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Neki Arā, Arā Neki: Art, Belonging and Not Belonging, Māori and Pākehā in Aotearoa/New Zealand

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ABSTRACT. In Aotearoa, many of us often situate ourselves on one side of a binary of colonial dynamics, despite how we have whakapapa (genealogies) that interweave these locations of belonging. This article will reflect on what it can mean to be Māori and Pākehā (NZ European of mainly British descent) and attempt to come to terms with historical and ongoing tensions between many of our collective ancestors that are still ongoing in Aotearoa (New Zealand). This includes the author's mixed cultural whakapapa (ancestry). Influences in this article include mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Western philosophy and art-related perspectives. Pūrākau (stories of origin) of Māui the Trickster in relation to notions of productive idiocy and testing informed by Avital Ronell's reading of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Gay Science* with an influence by Michel Foucault will be explored in relation to art and live art practices of artists who slide through the woven relationships of being Māori and Pākehā. Projects of Rebecca Ann Hobbs and Martin Awa Clarke Langdon, James Tapsell-Kururangi and Mark Harvey are reflected on, considering this theme. Each of these works will be contextualised in response to political tensions pertaining to normative cultural ideals and notions of acceptability in the worlds of Māori and Pākehā.

Keywords: whakapapa; mātauranga Māori; Pākehā; tangata tiriti; art practice

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Introduction

> At half-time, things were quiet, a bit too quiet. We needed a second-half battle plan, but, instead, we went into our shells. (Unnamed All Black, Best All Blacks Quotes, 2023)

In Aotearoa, many of us often situate ourselves on one side of a binary of colonial dynamics, despite how we have whakapapa (genealogies) that interweave these locations of belonging. For many of us, it's not often a very easy or comfortable experience. I cite a rugby quote above as a metaphor for how, as a game, rugby can be seen as a cultural unifier between Māori and Pākehā (NZ Europeans of mainly British descent). For many, it's no longer a game that represents us all – as a potential metaphor for how difficult, in my experience, many of us here continue to come to terms with these cultures simultaneously. Many perceive they are 'losing out' to the other side of the cultural divide (including what I and many others perceive as the threat of white supremacy despite approximately 180 years of colonial oppression), and we have just experienced a national election fought over these themes. While Aotearoa/New Zealand is a multicultural society, I focus on these cultures in this article due to my own experiences with identifying as both Māori and Pākehā.[1]

This article will reflect on what it can mean to be Māori and Pākehā (NZ European of mainly British descent) and attempt to come to terms with historical and ongoing tensions between many of our collective ancestors that are still ongoing in Aotearoa (New Zealand). This includes my own mixed cultural whakapapa (genealogy, as the author). Influences in this article include mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Western philosophy and art-related perspectives. Pūrākau (stories of origin) of Māui the Trickster in relation to notions of productive idiocy and testing informed by Avital Ronell's (2005) reading of Friedrich Nietzsche's (2001) *Gay Science*, also influenced by Michel Foucault (1980), will be reflected on in relation to art and live art practices of artists who slide through the woven relationships of being Māori and Pākehā. The artworks of Rebecca Hobbs (Pākehā) and Martin Awa Clarke Langdon (Tainui, Ngāi Tahu; 2016), James Tapsell-Kururangi (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Raukawa iwi; 2018) and myself (Harvey, 2022) will be reflected on here considering this theme. Each of these works will be contextualised in response to political tensions pertaining to normative cultural ideals and notions of acceptability in the worlds of Māori and Pākehā.

Pākehā not Pākeha, Māori not Māori

> It's not easy being Pākehā. Stop laughing. It isn't.
> This is because we don't know who we are. Not really. (McNaughton, 2022)

> I'm viewed as a plastic Māori, because of the way I choose to live life, moving with Western trends, away from traditional life. (Mahauariki, 2012)

What makes one Māori or Pākehā or both is well-known across Aotearoa to not always be a simple answer. For starters, to be Pākehā is often defined by one knowing they have European ancestry, particularly British and, along with that, usually pale coloured skin and if one has lived in Aotearoa for a while where their accent is localised to here. There are well-known variances around this, too, where folks have become 'Pākehāfied' (such as people of Dutch, Croatian, Portuguese ancestry and so forth), and some who have recently arrived identify with the term. The term Pākehā itself is Māori, meaning the above (and other notions like being foreign), but it also implies a relationship with Māori by being a Māori kupu (word). Despite how some who call themselves NZ Europeans see the term only in negative ways, with, for instance, it also meaning 'foreigner,' it is, as Moana Jackson implies, a form of linguistic inclusion and celebration often in te ao Māori (the Māori world; 2019). Throughout te ao Māori, we widely pride ourselves on embracing and celebrating cultural differences to find connection and build mutual understandings and mutual acceptance, including with non-Māori. As is also commonly known in te ao Māori, there was never a singular Māori identity prior to European colonisation, with iwi/hapū (tribes and sub-tribes) serving as identifiers for us, along with our rohe (areas of whenua/land we resided over) and tūrangawaewae (the place we stand in and have a right to call home through our ancestry). The term Māori did not refer to a collective identity. It referred to 'normal.' Additionally, there are concepts of manaakitanga (referring to the uplifting of mana, hospitality and kindness, among other things) and utu (reciprocity), applying tikanga (protocols) and kawa (protocols and processes) that guide Māori to welcome and embrace others, including those not from one's iwi/hapū and whanau (family) – who in contemporary times are usually welcomed when they respect the customary rights and protocols of iwi/hapū. So cultural differences and concepts of belonging and not belonging have long been embraced in te ao Māori, including for Pākehā.

