Te Okiokinga Mutunga Kore – The Eternal Rest

Investigating Māori Attitudes towards Death

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Ki ōku tīpuna, tōku whānau, ōku hoa kua wehe atu ki te pō. He rangahau tēnei hei whakamaumahara i a koutou. Moe mai i roto i ō koutou okiokinga mutunga kore. Moe mai, moe mai rā.
Abstract

Te Aria

Metaphorically entitled as ‘te okiokinga mutunga kore’, ‘the eternal rest’, this thesis addresses the research question ‘what are Māori attitudes to death?’, specifically experienced by three major cohorts of people; working professionals, those in education and Māori cultural practitioners, and explains how their environments have shaped their view of death.

These attitudes are shaped through upbringing and belief, thus, this thesis re-tells Māori mythological beliefs of origins of death, discusses key tikanga Māori (Māori customary concepts) and their importance within traditional and contemporary Māori death rituals, which, in turn, forms the unique attitudes that Māori have towards death.
Figure 1: Map of New Zealand outlining Māori tribal boundaries

Map sourced from University of Auckland Library Website (Sullivan, 2009: Online).
Acknowledgements

He Mihi

“He ora te whakapiri”
“Strength in unity”

(Brougham & Reed, 2003: 135)

This whakataukī (proverb) shows that I could not have completed this research without the help of the many people that pulled me along the way to this finished product. They are my ‘strength’, my backbone, which enabled the submission of this thesis. Thank you all immensely.

Firstly, I would like to thank my participants and their invaluable thoughts: anatomy students, widows, regular tangihanga attendees as well as the embalmer and funeral director. You form the flesh of this research and I am eternally grateful. Tēnā rawa atu koutou.

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Methodology

Kaupapa Māori Framework

Due to this research being founded on Māori attitudes to the body after death, interviews were undertaken to gain insight into these attitudes. With reference to the process of interviewing and using humans as research subjects, Te Tumu, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, places strong emphasis on the ideology that research done with Indigenous communities, including Māori, should be conducted in a manner that is culturally appropriate and treats the participants with the utmost respect and dignity whilst interviewing. Reference to numerous literature regarding Kaupapa Māori Research and Māori Ethics, such as Mead (2003, *Tīkanga Māori: Living by Māori Values*), Smith (1999, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*) and Bishop (1996, *Collaborative Research Stories: Whakawhanaungatanga*) validated that Kaupapa Māori Research is research that is conducted by Māori for the benefit of Māori. This research therefore follows this philosophy and the framework used is now explained.

Kaupapa Māori is described as being a “body of knowledge accumulated by the experiences through history, of the Māori” (Nepe, 1991: 4). The Kaupapa Māori framework is therefore, a method that ensures that the Māori knowledge gained, is obtained, researched and handled in a way that does not distort its meaning, ensures its safety, and ensures the safety of those generous enough to gift that knowledge. This framework is an independent one that does not align to Western methods of research, as it is Māori knowledge that is the focus, therefore an independently Māori framework should be used to better reflect the data obtained. In the
instance of this research, knowledge obtained was carried out by a Māori researcher, Māori participants were used, and the end product is aimed at benefitting Māori, therefore the Kaupapa Māori framework was essential (Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006: 331).

This framework is governed by the Māori language (*te reo Māori*), Maori custom (*tikanga Māori*) and based upon *mātauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge) which affords a cultural framework determined and defined by Māori (Pihama, 2010: 5). Alongside the methodological approach outlined in the Te Tumu Post-Graduate Handbook (explained later), innate systems and methods were used to maintain the integrity of the research as well as those researched. These systems describe the collective and autonomous nature that Māori research is underpinned by, namely; *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty, self-determination, governance), recognition of the Māori world view, *te reo Māori* and whānau (Walker et al., 2006: 335).

*Tino rangatiratanga* describes the research being owned and maintained by the collective rather than merely the researcher, thus, it is owned by all those who have contributed (large or small) to the finished product. This principle also ensures Māori cultural protocols and beliefs are kept in mind throughout the entire research process. Māori perceive knowledge as being highly specialised and *tapu* (restricted, sacred), and only a select few would have the ability to research, gain, and access knowledge. The participants are also entrusting the researcher with this knowledge, and therefore this knowledge must not be mis-used, but must be respected and protected.
The principle of whānau enables Māori researchers to gain a more in-depth view into those researched. Participants and researchers that have an already established rapport, such as a link by family or friend, find themselves more comfortable in talking with the researcher as they know they can feel safe, their information will not be misrepresented, and they have the ability to be entirely truthful, resulting in a more rounded piece of research.

The final value that is important within the Kaupapa Māori framework is te reo Māori. Te reo Māori has the ability to unlock doors to histories, values and beliefs that are often closed to those who do not understand the language (Walker et al., 2006: 334). With an understanding of te reo Māori there is less mis-interpretation of data, because, Māori terms are often not fully defined or understood with the use of the English language alone, such as mana (prestige, status, authority, rank), tapu and noa (unrestricted, free from tapu). Therefore te reo Māori is a very helpful tool into more meaningful research.

Personally, the principles of this framework are already mentally and physically instilled into a Māori mindset, however, outlining these concepts identifies the level of connection and proper practice that are associated with Māori research. The principles of tino rangatiratanga, whānau and te reo Māori shape the Kaupapa Māori framework, and conforming to this framework ensures the ethically correct treatment and use of such knowledge.

Furthermore, the relevance and appropriateness of the following guidelines provided in the Te Tumu Post-Graduate Handbook also proved worthy.
1. The Indigenous community must be consulted about the nature of the research and it is important that they are in agreement that the research may be conducted;

2. All research on or about Indigenous Peoples must be mutually beneficial to that community and the researcher;

3. The researcher, in conducting research in an Indigenous field, has an obligation to regularly inform, consult and update that community throughout the course of the research including the research methodology to be employed and the outcomes of the research;

4. The researcher recognises the honour and privilege of accessing Indigenous knowledge. It should be recognised that some people who may contribute to the research may be chronologically young, but their wisdom is valuable. To adopt an attitude as a researcher that one is merely a vehicle for the expression of Indigenous knowledge in an academic context, provides a sound basis from which to work among Indigenous communities;

5. The researcher accepts unconditionally that there are reciprocal obligations to the Indigenous community in agreeing to their research to proceed. The obligation may well be in terms of unpaid time to undertake a task or several tasks requiring academic expertise for their community. This is based on the Māori notion:

   Nō te kopu kotahi
   i kai tahi, i moe tahi,
   i mahi tahi

6. The researcher observes Indigenous protocol at all times in the context of conducting research and allows for this in the preparation of their design. This includes the set timeframe not only to negotiate access to the sources of Indigenous knowledge and collect data, etc., but also to take into consideration those cultural events and practices which are mostly unplanned. In the Māori world, this may include te whānau mai o te tamaiti, hura kōhatu, tangihanga, te rā o te tekuau mā rua, poukai, kawe mate, whakataetae, pōhiri, manuhiri, hui, and ngahau. The researcher must be prepared to participate if that is the expectation of the Indigenous community;

7. The researcher must acknowledge and cite all sources of knowledge in the text of the research;

8. The researcher, on completion of the research with the Indigenous community, appropriately inform the Indigenous community of the completion of their work in the community and thank them appropriately through koha aroha which may include kai, taonga, etc;

9. The researcher, on completion of the research document, presents a copy of the document to the Indigenous community from which the information was obtained.

(Te Tumu, 2004: 18-19)

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1 We are from the same womb
Eat together, sleep together,
Work together

2 Definitions for terms that are used in direct quotes will appear in the glossary.
This research is founded on a combination of both primary and secondary literature. Because this thesis is limited due to word count, only eight participants were used as interview subjects. The participants were chosen based on having intimate dealings with tūpāpaku and have been categorised into four groups: those exposed to tūpāpaku on a professional level (Embalmer and Funeral Director\(^3\)), those exposed to tūpāpaku on an educational level (Anatomy Students), those exposed to tūpāpaku on an intimate level (Widows) and those exposed to tūpāpaku on a cultural level (Regular Tangi Attendees). Selection criteria also required that participants to be over 18 years of age, they must identify as Māori, and must have attended funerals and/or tangihanga in the past. The participants reside in both North and South Islands of New Zealand and were recruited through personal networks.

**Participant Details**

The descriptions of the participants are provided here in order to enhance the understanding of their answers, and more so their perspectives. Anonymity was requested by the participants and for that reason, measures such as nomenclature in which to identify the participants have been carefully structured in order to uphold this request. Participant biographies are in accordance with their details at the time of the interview. Participants were identified by their gender Wahine (female) or Tāne (male) followed by how they are exposed to the tūpāpaku: either an Anatomy Student, a Widow, a Regular Tangi Attendee, an Embalmer or a Funeral Director. Because there are two participants that identify as Wahine Widow, they will be identified as Wahine Widow 1 and Wahine Widow 2 respectively.

\(^3\) The Embalmer and Funeral Director will be addressed as these respectively as they disliked being referred to with the term Undertaker (further explained in Chapter Four).
Wahine Anatomy Student

Wahine Anatomy Student is 36 years old and was born in a predominantly Māori town in the North Island of New Zealand where she attended school. She later attended a boarding school in Auckland in her secondary school years. Her anatomy background stems from her attendance at the College of Massage in Wellington. She also later completed a Bachelor of Science in Anatomy at the University of Otago.

Tāne Anatomy Student

Tāne Anatomy Student is 25 years old and belongs to the Anglican and Ringatū faiths and was born in a small North Island town of New Zealand. He attended Kōhanga Reo and undertook his primary schooling at a small, predominantly Māori, primary school. He later carried out his intermediate and secondary schooling in Gisborne. Immediately following secondary school he moved to Dunedin to carry out his tertiary education at the University of Otago where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Anatomy and a Bachelor of Pharmacy. He currently works in a pharmacy.

Wahine Widow 1

Wahine Widow 1 is 77 years old and was born in a primarily Māori town in the North Island of New Zealand. She has worked in Auckland and Hastings and was brought up in the Ratana faith but swayed to the Catholic religion to join her late husband. She attended a small Māori school and later attended the local high school in the same area, finishing school at the age of 16 to pursue work. She has no children, was widowed in 1976 and has never
remarried. At present, she is retired and lives and works, mostly voluntarily, within the community in which she was born.

**Wahine Widow 2**

Wahine Widow 2 is 56 years old and was born and raised in a predominantly Māori town and is a staunch member of the Ringatū and Catholic faiths. She went to a Catholic primary school and later attended the local high school in the area. She has worked mainly in Māori and Indigenous organisations where she is currently an administrator and trainer within the education sector. She was widowed in 2005 and has four children.

**Wahine Regular Tangi Attendee**

Wahine Regular Tangi Attendee is 61 years old and was also born and raised in a small, mainly Māori, town where she carried out both her primary and secondary schooling. She is a firm believer of the Catholic faith and also a very frequent tangihanga attendee, claiming to have attended over 1500 tangihanga. She is generally seen, when attending tangihanga, behind the paepae (orator’s bench) as a supporting songstress. She has four children and six grandchildren and currently lives and works in the North Island of New Zealand.

**Tāne Regular Tangi Attendee**

Tāne Regular Tangi Attendee is 20 years old and identifies himself both as Māori and Greek. He attended Kōhanga Reo and attended a small Māori school in his primary school years. He carried out his secondary schooling at both, a school immersed in the Māori language and
tikanga, as well as a mainstream, non-Māori school. He has recently completed a Bachelor’s Degree, is a frequent tangihanga attendee and attempts to attend most tangihanga in his home area having claimed to have attended roughly 300 tangihanga in his life.

Wahine Embalmer

Wahine Embalmer is 53 years old and was baptised as a Christian but has Ringatū upbringings. She was born in a largely Māori town where she attended a small rural primary school, later transferring to the local intermediate school and then the local high school. She has undertaken tertiary studies and has mainly worked within the Kōhanga Reo system before making the change in vocation to an embalmer where she has remained for nine years. She has mostly undergone hands on experience in reference to her embalming education.

Wahine Funeral Director

Wahine Funeral Director is 61 years old and is a member of the Anglican faith. She underwent her primary schooling in a small North Island town in New Zealand. She moved northward in 1961 and immediately enrolled in a small secondary school where its residents were primarily Māori. She has worked in Australia and returned to New Zealand in 1995 to aid in the operations of a funeral home. She has been working as a Funeral Director in this same funeral firm for 15 years.
Ethics

Due to Māori subjects being used, Māori consultation through Otago University was also sought and because this research encompasses an area of human involvement, ethical approval was sought from the University of Otago’s Ethics Committee to ensure the safety of the participants. An information sheet was sent to each participant before the interview took place and upon commencement of the interview a further explanation of the project was provided. Participants were afforded the opportunity to address concerns and ask any additional questions they may have. They were then asked to sign a consent form that ensured their rights and safety, and outlined their ability to withdraw from the interview if they so desired. Most interviews were conducted one-on-one, however, some participants requested the presence of a family member or friend which was permitted. Using a semi-structured interviewing technique, the interviews were recorded and the transcripts were sent back to the participants for inspection and accuracy.

Orthographical Application

Due to this thesis being written in English, italics will be used for all non-English words, except those that occur in direct quotes or as proper nouns. Translations of Māori words will be provided the first time they are used and a list of all non-English words used in this thesis is provided in the glossary. Where applicable, macrons have been used to denote vowel length, except in the case of direct quotes which will be written as they appear in the original source. [sic] will be used to denote spelling mistakes in a direct quote. In the cases of place names and people’s names quoted by the participants I have taken the liberty to maintain their anonymity by coding these places or names with initials. Tūpāpaku, body and corpse

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4 A copy of the information sheet and the consent form are attached in the Appendices (See Appendix A and Appendix B).
will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis, however, the use of the term cadaver\textsuperscript{5} will only be used in accordance with its definition. The terms \textit{tangihanga} and funeral are terms in their own right and are not used interchangeably. They are also further explained in the thesis. Headings throughout chapters will be recognisable by bold and italicised font, their respective sub-headings will be italicised only.

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{5}A cadaver is an entire dead body that is generally used for medical purposes (WiseGeek, 2010: Online).
\end{footnote}
Introduction

*He Tīmatanga Kōrero*

“-death, the undiscover’d country from whose no traveller returns.”

(Shakespeare as cited in Department of Health, 1987)

We introduce death here at the beginning as a means of contextualising the ensuing chapters. This section initiated with Shakespeare’s phrase above, illustrates the finality of death, bluntly described as the place of no return. It also describes death as being an ‘undiscovered country’, an unknown destination. Being part of everyday life, death is the one thing that everybody is affected by, regardless of age, geographical location, social echelon, gender or ethnicity. Death is the axis upon which the behaviour of the living pivots and continues to be referred to as the heart of Māori society.

As defined by the Oxford Dictionary, death is “the state of being dead” and “the end of something” (Hawker, 2004: 174). With this said, the definition of being dead and realising when someone has reached the state of being dead, although seemingly straightforward, has proven to be difficult in a contemporary light (Jones as cited in Leishman, 2009: 2). The medical definition of death is “the failure of the heart and the cessation of breathing”, otherwise known as cardiopulmonary death⁶ (Harvey as cited in Chau & Herring, 2007: 16). Otherwise, death has occurred when the heart stops beating and the lungs stop working and breathing. Without the beating of the heart the body is unable to get oxygen and nutrients to

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⁶ ‘Cardio’ refers to the heart and ‘pulmonary’ refers to the lungs, therefore, cardiopulmonary death is the death of the lungs and heart.
the rest of the body, therefore due to the death of the heart the rest of the body starves and also dies.

However, with the advances of medical technology, this definition may not be enough to encapsulate the definition of death in the current era. With modern advances, people are able to be kept alive without a working heart and lungs, and machines are able to take over the function that an otherwise ‘dead’ person would not be able to. These machines are capable of prolonging life and, although not completely reverse death, are able to give life to the otherwise lifeless. These machines allow the transplantation of vital organs such as hearts, lungs, kidneys and livers, so that people may live longer than what was previously destined for them. With this said, brain death seems to have marked the modern age when defining death. Brain death is the irreversible destruction of the neuronal contents of the intracranial cavity. This includes both cerebral hemispheres, including cortex and deep structures, as well as the brainstem and the cerebellum. An equivalent term is total brain infarction to the first cervical level of the spinal cord ... irreversible neuronal dysfunction is so great that regardless of any supportive measures, irreversible cardiac arrest and death of the adult human being is inevitable within one week. (Korien, 1978: 7)

As stated in the above excerpt, brain death, also known as total brain infarction is the permanent and irreparable damage to the ‘entire’ brain. Infarction refers to the death of a localised area of tissue caused by lack of blood supply, resulting in death. Brain death refers to the ‘total’ destruction of neuronal components in the skull cavity above the first vertebrae of the spinal cord, including the ‘entire’ brain. It is also noted in the passage that, in spite of a person being put on life support, permanent heart failure is predicted within the week of brain death taking place. In this instance, although the person may still be able to breathe and may also show signs of life, medically, the person is pronounced dead.
Death is a topic that can be seen as relatively gloomy and for Māori, it has many attachments to tapu (which will be elaborated on later). In saying that, it is a topic of great personal interest. As a Māori Anatomy Student, I was intrigued about how other people might feel when they came into contact with the dead and/or used human tissues to gain knowledge, thus, this thesis looks at attitudes towards death and the tūpāpaku (corpse), but more specifically, Māori attitudes. Through a Māori lens, the correlation that death and tikanga have is so eminent that even I found myself organically practising such tikanga. While writing this thesis I was aware of the tapu aspect of this topic and this influenced how I handled the research and writing stages of this thesis. Such things included separating work from food and eating establishments as well as photographs and pictures that illustrated the death process. Because of this, no photographs have been included. Interestingly enough, my supervisor has also since advised me that he too consciously separated my work from food.

This research delves into an area that has undergone minimal research in the past, shedding light on some answers of ‘what are Māori attitudes to death?’ Perhaps this has been due to its ubiquitous nature, as quoted by Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, “Maori talked about death all the time … it was the topic least studied by Maori or understood by members of other races” (Waikato Times, 2009). This thesis addresses questions that people are always questioning but perhaps never have a real opportunity or the reassurance to ask. The core theme of this thesis is Māori attitudes to death. People’s experiences in exposures to tūpāpaku provide a core source for this information. Widows, anatomy students, an embalmer, a funeral director and professional mourners act to form foundations of discussion within this research.
Growing interest, deeper research and personal passion and desire to research this topic have motivated this research, that is, to investigate people’s attitudes towards the body after death. The initial aspect that drew me to this research topic, however, was my desire to combine ideas that I had learnt from my BSc (Anatomy) and my BA (Māori) degrees. Upon developing interest and further research into this topic other questions came into light, especially in the case of people who work with tūpāpaku professionally. Personal intrigue led me to thinking about whether they too had coping mechanisms with regard to the tapu associated with the dead body and whether their attitudes to these tūpāpaku did actually differ from a person with exposure to tūpāpaku in a non-professional capacity.

It was during my very first encounter with pro-sections in an anatomy laboratory when learning about the head and neck regions that aroused my interest. I became interested in this particular pro-section lying in front of me. His blackened eyes caught my attention, and drew me to stare at this aged man’s face. Immediately after this incident, his eyes haunted my sleep and as I looked for support from my friends and family and they advised me to carry out karakia (prayer) and whakanoa (tapu removal procedures) such as sprinkling my body with water. This experience further fuelled my desire to research this area for the benefit of other Māori anatomy students and compare my experiences and coping mechanisms with theirs.

In addition, the thought of providing Anatomy Schools in New Zealand with a document as a guideline to be mindful of the Māori culture, especially in recognition of the sensitivity of such a taboo topic, became another consideration. Thus, this document provides a basis to

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7 Portions of human tissue used for educational purposes.
understanding values and traditions important to Māori so that Māori culture can be more valued by the people around them. There may also be potential to transfer this understanding to similar institutions working with tūpāpaku and other Indigenous peoples around the world.

Māori death practices, especially those strongly associated with tangihanga, provide the main comparison and discussion throughout this thesis.

**Key Literary Works**

Many sources of literature have aided this research, especially the historical rituals of death. Special mention must be attributed to Best (1921) and his work entitled *Maori Eschatology*, which provides the basis for comparison of customary death practices and outlines the purpose and importance of their application and maintenance in traditional Māori society.

The same credit must also be afforded to Oppenheim (1973) and his book *Maori Death Customs* as well as Buck’s (1949) *The Coming of the Maori*, as many themes stemmed from the writings in these books. The origins of death in a Māori myth context and the variations that were noted from tribe to tribe were evident in Oppenheim (1973). He wrote about alleviating tapu associated with death. This led discussion of traditional methods and the need for tapu alleviation preservation and disposal of bodies, as well as death rituals such as tangihanga and hahunga (exhumation).
Mead’s (2003) *Tikanga Māori* was also invaluable with concepts of traditional and contemporary Māori society being explained. This literary work became important in discussing tikanga within Māori society.

On a contemporary note, many parallels were obtained using Ngata (2005) and his work *Tikanga Māori – Māori Perspectives*, which focuses on Māori views towards death and how present day Māori professionals view the process of *tangihanga* in comparison to its traditional form. It also acknowledges the idea that Māori culture is fluid and changing, using the practice of *tangihanga* as an example.

Te Puni Kōkiri’s (1999) report *Hauora o te Tinana me ōna Tikanga* also provides interesting and very relevant reading. This report takes into consideration the ideas and thoughts of Māori health professionals as well as *kaumātua* (respected elders). It looks at death within a contemporary framework shedding light on organ donation and legislation such as the *Human Tissue Act 1964* and the *Coroner’s Act 1988* and how these impact on contemporary views.

*Chapter Outline*

Chapter One looks at tikanga and specifically exploring tikanga applied during death. Concepts like *tapu*, *mana*, *noa*, *utu* (revenge, reciprocity) and *aroha* (love, compassion) are major talking points in this chapter.
Chapter Two outlines mythology and its importance in shaping one’s thought processes. This chapter looks at myths associated with death and their importance within the formation of attitudes.

Chapter Three explains traditional Māori death practices such as embalming, cremation, hahunga, primary and secondary burials as well as traditional expressions of grief.

Chapter Four explores contemporary death practices and reasons that prompted the move from traditional practices to its contemporary counterparts. This chapter begins with the arrival of Pākehā\(^8\) and continues on with the establishment of European law and the establishment of health and safety regulations. This chapter also outlines modern forms of death practices and the complexity of tangihanga.

Chapter Five investigates the crux of this thesis, Māori attitudes towards death. This final chapter follows the participants and details some of their most compelling experiences with tūpāpaku and looks at traditional attitudes and how they may, or may not have changed through time.

It is through the combination of my personal experience on marae, learning within laboratory settings, upbringing, and knowledge and values placed on tikanga Māori that this thesis unfolds.

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\(^8\) The first use of Pākehā in treaty documents referred to the British immigrants that settled in New Zealand in the 1800s, however, nowadays the term Pākehā has broadened and can refer to any European person that is living in New Zealand.
Chapter One

Tikanga Māori

“Ko taku iwi tuaroa tēnā”

“That is my backbone”

(Brougham & Reed, 2003: 20)

The above whakataukī refers to the laying down of a challenge, it means to challenge someone to touch one’s backbone if they so dare, as the immense sacredness of the backbone repels one from going near it. This whakataukī represents the focus of this chapter as tikanga which forms the backbone, the main concept within a Māori world view, and guides Māori to act and behave in a manner they believe to be correct. This whakataukī demonstrates the challenge for Māori to maintain tikanga and use it daily, including the instances of death rituals and concepts that surround death.

Tikanga being a major contributor throughout this thesis, it is explained here at the beginning. This chapter looks at the innate nature of tikanga to Māori and how the interview participants apply particular tikanga to death and the tūpāpaku itself. We explore the concept of tapu and its relationship to death, and the protection and safe handling of objects considered tapu. Concepts such as noa, utu, mana, aroha, mauri and wairua and their place within the Māori view of death also provide central topics for discussion.

Māori tradition is inbred with fundamental Māori cultural concepts that are commonly categorised under the title tikanga and/or tikanga Māori. Mead states that “tikanga Māori is
defined in legislation as Māori customary values and practices” and also goes on to assert that this definition alone is not sufficient enough to describe the entirety of what tikanga Māori encompasses (Mead, 2003: 11). When dissected, tikanga can be explained by the root word tika meaning ‘correct’ or ‘right’. Therefore tikanga itself can be described as a ‘rule’, a ‘plan’, a ‘method’, a ‘custom’, a ‘habit’, or a way which seems right in accordance with one’s beliefs (Williams 1971: 416). Thus, when referring to tikanga Māori, simply put, it is the Māori way in which something is carried out, or done ‘according to Māori custom’ (Mead 2003: 11). The Māori culture is bound by tikanga and as stated by Wahine Funeral Director “99.9 percent of her clients are Māori, tikanga occurs naturally” (Pers. Comm., 2009). With reference to Tikanga Māori and death, tapu is the most prominent. Tapu is synonymous with death not only pertaining to deceased Māori, but the deceased of any ethnicity.

Tapu

Tapu is a concept that is difficult to explain; Shirres (1997: 33) describes tapu as formed from two rudiments:

one from reason and the other from faith. Both elements link with tapu and mana. The element from reason sees tapu in its primary meaning as ‘being the potentiality for power’. The element from faith sees tapu as the ‘mana of the spiritual powers’, of Taane [god of the forest], Tangaroa [god of the sea], Tuu [god of war], Rongo [god of cultivated foods] and so on.

This description illustrates the awe that Māori had for the supernatural powers of the atua (gods) or spiritual powers. As a result, Māori followed these rules to ensure everyday operations ran smoothly. Another description explains tapu as a term describing the influence of atua within the universe and over all things animate (people, insects, animals) and inanimate (mountains, rivers, waka [canoe]). It also relates to a system of protective prohibitions or restrictions which control relationships between entities (people, land, environment) and their respective expressions of tapu. (Ka’ai & Higgins, 2004: 18)
These definitions assume that the essence of *tapu* stems from the *atua* and their ability to influence and maintain facilitation over inanimate⁹ and animate elements.

*Tapu* was used as a social ordering tool of traditional Māori. Māori obeyed these rules due to the fear that Māori had of the *atua*, and breaching this *tapu* could potentially have detrimental effects. *Tapu* was used alongside other elements such as the environment, land, animals and insects to ensure these entities lived in harmony with each other. For example, if a certain area or food source was under threat and depletion, that place sanctioned *tapu* and was enforced mainly from the fear Māori had of the *atua*. The resources in that area were placed under *rāhui* (prohibition), and the *rāhui* was removed once those resources had replenished. This reverence shows the strength of *tapu* and the placing of an area under *tapu* demanded the respect of the community which subsequently ensured the natural balance of the universe.

*Tapu* is one concept that permeates tikanga. Attitudes that Māori have towards the importance of *tapu* and tikanga is what guides them in the way they attend and practise daily activities. *Tapu* is the most prominent concept throughout Māori death rites and prior to the establishment of the legal system, *tapu* was the regulator of pre-European Māori society. Most things contain an element of *tapu*, albeit at varying levels, and it is through death that this concept is particularly prominent. If a person was to breach *tapu*, repercussions, sometimes in the form of death, resulted and were addressed through the concept and practise of *utu* (elaborated on further in this chapter).

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⁹ Such importance is also evident in the acknowledgements stating a personal *pepeha* (sayings of tribal identification and include geographical features) with reference to mountains (*maunga*), rivers (*awa*) and canoes (*waka*). An example of the researcher’s personal *pepeha* is seen at the end of the acknowledgements.
The intrinsic tapu of an individual fluctuates during periods of a person’s life. Some examples include the menstruation cycle of a female, the maturation of an individual and tattooing. Hence, during these times, restrictions are placed on the people involved.

The separation of tapu and noa elements, sometimes serve in the interests of pragmatism. For example, menstruating women are advised not to swim in the ocean, because from a sanitary point of view, blood does not mix well with the potential seafood to be gathered, as well as, the ability for sharks to sense blood, which could endanger the life of the menstruating woman and family members swimming (Mead, 2003: 49). The intertwined and holistic nature of the Māori world view also gives rise to the concept of noa. Noa and tapu are complimentary of each other, and are often practised together.

Noa

Noa, in essence, is the state of being ‘normal’, ‘unrestricted’ or “free from the extensions of tapu” (Moorfield, 2004: 237-240). Noa is most commonly coupled with tapu, where noa acts to restore a balance that had once been overturned due to immense tapu (Mead, 2003: 31). Noa is a concept that remedies the harmfulness of things that had been laden with tapu to a state safe enough to be handled. Noa should not be seen as the opposite of tapu, nor should it be viewed as something that exists with the absence of tapu. Noa should rather be seen as a complimentary concept to tapu.

The tapu of death blankets not only the deceased, but everyone and everything associated through contact with that deceased member such as the spouse and children, the siblings of
the deceased as well as all property that was owned, worn or linked to that member. Thus, during death, precautionary measures of ensuring that items are not ‘contaminated’ by this tapu are taken.

The process of whakanoa is the act of making something more ‘noa’ by tapu removal. Whakanoa is essential in neutralising something, or someone immersed in tapu and although something can never be completely free of tapu, the process of whakanoa is necessary to make something safe enough to work with, manipulate or utilise once again (Barlow, 1991: 171). There are some things that have the capacity to whakanoa. Such things include water, food (usually cooked), karakia (recitation) and sometimes women and it is these things that are used alongside immense tapu to restore balance.

In the instance of the tapu of death, water is commonly left at the exits from where the tūpāpaku is housed, for example, urupā (cemetery) or where the deceased lies during tangihanga. This water is provided to “cleanse” oneself from that tapu upon exiting. The example of cooked food being used to whakanoa is in the instance of the hākari (feast) at the completion of the tangihanga to lift the tapu of death that blanketed those who were in contact with the tūpāpaku during the tangihanga. The water serves as a decontaminating agent that brings the tapu, resulting from being within close range of the tūpāpaku, to a safe enough level to continue everyday activities. Elements used for whakanoa all have their roles for different occasions, sometimes used in isolation and sometimes in combination with each other such as water and karakia.
**Karakia**

Ryan (2008: 105) describes *karakia* as a ‘prayer’, ‘chant’ or ‘incantation’. It is often used alongside water in the process of *whakanoa*. In former times, items belonging to the deceased were often burnt by traditional Māori to remove the *tapu* of death, such as burning down *whare mate* in order to render them harmless. Nowadays, however, the sprinkling of water and offering a *karakia* are used to neutralise the *tapu* and reinstate equilibrium, as opposed to ‘burning down’ the *whare mate* and items of contact, for convenience and retention of the ‘physical’ resource.

It is believed that anything that came into contact with *tūpāpaku* became laden with *tapu* and hence, that item was unable to be safely used until that *tapu* had been removed. *Whakanoa* serves to render things ‘usable’ again. A space, an object or a human being can become affected by this *tapu* of death and *whakanoa* ensures safe handling and protection from potential harm from the spirit world. Notably, *whakanoa* provides ease of mind and allows those affected by *tapu* to continue in their lives without feeling anxiety, or expecting negative repercussions, if the *tapu* was still active.

*Whakanoa* was observed in anatomy students, giving the participant psychological and cultural safety. Tāne Anatomy Student explains:

> If I had any *tapu* on me, in a way [the sprinkling of water was] just to *whakanoa* myself. But the *karakia* was to give me strength. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Tāne Anatomy Student, sprinkles water over himself and performs *karakia* as a means to keeping his self spiritually safe, he also mentions strength and how *karakia* gives him mental
strength to get through the laboratory. Wahine Anatomy Student also aligns to the same reasoning as Tāne Anatomy Student below.

Sometimes I’d have a little karakia before and then again after, wash my hands and sprinkle myself, just like when you leave the urupā. Just to make sure that nothing came home with me. It’s just that whole thing, those things that you were taught when you were little. That whole whakanoa thing. (Wahine Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

The upbringing of Wahine Anatomy Student informed her to whakanoa herself upon leaving the urupā, therefore, due to the laboratory housing many tūpāpaku, Wahine Anatomy Student treated the laboratory like an urupā and used her knowledge of whakanoa to protect herself and to make sure that ‘nothing went home with her’. Like the urupā, the process of sprinkling water also relates to the whare mate where, upon exiting, most Māori tribes observe the practice of sprinkling themselves with water to rule out the risk of possible spiritual repercussions. On this note, both anatomy students interviewed perceive the laboratory as both an urupā and a whare mate and, therefore, feel the need to carry out whakanoa procedures. The embalmer and funeral director also support this idea.

When you get a call out I know that I’m already covered [by karakia that has been done previously] and yes its like when you come into the urupā you wash your hands and you go to the whare [of the tūpāpaku] you wash your hands, same thing, yeah I do it all the time. (Wahine Embalmer, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Wahine Funeral Director (Pers. Comm., 2009) affirms that the building has been blessed, the cars are blessed and if we feel amongst ourselves that we need karakia, just to make you feel good inside, and you need that you know.

As seen here, karakia is used as a psychological safety precaution, after which they continue with their everyday activities. The act of performing karakia is also noted in Wahine Embalmer’s (Pers. Comm., 2009) response, whereby

the protocols for preparing the tūpāpaku is always the same as when you receive it on the marae anyway. Like I said before, I’m always covered and for myself I know that koro [grandfather, elderly man] is doing karakia for me anyway and
he’s also doing it for the tūpāpaku and also for the families, so yeah, it doesn’t just start and stop here.

