

**Prototype theory and the concept of *taonga*: Implications for Treaty-related issues such as the display and conservation of *taonga Māori***  
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**Abstract**

This paper examines, in the context of prototype theory, issues and problems associated with the concept of *taonga*, the specific aim being to provide an approach that could assist those who are concerned with the interpretation of Article 2 of the Treaty of Waitangi and Treaty-related issues such as the appropriate display and conservation of *taonga Māori*.

**Introduction**

*Ko te hā o taku maunga, ko taku manawa*  
(The breath of my mountain is my heartbeat)  
(Te Heuheu Tukino IV, Horonuku, 1886)

For the purposes of initiating this discussion, the word ‘taonga’ is loosely translated as ‘culturally-relevant treasure/s’. It will, however, become clear as the argument unfolds that the word ‘taonga’ can have different meanings and values in different contexts and that, therefore, any attempt at translation can, at best, provide a starting point from which to investigate further.

My particular interest in *taonga Māori* arises out of my personal involvement (as curator and conservator) with *taonga Māori*, and my association with tribal groups wishing to establish *iwi* museums, libraries and/or archives to house, protect, preserve, conserve, restore and display tribal *taonga*. In some cases these *taonga* are currently held overseas. For example, Heintze (1990, p. 87) notes that:

The *taonga Māori* collection of the Ubersee Museum [Bremen] is an accident of history. . . . None of the museum’s *taonga Māori* specimens have been acquired, on the part of the museum, by persons having expert knowledge of, or being involved in serious research in Māori culture.

Māori cultural values, together with the spiritual connections that Māori have with their treasures, have often been given very little or no recognition. *Taonga Māori* held by national and international museums, galleries and libraries have been displayed, viewed and appreciated by many for generations. Many more of these *taonga* have, however, remained ‘mute’ in the storage rooms and basements of these institutions. In 1994, I was a member of a group taken into the basement of a New Zealand museum to view some Māori artefacts. Unfortunately, the curator in charge of the *taonga Māori* section was unable to tell us anything about the nature or function of these artefacts. They were effectively ‘mute’: even within the context of a New Zealand museum, their meaning and value were treated as being of no real

significance. It is of serious concern to Māori that their cultural and spiritual treasures are often not being given the respect and treatment they deserve. The *iwi* (tribal groups) to whom these *taonga* mean the most have often not had adequate access to them, let alone a say in how they should be cared for.

The notion of tribal institutions dealing with their own *taonga* was first mooted decades ago. Research undertaken by Māori archivists, librarians, museum and gallery workers has prompted a determination to explore the possibility of making the notion a reality. It is hoped that the care, display and sharing of *taonga* prestige, spiritual protection and narratives will, in due course, be under the control of *iwi* and/or *hapū* whose people will take full responsibility for the management and interpretation of their own *taonga*. If this is to happen, the term ‘taonga’ itself must be critically analysed. Otherwise, boundary disputes (disputes about what can or should be treated as *taonga Māori*) are likely. For example, in 1999, I was privy to a joint project between a Local Authority and the Tangata Whenua (the local *iwi*) to establish a local Heritage, Art and Cultural Centre. The initial understanding was that there would be two entities sharing equally in the establishment and operation of the Centre which was to be headed by the Mayor of the town and the Chief of the district. However, as meetings progressed, it became clear that there had been some misunderstanding. It was suggested not only that tribal *taonga* be made available for display in the Centre, but that local carved meeting houses should also be made accessible. Only then would the Māori contribution be seen as being equivalent to the contributions made by renowned local potters and painters. The *iwi* representative drew the attention of those present to the view from the window, saying:

This is the heritage and art that I offer you: That mountain which gives me my breath; that lake and this land which gives me sustenance; that which was handed down (*he taonga tuku iho*); that which will be handed on (*he taonga tuku iho*) through the generations to come. For as long as they have existed, how well do you know and understand their history?

From time immemorial, land features have been cared for and interpreted in appropriate contexts by those who understand them. That is the point the *iwi* representative was making. The type of misunderstanding to which he was responding is of very real concern to many Māori: their cultural and spiritual treasures are either not being recognised at all or are not being given the respect and treatment they deserve. As Hakiwai (1990, p. 16) states: “Māori culture has been distorted, stretched and squeezed to fit the theories and practices of western-trained scholars”. He adds: “Māori culture history is a . . . conception of who the Māori people are, where the Māori people have come from and what Māori culture is all about. [Taonga] are not just wooden objects or aesthetic heirlooms, they speak and represent our origins, our beliefs, our very foundation on which we order our lives”.

### **Categorisation and prototype theory**

In this section, I examine literature on prototype theory with a view to identifying a principled way of understanding the complex nature of the word ‘taonga’. The section begins with an introduction to Wittgenstein’s approach to categorisation and family resemblance. This leads into a discussion of empirical work conducted by Elenor Rosche and her associates in the context of prototype theory. This is followed

by a brief discussion of the potential significance of prototype theory in relation to debates relating to culturally significant concepts such as *taonga Māori*.

***Categorisation and family resemblance***

Prototype theory, categorisation, meanings, and perceptual prototypes are areas which have seen considerable debate within cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics (see, for example Taylor, 1995; Tsohatzidis, 1990). Prototype theory arose out of an increasing body of evidence that seriously undermined the foundations of what has come to be known as the ‘classical, Aristotelian theory’ of categorisation (Taylor, 1995, p. 38). The ‘classical theory’ of categorisation evolved in such a way as to include each of the following:

- categories are defined in terms of a conjunction of necessary and sufficient features;
- features are binary;
- categories have clear boundaries;
- all members of a category have equal status (pp. 23-4).

In a highly significant passage of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein (1968) indirectly questions the fundamental tenets of the ‘classical theory’ of categorisation. With reference to the word *Spiel* (game), he develops the concept of ‘family resemblance’. In considering the meaning of ‘game’ and with reference to board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on, he asks:

What is common to all of them? - Don’t say: “There *must* be something common, or they would not be called ‘games’” – but *look* and *see* whether there is anything common to all. – For if you look at them you will not see something that is common at *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that.