Belonging can be seen to be more complex when considering whakapapa for Māori and Pākehā. For Māori, it is commonly known that one's Māori whakapapa is what defines one as being Māori. The sharing of whakapapa with others is widely considered an essential way in which to build relationships and mutual acceptance and empathy between people. Many Pākehā do not know who their ancestors were or where they were from. In my experience, many of my own Pākehā arts students have told me they don't know where their families come from.

Some have even said in my tutorials that they don't have a culture and that they feel like they don't belong because of this sometimes. While many Māori do know much about their whakapapa, there are still many who don't. Processes of urbanisation and colonisation and subsequent cultural and sometimes whanau isolation are common factors behind this (Anderson et al., 2015; Walker, 2004). Beyond some simply not caring (like many of my relatives over the years), not knowing these answers can leave one feeling vulnerable when in situations that invoke the Māori custom of exchanging whakapapa, as has been my own experience with being both Māori and Pākehā at times until more recently.

Unlike in many other cultures around the world, including what we usually consider Indigenous, skin colour is not commonly considered a defining aspect of what makes one Māori, or blood quantum, but it is having Māori whakapapa – one never is considered 'part Māori,' one is only ever Māori or not Māori due to whakapapa. While, in my own experience, I have regularly been reminded by other Māori that I am Māori despite having light-olive skin, there are still many who pass me for being only Pākehā in public due to my facial colouring. I mainly experience this from Pākehā, which may be due to European norms of judging people by their skin colour. I identify with what some here call being a 'day-lighter' (a white Māori), or as 'white-passing.' I am no exception in te ao Māori in that it is well-known that most Māori have Pākehā ancestry as well. But, when in public and I sometimes meet strangers in Aotearoa, and, especially when I am overseas, I am judged to be a white man first and foremost (I have hardly ever been recognised as being Māori overseas and have often avoided the topic out of self-protection from feeling tired of explaining myself). In my experience, this comes on top of me growing up in mainly urban Pākehā contexts, with the privileges of being white and cis-male and, in Judith Butler's terms, being policed (1996) into a feeling of imposter-syndrome as being a 'Plastic Māori' (Taylor, 2021), or being 'not Māori enough' and 'failing as a Māori' in my way of being. And, yet, at times, I have experienced identifying as Māori when it comes to talking about my whakapapa, especially when in contexts with other Māori, such as around iwi/hapū settings. (Even so, I do feel vulnerable at times for not growing up knowing my whakapapa – here comes the imposter syndrome again….)

There is, therefore, for me, in my experience, a continual oscillation about being Māori, not Māori, Pākehā and not Pākehā, as something that is never fixed. It can be described as one of Jacques Derrida's notion of *différance*, whereby that which is written also refers to what it is not, its opposite, both and neither simultaneously, beyond any fixed definition (Derrida, 1978, p. 374; Derrida, 1982, p. 317, pp. 322-327). To be sliding between Māori and Pākehā is also I propose something that slips through a range of emotions and possibilities, unproductive and productive, all of these and neither at the same time. I experience loss and trauma about disconnection from my tūpuna (ancestors) and their ways, but I celebrate what they have given me from both my Māori and Pākehā sides. It is for me what Georgina

Tuari Stewart notes of the intersections of the Māori and Pākehā worlds for many of us who reside there, like her, as continually being in a site of liminality, what Homi Bhabha (2021) has termed a 'third space' as a location of hybrid potentialities (pp. 25-26) where the cultures are very often interwoven. (This can be seen to echo the Chicando and Spanish American notion of Nepantla, as a space of slippery multiple cultural identities and potentialities [Anzaldúa, 1987; Black, 2014].)