She does not perform karakia in every instance she undertakes a tūpāpaku as she believes that she has already been ‘covered’ and protected by her ‘koro’. Wahine Embalmer feels reassured in the knowledge that not only is her koro carrying out karakia on her behalf, but also on behalf of the families who have lost their loved ones. Māori perhaps did karakia frequently as it afforded a sense of continuity. However, with tohunga of old, who would have been tapu for the main part of their life, a similar continuum may have been necessary. Where the tapu of something needed to be maintained, separation of tapu and noa items were also observed.

Separation of tapu and noa

Separation of tapu and noa, in terms of space are also important when considering the proximity of the tūpāpaku. Strong attitudes of the need for separation of things tapu from things that are noa are evident throughout the thoughts of interviewees. Noa and tapu aspects are generally separated to maintain the sacredity of tapu and so as not to ‘contaminate’ articles that are noa. This idea of separation is evident in the work place of Wahine Funeral Director. She affirmed that there are different drainages for embalming, and for kitchen wastes. She further elaborates that

this part of the drainage [kitchen area] is totally different from the embalming. At home, your toilet is different compared to your kitchen sink. And that applies here. There are health regulations in regard to discarding waste, that’s what we call it, waste. So we monitor it all the time. (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009)

As seen here, Wahine Funeral Director applies her home logic with the example of the separation of toilet and kitchen wastes with the separation of blood and embalming fluid from the kitchen wastes at her firm.
Wahine Embalmer confirms that the most frequently asked question when her occupation is revealed to people regards the drainage of embalming waste. Wahine Funeral Director states:

With the fluids we have different drainages where the fluids go…that’s the most common thing that people want to know, where does the blood go to? (Wahine Embalmer, Pers. Comm., 2009)

She further explains the similarity of the blood drainage during embalming with a woman during menstruation.

It’s like when you got your period. And that’s watered down too. It’s the same procedure here. Not many people think about that aye, not many Māori think about the period. You know you wear a pad or something, and it gets thrown out so why should we be so worried. No, we have a separate drainage for that. (Wahine Embalmer, Pers. Comm., 2009)

This notion of separation of blood whilst embalming seems to be highly discussed, but as stated by Wahine Embalmer she is not convinced that Māori think of the blood from women during menstruation. She further highlights that menstrual blood and blood from the corpse are the same form of blood, however, people merely flush menstrual blood into the sewerage system without thinking anything of it. Such items as used plasters, sometimes bloody ones, are also simply thrown directly into the garbage. This idea extends beyond the notion of blood disposal during embalming to the drainage of blood from the premises.

Aligning to the idea of separation, this is also noted in Western texts. Ariès states that the Western public

honoured their burial places, partly because they feared the return of the dead. The reverence they showed to the tombs and to the Manes was designed to prevent the dead from “coming back” and bothering the living. Whether they were buried or cremated, the dead were impure; if they were too near, there was danger of their contaminating the living. In order to avoid all contact, the abode of the dead had to be separated from the domain of the living. (1981: 29)

The above passage indicates the separation of the realm of the dead from the living quarters as it was believed that the dead had the capacity to contaminate the living. The dangerous
nature of the dead was also thought of as a very real threat because, if the living and the dead were too closely associated with each other, then the return of the dead to hinder the lives of the living was possible, either physically by way of health and safety, or spiritually by way of ghostly encounters. The notion of ‘contamination’ is noticeable in a Māori viewpoint where not only urupā are separated from the living, but so too are tūpāpaku during the time it lies in repose on the marae. The process of whakanoa and separation of tapu and noa are done to keep a person physically and spiritually safe so as not to be afflicted with the possible detriments of utu.

_Utu_

Like other concepts explained thus far, tapu is also present when describing utu. Utu is defined as ‘repayment’, ‘revenge’ and ‘reciprocate’ and is an important concept that demands structure amongst Māori society. Utu, like tapu and noa, is also important in upholding balance and harmonious relationships between individuals and groups (Moorfield, 2005: 186).

_Utu_ is often defined as ‘revenge’. However, this is only one aspect of its fuller meaning. As revenge, it is usually applied as a result of an incident where the mana and tapu of a person was challenged. In this case, retribution is sought to regain and restore a balance with the initial offended party. However, balance is often temporary, as utu is continually sought by each party until an agreement is reached between them when the matter is considered ea (balanced). (Ka’ai & Higgins, 2004: 14)

_Utu_, as seen in the above excerpt is commonly referred to as revenge and when looking at this concept a little deeper, utu is seen as avenging something until a state of ea has been reached (Mead, 2003: 31). During the inter-tribal conflict period, practices such as _muru_, ritualistic plundering for penalty of an offence (briefly touched on in parts of this thesis), were undertaken to assure an incident had been properly avenged. Should tapu be breached,
this would cause possible repercussions that could sometimes prove detrimental. These repercussions were enforced by the supreme powers of the *atua* and were beyond repair unless intervention by a *tohunga* was sought. This anxiety about possible consequences is correlated to the respect that Māori have for the natural ordering that *tapu* imposes on Māori views of death, and wider Māori customs.

*Utu* can be positive or negative, such as repayment for aid during times of need, or payback in the form of vengeance. Māori held fast to their beliefs of *utu* and the idea that everything happened as a repercussion of their behaviour. Using the Influenza epidemics (explained in the following chapter) as an example of *utu*, Rice (1988: 107) explains:

> Maori response to the 1918 Influenza pandemic was shaped by deep-seated religious beliefs about disease and the supernatural. . . . In traditional Maori society any death not caused by accident, old age or warfare was attributed to mate atua, or supernatural causes. . . . This was because the Maori believed in the possibility of makutu (magic). . . . But if the patient believed he or she was being punished for some unremembered past wrongdoing or was a victim of makutu, then nothing could save them, except perhaps the intervention of a tohunga (a priestly expert in spiritual and medicinal matters).

Given that Māori deeply valued the concept of *utu*, the above excerpt shows that if stricken by illness, it was a direct result of their own wrongdoing. Māori strongly believed that in these cases, nothing could be done to help save them from their ensuing fate. Supporting this idea, Best (1995b: 168) asserts that “the common belief was that sickness and disease were caused by the activities of malignant demons, atua, and it was this belief that prevented anything like medical research, in both religions”. The belief Māori had in higher powers and the faith they had in their *atua* invalidated medical help from Pākehā and they acknowledged death as being inevitable. As Taawhao Tioke (a Tūhoe *kaumatua*) quoted:

> If my kidneys, liver, lungs, or heart are affected, I will never decide to go to doctors to put me into the waiting list; I will never agree. If affected, I will put my faith in God, I will put my faith in the appropriate medicine . . . I do not have
faith in Pakeha cures … that thought will not enter my mind. (as cited in Hohepa & Williams 1996: 34)

Tioke’s firm conviction of refusing to use Pākehā medicine aligns again with Māori and Western validations of fate according to Best (1995b) and Ariés (1974b) determining the conclusion to one’s life. Māori felt a sense of peace knowing that their death was nearing and they were comfortable knowing that their time had come. Wahine Funeral Director (Pers. Comm., 2009) shares her belief that “you’re only here for a short time, you may as well live your life to the fullest, because you don’t know when your numbers up”. In this instance she expresses her view that one cannot fight the inevitable and although there have been medical advancements, once death was eminent, there is nothing much else that can be done. This illustrates the attitude of death’s inevitability.

_Utu_ in a positive context, can be highlighted in the instances of the widows interviewed. Wahine Widow 2 feels it necessary to attend every _tangihanga_ possible in her region to ensure that the obligation of _utu_ is being met, that is, “to repay back those ones that came [to her husband’s _tangihanga_]” (Wahine Widow 2, Pers. Comm., 2009). Wahine Widow 1 is also familiar with _utu_, in donating her time where she “rarely misses [a _tangihanga_]” (Wahine Widow 1, Pers. Comm., 2009). She attends the _tangihanga_ whether the deceased are connected genealogically to her or not. Knowing the deceased, she says, is enough for her to be compelled to attend. She further explained that when given the opportunity she will try and do what she can to assist. As shown with the widows interviewed, they feel obligated to give back to the community as a sign of reciprocity or _utu_ for the efforts that the community gave to the widows at the time of their husbands’ _tangihanga_. This attitude, however, was only salient in the instances of the widows. As seen here, Māori customary concepts are interwined. One does not stand solitary, the concepts co-exist with aspects of others, this is also evident with _mana_.

19
\textit{Mana}

\textit{Mana} is another Māori cultural concept that interweaves with \textit{tapu}. \textit{Tapu} comprises of different components. One of which is \textit{te tapu o te tangata}, \textit{tapu} that is instilled in people by virtue of \textit{mana}, by mere merit of his or her existence. \textit{Mana}, like \textit{tapu}, is another term that is difficult to describe accurately by way of the English language. Attempted by Williams, \textit{mana} is defined as being ‘authority’, ‘control’, ‘influence’, ‘prestige’, and ‘power’ (Williams, 1971: 172). \textit{Mana} is also described as an aspect that everybody obtains at birth and is dependent on the social status, achievements and the regard in which their parents are held by the community (Mead, 2003: 51). He further elucidates that:

While an increment of mana is inherited at birth it is possible to build onto it through one’s personal achievements, through good works and an ability to lift the mana of the whole group. For example, being chosen as an All Black could be viewed as lifting the mana of the tribe because everyone will know the selected person is a member. Besides the whole nation supports the All Blacks and so it is good publicity for the iwi. Mana is much more open to extension than any other attribute. (Mead 2003: 51)

The extract above, highlights the flexible parameters that \textit{mana} is encapsulated in and as shown, \textit{mana} can be increased throughout one’s lifetime and therefore is not completely restricted by one’s whakapapa. A more traditional example of this idea is the ability of increasing or decreasing the \textit{mana} of the individual or tribe from the success or failure of one’s endeavours (Moorfield 2004: 238-240). If for example a war party set out for battle and came back defeated, then subsequently, this failure would decrease the \textit{mana} of the war party as well as the tribe associated with that war party. Conversely, had they come back victorious, this would enhance the \textit{mana} of that tribe.

Like \textit{tapu}, \textit{mana} has multiple definitions and is attributed to many aspects of Māori culture, such as in the examples of \textit{mana atua} (sacred power of the gods), \textit{mana tangata} (power
acquired by a person due to achievement) and *mana whenua* (power associated with land) just to name a few (Barlow 1991: 61-62). *Mana* provides an increased ability for someone to lead, to facilitate and convene tribal activities and rituals, and the ability to politically and socially direct the matters of the tribe and community. Although *mana* has been attributed to people thus far, it is possible for non-living objects to contain *mana* by association, such as objects linked with important events or people who possess or possessed that item (Moorfield 2004: 238-240).

*Mana* and *tapu* are interconnected in that, the level of one is mirrored by the level of the other. Dependent on the amount of *mana* one has, *tapu* can also be varied. With the instance of *whakapapa*, the closer the association one has with the *atua*, the more *mana* they possess. In this case, a *tuakana* (elder relative of the same generation\(^\text{10}\)) would have more *mana* than their *teina* (younger relative of the same generation\(^\text{11}\)) by virtue of his or her *whakapapa*.

With the instance of acquired *mana* (*mana* gain through achievements), *tohunga* (priestly expert) would have more *mana* and therefore be more *tapu* than a *taurekareka* (slave), by virtue of their expertise (Mahuika, 1992: 59). One’s *mana* level is linked to one’s *tapu* level, in that, the more *mana* one has, the more *tapu* one is. Everybody has the accountability of maintaining their own *tapu* and their own *mana*, and every measure necessary was used to do so. This is notable in the instances of hiding *tūpāpaku* and keeping constant vigil over the *tūpāpaku* to ensure that it is not removed and maintain individual, family and tribal *mana*. This idea also overlaps with the concept of *aroha*.

\(^{10}\) *Tuakana* means the genealogical elder brother or male cousin of a male or, the genealogical elder sister or female cousin of a female.

\(^{11}\) *Teina* means the genealogical younger brother or male cousin of a male or, the genealogical younger sister or female cousin of a female.
Aroha

When referring to death through a Māori lens, aroha is highly visible, talked about and practised. Aroha translates commonly to ‘love’ but encompasses much more. This term can denote ‘sympathy’, ‘empathy’, ‘compassion’, ‘pity’, ‘charity’ and ‘affection’ (Moorfield, 2005: 9). Aroha is a concept that is deeply rooted in Māori society and deserves discussion, especially when death is at the forefront. Aroha is, given by Haami Piripi12 who comments that,

driving long distances to a tangi can be hard, but its aroha that makes you do it. If you’re woken up at 2 o’clock in the morning with a phone call to say so-in-so’s died – well, everything stops. Whatever you’re doing ceases to be important. What’s important is getting there. It’s a big cost – and that is aroha. (Piripi as cited in Ngata, 2005: 43)

In the above instance Piripi says that the most important aspect is to be there and also states that ‘everything stops’ when a death has occurred. The best thing that someone can do is to ‘be there’. This notion of attendance is also evident where the tūpāpaku is constantly accompanied. Tāne Regular Tangi Attendee commented that they abstain from leaving the body unattended. He further describes that the tūpāpaku must be accompanied at all times whilst lying in repose on the marae. Wahine Funeral Director and Wahine Embalmer ensure a tūpāpaku is not left unattended and affirm that this is also practised during the retrieval of the tūpāpaku. In this instance the practice of maintaining vigil over the tūpāpaku makes connections to the concept of mana and the attitude that many Māori have towards prevention of potential loss of mana. Aroha also plays a role here, where aroha keeps the tūpāpaku figuratively ‘warm’, known also as ‘te whakamahana i te tūpāpaku – the warming of the corpse through accompaniment’ (Rewi, Pers. Comm., 2010). Another concept that needs addressing is mauri.

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12Haami Piripi elder of the Te Rarawa tribe (see Figure 1 for location) and former Chief Executive Officer of Te TauraWhiri i te Reo Māori – The Māori Language Commission.
**Mauri**

*Mauri* is the ‘life force’ and this thesis can not be properly discussed without also referring to this founding Māori concept. *Mauri* is a notion frequently talked about when referring to Māori attitudes and death. *Mauri* is a term which explains the ‘life principle’ that all things possess, animate and inanimate alike (Barlow, 1991:83). In some instances the *mauri* of something or someone can be transferred to a material object to keep this *mauri* safe. *Mauri* stones were often hidden and sometimes buried to sustain the *mauri* of the *whenua* for the maintenance of crops under Rongo (God of peace and cultivated foods). Similar to *mana*, *mauri* can also be “strengthened, diminished or transmitted” (Ka’ai & Higgins, 2004: 18). The effect of transmission results in a binding of people to ancestors and future generations, *whenua* and other entities that are encompassed in the natural world and the spiritual world. Williams shares this sentiment:

> The bonding agent is the mauri. Just as it ties them inescapably to future generations, it also charges individuals with the responsibility to pass to succeeding generations at least as good a resource base as that which they received from the previous one. (Williams, 2004a: 95)

Mead emphasises the importance of *mauri* as being the life spark that causes every bodily function to exist, every heart beat, every morsel of food consumed, every drop of blood able to flow through our veins, and “the personality of the person to be vibrant” (Mead, 2003: 54).

The *mauri* makes something ‘living’. At death, the *mauri* extinguishes, and thus, so does the life of any given thing. Often confused with *wairua*, the *mauri* of someone or something terminates when its life ends, the *wairua*, however, continues to exist.

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13 There are also contemporary examples of *mauri* being housed in material objects such as in the instance of the Large Greenstone rock at the entrance of the Tangata Whenua (Māori exhibition) at the Otago Museum in Dunedin, New Zealand, and the *mauri* of the Manu Kōrero Competition housed in a carved waka that is passed from one host region to the next.

14 Rongo is also known as Rongo-mā-tāne.
**Wairua**

*Wairua* describes “a spiritual life principal” (Ka’ai & Higgins, 2004: 14) of a person and the interaction they have with co-existing entities. A *wairua* of a person is also referred to as the ‘attitude’, ‘mood’ and ‘soul’ of a person, however, the most common definition is ‘spirit’ (Ryan, 1995: 289).

There are four characteristics that Best (1941) describes as being central for a better understanding of *wairua*. Firstly, *wairua* is not a separate entity from the whole person and is not bound to any particular part of the body. Secondly, it is immortal and subsists after death. Thirdly, it is capable of forewarning danger, and lastly, it is subject to attack through *mākutu* (sorcery) (Best as cited in Mead, 2003: 55). These components formulate the intangible element of *wairua*. Due to Māori culture being a highly spiritual one, the discussion of *wairua* is important. Without the concept of *wairua* many of the concepts explained, such as *tapu, noa, karakia, utu* and *mauri* would cease to be relevant, as it is the potential spiritual harm to the *wairua* that these concepts serve to prevent.

**Conclusion**

We have seen that *tikanga* is ingrained in every facet of Māori life especially in the realm of death. *Tikanga* facilitate the way that Māori live their lives. The social ordering tool of *tapu* was used to ensure harmony in a pre-European Māori society. With the need to manage the immense *tapu* of death, whether it be in laboratories, the funeral firm or on the *marae*, this concept is very prominent.
Along with *tapu*, *noa* was also explored, where *noa* was not seen as the opposite to *tapu* but rather its complimentary partner. The process of *whakanoa* described the act of *tapu* removal using the aid of water and *karakia* to most commonly neutralise the immense *tapu* of death. *Karakia* and water were used as a psychological spiritual safeguard learnt on the *marae* and transferred to the workplace in the funeral firm, as well as the classroom in the anatomy laboratory.

Separation of *tapu* and *noa* elements was also a talking point. Witnessed in a place of work with different drainages for embalming waste and kitchen waste, as well as in Western texts where the burial grounds were purposefully established away from living quarters, for fear of spiritual ‘contamination’.

The concept of *utu*, whether it be positive or negative was also discussed. Many Māori aligned to the laws of *tapu* for unknown fear of *utu*, retribution from higher powers. *Mana* was also looked at, illustrating the importance of *mana* retention, and the maintenance of vigil over *tūpāpaku* to protect the *mana* of the *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi*. This constant vigil was also seen as a mark of *aroha*, in that, continual accompaniment of the *tūpāpaku* figuratively ‘warmed’ the *tūpāpaku*.

*Mauri* or ‘life force’ was also briefly outlined, defined as the essence that caused something to be living, where, if something was dead, then its *mauri* was also seen to be extinct. Differing to this notion is the concept of *wairua*, which continues to exist although its ‘body’ had ceased living.
Having touched on these significant Māori customary concepts for better understanding when they appear in ensuing chapters, we now have a foundation for discussion. However, it is now critical to retrace the possible origin of these concepts. In the following chapter, we explore mythologies that created the histories, pedagogies and identities of Māori, more particularly, their foundations for attitude formation pertaining to death.
Chapter Two

*Mai i te tīmatanga – From the beginning*

“Hawaiki nui, Hawaiki roa, Hawaiki Pāmamao”

Big Hawaiki, long Hawaiki, far and distant Hawaiki

(Mead, 2003: 27)

The above quote represents the power of mythology. After being told and re-told, myth coupled with belief can be applied into a person’s identity. There is speculation about the existence of Hawaiki, and as such, it has remained the mythical birth place of Māori people. Myth is created to answer some baffling questions in life, such as Hawaiki and the creation of Māori. Hawaiki also represents one of the many final spiritual resting places of Māori that is often referred to in eulogies to the dead. Attitudes are based on upbringing and, from a Māori perspective, it is through myths that many histories, stories and identities are created. These myths act as a basis for attitudes because, as will be shown in this chapter, the myths that provide historical foundation of Māori culture also shape the thought processes and ideologies that guide decision making within Māori practices.

This chapter looks at the origin of death through a mythological lens and demonstrates how different cultures have hypothesized the idea of death. Common Māori narratives such as Tū-mata-uenga and his revenge over his brothers, the seeking of the female element, Māui’s attempt to bring immortality to mankind, and *te whare o aituā* (the realm of misfortune) are explored as we discuss and compare similar narratives that Māori share with other cultures.
What is myth?

Myths are not necessarily absolute truths. Rather, they are flexible depictions of the truth. They offer answers to the fundamental questions of existence. It is important to grasp global myths and compare and contrast these with Māori myths because, in many cases, the similarities between myths are endless and it begins to make one wonder whether it began from one single event and then later adapted to the customs of different cultures? Myth originates from its Greek counterpart *mythos*, meaning ‘word’ or ‘story’ (Philip, 2007: 6). As explained by Hawker, myth is “a traditional story of early history explaining a natural event, especially involving supernatural beings” (2004: 471). Bierlien describes myth as the “earliest form of science” (1994: 4). These definitions of myth also depend on who is asked to define it.

Myths are recitations of events that have taken place before written history. They link the past, present, and future. An everyday person would describe a myth to be “lies, fables, or widely believed falsehoods” as well as ‘old wives tales’ (Bierlien, 1994: 4). A myth can also be seen as a mis-perception, for example, a reporter might make reference to “commonly held myths about AIDS” (Bierlien, 1994: 4). Within the context of this chapter, myth depicts truth or a ‘flexible’ representation of that truth. It is myth which formulates the links between ancient and recent ideas and gives meaning to our quality of life and how things came to be. Myth challenges the origin of everyday actualities, such as death, and with the aid of creativity, intrigue and flair, myth grasps the minds of humanity and creates a popular belief transcending generations.
In many cultures, myths generally follow stories pertaining to love, the adventures of a trouble-maker, the sombre nature of sickness or harm, and the inevitability of death and its mystery. They may also cover stories about heroes and their endeavours, the repercussions of wrong doings, defying the odds and venturing into the world of the unknown such as enchanted castles, lost kingdoms, dark caves and monsters’ lairs. Myths attempt to bring light to the mysteriousness of the world and all that is in it, whether this be dealing with the circle of life, the relationship between humanity and the higher powers of the gods, the creation of the world and the birth of a civilization. Myths ultimately attempt to explain the nature of the universe, how it came about, and how it might end (Cotterell & Storm, 1999: 7).

Myth offers a way of understanding the world through metaphor, prayer and recitations and offers life lessons necessary to live freely in society. Stories are adapted and patterned in accordance to the teller and the context in which they are told. With this said, myths are neither concrete nor certain, but rather they are fluid and continuously changing (Philip, 2007: 7). Occasionally, characters, places and actions alter within stories, however, the feature that is of the utmost importance is the moral of the myth and it is this which needs to be retained. Important beliefs and practices are extracted from daily routines, from culture to culture, and inserted into these stories to make that myth their own. This idea is noticeable in the following excerpt taken from ‘The Millennium Book of Myth and Story’

The telling of stories is as old as the human race. Every culture, throughout its long history, has used stories, along with dance and drawing, to record and perpetuate important events, to honour heroes and celebrate the heroic; but also to speculate about the past and the future, and the very nature of existence. (Saxby & Winch, 1997: 7)

With the idea of shaping myths in accordance to a culture’s beliefs and practices, Māori mythologies are now introduced.
Māori Myth

Personally, I think that Māori myth provides the idea of how uniquely Māori ideas, values and beliefs came to be deeply ingrained in Māori society. Māori culture is a highly oral culture, therefore myths and legends are important to the maintenance of the culture. These stories form the initial thought for those listening to them to build on, thus directly influences one’s attitude of any given subject.

As mentioned earlier, myths attempt to reason how important events like earth’s creation, the birth of civilization, and why mortality came to be. Everything must have a beginning and in the context of a Māori paradigm, the creation of the Māori world is brought into focus through mythology. The creation narratives of Māori serve as an introduction to this section as they set the scene for Māori myth and provide the foundation to introduce the origin of death.

As Māori are not a homogenous race, tribal differences exist within creation narratives. According to some, it was Io (the supreme being) who created Rangi-nui (Skyfather) and Papa-tū-ā-nuku (Earthmother) with many stages of energies, some of which are Te Korekore (the void), Te Kōwhao (the abyss), and Te Pō (the night) (Reilly, 2004: 1-3; Barlow, 1991: 11). These cosmogonical narrations intended to represent ideas and circumstances which transformed a once desolate universe into life (Best, 1954: 11). Cognisant of tribal differences, Figure 2 is a summary of the generic North Island narrative which places Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku at the centre of the creation story.
Between the tight embrace of Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku lay their many children, said to be as many as seventy (Best, 1954: 12). However, only eight of those children (as represented in Figure 2) are commonly referred to: Whiro represents the god of evil, Tāwhiri-mātea is god of the elements, Tangaroa is god of the sea, Tāne-mahuta is god of the forest, Tū-mata-enga is god of man and war, Rongo-mā-tāne is god of peace and cultivated foods, Haumia-tiketike is god of uncultivated foods, and Rūaumoko15 is god of earthquakes and volcanoes. There came a time when the children were exasperated from living within the confines of the world of darkness created by the embraced bodies of their parents. The children gathered and discussed their options. Tū-mata-enga suggested they slay their parents, Tāwhiri-mātea wanted them to stay together. A consensus amongst the offspring of Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku finally resulted in separation being the more feasible option (Andersen, 1995: 368). Many of the children attempted to separate Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku but to no avail. Their embrace was far too strong and they would not budge (Reed, 1999: 12). Tāne-mahuta, placing his back on his mother and his hands and legs to his father, pried the two apart and into their dark world seeped te ao mārama (the world of light, enlightenment) (Grey, 1956: 3). It is from here that we pick up the three main narratives regarding the Māori origin of death, starting with the story of Tū-mata-enga.

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15Alternate spelling “Ru-ai-moko” (Marsden, 1992: 131). Rūaumoko had not been born at the time of the separation and therefore still remains inside Papa-tū-ā-nuku’s womb, hence he is the god of volcanoes and earthquakes below the earth (Best, 1995a: 77-78).
Tū-mata-uenga’s Revenge

Tū-mata-uenga is one of the sons of Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku and is the founding atua of war. He is also credited with the creation of Tiki, the first mortal man, and therefore, the creation of the male element (Andersen, 1995: 412). The story of Tū-mata-uenga and his revenge against his brothers occurred soon after the separation of their parents. Tāwhiri-mātea, due to his desire to keep his parents together, waged war against his brothers for not siding with him by sending blistering winds, hurricanes and tornadoes to destroy them. However Tangaroa, being the god of the ocean was able to hide in deep waters, Haumia-tikitike and Rongo-mā-tāne took refuge underground and Tāne-mahuta was able to hide in the confines of his great forests (Grey, 1855: 7-9). Tū-mata-uenga, therefore outraged that his brothers had not aided in his fight against Tāwhiri-matea, sought revenge against them, waging war against Tāne-mahuta by snaring birds and insects in his domain, the forest, and devouring them. He used fibrous plants to weave nets to catch the children of Tangaroa (in their marine domain) and consumed them. He dug up the earth from where Rongo-mā-tāne and Haumia-tikitike hid and ate the edible roots below the ground. That which was not eaten was left in the sun to wither and die (Grey, 1855: 11-12, Andersen, 1995: 372). These four brothers that had been defeated by Tū-mata-uenga and their offspring became food and sustenance for humanity. It is these events that attribute Tū-mata-uenga as the god of war. This narrative is also sometimes known as the introduction of death into the world, as Tū-mata-uenga, due to his anger, defeated and killed elements in the forest, marine and agricultural realms. The association of Tū-mata-uenga with death is also noted in Cook Island, Mangaian, Hawaiian and Tahitian myth (Best, 1995a: 174). This narrative will be left here as the ensuing segment explores another common Maori myth regarding death and the search for the female element.
Seeking the female element

The idea of seeking the female element stemmed from the gods and the need to create a race of mortal beings. However, the difficulty remained in the fact that man is incapable of procreation without females. Therefore, it was decided that searching for the female element, or a means of creating women, was the answer (Best, 1995a: 119).

The intention of the gods was to fashion an ordinary, non-supernatural mortal race. The gods, dispersed themselves far and wide in a desperate search for the *uha* (the female element) which was unsuccessful (Buck, 1949: 450). It was then decided that fashioning a woman form from the earth was appropriate. As Tāne-mahuta was the nourishment and fertilizer of the earth mother, having clothed her with trees, shrubs, flaxes, grasses and tussocks, he was given the task to also create a female. He journeyed to Kurawaka, or the *mons veneris* (pubic region) of Papa-tū-ā-nuku to execute this act. Here he fashioned from clay an outline of a womanly figure and breathed life into it through the nostrils. It is through this instance the creation of women, and the creation of humankind, came to be. Through a Māori mythological lens, this first woman was Hine-ahu-one, meaning ‘woman fashioned from the earth’ (Best, 1995a: 121). It was occasionally claimed that “if it were not for women, men would have lived forever like the stars in the sky” (Orbell, 1995: 36). However, because women have the ability to give birth and bring new life into the world, this implies that eventually death must also occur (Orbell, 1995: 36).

This view is also represented in the instance of Greek myth, in the case of Demeter (goddess of fertility) and her daughter, Persephonē (seasonal giver of grain) also known as Korē.
Persephonê was captured by Hades (god of death) to be taken as his bride. Demeter was furious and refused to let grain grow without the presence of her daughter. An agreement was settled, that Persephonê would spend one third of the year in the underworld with Hades and for the other two thirds she would reside on earth to enable the grain to grow (Powell, 2004: 222). This myth shows the binary that fertility on earth cannot be separated from death. As the turn of the seasons occur, from autumn to winter and spring to summer, each cannot occur independently, therefore, with life there must be death. Powell also suggests that:

There can never be a world (except in the imagination of poets) in which there is only life and never death because life comes out of death, one feeding on the other. Life depends on death. (Powell, 2004: 236)

The idea of a woman being the bearer of life as well as the bringer of death is demonstrated in Māori myth with Hine-nui-te-pō, the goddess of death, whom we now refer.

_Hine-nui-te-pō_

In the instance of the origin of death, it is through the stories of Hine-tītama, Hine-nui-te-pō and Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga (Māui) that the narratives of death are most commonly told.

**Figure 3: Genealogy of Hine-tītama**

![Genealogy of Hine-tītama](image)

Adapted from Reed, 2004: 4 and Walker, 1992: 172.
Through the creation and subsequent union of Hine-ahu-one by Tāne-mahuta, a daughter Hine-tītama, was born (genealogical links shown in Figure 3) (Moorfield, 2005: 27). Hine-tītama is depicted as the dawn maiden and was so beautiful that men of numerous following generations supposedly compared a beautiful woman to her, for example the *whakataukī* “Ko Hinetītama koe, matawai ana te whatu i te tirohanga” translated to “You are like Hinetītama, the eye glistens when gazing upon you” (Best as cited in Reed, 2004: 36).

Tāne-mahuta incestuously co-habited with Hine-tītama and later in Hine-tītama’s life she became increasingly inquisitive as to her genealogy. Tāne-mahuta would not reveal these details to her. Reed states that she was so curious that “she asked the day and the night, the posts, the wall, the roof of the house, and the gable of the verandah, but in vain” (Reed, 2004: 37). After acquiring the answers from her brothers, she was disgusted and very embarrassed to find out that her lover was also her father. This resulted in her fleeing to the underworld which would then be known as Rarohēnga.

Tāne-mahuta attempted to convince Hine-tītama to return from Rarohēnga, however, due to her deep embarrassment from her knowledge of her incestuous relationship, she decided to stay in Rarohēnga and subsequently changed her name to Hine-nui-te-pō, meaning the ‘great woman of the night’. She is also referred to as the goddess of death. The reasoning she chose to reside in Rarohēnga is emphasised in the following phrase “*Hei konā, e Tāne, hei kukume ake i ā ūia hua ki te ao, kia haere au ki raro kei kukume iho i ā ūia ki Pō*”, which translates to “Remain, o Tāne, to bring forth progeny to the world of life, I go below to draw them down to the world of darkness” (Mead & Grove, 2001: 74). Another account suggests

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16 Hine-tītama is also known as Hinetauira in Reed (2004: 36).
the same notion in the phrase “Tukua atu au ki te angi o te Muriwai hou hei kapu mai i te toiora o aku tamariki i te ao turoa”, translating as “I go to the Underworld, the realm of the dead, there to protect the spiritual welfare of my children of the upper world” (Best, 1954: 18). These phrases explain that Tāne-mahuta would stay in the world of the living to nurture and care for their children during their lifetime and Hine-nui-te-pō would take ward of them once they had passed on and their souls had descended into the underworld.

It is said that from this point, the path of death was opened and Best explains that this flow of spirits has continued since that fateful day. He further explains that “the spirits of men [humanity] ever flow like water down to Rarohenga, to enter the realm of Hine-nui-te-pō, erst the Dawn maid” (Best, 1954: 18).

Reed states:

She [Hine-nui-te-pō] is dreaded as the goddess of death, but must also be remembered as a young woman fleeing from her shame, yet imbued with love for her innocent offspring and their descendants. (2004: 35)

In this case it is suggested that Hine-nui-te-pō, although feared as the goddess of death, should also be regarded as a naive woman who continues to uphold her responsibility of unconditionally loving her children and descendants in the afterlife. Best also supports the loving notion of Hine-nui-te-pō and affirms that “Were it not for Hine [Hine-nui-te-pō], our spirits would be haled within Tai-whetuki, the house of death, and there be destroyed” (Best 1954: 18). He does not describe Hine-nui-te-pō as being the intimidating and gothic goddess of death, but an entity of the “mother of our race” and “the salvation of man” (Best 1954: 18). Hine-nui-te-pō is also eminent in another Māori narrative of death, one that features a trickster called Māui.
Another common Māori narrative sourced as the origin of death, is the myth about Māui, the son of Makea-tutara, his father, and Taranga, his mother. He is also sometimes known by his many characteristics and endeavours. Māui was a demigod who was renowned for trickery, deception, mischievousness and curiosity and is credited with accomplishing a number of astonishing and significant feats like fishing up the North Island of New Zealand, slowing the sun and obtaining fire. The following narrative tells of Māui’s attempt to gain immortality.

