preserving the meaning of the original, its sound was lost entirely. This raises an issue of some significance:

> If there is no means of retaining the lyrical flow and essence of a language – characteristics so important to poetry – how then, does the translator possibly impart the poet's intent into the translation? One method – though a

> controversial one – is via innovation in punctuation. If cadence and flow may not be maintained through the sound quality of the words, then possibly punctuation can do what phonetics cannot (Walker, 1998, ¶6).

Verse in French is syllable-timed; in English, it is stress-timed. Since this difference reflects a fundamental feature of the two languages, it is difficult to see how the problem could be resolved through different punctuation. In fact, those who wish to fully appreciate the rhythm of French poetry have no alternative but to learn French, just as those who wish to fully appreciate the rhythms of artistic works in Māori have no alternative but to learn Māori. Certainly, detailed investigations into the rhythmic aesthetic of Māori verbal art forms, such as that begun by August (2001), are long overdue. However, the true value of such research is the greater understanding of Māori verbal arts, not its capacity to assist translators. It is highly unlikely that those rhythmic qualities that are characteristic of Māori texts will be transferable to English. In fact, any attempt at that type of transference could be misleading.

Attempting to recreate the style of a source text in a translation may prove to be just as problematic as attempting to transfer cultural values from one language to another. As James (2002), observes, the problems involved in attempting a degree of correspondence that extends beyond the realm of meaning are fundamental.

The translation of waiata

The task of translating waiata from Māori into English is a complex and often problematic one. This relates, in part, to the fact that they have a literary and artistic function, which is integrated with their social and cultural function. As Mead (1969, p.379), observes:

> [In] order to translate the compact language of poetry into ordinary speech a long explanation is necessary. For a full understanding and appreciation . . . [a] paraphrased explanation would need to be extended even further.

According to Mitcalfe (1974, p. 11), "imagery drawn from a mythological frame, accepted and known by all, is common. It is therefore compressed and highly allusive, so that translation is impossible without extensive explanatory notes (which lose the immediacy of the original)". Even so, in the *Nga Moteatea* series, Ngata and Jones (1959) proved that the translation of waiata is by no means impossible and that the provision of annotations (as a way of giving further meaning to the compact language) does not necessarily result in any significant loss of immediacy. In fact, if there is a problem with some of the translations in that series, it is one that relates to their effectiveness as works of art in English. The danger is that readers may assume that the poetic and artistic qualities of the translations are a direct reflection of the poetic and artistic qualities of the original texts. In so far, for example, as metrical structure is concerned, this is unlikely to be the case. The essential issue, therefore, in undertaking a translation exercise of this type, is to pursue the issue of the precise function of the translation. Thus, Ngata (1959, p. vi), in the context of a discussion of Palmer (1958) notes:

> No matter how brilliant the translation, how apt the phrase or vivid the image, the English version is no substitute for the original Maori. We are reading the

> poetry of a people in the language of that people and the English version should be an aid to further and more intensive study of the Maori text.

Ngata's rationale for translating his collection of waiata was to expand the literature on waiata and provide a foundation for further study into Māori literary and artistic works. With reference to the work of Jones (1959), Ngata (1959, p. xxi) makes reference to the difficulties associated with compression:

> The Maori language in poetical compositions admits of a brevity which cannot always be imitated successfully in English. There are idioms of the language for which there are no parallel in the English, and it is in this regard a translator often encounters the chief difficulty, or in those turns of expression which do not occur in English grammar, but which are proper to the Maori.

A major difficulty associated with the translation of waiata relates to the issue of how to represent idioms, symbols and imagery which are embedded in the Māori culture. Here, explanatory notes can play an important role as Ngata (p. xxi) observes:

> The signification of many words…depend…on the theme of the composition or on the circumstances under which the original work was composed. In this respect the annotations . . . have been most helpful, especially where the sense of the composer is doubtful, or where more than one meaning can be given to the passage or expression. These annotations have enabled a selection to be made – for the purpose of translating – of an appropriate rendering in keeping with the ideas in the composition, or to the composer's mode of expression and to that of the tribe to which he or she belonged.

In providing translations of waiata, Ngata's primary purpose was to convey the meaning of the source text in a way that was as faithful as possible to the source text. This meant that where imagery and symbols had particular historical or cultural significance, they were retained, and an explanation was provided where considered necessary.