Accompanying this sense of cultural third space are the tensions, slippages and often fluid play between what Stewart (2021) calls the cultural imperialism of European coloniality and Māori romanticism. It is where one may choose an imperial track, with cultural practices and tactics shaped by colonial conditioning, like the use of te reo Pākehā (the English language) in this text, just as she outlines in her own writing. Or, one may steer towards a sense of romanticism, by striving to recover and whakahoki (return) to Māori ways of being always in the world. Stewart (2021) notes how she swims between both currents to navigate that which they each offer depending on the context, which is the same as mine. Like with Stewart's writing, using English as an example of Pākehā knowledge and tools can be useful to connect with others, not Māori and Māori who don't speak much of our language, to begin to convey Māori notions, despite the two languages being well-known to not neatly match in translation, building education and understanding between our points of difference in the third space. Where this sense of third space can move beyond is the ongoing, pervasive slippage of what many call (and I propose as) white supremacy, such as the notion that mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) is not science (Hikuroa & Parke, 2021; Stewart, 2021). Mātauranga Māori and Pākehā dominated schools of knowledge like Western science are well known to inform each other in Aotearoa, such as in making significant developments in kauri dieback research (Harvey & McEntee, 2023), showing how a sense of the third space can be productive. As Stewart shows in her writing, it is not a place where Māori knowledge is ignored or subsumed by Pākehā perspectives if we are to move past the binaries towards a more tolerant, mutually respectful and mana-enhancing way of operating. (Mana refers to authority, prestige, power, charisma, spiritual power, influence and status, among other meanings.) I propose that this approach calls for a sense of the following:

> Ka mua, ka muri. (Whakatauki, i.e., Māori proverb: 'look back to move forward')

This whakatauki proposes respecting and working with the kaupapa (processes, approach and ways, among other things) of our Māori tupuna, while responding to and adapting to new ideas and at times taking them on. As some Māori oral traditions tell us, many of our tūpuna saw Pākehā ideas as useful, illustrating that it is possible to operate in the third space between Māori and Pākehā knowledge, so

long as mātauranga Māori is not trampled over and discarded as Māori have been widely known to experience and authors like Stewart warn us about.

Māui and Productive Idiocy

Before exploring some art projects in relation to belonging and not belonging in this, at times fluid cultural intersection, I propose reflecting here on a pūrākau (origin story) to do with the demi-god Māui, passed down by many Māori tūpuna while weaving in Pākehā theory around the concept of idiocy order to further conceptually 'set the scene' for them. I present this framework here because idiocy can be a way to navigate the the third space via reflecting on and creating new knowledge through art making as artistic research (Slager, 2021).

There is a long Western tradition of writing about idiocy, tracing back to the Ancient Greeks. They framed it as 'Ideōtēs,' a naïve person without professional skills who avoids public affairs (Sansi, 2020, p. 266), residing in fantasy (Baker, 2007, p. 508), in search of a sense of utopia (Sansi, p. 252). The central modus operandi for Dada artists, to Roger Sansi, was where they 'renounced their academic knowledge and skill, to become amateurs, who engaged with the world through chance' (p. 266). Sansi (2020) adds that the idiot avoids rationalisation, dissenting by resisting 'consensus' (p. 252).

Despite how these perspectives of idiocy might appear to make it seem reductionist and unproductive, I propose that together they can be seen as aspects of how it potentially resists normative perspectives that may abuse and curtail human and Indigenous rights, including cultural binaries and what Stewart calls colonial imperialism, like the tactics of white supremacy and its accompanying hate speech, as well as climate denial and market rationalist activities that are well known to now cause pollution. Art as idiocy can guide us in reflecting on, questioning and coping with such potentially repressive and abusive cultural practices through its playful resistance, often with humour as a tactic. Artworks with idiocy in this way can be, as Simon Baker argues, a mirror to societal norms presenting alternative perspectives, like Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, René Magritte's paintings of cows, John Heartfield's critiques of Nazi's and Paul McCarthy's video works that problematise dominant conservative American family values (Baker, 2007).

A not-too-dissimilar perspective of idiocy may be located in Māori oral traditions with heahea (idiocy) in relation to the pūrākau of 'Māui the Trickster.' Māui (who is known across many Polynesian cultures), also known as Māui-tikitiki-o-Taranga can be seen to have operated in a place of belonging and not belonging by being both in the atua (gods) realm and the human one but perhaps neither simultaneously. He is well known in te ao Māori to be a 'shapeshifter' (Waipara, 2022), to often be seen to make false promises to trick and deceive others.[2] He was known to 'play dumb' to others, 'giving them enough rope to hang themselves' to reveal and/or create significant aspects of our lives today. In that

sense he can be seen to operate through productive idiocy. An example is the pūrākau, where he deceived the fire-God Mahuika to obtain fire and fool his brothers into taking him fishing in order for him to show up their arrogance by fishing up Te Ika-a-Māui (the North Island of Aotearoa) into existence (where all of the works written about are located).