Māui’s desire was that man should live forever and thus, with the tales that were told to him by his father about Hine-nui-te-pō, he went in search of the goddess and descended to Rarohēnga in an attempt to reverse death. As Māui knew new life was birthed through the vagina, his plan was to complete a reverse journey, entering through her vagina and eventually exiting through her mouth whilst she was in slumber (Higgins & Moorfield, 2004: 85). Accepting that his human physique was not effective for the task, Māui changed into a mokomoko (lizard). He did not travel alone and took some friends to accompany him, one among them was Tīwaiwaka. Māui’s wiggling attempts to enter the birth tract of Hine-nui-te-pō amused Tīwaiwaka so profusely that he could not contain his laughter which consequently caused Hine-nui-te-pō to awaken. Māui was crushed to death between her thighs (Grey, 1956: 44). Concomitantly, the tīwaiwaka (fantail) and the mokomoko are seen as Māori omens of death and misfortune today (Mead, 2003: 147). Had Māui been successful in his attempt to reverse death “men would not have died, but would in that case have lived for ever” (Grey, 1855: 10).

17 Some examples include Māui-pōtiki, pōtiki meaning last born as he was, Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga, tikitiki meaning topknot or girdle, and Taranga being his mother, Maui-toa meaning courageous Māui, Maui-mohio meaning wise Māui, and Maui-nukaraup meaning deceitful Māui (Best, 1995b: 337; Journal of Polynesian Society, 1929: 1).
Similarly, an ancient Mesopotamian myth features a hero known as Gilgamesh. Like that of Māui, Gilgamesh also goes out in search of eternal life after he is traumatised by the death of his friend Enkidu and subsequently fears the thought of his own death (Martell, Quie, Malam, Wood & Matthews, 2002: 10). He goes in search of Utanapishtim (the only human with knowledge of immortality) who suggests that Gilgamesh search for a particular plant only found in the depths of the ocean which had the ability to rejuvenate one’s aging life (Martell et al, 2002: 10). After acquiring the plant, whilst Gilgamesh was bathing in a pool, the plant was stolen by a serpent and consequently, death became inevitable (Philip, 2004: 72). Like the Māui narrative where the lizard is a focal point of the narrative, it is a reptile, in Mesopotamian myth that also plays a prominent role.

In some parts of Ngā Puhi\(^\text{18}\), there is another myth pertaining to the introduction of death into the Māori world. One account recalls a man by the name of Pātito who died and whose spirit descended to Rarohēnga. His son, Toakai, was a formidable warrior who became so renowned for his skills and expertise in the art of war that the word reached his father in Rarohēnga. With the aid of a chosen koikoi (a long spear pointed at both ends), Toakai’s father, in spirit form, revisited earth and announced a challenge in battle against his son. A violent battle followed and the father came out victorious. Satisfied in defeating his son Toakai, Pātito returned to Rarohēnga to take residence there (Reed, 2004: 90). Ngā Puhi, in conjunction with this myth, affirms that if the son had been successful and defeated his father in this battle, then death could have potentially been conquered. Failed attempts seem to be the similarity between these stories, as it was Māui’s failure to enter through the birth tract

\(^{18}\text{Nga Puhi is an }\text{iwi located to the North of Auckland, North Island, New Zealand (refer to Figure 1 for location).}\)
and Toakai’s defeat by his father that death gained power over humanity and as such, exists today.

*Te Whare o Aituā*

Another concept that requires exploration when looking at Māori myth and death is the reference to *te whare o aituā*. *Te whare o aituā* can be translated literally as ‘the realm of misfortune’ whereby ‘whare’ means ‘house’, which is symbolic (in this instance) of ‘realm’ and *aituā* means ‘misfortune’. *Te whare o aituā* is sometimes known as ‘*te whare o te mate*’ which depicts sickness and death as they are all rooted in the terms *aituā* and *mate* (Kāretu, 1984: 106). *Aituā* also doubles as the term for accident, disaster, ill omen, trouble, fatality and catastrophe and as seen here, misfortune is the common factor (Ryan, 1999: 24).

Consequential to the Māui encounter with death, *te whare o aituā* also figuratively refers to the female reproductive organ as this organ is also attributed to death. Goldie suggests:

> That which destroys man is the mana of the female organ: it turns upon man and destroys him. (Goldie, 1904: 7)

This excerpt illustrates the power of the female genitalia and is justified in the tale of Hine-nui-te-pō and the act of killing Māui. A Ngāti Awa account proposes that *te whare o aituā* lies underneath and *te whare o te ora* spans above, literally meaning “the realm of misfortune is below, that of life is above” (Best, 1995a: 121). Where *te whare o aituā* represents the female reproductive organ and death, and ‘below’, or more precisely, the land is where Papa-tū-ā-nuku resides (Goldie, 1904: 6). Conversely, *te whare o te ora* symbolises the male reproductive organ, life, and the realm of the heavens where Rangi-nui resides. The idea of *te whare o te ora* is perpetuated further within literature and describes the regions of life
being in the upper regions of the body, such as “the mouth, which supports the body and
provides life” (Reed, 2004: 38). A slight variation on the idea of te whare o te ora and te
whare o aituā is Tūhoe’s version of Tiki and how he supposedly created women and
fashioned her from the earth. Tiki made two distinct mounds called Tūāhuarangi (which
belonged to Rangi-nui) and Pukenuiapapa (which belonged to Papa-tū-ā-nuku) (Reed, 2004:
39). Rangi-nui’s mound signified life and affluence such as that shown in the instance of te
whare o te ora. Whereas Papa-tū-ā-nuku’s mound represented death and misfortune, such as
in the instance of te whare o aituā. Women were said to be fashioned from the Pukenuiapapa
mound, reiterating the association of women with misfortune and death (Reed, 2004: 39). As
seen here, variations occur tribally in respect to the exact association of women with death,
variations also occur with the movement of wairua after it has left the deceased’s body.

Departure of Wairua

Death itself must not be thought of as the end, but rather the beginning of a wairua’s journey
to its final resting place. Te Rerenga Wairua is a term often associated with the travels of the
wairua in Māori beliefs. Cape Reinga, located on the northern most point of New Zealand
(shown in Figure 4), is also known as Te Rerenga Wairua. The literal translation is ‘the
leaping place of the spirits’ (Mitcalfe, 1961: 38).
Figure 4: Map of North Island, New Zealand - Showing the location of Cape Reinga (A), Te Paepae o Aotea (B), Mount Hikurangi (C), and Maungapōhatu (D), North Island, New Zealand

Map sourced from Google Maps, 2010.

Once free from their body it is claimed that spirits journey northward to Te Rerenga Wairua. Hohepa Kanara (as cited in Mitcalfe, 1961: 38-42), a Northland kaumātua, explains a more extensive journey, whereby the wairua firstly rests and mingles with wairua from other parts of New Zealand on Haumu (hill of spirits). It then moves to another hill, Maringinoa (weeping of the spirits) to farewell loved ones left in the land of the living. Wairua then journey down Te Aka (the root to the spirit world) to Mauria-nuku, the entrance to the underworld. Te Ripo-a-Mauria-nuku (the current of Mauria-nuku) transports the spirits to Manawatawhi (the last breath) where wairua take a physical and figurative ‘final breath’ and look back to their home before being swept away into Te Reinga (Kanara as cited in Mitcalfe, 1961: 38-42, Oppenheim, 1973: 94).
Other tribal variations exist, although the essence and function is still the same. Similar to the idea of Te Reenga Wairua, some Ngāti Awa Māori believe that spirits head to Te Paepae o Aotea, the departing place for spirits to commence their journey to Hawaiki. Another correlation is seen with the hill Maringinoa, where spirits supposedly sit and weep. Ngāti Awa shares a similar belief with Turuturu-roimata, literally meaning, the weeping rock. Spirits also supposedly weep on this rock before finally departing to Te Paepae o Aotea (Mead, 2003: 148).

Significant geographical locations to a specific iwi (tribe) are also thought to be departing places for spirits. Such examples include the belief of some Ngāti Porou, about spirits heading to Hikurangi as a departing place and Maungapōhatu serving the same purpose for some Tūhoe (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009; Reading The Maps, 2010: Online). With the examples of significant geographical landmarks as departure places for spirits, Māori beliefs about the final resting place of spirits also vary markedly.

**Spiritual Resting Places**

In order to better understand the realm of death, contextualising the final resting place in a Māori paradigm is appropriate. The specific destination of the spirit’s final resting place is unknown, however, there are many beliefs as to where this could be. These places appear to be mythical, intangible places, as there is no actual evidence of their existence. The

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19 Ngāti Awa is a coastal tribe located in the Bay of Plenty, North Island, New Zealand (refer also to Figure 1).
20 Ngā Paepae o Aotea or Volkner’s rocks, is located approximately 50 kilometres off the coast of Whakatāne (refer to B, Figure 4).
21 The Ngāti Porou tribe come from around the East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand (refer also to Figure 1).
22 Hikurangi is the sacred mountain of Ngāti Porou (see C, Figure 4).
23 Maungapōhatu is a sacred mountain of Tūhoe (see D, Figure 4).
24 The Tūhoe tribe is located in the inland parts of the North Island of New Zealand (refer also to Figure 1).
following is by no means an exhaustive directory of final spiritual resting places, but rather a
glimpse of the varied beliefs Māori have. Cosmologically, it would be correct to begin with
Te Pō.

*Te Pō*

Te Pō is literally ‘the night’, however, when referring to Te Pō in a death context it does not
necessarily refer to the night, but rather, ‘the unknown’ (Best, 1954: 11). The ‘unknown’
describes the mysterious characteristic of death, as no one really knows what lies beyond
death. The origin of Te Pō as a term for death draws from the creation narratives where in
the beginning there was complete darkness as Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku were held in a
tight embrace (Buck, 1949: 442). The world was unknown as it lay in complete darkness. It
was not until light seeped into the world, from Tāne-mahuta separating his parents, that the
unknown, became known.

*Rarohēnga*

Rarohēnga seems to be another final resting place of the spirit commonly talked about by
Māori. Rarohēnga dissected, can be broken up into ‘*raro*’ meaning ‘below’ and ‘*hē*’ meaning
‘wrongdoing’, in the instance of Hine-tītama, it is fitting because, due to the wrongdoing of
her father, she fled to the ‘under’ world, thus, Rarohēnga is commonly Hine-nui-te-pō’s
domain. Rarohēnga is where Hine-nui-te-pō resides and nurtures the *wairua* of the dead.
Best contrasts this belief and states Rarohēnga as being the destination that spirits inhabit
after death, and the dwelling place of, in fact, Whiro, the embodiment of darkness, evil and
death (Best, 1995a: 75). Mead proposes an amalgamation of both ideas where the
underworld is divided into two ruling realms, one of Whiro and one of Hine-nui-te-pō. Whiro is claimed to be the destroyer of souls, and his realm is said to resemble one of a purgatory nature. On the other hand, Hine-nui-te-pō is regarded as the guardian and protector of souls where her realm is regarded as utopia (Mead, 2003: 147).

Tāne-mahuta is said to have pursued Hine-tītama to the doors of Rarohēnga to persuade her to stay on earth, but to no avail (Buck, 1949: 509). Māui also supposedly journeyed to Rarohēnga on numerous occasions, such as in the search for immortality, to visit his grandfather (Muri-ranga-whenua\(^{25}\)) as well as to obtain fire (Reed, 2004: 91). Rarohēnga is also sometimes interchanged with Te Reinga.

*Te Reinga*

Te Reinga is sometimes described as being the ‘netherworld’ or the immediate underworld of spirits (Andersen, 1995: 307; Reed, 2004: 91). Both Te Reinga and Rarohēnga are referred to as the underworld, however, Reed refers to Te Reinga as the ‘immediate’ underworld of spirits, and explains that Rarohēnga is the umbrella name for all underworlds. According to a Ngāi Tahu *kaumātua*, Te Reinga and Rarohēnga are very different from each other and should not be seen as equivalent. Oppenheim describes Te Reinga as an ‘afterworld’ and the place that *wairua* depart for ‘after’ death. He also interchanges the terms Te Reinga and Te Pō, which can be accredited to the fact that both are unknown (Oppenheim, 1973: 94).

\(^{25}\) Muri-ranga-whenua is also sometimes noted as being Māui’s grandmother and is sourced as giving her jawbone to Māui which aided in his ability to fish up the North Island of New Zealand (Andersen, 1995: 198-203).
Paerau

Paerau is also commonly used to describe the underworld and in accordance with myth, it tells us of Makea-tutara (Māui’s father) dwelling in Paerau and Taranga’s (Māui’s mother) flee to Paerau during the day to be by him (Ministry of Justice, 2002: Online). Reed proposes Paerau as a name for the ‘spirit’ world and suggests that this might only be a term for one of the spirit world’s many divisions (Reed, 2004: 95). In whaikōrero (formal oratory), Paerau is used in poroporoaki (farewell) in the phrase “ki tua o Paerau” meaning ‘beyond the threshold of life’ and ‘beyond the vale’. The phrase “kei tua o te ārai” also carries the same meaning of ‘beyond the vale’ (Brooke-White, 1981: 14). Paerau is used in this instance to denote that someone has passed on and that they are beyond the point of life: their internal organs have stopped functioning and their mauri has left them, therefore, they now inhabit the realm of the dead.

Hawaiki

Hawaiki, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is known as the Māori spiritual homeland and the place where Māori originate, however, there is no ‘physical’ evidence that Hawaiki exists and thus, resulting in ‘mythical’ being attached to its existence. The close linguistic similarity of Hawai‘i and Savai‘i (Western Samoa) drew researchers’ attention to the idea that Māori could have originated from these places (Buck, 1949: 36-37). With respect to Hawaiki and its association with the final spiritual resting place, some Māori believe that one should return to one’s motherland in his or her death, to be nourished and enriched from its fruits therein. Within a farewell speech it is common to hear an orator eulogising the deceased with phrases such as ‘haere ki Hawaiki nui, Hawaiki roa, Hawaiki pāmamao’, meaning, to ‘depart to Big Hawaiki, Long Hawaiki, Distant Hawaiki’ (Mead,
Another common variation on this phrase is “Tawhiti nui, Tawhiti Roa” illustrating the spirit’s journey being distant (tawhiti) (Rewi, Pers. Comm., 2010). The expansiveness and diversity of the wairua’s final resting place shows the variety of Māori belief and the importance of Māori narratives in a Māori world view.

**Conclusion**

Myths usually involve creativity and imagination in order to survive the telling and re-telling of its story through generations. This chapter looked at generic myths and how they aid in understanding some of the riddles of life, such as how the earth was created and why death is inevitable. This chapter showed that myths contain flexible histories that offer possible origins to otherwise enigmatic questions.

Some Māori myths pertaining to the origin of death were outlined, including Tū-mata-uenga and the devouring of his brothers, the seeking of the female element, as well as Māui and his search for immortality. We also drew similarities between cultures, such as the Mesopotamian myth of Gilgamesh and his search for immortality as well as the Greek myth of Persephonē. The correlation that women have with death was prominent throughout the chapter, with the stories of Hine-nui-te-pō protecting her children in the afterlife and the concept of te whare o aituā.

The departure place of spirits was also another talking point in this chapter, acknowledging some tribal disparities of Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe and Ngāti Porou. This led to the final discussion
point on Māori beliefs and the *wairua*’s final resting place ranging from underworlds to spiritual and physical homelands.

The Māori culture is an oral culture, therefore discussing myths is important in understanding the origins of death and how a uniquely Māori attitude can be formed. Myths encompass cultural themes which connect the past, the present and the future. A culture’s attitude is founded on these themes and thus, myths are pertinent to outline the origin of these attitudes within the Māori culture. With that said, we leave idealised references here and take a look at traditional death practices, the focal point of the subsequent chapter.
Chapter Three

Ko ngā Ritenga o Mua - Traditional Death Practices

“I whānau mai te tangata kia mate”

We are born to die

(Rewi, Pers. Comm., 2010)

Opening with the utterance “I whānau mai te tangata kia mate - we are born to die”, which represents the inevitability of death. This chapter focuses on some traditional Māori death practices with particular reference to those that have changed noticeably, or those that are no longer practised. We begin by looking at tradition, where Hawker describes tradition as “the passing on of customs or beliefs from generation to generation” as well as a “long-established custom” (2004: 733). We define death practices and then discuss the fundamentals of how Māori handled death traditionally. These include embalming, the tapu associations of death, corpse handling and final disposal of the corpse. This chapter also aims to highlight the complexity of tangihanga and traditional expressions of grief as well as their overall importance to a culturally Māori view of death.

Death Practices

Ceremonies for the dead have occurred since the existence of humankind. Evidence of this has been noted with the placing of artefacts, jewellery, food, animal bones, weapons and heirlooms alongside skeletal remains (Maringer as cited in Davies, 1997: 23; Binford, 2004: 7). Death practices are also known as funerary practices and mortuary practices. These rituals differ from other rituals in that they show structure and formality and are not
performed just anywhere. As such, there are special places and set times reserved for the procedure of death rituals.

Specific people are employed to facilitate these rituals (Leming & Dickinson, 2002: 344). An expert (tohunga) that has vast experience in death proceedings are required to undertake these death ceremonies. With relevance to Māori, kaumātua are usually entrusted with this task and with the example of Cook Islanders, Samoans and Fijians, ministers and priests usually facilitate this aspect (Kiriau, 1987: 13, Curulala, 1987: 17, Pesio, 1987: 25).

Funerary practices are essential as they are the intermediary between the status as a living person and one that is deceased. These practices are required to encourage the spirit of the deceased to transition from the living world to its next world. If funerary rites are not carried out, this gives access for that person to be a hazard in the living world. Van Gennep suggests that deceased who have no funerary rites performed for them attempt to be reincorporated into the world of the living and since they cannot be, they behave like hostile strangers towards it. They lack the means of subsistence which the other dead find in their own world, and consequently must obtain them at the expense of the living. (Van Gennep, 1960: 160)

This shows the importance of performing correct funerary rites. This is also noted within Māori funerary practices. If the rituals are not completed properly, the wairua becomes agitated and prosecutes the whānau for their incompetence, however, should the rituals be carried out correctly, the wairua, travels happily on its journey to its final resting place (Mead, 2003: 56). Of further importance, death rituals serve to restore the social order of society in the absence of the deceased.
**Funeral**

The most common form of a death practice is termed ‘funeral’. The word funeral derives from the Latin word *fūnus* which had a variety of meanings including ‘corpse’, ‘a dead person’ and ‘funerary rites’ (Glare, 1982: 748). The term funeral refers to the ceremony that is held for the deceased, where generally songs, stories and prayers take centre stage for the deceased’s farewell. Bringing life to the sadness of the death of a loved one is aided by music, singing and dancing and hence is generally incorporated into death rituals (Metress as cited in Leming & Dickinson, 2002: 345). The funeral ends with the committal of the deceased to the earth. The terms *tangi* and *tangihanga* have been commonly adopted into New Zealand’s language to mean ‘death ceremony’ or ‘funeral’. With *tangihanga*, the medium is Māori, and thus Māori customary concepts are also attached to this ceremony. With funerals, the medium is English and therefore also carry forms of English customs. Because the *tangihanga* is a major aspect of ‘Māori’ death, it is important to grasp an understanding of traditional Māori society as a perspective into the logic behind Māori death practices.

**Traditional Māori Society**

To contextualise traditional death practices, it is necessary to identify the space in which they were applied, therefore, we briefly explain Māori structural composites. Social structures in traditional Māori society consisted of *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi*. The term *whānau* or family, referred to the smallest social group, and as the *whānau* increased in size a term was attached to the bigger *whānau*, known as *hapū*, or sub-tribe. In addition, *iwi* refers to the larger body of affiliates that has resulted from an expansion of *hapū* (Buck, 1949: 333). Māori generally lived communally within *whānau* and only co-operated as *hapū* and *iwi* for large gatherings.
and as allies in warfare. The *ariki* (high chief) was relied on to carry out the duties associated with important ceremonies, such as births, deaths and marriages, and the *rangatira* (chief) was second in charge and was elected by way of expertise in oratory and war (Salmond, 1975: 13). The remaining members of the community were made up of *tūtiūā* (commoners) who ranged from children, to adults and recognised senior elders.

Traditionally, Māori lived in close proximity and it was not just the nuclear family of the parents and the children that lived in the same household. The family also consisted of uncles, aunties, grandparents and other family members (Metge, 1964: 9). *Whānau* members were very much a part of each others everyday lives, from cooking to eating, and from washing to sleeping. The activities of traditional Māori were regulated by *mana* and *tapu* which established laws within the community where offenders would be punishable by *utu* (Salmond, 1975: 12-13). With this brief overview of traditional Māori society, we now focus on *tangihanga*.

**Tangihanga: A Definition**

Dissection of the term *tangihanga* gives the root word ‘*tangi*’ which means ‘to cry’ and also ‘to mourn’ (Williams 1971: 379). With the addition of ‘*hanga*’, *tangihanga* transforms *tangi* into a derived noun, therefore *tangihanga* refers to the ‘process of crying’ or the ‘process of mourning’ (Moorfield, 2001: 88-89). Oppenheim suggests that *tangi* means to ‘weep’, and further explains that the verb *tangi* did not merely refer to weeping alone but rather “the special high-pitched wail accompanied by self-laceration” (1973: 37). He further construes that this better exemplifies the *tangi*, as it not only expressed mourning but also the meeting
and the parting of the deceased. He also adds that *tangi* is known as such because it was ‘weeping’ that constituted the major part of the *tangihanga*.

*Tangihanga* is a cultural practice that is uniquely Māori. The Māori world abounds to spirituality and like funerals for European death rituals, *tangihanga* serves as the medium for the deceased’s spirit to travel on its journey to the afterlife. As explained by Wahine Widow 2, the purpose of a *tangihanga* is to

> bring people together to show their respect for that person that’s passed away. It’s *whanaungatanga*, and to practise our *tikanga* and *kawa*.

(Wahine Widow 2, Pers. Comm., 2009)

The *tangihanga*, at the height of it all, is a means and an avenue to practising, maintaining and carrying out traditions that have been passed down from our *tūpuna* (ancestors). *Tangihanga* is a method of exercising *tikanga* and *kawa* (protocol) as well as the ability to re-connect with whānau, build new relationships and re-kindle old relationships, embodied in the term *whanaungatanga* (making new connections with people). From a Māori world view it can be seen that Māori based their beliefs on logic and reasoning, thus, *tangihanga* is an opportunity to practise and maintain *tikanga Māori*. Its precedence over all other gatherings at a *marae* marks its value in Māori society (Higgins & Moorfield, 2004: 88).

**Pre-Tangihanga**

There are many phases and many people involved in the practice of *tangihanga*. Generally, the roles and responsibilities of those attending are already known and everyone knows their place and what is required of them. At a time of death, kin would gather and share the load of work and resources (Metge, 1964: 50). These responsibilities range from oratory to
cleaning, cooking and singing. Although, as per Oppenheim (1973: 48), the *tangihanga* is not initiated until the arrival of the *tūpāpaku* onto the *marae*, there were procedures that were undertaken prior to this, such as the *tuku i te wairua* (release of the spirit) as well as the preparation of the venue and discussions on where the *tūpāpaku* will lie. For the purposes of this thesis, I will refer to these preliminary measures as pre-*tangihanga*.

*The ‘Tuku i te Wairua’ Process*

The *tuku i te wairua*, sometimes shortened to *tuku*, is the process of freeing the spirit from the body of the deceased. This process requires a *tohunga* to perform *karakia*, and is performed immediately after death (Ngata, 1987: 5). Mead, however, states that *tuku* is sometimes carried out while the person is still alive, but in a state of deterioration to the extent that he or she is on his or her ‘last legs’ and death is very near (Mead, 2003: 56). Putting the actual time of performing this rite aside, *tuku* seems to take place in the approximate stages of death, either immediately before, or immediately after the individual passes.

As has already been noted at the beginning of this chapter, it is unhealthy for the spirit to remain in the living world, thus, *tuku* ensures the spirit is cleansed of any impurities that may be attached to it, enabling it to join the spirits of other loved ones that have already passed. Mourning may occur before or during the *tuku* and is commonly evident with the wailing of elderly women (Ngata, 1987: 5). Once the deceased has passed on, the immense *tapu* of death is then settled upon the mourners. The deceased is now considered a *tūpāpaku* and is now under the vigil eye and protection of the *whānau*. The process of preparing the *tūpāpaku* for the *tangihanga* now commences.
The Tūpāpaku

*Tūpāpaku* is frequently used among Māori as the term to describe a corpse or dead body. *Tūpāpaku* literally means to stand shallowly, a word formed from the terms *tü* (stand) and *pāpaku* (shallow) (Williams, 1971: 255-443). This refers to the position of the deceased during *tangihanga* where the bodies of the deceased were formerly tied into foetal-like positions. The knees were brought up to the chest and the arms were wrapped around the legs. In order to achieve this position, it is highly probable that this procedure occurred before rigor mortis set in (Buck, 1949: 424).

There are global similarities, such as in Hawai’i, where rope was bound around the bent knees and looping the rope around the back of the neck (Buck, 1949: 424). Archaeological evidence from the Stone Age also shows that skeletons were buried in this foetal positioning (Breuil and Lantier as cited in Davies, 1997: 23).

This ‘propped up’ feature of the corpse serves to acknowledge the deceased as a living entity. The *wairua* is claimed to hover over the *tūpāpaku* during the *tangihanga* to ensure that the rituals are carried out correctly (Mead, 2003: 55). Under the watchful eye of the *whānau*, once the *tūpāpaku* has been prepared, arrangements are made for it to be taken to the *marae* for the *tangihanga*. 
The Tangihanga Process

Prior to modern tangihanga, where everybody has the opportunity to have tangihanga held for them, only people of rank and chiefly status were afforded tangihanga. Mere commoners would usually have just the burial, whereas taurekareka would sometimes not even have a burial. The tangihanga process varies from region to region and tribe to tribe although the principles and many elements of this process are similar. The tangihanga can range from being small and private, attended only by a few immediate family members and close friends to being an enormous event attended by thousands. The most common setting for tangihanga is the marae, therefore we need to consider marae protocols and their observation during tangihanga.

The Pōwhiri

As has been already mentioned, the tangihanga ritual is a very complex process and contains many elements which all serve a purpose. The tangihanga proper is initiated with the advance of the tūpāpaku and their whānau onto the marae during the pōwhiri (ritual of encounter). The pōwhiri generic is the welcoming of visitors onto the marae. In terms of tangihanga, the body is ‘formally’ brought onto the marae. As she would while inviting living visitors, an elderly woman performs a karanga (call of welcome), in this case, to the deceased and those accompanying it, to enter onto the marae. The karanga is performed in a high pitched wailing tone and usually only by women of an older age due to the belief that not only are they able to welcome the living, they are also capable of addressing spiritual entities or wairua. These wairua are welcomed in order to accompany the deceased to the spirit realm. The karanga also acts to connect the entire group, both living and dead, genealogically and sometimes extends as far back as the Hawaiki connections (Salmond,
1975: 140). These spiritual connections joined by the karanga enable a safe passage for the recently deceased to journey towards their spiritual resting place and are accompanied by other recently deceased persons and whānau (Wahine Widow 2, Pers. Comm., 2009). Wahine Widow 2 identifies her presence at a majority of tangihanga, immediately after her husband’s passing, as a sign of gratitude, as she believes that those who passed on in proximity of her husband, would accompany him on his spiritual journey.

Solidarity of the group is further portrayed following the karanga, where a moment is usually given for the manuhiri (visitors) and tangata whenua (local people/ hosts) to weep and wail over the tūpāpaku together.

The Whaikōrero

Following the karanga, whaikōrero (formal oratory) begins. The weeping and wailing generally continues, but in a more controlled manner with less volume. The kawa of the marae determines the flow of oratory, however, the host side always performs the final speech to ensure the mauri is retained (Mead, 2003: 364-368). Within formal oratory at tangihanga the main concepts addressed are the farewell to the deceased, remembrance of those that have recently passed, genealogical links of the deceased and encouragement of the deceased’s spirit to travel to the spirit world (Ngata, 1988: 10). It is during whaikōrero that tūpāpaku are addressed in a way that visualises that the deceased is still alive. This is to acknowledge that the deceased’s wairua is still present.
The Whakatūtakitanga

Concluding the pōwhiri is the whakatūtakitanga (to meet for the first time) which is the meeting of the host and visiting sides where both parties come together as one (Trade Union Education Authority, 1990: 8). This process is accomplished by physical human contact of either one or more of the hongi (the noses of the manuhiri pressing with the noses of the tangata whenua) and rūrū/harirū (hand shake between two people). The hongi represents the symbolic sharing of mana, mauri and tapu where foreheads and noses are pressed sometimes invoking intense emotion (Ngata, 1987: 7). Harirū and hongi are generally lengthier at a tangihanga than at any other pōwhiri and is attributed to this intense sharing of emotion, energies and synergies.

Display of the Corpse

During the karanga, the whānau pani and/or kirimate (bereaved family), accompany the body to where the tūpāpaku will lie in repose on the marae, for the duration of the tangihanga. The placement of tūpāpaku varies from region to region. Some tribes place the body on the mahau (veranda of the marae), some place it inside the wharenui (meeting house), while others are placed in a whare mate, or a temporary building to the side of the wharenui, known as a whare tūroro (house for the sick) (Higgins & Moorfield, 2004: 87). Whare mate and whare tūroro were buildings that were traditionally temporary, however, advancements have shown the establishment of permanent whare mate which will be outlined as a modern application in the following chapter.
Traditionally, the only means by which a building was freed from the *tapu* of death was to destroy the establishment by fire (Best 1905: 157), therefore if someone became ill, a temporary shelter was built for them in order to save the building from the *tapu* of possible death (Buck, 1949: 416). Thus, the term *whare tūroro* stems from *tūroro* meaning ‘a sick person’ or ‘patient’ and was a construct for the ill/sick patient (Ryan, 1999: 151).

The term *whare mate* is given to both the ‘physical’ building housing the dead, and the ‘metaphoric’ group of people closely related to the deceased. The *whare mate* is also used as a blanket term to describe the people within the confines of the ‘physical’ *whare mate*. Its common application however, refers to the house in which the dead lie (Salmond, 1975: 180-181). *Whare mate* is also used synonymously with *whare tauā* (house in which the body lies) and *whare pōtae* (Higgins & Moorfield, 2004: 87). The *whare mate*, traditionally a temporary shelter, also accommodated the widow or widower and some of the closest genealogical relatives of the deceased who remained with the body until burial took place (Oppenheim, 1973: 45).

*Atamiratia*

The preparation of the body for exhibition and display is expressed as the process of *atamiratia*. This term derives from the root word ‘*atamira*’ meaning ‘stage’ or ‘platform’ (Ryan, 1999: 28). In this instance it is the body which was, in pre-European times, placed on a platform for people to view and pay their respects (Voykovic, 1981: 29). The platform (*atamira*) was generally a low one that was elevated at the head region and often had some form of roof used for shelter (refer to Figure 5) (Best, 1921: 167).
Figure 5: Diagram showing the structure of the platform used in pre-European times to view the deceased.

Adapted from Voykovic, 1981: 29; Best, 1921: 167; Ryan, 1999, 28.

The process of *atamiratia* involved beautifying and adorning the *tūpāpaku*, in readiness for public display. Adornments were arranged around the body and consisted of either, *korowai* (cloaks generally made from feathers of native birds), *pounamu* (greenstone), jewellery and other prized possessions and heirlooms. *Kōkōwai*, or red ochre, prepared as a paint was occasionally used to enhance the appearance of the body and the ears were adorned with albatross feathers to denote chiefly rank (Buck, 1949: 416). The items arranged with the body varied in value which was dependent on the status of the deceased. These items lay with the *tūpāpaku* which acted figurative ‘warmth’ during the *tangihanga* (Salmond, 1975: 104). Like other ethnicities, this process demonstrates an attitude that Māori also share, in that, they go as far as to beautify the *tūpāpaku* for display, and probably more so than what we might perform usually, unless attending an important occasion. The set up of the platform and beautifying processes again emphasise the importance of *tangihanga*. 
**Tangianga - Duration**

Oppenheim states the tangihanga as being set out in three phases; “the initiation of the public ceremonial, the ceremonial itself, and the disposal of the corpse” (1973: 48). When asked what marks the beginning of the tangihanga, the participants’ views varied. One informant asserted that the tangihanga begins “when the flag is raised” (Tāne Regular Tangi Attendee, Pers. Comm., 2009), whereas another informant stated the tangihanga as beginning “when you bring them [the deceased] onto the marae” (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009). Further disparity saw another participant proposing that it begins the moment the person dies (Wahine Widow 2, Pers. Comm., 2009).

In traditional times, the only people reported to entitlement of tangihanga were people of high rank. In my opinion, because tangihanga were few, this may also be the reason as to their lengthiness. In the instance of King Tāwhiao’s death in 1894, the tangihanga endured for two months and is the longest recorded tangihanga (Matenga-Kohu & Roberts, 2006: 25). The extensive duration of tangihanga served to provide relatives, kinsmen, and those who wished to pay respects, the time to travel and pay their respects to the deceased. Buck states that the “length of time a corpse was kept before burial was indefinite” (1949: 421). This was due to the reality that no one knew when the final group of mourners would arrive.