There is no simple answer to the question of how best to translate waiata into English. In this case, the primary purpose was to communicate meaning as faithfully as possible so that there was greater understanding of the relationship between the waiata and their historical and cultural setting. This would include exploring the nature and significance of imagery and symbolic use of language. It would not, however, include an attempt to produce texts that are artistically satisfying as English compositions.

A translator must always carefully consider the purpose of a translation before deciding which approach to adopt. In this case, the translation of the waiata, which is accompanied by explanatory glosses, was undertaken in order to reveal as much as possible of the meaning and significance of the source texts. The aim of the translation was therefore not primarily to seek to find a way of capturing the full artistry of the source texts in the target language. Instead, readers were to be encouraged to appreciate some of the significance of that artistry through an appreciation of the complexity and range of social, cultural, historical and personal reference and the interaction of literal and symbolic meanings.

The translation process and the role of the Ngāti Hauā Kaumātua Advisory Panel and the Te Hauora o Ngāti Hauā

The Ngāti Hauā Kaumātua Advisory Panel and the Te Hauora o Ngāti Hauā had recorded and transcribed a number of waiata before this project began. These were waiata for which Ngāti Hauā are known as the 'kaitiaki' or 'kaipupuri'. Although Ngāti Hauā people have been singing these waiata for as long as the Kaumātua can remember, neither their origins nor the names of their composers are known. One of these waiata - *Ka Mahuta* - was recorded by Mervyn McLean of the Auckland University Anthropology Department at Kai-o-te-mata Marae in Morrinsville on the 20th of November 1976. The remaining four were recorded by the Te Hauora o Ngāti Hauā organization in 2002. These are: *Tērā te marama, E rere te ao, Tākiri ko te ata, and Tērā te marama ka kowhiti.*

It was decided that these five waiata would be the first to be translated and that I should undertake that translation with the guidance and assistance of the Ngāti Hauā Kaumātua Advisory Panel and Te Hauora o Ngāti Hauā. Meanwhile, they would continue to collate, record and transcribe other waiata which were to be translated at a later date, the overall aim being to produce a book which includes source texts and translated texts along with notes and explanations and a sound recording of each waiata captured on Compact Disk.

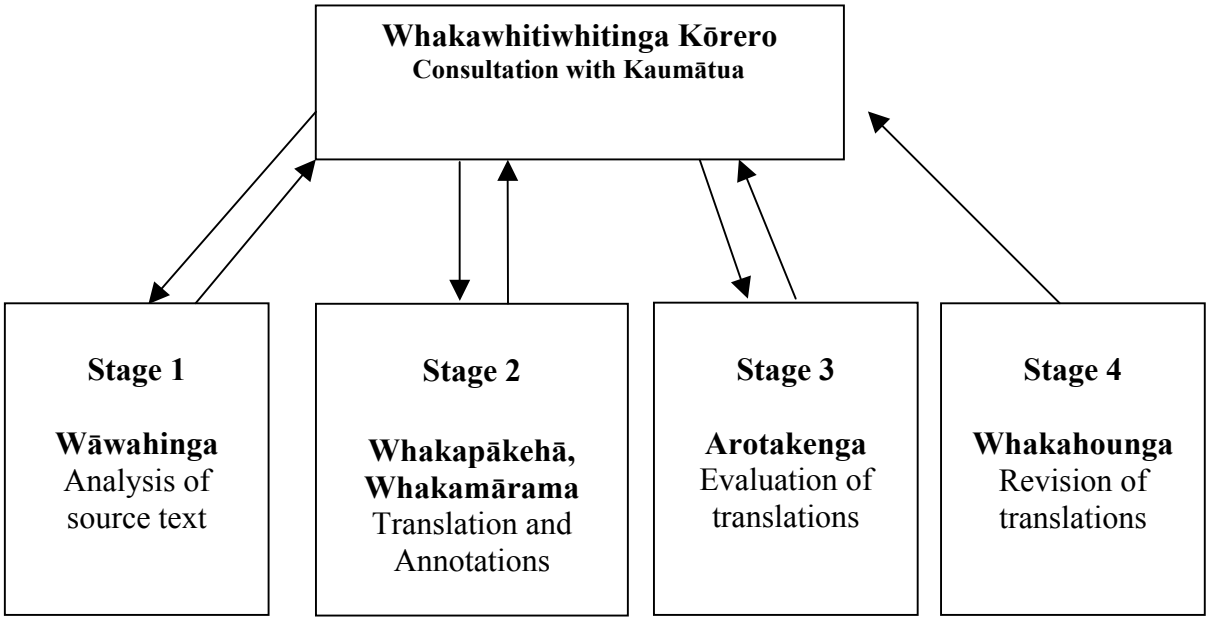
Although it was agreed that I would take responsibility for producing annotated translations of the five waiata to which reference has been made, it was also agreed that the translation process would be conducted with the supervision and guidance of the Ngāti Hauā Kaumātua Advisory Panel whose members had instigated the process and had already transcribed the five waiata. Members of that Panel would assist in the translation process, providing as much information as possible about the waiata, and commenting on translation drafts.