To this simple statement he adds the following argument, fleshing out the notion of ‘game’ and its complexities:

To repeat: don’t think, but look! – Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you may find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost. – Are they all ‘amusing’? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-ring-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; can we see how similarities crop up and disappear.

He concludes that this type of examination reveals “a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of details”, noting that he “can think of no better expression to

characterise these similarities than ‘family resemblances’; for the various resemblances between members of a family; build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way. – And I shall say: ‘games’ form a family” (pp. 31-2). To this he later adds, “one might say that the concept of ‘game’ is a concept with blurred edges” (p. 34).

In acknowledging that open-endedness is a characteristic of the meaning of a word such as ‘Spiel’ (game), Wittgenstein challenges the very principles of the ‘classical approach’ to categorisation: a category such as ‘game’ cannot be “learnt as a conjunction of those critical features which uniquely distinguish games from non-games. Rather, the category has to be learnt on the basis of exemplars” (Taylor, 1995, p. 39). This can be seen in Wittgenstein’s discussion of how we might explain what a game is: “I imagine that we should describe *games* to him [sic], and we might add: ‘this *and similar things* are called ‘games’” (Wittgenstein, 1968, p. 33). Wittgenstein does not, unfortunately, discuss this matter in further detail. This issue has, however, been taken up by others.

### ***Categorisation and prototype***

Wittgenstein’s insights in relation to ‘family resemblance’ and the notion of a central or prototypical membership were the basis for the empirical work conducted by Eleanor Rosch, an American psychologist, and her associates in the late 1960s and 1970s. This research on ‘prototypical membership’ and categorisation began with colour categorisation experiments and with the evidence for colour universality provided by Berlin and Kay (1969). Some of the experiments conducted by Rosch involved the Dani (an indigenous tribe in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya on the island of New Guinea) whose language has only two colour terms based on brightness rather than hue (*mili* (roughly ‘dark’) and *mola* (roughly ‘light’)). Rosch (then using the name Eleanor Heider) found that Berlin and Kay’s (1969) results meshed with her research on the Dani. There appeared to be ‘focal points’ (best examples) that were universal and visually salient across cultures (Heider, 1971; Heider, 1972; Heider & Oliver, 1972). It was found, for example, that children chose focal colours more frequently than non-focal ones and were able to match focal colours better than non-focal ones. This appeared to demonstrate that “focal colour areas as a whole were more salient to young children and more likely to be used to represent the basic colour name than were other areas of the colour space” (Heider, 1971, p. 455). Furthermore, focal colours were given the shortest names and were identified by name more rapidly across languages. They were the most accurately recognised by both English and Dani speakers; and they could be paired with names with the fewest errors (Heider, 1972). There appeared, then, to be ‘natural prototypes’ (based on colour) to which subjects responded irrespective of whether their own languages made direct use of them in categorising and naming colour. Was this also true in other areas, areas that were not directly related to visual perception?

Rosch investigated the possibility that other domains were also organised in terms of more and less prototypical examples, conducting two very significant experiments relating to other semantic categories (Rosch, 1973). The first experiment involved subjects selecting from six choices the ‘best example’ of a category, the categories being *fruit, science, sport, bird, vehicle, crime, disease, and vegetable*. The second experiment involved reaction time and judgement in relation to twenty-four pairs of words (two from each category - one a ‘good example’ of a category; the other a ‘not

so good example'). Here the categories involved were: *toy, bird, fruit, sickness, relative, metal, crime, sport, vehicle, science, vegetable, and part of the body*. The exemplariness of instances was related to (a) adult and child speed of judgement for category membership, and (b) child errors in judgement. The results indicated that subjects could easily rate how exemplary a category member was. Furthermore, there was general agreement amongst subjects. It was concluded that a 'best example' or 'natural prototype' may be "processed in terms of . . . internal structure rather than in terms of attributes of . . . formal meaning" (p. 142). On the basis of these and other related experiments, Rosch and her colleagues concluded that human beings learn and use language in a way that reflects a tendency to classify the world in terms of 'family resemblance', in terms of examples (more prototypical examples and less prototypical ones) rather than in terms of binary values (Rosch & Mervis, 1975). Thus, there are prototypical examples of, for example, a category such as 'chair' and less prototypical ones. In some cultures, a 'chair' might prototypically be something that has four legs and a seat and has a particular function. However, the absence of four legs – even the absence of legs altogether – does not necessarily mean that something cannot be classified as a chair. In fact, it is quite possible to conceive of a chair that is not designed for sitting on. Definitions of words are often, therefore, little more than approximations.

The research of Rosch and her colleagues on prototype-related categorisation provides empirical support for the notion that the meaning of words is not a simple matter of inclusive/exclusive category membership. Thus:

[Elements] are assigned to a category not because they exemplify properties that are absolutely required of each one of its members, but because they exhibit to a greater or lesser extent (or are simply *expected* to exhibit to a greater or lesser extent) certain types of similarity with a particular category member that has been (naturally or culturally) established as the *best example* (or prototype) of its kind (Tsohatzidis, 1990, p. 1).

Although the central members of a category (prototypical examples) share a large number of common attributes (in line with the more 'classical approach' to categorisation), a prototype approach also allows membership to entities that share only a few attributes with the more central members.

### **The relevance of prototype theory to the understanding of culturally-embedded concepts such as *taonga***

I have attempted to indicate how and why Wittgenstein, Rosch and others have argued for an approach to human perception, cognition and categorisation that involves prototypical and non-prototypical instances, asserting that categories can be open-ended (or fuzzy-edged). This provides a principled way of arguing for different approaches to concepts such as 'taonga' in different contexts of use, some of these being more 'prototypical' than others. The further removed we are from 'core' meaning (prototypical examples), the more 'fuzzy edged' the concept becomes and the less agreement there is likely to be about whether a particular object belongs or does not belong to the category in question.

### ***Taonga*: Dictionary-based definitions**

My primary aim in this section is to demonstrate the dangers that can be associated with simplistic and unitary interpretations (and translations) of culturally significant

concepts such as ‘taonga’. In the search for an understanding of the concept of ‘taonga’ that takes account of prototype theory, I begin by examining a range of dictionary definitions.