I propose Avital Ronnell's (2005) reflections on Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* (2001) are in some ways aligned with the pūrākau of Māui. One aspect of this is how Ronell emphasises 'testing' – in the application of Nietzsche's call for experimentation as an aspect of idiocy and its uncovering of conditions of possibility. The idiotic test-writer for Ronell (2005, p.10) engages in playing the fool, endless and simultaneous questioning, reaffirming and failure, in the spirit of discovery. (Who is to say that Māui did not operate this way.) Failure, from this perspective, can come in many shapes, like breaking expectations and promises, lies, the fall of truth and deception – all things Māui is also still known for. This version of experimentality is one that promises its promises *only as promises* (Ronell 2005, pp.153, 224). For Ronell, promises, despite what one may expect of them, cannot guarantee their fulfilment – as many have experienced, promises can be broken. Art and live art projects (experimental and conceptual arts that engage with performance in the 'expanded field' [Harvey, 2011]) that operate through this perspective make promises that they can never guarantee to fulfil. They cannot, from this perspective, operate in didactic or binary ways, perhaps making them ideal for third-space hybrid and fluid cultural engagement and responses. Additionally, as Ronell observes, idiotic testing incorporates the 'test-writer's' (or one's own) sense of personality and passions. Testing is always linked to her with one's sense of identity, including culture and politics, like the slippage of being Māori and Pākehā – including in artistic research. The allowance for an inclusion of personality coupled with endless questioning, affirming and failure in idiotic art tests can generate slippages through the potential of mistakes and slippery playfulness to reveal much about the structures of colonial and positivist norms, in addition, to offer alternatives in thinking that Western art might otherwise ignore.

Layered with this perspective of idiocy in this third space, I propose notions of productive power dynamics (Foucault 1980, pp. 134–140). As Michel Foucault notes, power is the ability or process of influencing the events and behaviours of others. This sense of causality and influence can be seen to be productive. This can be perceived as positive, negative and neither, everywhere humanity resides, including the contexts and sites of art/live art projects (such as the examples discussed below). Engaging with productive notions of power can have the potential to colonise, to oppress and even empower voices of resistance to oppressive colonial norms. Mark Haugaard, who critiques Foucault's notion that power is a one-way, 'top-down' process, proposes instead that it can be multidirectional in its fluidity (2022, pp. 341-450) – there can be more than one mode of power operating simultaneously, as I propose the following art projects

activate. This perspective may be seen to add to Ronell and Māui's notions of idiocy a conscious consideration of power that may build even more awareness about cultural-political contexts and new insights –as productive idiocy.

Maungataketake

Figure 1
Maungataketake

Note. Video still from Langdon & Hobbs (2016). Copyright 2016 by Martin Langdon and Rebecca Hobbs. Reprinted with permission.

Maungataketake (2016), by Martin Awa Clarke Langdon and Rebecca Ann Hobbs, with camera work by Ralph Brown, is a 5-minute video where, in collaboration, the artists perform with a three-dimensional sculptural rendering that they have created of the now demolished *Maungataketake* maunga (mountain) in Ihumātao, Māngere, Auckland. The sculpture, while perhaps looking like a giant version of a plastic building block out of a *Lego Duplo* catalogue, with its shiny green finish, is based on the contour maps of the now-lost volcanic cone. Perhaps reminiscent of generations of slapstick TV shows, Hobbs and Langdon are holding the sculpture at each end and walking back and forward as though they are trying to work out where best to have in front of the camera, referring to where the mountain used to be, but appear to not make their mind up. Perhaps in the spirit of the Ancient Greek story of Sisyphus, it 'seems hopeless' and rather than giving up, the video stops and loops back to the beginning in the St Paul St art gallery space where it has been shown, along with other collaborative artworks between Hobbs and other Māori artists with a focus on Ihumātao – it can now be seen at Circuit Aotearoa's web site (Hobbs & Langdon, 2023; with a further conversation on the same web site; see

Langdon, Hobbs, Matata-Sipu, 2020). It can be read as though nobody knows where the mountain was anymore. In Hobbs's (2018) words,

> The *Maungataketake* artwork was made in consultation with mana whenua and, as noted earlier, in collaboration with the artist Martin Awa Clarke Langdon. We came to the joint conclusion that retrospective attempts to rebuild destroyed maunga were absurd and analogous to rubbing salt into the wound for mana whenua. Our kōrero (conversations) circled around the different and multiple perspectives that different communities have with the maunga and the different logics that are applied to them, illustrating how sites are often 'doubly inhabited by often irreconcilable cultural positions' (Rogoff, 2013, p. 110). The directing choreographic kaupapa for this collaborative performance work was jointly written with Martin and guided by mana whenua: *Thinking about perspective, proximity and connection whilst vainly rebuilding Maungataketake one absurd step at a time.* (pp. 13-14)