Consultation with the Kaumātua Panel was an integral part of the translation process. These consultations (Whakawhitiwhitinga Kōrero) were lead by the Kaumātua: they owned the process as well as providing guidance. In terms of the consultation process itself, considerable importance was attached to *kanohi ki te kanohi, kanohi kitea* and *manaaki i te tangata*. These concepts were regarded as having particular importance in relation to ensuring that there was an appropriate balance between tikanga Māori and University research protocols and ethics procedures.

Consultation was at the core of the translation process. From this core, emerged four stages:

Stage 1 Wāwāhinga – Analysis of source texts;
Stage 2 Whakapākehātanga, Whakamāramatanga – Translations with annotations;
Stage 3 Arotakenga – Evaluation of translations;
Stage 4 Whakahounga –Revision of translations (see *Figure 1*).

***Figure 1*:** *Translation process model*



Stage one involved identifying, in consultation with Kaumātua Panel members, the type of waiata involved in each case and attempting to decipher or decode any archaic or figurative words and phrases. Where historical information about source texts is available, what Kussmaul (1995) refers to as a 'Top Down' process (which begins with an analysis of the context or background of the text and moves into a consideration of phrases, and, finally, individual words), is generally considered preferable. In this case, the fact that very little information about historical background and context of production is available, made a 'Bottom Up' process (which begins with individual words and phrases and works upwards towards a consideration of background and context) unavoidable, especially as the search for possible clues to historical and situational context was considered to be an important part of the process itself.

The analysis of texts which are deeply embedded in history, particularly those which have an aesthetic as well as a socio-cultural aspect, is particularly complex in that single words or phrases may be immensely significant, not only in terms of denotation, but also in terms of connotation. They may be used literally or symbolically, or they may combine literal and symbolic force. Thus, for example, line two of *Ka Mahuta* contains the words *kura, tātai* and *puni*. The word 'kura' has many different possible meanings and connotations. It could refer, for example, to a school, to the colour red, to a red feather, or to a treasure. In the context of this waiata, it is possible that it refers to the treasured red feathers that were lost overboard when the Tainui canoe approached its final resting place in Kāwhia, feathers that were found on shore by a member of a rival tribe. The word 'tātai' can be translated as 'to count'. However, it can also be used in the context of recounting one's genealogy. The word 'puni' generally refers to a company of persons.

The process of translating source texts is closely allied to that of textual analysis. In fact, it is generally textual analysis that provides a rationale for the translation itself. In this case, the words *kura tātai puni* were translated *the beloved one whose genealogy*, and the line as a whole - *E tū ai koe te kura tātai puni te kawau mārō e* – was translated as - *Where you stand, the beloved one whose genealogy is borne within the swoop of the cormorant*. In this context, 'kura' was interpreted as *treasure*. However, because the word 'treasure' can be applied to things as well as to people, and because the use of the word 'kura' with reference to people is generally associated in Māori culture with close relational ties, the phrase 'the beloved one' was selected as an appropriate translation of the word 'kura' in this instance. Because the association of the word 'puni' with 'tātai' indicates a human rather than an abstract interpretation, the words 'tātai puni' were translated as 'genealogy'.

Stage 3 of the translation process involved an evaluation of the draft translation of words and phrases in relation to a consideration of the text as a whole. Here, a decision had to be made about the extent to which the proposed translation was faithful to the original, the extent to which the meaning and significance of the original were captured in the translation, and the extent to which the translation of individual words and phrases contributed to the coherence of the translation as a whole.

