

**TE WHARE TAPERE  
Towards a Model for  
Māori Performance Art**

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*E tukuna ana tēnei pukapuka hei tohu aroha ki aku mātua ki a Tūroa rāua ko Maryrose, nā rāua tēnei pōtiki i atawhai, i manaaki i roto i ngā tau.*

*This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Tūroa and Maryrose Royal whose love and support have been unchanging through the years.*

## **(i) ABSTRACT**

The thesis represents an attempt to develop a written theory upon which a new practical model for Māori performance art, or 'whare tapere', might be constructed. It is subtitled 'Towards a Model for Māori performance art' as, in the author's view, the model itself will be finally created when the theory presented in this thesis is practically applied.

The thesis is divided into three major parts and is introduced by a section which discusses the title of the thesis, a definition of Māori art by Professor Hirini Moko Mead, methodologies employed and an explanation concerning the place of the Māori language in this thesis.

Part I represents a theory as to the world view of pre-contact Māori culture. Constructed from a mixture of 19<sup>th</sup> century manuscript and 20<sup>th</sup> century oral sources, the theory commences with an exploration of the author's own whakapapa. This is posited as a methodology by which to discover the foundation themes and concepts of the Māori world view. Part I then moves to discuss some of the philosophy (or philosophies) that arises from this world view.

The purpose in determining the Māori world view and philosophy is found in the notion that the institutions of any society and culture are created out of and are expressive of that community's world view. Through their activities, institutions express these world views both inwardly and outwardly. Hence, the reconstruction or the creation of a new whare tapere institution in contemporary circumstances is reliant upon the identification of a societal world view and philosophy.

Part I of the thesis argues that the Māori world view is found in the concept entitled 'Te Ao Mārama' which is located in the paradigm of Ranginui (the sky father) and Papatuanuku (earth mother). Upon this world view was constructed the subsequent history of the Māori world, both in the Hawaiki period and in the Aotearoa period. As Ranginui and Papatuanuku are referred to in all iwi traditions, I argue that the Te Ao Mārama world view and philosophy is a pan-Māori phenomenon.

Part II of the thesis considers the historical Whare Tapere, an institution which fell into disuse in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The material commences with the Hawaiki story concerning the death of Kae following the birth of Tūhuru. Contained within this story is a description of the mythical first whare tapere of Māori tradition which served as a model for subsequent whare tapere.

The material considers other Hawaiki traditions, including those concerning Māui, Tamatekapua and Tāne-rore (to name a few) before including Aotearoa expressions of the whare tapere. Here we find descriptions of aristocratic figures such as Te Kahureremoa and Tūwharetoa. 19<sup>th</sup> century figures are also included such as Puhīwahine and Erenora Taratoa, before concluding with Pākehā descriptions (mostly from the 19<sup>th</sup> century) of the whare tapere in action. As many Pākehā visiting pā did not know what they were witnessing and describing in their diaries

and journals, I argue that in many instances they were viewing the whare tapere in action.

Finally, Part III of the thesis presents a theory upon which a new form of the whare tapere might be constructed today. It sets forth the Te Ao Mārama world view and philosophy as the foundation for the whare tapere and how it might be used to influence all the activities of the whare tapere. The theory urges the use of the Te Ao Mārama world view and philosophy upon which the various creative forms that are described in Part II might be employed. In addition to this, the Te Ao Mārama philosophy is also employed to construct a rationale upon which non-Māori forms and concepts such as *mimesis* might be employed in this new whare tapere.

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