***Bilingual (Māori-English) dictionary definitions of ‘taonga’***

The *Te Reo Tupu* electronic database contains full text versions of dictionaries by Williams (1971), Ngata (1993) and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (1996) as well as a number of smaller more specialised topic dictionaries covering areas such as legal terms, flora and fauna and Kai Tahu (dialect) words. It is, therefore, a useful starting point for an exploration of the concept of ‘taonga’. There were, in total, 72 query hits for ‘taonga’ on *Te Reo Tupu* (see *Appendix 1* for a list of these along with collocations, that is, along with phrases or groups that include the word ‘taonga’).

In the following tables, a comparison of different dictionary definitions of ‘taonga’ is provided. Because Williams’ *Dictionary of the Māori language* is generally regarded as the most significant Māori-English dictionary, the definition provided there is selected as the base-line one, all other definitions being compared with it in relation to similarities and/or differences. The entry for ‘taonga’ (see A.16 in *Appendix 1*)<sup>1</sup> in the Williams dictionary (Williams, 1971, p. 381) is as follows:

*Taonga* (noun): Property, anything highly prized  
 ‘*Ko te whiwhi i te taurekareka, i te taonga, i te rawa rānei o te pā horo.*’  
 ‘*Ko to te tangata Māori taonga nui tēnei (te haka) mo te manuhiri.*’  
 ‘*Kīhai i wareware ki tana mea i kitea ai hei taonga mōna, arā, hei whakakite mai ki ia tangata, ki ia tangata.*’

**Table 1: A comparison of features of the definition of ‘taonga’ in Williams’ *Dictionary of the Māori language* with features of definitions that occur in other bilingual dictionaries**

Reference Number	Property	Anything highly prized	Other
A2 Taonga	✓	x	Goods
A13 Taonga	✓	x	-
A14 Taonga	✓	✓	Valuable
A16 Taonga	✓	✓	-
A46 Taonga	x	✓	Treasure
A47 Taonga	✓	x	Goods
A48 Taonga	x	✓	Possession
A49 Taonga	✓	x	Effects
A50 Taonga	x	✓	Substance
A51 Taonga	✓	x	Tool
A52 Taonga	✓	x	Gear
A53 Taonga	✓	✓	Asset
A54 Taonga	✓	x	Belongings
A55 Taonga	✓	x	Chattel
A56 Taonga	x	✓	Instrument
A57 Taonga	✓	x	Utensil
A58 Taonga	x	✓	Wares
A60 Taonga	x	✓	Gadget
A61 Taonga	✓	x	Stock

**Table 2: An indication of the extent to which dictionary definitions of collocations involving the word ‘taonga’ reflect the definition of ‘taonga’ in Williams’ *Dictionary of the Māori language***

Reference Number	Property	Anything highly prized	Other
A1	Hakari taonga	✓	x Gift Giving
A3	Hoko taonga ā-karere	x	x Mail order
A4	Hoko taonga	x	x Commerce
A5	Kāpata taonga	x	x Cabinet
A6	Taonga kōpaki	x	✓ Present
A8	Moumou taonga	x	x Prodigal
A9	Taonga tuku iho	✓	✓ Inheritance
A10	Pouaka taonga	x	x Safe
A11	Whai taonga	x	x Rich
A12	Rārangi taonga	x	x Inventory
A15	Taonga taketake	✓	x Raw material
A17	Taonga ā whare	✓	x Furnishings
A18	Taonga ā whare	✓	x Furniture
A19	Taonga ake	✓	x Effects, Personal
A20	Taonga ake	✓	x Personal effects
A21	Taonga hoko	x	x Commodity
A22	Taonga hokohoko	✓	x Merchandise
A23	Taonga horomata	x	x Virtue
A24	Taonga mahi	✓	x Implement
A25	Taonga mahi	x	x Apparatus
A26	Taonga manatunga	x	✓ Souvenir
A27	Taonga māpuna	✓	✓ Prized possession
A28	Taonga ngutūre	x	x Second-hand goods
A29	Taonga pūoro	x	✓ Musical instrument
A30	Taonga tākaro	x	x Toy
A31	Taonga tāpui	x	x Trade in
A32	Taonga tauhokohoko	x	x Commerce
A33	Taonga tauware	✓	x Unsolicited goods
A34	Taonga tōrōkiri	✓	x Faulty goods
A35	Taonga tuauki	✓	✓ Antique
A36	Taonga tuhituhi	✓	x Stationery
A37	Taonga tuku iho	✓	✓ Heritage
A38	Taonga tuku iho	✓	x Patrimony
A39	Taonga tuku	x	✓ Legacy
A40	Taonga waimārie	✓	x Mascot
A41	Taonga whakaahuru	x	x Amenities
A42	Taonga whakahī	x	x Pride
A43	Taonga whakahirahira	x	✓ Masterpiece
A44	Taonga whakapaoho	x	x Organ
A45	Taonga whītiki	✓	x Prize
A59	Taonga mārō	✓	x Hardware
A62	Taonga tauware	✓	✓ Reciprocal gift
A63	Te Ture Taonga Tauware	x	x Unsolicited Goods and Services Act
A64	Tino taonga	x	x Indispensable
A65	Tino taonga	x	x Indispensable
A66	Tino taonga	x	✓ Invaluable
A67	Tino taonga	x	✓ Valuable
A68	Wāhi hoko taonga	x	x Book shop
A69	Whai taonga	x	✓ Wealthy
A70	Whai taonga	x	x Furnished
A71	Whakahoki taonga kāore e ea	✓	x Voluntary repossession
A72	Whare taonga	x	x Museum

As is indicated in the *Table 1* above, different dictionaries approach the definition of 'taonga' in different ways. Some – see, for example, A51, A52, A57, A58 and A60 - depart substantially from Williams' definition. This should alert readers to the dangers of turning to bilingual dictionaries in order to address issues relating to words that are of cultural or political significance.

