

6.0 Conclusion

Māori society has found itself at a contemporary cross-roads. 19th century claims under the Treaty of Waitangi are being settled, new capital is moving through Māori society, Māori political representation has increased and Māori everywhere have risen to the challenge of saving the Māori language. Much work has been completed since the beginning of the so-called Māori renaissance whose beginnings might be tied to the creation of Ngā Tamatoa in the late 1960s. Since that time, we have seen their petition on the language delivered to Parliament in 1973. We have seen the great Māori land march, instigated by Dame Whina Cooper in 1975 and the creation of the Waitangi Tribunal in that same year. There have been the occupation of Bastion Point and the protests at Raglan which have served to embolden Māori calls for justice. The Springbok Tour of 1981 legitimised protest in the eyes of many New Zealanders and assisted the growth of Māori protest, culminating in the major Treaty protests of 1984 and 1985 at Waitangi. 1984 was the year in which a major hui on the Treaty was held at Tūrangawaewae Marae at Ngāruawāhia, the seat of the King Movement.

1987 saw the landmark decision of the Court of Appeal with respect to the sale of State Owned Enterprises and the responsibility of the Crown to the Treaty of Waitangi. The middle to late 1980s was also distinguished by the publication of a number of important reports by the Waitangi Tribunal. Claims at Motunui, Kaituna, Manukau and that concerning the Māori language were all heard and the views of the Tribunal have catalysed a changing mood in New Zealand society as to the misdemeanours of its past. 1990, of course, was the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. The scene was set for a monumental gathering of New Zealand citizens in the presence of Queen Elizabeth II of England, constitutional head of the New Zealand government. Would the gathering be controversial or harmonious?

Security was ultimately successful in isolating Māori protest from the dignitaries of the day, save for one incident. A Māori woman got close enough to the entourage to throw a t-shirt which hit the Queen. An indignant Sir Kingi Ihaka, kaumātua of Te Aupōuri and sitting next to the Queen, immediately stood up as witness to the event and expressed his disgust. The event did little for the cause and only heightened security paranoia.

By the time the Queen arrived at the Waitangi Marae grounds, management must have felt somewhat pleased with themselves as most protesters were kept at bay. Save for a small, vocal group who managed to seat themselves at the top of the bleachers, and out of reach of security, the proceedings upon the marae itself were basically civil. By this time, most angry Māori were greatly disappointed that their protest had been largely unheard until Reverend Whakahuihui Vercoe, Bishop of Aotearoa, took the microphone as one of the scheduled speakers. His was an impassioned speech that took the Government representatives completely unaware. He calmly reminded the Government, before its own Queen, of its failure to honour the Treaty of

Waitangi and the oppression that it has subsequently visited upon the Māori people.

The great encounter that was Waitangi 1990 was largely a microcosm contemporary of Aotearoa/New Zealand society. All the main characters were there: the disaffected Māori willing to voice a wayward, largely ineffectual protest, the over-confident, self-satisfied politician, the unaware Pākehā New Zealander with little or no appreciation of the issues.

And so the 1990s opened. MMP has seen to an unprecedented rise in the number of Māori MPs. But attached to it comes an unprecedented exposure of Māori bungling of affairs in the Aotearoa Television scandal. On the bright side, today there are numerous kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, whare kura and whare wānanga throughout the country. There are Māori owned and managed radio stations, health initiatives and a wide array of Māori businesses ranging from tourism ventures to perfumery, design studios, publishing houses and more.

Capital is rising in Māori society. However, with some incongruity we also have appalling health statistics, education retention rates, diabetes, health disease, domestic violence and so on. Such statistics remind us that the rise of the Māori middle class is a relatively recent phenomena and the good progress of the Māori world in recent years is fragile.

There is the tremendous tension that has arisen in the context of the fisheries settlements. Māori living in cities and who have diminished or no relationships with their traditional tribal origins are asserting a right to some of the fishing assets held by the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission. In response, the Commission has made an interim decision which reinforces and recognises the view that the property rights which they administer properly belong to iwi and not to pan-Māori entities domiciled in the cities.

Such a debate goes to the heart of notions concerning the future of the Māori race. The spectrum is defined by those who adhere to historical tribal groupings and those who do not. Most, probably, fall in the middle. Overall, however, the real challenge for Māori is not so much the nature of Māori groupings but the processes by which Māori can consider the issues that befall and realise realistic and forward outcomes.

Given this contemporary situation, a mix of discovery of our ancestral past and the embracing of the riches of the Western world, tied in with the trauma of the colonial experience, the tensions in and between Māori; as a new kind of Māori culture and society is being brought into being, what is the role, the impact, the place of this new whare tapere? What good can it bring?

Whilst others may draw their own conclusions in regard to this question, my response is to say that any culture requires institutions and forums whereby it can analysed and discussed by members of that culture. No culture can

hope to grow without such attention to its forms and beliefs. In most societies and cultures, it is the education institutions who play a large part in this, however, they are not the only ones. In fact there are many more including political structures, judicial proceedings, health and welfare institutions and those devoted to the retelling of the stories of that culture.

It is my concern that as Māori culture (and New Zealand's as a whole) enters the 21st century, there needs to be a range of institutions devoted to the paradigms of that culture. Hence, I see the whare tapere being a venue where Māori and others can come together and explore their culture in an entertaining and perhaps even a profound way. I am concerned that as Treaty claims are settled and the recapitalisation of Māori society proceeds, there needs to be a fundamental set of beliefs or philosophy that underpins these developments. I would boldly suggest that Te Ao Mārama be that philosophy for it is life orientated and life affirming.

Some may consider the proposals that are described within this thesis as firmly tribal in orientation and outlook. Indeed, the thesis does talk about iwi and looks to the establishment of iwi based whare tapere. However, if one considers the fullest extent of the Te Ao Mārama philosophy, I look forward to the elevation of this philosophy beyond the iwi paradigm and beyond even the race paradigm. I look forward to the transportation of this philosophy across cultures and societies and into other communities just the philosophies of the Bible and the Koran have moved across community boundaries.

The whare tapere, as I envisage it, must be a place where the Te Ao Mārama life philosophy is expressed, explored, analysed and liberated. It must be a mechanism whereby the Māori past is explored to help explain the present and to nourish the future. As Phil Mann says, it must be a place where 'the force of the past can be liberated in the present through the theatrical act.' The Te Ao Mārama philosophy is dynamic, organic and malleable. Therefore, it must not become fixed in a particular locality be that physical, intellectual or spiritual. It must be transportable and able to find expression in a wide range of circumstances. The whare tapere must be able to answer the major issues of our time. It must boldly and courageously confront the deepest, bitterest, traumatic issues that strike us, bury us, who conspire to see to our end. In doing this, the whare tapere must tell the truth. Not some unusable, illusory truth, but one which liberates us out of contemporary turmoil and leads us to a better place.