**Preservation Methods**

Because tangihanga were traditionally so lengthy, some preservation measures were needed to stall the rapid decomposition process of the body. Although primitive, there are

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26 King Tāwhiao was the second Māori King (Paterson, 2004: 165).
documented cases of some early body preservation during the *tangihanga* and sometimes thereafter. Methods of preservation employed plants, oils and spices.

*Embalming*

Embalming is a process that slows the rate of body decomposition and it has largely progressed from its primitive beginnings in Egypt some five or so thousand years ago. This process involves treating a corpse with chemicals, oils or ointments to preserve it from rapid decomposition (Dictionary.com, 2009: Online). Embalming stems from the root word ‘balm’ which was used as an agent to smear onto the body for preservation purposes (Foreman, 1965: 169).

In ancient Egypt even as far back as pre-3100 B.C., bodies were wrapped in animal skins. Subsequent to the animal skin technique, bodies were sealed with resin and then wrapped, this process is known as mummification. Later knowledge proved that the removal of the internal organs slowed body decomposition and gave rise to the disembowelment technique. The disembowelment technique was found to slow decomposition better, as the empty cavity gave opportunity for the body to dry more effectively (Spencer as cited in Leming & Dickinson, 2002: 359).

In pre-colonial times, the way Māori handled the corpse depended on the *kawa* of the *marae* and status of the deceased. Embalming was only afforded to people of high rank. Māori did in fact embalm their dead using various methods and techniques. Embalming is pre-conceived and misconceived as a process not frequently used by Māori in former times,
however there is documentation that confirms its existence although chemicals and dosages to embalm bodies have contemporarily evolved.

A drying process, *whakataumiro* was exercised in the South Island and performed only by *tohunga*. Not much is said about the exact process of *whakataumiro*, but literature indicates that nothing was removed from the corpse and the body was dried whole (Beattie, 1994: 89). Another process identified by an informant expresses that the intestines remained inside the body cavity and the body was rubbed with *taramea* (spear grass) oil, due to its scent, and in some cases the body was later treated with *maukoroa* (haematite (a red/grey or black mineral)) (Beattie, 1994: 89). The *maukoroa* was used to the same effect as *kōkōwai* and was used to beautify the corpse. In another instance, whilst the corpse was drying, oil was massaged into the body and gum from the *tarata* (lemonwood) tree was used for preservation (Buck, 1949: 424). The embalming process was also eminent throughout the Pacific. In Hawai’i some corpses were preserved by “opening the abdomen, removing the contents, and filling the cavity with salt” (Buck, 1949: 424) in order to mask the smell and decrease the decomposition of the corpse.

The *kawakawa*27 plant is another renowned agent used alongside *tūpāpaku* during the *tangihanga*. It is a native New Zealand plant used as a remedy for toothaches, itching, cuts and wounds and also aids in repelling insects (New Zealand Herbals, 2008: Online). In relation to death however, the pungent smell of the *kawakawa* leaves were used to mask the smell of the decomposing corpse (Williams, 1971: 110). *Kawakawa* was inserted inside

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27 The *kawakawa* plant, scientific name of *Macropiper Excelsum* is a shrub that is endogenous to New Zealand and is bitter to the taste.
orifices of the body such as the mouth, nostrils, ears, vagina and anus, to block bodily leakage.

Externally, *kawakawa* was usually constructed into a headband and wrapped around the head of the corpse and termed *pare kawakawa* (Buck, 1949: 417). ‘*Pare*’ stems from the word *tīpare* meaning headband (Ryan, 1999: 142). In a symbolic nature, women still wear *pare kawakawa* today during *tangihanga* to mark death. Another belief tells that the *pare kawakawa* also symbolises Rongo-mā-tāne, the god of peace, and allows the spirit peaceful travel to the next world (Matenga-Kohu & Roberts, 2006: 14). The placing of *kawakawa* on the head represents the regard that the head is held in.

*Preservation of Heads*

The head is described as the most *tapu* of all body parts as it houses one’s knowledge, skills, attributes and personality, thus, especially in the cases of revered combatants and chiefs, dire measures were sought to retain the head after their death. One might extrapolate this as the reasoning behind preservation of heads being a relatively common practice amongst Māori.

During Māori inter-tribal warfare, in the event of a warrior’s death, all possible means were taken to return the fallen to their homes. If it was too difficult to carry or extract the entire body from the place where he died, the travelling war party would sever the heads from their fallen clansmen and at least take their heads home with them. Once home, a process of head preservation, a process by the name of *rara*, was sometimes carried out. This process consisted of the head being heated by flames, then dried by smoke. During this drying
process, the fat and oil from the head was drained and then the heads were placed inside boxes and put on poles around the pā (fortified village) (Beattie 1994: 273). Through the process of rara, the heads preserved for many years.

Another process of head preservation affirms that in the first instance the brain and eyes were removed from the skull cavity and all orifices (mouth, eyes, nose and ears) were closed using flax fibre and gum. The head was then boiled or steamed in an earth oven. Smoke or sunlight was then used to dry the heads and shark oil was used to preserve the head. The actual process was not fully outlined but the assumption is that the shark oil was smeared on the skin. Sometimes red ochre was used to enhance the colour of the skin (Wharewaka, 1990: Online).

In some cases of highly ranked people, the head (without the body) after dressing, would then be paraded through their respective villages: tangihanga were held for them and they were later buried (Beattie 1994: 89-90). In other instances, the preserved heads of tribal enemies were set up on the marae and mocked, in order to degrade the mana of that person (Wharewaka, 1990: Online). Prior to preserving the head, if the deceased’s fighting comrades were able to extract him from the battlefield, cremation of the remaining body was undertaken to ensure these did not fall into the hands of enemies.

**Cremation**

Cremation is defined as ‘reducing a corpse to ashes’ by burning (Hawker, 2004: 160). Cremating the dead was evident among very early civilisation for Māori and non-Māori alike.
Such evidence shows historical beginnings of cremation as being well established in the Hindu and Greek cultures (Dunedin Cremation Society, 1903: 3). Cremation is seen as a natural process as it unifies two founding elements of existence, fire and death (Davies & Mates, 2005: xvii).

With reference to Māori, cremation was generally used for the convenience of travelling war parties, however, some iwi did cremate on a regular basis as part of their everyday social existence, such as in the instance of Southern Māori. An informant declares that there was a location at Purakaunui that served as a space for burning bodies, insomuch that perhaps it was a traditional crematorium. Bodies about to be cremated were placed inside mats then burned and later buried. Another account stated that at another location, slightly north of Purakaunui, cremation was common, but only in the evening immediately prior to sunset (Beattie 1994: 89). It was ensured that the fire was not ignited until the wind was blowing out to sea, whilst burning the corpses. If the wind was blowing inland from the sea, the fire was not lit as the people were susceptible to smoke inhalation and they would figuratively be deemed to be ‘eaten by their own’, because they had inhaled the essence of their dead (Buck, 1949: 426). Like many processes stated in this chapter, the burning of the bodies was also a process undertaken by tohunga.

People of Ngāti Awa also cremated their dead but it was not a common practice. For them, cremation was specifically used for people who had died from kai-uaua (tuberculosis) which struck Whakatāne around the 1880s. The ashes were later buried in a desperate attempt to prevent the spread of the disease (Best, 1921: 202).

28 Purakaunui is located between Waitati and Aramoana in the Otago region of the South Island of New Zealand.
Preservation of *mana* was effected through possession of kinsmen in life and in death. Therefore, tribes that resided in the open country regularly practised cremation. This was due to the difficulty of hiding the bones of the deceased from their foes. One account explains a war party actually burning their living wounded in a desperate attempt to keep them away from enemies (Best, 1921: 201). The concept of *mana* and the practice of *mana* retention was vital to the status of the group and as can be seen in the examples above sometimes drastic measures were done to ensure its maintenance.

**Procuration and Degradation of Mana**

The practices of procuration and degradation of *mana* was highly exercised in traditional times, regardless of whether the individual was living or deceased. Formerly, family members were always present and very protective over *tūpāpaku*, especially if the deceased was of high rank. As mentioned earlier, this was due to the fear of the *tūpāpaku* being taken, usually by enemies, and the *mana* of the *whānau*, *hapū* or *iwi* being subjected to degradation.

In death terms, procuration of *mana* is a means of increasing one’s *mana* by devouring body parts of the defeated. It was claimed that to eat one’s foe after being defeated was “the ultimate insult” and believed to figuratively give the “final word” (Voykovic, 1981: 40). The idea was, by consuming the body parts, especially the brain, eyes and heart of the defeated, their ‘power’, ‘essence’ and ‘integrity’ would be transferred to the person consuming the body parts. Those most highly sought for consumption therefore, were the most respected, talented and skilful of warriors and high chiefs, especially chiefs of victorious war parties. The consumption of the human anatomy was declared the ‘feast of victory’ (Maynard and
Dumas, 1937: 236). The degradation of *mana* through humiliation was by consumption and desecration of their remains.

In addition, body parts of the fallen would be used for everyday items such as fish hooks, flutes, knives and the heads of spears using their bones (Best, 1905: 221). The skull was also sometimes used as a drinking vessel. By using these items on a daily basis, alongside *noa* elements, the victor would be eternally victorious (Beattie, 1994: 273).

This practice of consuming body parts has been seen as savage but only because it was not practised by the European culture and therefore has derogatory undertones. However, because cannibalism was embedded in traditional Māori culture:

> they [Māori] in practicing it, broke no known law, and as they did not think it wrong, they never once thought of concealing it; and that as they (their tribe) were doing to-day, they (their tribe), had been done by yesterday, and might be again to-morrow. (Colenso, 1868: 372)

The idea of *mana* being inheritable through body consumption seems plausible when discussed in these instances. These ideas form the need to retain not only individual mana but the *mana* of the *whānau*, *iwi* and *hapū*. The importance of *mana* is further described in burial, which will now be the focus.

**Burial**

Burial refers to the covering or concealing of the *tūpāpaku* in the ground and the terms ‘*tāpukenga*’ and ‘*nehunga*’ are also used to define this process. These terms arose from their root words ‘*tāpuke*’ and ‘*nehu*’ meaning to bury (Best, 1905: 188). The burial was much
different in the 1800s than it is today which consisted of either the permanent or primary burial, normally practised on commoners, or the secondary burial, usually applied to people of high rank.

*Primary Burial*

Death is immersed in *tapu*, therefore all burials whether they were primary or secondary, were carried out by *tohunga* who were experts in the field. The primary burial consisted of the *tūpāpaku* either being dropped or placed in a hollow space, such as a cave or a hollowed out tree, or else being buried in a swamp or a sand dune (Best, 1974: 116). One account tells of a hollowed out tree in Ōpōtiki named Te Ahoroa. It was a ‘burial’ tree and had approximately 500 skeletons therein. A *kaumātua* of the area explained

> that her people had been in the habit of depositing their dead there for a long time, pushing their bones through a hole in the trunk 50 feet from the ground.  
> (Tregear, 1904: 398)

As one would expect, sand dune burials were commonly practised by tribes residing along the coastlines as it was easier to move sand than earth as a space for *tūpāpaku*, especially when one considers the tools of that era. Opihi Whanaunga Kore (See B, Figure 6)\(^3\), was one well-known *urupā* used for this very purpose (Buck 1949: 426).

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\(^{29}\) Ōpōtiki is located 58 kilometres East of Whakatāne (See A, Figure 6).

\(^{30}\) Opihi Whanaunga Kore translates to Opihi without relatives and symbolically means that in the end, death has no relatives (Buck, 1949: 426). Opihi is located on the Piripai spit directly off the coast of Whakatāne.
The above methods were more common techniques for primary burial, however, there were also other techniques that, although obscure, have been documented. Some of these include sinking the body to the bottom of a lagoon or pool by strapping heavy materials such as rocks to the body, volcanic burials where the tūpāpaku was deposited into a volcanic crater, and shallow grave burials, where the corpse was shallowly buried under rocks, wood, leaves and soil (Oppenheim, 1973: 62; Rankin as cited in Voykovic, 1981: 65).

The practices of body disposal by Māori were predominantly primary burials (outlined above). Primary burials saw the corpse directly deposited in a permanent location and
deemed never to be disturbed, touched or exhumed in the future (Tregear, 1904: 393). For a select few, secondary burials were also undertaken.

**Secondary Burial**

Secondary burials were reserved for people of rank, chiefs and warriors of reknown. A secondary burial referred to the process of exhuming a previously buried corpse and reburying the remains. The corpse was initially deposited in a temporary resting place to allow for decomposition of the soft tissues of the body, after which, the remains were later exhumed and following a ceremony, the bones were re-buried (Best, 1905: 211).

The first stage of the secondary burial process required the corpse to undergo decomposition. All temporary placements of tūpāpaku were situated in environments which ensured a temperature and humidity that encouraged decomposition and easy removal of the remains for future re-burial. Such environments included corpses being hung in trees (known as aerial burial) where gravity allowed the decomposed soft tissues of the body to fall to the ground. Corpses were also placed on elevated sheltered platforms in caves and some were temporarily buried in swamps, shallow graves and sand graves (Voykovic 1981: 65-66). One interview participant explains that

> they [Māori] used to hang them [deceased] out on pou’s [sic][posts]to dry them out in sea salt and then collect their remains and hide them just so that people couldn’t takahi [trample] their mana. Only tohunga would take them away and they would be the only ones that actually stay there until the body was [ready].

(Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Tāne Anatomy Student voices that tūpāpaku were hidden so that people would not ‘takahi on their mana’. This supports the claim that these initial burials were in isolated locations due to
the potential concern that foes would locate tūpāpaku and desecrate their mana. As addressed in the above passage, mana affects the way in which death practices were carried out. Hidden remains were evident throughout New Zealand. One Tūhoe account reports that these hidden urupā were only accessible via ladders or the lowering of a person from a cliff top. Another example of this secrecy, again in the Tūhoe region, was in Ruatāhuna (See C, Figure 6)31 where one could only gain entrance to the cave by towering a tree then subsequently lying poles from the tree to the ledge of the cliff where the cave was located (Best, 1905: 218). These bones were then collected and the hahunga ceremony performed.

**Hahunga**

The hahunga is the system of exhuming the decomposed body and removing the flesh from the bones before putting them on display for the final part of the grieving process. More specifically, the bones were “scraped to remove any adhering flesh, oiled and painted with red ochre” (Buck, 1949: 425). Like that of the primary burial, only tohunga were allowed to handle the tūpāpaku and in the case of secondary burials it is protocol that the same tohunga who carried out the initial burial also carried out the secondary burial. It was common to have mass hahunga performed at one time and therefore many tūpāpaku required re-burial (Best, 1905: 211-212). The hahunga process also varied tribally.

Due to a large number of tūpāpaku being exhumed at once, each individual set of bones was neatly displayed on the marae. Like the tangihanga, elderly women welcomed the bones onto the marae with the karanga which was accompanied with weeping and wailing over the bones. Often, the hahunga created more tears, sorrow and grief than the original tangihanga

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31 Ruatāhuna is located about 60 kilometres directly inland from Whakatāne.
as there were several bones on display at the same time. This grief was compounded by the fact that the *hahunga* was the last opportunity for the community to engage with both the physical and spiritual embodiments of the deceased (Buck, 1949: 425).

One account of *hahunga* is recalled at the ceremony of Heuheu I and his wife who both perished during a volcanic eruption in Taupō,

> The bodies had been placed in a box elevated on posts. The side of the box was opened to permit observation and tangi and haehae carried out. An old woman led the ceremony which was attended by about forty people, being the closest relations of the dead people. The bones were afterwards to be taken and thrown into the crater of Tongariro . . . (Cooper as cited in Oppenheim 1973: 69)

*Hahunga* was also very *tapu* and an important part of traditional Māori death rituals and because the bones were a tangible link with the past as they were ‘living’ physical proof of the existence of ancestors…their viewing was the conclusive evidence that made the names of the tipuna [ancestors] recorded in whakapapa a reality to the living. (Voykovic 1981: 74).

The above excerpt shows the significance of the *hahunga*. It describes how *whakapapa* and the bones of an ancestor bind the living and the dead, a bond that only lengthens and strengthens and never breaks.

**Expressions of grief and Mourning**

Other customary Māori death practices were affected directly or indirectly as a result of Pākehā influence, for example, some expressions of grief and mourning such as *haehae* (laceration), *whakamomori* (suicide) and *koangaumu* (sacrifice). Sometimes the weight of

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32 Heuheu I was a high chief from the Tūwharetoa tribe, located around the Taupō area (refer also to Figure 1).

33 Taupō is located in the central part of the North Island of New Zealand (See D, Figure 6).
grief, especially of a person one shares a close bond with, is difficult to bear and coping mechanisms are applied.

The Haehae

Haehae, or laceration, was a frequently exercised custom which was customarily exercised amongst older women. A sharp item such as a sea shell or sharp rock (usually obsidian) were commonly used instruments for self-laceration. It was not uncommon to hear the request “homai te mata kia haehae au” meaning ‘give me a rock so I may self-lacerate’, before a grieving relative asks to be given obsidian with which to lacerate him/herself when a close relative died (Best, 1921: 169). The lacerations were made over the entire body mainly on the wrists, shoulders, thighs and cheeks (Oppenheim, 1973: 51). Dye was normally added to the wounds to leave a permanent mark as evidence of mourning (Beattie 1994: 92). Haehae gave a physical representation of the pain inside the mourner and served as a cleanser to free mourners from this pain. Haehae is the means of showing the amount of affection for the deceased. Nowadays, this practice is symbolised during tangihanga by women beating their chests with a subtle and slow waving motion, sometimes also performed with a handkerchief (Salmond, 1975: 145).

The Whakamomori

Whakamomori is another method of grieving which allows release of grieving emotion, of love and affection at an extreme level, experienced by the living. It is also a term synonymous with suicide, however whakamomori in a Māori death context refers to suicide in an immediate response to a death of a loved one. Whakamomori is the act of taking one’s
own life as liberation from their grief. Literature shows limited documentation of whakamomori amongst men, therefore whakamomori amongst women will drive discussion in this section.

Dependent on rank, a widowed wife would occasionally take her own life as an expression of her loyalty and devotion to her husband during the tangihanga. In the early 1900s there is an account by Judge Maning, whilst in attendance of a high chief’s funeral in the far North, where

on a morning walk, he discovered the widow of the deceased chief hanging. His first impulse was to cut her down and apply artificial respiration. However, an elderly Maori who was present, said “Don’t touch her. She may not be dead yet”. 

(Buck, 1949: 417-418)

Another report asserts:

It was no uncommon thing for a wife to be urged by her friends to hang herself upon a tree, that she may accompany her departed lord and remain with him forever. When not exhorted to destruction she has inflicted death upon herself of her own free will, and has perished miserably with him she loved leaving her orphan children to the care, or more properly speaking, the neglect of strangers.

(Yates as cited in Oppenheim, 1973: 54)

In the above citations it is evident that the beliefs of Māori, in respect to whakamomori, were very real. Peer pressure emphasised the need for a woman to join her late husband, even to the extent that a mother might orphan her children. This suicidal expression of grief was not always demonstrated with widowed wives but also sometimes with parents or children. The affection a parent might have for a favourite child, or vice versa on occasion, saw whakamomori take place. The latter however, was very uncommon (Beattie 1994: 271). A death custom that was by no means uncommon however, was the practice of koangauwu.
The Koangaumu

Koangaumu was the process of killing slaves or close kin as a human sacrifice to the deceased. The sacrificed was termed ika koangaumu, meaning sacrificial fish or victim (Best, 1921: 158). Additional terms associated to the victim are ika whakahere, raukakai and tānga ika (Rewi, Pers. Comm., 2010). There were two reasons for this: firstly, to supply human flesh for the hākari that would be consumed at the conclusion of the tangihanga, and secondly, the sacrificial killing of slaves provided a tribute to a great chief as well as accompaniment and service to him in his afterlife. It was seen that the slaves would serve the dead chief or high ranking person and ensure their afterlife was as fruitful and fitting in his death as it was when he was alive (Best, 1921: 166).

Those sacrificed were sometimes referred to as whāriki (a mat) for the chief’s grave, whereby those sacrificed were laid within the grave, beneath the dead chief, and acted as “something for him to rest upon” (Best, 1995a: 239).34 Similarities existed within the Pacific where in Fiji one account informs us that

friends suffered grievously; his wife or wives, sometimes also his mother or friend, were strangled, and their bodies laid in the bottom of the grave to serve as ‘grass’ to place his body on. (Best 1995a: 239)

These are just some expressions of grief and mourning which exemplify how traditionally grounded Māori culture is in its beliefs.

34 Another term for this process is whakahere (sacrifice, offering).
Conclusion

Death rituals have a vital role in the maintenance of Māori custom. As seen in this chapter, they provide a path for the spirit to travel to its final resting place. If death rituals were not performed, or performed poorly, the *wairua* becomes irritated and attempts to cause harm to the living.

The *tangihanga* headed discussions in this chapter and it was evident that the *tangihanga* is indeed a complex process that incorporates many elements. Firstly, the processes prior to the *tangihanga* were looked at, including *te tuku i te wairua* and the reasons for the posture positioning of the *tūpāpaku*. Following this, the *tangihanga* proper and its many rudiments were delved into. The importance of *karanga*, *whaikōrero* and *hongi* in the *pōwhiri* of a *tangihanga* were explored, as were the methods of displaying the corpse. These display techniques involved the housing of the *tūpāpaku* in *whare mate*, as well as the process of *atamiratia*.

The duration of *tangihanga* varied and depended on the rank of the individual and environmental conditions. With lengthy *tangihanga*, some form of body preservation was needed, thus, the discussion of embalming methods in traditional Māori times was a focal point. The use of *kawakawa* in Māori death rituals was also discussed as well as the strong obedience that Māori had towards the concepts of *tapu* and *mana*, which structured the way death rituals were observed. The procuration and degradation of mana was covered including steps taken to avoid such occurences.
This chapter looked at methods of traditional burials, where customarily, either a primary or secondary burial was carried out, and again, depending on the rank of the deceased whether the hahunga ceremony was also undertaken. Open expressions of emotions were not restricted and were evident in the volume, length and duration of wails and sobs. Further emotional expression was evident in the practice of haehae, whakamomori, and koangaumu.

The ideals looked at in this chapter influence Māori attitudes as they reflect the protocols, procedures, values and importance that Māori place on correct treatment and facilitation of tūpāpaku as well as the thought processes, energies and emotions embedded within Māori death practices. Death practices therefore directly affect Māori attitudes towards death and are an essential element to this research. Having discussed traditional death practices, we build on this for discussions in the following chapter which focuses on the reasons behind the extinction and change of traditional death practices, and the evolution of new death practices.
Chapter Four

*Ko Ngā Ritenga o Nāianei* - Contemporary Death Practices

“The Ao hurihuri
*Te ao huri ai ki tona tauranga:*
*Te ao rapu;*
*Ko te huripoki e huri nei*
*i runga i te taumata o te kaha*

“The Ao Hurihuri
is a world revolving:
a world that moves forward
to the place it came from;
a wheel that turns on an axle of strength”
(King, 1992: 191)

The phrase above emphasises that everything does change and evolve, however, regardless of change it still ‘turns on an axle of strength’ that being its unique origin. Contemporary marks change and evolution. Although there have been developments from what was practised in the past, the symbolic and physical principles remain the same.

This chapter outlines contemporary death practices and how and why they have changed from traditional practices to what they are today. The most determining periods in New Zealand’s history which distinguished this change aligned most dramatically to their ability to effect mass deaths: including the arrival and introduction of diseases and weapons by Pākehā. Other reasons for change in death practices arose from the imposition of European law, health and safety regulations and urbanisation which provide the basis of discussion in this chapter.
Modernisation of certain death practices will also lead discussions, including the current processes and technological advancements of tangihanga, contemporary body preservation techniques, contemporary cremation, contemporary burial and the emergence of hura kōhatu. This chapter begins with a pivotal period of change to practices in New Zealand with respect to Māori, that being, the arrival of the Pākehā.

**The Arrival of Pākehā**

The first Pākehā sighting of New Zealand was by Abel Tasman on the 13\textsuperscript{th} of December 1642, however, the first Pākehā to actually set foot on New Zealand’s shores was Captain James Cook. James Cook captained the Endeavour to its safe arrival some one hundred years later on the 7\textsuperscript{th} October 1769 (Hita-Brown, 2006: 337-338). Following the arrival of Cook came waves of traders interested in the vast resources that New Zealand had to offer. These explorers, settlers and traders not only brought things such as alcohol, blankets and muskets, but they also brought with them fatal diseases that disrupted the lives of Māori (Stenson, 2004: 25).

**Sickness**

*Te tūroro*, or the ‘sick patient’, and *te tangata taumaha i te mate*, or ‘the seriously ill patient’, were some terms that came with the introduction of diseases into Māori society. The changing beliefs with the introduction of disease caused a change in the way that Māori perceived their dead which ultimately altered the traditional attitude that Māori had for tūpāpaku.
As asserted by the late Māori entertainer Dalvanius Prime, *tapu* was “a state of mind” (Tapu Uncovered, 2000), which shows the idea that *tapu* was inbuilt into a Māori mindset. The strong observance that Māori had for *tapu* formed the belief that sickness was a repercussion due to the ‘breach of *tapu*’ (Metge, 1964: 10). This belief, therefore, was seen as a fault of their own that caused sickness to be inflicted upon them. Sickness changed the outlook on how Māori perceived the dead because the attitude that Māori had for the strength of *tapu* caused Māori to sometimes give up hope if they were stricken with sickness, a concept known as fatalism. Fatalism describes the “attitude of resignation in the face of some future event or events which are thought to be inevitable” (Rice, 2002: Online). On this note, a Māori attitude was that *utu* had found them due to a past breach of *tapu*, thus Māori accepting their coming death. This idea is demonstrated in the recollection of relief workers noting Māori as having

a deep resignation or apathy, and an absence of the will to live. A recurrent description of this phenomenon in relief workers’ reports was: ‘they just turned their faces to the wall and died’. (Rice, 1988: 107)

Sickness then changed the attitude that was based around the treatment of bodies, which was usually a very *tapu* and spiritual element. Epidemics, like Influenza in 1918, encouraged the straying away from traditional Māori beliefs.

The introduction of diseases was a major contributor to mortality rates, especially since Māori had no immunity to them. Diseases like Tuberculosis, the Measles epidemic of 1854, the Whooping Cough epidemics of 1877 to 1880, and the 1890 and 1918 Influenza epidemics hit Māori brutally hard, and in some cases, it was this magnitude that caused Māori to change their views of death (Rice, 1988: 123).

In ancient times no large burial ground existed anywhere near Native settlements, but when disastrous epidemics were introduced by Europeans, then such great
numbers of people died that they were buried near their village homes, and many were never exhumed. Sometimes the death rate was so appalling that the survivors fled in terror to seek a new home, often leaving many dead unburied behind them. (Best, 1921: 198)

As seen here, it is eminent that the former practice of burial and the immense ritual usually associated with death in early Māori society was abandoned due to mass deaths caused by the introduction of what came to be known as *he taru tawhiti* (a weed from afar).

**Influenza Epidemic**

Influenza was one such form of death, known in the Māori world as *he taru tawhiti*, literally meaning ‘a weed from afar’. This term referred to something that was foreign, and in this instance meaning “an imported disease” (Broughton, 1996: 187). It was perhaps figuratively referred to as such because like a weed in the garden, Influenza was such in life and was responsible for huge disruptions in a Māori way of living. People accused the Niagara, a ship that docked on Auckland’s port on October 12th, to be the cause of the 1918 Influenza epidemic. The following month was accordingly phrased ‘Black November’ as this epidemic was perceived as “New Zealand’s worst recorded natural disaster” and drastically interrupted the operations of everyday life (Rice, 1988: 1-4).

World War I saw the end of an estimated 16,700 New Zealand soldiers lives over the span of four years, while the 1918 Influenza epidemic almost claimed the lives of half that in a matter of two months. On a global scale the Influenza epidemic impinged on the lives of 720 million and killed over 20 million people (King, 2003b: 98). With respect to New Zealand deaths, and in comparison to Pākehā deaths, the Māori death toll was seven times that of

35 The Niagara, also known as RMS Niagara, had just arrived from Vancouver, Canada and San Francisco, United States (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2008: Online).
Pākehā (Rice, 1988: 1). Health professionals put this down to the lack of awareness and accessibility of treatment, the deficiency of the Māori immune system, meagre ventilation, insufficient water availability and overcrowding which saw the newly introduced Influenza virus affect Māori greatly (Rice, 1988: 104-105, King, 2003b: 99). One account exemplifies the unforgiving gravity of the epidemic in the Waikato area, where a source states that he would

leave at about six o’clock in the morning when it was getting light. We’d load the bodies of people who had died in the night on to the boat, which was about 20 feet long and had an old standard engine. There was no time for relatives to mourn. Most of them couldn’t anyway. Then off we’d go, two of us, chugging up the river through the fog. I tell you, it was eerie. We often thought we saw things and heard things to do with the spirits of those people.

We’d get to Taupiri, unload the bodies, bury them in wide graves and then return to Mangatawhiri by about four in the afternoon. Sometimes we had to turn around and go straight back with some more. Each time we got there, hello – somebody else was dead. This went on for two weeks. I lost a lot of my family: one of my sisters and my two brothers-in-law. People were just dying everywhere. (as cited in King, 2003b: 101)

In this case, the mass deaths caused by the Influenza epidemic ran the lives of those involved to the point where it seemed like the norm. From these mass deaths, lengthy tangihanga, without the presence of the bodies, were administered to cater for the throng of lives that had been taken.

We now discuss how introduced diseases, like Influenza, altered the functions of everyday life such as Māori death practices. Because the marae has been seen as a communal establishment, the strike of Influenza indirectly prohibited tangihanga from being held on marae as European Law and health officials viewed marae as being an unhygienic venue for tangihanga (Buck, 1949: 413). Due to this ban and a constant push by officials to bury the dead quickly, a large number of Māori that were killed by Influenza were buried without the usual traditional ritual associated with death. Some school grounds and churches were
utilised as temporary venues to house the sick as opposed to conducting tangihanga on marae. Due to the constant demand of prompt burial, some were simply buried in shallow graves adjacent to these temporary hospitals which rendered the area tapu and consequently, continue to be deemed tapu today (Rice, 1988: 119).

The Musket Wars

Although Influenza epidemics caused a dramatic increase in mortality rates, they were not as large as those encountered during the musket war period which we now focus on. Parekura is defined as ‘catastrophe’, ‘calamity’ or ‘massacre’ and as such can be attached to the effects that war had on Māori (Moorfield, 2005: 113). With the introduction of diseases and muskets, as will soon be addressed, death pools rose dramatically.

The Musket Wars36 brought conflict and a major loss of lives and consisted of conflicts and bloodshed of both Māori and Pākehā (Metge, 1964: 12). The arrival of muskets turned the balance of fighting capability, skill and success to whomever was lucky enough to gain possession of such weapons. The introduction of these muskets, and hence the Musket Wars, caused the largest proportion of Māori life loss to ever hit New Zealand. In pre-European New Zealand times, Māori engagement in combat tended to be individual against individual, whereas musket ownership afforded the individual the potential to engage with many, thus, destruction and unsurpassable fatalities resulted (Ryan & Parham, 2002: 7). Muskets were brought into New Zealand by boat and as the Auckland Harbour was the first port of call for European arrivals, Hongi Hika, Chief of the Ngā Puhi people at the time, had first dibs on

36The Musket Wars was termed as such because it was a battle of which the recently introduced muskets were the main source of weaponry.
muskets. From here, war set out in a southerly direction through Waikato, Taranaki, and the Wellington region and later into the South Island of New Zealand (Stenson, 2004: 32). It is approximated that between 50,000 and 60,000 people either lost their lives, became slaves or were compelled to permanently re-locate elsewhere due to this inter-tribal war amongst Māori that broke out in the early 1800s (Ryan & Parham, 2002: 1).

The lives lost in these wars changed the way in which Māori handled the body post-death and changed the way that Māori perceived the body. A traditional Māori view of death revered the tūpāpaku as an immensely tapu element, demonstrated by the highly ritualised ceremony associated with death. Tūpāpaku lay in repose on the marae, especially in the cases of revered warriors, where respects were paid, atamiratia took place and the ceremony was concluded with the burial, had hahunga not been carried out. One account reports that Māori warriors re-used their own trenches as a mass grave for 107 fallen warriors (Ryan & Parham, 2002: 103). This idea of a mass grave is further evident, not only in New Zealand, but also overseas, illustrated in Italy with fallen soldiers from the 28 Māori Battalion. Ritualised burials, particularly for these warriors, had not taken place, and proper procedures ensuring a balance of tapu resulted in war being the reason for the swaying of Māori beliefs from ritual death practice to burial without proper ceremony. This idea is further emphasised with mass graves of New Zealand soldiers overseas in Egypt as well as memorials in Greece from both the Great War (WWI) and the Second World War (WWII). One account states that:

> Just outside Florence, about 5km from the New Zealand club, was a military cemetery. This cemetery contained 28 men [from the Māori Battalion] who had fallen in the battle for Italy. . . .The names of the men who fell in battle represented a cross-section of Maoridom. (Gardiner, 1992: 175)

Other traditions began changing with the arrival of both Pākehā and the musket. Wright as cited in Ballara (2003: 413), claims that firing guns became common at hahunga ceremonies
to deter unwelcome spirits as well. In one account of an 1829 burial he mentions that the
corpse was dressed in a blanket rather than a *korowai* (Māori cloak) and his *mere* (hand held
club) and his guns were placed alongside his casket as well. This example shows the
blending of two cultures as well as two ages which further affects the changing attitude of
Māori towards death. Further discussion of this change looks at the introduction of law,
health regulations and urbanisation.