In the first draft of the translation of *Ka mahuta*, *Haere rā koutou i te apu hau, i te apu a Paoa, i te tira wairua e i* was translated as *I bid you farewell, caught in the turbulence of emotion, in Paoa's grasp, with the spirit people*. At that stage, 'apu hau' was interpreted as 'gathering of winds'. Three possible interpretations of 'Paoa' had been considered. First, it was considered possible that 'Paoa' referred to a gathering of winds. Secondly, the possibility that 'Paoa' referred to one of the Waikato ancestors who had migrated to Hauraki was entertained. Thirdly, it was considered possible that reference was being made to smoke. On balance, the most likely interpretation was thought to be the first. However, the actual translation reflected the general view that the word was being used metaphorically and, therefore, the phrase 'turbulence of emotion' was selected in order to reinforce this interpretation.

In revisiting the translation and seeking to evaluate it, I had the advantage of having come across an unpublished manuscript written by Pei Jones in 1949, entitled *Te Tuhi Mareikura*[1]. In this manuscript, *Ropu-hau* and *Apu-tahi-a-Pawa* are referred to as two stages of creation in Tainui Mythology. Jones translates 'Ropu-hau' as 'gathering winds' and 'Apu-tahi-a-Pawa' as 'the questing soul'. It therefore seemed possible that 'apu-hau' was intended to refer to the latter. In fact, there was a possibility that the word 'Paoa' had been incorrectly transcribed. It may have been 'Pawa' in the original text. Thus, 'Te Apu-tahi-a-Pawa' may have been shortened to 'te apu a Pawa' in order to maintain the rhythmic structure of the line. For these reasons, the translation of line 3 was changed to *I bid you farewell, as you take your journey with the gathering winds and the questing souls to join the spirit people*.

Any translation that aims to capture the essence of a source text is always, in one sense, provisional. There is always a possibility that further light will be thrown on the source text. This is one of the reasons why it is necessary to be cautious in the use of parallel texts and bilingual dictionaries. Although bilingual dictionaries are useful

on some occasions, it should always be remembered that words often have several senses (core meanings) as well as a wide range of possible connotations. Only when context has been taken into account as fully as possible, can a decision about translation possibilities be made. So far as parallel texts are concerned, these can be useful in revealing the use of the same, or similar, phrases in different source texts. In this case, the phrase 'Tērā te marama' occurs in the first line of each of the following: *Ka mahuta, Tērā te marama* and *Tērā te marama ka kowhiti* (see *Table 1*).

Table 1 – ***A demonstration of the usefulness of parallel texts in the translation process***

	Source Text	Translation
Waiata 1 line 1	**Tērā te marama** ka mahuta i te pae o Tahu e tama e i	Beyond Tahu's horizon **the moon** rises, oh son.
Waiata 2 line 1	**Tērā te marama** hohoro te kake mai kia mihi atu au	**Behold the moon** swiftly rising so that as I greet it –
Waiata 3 line 1	**Tērā te marama** ka kowhiti kei runga	**Behold the** new **moon** appears

In considering translation possibilities in relation to this phrase, Ngata and Jones (1970) - *Ngā Mōteatea* – was used as a source of parallel texts. It was found that this phrase did appear and that it had been translated as *Behold the moon* (1970, p. 257). Even so, although this translation was considered appropriate in the case of two of the waiata, it was not considered appropriate in the other case. This is because the syntactic structure of the line as a whole makes it more likely that this phrase is informative (providing information) rather than directive (requesting/ requiring a particular reaction/response).

***Ka Mahuta*: Translation and commentary**

***Ka Mahuta*: The moon rises**

The title is clearly a verb in present form (literally 'rises'). In the context of the first line, it is clear that the subject of that verb is *te marama* (the moon). In translating the title, the subject of the verb has been added in order to put the title into context.

Line 1: ***Tērā te marama ka mahuta i te pae o Tahu, e tama e***
Beyond Tahu's horizon the moon rises, oh son

The rising moon is a symbol of death, one that occurs in the majority of *waiata tangi* included in Ngata's collection (see, for example, Ngata, 1959). Thus, the reference to the moon rising at the beginning of this waiata signals that it is a waiata tangi. The group *e tama* was initially translated as *my son.* However, in the absence of a possessive construction, a decision was made to translate the vocative as *oh son.* The effect of this is to make the reference more general. There is, in other words, no

presumption that there was a close whānau relationship between the composer and the deceased.