Many of the collocations of 'taonga' recorded in the dictionary database (see *Table 2*) appear to be recent ones created by the *Taura Whiri* (Māori Language Commission) in response to the need to deal with contemporary contexts. Examples of these are: *hoko taonga ā-karere*; *pouaka taonga* and *taonga nguture*. Neither the first nor the third of these involves the concept of 'highly prized'. The second does so - but indirectly. Of course, meaning change is a characteristic of all languages. Nevertheless, what we see here is not a natural language process of word creation, but an artificial one, that is, the creation of words by a group whose role is to ensure that the Māori language is sufficiently flexible to deal with contemporary life. So long as this is fully recognised, this need not present a problem. What is important to bear in mind, however, is that neither naturally occurring nor artificially created collocations will necessarily retain the core meanings of their constituent parts. The fact, therefore, that some of the collocations listed above have little or nothing to do with possession and/or value does not mean that both are not in some sense fundamental to the prototype.

In defining 'taonga' as 'property, anything highly prized', Williams is as inclusive as possible. At first sight, the inclusion of the word 'property' might suggest to those who are unfamiliar with Māori culture that the concept of *taonga* does not extend to physical features of the landscape such as rivers, lakes and mountains. Any such interpretation would be inconsistent with the Māori concept of 'property' which is one that includes that which belongs by virtue of *whakapapa*, that is, by virtue of genealogical links, links not only to people but to everything that is conceived of as being imbued with life force.

### ***Taonga: Context-centred understanding***

#### ***Taonga and Taonga Māori: Exploring the outer edges***

At an early age, I was given *mako* (shark tooth earrings) as special 'taonga' that belonged to my *kuia* (grandmother). Later, on achieving a secondary school scholarship, I was presented with a sterling silver wristwatch by my father's parents. I was told that this also was a special 'taonga'. When I questioned my grandparents about why such different things could both be called 'taonga', I was told that everything that is precious to you is a 'taonga', as is everything created by Rangi and Papa. All of these things live on through time and generations.

In every-day usage, the word 'taonga' has an inclusive sense. For the individual, anything that has significance may be described as a 'taonga'. Even so, irrespective of what these two items – the wristwatch and the *mako* - mean to me personally, there is a significant difference between them. The first is, in the broadest sense, a *taonga*; the second is a *taonga Māori*, something that has particular significance within the context of Māori cultural life. Both have very real significance for me. The second has the added significance of being 'tuku iho' (handed down from the ancestors). Even so, it is not, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, a *taonga* in the prototypical sense - and it is the prototypical sense of the word *taonga* that is central to an understanding

of what the *Treaty of Waitangi* meant – and means – to Māori and, by extension, to an understanding of what the guardianship of *taonga Māori* should entail.

**Towards understanding of the prototype: Taonga Māori in the context of the Treaty/ Treaties of Waitangi**

In 1840, many Māori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi. The second Article of the English version of the Treaty guarantees to the Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and to the respective families and individuals thereof “the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession”. The Māori version refers explicitly to *taonga*:

Ko te Kuini o Ingarani ka wakarite ka wakaae ki nga Rangatira ki nga hapu –  
ki nga tangata katoa o Nu Tirani te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou  
kainga me o ratou taonga katoa.

For the Treaty in English and Māori, see Orange (1987).

There has been considerable debate about the way in which Article 2 of the Treaty should be interpreted. It is now much more widely understood than it was in 1840 that translation is an art rather than a science. The fact is that culturally-embedded concepts such as, for example, *property* and *possession* in English and *taonga* in Māori have no direct translation equivalents. Even so, it is clear from the English version of the Treaty that concepts of property and possession extended beyond movable objects (to include lands and estates, forests and fisheries) - just as did the concept of *taonga*. Why, then, has so much debate about the Treaty centred on the word ‘taonga’? One reason may be a failure to distinguish between the every-day, inclusive sense of the word, and the more central (prototypical) sense that is associated with formal contexts of use. The exploration and clarification of the prototypical meaning of *taonga* is, therefore, of considerable significance in the context of debates about the interpretation of the Treaty.

Tapsell (1998) notes that “since its inception in 1975, the [Waitangi] Tribunal<sup>2</sup> has heard . . . under the Treaty reference to ‘taonga’, Māori claims relating to rivers, harbours, lands, fisheries, forests, sacred sites, mountains, underground resources, carvings, airwaves, and language”, adding that “even the Treaty itself, in which the word is enshrined, is considered by Māori to be a document of great sacredness and is today referred to as a ‘taonga’” (p. 11). What characterises each of the claims to which Tapsell refers is that it relates not to *taonga* in the broad sense, but to what may be referred to as ‘taonga tuku iho’, that is, to “that which has been handed down from the ancestors” (Mead, 1984, p. 21). This can include the intangible as well as the tangible.

In 1986, the ‘te reo Māori’ claim lodged by Huirangi Waikerepuru and Ngā Kaiwhakapūmau i te Reo Incorporated Society, was heard by the Waitangi Tribunal. The following is included in the Tribunal’s report:

The claimants called Professor Hirini Moko Mead of Victoria University of Wellington who produced for us a carefully prepared submission on the meaning of Article II and Article III of the Treaty. The general thrust of his

view of the treaty so far as Article II is concerned is that the phrase "O ratou taonga katoa" covers both tangible and intangible things and can best be translated by the expression "all their valued *customs* and possessions." This is in accordance with the conclusion we have already reached in the Kaituna River Finding (para. 4.7) where we accepted the phrase to mean "all things highly prized", and the Motunui Finding to the same effect. In the Manukau Harbour case we reached the conclusion that "taonga" in the context of the Treaty means more than objects of tangible value (Section 4.2.3) [*Italics added*].

To this, the report added the following in relation to te reo Māori as a 'taonga':

When the question for decision is whether te reo Maori is a 'taonga' which the Crown is obliged to recognise we conclude that there can be only one answer. It is plain that the language is an essential part of the culture and must be regarded as "a valued possession". The claim itself illustrates that fact, and the wide representation from all corners of Maoridom in support of it underlines and emphasises the point (Section 4.2.4).

In 1987, following the recommendations of the Waitangi Tribunal, the *Māori Language Act 1987* was passed. The Act declared Māori an official language and established *Te Kōmihana mō Te Reo Māori*, now known as *Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori* (Māori Language Commission).

