



<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz>

### *ResearchSpace@Auckland*

#### **Copyright Statement**

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.

<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback>

#### **General copyright and disclaimer**

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form.

**GOVERNING BODIES: A MĀORI HEALING  
TRADITION IN A BICULTURAL STATE**

**Tony O'Connor**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology,  
The University of Auckland, 2007.**

## ABSTRACT

Biculturalism is a relationship in government between the British Crown and the indigenous [Māori] people of New Zealand. I show that this relationship permeated some Māori healing practitioners' healing knowledge and perception. A key way in which this occurred was through the practitioners recognizing biological and social boundaries between Māori and Pākehā [New Zealanders of European descent]. A second was through the practitioners' embodiment of connections with social groups including the nation, a history and present shared between Māori and Pākehā and an idealized pre-contact past. A fundamental principle of *Te Oo Mai Reia* was that for the practitioners to harness the power of the various forces that sustained life they had to be in touch with their whakapapa [genealogy] for it was through their ancestors that they could commune with the Ultimate Deity, Io, the source of the most potent of all forces of life. A further key principle was that spiritually inspired and traditional Māori culture heightened the wellbeing of Māori, not modern, Pākehā culture. Spiritual and ancient knowledge was supra-conscious and made knowable through an embodied awareness of self and other. To make my argument I draw on literature inspired by Foucault that shows how states govern by implementing their operations and securing their penetration into the citizenry by drawing and building upon pre-existing bodies of knowledge and relations of power. I also draw on literature that shows how the human body bears the effects of such practices of government. To this literature I integrate perception by showing how, in this Māori healing context, the government of the bicultural nation-state worked through the ways the practitioners made sense *with* the body (especially through feeling, seeing and touching).

Keywords: healing, body, medical anthropology, governmentality, embodiment, perception, biculturalism, New Zealand

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a privilege to carry out this work. I have felt honoured by those research participants who entrusted me with their stories and experiences, and humbled by those people who believed I had the necessary expertise and qualities to carry it out. To both groups of people, I hope I have met your expectations.

I have been extremely fortunate in having such a supportive and reliable supervision team – Dr Susanna Trnka (principal supervisor), Associate Professor Julie Park (supervisor), and Dr Rhys Jones (advisor). Thanks to Susanna for her unwavering attention and exciting perspectives, to Julie for her continued mentoring of my academic career, and to Rhys for his insightful comments about Māori health. I could not have wished for better supervision. I am also grateful to my examiners. The points they required me to address made this thesis a better work than it would have otherwise been.

This research would not have been possible without its funding for which I am truly grateful. This includes a University of Auckland Doctoral Scholarship and grants from the University of Auckland Arts Fund and University of Auckland Post-graduate Students Research Fund. I am also grateful to the Department of Anthropology's PBRF Fund and Stipend Committees. The administrative and academic support of the Anthropology department has been invaluable, especially that of Drs Christine Dureau, Bruce Floyd and Professor Cris Shore. My fellow anthropology students made my PhD experience all the more enjoyable, especially Anneka Anderson, Bon-Giu Koo, Marama Muru-Lanning, Sally McAra and Relinde Tapp.

Thanks also to Dame Joan Metge and Dr Tricia Laing for their sage advice and hospitality, Professor Eric Schwimmer for sharing his encyclopaedic knowledge and showing me a good time on a cold night in Montreal, and Professor Mason Durie for sharing his time with me. Thanks also to Dr Ruth Fitzgerald for her input into Chapter Three as editor of SITES. I would also like to thank Professors Wendy Larner and Richard Le Heron for their brilliant facilitation of an inspirational workshop on governmentality in Auckland, 2003.

Thanks to all my family for their ongoing interest and support of my study. I could not have done this work without the patience and encouragement of my best friend and

wife, Kathy. My little treasures, Joseph and Ryan, played their own roles too – they helped me make more efficient use of my time so that I could finish what needed to be done. A special thanks to my parents and parents in law for their amazing contributions (the details of which is a book in itself!), to Ian for his childcare, and to Christine for her editing.

I am thankful for the contributions made by the research participants and am pleased to have made friends among them. Papa (Hohepa) Delamere's sudden, unexpected death in September 2006 was an enormous loss of outstanding vision, understanding and leadership of people – Māori and Pākehā. Papa had the final call on making this research happen, and for his decision I am eternally grateful. I dedicate this work in his memory.

# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .....	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	3
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	8
Beginnings .....	8
Bicultural government .....	10
Māori health and healing .....	20
Government of the Body.....	23
Fieldwork and Methodology.....	27
Field sites .....	27
Participant Observation.....	29
Interviews.....	30
The role of the body .....	33
Research position .....	35
Ethics.....	39
Looking ahead.....	41
CHAPTER 2: TRADITIONAL MĀORI HEALING / <i>TE OO MAI REIA</i> .....	45
Describing a Māori tradition of healing.....	45
Bringing embodied knowledge to Te Oo Mai Reia.....	48
Te Oo Mai Reia – interpreting the phrase.....	50
Te Oo Mai Reia – the healing methods .....	54
Romiromi and Mirimiri.....	54
Korerorero.....	55
Karakia, Takutaku and Kaupare .....	56
Rongoā .....	60
Working as a Māori healer.....	60
Conclusion .....	66
CHAPTER 3: MAKING A PUBLICLY FUNDABLE TRADITION OF MĀORI HEALING.....	67
Making the State Bicultural .....	68
The Bicultural Development of <i>Rongoā</i> Services .....	71
Modeling a publicly-fundable form of <i>Rongoā</i> .....	75
Conclusion .....	84
CHAPTER 4: MĀORI ETHNICITY AND CITIZENSHIP.....	86
The Treaty of Waitangi and Māori identity .....	88
Political power and identity beyond the Treaty of Waitangi .....	90
Whakapapa.....	92
Spirituality.....	98
Illness, healing and Māori identity.....	102
Cultural Rights.....	106
Conclusion .....	109
CHAPTER 5: THE BODY .....	111
The Body as a Material and Non-material Entity .....	112
<i>Te Oo Mai Reia</i> conceptions of the body.....	114

Knowledge in the Body .....	120
Whakapapa – a principle uniting spirit and flesh.....	125
Mauri and Wairua – key principles of non-matter.....	129
Conclusion .....	130
CHAPTER 6: MAKING SENSE THROUGH THE BODY.....	132
Making sense .....	132
Making sense, spiritually .....	134
Making sense with the <i>whatumanawa</i> .....	139
Conclusion .....	150
CHAPTER 7: HEALING SUFFERING.....	151
The goals of healing.....	151
Connectedness.....	152
Neutrality .....	155
Moving toward a state of wellness.....	158
Pain and suffering .....	158
Healing pain.....	160
A case of healing.....	166
Conclusion .....	170
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION .....	172
GLOSSARY OF MAORI WORDS.....	180
REFERENCES .....	184

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 7.1</b> A healing method commonly used to evacuate spiritual entities from the body .....	155
---	-----