As many note, the loss of the maunga, just as with the loss of Māori land, in general, has caused intergenerational trauma for mana whenua (a contemporary term catalysed by Crown legal processes, for the iwi who have mana and jurisdiction over the area of land, in this case, the members of Makaurau Marae amongst others; Taonui, 2019, Walker, 2004). The destruction of the maunga occurred after the land of Ihumātao was confiscated (raupatu – and, to many of us Māori, stolen) by the Crown in 1863 in response to many tangata whenua (Indigenous people of the land, Māori) participating in the New Zealand wars against the Crown's abuses of many Māori at the time (Scottie Productions, 2021; Walker, 2004; Anderson, 2015). Maunga, for Māori, especially mana whenua, are usually considered sacred and to be tūpuna, so the loss of this one, with their ancestral urupā (graveyard) on the back of the loss of the surrounding whenua and maunga confiscations and the resultant economic disenfranchisement has been deeply traumatic for them. Perhaps fuelling the grief, the rocks from the destruction of the maunga were used for the runway of Auckland airport in the 1960s (Scottie Productions, 2021), and so the airport's existence can be a constant reminder of the loss. Building on the sense of collective hurt have been repeated efforts to rebuild this and other maunga and, in this case, with human faeces (ibid). The situation came to a head when the landowners of some of the most sacred areas of this land (who received this land from the Crown after it was confiscated several generations ago) sold it to housing developers for a sub-division for mainly wealthy people, causing divisions between the mana whenua when some supported this (to receive some cheap housing), while many did not. The latter group, represented by Te Wai o Huia, including iwi members such as Pania Newton, began a public protest campaign to stop the building of houses on the sacred land and to protect it for perpetuity under mana whenua control,[3] with the SOUL (Save Our Unique Landscape; Latiff, 2020).

In my own experience of having friends on both sides of the situation, there were tensions and vulnerabilities for all involved. This included multiple simultaneous slippages of perceptions and feelings of fear, trauma, anger and belonging and not belonging for all, including the Pākehā and Māori from outside who supported the SOUL campaign in their role as manuhiri (guests). The SOUL campaign has been part of a long tradition of land rights activism, with Māori seeking to gain stolen land back from Pākehā and the Crown (often with the support of others). Hobbs and Langdon's project can be seen to blur between its mana whenua connections and sense of being manuhiri, with Langdon having whakapapa through Tainui iwi to the site (as Tainui also claim rights there, yet they do not have ahi kā, 'keeping the home fires there') and Hobbs, as Pākehā. It has been part of a response in support of the SOUL campaign and, just as Hobbs notes above, has been developed with guidance by these iwi members as a way of 'getting their message out' to the world and perhaps using humour as a way of reflecting on the absurdity of the loss and perhaps as a way of coping with it (by ridiculing the colonial process of destroying the maunga).

While the work is consciously attempting to operate within a hyphen space of cultural responsiveness and giving space and voice to Māori perspectives (in application of Jones and Jenkins; Hobbs, 2018), Hobbs and Langdon, I propose, are engaging with productive idiocy in this sense of third space. It is a space of Māori and Pākehā, of belonging and not belonging, as a Māori and Pākehā, as a project slipping between the wishes of Māori and the strong arm of Pākehā colonial legal processes, as well as both and neither simultaneously. Besides the serious nature of the subtext in this work, it could be seen simply as a humorous video – in line with Ronell's call for testing Hobbs and Langdon incorporate their sense of personality via this humour. The apparent idiocy in the work can be seen to help people from the outside access the political issues at hand if they are enticed to enquire into why these artists are doing this. We may also be reminded here of how Māui fished up Te Ika o Māui (The North Island) and how absurd it may have seemed to his brothers, yet it was successful – in *Maungataketake*, Hobbs and Langdon appear to try and promise magically 'fishing the mountain up to the surface,' with their giant green Duplo block, only to fail (Ronell might be very excited by this sense of experimental failure). The absurdity of Hobbs and Langdon's video can be seen to effectively generate layers of insights in the spirit of productive idiocy while simultaneously questioning the colonial processes and affirming the feelings and perspectives of mana whenua around this loss and injustice. One could say 'it was the best they could do' to bring back the mountain, through the 'Te Tiriti space,'[4] rather than be able to fix it.…

As a coda to this years-long protest campaign SOUL, the government purchased the Ihumātao land that was sold to developers and gifted it back to the iwi in 2021. The land is now under mana whenua control, and they are undergoing a process of internally resolving what to do with the land. The video *Maungataketake*, along

with the rest of Hobbs's (2018) art practices, can be seen to be part of a string of forms of public activism that helped to build momentum and public awareness around the campaign to save the sacred land, including her later street protest she has organised for SOUL later in 2017.