With reference to the Waitangi Tribunal finding in relation to the Māori language, Kawharu (1989, p. 321 fn.8) notes that "'taonga' refers to all dimensions of a tribal group's estate, material and non-material – heirlooms and wāhi tapu, ancestral lore and whakapapa, etc". That this has been generally acknowledged is evident in a range of government publications. For example, the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1993) states that "Maori is the language of the tangata whenua of New Zealand. It is a taonga under the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi and is an official language of New Zealand (p. 10)".

All of those things that are specifically listed in Article 2 of the Treaty of Waitangi (e.g. lands and estates) can be regarded not only as *taonga*, but also as *taonga tuku iho*, as can the Māori language. However, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the prototypical sense of *taonga*, it is useful to turn to another context, that of display and conservation.

***Towards fuller understanding of the prototype: Taonga Māori and the Western concept of artwork***

Tapsell (2000, p. 13), a Māori scholar and museum Director, discusses *taonga Māori* in the following terms:

A taonga . . . represents a Māori kin group's (whānau, hapū, iwi) ancestral identity with their particular land and resource. Taonga can be tangible, like a greenstone pendant, a geo-thermal hot pool, or a meeting house, or they can be intangible, like the knowledge to weave, to recite genealogy, or even the briefest of proverbs. All taonga possess . . . the elements of ancestral prestige (mana), spiritual protection (tapu), and

genealogically ordered narratives (*kōrero*). *Taonga* are protected through rituals and incantation (*karakia*), which invokes the element of *tapu* and ensures they are treated with due reverence. They are seen as the spiritual personifications of particular ancestors, either as direct images or through association. . . . Thus *taonga* are time travellers, bridging the generations, allowing descendants to ritually meet their ancestors, face to face. . . . *taonga* are vital threads from the past, acting as guides . . . to interpreting the past.

In a keynote address to a *Taonga Māori Conference* which centred on the conservation of artefacts, Kaeppler (1990) noted that “*taonga* are not lifeless things”. They convey information “but often in a language not everyone can understand”. They are “entwined with people and their histories – the material manifestations of social relationships and societal transformations”. They are “part of the integrally related verbal, visual, special, sound, and movement systems that distinguish Māori culture from all others” (p. 11). They are, therefore, crucial keys for understanding Māori society and culture.

At the same conference, Mead (1990) argued that two concepts – *kōrero* and *whakairo* – were fundamental to a proper understanding of *taonga*. *Kōrero* (the stories and explanations associated with *taonga*) give them “meaning and cultural significance”, enriching and enhancing them by linking them historically to “a particular social group such as *whānau*, *hapū* or *iwi* who have cultural rights not only to the *kōrero* but also the *taonga* itself”. *Whakairo* is the “process of transforming something natural [i.e., wood etc.], into something culturally called a *taonga* (highly valued object of culture)”. Thus a ‘*taonga whakairo*’ – which may be a natural part of a living culture, such as, for example, a mountain or a creation such as a *wharepuni* (carved house) - is anything to which the transforming process has been applied.

To the two concepts to which reference has already been made - *kōrero* and *whakairo* - Mead adds a number of others which, he argues, can be useful in determining whether a particular *taonga* could be conceptualised in a way that is similar to the conceptualisation of works of art in Western terms. First, there is ‘*tuku iho*’ (passing down from one generation to the next): “the more generations involved in the handing down the greater the *mana* (prestige)” in that “antiquity is valued because it implies association with the ancestors who form the foundation of Māori identity”. Thus, “the living descendants are trustees of the *taonga* by right of *whakapapa* or genealogical decent” (p. 166). Secondly, there is ‘*taha wairua*’, the property of ‘spiritual essence or force’. This is the quality “which is described in the *kōrero* associated with the *taonga* and which one accepts or rejects according to one’s experience and faith”. It is the “spiritual aspect . . . generally acknowledged [as the] major difference between ‘artefact’ and ‘*taonga*’”. A *taonga* that “[represents] an ancestor who is related by *whakapapa* (genealogy) to a group of descendants” has particularly high spiritual significance. For living relatives such a *taonga* “is more than a representation of their ancestor”. It actually is “their ancestor” and “woe betide anyone who acts indifferently to their *tipuna* (ancestor)”.

Any discussion of *taha wairua* inevitably involves *mana* and *tapu*. Mead argues that “when a *taonga* has high *mana* . . . it is a powerful *taonga* of great prestige; it is also very *tapu*, that is, sacred and charged with spiritual power”. However, a *taonga* with

“low mana also has a low level of tapu associated with it. Thus, taonga differ in the level of mana and tapu accorded to each one” (p. 166). There are, as Mead suggests, a number of variables associated with the differences in these levels (pp. 166-8):

- The correlation between the ‘mana’ of the ‘taonga’ and the ‘mana’ of the owning tribe or iwi;
- The closeness associated with death and burial customs;
- ‘Whakapapa’ and the connection to the owner and the creators of the taonga;
- Antiquity;
- ‘Ihi’, ‘wehi’ and ‘wana’ (the power, the awesomeness and the authority) of the created work; and
- Other variables such as size and material (i.e., pounamu (greenstone), etc).

Mead is attempting here to make a distinction between *taonga* in a general sense and *taonga* that could be conceptualised in a way that is similar to the conceptualisation of works of art in Western terms. This is a particularly difficult task in that the concept of artwork has little direct relevance within Māori culture. Even so, Mead’s attempt is an interesting one, and one that identifies a range of characteristics that appear – particularly when they are extended beyond the realm of artefacts - to be prototypical.

Tapsell (1998), in discussing *taonga* from a Te Arawa perspective, focuses on *whakapapa*, *mana*, *tapu* and *kōrero*. In his discussion of *whakapapa*, Tapsell refers not just to genealogy in the Western sense, but to “genealogical descent lines connecting gods with all things” (p. 12), noting that when *whakapapa* is “recited by elders in chant-like form”, we have “the philosophical context in which *taonga* can be understood from a Māori perspective”, a perspective that allows for the “sequencing of the universe by tying *all things* into a genealogical order” [italics added].