The phrase *Tērā te marama* appears on numerous occasions in parallel texts (see, for example, Ngata, 1959, pp. 137, 207, 256) and is generally translated as *Behold the moon*. This possible translation was rejected in this instance because the syntactic structure of the line as a whole makes it more likely that the function is informative (providing information) rather than directive (requesting/ requiring a particular reaction/response).

Line 2: ***E tū ai koe te kura tātai puni te kawau mārō e i***
Where you stand, the beloved one whose genealogy is carried away within the swoop of the cormorant

The words *kura tātai puni* . . . have been translated *the beloved one whose genealogy* . . . In this context, 'kura' is interpreted as *treasure*. However, because the association of the words *puni* and *tātai* indicates a human rather than an abstract subject, *tātai puni* has been translated as 'genealogy'. There is a range of possible interpretations of *kura*, the most likely here being *treasure.* However, in order to capture the human reference, 'kura' has been translated here as *the beloved one* (i.e. the one who is treasured).

Line 3: ***Haere rā koutou i te apu hau i te apu a Paoa (Pawa) i te tira wairua e i***
I bid you farewell as you take your journey with the gathering winds and the questing souls to join the spirit people

A discussion of the reason for the final version of the translation of this line – one in which an unpublished manuscript by Pei Jones plays a critical role – is included earlier.

Line 4: ***Takahia e koe ngā toka taniwharau, ka tere, rua mano e***
Tread Ngā Toka Taniwharau, take wing amongst two thousand

In the initial translation of this line, *Ngā Toka Taniwharau* was translated as *the rocks of the prodigious.* The focus of this translation was on *taniwha rau,* which was interpreted as *the great ancestors*. The word *prodigious* was selected in order to indicate the awe-inspiring nature of the great ancestors. However, the Kaumātua Panel members suggested that *Ngā Toka Taniwharau* might be a place name (a reference to a place no longer known). For this reason, it was decided to leave the phrase in its original form and provide a gloss in the footnotes.

Line 5: ***Ka pāea kei uta kei te whakahekea iho ko te wairua tapu e***
Cast ashore, the Holy Spirit descends upon you

This line is problematic in that, in terms of grammatical accuracy, the first part should read *Ka pāea kē i uta* rather than *Ka pāea kei uta.* The Kaumātua Panel members noted, however, that the transcription might have taken the form it did because the singers ran the words *kē* and *i* together.

Although *wairua tapu* is translated as *Holy Spirit*, it is possible that this is a reference to the spirit world generally rather than to the Christian concept of Holy Spirit. However, the association of this waiata with the Ngāti Hauā tribe (who became committed Christians under the leadership of Wiremu Tamehana Tarapipipi Te Waharoa - also known as the Kingmaker) was a deciding factor in this translation.

Line 6: ***Hei ara mōhou e uia mai koe māu e kī atu nō Wharekura toetoe ngā nunui e***
To guide you, if you should be asked, say that you are from Wharekura, from the remnants of the multitudes

The translation of this line reflects the composer's use of direct speech, the conditional construction and the reference to *Wharekura*.

Line 7: ***Tēnei anō rā ngā whakataukī i waiho ake ai e hahu (hau) e tonga e, he taonga kākaho e…***
These are the ancient sayings handed down for you to use, a precious lattice work…

According to Mead and Grove (2001), the *Kākaho* is a "tukutuku or lattice work with which houses were lined" (p. 118). In this context, and particularly in relation to the reference in the previous line to Wharekura (School of Learning), it was decided that the meaning was symbolic, the latticework representing the interacting references which would serve as battens in the construction of the speech. Thus, the teachings of the School of Learning would support the deceased in addressing the ancestors.

Final comments

My primary aim here has been to provide, with the assistance of te Hauora o Ngāti Hauā and the Ngāti Hauā Kaumātua Advisory Panel, a translation of a single waiata that is as faithful as possible to the source text, to document the processes involved in doing so, and to make as explicit as possible the issues and problems that had to be addressed, including issues and problems relating to translation theory. My hope is that this will be of interest to other translators of indigenous texts, particularly other translators of Māori waiata.

Endnotes

1. The Tuhi Marekiura Manuscript is located in the New Zealand Collection at the University of Waikato Library. This particular manuscript is one of the many books and resources, published and unpublished by the late Pei Te Hurinui Jones. At this point in time the collection is not yet open for public use, however, efforts are being made to prepare the collection for the public.

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