Nans Home

It's a warm, sunny spring day, and James Tapsell-Kururangi has invited a small handful of guests, including myself, to travel hundreds of kilometres to the suburban hot-spring 'tourist-mecca' city of Rotorua to join him in *Nans* [sic] *Home* (2018; with no apostrophe). The structure of this live art/artwork is simple: we hang out with James at his childhood home, his grandmother's house in a suburb of Rotorua, have conversations and share stories about his childhood and Nana, have some of the meringue pie cooked before we arrive, and banana cake sliced in half, and we can take ourselves on a tour of the home. In Tapsell-Kururangi's (2018) words,

> Grief is not a happy story. It tells of tragedy, of loss and emptiness. My grandmother's house will soon be subjected to the same neoliberal forces that commodified my childhood home into an Airbnb. The archetype of the domestic house or family home allows a private domesticity, an atmosphere of time spent in the kitchen, or in the living with family. Love, lemon meringue pie cooked before arriving home, banana cake sliced in half to share. I *long* for time alone and travel home. I *dream* of places we no longer own and hold onto love. (p. 4)

Tapsell-Kururangi's grandmother has passed away some months beforehand, and all her furnishings are left in place, and the 1970s-era house is, at the time of this performance, an Air B&B for anyone to hire. It is as though she still lives there with the sound of the clock in the kitchen ticking. Yet, despite Tapsell-Kururangi's sense of belonging, the loss of his grandmother and the subsequent commercialisation of her home to the public corporate realm is something he has simultaneously inferred not belonging to. From my own experience as a participant-spectator, it appears that we are being taken along a journey of nostalgia for him –that simulates his experiences of going home to his Nana's home, perhaps even almost detail for detail. And yet, we, like him, are guests.

Nans home can be seen to use productive idiocy within Tapsell-Kururangi's personal sense of third spacing through Māori and Pākehā modes of being and operating. Through his deceased grandmother, he is Pākehā, and, from his other family, he is Māori, yet both cultural locations and neither simultaneously shape this artwork. The framing of his art project can be seen to be Pākehā with its English title, neo-colonial 1970/1980s decor and contemporary visual art framing (it was part of Massey University's Visual Arts department programme). The work has promised us something grand by having us travel to it from other parts of the

country. But, when we arrive, and, after serving cake, he tells us, ‘That’s it, that’s the work,’ one might at first see it as a failure in confirming with the materialistic norms of white-cubed colonial (mainly Pākehā influenced) market-centred art modernism (‘what, he did no painting or sculpture?’). Despite his affirmations of colonial Pākehā art institutionalism in the work’s framing, we are instead guided through a Māori-influenced process of manaakitanga with his hospitality towards us. While the work may be seen through the lens of being ‘social sculpture’ or ‘social practice’ with its attempts to engage with the ‘everyday’ (Bishop, 2012; De Certeau, 1984) by affirming Western contemporary mainly Pākehā-dominated capitalist art institutional norms and power structures (of white privilege, for instance), I propose it simultaneously aims to question this through his manaakitanga and therapeutically sharing of his grief with us, applying a form of ‘rest as resistance’ (Hersey, 2022). In doing so, it may be seen to attempt to ‘rest from’ and avoid the driving forces of having to produce a cultural artifact in the style of the normative modernist colonial art canon by inviting us to ‘rest a little’ and take as long as we want to hang out with him and eat cake and reflect, with the sound of his Nan’s kitchen clock ticking.

By blurring daily life and manaakitanga with art, Tapsell-Kururangi’s tactics of productive idiocy here may also be seen to remind us that the notion of art is a colonial construct, so it can be fraught to expect there to be a ‘Māori artform’ as such. While there has long been whakairo (carving), raranga (weaving) and many other forms of Māori cultural practice we now consider to be art forms, they were only named as being artforms once Europeans arrived. The word ‘toi,’ which is commonly associated with the arts, that many use as a word for art, actually refers to the mastery of something (there was no word for art in Māori until European colonisation).Tapsell-Kururangi, I propose, brings to this sense of third space a simultaneous oscillation between the past and the present in addition to the colonial Pākehā and Māori, and he uses grief and nostalgia in *Nans Home* towards. He adds:

> Longing is an underlying tenet of Mātauranga Māori. It can be a Māori phrase, i-ngā-rā-o-muā, an enduring weaving of the past into the present. What is the art of dreaming? Dreams are powerful political ideology which shapes the way nations live. For an artist, it is a queer question of living with his emotions. Living with his family’s oral histories. I grieve the loss of my grandmother and watch her home slowly become another. Observing the surrounding maelstrom of contemporary politics. Taking notice and resisting any conclusion. (Tapsell-Kururangi, 2018, p. 5)

After some hours, having all of us agreed that it feels like we’re content with our exchanges, dreams of home, imaginings of his Nan and our own associations with our grandmothers, we are all driven away by him.