For Tapsell, *mana*, *tapu* and *kōrero* are all essential aspects of taonga. He defines *mana* as “authority; power; prestige; status; integrity; self-esteem; source of energy from the gods transmitted through ancestors; ancestral power embracing people and their estates” (p. 12). To maintain the *mana* of a *taonga* “demands the complementary presence of ‘tapu’ [the second element], so that the ancestral sanctity of such items can be properly preserved for the benefit of descendants who have yet to be born” (p. 13). Tapsell defines *tapu* as “protect[ion]; sacred; prohibition, [being] set apart; [indicating] presence of ancestors”. He notes that “[if] transgressed [it] can inflict ill fortune” and that “[the] balancing state to tapu is ‘noa’ or profane, common, everyday, free of ancestral influence” (p. 13). Thus:

Tapu acts as a social controlling agent preventing an item’s mana, or power, from being transgressed by the state of noa. The greater the mana of a taonga, the greater its tapu, demanding careful trustee-like management (p.13).

The management of *tapu* is generally in the hands of senior elders and their families “who are not only responsible for each taonga’s long-term care under the strict controls of tapu, but also its proper exhibition to the wider kin group during life-crises”, such as death rituals (*tangi*) etc. which occur on the kin group’s *marae* (p.13).

According to Tapsell, *kōrero* is the “most important element contained within taonga” (p. 14). He defines *kōrero* as “verbal discourse; orally transmitted knowledge; true

account of the past; historical utterance; narratives associated with the ancestors” (p. 14). Without narratives, a *taonga* “ceases to be recognised as representing a specific genealogical position for its descendents” and this may “undermine the ongoing trusteeship of the item and its associated mana and tapu”. There are two types of *kōrero*, the first – the primary form – is used as “the customary medium of transporting all lore and knowledge”; the second - the pure form – includes the ancient form of *karakia* (incantations or highly ritualised prayer). All *taonga tuku iho* are imbued with ancient *karakia* which is “essential to ensuring that the mana, tapu, and *kōrero* of their kin group’s ancestral items remain intact”. Furthermore, “*karakia* serve as a channel of communication with the *atua* who control the power to nourish or destroy the *mauri* [life force] contained within all existing things” (p. 14). After creation of a ‘*taonga*’, “ritual recitations of *karakia* . . . [envelop] it in a state of tapu. This protects the *mauri* and thereby ensures that the item’s inherent mana, tapu and *kōrero* is secured” (p. 15).

Tapsell lists the following as examples of *taonga whakairo* which exist today, (p. 19):

Fine cloaks (*kaitaka*, *korowai*, *kakahu*), mats (*whariki*), and wall panels (*tukutuku*) woven from flax; canoes, houses, gateways, posts and long-handled weapons (*taiaha*, *tewhatewha*) sculpted from wood; flutes, fish hooks, and club-like weapons (*wahaika*, *patu paraoa*) carved from human or whale bone; and effigies for protecting resources, sinkers, club-like weapons (*mere*, *patu onewa*) and personal adornments (such as *hei tiki*) made from various kinds of stone including basalt (*onewa*), nephrite (*pounamu*) and bowenite (*tangiwai*).

### ***Taonga as prototype***

Dictionaries are useful in providing definitions of concepts that are sufficiently inclusive to encompass their ‘fuzzy edges’ They do not, however, generally provide much guidance in relation to the prototypical senses of culturally-embedded concepts, and it is these prototypical senses which may provide an important key to understanding. It is only from the perspective of the prototypical sense of *taonga* that we can make sense of the words of the *iwi* representative quoted at the beginning of this article:

This is the heritage and art that I offer you: That mountain which gives me my breath; that lake and this land which gives me sustenance; that which was handed down (*he taonga tuku iho*); that which will be handed on (*he taonga tuku iho*) through the generations to come. For as long as they have existed, how well do you know and understand their history?

It is only from this perspective that we can begin to understand the resonances of the word *taonga* in the Treaty of Waitangi. It is only from this perspective that we can begin to have meaningful discussion about *taonga* with those whose perception of art and artwork is essentially European. *Taonga* are *taonga* by virtue of culture and context. They cannot be separated from the place to which they belong and the people to whom they belong - from their *kōrero*, their *whakapapa*, their *mana*, and their *tapu* - without being violated.

## Endnotes

1. The first edition of this dictionary was compiled by a missionary, Bishop William Williams, and published in 1844 (although completed 6 years earlier) by the Mission Press at Pahia. Now in its seventh edition (Williams, 1971), this dictionary focuses on traditional vocabulary, the headwords often being contextualised in one or more sentences (usually taken from an older manuscript) following each entry.
2. The passing of the Treaty of Waitangi Act in 1975 established the Waitangi Tribunal as a forum for the investigation of Treaty grievances by Māori against the Crown.

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**Appendix 1: References to ‘taonga’ - *Te Reo Tupu* database**

The query hits have been organised alphabetically and assigned a reference number. Where ‘rd’ occurs, it refers to the record number on the ‘Status Line’ of *Te Reo Tupu*.