**Law and Death**

Legislation and health regulations work together to impose laws that are required for the
health and safety of the people. With respect to the *tūpāpaku* and hygiene, disposal of the
corpse as well as the handling of the deceased before disposal is written into law which must
be abided by all citizens. Barnes (1991: 13) affirms that death “must be properly certified
and properly registered”. This certification is necessary for all deaths in New Zealand where
a death registration must be completed (usually done by the funeral director) as well as an
application for a death certificate in which the cause of death is mentioned37.

Pre-European times saw no need for these laws and thus, there were no laws established. The
traditional Māori were facilitated and regulated by the laws of *tapu*. Death rites, inclusive of
the disposal of the corpse, the *tangihanga* ceremony and the *hahunga* were all done under the
direction of expert elders who carried out death rituals in accordance with *tapu*. These rituals
did not involve any paperwork and the works of the *tohunga* were highly trusted by all

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37 Both the application for registration and certification of death are attached in the Appendices (See Appendix C and Appendix D).
families involved. Nowadays, certification and documentation is required for almost everything from the funeral directors to the burial plot and the cause of death.

**Causes of Death**

Under the *Births, Deaths, Marriages and Relationships Registration Act 1995*, it is illegal to dispose of a body before proper certification and cause of death is determined. The medical practitioner responsible for the deceased must provide documentation for the cause (Polson, Brittain & Marshall, 1953: 32). A death certificate, sometimes known as a medical certificate for the cause of death, is a form that is disseminated through the deceased’s family, doctors, coroners, and the funeral directors and embalmers. The cause of death, in a contemporary context, is the most vital piece of information, not only when treating and preparing a *tūpāpaku*, but also in terms of providing piece of mind for the next of kin. Funeral directors and embalmers make it their business to know the cause of death as it determines how they ‘treat’ the corpse, like the following account of death by drug overdose.

> We make it our business to know how people die because sometimes you can have a chemical reaction with embalming. Say for example, you took a lot of tablets or something to belt your body or whatever. We need to know sometimes because it can clash with our chemicals in embalming. And the cause of death certificate always tells us. (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009)

This shows that although death has been confirmed, there can still be complications with the methods by which a corpse is treated. In addition to informing the next of kin of their loved one’s cause of death, it also gives vital information to those who prepare the body so they are able to do so appropriately, without risk of a side effect.
In modern days, the causes of death have broadened. Not only is the cause of death from warfare, old age, still birth and sickness as in traditional times\textsuperscript{38}, but aspects like gunshot wounds, suicide by gassing, motor vehicle accidents, drug overdoses and myocardial infarctions (heart attacks) have entered the modern age. Also, conditions such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), as well as viruses like Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) have marked changes to how bodies are prepared for funerary rites.

With regards to Māori and HIV, HIV itself is a very rare virus, few people contract this virus, however rare, there is a relatively high incidence evident in Māori and Pacific Islanders. Māori account for 14.6 percent of the New Zealand population and account for 7.2 percent of HIV cases up until the end of 2009 (INA – Māori (Indigenous & South Pacific) HIV/AIDS Foundation, 2010: Online).

HIV positive corpses require greater protection in accordance to morticians handling the body and he recommends

- wearing a face mask and glasses to protect mucosal surfaces;
- wearing a water-impermeable gown or body suit to cover the arms, and a plastic over-apron; and
- wearing two pairs of gloves (latex inner gloves and outer thicker household rubber gloves); some pathologists also opt for cut-resistant glove liners. The instruments used should be kept to a minimum, and blunt-ended implements used in preference to sharp-pointed for example, round-ended scissors, and non-pointed body-opening knife blades and organ-slicing knives. (Lucas, 1993: 1074)

As noted here, extreme care is taken when dealing with HIV positive corpses with morticians highly encouraged to use double gloving and blunted instruments to prevent the likelihood of cross-contamination through cuts, grazes or open wounds. This maintains the idea of

\textsuperscript{38} These causes of death were mentioned as they were the only ones mentioned by the informants as well as being predominantly new, and differing from former causes of death.
changing the practices of the tūpāpaku contemporarily with the introduction of new practices to adapt to new diseases that pose a high risk of possible infection.

In reference to gun shots and gassing\textsuperscript{39}, Wahine Funeral Director gives an example where:

Maybe in a suicide where they used a gun, or it could be an [motor vehicle] accident that’s just mangled [the face]. It [deceased] could have been drowned and they found you after 2 weeks. That’s just a complete mongrel, I’ll tell you that now, especially drowning. Gas, if it’s suicide through gassing, through a vehicle, its one of the worst deaths imaginable. It smells so bad. You have to seriously think. The body may not be damaged but the fumes have gone through the system and it smells to high heaven. So you have to ask the family, do they really want it [viewing]. And what’s gone in you can’t get out. (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009)

As elicited above, dependent on the cause of death and the wishes of the family, the corpse is treated accordingly. Wahine Funeral Director explains some of these new causes of death such as suicide by gunshot, motor vehicle accidents and suicide by gassing. As with the example when informing the family of whether or not they would like to view their deceased loved one, they are strongly encouraged to select the ‘no viewing’ option as the smell is unbearable. This shows the move of cultural practices, where previously the ‘viewing’ option, when the body was available, was the ‘only’ option. Now, with the example of ‘death by gassing’, professionals that prepare the body advise against this viewing option, whereas previously this option did not exist.

\textsuperscript{39}Gassing in this instance refers to carbon monoxide poisoning. Because carbon monoxide is an odourless and colourless gas, it is a common suicide approach. Gassing in this context refers to running a car’s engine in either a confined space or through placing a hose in the exhaust and putting the hose back into the cabin of the car. The gas is then inhaled until death occurs (Routley, 1998: Online).
Within a legal world, many components ensure an ethical framework. As such, the *Human Tissues Act 1964* and the *Coroner’s Act 1988* are pieces of legislation where tūpāpaku are constantly referred to. Because the conforming to these statutes are written within the law and penalties are had if these laws are broken, legislation has caused the switch of attitudes towards the corpse and ultimately to death. These Acts ensure the correct treatment of human bodies and those associated with them. These legal statutes will be briefly described before drawing special attention to the relevant sections of each Act.

The *Human Tissues Act 1964* raises contemporary death debates. This Act facilitates the “collection and use of human tissue, trading in tissue and the export and import of tissue” (Henaghan, 2009: 1). Human tissue, within this Act, refers to an entire human body or part thereof, as well as substances and material from an individual. Examples of human tissue include human blood, hair, nails, mucus, urine, faecal matter, bone marrow, hearts, kidneys, livers and lungs, as well as parts of these, like heart valves for example. Thus, the *Human Tissues Act 1964* is particularly pertinent in environments such as anatomy laboratories due to the ethical implications associated with human tissues for educational purposes. The purpose for this Act, as stated in Section 3, is to guarantee that collection and/or use of human tissue:

> (a) Occurs only with proper recognition of, and respect for, -  
> (i) the autonomy and dignity of the individual whose tissue is, before or after his or her death, collected and used; and  
> (ii) the cultural and spiritual needs, values, and beliefs of the immediate family of that individual; and

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40 The *Human Tissues Act 1964* was further amended in 2008 as it was seen to be outdated and incomprehensive. Therefore, today it is known as the *Human Tissues Act 2008*, but due to the literature surrounding the 1964 Act as well as the 2008 Act being relatively similar, the *Human Tissues Act 1964* will be referred to as such.
(iii) the cultural, ethical, and spiritual implications of the collection or use of human tissue; and
(iv) the public good associated with the collection or use of human tissue (whether for health practitioner education, the investigation of offences, research, transplantation or other therapeutic purposes, or for other lawful purposes); and
(b) does not endanger the health and safety of members of the public; and
(c) generally does not involve the requirement or acceptance, or the offering or provision, of financial\(^{41}\) or other consideration for the tissue. (Human Tissues Act 1964 as cited in Henaghan, 2009: 1)

As per Section 3(iv), this Act was established as a means of surveillance and protection for individuals over which human tissue is used in education at anatomy schools, investigations into the causes of death (autopsies) and transplantation. Section 3(ii) however, is the segment of the Act that is of most importance in accordance with Māori, as it ensures that one’s cultural and spiritual values are very much a part of the individual’s and their families’ being. Decisions made as a collective are important to Māori, thus the whānau are involved in the decision making process in regards to donation of human tissues of a deceased whānau member. As such, the “wishes of the deceased family do override the deceased’s wishes” (Henaghan, 2009: 1). This shows that the law, in this case, has ensured the cultural concept of whānau is maintained.

*Coroner’s Act 1988*

Another Act that is largely applicable to the human body and tissues is the *Coroner’s Act 1988* which was further amended in 2006. This Act’s purpose is to facilitate the investigation and identification of the causes and circumstances of a sudden or unexplained death in which a coroner is responsible for determining\(^{42}\). This identification is then used to aid in the prevention of similar sorts of death in the future (Protheroe, 1984: 6). These deaths include

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\(^{41}\)“Financial” refers to the fact that human tissue cannot be exchanged for any monetary gains, all gifting of human tissue must be done by one’s kindness.

\(^{42}\)It is important to note that a coroner is not needed for roughly 80 percent of deaths. These 80 percent can be released by the cause of death issued by a medical practitioner. However, this Act is indeed significant to those 20 percent of deaths that occur due to suspicious circumstances (Protheroe, 1984: 2).
suicide, homicide, and deaths of a violent manner or without a known cause (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999: 26). A coroner is defined as an official individual that is responsible for holding inquests into suspicious deaths (Hawker, 2004: 153). As identified through the Act, a coroner’s role is to decide whether or not to undertake a post-mortem as well as approve the release of the body after obtaining a report of death by the New Zealand Police (New Zealand Legislation: Acts, 2010: Online). The section of the Act most pertinent to a Māori viewpoint is Section 2(b) (i) which states that the Act must recognise,

the cultural and spiritual needs of family of, and of others who were in a close relationship to, a person who has died. (New Zealand Legislation: Acts, 2010: Online)

Section 8, paragraphs 8(e) and 8(f) refer to

minimising distress and offences because of their cultural and spiritual belief or custom or ethnic origins. (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999: 27)

These sections entitle the deceased’s family to do all means necessary to uphold cultural customs and, in the case of Māori, the most problematic issue is the immediate release of the body for tangihanga. This becomes an issue as coroners must approve the release of the body in unexplained deaths and in the instances of weekends, the transfer of the body to the whānau is not always immediate (Protheroe, 1984: 5). This idea of whānau leads into the legal and contemporary issue of ownership of tūpāpaku.

Tūpāpaku Ownership

The issue of who owns the tūpāpaku is now a very contentious one, and more often than not, this issue involves heated debates. If there is conflict it usually consists of the spouse and children against other whānau of the deceased and the main cause of these conflicts is agreement as to where to bury the deceased. It is usually resolved by a consensus, although,

43 “Inquest” means the inquiry to the cause of death.
on many accounts, not everyone is in agreement of the resolution reached. One written report
of a recent case is in the instance of James Takamore where:

Tuhoe relatives of James Takamore took his body without wife Denise Clarke’s
permission in 2007 and buried it at Kutareere marae, near Opotiki, in the Bay of
Plenty. . . . She and her husband had lived in Christchurch for 20 years. He had
wanted to be buried there and had little contact with his North Island family.
(Orago Daily Times, 2009)

In the above example, the interests of the spouse took precedence over those of the whānau.
There is protest as to why the spouse should have this precedence when the whānau has an
on-going relationship with the deceased. The spouse, from a Christian wedding perspective,
only stipulates the relationship as being ‘till death do us apart’, therefore one might permit the
tūpāpaku to be returned to kin (Tomas, 2008: 233). Brandt, on the other hand, suggests that
“the spouse is the person who has the deepest and most intimate connection to the deceased”
thus, it is the spouse that should have precedence to the tūpāpaku (2009: 10). These debates
alter the attitude that Māori have towards the dead, as now it becomes a legal issue and
European education becomes the power over rights to the tūpāpaku, rather than aligning to
Māori customary concepts and practices.

Similar disagreements occurred with celebrities such as Billy T. James and Prince Tui Teka.
In the event of Billy T. James, being Māori from Tainui44 and his spouse being Pākehā, his
body was taken from Muriwai, a suburb of Auckland, to Tūrangawaewae Marae, located in
Ngāruawāhia, a small town roughly 30 kilometres from Hamilton. Although the facts are not
clear, the general idea saw Billy T. James lying in state at his home in Muriwai, and then
buried at Taupiri Mountain.45 However, a kaumātua informed the family of Billy T. James

44Tainui refers to the canoe responsible for giving rise to many iwi in the Waikato area (situated in the Hamilton
region of New Zealand), Tainui can also sometimes refer to this area, such as in this case.
45Taupiri Mountain is a sacred burial place of the Tainui people and is located roughly 5 kilometres from
Ngāruawāhia, North Island, New Zealand.
that he could not be buried there unless he lay at Tūrangawaewae prior to that, thus the body was taken from his home at Muriwai to Tūrangawaewae Marae (Pahl, 2003: Online). Similar disputes occurred with the tangihanga of Prince Tui Teka (Tūhoe) who passed away in Whangārei. His body lay in repose in Tokomaru Bay, the region of his wife’s people, on the East Coast. His people back in Tūhoe, however, wanted him to return home. After rigorous debates Prince Tui Teka was buried at Tokomaru Bay (Tomas, 2008: 233).

The Tono Mate

In the instances where the deceased does not leave a will, resolving the issue can be very complicated. A request for the return of the deceased to their hometown sometimes remedies the situation. In Māoridom, this is termed toto mate. In some instances a hui (meeting) is held between all parties concerned, such as the spouse of the deceased and their children, the immediate family of the deceased, and any other extended whānau members that may have an interest as to where the tūpāpaku is to lie in repose and/or be buried. However, toto mate can also be voiced whilst presenting whaikōrero on the marae. This practice serves two purposes; firstly, it allows the family to take the deceased home; and secondly, it recognises genealogical links of any existing children to their tribal area (Matenga-Kohu & Roberts, 2006: 10). The importance of toto mate here is the fact that if a parent is to be buried in their respective tribal area, it gives their children an opportunity to belong and a reason to return and re-connect with their people. As emphasised by Haami Piripi in Ngata (2005), if the tūpāpaku is not buried in the correct place, in this case the place of origin, then the children of the deceased will never return to their homeland, as they will have no connection to that place. He further states that in some cases he would “physically fight to get that person – sometimes, we might even try physically to remove the coffin” (Piripi as cited in Ngata,
This demonstrates the strong belief and importance to Māori of being buried in the right place, thus the importance of *tono mate*.

There is another account that occurred in an area that cannot be disclosed due to anonymity, where, as told by one participant;

usually if that person [deceased] is *rangatira* [chief] and got two *marae*, then usually there’s a big fight. Ah well not a fight, but a *kōrero* [conversation] happens…the daughter asked if she could take him to the wife’s *marae*. So Koro arrived…and he said to his sister, *e kopi tō waha, māku e kōrero mōu* [don’t say a word, I will speak for you], so when Uncle arrived, an uncle to the ex-wife. That’s when the *whawhai* [fight] began and then he goes, *kua tohungia e te whānau, te tamāhine o te tangata nei, kia haria ki taku marae, ki roto i X* [to the family, this is the daughter of this person, we are taking him to my *marae* in X]. And then Koro goes *ko wai te māmā o te tangata nei? Ko Y* [who is the mother of this person? It is Y]. To cut a long story short, It [the debate] didn’t go Uncle’s way, and he stayed at Z Marae. (Tāne Regular Tangi Attendee, Pers. Comm., 2009)

This concept of *tono mate* links into the Māori customary concept, as described by Hone Sadler, of ‘*tukuna mā te whare e kōrero*’, meaning, ‘let the house decide’ (as cited in Tomas, 2008: 235). This concept represents the allowance made for the *whānau* to an inclusive right to voice their opinion on where they believe the *tūpāpaku* should lie, both temporarily, during the *tangihanga*, and also permanently by virtue of the actual burial.

The *Human Tissues Act 1964*, the *Coroner’s Act 1988*, debates over ownership of *tūpāpaku* and *tono mate* show the parallels of law with death for resolving disputes. Another link shown with law is the coupling of law with health and safety regulations and their affect on attitudes.
Health and Safety Regulations

Nowadays, the correct authorities must be notified in the event of a death, to handle and dispose of the corpse appropriately, so as not to endanger the health and safety of the public (Barnes, 1991: 13). Unlike the days of old, it is now accepted that corpses are prohibited from being buried in any venue, due mainly to the fact that it may prove detrimental to the health of the living. As stated in the Burial and Cremation Act 1964,\(^{46}\) Section 46(1),

> It shall not be lawful to bury any body in any land not being a cemetery or a denominational burial ground or a private burial ground or a Maori burial ground if there is a cemetery or any such burial ground within 32 kilometres of the place where the death has occurred, or of the place whence the body is taken for the purpose of burial. (New Zealand Legislation: Acts, 2009: Online)

As seen in the passage above, the act of burial cannot be carried out in just ‘any’ area and it is also considered illegal to do so. The burial must take place in a cemetery proper. If a cemetery has not yet been decided upon, or is unavailable then the burial ground closest to the location of death, within 32 kilometres,\(^{47}\) will be the default burial ground. Although Māori did in fact have wāhi tapu (sacred places) for the burial of their tribal members, the idea of containment is implied here, similar to containment in the instances of the Influenza epidemics. Buck (1949: 413) wrote that:

> Epidemics were always difficult to control. The family sometimes carried the patient off to some other village and so spread the infection. The tangi custom was also a source for the spread of infection. The Health Department had to enforce a by-law with the Councils that there should be no public tangi with visits from other villages if the death was due to infectious disease.

This comment demonstrates the need for the Health Department to impose restrictions to the point that a by-law was created. This by-law prohibited the occurrence of tangihanga in the areas where Influenza had struck in order to prevent its spread. This again highlights the change of customary death practices with the arrival of epidemic diseases, due to the need to

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\(^{46}\) Section 3 of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 also states that “this Act shall not apply to Maori burial grounds or to the burial of bodies therein” (New Zealand Legislation: Acts, 2009: Online).

\(^{47}\) The Burial and Cremation Act 1964 was amended to 32 kilometres from the original Act which stated 20 miles.
contain infectious diseases and the necessity to isolate such epidemics. The need for sterility of infectious diseases is also notable in the Health (Burial) Regulations 1946 stating that a

Person to have died of a communicable disease –

(a) Shall, unless a Coroner otherwise orders, cause the body to be buried within forty-eight hours of death:
(b) Shall cause the body to be placed in a coffin and entirely wrapped therein in a sheet with an approved disinfectant. (New Zealand Legislation: Regulations, 2007: Online)

As is seen in the above instance, a window of forty-eight hours after death, in the instance of someone that has died from an infectious disease, is given for burial. Not only must the deceased be completely contained in the coffin, it must also be wrapped with a sheet soaked in an ‘approved’ disinfectant. The influence of law has caused different handling procedures of the tūpāpaku and embedded a theme of ‘cleanliness’ within the minds of the public. The tūpāpaku must now be contained and be seen as ‘normal’, whereas traditionally, the way the body was viewed in its death was the way it was when it died.

Health and safety regulations also came into effect with the duration of tangihanga. The health and safety standards imposed the duration of tangihanga to be no longer than three days in the summer and four days in the winter in New Zealand, this regulation did, in one respect, come as a great reprieve to the tangata whenua because, as per Māori practice, as long as the tūpāpaku was on the marae, tangata whenua were obligated to cater for the droves of people coming to pay their respects, which sometimes caused a considerable strain on their resources (Buck, 1949: 421). Matenga-Kohu & Roberts also note the law as being responsible for the shortened tangihanga, as the holding of a corpse for this long posed far too great a health risk (2006: 25). In the case however, of refined leaders such as Te Ataairangi Kaahu and Sir Howard Morrison, due to their rank, the length of tangihanga were one week long and five days long respectively (BBC News, 2006: Online; Rotorua District
Council, 2009: Online). Health and safety regulations have altered the way in which Māori handle their dead which is also seen in the instance of urbanisation.

Urbanisation

The increased populating of urban areas is due mainly to increased employment opportunities evident in every country and in every culture (Kok & Gelderblom, 1994: i). In New Zealand, this trend was observable on the coasts in the four main urban centres of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin (Thorns, 1977: 58). Urbanisation is salient in New Zealand censuses where 1926 showed close to 66 percent of the total population to be living in urban centres, whereas in 1971, this figure rose to nearly 82 percent with the most dramatic change being Māori where, in 1926 only 15.4 percent lived in urban centres, and in 1971, that figure had skyrocketed to 71.2 percent (Thorns, 1977: 58).

Urbanisation changed the viewpoints of Māori because it changed

a traditionally rural and communally oriented people to the competitive and individualistic life of a western industrial city. (Metge, 1964: 3)

In essence, urbanisation altered the whānau nature of Māori who adopted the idiosyncratic lifestyle of the Pākehā which existed in the cities. Urbanisation changed Māori life in so much that marae were no longer the focal living quarters, and consequently Māori were separated from their tūrangawaewae. Placing change on Māori life, urbanisation also forced a change in Māori customs, the practice of tangihanga being one of these. Before urbanisation, the marae was used as an all-purpose venue for all gatherings, albeit birthdays, meetings and tangihanga. The absence of marae in urban areas caused problems, because urban Māori were away from home, there was less contact with their land and people, and
consequently less availability of people to assist in tangihanga arrangements (Metge, 1964: 167). Thus, a change was presented where some Māori chose to hold the tūpāpaku in their homes, using their homes in urban centres as a substitute for the marae. Others opted to take tūpāpaku back to their rural hometowns. This development of tangihanga is further outlined in the ensuing section.

**Modern Tangihanga**

As put by Tariana Turia (2001), tangihanga offers the kiri mate (whānau pani) the opportunity to be supported and to grieve. It creates an opportunity to farewell the spirit and the soul of the deceased. It rekindles the institution of gifting and the reaffirmation of kinship ties. It offers the opportunity for new relationships and to retell the stories of the deceased and the whānau. It removes the fear of expressing grief.

This passage represents a contemporary view of the purpose of tangihanga and shows the symbolic meaning of tangihanga to be similar to that observed in the past. As shown above, the tangihanga allows the spirit of the deceased to depart on its journey thereby allowing people to re-establish old relationships. Tangihanga provide a non-threatening forum for Māori attendees to openly express their emotions and maintain Māori custom (Ngata, 1987: 7). We now look at the effects of urbanisation in different phases of tangihanga.

**Phases of the Tangihanga**

Interview participants shared differing opinions regarding the phases of tangihanga. Wahine Widow 1 explains tangihanga as going onto the marae at

9 o’clock in the morning and assemble there and then the other outlying places will come and then you can all go on together. It doesn’t always happen that way, sometimes you are caught on the hop and you have to go on yourself, but usually
you do what is generally done, they all go on together and go through the format, and then after they’ve had a cuppa tea you leave and you go home. (Pers. Comm., 2009)

In the above excerpt Wahine Widow 1’s interpretation of a tangihanga shows a relatively simple explanation which could correlate to her role as kaikaranga (caller) within the tangihanga.

Tāne Anatomy Student explains in relatively more depth that the tangihanga:

starts from when you bring them [the deceased] onto the marae. They usually sit there for 3 days, but I’ve been in cases where they sat there for longer for people that were overseas, like kids. And droves of people just come throughout the days and they pay their respects. They poroporoaki [farewell] on the night before to celebrate that person and let the whānau pani tell stories and sing songs. Its a way of easing the burden of mourning of those ones [mourning] and usually close the casket before the sun rises. But I’ve been in cases where they’ve kept it open and it’s a struggle to close it for the family. Usually at about 10 or 11 o’clock we have a big karakia and service and take them to the urupā [cemetery]. [Have] karakia and service there. Bury them, take the whānau back to the marae and go straight into having a hākari [feast]. (Pers. Comm., 2009)

Tāne Anatomy Student indicates that the tangihanga begins when the body is brought onto the marae and the duration depends on the availability of family attendance. He signals the importance of the poroporoaki, or the farewell, which is held on the last night of the tangihanga and serves to create a happier atmosphere to a poignant time, especially for those with intimate relationships with the deceased. A comfortable attitude that Māori have towards death exists, especially during the pō poroporoaki (farewell night) where songs are sung and words of remembrance, usually humorous stories of the deceased, are shared by all in attendance. The pō poroporoaki affords the whānau pani and kirimate the opportunity to express words and emotions that are usually restricted culturally throughout the tangihanga process.
Tāne Anatomy Student describes the difficulty in the closure of the casket which could be likened to the emotions of the *hahunga* because this will be the final time the family has to ‘physically’ see the deceased. The closing of the casket is substantially difficult, as can be imagined. Following the closing of the casket, a service is held and then the *tūpāpaku* is transported to the *urupā* for burial, where more rituals take place, such as *karakia* and song. The mourners then make their way back to the *marae* to share in a feast fit for a king. The *hākari* is immensely important as it represents the spiritual and psychological removal of the mourners from the ‘realm of the dead’ and back into the ‘world of the living’. The modern *tangihanga* is further compared in the following section.

*The Tangihanga of Sir Āpirana Ngata*

This section discusses the *tangihanga* of Sir Āpirana Ngata, who died on the 14th of July 1950, and contrasts his contemporary *tangihanga* with traditional elements of *tangihanga*.

Sir Āpirana Ngata’s mortal remains lay in state for five days in the whare mate erected beside his ancestral house Porourangi. The coffin, facing the marae through the open end of the whare mate, was draped with feather cloaks and surrounded by floral emblems, possessions and photographs of Sir Āpirana and his ancestors. . . Across Sir Āpirana’s feet lay Rāpata Wahawaha’s sword of honour, presented by Queen Victoria for service to the crown. The kirimate, comprising of Sir Āpirana’s immediate whānau, including grandchildren, maintained their vigil around the body for the duration of the tangi. (Walker, 2002: 392)

His *tangihanga* was an elaborate one that emphasized all facets of his existence from his achievements in life, his career and the people that loved him. As seen in the above excerpt, he lay on his marae for the duration of five days where, traditionally, the length of *tangihanga* were indefinite because knowledge of the final group’s arrival was unknown.

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48 An esteemed Māori politician from Ngāti Porou.
The duration of five days is lengthy by today’s standards, however, his status in the Māori world would be a determinant as to the extended length.

Another shift is the *whare mate*, described in the excerpt refers to the ‘house of dead’, a wooden shelter-like construct that stands to the side of the *wharenui*. In traditional times, a *whare mate* was sometimes erected as a temporary establishment for the housing of *tūpāpaku*. After the *tangihanga* the temporary *whare mate* were burnt to complete *tapu* removal. Nowadays however, some *marae* have chosen to permanently erect *whare mate* on their premises which act as traditional *whare mate* (Oppenheim, 1973: 45). The shift from temporary to permanent *whare mate* shows an attitudinal change, as some Māori have chosen to adopt a more effective way of dealing with *tapu* associated with death. Painoaiho Marae and Kokohīnau Marae were two of the first *marae* to establish permanent *whare mate*, in the mid 1960s (Rewi, Pers. Comm., 2010). *Tapu* removal, with permanent *whare mate*, is achieved by way of *karakia* and water instead of burning. In my opinion, this change shows the attitude of modern Māori who still adhere to traditional practices whilst continually moving with the convenience of contemporary times.

The coffin has an appearance in contemporary *tangihanga*. Polson et al (1953: 274) describes the coffin as being introduced with Christianity where the coffin represented high class and was also believed to aid in resurrection in addition to its prime function as an apparatus that aided in the transportation of the corpse. The coffin is documented as a “modern innovation” however, there is evidence of its use in Kaeo (far north of New Zealand) in 1825 (Oppenheim, 1973: 62). In former times, *tūpāpaku* were either wrapped in

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49 Painoaiho Marae is located in Murupara, situated roughly 40 kilometres inland from Whakatāne.
50 Kōkōhīnau Marae is located in Te Teko, situated roughly 15 kilometres away from Whakatāne.
tree bark or whāriki made from flax fibres. One account states the corpse being wrapped in the whāriki and korowai that the tūpāpaku had been in contact with, which also shows the transfer of tapu through contact (Buck, 1949: 423).

Although the tūpāpaku is not displayed in the foetal position, the face is usually left uncovered to ensure prolonged communication with the dead, likened to traditional reasoning behind the upright posture of tūpāpaku (Ariès, 1981: 508). An interesting point to note is the term tūpāpaku which referred to its positioning. Because the tūpāpaku, deceased body, is no longer exhibited in its tūpāpaku position, should this term still be used to refer to the corpse? Should a new term be coined to encompass today’s positioning of the corpse?

Moving along, at Sir Āpirana’s tangihanga, korowai, photographs (of deceased ancestors), flowery endowments as well as a sword of honour take their place alongside the tūpāpaku. Although photographs, flowers and swords were not a feature of pre-colonial tangihanga, symbolic adornments of the deceased life are still placed around them in death, thus, this process of having items and possessions displayed, is similar to what occurred in the past. The attitude that affects the practice, therefore, has been retained.

The terms kirimate and whānau pani are central to Māori death perspectives and understanding the roles that each play. Informant attitudes are aligned to their knowledge of such terms, therefore these terms are looked at here, using Sir Āpirana’s tangihanga as their introduction. Walker mentions that Sir Āpirana was enveloped by both his immediate family (kirimate) and his extended grieving family. Kirimate signified ‘immediate whānau,
including grandchildren’, however, more specifically, *kirimate* defines the closest genealogical family to the deceased. *Kirimate* can be thought of as two separate terms, ‘*kiri*’ meaning ‘skin’ and ‘*mate*’ meaning ‘death’ (Moorfield, 2005: 57, 82). Therefore *kirimate* can refer to those that share the same figurative skin, or blood as the deceased.

However, with the introduction of *whānau pani* these terms can become confusing. *Whānau pani* and *kirimate* are frequently used interchangeably, however depending on who is asked, can be defined differently also. Williams explains these terms by indicating that *kirimate* are those related to the deceased closely in the likes of brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, cousins and so on, whereas *whānau pani* are the bereaved family that relied heavily on the deceased and whose status has changed due to the death, such as a widow or an orphan (Williams, 1971: 119, 257).

There was a consensus amongst the interviewees when asked to define *whānau pani*. Wahine Widow 2 states *whānau pani* as being the “*whānau* of the deceased” but only under the condition that they are ‘very’ close to the *tūpāpaku*, regardless of being related by blood or not (Pers. Comm., 2009). This sentiment is shared with the views of a further three interviewees. The main point here is that, although *kirimate* and *whānau pani* are quite often used synonymously, as seen above, these terms carry distinctions when looking at primary and secondary literature. These distinctions, in turn, create differing attitudes.

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51 ‘*Mate*’ carries many meanings such as ‘sick’, ‘ill’, ‘beaten’, ‘defeated’, ‘trouble’, ‘defect’, ‘misfortune’ and ‘sickness’ (Moorfield, 2005: 82). However, within this context ‘*mate*’ is used to mean ‘death’.
There is reference in the description of Sir Āpirana Ngata’s tangihanga describing how the whānau ‘maintained their vigil around the body for the duration of the tangi’. One aspect this relates back to is the concept of mana. The body was constantly under watch so as not to fall in the hands of enemies, a ‘vigil’ upheld by the whānau for the entirety of the tangihanga until burial. This aspect also correlates to the belief that the tūpāpaku should not be left alone because the accompaniment keeps the tūpāpaku figuratively ‘warm’, and the tūpāpaku is not ‘abandoned’ and ‘lonely’. The idea of vigil, creates the protective attitude that Māori have toward tūpāpaku and is an element constant in both traditional and contemporary settings of Māori death practices.

Over 5000 people were in attendance of Sir Āpirana’s tangihanga and in relation to the hākari spread, it definitely was of massive proportions, the hākari further demonstrating the size.

The kanohi wera [cooks] used a bulldozer to dig the hāngi [earth oven] pit for the hākari on a scale to match the occasion: into the pit of hot stones went eighteen bullocks, twenty-three pigs, thirty-five sheep and a vast amount of poultry, kūmara [sweet potato], potatoes and crayfish. (Walker 2002: 394)

The hākari element of the tangihanga serves to return immediate mourners to the ‘living world’ as they have been enshrined in an immense tapu associated with death throughout the duration of the tangihanga. The hākari also acts to restore the people and place to a state of noa (Mead, 2003: 143). Identical to former times, regardless of the crowd size and the resources of the area, the tangata whenua will still ensure that everyone is catered for. As seen in Sir Āpirana’s tangihanga, although many aspects have somewhat altered, the reasoning behind Māori death practices, such as tapu removal, continual communication with
the dead and *mana* retention, remain intact. This is also noticeable with technological advances of *tangihanga* which is the ensuing discussion piece.

*Technological Advances of Tangihanga*

Movements of the times are evident in every morsel of life from kitchen gadgets to big screen televisions and from iPods to computers. However, the biggest impact as far as technological advancements goes, comes in the form of the internet. Hawker (2004: 382) defines the internet as “an information network linking computers”. Almost everything is accessible through the internet from buying houses to applying for jobs and from watching movies to receiving an education. One has 24 hour access to almost every part of the world through their computer. With this being said, *tangihanga* have also taken on this medium in the form of tele-*tangi*. The tele-*tangi* refers to the ability of viewing *tangihanga* over the internet.