Whakahoki te Paoro

> What are those guys doing in their gumboots mummy? (Passerby, *Whakahoki te Paoro*, 2021: a child staring at the performance from a farmhouse balcony we walk past)

It's a cold winter morning. I'm walking along a road with a newly found friend (a performance participant), and we are chatting away about all sorts of things 'to pass the day by' and taking turns kicking this giant grey ball down the road towards the misty maunga of my tūpunā (Tararua mountain range), that plucks at my nostalgia over what my ancestors in the nearby town used to see. The ball is full of invasive marram grass I have pulled out of Kuku beach here in the Horowhenua (Southwestern North Island coast), which normally suffocates the local sand dunes. The maunga ahead of us is in the mist, and the sound of kicking the ball reminds me of a shotgun in duck hunting season: a loud sound shuddering, echoing and barking not too unfamiliar for the families that live on the surrounding dairy farms, maybe. I am filming it so all the viewers can see and hear later is the ball being kicked like a giant shotgun pallet as the video frame follows it forwards.

Figure 2
Whakahoki te Paoro

Note. Video still from Harvey (2022). Copyright 2016 by the author.

We eventually get tired after about 10 kilometres. This, despite our aim to walk in our *red-band* gumboots (a national rubber boot brand synonymous with farming and rural life) for the full 12 kilometres to the main motorway, State Highway 1. This is in homage to how both my local Māori and Pākehā ancestors would have

(heroically to me) walked for miles through this very same area prior to mechanised transport. We get picked up by a mate, and I deliver the ball to our friend's farm, where the cows, sheep, goats and farm dog appear to play a 'scattergram' game of football with it in the paddock. I have failed to achieve my quest (to walk all the way and deliver it to the motorway roadside), perhaps in homage to what Māui's brothers thought of him and Sansi's writings around the Greek perspective of idiocy referring to being unprofessional. The animals look happy and excited. I have hope that the ball will hold in the marram grass so that it eventually turns it into compost. But, after a day, the cows break into it and eat all the grass. (At least they are happy, I suppose.)

The resultant video and the participatory live action are called *Whakahoki te Paoro* ('Return the Ball,' Harvey, 2022), which is part of a long-term art and ecology project I am doing called *Whakahoki* under the guidance of Huhana Smith (Ngāti Tukorehe iwi) as a curator, on behalf of Ngāti Tukorehe (as it is situated in their whenua, Kuku). It is also part of *Tu Waitū i ā Nuku: Drawing Ecologies* (2023). *Tu Waitū i ā Nuku* is a Māori-led project with a series of artworks made by Māori and Pākehā artists in Kuku that is being presented in a range of contexts outside of the area, such as the Govett Brewster (2022-2024). With this work (*Whakahoki te Paoro*), I propose a productive idiotic test to trial a smaller version of what I aim to be a three-metre-in-diameter compost ball of marram grass that participants and I will fill up on the sand dunes and roll out to State Highway 1, to 'give it back.' We will subsequently replace the grass with native species on the dunes with the aim of returning them back to health. Questions and affirmations for me remain about the work in that I have used a plastic tarpaulin and gaffer tape for this ball. While I have since recycled it in a soft-plastic recycling bin, will it really be positive for the environment in the long-term due to how whatever it is made into runs the risk of eventually producing microplastics when that, in turn, breaks down, which are well-known now to be toxic for soils and waterways? It might and it might not, both and neither continuously. Perhaps this is compounded by how we are picked up by our friend in their ute for the last two kilometres of the performance, further creating pollution. Nonetheless, the failures of this 'silly ball performance' to 'do good all round' for the environment may, in contrast to my original intentions, just invite us to reflect on 'humanity's dangerous exploitation of the natural world 'we make nature' as we used to 'make history' (Randerson, 2018, p. 117). I propose it can also be seen to draw attention to the slipperiness of the play and tugs of war in ideas, theories, beliefs and science in their power to influence our thinking (in this case my own) in relation to the environment. One can argue that, in this age of mass media and frequent misinformation, this could slow down and even derail our attempts to repair the damage we do to te taiao (the environment).

Productive idiocy is attempted throughout this work in how it promises, continually affirms questions, fails and plays with my own attempts to engage

ecologically. While I aim to deliver a 'good' and viable ecological outcome by removing an invasive pest and replacing it, am I just still failing at this work contributing positively to climate change by letting the cows eat it, considering their methane production? Or, both and neither simultaneously in the spirit of Derrida? The cows eating it can be seen to just be a minimal ecological problem, but they could serve to remind us about the local habitat destruction and pollution caused by local monocultural dairy farming by Pākehā and Māori farmers alike. This sense of failure I am experiencing over this is I propose leading to insights and perhaps ways to engage in the next iterations of this test project to avoid it. (I will not give the next iteration of this work to the cows next time, I promise myself....)