A.1	<i>Hakari taonga</i> : A formal ceremony of giving gifts to the dead of high rank (Te Reo Tupu, rd 173289).
A.2	<i>Hautaonga</i> = <i>taonga</i> (noun): Goods, property ‘ <i>Kei tutuki to waewae i a Rawiri, he hautaonga nui, kei a Tuku-a hika</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 6335).
A.3	<i>Hoko taonga ā-karere</i> : Mail order (Te Reo Tupu, rd 171685).
A.4	<i>Hoko taonga, Tauhokohoko</i> : Commerce (Te Reo Tupu, rd 170863).
A.5	<i>Kāpata taonga</i> : Cabinet ‘ <i>Na Pāpā i hoatu he kāpata taonga ma Mere, hei pupuri i ana taputapu</i> . Father gave Mary a cabinet to keep her possessions in’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 67961).
A.6	<i>Kōpaki</i> A present made to the relatives of a deceased person in token of respect. Also called ‘ <i>taonga kōpaki</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 17737).
A.7	<i>Mea, Taonga</i> : Object ‘ <i>He aha tērā mea i te taha o te taiapa? What is that object by the fence?</i> ’ (Te Reo Tupu, rd 104452).
A.8	<i>Moumou taonga, Tōiōā</i> : Prodigal ‘ <i>Kua hoki mai te tama moumou taonga: The prodigal son has returned</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 112142).
A.9	<i>Oha, Manatunga, Taonga tuku iho</i> : Inheritance ‘ <i>E waiho ana te tangata pai i te oha ma āna uri: A good man leaves an inheritance for his descendants</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 94420).
A.10	<i>Pouaka taonga</i> : Safe ‘ <i>I rakaina ngā moni ki roto i te pouaka taonga: The cash was locked up in the safe</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 118994).
A.11	<i>Rangatira, Whai taonga</i> : Rich ‘ <i>He hara tērā e whiua ai ma te mate, ahakoa rangatira te kaikōhuru, ware rānei: That was a crime punishable by death, whether the murderer was rich or poor</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 117535).
A.12	<i>Rārangi taonga</i> : Inventory ‘ <i>I whakainea te rārangi taonga ki ngā whatanga, ā, i kitea kei te tika: The inventory of goods was checked against the shelves, and was found to be correct</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 95601).
A.13	<i>Rawa, Taonga, Taputapu, Utauta</i> : Property ‘ <i>Ko ia tangata e whai tika ana kia whiwhi ki te rawa mōna ake, āpiti atu rānei ki ētahi atu tāngata: Everyone has the right to own property, alone as well as in association with others</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 112582).
A.14	<i>Rei, Kura, Taonga</i> : Valuable ‘ <i>Hei moenga mo aku rei taku kete: My kit is the bed for my valuables</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 135997).
A.15	<i>Take waihanga, Taonga taketake</i> : Raw Material ‘ <i>He harakeke te take waihanga mo te mahi kete: The raw material for making kits is flax</i> ’. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 114662).

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A.16	<i>Taonga</i> (noun): Property, anything highly prized ' <i>Ko te whiwhi i te taurekareka, i te taonga, i te rawa rānei o te pā horo.</i> ' ' <i>Ko to te tangata Māori taonga nui tēnei (te haka) mo te manuhiri.</i> ' ' <i>Kīhai i wareware ki tana mea i kitea ai hei taonga mōna, arā, hei whakakite mai ki ia tangata, ki ia tangata.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 47146).
A.17	<i>Taonga ā whare</i> : Furnishings ' <i>He tino pai rawa atu ngā taonga ā whare: The furnishings are in good condition.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 85855).
A.18	<i>Taonga ā whare</i> : Furniture ' <i>I hokona mai e māua he taonga ā whare mo tō māua whare hou: We bought furniture for our new house.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 85859).
A.19	<i>Taonga ake</i> (noun): Effects, Personal <i>taonga</i> : 'goods, property' <i>ake</i> : 'self' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 159328).
A.20	<i>Taonga ake</i> (noun): Personal effects <i>taonga</i> : 'goods, property' <i>ake</i> : 'self' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 149980).
A.21	<i>Taonga hoko</i> : Commodity ' <i>He taonga hoko nga kai mo te kāinga: Groceries for the household are commodities.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 70358).
A.22	<i>Taonga hokohoko</i> : Merchandise ' <i>He kura ngā taonga hokohoko i roto i to rātau toa: They have valuable merchandise in their shop.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 100791).
A.23	<i>Taonga horomata</i> : Virtue ' <i>He taonga horomata te tika me te atawhai: Justice and kindness are virtues.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 136563).
A.24	<i>Taonga mahi, Taputapu</i> : Implement ' <i>Kai nga tohunga mahi anō a rātau ake taonga mahi –he kāheru mo te kari, he hama, me ētahi atu: Tradespeople have their own special implements – spades for digging, hammers, and so on.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 93020).
A.25	<i>Taonga mahi</i> : Apparatus ' <i>Pau katoa te ata ki te whakatikatika i nga taonga mahi hai whakamātau i te wai: It took all morning to set up the apparatus to test the water.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 63410).
A.26	<i>Taonga manatunga</i> : Souvenir ' <i>Ka kitea katoatia rātau e au i waenganui i aku taonga manatunga: I find them all amongst my souvenirs.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 123937).
A.27	<i>Taonga māpuna, Kahurangi, Matahiapō</i> : Prized possession ' <i>He taonga māpuna na te iwi: A prized possession of the people.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 112011).
A.28	<i>Taonga nguturu</i> : Second-hand goods (Te Reo Tupu, rd 172428).
A.29	<i>Taonga pūoro</i> (noun): Musical instrument <i>taonga</i> : 'property, anything highly prized' <i>pūoro</i> : 'music' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 149983).
A.30	<i>Taonga tākaro, Kaupeka, Toi</i> : Toy ' <i>He pai ki te tamariki ngā taonga tākaro: Children like toys.</i> ' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 132175).
A.31	<i>Taonga tāpui</i> : Trade-in (Te Reo Tupu, rd 172757).
A.32	<i>Taonga tauhokohoko</i> (noun): Medium of exchange <i>taonga</i> : 'property, anything highly prized' <i>tauhokohoko</i> : 'commerce'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 149986).