Using the web-cam so that whānau living overseas can attend for a few hours – it’s fabulous. Its all about the essence of the human connection that happens at tangi. And I think the essence is simply BE there in some way. (Reid as cited in Ngata, 2005: 47)

In this case, Reid supports the change that technology has created whereby, the *tangihanga* has become readily available and accessible to all whānau in all corners of the world. In this case, the internet has connected the *tangihanga* to all whānau who possibly could not attend the *tangihanga* in person. Reid’s idea surrounding this initiative encompasses the importance of the ‘human connection’ and ‘being there’, whether it be in person or taking part through the expansions of the new age, by way of a computer screen. The tele-*tangi* shows bounds of advancement considering that there has been huge reluctance by Māori to even take ‘still’ photographs during the *tangihanga* (Rewi, Pers. Comm., 2010). Discussing this point, personally, there are both pros and cons to this advancement. On one hand, yes, it does allow people that were unable to attend in person the opportunity to farewell the deceased. In this
case the tele-tangi could benefit not only whānau living overseas but could also benefit whānau members that are imprisoned (although there are policies that enable them to attend ‘close’ relatives’ tangihanga) as well as those too sick to travel. However, on the other hand, the ‘human contact’ will dwindle. Nothing substitutes for the human touch and face to face conversation. This advancement could also possibly create a lack of attendance to tangihanga, resulting in the loss of intergenerational passing down of customs and knowledge. This is a major attitudinal shift.

Alternatively, tangihanga attendance and participation has been made more accessible through broadcasting mediums like television. Instances like the funeral of Michael Jackson as well as the tangihanga of the late Māori Queen, Dame Te Ataairangi Kaahu, were publicised through live and pre-recorded television. In the instance of the previously mentioned Dame Te Ataairangi Kaahu’s tangihanga, it should be noted that the very tapu and intimate processes such as the poroporoaki were kept off cameras whereas the public processes such as the transportation of her coffin by waka to her burial plot on Taupiri mountain, were publicised for the whole nation to ‘participate’ in. These public funerals were made specifically to cater for the masses that were unable to attend the event in person, or possibly could not take part due to the sheer quantity of people in attendance. These new notions of televised tangihanga and tele-tangi through the internet show that the tangihanga is not a static idea, but rather it is a fluid and dynamic process. This fluidity continues with the modernising of preservation methods.
Contemporary Preservation Methods - Embalming

Embalming has since progressed from its primitive origins in Egypt as well as its Māori origins. In today’s Māori society, all people are now entitled, if they wish, to embalm their dead, where in former times, only select individuals and tohunga that had knowledge of the correct incantations and tikanga were permitted to handle tūpāpaku. Wahine Funeral Director explains that there is no formal training involved in embalming and it is all experiential whereby one learns by observing and doing what was observed. She mentions that “after [embalming] 100 bodies you can go down to Wellington to up skill” (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009). The funeral school in Wellington teaches a wide range of things from creating rapport with clients to understanding the correct combinations of chemicals regarding the size of the person and their cause of death. Wahine Funeral Director confirms that because there are always new combinations of chemicals and improved chemical dosages, they must read the latest research regularly to keep updated with the advancements in their industries (Pers. Comm., 2009).

There are sometimes misperceptions with regard to the terms used, for example, an embalmer, funeral director and undertaker are sometimes deemed interchangeable with each other, however this is not the case. All positions vary in definitions, roles and responsibilities. A funeral director is the person whose role is to ‘organise’ the funeral, tangihanga or cremation arrangements. They are also responsible for maintaining the paperwork which includes expense and death certification. Funeral directors are also commonly known as undertakers (Hawker, 2004: 292), however, ‘undertaker’ is not a term Wahine Funeral Director is comfortable with. In her opinion, it has negative connotations. She further states that the term ‘undertaker’ carries the meaning of a gloomy man in a black
suit ready to take one’s loved one, and this is not how she wants to be portrayed. Therefore, she prefers ‘funeral director’ as the term used for her position (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009). An embalmer, on the other hand, refers to the person undertaking the embalming process and is responsible for the hands on preservation of the body and the preparation process. A funeral director, embalmer and undertaker, therefore should not be confused with each other.

*Embalming Considerations*

Embalmers have considerations to abide by which must conform to the *Health (Burial) Regulations 1946*. These include factors such as approved disinfectants, hermetically sealed coffins and requirements of the mortuary. Regulations insist that only the approved disinfectants are used to clean the surfaces in which the *tūpāpaku* lie during embalming as well as the surrounding surfaces. Regulations also state that hermetic (air-tight) coffins be used and these must be designed with “a lining of zinc, copper, lead, galvanised iron, or other suitable metallic substance[s]” (New Zealand Legislation: Regulations, 2007: Online). In reference to the requirements of the mortuary, some of the more notable regulations state that the mortuary be “erected on the ground floor”, “substantially built and in good repair and so constructed as to prevent, as far as possible, the harbourage of rats and other vermin” (New Zealand Legislation: Regulations, 2007: Online). Furthermore, the floor shall be constructed of cement concrete, mineral asphalt, or similar impervious material finished with a smooth even surface and graded and drained so that any liquid falling on the floor shall be discharged outside the building.

(New Zealand Legislation: Regulations, 2007: Online)

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52 A mortuary in this context refers to ‘the room’ used for the handling, preparation and preservation of the dead body. The mortuary does not refer to the reception areas or the entire premise itself.
These regulations state the necessity for all slabs in which the bodies are placed to be built from marble or other non-absorbent material and shall have a smooth even surface. The edges of all such slabs shall be raised, and a suitable outlet shall be provided for liquids to discharge into a channel in the floor or into a suitable receptacle. All angles of the slabs, both internal and external, shall be rounded. (New Zealand Legislation: Regulations, 2007: Online)

These regulations show that the embalming procedures are very stringent and from smooth, hard surfaces to drainage, all things must be managed to ensure proper treatment of corpses and that no health risks be posed on the living.

**Method of Embalming**

The process of embalming has improved markedly from the methods used formerly. Traditionally, oils, balsams and crushed spices were smeared over the body to prevent the smell and only in some privileged cases was disembowelment undertaken. Today, embalming refers to “the replacement of normal body fluids with preserving chemicals” (Leming & Dickinson, 2002: 358) as opposed to adding preserving agents to the surface of the body which was practised by some Māori in pre-colonial times.

Wahine Funeral Director and Wahine Embalmer affirm that there is a standard way of preparing a body where an incision is made at either the carotid artery in the neck or the femoral artery in the leg and embalming fluid injected. Water is constantly running as the embalming fluid is injected into the body which dilutes the blood. As the blood is retracted from the body with the aid of water, it is substituted for the embalming fluid (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009). The flow of embalming fluids through the vascular system is
done by an embalming machine which can be thought of as “an artificial heart outside the
body” (Leming & Dickinson, 2002: 359). Cosmetic procedures are also used to add a natural
looking colour to the tūpāpaku: ‘natural’ in a sense that the tūpāpaku resembles the
appearance of a living person. This is done by applying sprays, lotions and liquids to the
skin’s surface, used generally on the face and the backs of the hands of the deceased (Leming
& Dickinson, 2002: 359). These cosmetic procedures can be likened to the addition of red
ochre to aesthetically enhance the skin in traditional times.

Embalming is highly encouraged if the body is to be viewed, if viewing is not the case, then
alternatives are suggested by the funeral director to save the family costs, as embalming is an
expensive process. Embalming is not compulsory and can be declined if so wished, however,
the potential for body decomposition is drastically accelerated without it. A body that is not
embalmed only has a maximum of a few hours which is dependent on the climate, the body’s
own conditioning as well as the cause of death, after which the smell and sight of the
decomposing body becomes intolerable and, on the part of health officials, unthinkable
(Barnes, 1991: 50-51).

Embalming has developed and now employs simpler and more efficient methods of delaying
decomposition of the body. These methods also allow flexibility for the duration of the
tangihanga, and allows an extension of time for family members to attend tangihanga before
the body overly decomposes. With respect to who is entitled to be embalmed, nowadays all
people, irrespective of rank, have the opportunity to be embalmed. In traditional times only
the privileged few of chiefly status would be considered for embalming. Wahine Funeral
Director (Pers. Comm., 2009), testifies that the same procedure for ‘everybody’ is used and
this procedure ‘does not alter’ unless requested by the family. This equality given to all people should they desire to be embalmed, is evident in the following excerpt.

Everyone is treated as far as embalming is concerned to their manner of death. I just like to stick to the one [technique], because it works anyway, our job really is to ‘preserve’ the body. (Wahine Embalmer, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Her attitude to ‘sticking to one technique’ shows that nowadays, people are equally treated in the funeral business, as opposed to what happened in the past where only people of rank had the option of being embalmed.

Religious, Cultural and Tribal Differences of Embalming

In terms of embalming, some cultures apply different rituals while preparing the bodies of their deceased. Wahine Embalmer explained that:

we’ve had Mormons. They do their own dressing, they allow only men in the dressing area, even to embalm, some Mormon still prefer men to do the embalming and women aren’t allowed in the room. But then we’ve had other Mormons too, where it [the gender specific protocol] doesn’t really affect [them]. (Pers. Comm., 2009)

This shows that some families heavily practice their rituals and others, of the same faith, are a bit more relaxed.

Differences also occur regionally within the same culture, such as the following instance reported by Wahine Funeral Director.

I went to A to the funeral home over there and they brought one body up and the mouths were open. They’re used to it in A, not having a closed mouth. And here [B], they go nuts, they are in [to] you straight away. At A it’s [protocol] totally different. Its [open mouths] like its natural, they just bring them up and view them and their mouths are open. (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009)
Tūpāpaku being viewed with their mouths open was perceived by Wahine Funeral Director to be the standard in that area, whereas if this same practice was exercised in B, which is only an hour drive down the road, it would be frowned upon. Not only does this comparative highlight the regional differences but it also identifies intra-cultural differences whereby although the culture is the same, the practices of some people within that culture also differ.

_Cremation_

In pre-colonial times, cremation for Māori was carried out for two reasons, either the protection from the potential spread of communicable diseases or protection from mana degradation. The latter was evident among travelling war parties and _iwi_ residing in the open country. Cremation in these cases, were done by lighting fires, ensuring that the wind was not blowing in the living’s direction. Nowadays, given that the paperwork is approved, cremation can be done for whoever wishes it to be done.

The establishment of crematoria\(^{53}\) coupled with the law have disabled the ability to cremate anywhere in modern times and crematoria have been erected all over the world with 17 currently operating in New Zealand (Finda, n.d.: Online). To cremate a deceased loved one, one must apply in writing and conform to the _Cremations Regulations 1973_ (New Zealand Legislation: Regulations, 2008: Online). These regulations affirm the relationship between the deceased and the person wanting the cremation to be performed. It also stipulates the

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\(^{53}\) A crematorium consigns to the overall set of buildings housing the cremator (place in which bodies are incinerated): the chapel, waiting room and other facilities. Crematorium is also known in the United States as a ‘crematory’, in China as a ‘funeral room’ and there have also been references made to portable crematoria as ‘Hygienic Wagons’ and ‘Portable Furnaces’. (Davies & Mates, 2005: 143-144)
cause of death and also requires the signature of a coroner, justice of the peace and a medical practitioner.\textsuperscript{54}

The cremation process differs from country to country, however the general method used by the majority is as follows:

1) ignition and burning of coffin and outer layers of the body;
2) drying of the ‘wet’ parts of the body followed by the burning of the contents of the thoracic, cranial and abdominal cavities;
3) completion of the burning of combustible parts;
4) calcination of bones;
5) cooling of the ash remains, and ash processing to produce a final ash of small particles. (Davies & Mates, 2005: 132)

As is seen in the above passage, the process of cremating the dead has drastically changed. The process of cremation involves the burning of the coffin and body by exposing it to intense heat. This process takes roughly an hour to complete. In the fourth stage calcination of the bones take place. This is extreme heating causing the bones to lose their moisture which enables the formation of a powdered look once the bones have been processed (stage five). The now processed ash is then either given to the relatives of the deceased, who either bury, store, or disperse it in a special location to the deceased, or arrangements for a burial in a crematorium or cemetery are made (Dunedin Cremation Society, 1903: 24). This development in methods is also apparent in contemporary burial which we now focus on.

\textit{Contemporary Burial}

In pre-colonial times, Māori burials were not elaborate, which could perhaps be due to the threat of the \textit{tūpāpaku} landing in enemy hands if the burial was a public event. Nowadays,

\textsuperscript{54} The reason a medical practitioner must sign off the application is to ensure there is no pacemaker fitted in the deceased. A fitted pacemaker could damage property or injure or kill persons in proximity during cremation.
the burial day, known as \textit{te rā nehu} marks the final phase of the \textit{tangihanga} (Beattie: 1994: 273). \textit{Nehu} is claimed to be a term invented from Christian beliefs and was used to convey the burial rite, however, it was not a word frequently used in the past. The term \textit{nehu} refers to the body being soft like that of \textit{pungarehu} (ashes) (Beattie 1994: 273). The \textit{nehu} is seen as the most pertinent time to attend the \textit{tangihanga}. If people were unable to pay their respects over the first days of the \textit{tangihanga}, they would make a much greater effort to attend the \textit{nehu}, the actual burial.

As we have already mentioned, formerly, the \textit{tūpāpaku} was treated and handled in accordance with the \textit{kawa} of that \textit{iwi} as well as taking into consideration the status of the deceased. In pre-contact times, \textit{tūpāpaku} were generally placed in an environment that promoted decomposition of the soft tissue so as to allow the burial of the bones at a later date by way of the \textit{hahunga} ceremony. Nowadays, with the establishment of legal implications, it is the law to ascertain that corpses are laid to rest at least six feet beneath the ground (Matenga-Kohu & Roberts, 2006: 27). The colloquialism ‘six feet under’ originates from Britain where, during the Bubonic Plague of 1665, English Law imposed a law that corpses be buried at least six feet underground to help prevent the spread of the plague to the living (Historic-UK, n.d.: Online). This practice seems to have immigrated to New Zealand with Pākehā.

Other changes to the practices of burials have also occurred with the instance of ‘eco-friendly’ burials. With the turn of the century and due to the increasing awareness about the responsibility people have for the environment, there have also been cases of eco-friendly burials. In these cases, everything from the material used to construct the casket, to lessened
amounts of embalming chemicals, to the type of soil used for covering the grave has a ‘natural’ theme. The idea is to remove anything that could potentially impede the natural environmental courses that are at work in that area. This includes burial plots being dug only as far as the active layer of soil. Un-embalmed corpses are buried in caskets that are made from untreated wood to expedite the decomposition process, and graves are marked by native trees rather than metal or stone plaques (Eco-Funerals, 2008: Online).

**Hura Kōhatu**

The *hura kōhatu*, also known as *hurahanga kōhatu*, *hura pōhatu*, *whara kōhatu* as well as *te rā wairua* is a memorial ceremony held approximately one year after the burial (Matenga-Kohu & Roberts, 2006: 33). The *hura kōhatu* normally begins with the welcoming of people onto the *marae* whilst the *whānau pani* and *kirimate* weep and mourn over a photograph of the deceased. Following this, the entourage attending the ceremony make their way down to the *urupā* to perform the unveiling of the headstone (Higgins & Moorfield, 2004: 90). It is usually after this ceremony that a photograph of the deceased is authorised to be hung in the *wharenui* for the public to remember. In my experience, no living persons photographs are hung in the *wharenui*, instead these photographs are reserved for the *wharekai*.

The *hura kōhatu* is a symbolically adapted practice that has been created through the influences of law and the input of the Health Department (King, 2003a: 254). As previously described, *hahunga* was the practice of ceremonially displaying the bones of the deceased marking the conclusion of the grieving process. The *hura kōhatu* has since replaced the *hahunga* and affords the application of a similar principle, that being to confirm the final
resting place of the deceased. It also allows those absent from the tangihanga the opportunity to grieve and pay their respects alongside the whānau.

Conclusion

This chapter identified the straddling of the traditional and the modern world and how traditional blueprints of death practices are used physically and symbolically today. This chapter began by outlining the reasons for change in regards to death practices. Such reasons included the arrival of the Pākehā who brought with them weapons of mass killing, like muskets and diseases, with particular emphasis on the Influenza epidemics.

Law and its impingement on death was also discussed along with death registration and certification as a requirement by law in order to dispose of the dead: the most vital piece of information, being the cause of death which not only provided information for corpse treatment, but also closure for the whānau. The Human Tissues Act 1964 and the Coroner’s Act 1988 are key pieces of legislation involving tūpāpaku and were discussed highlighting links between them. The contentiousness of tūpāpaku ownership was demonstrated with the examples of James Takamore, Billy T. James and Prince Tui Teka. The concept of tono mate was also brushed upon and how it fits into the theme of final burial.

Health and safety regulations were major contributing factors to the change of Māori death customs. The Burial and Cremation Act 1964 and the Health (Burial) Regulations 1946 proved to be determining documents regarding health and safety regulations with reference to contemporary death practices. These pieces of legislation strongly influenced the treatment
of tūpāpaku, especially in the case of infectious diseases, they also effected shortened tangihanga.

Urbanisation along with health and safety regulations, European law and the arrival of Pākehā gave rise to the evolution of the modern tangihanga. Many modern tangihanga practise and retain the symbolic references of their traditional predecessors in as much as they reunite people, re-form old relationships, give the spirit of the deceased a forum to travel and perhaps more importantly, provide a medium for the open expression of emotions and grief. The tangihanga of Sir Āpirana Ngata in 1950 provided a case for comparison showing both disparities and similarities with traditional tangihanga. Technological advancements of tangihanga were also delved into, giving the instances of tele-tangi and the televised tangihanga of Dame Te Ataairangi Kaahu.

Contemporary preservation methods were then explored focusing on embalming, which is no longer restricted to an expert few or reserved for those of chiefly status. We also discussed the roles of the funeral director and the embalmer as well as the methods of embalming. Contemporary cremation then came to the forefront describing how, for Māori this is no longer premised on the need to conceal kinsmen from enemy hands as it once did. This was followed by burial through a contemporary lens, and the shift from hahunga to hura kōhatu due to health and safety regulations.

This chapter looked at new and emerging ideas, even in something that seems as concrete as Māori death practices. With the change that Māori death practices has had over time, the
focus of the following chapter is the attitude of the individual towards death itself, and the change that those attitudes have had throughout time.
Chapter Five

*Ko ngā Waiaro mō te Mate – Attitudes about Death*

“*E motuotia ana a waho kei roto he aha*”

“One cannot know from the outside what is contained within”

(Taurima & Cash, n.d.: 8)

The above *whakataukī* is applicable to attitudes in that, you need to delve deep within and explore their world in order to fully understand them. This chapter looks at the attitudes of Māori and their perspectives of death. The terms ‘attitude’ and ‘Māori identity’ are defined to create the basis for discussing Māori attitudes. Traditional attitudes are also explored and whether or not this differs from the attitudes towards death within a contemporary context. Particular vocations, education and personal experiences have been chosen as we look at how these have impacted on the way the participants perceive the body today. Organ donation and the implications this has on Māori spiritual perspectives is also investigated outlining the reluctance of Māori to donate organs.

*Attitude: a definition*

Not much more than a hundred years ago the term ‘attitude’ was used exclusively with reference to a person’s posture. To describe someone as adopting ‘a threatening attitude’ or ‘defiant attitude’ was to refer to his physical mien. True, the word can still be used in this manner; but nowadays ‘attitude’ increasingly connotes the psychological rather than the immediately physical orientation of a person, his mental state rather than his bodily stance. (Warren & Jahoda, 1973: 9)

As seen here, attitude was traditionally thought of as relating to the physical stance of someone: having an attitude referred to an intimidating posture and the way in which one
stood. In today’s setting, attitude relates more so to the mental state of a person as opposed to their physical posture. The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (2002) asserts that ‘attitude’ was created from the term ‘aptitude’ which describes a person’s demeanour, personality or behaviour. In particular, attitude is defined as a “settled behaviour, as representing feeling or opinion” or a “settled mode of thinking” (*Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, 2002: 147). This term relates to the mental personality of someone rather than their physical appearance as was the case formerly. This mental personality is formed on beliefs and values that the environment has imposed upon the individual. Marsh and Wallace (2005: 369) state that:

> Often, the resulting beliefs people form regarding whether the object has desirable or undesirable attributes leads individuals to form a general evaluative tendency, that is, an attitude toward that object.

By the process of learning and association, otherwise termed ‘classical conditioning’, one can learn that a smile is associated with friendliness and lions and sharks are associated with danger (Gleitman, Reisberg & Gross, 2007: 198). However, in some circumstances, unless learnt otherwise, initial dramatic experiences with an object can affect the way in which one reacts to that object in the future. Using the example of a bee and a child, if a bee were to sting a child and it hurt, the child would tend to avoid bees in the future. However, if a bee never stung the child even though the child may play with bees frequently, then conversely, the child is less likely to be deterred from bees in the future.

The same can be said when addressing a person’s attitude to the body and death. If a person has had a bad experience with death or a dead body then they are more likely to see death as something abhorrent, whereas if someone has had pleasant dealings with death and the dead body, then they are more likely to view death more positively. Socialisation is “an interactional process whereby a person’s behaviour is modified to conform with expectations
held by members of the groups to which he belongs” (Halloran, 1967: 31). Classical conditioning coupled with socialisation forms the uniqueness of attitudes that are created within individuals. Attitudes are seen to be formed by the ongoing process of socialisation that does not slow down or cease with age. This shows that a person’s attitude is directly influenced by those they interact with over their lifetime. With this said, it can be assumed that everyone’s attitude is different, if not entirely different. Each and every one of us is unique and this uniqueness is shaped by our attitudes. As all the participants used in this study are Māori and have been raised in a predominantly Māori environment, the need to address the definition of ‘Māori identity’ is essential, therefore, this chapter also looks first at Māori identity whilst showing whānau as a key component to the establishment of this identity.

**Māori Identity**

Literary works by academics such as, of Dr. Ranginui Walker,\(^{55}\) Cleve Barlow, Dr. Mason Durie and John Rangihau, all have their own interpretations of Māori identity and these have been encapsulated into the following definition by Moeke-Pickering (1996: n.p) who states that Māori identity should be

\[\text{derived from membership and learning within the whanau, hapu, iwi and waka [canoe]. The individual was able to maintain their sense of belonging through their capacity to whakapapa or find genealogical ties to each of these structures within which certain responsibilities and obligations were maintained. Cultural practices such as language, customs, kinship obligations and traditions were fundamental to the socialisation of Maori identities. The tribal structures intertwined with the cultural practices provided the pathways through which Maori identities could be formed and developed.}\]

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As per the above passage, Māori identity can be a term that is relatively difficult and sometimes quite contentious to define, however, only in recent years has this contentiousness been apparent. Formerly, Māori identity did not exist as Māori people were the only people residing in New Zealand, and therefore, the term was not necessary. Māori were predisposed to identifying themselves in relation to their whānau, hapū, and iwi affiliations. The term māori meant ‘normal’ or ‘ordinary’ and it was used to denote something as being natural.56

Māori identity stems from the idea of being a member within a collective, which for Māori, meant being in whānau, hapū and iwi structures. The importance of these structures is evident in the correlation between these terms and other significant aspects of Māori society such as in the instance of the term whānau meaning ‘family’ and ‘to give birth’; hapū meaning ‘sub-tribe’ and ‘pregnant’; and iwi referring to ‘tribe’ and ‘bones’ (Buck, 1949: 333). With this said, it can be asserted that upbringing, beliefs and religious views play instrumental roles in the formation of one’s attitude, thus, the most close-knit Māori social structure, whānau, is explained here.

**Whānau**

*Whānau* is comprised of immediate and extended family members and therefore it can be said that the whānau in particular is a very important component of one’s identity and a major contributing factor to the formation of one’s attitude. Maori Marsden suggests that whānau is a group of which each individual is,

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56For instance wai māori means ‘fresh water’ in contrast with salt water and tangata māori means ‘an ordinary man’ as opposed to a tohunga (King, 1997: 8). Māori is also a term that often describes being ‘Indigenous’, such as in the instance of other Indigenous peoples of the world.
an integral member of that body or organism performing a particular function and role. Therefore, to serve others is to serve the corporate self. Thus, loyalty, generosity, caring, sharing, fulfilling one’s obligations to the group, was to serve one’s extended self. (as cited in Morice, 2006)

As the whānau unit is seen as an extension of one’s self, attitudes, especially in reference to Māori, therefore rely heavily on their involvement and participation within this whānau. Attitudes reflect one’s personality and because Māori are immersed in their whānau, these relationships, as well as a person’s upbringing, are determinants of attitude. Māori upbringing is affected by various tikanga and, within a Māori mindset; attitudes towards death are incorporated into this tikanga paradigm and what Māori believe to be the correct way to behave in the presence of tūpāpaku. These parallels will be explained later, however, as a base for comparison, Western attitudes to death will be discussed here.

**Western Attitudes towards Death**

The traditional attitude to death, albeit generic, varies from literature to literature. In some instances death is seen as a grim and terrifying topic where the fear of death is always eminent. Bottomley emphasises the fact that writers from the traditional world like Plato, Seneca and Epictetus described the dead body as being “the prison-house of the soul,” “the detestable habitation of the body,” and “a poor soul shackled to a corpse” (Bottomley, 1979: 157). This idea shows the unnatural and grotesque nature of death. On the other hand, death was also seen as a natural and liberating theme and one was not scared of the fact that death was coming. This idea is suggested with Ariés (1974b) stating that the attitude towards death traditionally, was an accepted aspect of life and the idea that death was looming did not dishearten one from continuing to live their life.

It used to be understood and accepted that a man knew when he was dying, whether he became spontaneously aware of the fact or whether he had to be told…man would feel his approaching death. In those days death was rarely
sudden, even in the case of an accident or a war, and sudden death was much feared, not only because there was no time for repentance, but because it deprived a man of the experience of death. Thus death was almost always presaged, especially since even minor illnesses often turned out to be fatal. (Ariés, 1974b: 538)

Ariés suggests that death was forthcoming and an accidental or sudden death was not a common occurrence. This type of death was highly feared as a person did not have the opportunity to be penitent from possible past wrongdoings. The above passage also mentions the brutality of even minor illnesses, as in most cases death was the result. This excerpt shows that, regardless of the severity of diseases, mild or acute, because medicinal technology had not developed, people perished. This idea, in turn, was also seen as a repercussion from ‘higher powers’. Additionally, in former times, it was a comfortable setting that death was ominous and people appeared to exhibit “the same resigned, comfortable attitude toward it [death]” (Ariés, 1974b: 538). A person would almost always be aware of his fate and if this was not apparent to him, then others were expected to make him aware of his coming death.

Ancient Greeks saw untimely death as being caused by unsympathetic forces of the natural world such as storms, animal attacks, human actions (like the brunt from a rival soldier), as well as death from supernatural powers such as “gods, ghosts, magicians, and priests” (Powell, 2004: 289). Powell further explains that a person’s fate was attributed to their actions. This fate was dependent on their past behaviour and therefore they were victims of their own doing. Furthermore, when death was caused by obvious external forces like animal attacks, there was still an underlying notion that it was a consequence influenced by the gods (Powell, 2004: 289). This idea correlates to the concepts of tapu and utu in a Māori context (which are elaborated on in the following chapter).
Death is a part of life and it was ill-feared. From an ancient Western view, the occurrence of a sudden death or a secret death was very much feared. A sudden death refers to an untimely death, a death that was not foreseen. Such deaths could refer to the death of a child, a drowning, or a fall causing death. In ancient times, as stated by Ariès (1981: 11):

A sudden death was a vile and ugly death; it was frightening; it seemed a strange and monstrous thing that nobody dared talk about.

A death that had not been foreseen was perceived as taboo and terrifying because it altered the natural order of the world. The occurrences of the world were consequently thought of as ‘an act of chance’ and these sudden deaths posed uncertainty within what was deemed a ‘certain’ world, from an ancient Western perspective.

This fear is also evident in a ‘secret death’, that is, the death referring to someone that dies without witnesses or receiving a death ceremony. For example, this can refer to the death of a lone traveller or the death of a lone person in one’s home (Ariès, 1981: 11). This secret death is feared for more the same reason as a sudden death in that it disturbs the natural order of society. These deaths were seen as shameful with the belief that the trigger for this untimely death was having done a past wrong.

**Christian Influence**

With the arrival of Christianity, ancient views of the shameful nature and the terrifying nature of the sudden death were changed. Someone that had died from sudden death did not die from some past wrongdoing, but was believed to have died “solely by the judgment of God” (Ariès, 1981: 11). Christianity did not view sudden death as something shameful, but rather something that was destined through the hands of God.
Christian influence has also seen some Māori lean towards the idea of God being the beginning and end of all things. Muller (as cited in Best, 1995b: 60) affirms that to accept rejoicing in death is a notion brought by Christian belief, an idea that links into the suggestion made by Tāne Regular Tangi Attendee (Pers. Comm., 2009) who asserts that once someone has died, they cross the veil of death to life again; expressed by the phrase “kua whiti atu koe mai i te mate ki te ora”. This plays on the thought that once someone has died, they have transitioned from a struggle to their afterlife where, in a sense, they are afforded the opportunity to ‘live again’. This thought also supports the idea of Wahine Widow 1 (Pers. Comm., 2009) who believes that those who have died earlier are waiting for the recently deceased in the afterlife.

Both Wahine Widow 1 and Tāne Regular Tangi Attendee share the same belief as those of the Hindu religions with the transmigration of the soul to the afterlife and the ability of a soul to be re-born. This concept is illustrated with the analogy of throwing water onto a fire. This act sees the death of the water in its liquid state, but its re-birth into a gas state as steam. As such, this is how the Hindu religion views death: a transition from one state into another (Filippi, 1996: 6).

Christianity also altered the view of the body at the time of death and during death rites. With reference to ancient Greeks, customarily, death was seen as an ordinary, wholesome and natural part of the life cycle. This natural conditioning of ancient Greeks to death is evident in the way the corpse was displayed. Nudity was a part of everyday life in ancient times and
consequently, the corpse was viewed naked. However, with Christianity, ‘nudeness’ was unacceptable. There were two probable reasons for this; firstly, nudity showed a heathen attitude towards the Christian faith and secondly, the wearing of clothing demonstrated dignity and humility (Bottomley, 1979: 158). These ideas showed that Christianity caused a change in the attitudes towards once acceptable behaviour. In this example the impact of ideologies from other cultures such as Christianity swayed the views of ancient Western folk. Māori views of death and how outside cultures’ influenced those views will now be talked about.

**A Māori View of Death**

The Māori had no great fear of death, indeed very much less than the average person among us has. . . . His outlook is much the same as is that of the Oriental, and this is probably owing to the fact that his mind has never been terrorised by truculent teachings of post-mortem tortures. (Best, 1995b: 60)

Paralleling with traditional Western attitudes, Māori were, and some still are, very comfortable with death. Ngata (as cited in Turia, 2007) explains the natural aspect of death within the Māori paradigm.

Death and dying, like giving birth and living, are considered natural and normal processes like breathing, eating, sleeping and creating life. Death is also a transitional process - from Te Ao Marama (the world of light) to Te Ao Pouri (the world of darkness), a normal part of the life cycle.

Death is accepted on all accounts within Māori society and is aligned to normal activities such as ‘giving birth’ and ‘living’. It is also seen in the passage above that procession from ‘Te Ao Mārama’ to ‘Te Ao Pōuri’ is a normal occurrence of life. Māori views of death are based primarily on the ideas that are incorporated within the practice of tangihanga as it is

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57 This nudity was also evident with the term gymnasium which literally means “school for naked exercise”, where males formerly competed and trained in the art of sport completely naked (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010).
here that Māori are exposed frequently to the corpse. As was stated by Sharon Clair, a Māori nurse,

Māori are quite comfortable around death, I think. Perhaps it’s because its our experience of tangi...the tangi gives you an opportunity to cry, to laugh, to celebrate, to connect and reconnect, and to feel a part of something. All that happens in a matter of three or four days. First there’s this grief and sadness, and you vent it all. In the evening there’s this deep, sense of prayer and healing that just envelopes the whole whare with a calm. (as cited in Ngata, 2005: 42)

Clair’s statement describes tangi as an opportunity to grieve and feel comfortable enough to express one’s grief without the need to suppress emotions. Upon her own passing, to consolidate this point, Clair also said “you know its ok to have a cry and let the kids touch me [while dead in the coffin] – it’s alright” (as cited in Ngata, 2005: 42). She explains elsewhere that she made her children aware of her request for a tangi where they take care of her body until the time of burial and her spirit is separated from her body. More importantly, she states that, it is only then that “life is complete” (Clair as cited in Ngata 2005: 42). This attitude shows that death should not be seen as scary or something to fear, but rather, it is the final stage in the circle of life. The Māori views of death that arose within literature are the need for the dead to be cherished, the necessity for death to be avenged, and the cyclic continuum linking the living and the dead, and will serve as talking points in the ensuing sections.

Death Must Be Cherished

Māori adhere to the fact that the dead should be cherished, talked to and honoured, in such a way that other ethnicities of New Zealand society might view it as over emotional and over dramatic (Dansey, 1992: 108). The tangihanga serves to provide a forum for grieving in a non-intrusive environment. This ‘cherishing’ aspect can be seen with the constant act of talking to the deceased as if he/she was a living person, as well as the effort that Māori put into never leaving the body unattended.
The customary purpose of withholding one’s own to prevent the body falling into the hands of the enemy acknowledges a cherishing element. Another reason which parallels the idea of ‘cherishing the dead’ is the ability for the tūpāpaku to be figuratively ‘warmed’ with aroha by the mere presence of another living person.