While the work perhaps tugs at usually Pākehā championed New Materialist perspectives around the human and non-human, I aim to consider it through the mātauranga Māori perspective whereby we tāngata (people) are never separate at all from nature. There is here, I propose, a continual entanglement, tussle and two and throwing between being Pākehā and Māori, which this subsequent attempt and conceptualisation is an instance of. While I aim to restore the beach-side whenua to its health and to the satisfaction of mana whenua, I am haunted by how the local ecological destruction has been caused by both Pākehā and sometimes Māori farmers, while this is simultaneously undergoing attempts to heal it by Māori and Pākehā, as agents of continually questioning and affirmations, both and neither. I intend for the image of the giant shotgun pallet on the video to remind the viewer of the colonial injustices over these lands towards Ngāti Tukorehe and other iwi/Hapū like our own. (Ngāti Tukorehe are currently in a court case to protect their burial sites in Kuku from wealthy Pākehā land developers, and they have a Te Tiriti o Waitangi Tribunal claim in process over historic Crown injustices as I write this (or legal case against the government through the tribunal that adjudicates abuses to Māori that are in breach of the founding nation state treaty). The shotgun reference is also I propose a play on the destruction being caused to our shared tūpuna, with how Pākehā landowners are still attempting to cut away at our maunga with stone quarries (which is traumatic for many local iwi in this region, something I feel in my stomach). Yet, it could also, at the same time, be a reminder of what damage many of us Māori are doing to our local region's environment with farming and transport pollution.

As implied here, my own identity and sense of belonging and not belonging are deeply at play here. This is the geographic region where both my Māori and Pākehā tūpuna settled and lived in the 19th century (with our Māori ancestors as mana whenua in areas on each side of Kuku on the West Coast of Tararua maunga, with shared relations with Ngāti Tukurehe I and others understand), so I am inextricably linked to this whenua as a neighbour. But, yet, because my ancestors moved away from here such a long time ago (over 100 years ago), I am very much a guest and do not belong here at the same time (and as manuhiri in Kuku) – I do,

and I don't, both and neither at the same time. While I aim to create humour at times here, it's also a place of vulnerability in these ways for me, as the sound of the shotgun pallets reverberates throughout the valley.

Conclusion

> Well, at least you tried. (My uncle, 1982)

Each of the three artworks, *Maungataketake* by Hobbs and Langdon, *Nans Home* by Tapsell-Kururangi and *Whakahoki te Paoro,* are explorations I propose into simultaneously traversing the notions of Māori and Pākehā belonging and not belonging. They may be, as Stewart reminds us of, the third space, where Māori and Pākehā worlds interact, play and swap over simultaneously to provide insights and new understandings into the contexts and sites in which they are each situated. While they all differ significantly in their details, they each can be seen to engage with productive idiocy in ways perhaps Māui the Trickster might be proud of, or not, towards generating political and cultural insights, albeit, through the art-as-activism of Hobbs and Langdon, the manaakitanga at Tapsell-Kururangi's *Nans Home* or the ecological question marks around my own gumboot-kicking. In each of these works, there are promises unfulfilled, continual questions about colonial-style politics and affirmations about mātauranga Māori concepts, like land rights, hospitality and ecology. Each of the works proposes different outcomes, with Hobbs and Langdon aiming to achieve the return of the land to mana whenua at Ihumātao, a sharing of nostalgia and grief in Tapsell-Kururangi's Nana's now corporatised house and the healing of the whenua in Kuku. The artists in all of them incorporate what Ronell would call their sense of personality to engage with their respective topics, which can be seen to significantly shape 'the funny' for Hobbs, Langdon and I and the cathartic for Tapsell-Kururangi. Each of these is also artistic research that may only serve to be sprinkles of reflection on the wider political issues that they explore. But, in doing so, their productive idiocy with perspectives in mātauranga Māori might just assist us with understanding, coping and dealing with these political issues. Just as perhaps Māui helped us by finding a home for us on this island (so to speak).

Perhaps this way of approaching and reflecting on the arts might assist us in how we see and address other aspects of our lives, like climate change, inequality and so forth – these are just what-ifs, and I do not mean to invoke the likes of 1980s rich international pop singers like *Band Aid* here, who can be seen to 'say all the right things' to save the world but only end up going to live in their holiday luxurious homes off their six-figure royalties, with nothing changed in the world. But I am forever hopeful and even if these tests fall over, I propose it can be more effective to 'give it a go' than to give up in this time of great environmental and socio-political change. As Derrida once said, 'we owe the world a debt' (1999).

Ko te reo hapa ka taea te whakatika,
Ko te reo ngū e kore e taea
(Whakatauki, Māori proverb: 'Spoken mistakes can be corrected, but unspoken ones cannot')

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Notes

1. I identify amongst other lineages as being of Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga iwi and Scottish Clan Keith descent.
2. The concept of the trickster and creater of realms and things for Indigenous people is not limited to the Pacific, as noted by Bayo Akamolafe (2023).
3. Others in this group included Bobbi-Jo Pihema, Moana Waa, Haki Wilson, Qiane Matata-Sipu, Pania Newton and Waimarie Rakena McFarland (Latif, 2020).
4. 'Te Tiriti space' is a common slang saying referring to the ongoing relationship between Māori and tangata tiriti (all others) that Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) as the founding nation state document of Aotearoa.

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