A.33	<i>Taonga tauware</i> : Unsolicited goods (Te Reo Tupu, rd 172834).
A.34	<i>Taonga tōrōkiri</i> : Faulty goods (Te Reo Tupu, rd 171222).
A.35	<i>Taonga tuauki</i> : Antique 'Kaore he taonga tuaki i roto i nga mahi pūkenga Maori – kai te mau tonu te mauri ora o nga taonga a nga tīpuna: The are no antiques in Maori art – each piece is the living work of ancestors'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 63283).
A.36	<i>Taonga tuhituhi</i> : Stationery 'He nui te hua ki te kura mo te hokohoko taonga tuhituhi: The school made a profit selling stationery'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 125470).
A.37	<i>Taonga tuku iho, koha, taonga pūmau</i> : Heritage 'Ko ngā tikanga whai hua o to tātau Māoritanga, ko ngā mea no kōnei no tēnei whenua kura, he taonga tuku iho ki ā tātau tamariki: The worthwhile elements of our culture, the things which belong to this beautiful land, are our children's heritage'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 907151).
A.38	<i>Taonga tuku iho</i> : Patrimony 'He taonga tuku iho ēnei whenua ki a mātau: These lands were our patrimony'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 108005).
A.39	<i>Taonga tuku, Taonga tāpae, Whakawhiwhinga</i> : Legacy 'Ko te taonga tuku tēnā i waiho iho e o tātau tūpuna: That is the legacy our forefathers bequeathed'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 97776).
A.40	<i>Taonga Waimārie</i> : Mascot 'Ko te taonga waimārie a te tīma poitarawhiti he kiwi kerehunga nui: The netball team had a large fluffy kiwi as its mascot'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 100124).
A.41	<i>Taonga whakaahuru</i> : Amenities 'He tino pai nga taonga whakaahuru o tēnei marae: The amenities of this marae are suburb'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 49977).
A.42	<i>Taonga whakahī</i> : Pride 'Ko tana pōtiki tana taonga whakahī: Her youngest child was her pride'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 111815).
A.43	<i>Taonga whakahirahira</i> : Masterpiece 'He taonga whakahirahira te whakairo: The carving was a masterpiece'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 100196).
A.44	<i>Taonga whakapaoho</i> : Organ 'Ko te nūpepa hei taonga whakapaoho i ngā pitopito kōrero o te wā: The newspaper is an organ for the dissemination of news'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 105683).
A.45	<i>Taonga whītiki, Paraihe</i> : Prize 'Kua hipa a ia i ngā tino taonga whītiki katoa o te koiora: He missed all the great prizes of life'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 112001).
A.46	<i>Taonga, Kahurangi, Mouna</i> : Treasure 'A muri ake nei i a au, tiakina aku taonga: After me, take care of my treasures'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 132783).
A.47	<i>Taonga, Rawa, Taputapu</i> : Goods 'Ka hoatu e ia te wāhi rua o āna taonga ki te hunga rawakore: He gave half of his goods to the poor'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 87736).
A.48	<i>Taonga, Rawa, Taputapu</i> : Possession 'Ka waiho koutou hei taonga māku: You shall be my own possession'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 110828).
A.49	<i>Taonga, rawa</i> : Effects 'Ka waiho e au katoa o aku taonga ā whare ki taku tamāhine: I leave my household effects to my daughter'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 78515).

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A.50	<i>Taonga, Rawa</i> : Substance 'Ka kitea e tātau ngā taonga utu nui katoa, ka whakakiiia o tātau whare ki te parakete: We shall find all precious substance; we shall fill our houses with spoil'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 127106).
A.51	<i>Taonga, Taputapu</i> : Tool 'Ka taea noa e te kaiwhakairo te kawē i āna taonga mahi: A carver can usually carry his tools with him'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 131734).
A.52	<i>Taonga, Tueke</i> : Gear 'Kua whakatākupetia e koe ngā taonga hōpuni? Have you packed the camping gear?' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 86339).
A.53	<i>Taonga</i> : Asset 'He tino taonga te mōhio ki te reo Māori ki ia tangata o Aotearoa: A good grasp of the Māori language is a great asset to any New Zealander'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 64113).
A.54	<i>Taonga</i> : Belongings (Te Reo Tupu, rd 65741).
A.55	<i>Taonga</i> : Chattel 'Mo te hoko ngā taonga o te whare: The household chattels are for sale'. Te Reo Tupu, rd 69143)
A.56	<i>Taonga</i> : Instrument 'He wheua manu ngā taonga a te tohunga mo te tā i te moko: The artist used instruments of bird bone in forming the moko'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 94944).
A.57	<i>Taonga</i> : Utensil 'Mauria mai he taonga tahu mo te haere: Bring cooking utensils on the trip'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 135850).
A.58	<i>Taonga</i> : Wares 'Whakaaturia o taonga hei hoko: Display your wares for sale'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 137072).
A.59	<i>Taputapu mārō, Taonga mārō</i> : Hardware 'Tikina atu he nēra i te toa hoko taputapu mārō: Get some nails from the hardware shop'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 89655).
A.60	<i>Taputapu, Taonga</i> : Gadget 'Anei taku taputapu hei tango mai i ngā tēpara i ngā pepa: I have a gadget here for removing staples from papers'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 85971).
A.61	<i>Taputapu, Taonga</i> : Stock 'Kua pau ngā taputapu o te toa: The shop has run out of stock'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 125988).
A.62	<i>Tauware</i> (adjective): Unrequited, not paid for. <i>Taonga tauware</i> : gifts for which an equivalent return will be expected. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 49977).
A.63	<i>Te Ture Taonga Tauware</i> : Unsolicited Goods and Services Act (Te Reo Tupu, rd 172836).
A.64	<i>Tino taonga</i> (adjective): Indispensable <i>tino</i> : 'veritable, very' <i>taonga</i> : 'anything highly prized', 'He tino taonga taua wahine: That woman is indispensable.' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 151180).
A.65	<i>Tino taonga</i> (adjective): Indispensable (Te Reo Tupu, rd 64113).
A.66	<i>Tino taonga</i> (adjective): Invaluable <i>tino</i> : 'veritable, very' <i>taonga</i> : 'anything highly prized', 'He tino taonga tana āwhina mai: His assistance was invaluable.' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 151183).
A.67	<i>Tino taonga</i> (adjective): Valuable <i>tino</i> : 'veritable, very' <i>taonga</i> : 'anything highly prized', e.g. 'He tino taonga āna kōrero: Her comments were most valuable.' (Te Reo Tupu, rd 151177).
A.68	<i>Wāhi hoko taonga</i> : Book shop (Te Reo Tupu, rd 170624).

A.69	<i>Whai taonga, Rangatira, Whai rawa</i> : Wealthy ' <i>He whai taonga i ngā rawa o te ao nei</i> : Wealthy in the goods of the world'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 137384).
A.70	<i>Whai taonga</i> : Furnished ' <i>He whare noho whai taonga</i> : It's a furnished flat'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 85851).
A.71	<i>Whakahoki taonga kāore e ea</i> : Voluntary repossession (Te Reo Tupu, rd 172865).
A.72	<i>Whare taonga, Whare tongarewa</i> : Museum ' <i>He nui ngā taonga Māori kei te Whare Taonga o Ākarana</i> : There are many Māori artefacts at the Auckland Museum'. (Te Reo Tupu, rd 102887).