Our dead are very close to us in Maoridom. They do not lie alone in that short space between death and burial. We stay with them every minute and talk to them and sing to them. (Dansey, 1992: 116)

On a personal note, whānau want their deceased loved ones with them at all times after their death to cherish the last few days they have with them, albeit the physical embodiment. Contemporary trying times sometimes cause debates if the body is not released from the funeral home within a short period of time after death. A peaceful Māori view is shown here with the idea that death must be cherished, however in complete contrast, Māori also view that death must be avenged.

_Death Must Be Avenged_

The avenging of death is noted through the concept of _utu_, a concept that restores balance seen fit by the community. In former times, death was avenged by means of force especially if it referred to an untimely death. Retribution was sought when a person died before their time, at the hands of another, regardless of whether the cause was by friend or foe. _Utu_ could come in the form of injury, shame or death. An example of the latter consists of two senior warriors that participated in a friendly fight involving weaponry. One warrior accidentally killed the other and was later killed by his own tribe for his recklessness. The death of these two warriors resulted in a drastic loss to the strength of the group however, as seen here, the loss of fighting force proved secondary to the service of justice (Voykovic, 1981: 101).
Another form of *utu* is the concept of *muru*, the practice of “punishment by plundering” (Salmond, 1975: 96). The traditional practice of *muru* is not performed today, but a parallel form might be the act of ritual compensation where a legal ritual is carried out as a penalty for offences made (Maning, 1912: 103). This custom was exercised in the instances of threats to marriage, breaching *tapu*, defeat in war and accidents which threatened or terminated life (Mead, 2003: 151-152). The focus of this concept however, is in the case of accidents which threatened or terminated life.

*Muru*, like *utu*, is a form of restorative justice. It aided in the circulation of wealth as well as the facilitation and control amongst pre-European Māori society. The difference between *utu* and *muru* is that after *muru* was performed the matter was seen to be settled and had reached a state of *ea*. *Utu* on the other hand was seen as an ongoing debacle between the participating parties. *Utu* may proceed over months or years between the quarrelling groups, whereas *muru* was usually only carried out once. The act of *muru* was used to prosecute the offender in a way that brought shame to the family and prevent a repeat offence from the perpetrator and onlookers (Ministry of Justice, 2001: 75).

Sometimes *muru* was performed by visitors if a death was due to accident. The relatives of the deceased were found guilty of negligence and were punishable by mere virtue that they ‘allowed’ the accident to take place. Consequently, the visitors would occasionally demonstrate their disapproval by beating the accused with sticks or their hands as well as potential compensation in goods, taken by the visitors. Similarly, this act could be done in the event of the return of a leader of a war party by relatives of those killed in that the
relatives gained reprieve by exhibiting grief through beating, which the leader wilfully accepted due to the honour of his position (Buck, 1949: 421).

A recent example comes from the 1970s where a husband, enraged by a domestic argument, shot and killed his wife. While the husband was in custody, the father of the accused attended the tangihanga of the woman where “he lay face down on the ground, offering his own life to the gathered tangata whenua as repayment for the woman’s life his son had taken” (Callaghan as cited in Voykovic, 1981: 103). Much of the people gathered wanted to avenge the woman by muru, however one kaumātua spoke of muru no longer being a part of their custom and spared the father of the accused. As seen per this example, if one was the reason, even in advertently, for disrupting a full life cycle of another, they were prosecuted. On the other hand, if one had reached maturity and lived their life to old age then acceptance was granted. This is due to the assumption that the next appropriate step after maturity is death (Voykovic, 1981: 104).

The traditional practices of utu and muru are no longer carried out today. Therefore, in a peaceful contemporary society, death is said to be avenged by the falling of tears and mucus and is depicted in the following:

*Te roimata i heke, te hupe i whuia ki te marae, ka ea aitu* – The tears that fall, the mucus that is cast upon the marae, avenge death. (Dansey, 1992: 108)

Another view of Māori suggests a link that the living has with death and is discussed in the following section.
Link of Living with Death

Paying respects to the deceased during *tangihanga* are done with the lid of the casket usually off. People talk to the deceased as if the person is still alive, involving the deceased in song and eulogy. This practice acknowledges the body in death as they would be in life, thus, breaking down the threatening undertone of death, ultimately giving rise to the attitude that death is very much a part of life.

There are also many references in Māori formal oratory linking the living with death, especially with respect to farewells to the dead and the continual indication of the land as being one’s final resting place. More specifically, these references more often than not include allusions to Papa-tū-ā-nuku, the earth mother. Papa-tū-ā-nuku is the undeniable link that life has with death as she is the beginning of life (explained in Chapter Two in the Māori creation narratives), she is our sustenance throughout life, and we are eventually interred in her at the conclusion of life. Such links within eulogies include:

*Haere rā e hoa ki te kōpū o te whenua, ki a Papatūānuku* - Farewell my dear one, to the original spring of life, to the great ancestress Papatūānuku. (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999: 11)

Another similar gesture is noted in Brooke-White’s *Whaikoorero – Ceremonial Farewells to the Dead* book.

*Ko koopuu parapara ko taau uurunga* – The womb of the earth is your pillow (1981: 25)

The above was said as the introduction of a farewell speech where Papa-tū-ā-nuku is the root of this metaphor. The ‘womb of the earth’ refers to Papa-tū-ā-nuku and her ability to bear the initial stages of life. Her womb created all living things on earth, and in death she creates a haven for the dead to reside at the time of their eternal rest, hence the figurative use of the
The notion of Papa-tū-ā-nuku being the bearer and taker of life aligns to the attitude that with life comes death and vice versa.

Death is expressed by Māori belief as the moment of the emergence of new life. An example of this duality is represented by *whenua* refering both to ‘placenta’ and ‘land’. This shows the connection of life and death, being birthed from the placenta, and interred within the land upon death, completing the circle of life (Williams, 2004b: 50). This linking of life and death through *whenua* is further supported by Voykovic (1981: 31):

In appearance hupe [sic] could be likened to afterbirth/placenta (whenua) and when this mucus cord touched the ground/earth (whenua) a circuit was completed. The circuit began with the real whenua of childbirth (which was usually buried in an area of trees or shrubs) and ended with the symbolic whenua of tangi as both forms of afterbirth ended in or on the ground (whenua).

The above extract illustrates the symbolic nature of the *hūpē* and likens it to the appearance of the afterbirth. During mourning, *hūpē* is shed and when this reaches the ground, it is said that this ‘circuit was complete’. Metge also (1976: 56) shares this connection in the form of ‘Te Po’ and explains that:

Te Po was a womb in which new life was generated out of death, the realm not only of endings but also of new beginnings...a place where the dead were reunited with their ancestors and death contains the seeds of life.

This link supports the attitude that life and death are intertwined and also exists within Western thought. Choron states that “the process of creation of life from dead matter will go on in all eternity” (1963: 38). This shows parallels with the idea that without death, life cannot be sustained. If referring to the sustainability of life, to sustain life one must eat, thus, with consumption, something else must consequentially die. The strong link that life has with death can be summarised into the following:
The above phrase applies the analogy of stitching and weaving. Like the conjoining of every stitch binding together to create a cloth, so too do the threads of the living and the dead bind together to create the tribe (Brooke-White, 1981: 22). These analogies and dialogues given to the dead are further evident with the use of euphemisms and metaphors.

**Euphemisms and Metaphors**

Death is very much a part of everyday life and yet it is concealed when using it in everyday conversation. One account asserts:

Death is one of the essential realities of life. Despite this, camouflage and unhealthy avoidance of its inexorableness permeate a good deal of thinking and action in Western culture. Even the words for death and dying are bypassed in much of everyday language by means of euphemisms. It is not the disquieting “I die”, but rather the anonymous “one passes on”, “one ends his days”. (Feifel, 1959: 115)

This is a similarity which is shared with both Western and Māori cultures. As shown in the above excerpt, although death is overwhelmingly present daily, people act to conceal its realities and avoid its direct use. Using euphemisms such as ‘one passes on’ and ‘to kick the bucket’ is more accepted than someone saying ‘someone is dead’. Euphemisms like these are used to disguise the bluntness and harsh reality of death.

Māori use metaphors that serve the same function as euphemisms, to describe death and the loss of a loved one. The deceased mark the past and are always mentioned, regardless of the

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58 Another phrase heard through passing is “to kick the bucket”, a figurative meaning deriving from the analogy of a pig’s last spasm as it is hung immediately before it is to be slaughtered. The apparatus placed through the hind legs of the pig was termed a ‘bucket’, hence, to figuratively ‘kick the bucket’ is to die (Pozefsky, 2009: Online).
gathering; whether birthdays, tangihanga or marae meetings, Māori pay homage, firstly, to those that have passed on and acknowledge ‘te hunga mate’ or ‘te hunga kua wehe atu ki te pō’, the ancestors, family and community members that have died (Higgins & Moorfield, 2004: 86). Māori sometimes apply metaphor to refer to someone’s death. An example is ‘kua hinga te tōtara i te waonui a Tāne’ meaning ‘a totara tree from the great forest of Tāne has fallen’ and symbolises that someone great and usually of chiefly status has died (Krupa, 1996: 21). Māori are also sometimes direct such as in the instance of “kua mate a mea” meaning “so-and-so has died” (Rewi, Pers. Comm., 2010). The difference here however, is that the Māori language serves as a buffer for the harshness of its English translation. These traditional views form the attitudes apparent today and are demonstrated in the participants and their attitudes towards the ōpāpaku.

**Attitude towards Ōpāpaku**

We have discussed classical conditioning and in the case of this section we look at experiences through being exposed to ōpāpaku in different circumstances. It can be assumed that with repeated exposures to a certain thing, in this instance ōpāpaku, there should be an increased tolerance towards it.

Interviewees were asked whether their attitude to the body had changed due to being exposed to the ōpāpaku in their employment or study. Their responses form the core of this discussion. Widows and regular tangihanga attendees reported that their exposures to the ōpāpaku in their circumstances did not alter their attitude. This may in part be due to ōpāpaku being in a familiar setting where the body is in its entirety and clothed amongst the
normal proceedings of the tangihanga. Also, the widows were aged 56 and 77 at the time of interviewing and had already experienced multiple tangihanga in their lifetime, therefore, were accustomed to the sight of a tūpāpaku in a tangihanga setting. However, in the instances of the anatomy students, the embalmer and the funeral director, this was not the case. Due to the frequent exposures to the tūpāpaku in the embalming industry and laboratories, the attitudes of the participants in these sectors to the body changed and will be the focus of this section.

With reference to anatomy students and their exposure to tūpāpaku in the laboratory setting, the biggest attitudinal change towards tūpāpaku came from Wahine Anatomy Student stating that:

I actually found that I used to be a bit scared to [touch them] even like with my [deceased] nannies and them...because I’m a body but I never used to touch the body. But yeah that’s changed. I think that I know they are not going to wake up and go RAA [laughs], and go BOO! [laughs]. (Wahine Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Wahine Anatomy Student has become less afraid of tūpāpaku during tangihanga due to her exposures and handling of human tissue in human anatomy laboratories. Due to her studies, she believes that she has reached a state where she is certain that tūpāpaku will no longer awaken.

Wahine Embalmer seemed to share this sentiment of being in a state of comfort with tūpāpaku since beginning employment in a funeral firm. She supplies some interesting thoughts;

I think my attitude has changed towards tūpāpaku since I’ve been here [funeral firm]. Because I used to be frightened ... as years and as time went on, I got used to it and I felt that, I still do, that they look after me. The tūpāpaku do, they look
after me. I used to feel safer inside the funeral home, inside the building than outside. I feel safer inside. I won’t go outside if I’m here by myself, unless I have to. Even out there [outside], I felt safer inside. . . I feel that I don’t get frightened (Wahine Embalmer, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Wahine Embalmer tells how previously she got frightened when dealing with tūpāpaku, however, working with tūpāpaku through her work has helped her grow more comfortable in their presence, even to the point that she believes that ‘the tūpāpaku look after her’. She feels safer and protected ‘amongst the dead’ within the funeral home as opposed to outside the funeral firm. In an earlier statement she jokingly affirms that she is more scared of the dark than she is of the tūpāpaku that are handled inside the firm where she works. This notion of safety ‘amongst the dead’ is further supported with Wahine Funeral Director’s testament where she is

the last normally left in the building and you got to switch all the lights off, but that doesn’t bother me, because at the end of the day, worry about the living that’s lurking outside. They’re the ones you got to watch. But it is true…you feel safe with a body. Yeah for some unknown reason you do. I mean if we have a body here and he has to stay here for three days, we always say hello to it [tūpāpaku]. We go ‘oh you still here’ [laughs]. Yeah it’s just a natural thing. You might accidentally knock the casket and then you just go ‘oops sorry’. (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009)

The above passage shows a humorous side to Wahine Funeral Director where she recalls that she might nudge the casket of a tūpāpaku accidentally and apologises to it, and could also be attributed to respect. She also avows that she talks to the tūpāpaku and gives cheeky remarks in instances where a tūpāpaku may have been in the firm for a while. This notion parallels with a firm Māori belief that the deceased are, in essence, still present. This is a key concept for Māori and is demonstrated in the way Māori address the dead during eulogies and whaikōrero, where the kaikōrero acknowledges and greets the tūpāpaku at times as if the deceased was still alive.
These experiences show that their constant exposures to tūpāpaku have in fact caused the mentioned participants to feel more ‘at ease’ in the presence of tūpāpaku, even to the extent that Wahine Embalmer and Wahine Funeral Director both feel ‘safer’ with tūpāpaku than living persons. Conversely, Tāne Anatomy Student, continues to harbour some reservation about the freedom in handling tūpāpaku. He showed a slight increase in comfort while in the presence of tūpāpaku but is still stand offish when it comes to handling tūpāpaku. He made a point of carrying out his rituals of sprinkling himself with water after each laboratory. He also refrained from taking food into the laboratory due to his knowledge and beliefs of tapu and noa. With tūpāpaku being tapu and food being noa, they should not be in proximity of each other. His response as to whether dealing with cadavers in laboratories got easier was:

Yeah sort of. I started getting used to the fact that we were in rooms with these dead bodies, dead body parts. But I’d still after the class, go to the bathroom and sprinkle myself. I got into the habit of not taking my bag into there because, my bag usually holds my kai, so I didn’t really want my bag to [get contaminated by potential spiritual beings]…even if I sprinkled it [his food]. I had this thing that even if it [his bag] was closed it [spirits] might be in there [his bag]. Superstitious or not, I don’t care but I didn’t want my kai to be tainted. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Tāne Anatomy Student did, however, feel relatively at ease in the presence of tūpāpaku, even to the point where he participated in the dissection of a cadaver. Previously, he adds he would not have undertaken that task. He explains:

by the end of Anatomy, there’s all these opportunities to dissect and explore and the final year I got to remove the skin of the abdomen of a cadaver…it was different, usually I don’t do that but I wanted to know what it was like, and I did it and I wouldn’t do it again. I just trust the Anatomists and yeah I believe that that’s [human structures] under there. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

This instance in particular shows that exposure to tūpāpaku in the laboratories did build a level of comfort where he was able to dissect a cadaver. In saying that however, the exposure of Tāne Anatomy Student to tūpāpaku within laboratories has not changed his disposition towards handling tūpāpaku. He explains that he is more aware in the structures of our human
anatomy and that he is “sort of more at ease with it” (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009), however, if given another chance he would not dissect a cadaver again. His attitude to a cadaver in the laboratory is aligned to the same attitude he has for a tūpāpaku lying in repose on the marae. Tāne Anatomy Student states:

I don’t even really touch a tūpāpaku when they’re on the marae. Just the solid coldness. [It] freaks me out. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

He states that his attitude in regards to the tapu of the cadaver does not differ to the tapu of the tūpāpaku lying in repose on a marae. However, he does prefer seeing a corpse on a marae as opposed to an unclothed cadaver in laboratories, because he is not yet attuned to cadavers and has had more experiences with tūpāpaku on the marae, thus, the tūpāpaku in a marae context is more familiar to him and therefore, less feared.

Wahine Funeral Director, believes that her attitude to the body has not changed and her attitude to the dead has “always been the same” (Pers. Comm., 2009). The constant comfort she has while dealing with tūpāpaku could be due to the fact that she has been around tūpāpaku from such a young age as her parents funded a funeral director and later owned a funeral home. She has continued to be in contact with many embalmers ever since. She also explains that she believes being comfortable around tūpāpaku also stems from her upbringing where she affirms that

it’s [being around bodies] a background thing, brought up with it and go to tangi’s [sic] all the time. Dragged around either by your kuia [grandmother/elderly woman] or your parents or your mother. (Wahine Funeral Director, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Attending numerous tangihanga with her kuia from a young age has formed her comfortable attitude she has toward tūpāpaku. This has enabled her to feel comfortable in her current occupation as a Funeral Director.
Attitudes to Parts of the Body

Attitudes are further represented in the differing perspectives that participants have with different parts of the body. Both Tāne Anatomy Student and Wahine Anatomy Student shared similar views in regards to pro-sections\(^59\). There were some instances where not only limbs were used as pro-sections, but also the head region, reproductive areas and the torso. The anatomy students were asked whether or not their attitudes differed depending on what parts of the body were used as pro-sections, and in the experiences of Wahine Anatomy Student:

Everything from the head down that was there, it didn’t really bother me much, but there was something about the head. I didn’t like looking at the head. Especially to be able to see the eyes. it’s just that face, if you see the person. Yeah so there is something about the face, the eyes. That’s one thing ... I just made sure I didn’t look at the eyes. (Wahine Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

The eyes are a very distinguishing feature of someone’s persona while they are alive, thus, the eyes represented the unique persona of that person.

In relation to Wahine Anatomy Student’s discomfort in dealing with the head, this could also be due to her knowledge of the *tapu* of the body and knowing that the head holds far greater *tapu* than any other part of the body. As mentioned previously, if the whole body could not be retrieved in battle, at least the head was taken home by kinsmen. The head was revered as a very *tapu* body part. In traditional Māori culture, using the skull as drinking vessels and utensils for holding cooking equipment was the height of insult, as it reduced the *tapu* of the head by using it with *noa* objects. In the instance of the victors this was the pinnacle of victory.

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\(^{59}\) A pro-section refers to a body part that has been severed from the body (as a whole) and is used as a focus of a certain laboratory. For example if the laboratory was focussing on the upper limb, then a pro-section of just the arm would be on view for students to interact with and learn from.
This differing attitude towards the head in comparison to other body parts, is also noted in the case of Tāne Anatomy Student where he is

more comfortable with the limbs than the reproductive [body parts] and the head freaked me out, because they look at you...and you realise it’s a real person in there. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

The head houses one’s personality, knowledge and the essence of that person, and the eyes portray these things. Therefore to look at lifeless eyes, means one is looking at a lifeless person, an occurrence that is not frequently experienced, and because this experience is unfamiliar, it is feared. This acknowledged revere could also be attributed to the tapu that Māori have for the head.

**Initial Tūpāpaku Contact**

With current participant attitudes towards tūpāpaku established, we discuss their initial tūpāpaku contact, either in a laboratory (in the case of anatomy students) or within the funeral firm (in the case of the embalmer and funeral director) in order to highlight the change in attitude between how the interviewees feel now, the experience of their initial contact with tūpāpaku is documented here.

With classical conditioning in mind, the assumption remains that a positive first experience consequently causes a positive attitude towards that object in the future. The experience of the first contact with tūpāpaku either in a laboratory as a cadaver, or a body within a morgue, resulted in different outcomes in the cases of the participants. Reflecting the situation they were placed in at the time of first contact and the preparation they had before that encounter.
In the instances of Wahine Embalmer and Wahine Funeral Director the consensus seemed to be one of comfort, especially with the prospect of dealing with tūpāpaku. Wahine Funeral Director explains that she was never concerned about handling bodies as “being brought up the Māori way” ensured her attendance at numerous tangihanga (Pers. Comm., 2009). She indicates that the “Māori way” was her upbringing on the marae where the majority of occasions held on the marae were tangihanga, thus, in a non-professional manner, she was exposed to tūpāpaku from a very young age. Wahine Embalmer also felt at ease with the prospect of handling tūpāpaku.

I was also quite comfortable with handling bodies I mean I had no qualms about that. You have to take the horns and all I guess. (Wahine Embalmer, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Discussing this further, if dealing with bodies on a large scale is part of one’s occupation then one would expect an increased comfort level between the person and the tūpāpaku, otherwise this would not be a chosen career path. Another point to note is the income generated from the job. Perhaps growing tolerance to tūpāpaku also comes with the reality that handling bodies brings in the necessary income needed to survive. Although income was not mentioned in the interviews, it is possible that the ease or tolerance of dealing with tūpāpaku must come with the acknowledgement of working within this occupational field.

Returning to the matter of initial contact with tūpāpaku in a professional capacity, Wahine Embalmer recalls her first call out:

My first job was good because I couldn’t wait. I mean if it’s your passion then you will want to try and learn as much as you can. I got introduced to the first body, the first call out was someone from AB. It was more like observing, just watch and learn, so that’s what I did and that’s how I learnt by just observing for a number of times until I was comfortable enough to do it on my own. (Wahine Embalmer, Pers. Comm., 2009)
As Wahine Embalmer affirms, she is comfortable in handling bodies. In her first professional dealing with a body, she merely observed and over time she gained the confidence to handle and treat the body, on a professional basis, independently.

In contrast, this initial encounter with *tūpāpaku* was not as pleasant in the case of the anatomy students, however. Wahine Anatomy Student recalls her first experience of cadavers within the laboratory.

> That room with those bodies in the black bags...yeah I do remember that actually. That was weird, because... those bodies were all in the bags. And you knew they were there and you just always knew. We’re used to seeing one body at a marae. Not like 21. (Wahine Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

In the above example it seems that upon entering the laboratory for the first time Wahine Anatomy Student was overwhelmed as she was accustomed to seeing only ‘one’ *tūpāpaku* on the *marae*, however, the eye-opening experience for her was when she realised that, in her case, there were cadavers in mass, all covered in ‘the black bags’.

As an anatomy student myself, the memory is vivid and an eye-opener for me, a small town girl from Whakatāne where illustrations in books were the closest to the ‘real thing’ we had. In the laboratory, cadavers were laid out on tables on the other side of the room in body bags. On the tables immediately in front of us were pro-sections of the upper limb consisting of muscles, bones, tendons and blood vessels of the severed body part. The smell used to preserve these pro-sections, in this case, was also a noticeable part of the experience, a very distinguishable smell likened to a cross between decomposing chicken and chlorine. In saying that however, I felt honoured to work with real examples of the human anatomy.
Tāne Anatomy Student recalled that in his first instance of coming into contact with a pro-section, he was ill-informed and under prepared for what he was about to see. He explains:

> I didn’t really know what a pro-section was. So, they said yeah there are some pro-sections over there underneath the tea towels and I was like aye, I wonder what those are? And then, pulled it off, realised what it was and yeah got a bit of a fright. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Tāne Anatomy Student also “ran out of the room and did a karakia” (Pers. Comm., 2009). He explained that he did not realise the human anatomy he was handling was ‘real’ until after he had handled it. After his karakia he gathered himself and re-entered the laboratory shortly after, however, he

> didn’t really deal with them [the pro-sections] [after that incident]. I let other people do what they want. I used the plastic models instead of the real things because I didn’t really know what to do. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Upon questioning him why he felt he needed to leave the laboratory, he replied,

> I think its just the fact that its tapu and that its somebody else’s body and we were prodding at it and I didn’t really know how to deal with that. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

In the above instance Tāne Anatomy Student was overwhelmed with other students’ ability to ‘prod’ at the human pro-section, whereas him knowing that the pro-section was ‘real, the act of ‘prodding at it’ did not seem correct to him due to his cultural background and the innate knowledge that he has of tapu and mana. Re-surfacing tapu, more particularly, the immense tapu associated with death, and handling the tūpāpaku was not carried out by ordinary people. This task was left to tohunga as they knew how to keep themself safe from the potential threats from the spirit world. This ‘prodding’ infers a sense of disrespect and due to the pro-section being a part of someone else’s body, Tāne Anatomy Student felt the need to respect it. His attitude, albeit cultural or personal, thus discouraged him from interacting with the ‘real’ human tissues.
Organ Donation

These changing attitudes also play a part in the following section which centres on organ donation and a Māori viewpoint on this modern and usually controversial issue. Organ donation is the allowance of the “removal and transplantation of viable organs from donor to recipient” (Donor Room, 2004: Online). With this process, recipients need to ensure that donors have a matched blood type to the recipient to ensure the body does not reject the new organ. Organ transplantation on the other hand, is the “surgical removal of an organ or tissues from one person (the donor) and placing it in another person (the recipient)” (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2010: Online). Organ donation and transplantation are doused in an enormous amount of legal considerations, such as within the New Zealand Government, like the Human Tissues Act 2008 and Coroner’s Act 1988 (explained in the previous chapter).

The attitude to death nowadays tends to straddle the ideas of customary belief systems and scientific orientations and leaves some people in a state of confusion. These conflicting issues are especially evident in the process of organ donation by Māori. Organ donation and transplantation are very contentious and these require major consideration of core aspects of religious beliefs, cultural values, and the belief of afterlife and the soul of a person. There are mixed views regarding organ transplantation and donation between Māori. Some view it as unnatural and rather believe in ‘fate’ hence they do not consider these as options. Other Māori, however, view organ donation and transplantation to be viable options because formerly “there were no options for Māori. This is all new for Māori; Māori are beginning to

60 There are also laws pertaining to the donation of organs internationally such as the UK Human Tissues Act 2004 (Britain), the Transplantation of Human Organs Act 1994 (India), and the Human Tissue Act 1983 (Australia) (Bell, 2006: 283; Ministry of Law Justice and Company Affairs, 1994; Herman, 1994).
look at this taonga as a gift” (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999: 13). Māori patients are more likely to be compatible with Māori donors, however, few Māori consent to organ donation. Statistics show that “only six Māori families consented to donation between 1988 and 1996 (from a total of 290 families)” (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999: 13). This may come as a surprise, but there has been the suggestion that those groups with a low donor rate should only be entitled to a low recipient rate. Applying this model would mean that because only six Māori families consented to donating organs, only six other Māori families would be entitled to that ratio of organs. The question of why there is such a low demographic of Māori donating organs is due to a number of factors: firstly, there is a lack of awareness with these options; secondly, of those Māori who have knowledge of organ donation, only a few seriously consider it as an option because they are unfamiliar with the procedures. The most important reason to note, however, is the spiritual implications of organ donation which involve the key concepts of *whakapapa, tapu, mana, mauri* and *wairua*.

*Whakapapa* explains genealogical ties one has, not only with their living *whānau, hapū* and *iwi*, but also with their ancestors, land and environment (Mead, 2003: 212-213). *Whakapapa* also unequivocally links into one’s intrinsic *tapu* and *mana* and due to the importance of these concepts Māori have great difficulty in willingly donating organs to others. As was noted earlier, *mana* levels marked the integrity of a person and the group or groups associated with him or her, as seen in the traditional practice of keeping *tūpāpaku* hidden from enemies for fear of *mana* desecration. One’s body houses these vital aspects and to give away one’s organs is to give away a piece of one’s *mana, tapu* and, essentially, their *whakapapa*. This highlights an attitude of reluctance to donate which is also prevalent in the case of being buried outside one’s homeland.
Mauri and wairua also play pivotal roles in organ donation, especially in the instance of deceased donation. Deceased donation refers to the donation of one’s organs in death and in particular brain-stem death, whereby body organs are kept alive to support organ transplantation. Because mauri represents the ‘life force’ of the person and wairua represents one’s ‘spirit’, they are encompassed in every part of one’s being and directly affect Māori attitudes to organ donation. Deceased donation requires removal of organs while the body is still ventilated. A ventilated body looks vital, feels warm, is partially receptive to touch, and for some people (Māori and non-Māori) appears virtually alive. Deciding to donate the body tissues of a relative requires overcoming the felt perception, on a sensory level, of that person’s vitality. (Shaw, 2010: 139)

The above passage notes the importance of the body being ventilated at the point of organ donation. In essence, the donor is still alive and it is to the discretion of the whānau to allow the organs to be donated. This indicates that the donor still contains their mauri; their life force and vitality have not yet been terminated. Thus, the wairua potentially takes its premature journey to its final resting place and as stated by one informant:

What do [we] think about such things as flying off to Te Rerenga Wairua with someone else’s organ left in our body? Would the body become just an empty vessel with a borrowed part in it while the spirit goes to Hawaiki whole again or does the ‘spirit’ of the owner of the organ go with you? Are you still you in ‘spirit’ or are you mostly you and a little bit of someone else? (Whakawhitiwhiti Whakaaro blog posting as cited in Shaw, 2010: 140)

There is the attitude that because you have another person’s organ, the belief questions whether the wairua of that organ travels with the body of another, the other person’s final resting place. This illustrates another reason as to why many Māori object to wilfully donate their organs. All of these cultural beliefs in whakapapa, mana, tapu, mauri and wairua manifest reluctance by Māori to donate organs.
Although there is reluctance by the majority of Māori, one example of a successful Māori transplant is shown in the case of Billy T. James who, in 1988, received a new heart. His existing heart was failing and his new heart gave him three extra years of life (NZ On Screen, 2009: Online). In this instance maybe his desire for life outweighed the adherence to customary concepts and beliefs as mentioned above.

Responses by participants showed mixed attitudes on the issue of organ donation. When Tāne Anatomy Student was asked whether he was a donor he replied:

No. Because, I don’t know what the definition of being a donor is to be honest. When you go and tick that box, it just says do you want to be a donor and it doesn’t say, donor organs or donor body to science. I don’t know what that means so I don’t tick it, and I don’t really want my body to be cut up for science … if someone really needs an organ and my organ’s not rotten then I’ll give it to them if I’m dying, but nah, I’m not into donating my body to science. (Tāne Anatomy Student, Pers. Comm., 2009)

Here Tāne Anatomy Student clearly refuses to donate his body to science because he is unsure of the definition, however, he is not entirely against organ donation. He further explains that if somebody desperately needs a body part and he was on his death bed then he would consider the prospect of organ donation. This also illustrates that on the consideration of others, regardless of one’s beliefs, attitudes can shift.

Wahine Widow 2 on the other hand, is supportive of the prospect of organ donation. She explains:

I think I want to be [a donor], to help somebody [who] might need my organs because it’s going to be no use to me. (Wahine Widow 2, Pers. Comm., 2009)

The important point Wahine Widow 2 draws attention to is the prospect of giving her organs so that others may benefit, as they will be non-beneficial to her post-death. This again, like
Billy T. James, shows a stray away from customary beliefs. Perhaps, in a modern paradigm, the obedience to customary practices has weakened to a point where the individual can create their own custom? Less obedience to customary concepts illustrated here shows the change of attitudes toward death. However, further discussion suggests that, even though customary concepts with regards to attitudes towards death seem to have relaxed, perhaps the concepts of *manaaki* and *aroha* have strengthened. Maybe the attitudes of *manaaki* and *aroha* that Māori have always had for people have shifted to another level, a level that embodies organ donation. It is interesting to note the change of attitudes here, especially whilst maintaining perspective on Māori customary concepts. The only apparent difference being the balance of what Māori customary concept outweighs the other and times when one becomes more important than the other.

Like Wahine Widow 2, myself, an anatomy student, I do not see any personal benefit taking my organs to the grave. My first consideration would be to my *whānau* and whether my organs could be of assistance to them, after which donating my body to science is a very real option. This attitude stems from my background in anatomy in believing that vital and ‘real’ information of the human body cannot be done without the use of cadavers. I also feel honoured to have had the opportunity to experience a cadaver, albeit as a student, and also feel the need to return the favour outlined by the concept of *utu*. However, I also acknowledge the reluctance of Māori to donate as the concepts of *whakapapa, mana, tapu, mauri* and *wairua* are so deeply embedded in Māori culture that these cannot be overlooked. All things considered, *whānau* members have the final word to their organ donation in death, however, if donation is an option then it is the responsibility of the deceased to voice their opinions to their *whānau* well in advance of their death to ensure their wishes are met.
Refering to donation, if one was to donate their blood then is the donor losing some of their mana, tapu and whakapapa? Is the recipient gaining what the donor has lost by virtue of their blood? With this in mind, another consideration might be that, not only should the donor be consulted with the option to donate, the whānau members should also be consulted as they too embody the donor’s whakapapa. Lewis & Pickering (2003: 33) identify the idea of whakapapa dilution and the weakening of the genealogical links to the future. Whether the idea of organ donation be accepted or denied, it is a topic that definitely requires further discussion, and understanding, not only from a scientific perspective, but also from a personal and cultural standpoint. Something that also requires further discussion is the overwhelming physical and spiritual link that death has with the land.

**Death and Land**

we will be in the heart of our own land, in the midst of our own people, which is the only place for the dead to lie. (Dansey, 1992: 116)

The attitude of Māori returning home to be interred is recurrent throughout literature and interviews. ‘The only place for the dead to lie’ describes one’s homeland, familiar surroundings and their final resting place. This section explores the correlation between land and death, and the attitude many Māori have of returning home in their death.

Tikanga is again emphasised in the views of the interviewees, where literature espouses the spiritual and physical connection that Māori have with the land. This idea can be better illustrated through the concepts of tūrangawaewae and ūkaipō. Tūrangawaewae refers to a non-threatening place for one to call home, whereas ūkaipō means the place where one found their sustenance, the place where one was nourished from the fruits of that place through their upbringing. Tūrangawaewae is most commonly used to note ‘a place to stand’, ‘a place
someone calls home’, ‘homeland’ and ‘origin’. Ūkaipō, on the other hand, literally means “a place where a person is suckled” (Barlow, 1991: 143). Very similar meanings of tūrangawaewae and ūkaipō are seen here, however the most distinguishing difference as stated by Rewi (Pers. Comm., 2010) is that tūrangawaewae can be moved. He further explains that it is a place where one establishes themselves, thus, tūrangawaewae can be anywhere. Ūkaipō, however is non-transferable and refers to the place where someone was raised, and is therefore concrete.

Tūrangawaewae is identified by Mead (2003: 272) as “a place for the feet to stand”. In a slightly different outlook, Harawira (1997: 5) recognises tūrangawaewae as:

a place where they [Māori] know they belong. Everything is familiar – the faces, the surroundings, the noises, the talking. It’s a home where they know they belong and can truly relax.

The freedom of expression and belonging that tūrangawaewae and ūkaipō afford, is further evident in the attitudes of many Māori, with their strong desire to be buried in their place of origin, their tūrangawaewae, their ūkaipō, no matter how far away from home they reside. This strong pull can be described by the concept matemate-ā-one, meaning the deep affection that one has for their own land and people (Moorfield, 2005: 83). The strong pull for Māori to be interred in their homeland and among familiar surroundings when they die, shows the entrenched connection they have with their tūrangawaewae and matemate-ā-one. Māori residing in New Zealand also anticipate being buried in their tūrangawaewae, further demonstrating the extent of matemate-ā-one. Wahine Regular Tangi Attendee (Pers. Comm., 2009) explains that she would like to be buried “on a hill…in New Zealand of course”, however, not just any hill in New Zealand, but an area that is close to her roots. This attitude
is also evident in Māori that do not currently reside in New Zealand and are drawn back to their tūrangawae wae and ūkaipō in their death.

Māori overseas expend great efforts to be buried back in New Zealand and due to the convenience of travel and the chase of the dollar, many Māori have made themselves a home overseas. In the majority of cases, Australia seems to be the alternative place for Māori. The past two decades has seen a large number of Māori ‘cross the ditch’ and subsequently create homes for themselves in Australia. According to the 2006 Australian census, it was estimated that almost 100,000 Māori were living in Australia (Australian Government, 2008: Online). The desire for Māori to return to their tūrangawae wae or ūkaipō upon passing is eminent with the fact that Māori in Australia apply for tangihanga insurance to guarantee that they are able to return home on the death of a whānau member in New Zealand or on their own death in Australia and need to be repatriated back home (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2007: 90).

Repatriation

Repatriation refers to the process of ‘restoring one to his or her own country’ or ‘to bring back from abroad’ (Foreman, 1959: 409). In death, repatriation refers to the returning of a corpse to his or her home country. This is particularly applicable in the case of fallen soldiers fighting overseas. The emigration of Māori to other parts of the world has become so common that consequently some Māori become buried in cities and overseas. The burial outside one’s tūrangawae wae does sometimes cause debate.

Nowadays, more people prefer to be buried in cities. But I disagree with this. For Māori, when you die you go back to the place where you found your sustenance in the world – which is usually where you were brought up, your ūkaipō. That’s where everyone knows you and will look after you – not only in life, but also in
death. And you will be a revered member of the community, even if its in the
graveyard. Your children and grandchildren and great grand children will keep
coming home to visit because you’re there (Piripi as cited in Ngata, 2005: 44).

Piripi has a strong insistence for Māori to be buried in the place they were brought up,
reiterating the importance of tūrangawaewae, ūkaipō and matemate-ā-one with reference to
Māori returning home in death. Te Puni Kōkiri’s (2007: 87) statistics support the idea of
Māori returning to New Zealand in death stating that roughly “half of all tūpāpaku are
repatriated to New Zealand”. Relating back to the returning of fallen warriors in pre-colonial
times during war, where if no other body part was brought back, great efforts for at least the
head of the fallen was returned, so that they could be mourned over in the deceased’s home
locale.

This ardent attitude to return to New Zealand is also outlined by Raina Smith’s statement:

Hoki wairua mai e tama, hoki mai ki te wā kāinga, ki tō iwi, hoki wairua mai! –
return to us in spirit son, return to your birthplace, to your people, return to us in
spirit. This is a cultural prerequisite, all possible avenues to get our loved ones
home … We are transient people here. If we bury them here we do not know
whether we will be here tomorrow, so we are thinking always in a futuristic way
… take them back to the home that will never shift. So it does not matter whether
we end up living in Victoria or in Perth, we cannot leave our remains in Victoria
and go off somewhere else. (Smith as cited in Te Puni Kōkiri, 2007: 88)

Here, it is obvious that matemate-ā-one is a strong belief. Smith (2007) believes that no
matter where one travels during their lifetime, they will always know their tūrangawaewae,
their ūkaipō by repatriating their remains back to New Zealand. This uniform belief of
returning home in death is a preferred option for Māori as their inherent connection to the
land will forever tie them and their descendants to their ‘home that will never shift’.
Conclusion

This chapter first looked at the definition of attitude and how, through the process of socialisation, each individual created their own unique identity and thoughts. Socialisation reflects attitude and through the way a person perceives themselves, it showed that identity played a contributing role. Māori identity in particular identified that upbringing within whānau complexes attributed, in some cases, to creation of some comfort in the presence of tūpāpaku. This was endorsed by some interview participants recognising death as being a large part of Māori life, especially in reference to tangihanga.

Western traditional views of death were then explored and Māori views paralleled some of these themes, such as sudden death being feared and natural death being accepted. The influence of Christianity showed a change in attitudes toward death, in both Māori and Western instances.

Māori views of death showed that death needed to be cherished which aligned to the notion of never leaving a tūpāpaku unattended. Another ideal maintained that death must be avenged, outlined by the concepts of utu and muru.

This chapter also explored the cyclic link between the living and the dead where tūpāpaku are addressed as if they are still alive, as well as Papa-tū-ā-nuku acknowledged as the origin of life and the residence of the dead; the common thread being whenua, placenta and soil respectively. This reaffirms the notion that death completes the cycle of life and re-
establishes the coming of new life. The use of metaphor was also noted in a Māori view of death where they acted as buffers to alleviate the harshness of death.

Attitudes to *tūpāpaku* were then looked at, showing that some interviewees’ perceptions changed after their respective exposures to *tūpāpaku*, whereas others did not. Seen in this chapter was also the use of *tikanga* in ‘*tapu*’ settings such as the funeral firm and anatomy laboratories. Psychological safety was asserted with the use of *whakanaoa* and *karakia*. With regards to attitudes to different body parts, noticeably, participants were weary of handling the head, due to the restrictions of *tapu* learnt through upbringing.

The initial contact participants had with *tūpāpaku* differed between the anatomy students and the embalmer and funeral director. The main difference being, the anatomy students were frightened in their first encounter, due to ill-preparation, whereas the working professionals were not.

We discussed organ donation and the possible reasons for the reluctance of Māori to donate, associated with Māori faith in spiritual impressions such as *whakapapa, mana, tapu, mauri* and *wairua*. The importance of these concepts governed the attitude towards organ donation, especially with the thought of ‘*whakapapa* dilution’.

Death and its connection with the land was the final discussion point in this chapter. Māori customary concepts of *tūrangawaewae, ūkaipō* and *matemate-ā-one* addressed specific places
and dislocation. This was especially noticeable with Māori residing overseas, focussing on Māori residing in Australia. These Māori yearn to return home in their death and this was apparent in the need to be repatriated, emphasising the importance for one’s final resting place to be amongst their people, their landscape, their home.
Conclusion

He kōrero whakakapi

The research question ‘what are Māori attitudes to death?’ formed the skeleton of this thesis where literature, interviews and personal experience created its flesh. Initiated with tikanga Māori, this thesis showed its significance in a Māori world view especially pertaining to death. Tikanga plays an imperative role in what Māori think and do, tikanga directly affects Māori thought and action. It is through situations relating to death in a Māori milieu that the Māori customary concept of tapu is especially prominent, whereby tapu is a key determinant in modifying Māori customary practices and the involvement of these in contemporary New Zealand.

Tikanga Māori such as noa was another significant element, where the act of whakanoa described the process of tapu removal and afforded psychological and spiritual protection. Whakanoa is usually done with the aid of water and karakia and is used to dilute the immense tapu of death. This idea was apparent in all participants.

Separation of tapu and noa elements was witnessed in the workplace with different drainages for embalming waste and kitchen waste, as well as in Western texts where the burial grounds were purposefully established away from living quarters, for fear of spiritual ‘contamination’.
Utu described retribution, which arose from breaching the laws of tapu. Utu is usually portrayed in a negative light, however it can also be positive, such as reciprocation in the form of aid. Mana was also explored, showing how vital mana retention was in a traditional setting, and how it is still vital in a contemporary context. The act of constant accompaniment with the tūpāpaku is also a mark of mana, for sake of mana retention, however, constant accompaniment is also a sign of aroha, in that it figuratively served to ‘warm’ the tūpāpaku. Mauri and wairua were also cemented as significant Māori customary concepts, especially from a spiritual perspective.

Māori, being an oral and spiritual culture, many discussion points encircle the oral side, through hearsay and story, and the spiritual side, through belief and faith. As such, Chapter Two talked about Māori oral culture of mythologies and explained the origins of death through a Māori lens. It showed the flexibility and endurance of histories through imaginative and creative story-telling. Mythologies connect the past, the present and the future and encompass life lessons shaped by cultures, thus, mythologies also helps to shape the attitudes of those cultures.

Women and their connection with death were prominent throughout Chapter Two, with the Māori stories of Hine-nui-te-pō and Greek myths of Persephonē, as well as the concept of te whare o aituā. A spirit’s departure place also led discussion in this chapter acknowledging some tribal disparities of Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe and Ngāti Porou. Māori beliefs regarding the final resting place of the wairua, ranged from underworlds to spiritual and physical homelands. Mythologies provided the foundation for death rituals and practices to stem from, thus, it was important to incorporate, particularly Māori mythologies into this thesis.
Death rituals have a vital role in the maintenance of Māori custom and it is through these rituals that Māori are commonly engaged with death, therefore marking a direct influence of Māori death rituals to Māori attitudes of death. Chapter Three, therefore, discussed traditional Māori death practices with a strong focus on practices that had either dramatically changed or had become obsolete within contemporary society. Māori traditional body preservation aligned to the strong attitude that pre-European Māori had for abiding laws of *tapu* as well as retaining the *mana* of *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi*. For example, burning buildings to neutralise *tapu* and hiding *tūpāpaku* to ensure *mana* retention.

Traditional burials were carried out depending on rank where, customarily, either a primary or secondary burial was undertaken. The secondary burial has vanished from the public eye due to European law, by which the *hahunga* has also fallen victim. *Hahunga* looked at body exhumation within traditional Māori society and was seen as the most emotional stage of the grieving process as it was the final time that *whānau* and community members would physically see their deceased loved one. Māori have an open attitude to grieving where it is done freely and without restriction. This can sometimes be portrayed as over emotional by non-Māori members of society. These open gestures were evident in the practice of *haehae*, *whakamomori*, and *koangaumu*.

The ideals looked at in Chapter Three reflect the protocols, procedures, values and importance that Māori place on the proper facilitation of death practices and the correct handling of *tūpāpaku*. The thought processes, energies and emotions embedded within Māori death practices shape Māori attitudes towards death.
Chapter Four identified the straddling of conventional and modern ideas of Māori death, and how traditional blueprints of death practices are used physically and symbolically today. Reasons for change of Māori death practices included the arrival of the Pākehā and the introduction of muskets and diseases, with particular emphasis on the Influenza epidemics. These introductions factored life alterations as well as attitude changes previously held towards the sacredness of tūpāpaku.

The arrival of European law to New Zealand, a concept foreign to Māori, begat a new system of death procedures. Some differences included the necessity for death documentation, the abidance of health and safety regulations and ethical applications, although logistically reasoned, changed the way Māori handled tūpāpaku. It also affected the way Māori carried out death practices, which subsequently also shifted their attitudes to death. Health and safety regulations such as the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 and the Health (Burial) Regulations 1946 proved to be determining documents which altered Māori traditional death practices. These regulations also affected the duration of tangihanga. Legislation, inclusive of the Human Tissues Act 1964 and the Coroner’s Act 1988, were discussed as was the contentiousness of tūpāpaku ownership highlighted with the examples of James Takamore, Billy T. James and Prince Tui Teka.

As one prominent expression of Māori culture in practise, tangihanga have evolved due to urbanisation, health and safety regulations, European law and the arrival of Pākehā, but has maintained the symbolic references of former times. The tangihanga of Sir Āpirana Ngata provided discussion for comparison with traditional tangihanga and in turn, revealed some developments in terms of tangihanga processes. Technological advancements of tangihanga
in Chapter Four, such as ‘tele-tangi’ and the televised *tangihanga* of Dame Te Ata-i-rangi-Kaahu, showed a major attitudinal shift away from the importance of physically attending a *tangihanga*. Despite the changes over time, the purposes of *tangihanga* remains unchanged: they still serve to reunite people, re-form old relationships, give the spirit of the deceased a forum to travel and, perhaps more importantly, provide a medium for the open expression of emotions and grief. Therefore, practise and participation in *tangihanga* forms the pinnacle of Māori attitude formation towards death.

Contemporary preservation methods were then explored, including the roles of the funeral director and the embalmer and the attitudes they have towards the term ‘undertaker’. The methods of embalming were discussed, as were the ethical and legal obligations attached to embalming. With contemporary cremation, the main point was the attitude shift whereby Māori no longer premised cremation merely on the need to conceal fallen kinsmen from enemy hands, as they did in days of old. Cremation is now based solely on preference and availability. This chapter also described burial through a ‘contemporary lens’ and the shift from *hahunga* to *hura kōhatu*.

Chapter Five identified how socialisation reflects attitude where, for Māori, identity showed upbringing within *whānau* as an attribution to creation of some comforts in the presence of *tūpāpaku*.

This chapter first looked at the definition of attitude and how, through the process of socialisation, each individual created their own unique identity and thoughts. Socialisation
reflects attitude and through the way a person perceives themself, it showed that identity played a contributing role. Māori identity in particular identified that upbringing within whānau complexes attributed, in some cases, to creation of some comfort in the presence of tūpāpaku. This was endorsed by some interview participants recognising death as being a large part of Māori life, especially in reference to tangihanga.

Three main Māori death views demonstrated that death must cherished, explored with the concepts of mana and aroha, that death must be avenged, exemplified by utu and muru and that death and the living have inextricable links. Papa-tū-ā-nuku is renowned for her ability to give life, especially as she is the source of nourishment. Papa-tū-ā-nuku creates the centre of the cyclic view of death and she represents whenua, meaning both soil and placenta.

Attitudes to tūpāpaku showed a dispersed result, with some participants changing their attitudes post-exposure within either a laboratory or a funeral firm and others showing no change. A marked similarity however, was the importance of tikanga, especially neutralising tapu by using knowledge of whakanoa and karakia, as well as these concepts affecting the participants’ attitudes to various body parts. Comparing the embalmer and funeral director with the anatomy students, with regards to their initial tūpāpaku contact, the under-preparation given to anatomy students invoked fear and unfamiliarity within their first laboratory, thus, creating a negative attitude within this setting.

Reluctant attitudes were also seen towards organ donation, especially for Māori. As reiterated throughout the thesis, the Māori culture is a highly spiritual one, therefore spiritual
implications is a chief reason behind this reluctance. With concepts such as whakapapa, mana, tapu, mauri and wairua being challenged, with regards to organ donation, Māori as a whole are extremely disinclined to participate in organ donation. However, as seen in Chapter Five, all participants, when considering aiding whānau members, are disposed to organ donation, showing a shift in attitudes.

The last discussion point in this thesis is the connection that death has with the land, and the wish for Māori to be interred in their homeland in their death. Concepts such as tūrangawaewae, ūkaipō and matemate-ā-one outlined reasoning behind repatriation of Māori to their home upon or close to death. This signified the importance and correlation that death has with the land, as it also has with the living.

Life is interwoven with death that one cannot exist without the presence of the other: if there is no death, then there can be no life. This thesis shows a distinctively Māori look into attitudes towards death through the eyes of an embalmer, a funeral director, two anatomy students, two regular tangihanga attendees, two widows as well as the researcher’s personal accounts as a Māori anatomy student.

Investigating death practices and traditions allowed understanding and acceptance, thus, this research has shaped my own attitude to death and stripped away the scary connotations that are often linked to it as well as teaching me the reasoning behind many customs of Māori death practices that I did not fully understand and never had the opportunity to fully explore.
The value of talking with people that worked with tūpāpaku on a professional level is unsurpassable. My understanding of their processes in handling tūpāpaku has grown immensely and I will be forever grateful for their gifting of that knowledge. I found that they still place emphasis on what they learnt during their upbringing to guide them in their daily work duties which aligned to tikanga. With respect to widows, I felt privileged to know about what things they deem to be important in association to mourning and it was intriguing to find out their roles in society had changed after being widowed. With reference to frequent tangihanga attendees, their thoughts were valuable in shedding light on the processes of the tangihanga, and the importance of each rudiment in the process.

Every culture is unique and therefore so too are the attitudes associated with that culture. Attitudes are shaped by socialisation, upbringing and the environment. Culture, being a major part of all three aspects, has a strong influence on attitudes. I found that my subconscious beliefs of tikanga guide my thinking regarding death. I now feel that I have an increased value placed on the need for tikanga to be upheld.

My choice of combining both Anatomy and Māori degrees in a topic that I am passionate about, shows that all forms of knowledge are connected in one way or another. With anatomy being a predominantly laboratory based subject, it was exciting to know that anatomy can be explained and analysed in a philosophical way, with beliefs and values of my Māori culture forming the main arguments in this thesis. I also gained an appreciation of Māori customary concepts and realising that it is okay to carry out my own cultural practices, even in a setting such as a laboratory.
My hope is not that this thesis will change the world, but rather, that knowledge with reference to Māori attitudes to death is available for everyone in New Zealand. With respect to anatomy students, hopefully my experiences can aid someone in gaining a better understanding of things necessary for better preparation of what to expect in their first laboratory.

Although my pre-laboratory perceptions of tūpāpaku have changed, I have found that not everyone shares the same experiences or perceptions as me. I found it interesting that with reference to the anatomy students, one was more comfortable after her exposure to cadavers, whereas the other remained firm to the same attitude instilled through his upbringing. This demonstrates the diversity of people’s attitudes and illustrates that no two people view things identically.

In conclusion, this research, *Te Okiokinga Mutunga Kore*, does hope to provide foundations necessary to create one’s own attitude towards death, whilst asserting and maintaining one’s own beliefs, values, customs and culture.
Glossary

aituā  misfortune, accident, disaster, ill omen, sickness, fatality
catastrophe
Aotearoa New Zealand
ariki high chief
aroha love, compassion, sympathy, affection
atamiratia display of corpse
atua god(s)
awa river
ea balanced
haehae gash
hāhi religion
hahunga exhumation
haka a vigorous dance with actions and rhythmically shouted words
hākari feast
hāngi earth oven
hapū sub-tribe, pregnant
harirū shake hands
hē wrongdoing
he taru tawhiti a weed from afar, an imported disease
hongi pressing of noses
hui to meet, meeting
hūpē nasal mucus
hura kōhatu unveiling of a headstone
iwa koangaumu sacrificial fish, victim
iwi tribe
kai food, to eat
kaikaranga a caller who is generally an elderly female that calls groups onto the marae during Māori encounter rituals
kaikōrero speaker
kai uaua tuberculosis
kanohi wera cooks, chefs
karakia prayer, chant, recitation
karanga call usually done by an elderly woman welcoming people onto a marae
kaumātua respected elder(s)
kawa protocol
kawakawa MacropiperExcelsum, a shrub that is endogenous to New Zealand and bitter to the taste
kawe mate a continuance of the mourning ceremony without the presence of a body
kirimate closest genealogical family to the deceased
koangaumu sacrifice
koha gift
koikoi a long spear pointed at both ends
kokowai red ochre
kōrero conversation, talk, speak
koro grandfather, elderly man
korowai cloak
kuia grandmother, elderly woman
kūmara sweet potato
mahana warm
mahau veranda of the marae
mākutu sorcery
mamae hurt, pain
mana prestige, status, authority, rank
manaaki support, hospitality
mana atua sacred power of the gods
mana tangata power acquired by a person due to achievement
mana whenua power associated with the land
manuhiri visitors
māori ordinary, normal, natural
marae meeting place
mātauranga Māori Māori knowledge
mate sickness, death, problem, ill, beaten, defeated, trouble, defect, misfortune
matemate-ā-one profound affection for one’s land and people
mate tara-ā-whare death by natural causes
maukoroa haematite
maunga mountain
mauri life force, vitality
mere a single handed weapon
mokopuna (abrev. moko) grandchild(ren)
mokomoko lizard
mons veneris pubic region
muru ritualistic plundering for penalty of an offence
nehu burial
ngahau entertainment
noa free from tapu, unrestricted
nui big, large
ō matenga the last meal, food or drink requested and consumed immediately before death
ohakī a dying speech
pā fortified village
paepae orator’s bench
pāmamao far, distant
pāpakaka shallow
pare kawakawa wreath for the head
parekura battle, slaughter, massacre, catastrophe, calamity
patu club
pepeha sayings of tribal identification that include geographical features
pō poroporoaki final farewell night of the tangihanga for the dead
poroporoaki final farewell to the dead
pōtiki: last born
pou: post, pole
poukai: ceremonial monthly marae visits where food is taken and shared (most commonly practiced by Waikato iwi)
pōwhiri/pōhiri: ritual of encounter
puku: stomach
pungarehu: ashes
rāhui: prohibition, ban
rangatira: chief
rara: the process of preserving the head
raro: below, under
Rarohēnga: underworld
ringawera: cook(s)
roa: long
rūrū: shake hands
tāne: male
tangata māori: an ordinary person
tangata whenua: local people, people of the land, host(s)
tangihanga: Māori funeral
taonga: treasure, gift
tapu: sacred, prohibited
taramea: spear grass, generally used traditionally for its scent
tarata: lemonwood
taru: weed
taurekareka: slave
tawhiti: afar, distant, foreign
Te Ao Mārama: the world of light, enlightenment
Te Korekore: the void
Te Kōwhao: the abyss
Te Pō: the night, underworld, the unknown
te rā o te tekau mā rua: church services of the Ringatū faith held on the 12th day of each month
Te Reinga: underworld, afterworld, netherworld, a place in which Māori believe spirits depart to
Te reo Māori: the Māori language
te tangata taumaha i te mate: the seriously ill patient
te tapu o te tangata: intrinsic or primary sanctity of a person
te turoro: the sick patient
Te Waiora o Tāne: Tāne’s waters of divination
te whakamahana i te tūpāpaku: the warming of the corpse through accompaniment
te whānau mai o te tamaiti: child birth
teani: younger relative of same generation	ika: correct, right
tikanga: custom(s)
tikanga Māori: Māori customary practice(s)
tiki: a neck ornament usually made of greenstone and carved in an abstract form of a human
tinana: body
tino rangatiratanga: sovereignty, self-determination, governance
tipuna/tīpuna: ancestor(s), grandparent(s)
tīwaiwaka  fantail
	ōhua  Ngāi Tahu dialect for tohunga

tohunga  priestly expert
totokoto  carved walking cane
tono mate  request for the deceased
tū  stand
tuakana  elder relative of same generation
tuku i te wairua (abrev. tuku)  release of the spirit
tūpāpaku  corpse
tupuna  ancestor
tūpuna  ancestors
tūrangawaewae  a place to stand, a place that one calls home
tūtūā  commoner(s)
ūha  female element
ūkaipō  a place where one was nourished, one’s origin
urupā  cemetery
utu  revenge, reciprocity
wahine  female(s)
wāhi tapu  sacred place(s)
wai māori  fresh water
wairua  spirit
waka  canoe
whaikōrero  formal oratory
whakahere  sacrifice, offering
whakamomori  suicide
whakanoa  tapu removal
whakapapa  genealogy
whakarau  exiles
whakataetae  competition
whakataukī  proverb
whakataumiro  process of drying the corpse
whakatūtakitanga  to meet for the first time at the conclusion of the pōwhiri
whakawhanaungatanga  to relate well with others, to make a social connection with others
whānau  family
whānau pani  orphaned family
whanaungatanga  relating well with others, making a social connection with others
whare  house
whare mate  house of the dead
whare o aituā  realm of misfortune, female reproductive organs (fig.)
whare o te ora  realm of the heavens, life, male reproductive organs (fig.)
wharenui  meeting house
whare tauā  house in which the corpse lies, chief mourners
whare tūroro  building to house the dying, temporary building to house dead
whāriki  mat, carpet
whawhai  fight
whenua  placenta, land
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A – Information Sheet for Participants

Tikanga & Tūpāpaku – Attitudes to the body after death

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for my Masters of Arts (MA) Thesis in Te Tumu, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies at the University of Otago. The information collected will be used in my thesis.

The aim of this project is to research the people’s attitudes to the body after death in reference to different contexts whether the exposure to dead people is due to educational, personal or work purposes.

What type of participants are being sought?

Participants must:

- Be currently living in New Zealand
- Have been in contact with bodies after death
- Be 18 years old or above
- Be fit under one of the following categories: undertaker, anatomy student, widow or person who regularly attends tangihanga

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to provide some personal experiences and personal opinions in relation to the aim of the project. You will be interviewed informally one on one for no longer than an hour and a half. Topics will vary between each type of interviewee.

Undertakers will be asked

- about their attitudes to the treatment of bodies which have died under different circumstances (e.g. suicide, natural causes), or come different social classes (e.g. rich or poor), or different cultures (e.g. Māori and Pākehā)
- about technical processes, such as, handling of fluids, or preparation of the body

Widows will be asked

- about their attitudes to the body as part of the whānau pani (immediate family of deceased who remain with the body throughout the tangihanga)
- how this experience has affected their attitudes to bodies (e.g. at tangihanga)

Anatomy students will be asked
• about their experiences of the different body parts, and whether their attitudes differ depending on the body part (e.g. the head as opposed to another part)

• about their first experience of seeing and handling a body part, and how they coped

• about any special actions or procedures or rituals they may perform on leaving the laboratory

People who regularly attend tangihanga will be asked

• about their attitudes towards the body

All participants will be asked

• whether or not their perceptions of dead bodies change within different contexts (e.g. for an anatomy student whether their attitude to the body differs from a pro-section to a body at a tangihanga; for an undertaker, would they embalm a member of their own family)

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

The information that will be collected will be in relation to the aims provided above. Your personal experiences and opinions will shape much of the thesis. Your personal experiences and opinions of bodies after death will be analysed. Every attempt will be made to maintain your anonymity.

This project involves an open-questioning technique where the precise nature of the questions that will be asked have not been pre-determined. However, this will depend on how the interview develops. Even though the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel uncomfortable, you are reminded that you do have the right to decline to answer or withdraw from the project at any stage.

Only the researcher and her supervisor(s) will have access to the data. The data collected will be securely stored so that only those mentioned above will be able to access it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University’s research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project is needed, will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed unless requested by the participants.

You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

Reasonable precautions will be taken to protect and destroy data gathered by email. However, the security of electronically transmitted information cannot be guaranteed. Caution is advised in the electronic transmission of sensitive material.
What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

- Courtney Sullivan
  Te Tumu, School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies
  University of Otago
  PO Box 56
  Dunedin
  University Phone Number: 03 4793048

- Michael Reilly
  Te Tumu, School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies
  University of Otago
  PO Box 56
  Dunedin
  University Phone Number: 03 479 8676

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX B – Consent Form for Participants

Tikanga & Tūpāpaku – Attitudes to the body after death

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary.

2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.

3. Personal identifying information [audio-tapes] will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed, unless requested by you.

   i) Please specify below (circle one) that you would like to receive the raw data at the conclusion of the project, or would you like it to be destroyed.

      Receive
      Destroy

4. This project involves an open-questioning technique where the precise natures of the questions that will be asked have not been pre-determined. However, this will depend on how the interview develops and in the event that I feel uncomfortable or hesitant I have the right to decline to answer any particular questions and/or withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.

5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

   I agree to take part in this project.

............................................................................. ........................................
(Signature of participant) (Date)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX C – Death Registration

Death Registration

A second copy is included for a spouse.

Full Name:
Date of Birth:
Profession or Occupation
Full Name of Father
Full Name of Mother
Maiden Name of Mother
Father; Profession or Occupation; Where Born?

SELF: Where Born?
When Arrived in New Zealand?

If ever married – first marriage:
To Whom?
Age of self at marriage
Place of marriage

Second marriage:
To whom?
Age of self at marriage
Place of marriage

Third marriage:
To whom?
Age of self at marriage
Place of marriage

ISSUE
Dates of birth of each male
Dates of birth of each female

SPOUSE: Date of birth of present and past spouses

FATHER: Degree of Maori or Island blood, and tribe

MOTHER: Degree of Maori or Island blood, and tribe

EX-SERVICE: Service number and rank
If army, state regiment
Service overseas? Which war?
Service in New Zealand? Which war?

Name and address of next of kin

Receiving any Social Security Benefit?
Titles? Justice of the Peace?
Registered Nurse, Midwife, Maternity Nurse?

LEGAL:
Solicitor
Executors of will?

Will lodged with whom?

ANY SPECIAL WISHES? BEQUETHING SPECIAL ITEMS?

(Sourced from the Humanist Society of New Zealand, Auckland Branch 1982: 18-19)
APPENDIX D – Death Certification

Request for a New Zealand Death Certificate

BDN93D

Request for New Zealand Death Certificate or Printout

Please note that you may be able to order your certificate and/or printout by Freephone 0800 22 77 77 (+64 4 474 8101 if outside New Zealand)

Part A  My Details

Surname
First names
Surname at birth (if different from above)
First names at birth (if different from above)
Place of birth (town or city) including country if not New Zealand
Date of birth
Phone number (daytime)
Email address

Part B  Delivery Address

Delivery name (if different from above)
Flat number (if applicable)
Street number
Street
Suburb or rural locality
City, town or district
Postcode
Country (if not New Zealand)

If a certificate is ordered, the delivery name and address will appear on the back.

The following two Declarations must be completed unless you are requesting a certificate/printout
• of a death that occurred more than 50 years ago, or
• the deceased’s date of birth is more than 80 years ago

Part C  Declarations

Warning it is an offence, punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine of up to $60,000, to make a false statement to obtain a certificate, printout or a source document, or to provide any means of identification knowing that it is false or is suspected to be forged or falsified.

1. My declaration (the person ordering the certificate/printout must complete)

I declare that the information about me that is entered on this form is true and correct

Signature
Date

If ordering on behalf of a company state their name below and include an original signed request on letterhead

Your details or the company name will be entered in the Access Register. For information about the Access Register visit www.bdm.govt.nz

2. Referee’s declaration (any other person 16 years of age or older must complete)

I am 16 years of age or older and have known the orderer for at least 6 months or have seen a government issued photo identification of the orderer and I am satisfied the information about the orderer’s identity stated in this form is true and correct

Signature of referee
Date
Full name of referee
Phone number of referee

Contact address of referee

Page 1 of 2

Turn over to enter order and payment details...
Continued from Page 1

(Continued from the Department of Internal Affairs, 2010: Online)

Definitions:

A certificate is an official document containing registered information.

A printout is a copy of the information from the registration and is not a legal document. Printouts are usually used for genealogical information purposes. A printout is either typed or a copy of the handwritten entry. Whether a typed or copy of the handwritten entry is issued depends on the record - this is not an option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part D</th>
<th>The death certificate/printout I want *(Mandatory)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deceased's surname*</td>
<td>Deceased's first names*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of death* (town or city) including country if not New Zealand</td>
<td>Date of death*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/Partner's details from most recent relationship (if any)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/Partner's surname</td>
<td>Spouse/Partner's first names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's surname</td>
<td>Mother's first names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's surname</td>
<td>Father's first names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other information (e.g., folio number)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part E</th>
<th>How many certificates/printouts and Payment details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificates A certificate is an official document containing registered information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20.50 each</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount to pay $</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enclose a New Zealand cheque, New Zealand money order or International bankdraft in New Zealand dollars made out to: The Department of Internal Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge my credit/debit card:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISA</td>
<td>Mastercard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card number</td>
<td>Expiry date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardholder's name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardholder's signature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DO NOT POST CASH

If paying in person at an Identity Services Office we also accept EFTPOS and cash payments.

If the record cannot be found we will contact you and search fees will apply.

Post with fee to:
Certificate Team
Births, Deaths and Marriages
PO Box 10526
Wellington 6143
New Zealand

Privacy statement: The information on this form is collected under the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationship Registration Act 1995. As part of processing your request, your identification details will be checked against other records held by Births, Deaths and Marriages or other government agencies, as authorised by law.

Remember to include payment when posting
Office Use Only
Bibliography

Ngā Rauemi


Best, E. (1921). “Maori Eschatology – The Whare Potae (House of Mourning) and its Lore; being a Description of many Customs, Beliefs, Superstitions, Rites pertaining to Death and Burial among the Maori People, as also some Account of Native Belief in a Spiritual World.” Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute, Vol.38, pp. 148-239.


Best, E. (1974). The Maori as he was: A Brief Account of Maori Life as it was in Pre-European Days. Wellington: A.R. Shearer, Government Printer.


