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## **Carving our Future in a World of Possibility: Exploring Contemporary Implications of the Māori-Pākehā Relationship in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the aesthetics of ethics through an examination of Aotearoa/New Zealand's Treaty of Waitangi. Through the metaphor of the carver, we demonstrate that instrumentality, ethics and aesthetics work together in a fluid state of play that provides the means to achieve the partnership relationships inherent in the Treaty. We claim that the theory of tensegrity allows for contestations surrounding meanings of the Treaty's intent and opens a space for growth and development. This is illustrated by the March 2010 signing of a memorandum of understanding between Bay of Plenty iwi and Tasman Pulp and Paper which affords both parties with a means to work productively together for their mutual benefit. This contemporary illustration is compared with the construction and carvings of the Te Tiriti O Waitangi Whare Rūnanga which demonstrate in a tangible way how aesthetics and ethics work together to build community solidarity among people of diverse backgrounds.

### **Introduction: The Mill and the River**

On March 4, 2010, agreement was reached in Aotearoa/New Zealand between Bay of Plenty *iwi* (*iwi* is defined as 'tribe' and in this case includes the three tribes Ngati Awa, Ngati Rangitahi and Ngati Tuwharetoa) and the Tasman Pulp and Paper Mill in the town of Kawerau. At the heart of their ongoing 58 year battle is the relationship that *iwi* and the paper mill have with the Tarawera River: a source of life and sustenance to Māori and a waste-disposal facility for Tasman Pulp and Paper. The Tarawera River represents a site of contestation, where business values of efficiency and productivity came into direct conflict with the traditional Māori values of respect for the land and its *mauri* (life force).

By signing the memorandum of understanding, both the owners of the paper mill and *iwi* agreed to work together (a significant achievement in itself) in order to clean up what local Māori called 'the Black Drain' (Davison, 2010). To understand the importance of this accord, Davison (2010) reports Ngati Awa spokesperson Pouroto Ngaropo saying that 'The River is a living entity which represents the spiritual, cultural and physical life of our ancestors. If it is unwell, so are we.' Hence, in

agreeing to enter into a long-term partnership with the owners of Tasman Pulp and Paper both parties agreed to ensure each other's well-being and survival. Iwi would cease its political actions in trying to close the mill, while the mill owners agreed to begin cleaning up the river.

Fulfilling such an agreement, however, will not be an easy task and both groups acknowledge that it will take perhaps up to 50 years before the River is returned to its original condition. Furthermore, for the next 25 years, the mill will still be able to discharge wastes into it. The memorandum, then, sets in motion a process where both parties can carve a future together based on the integration of instrumental, ethical and aesthetic values – ensuring that economic benefits will be accrued; that ethical imperatives of reducing harm and giving life are brought to the forefront of their relationship; and that the aesthetic ideals of striving for beauty and artfulness are embraced.

Although the three elements of instrumental, ethical and aesthetic ideals are held together in the agreement, the provocation that has brought these parties together to seek a common future was the aesthetic of the sublime, encapsulated in statement that declared the River a 'Black Drain'. Here the idea of blackness is appropriated by Māori, who have dark skin coloring, and turned onto a 'white' Western multinational, Norske Skog, the Norwegian-based company that owns Tasman Pulp and Paper (Pankhurst, 2009). This ironic, intertextual reversal, sees Māori venturing into the *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad, 1902/1993; Coppola, 1979/2001) in their motivation to convert the sewer of the 'drain' back into the community's life source. This sublime encounter with blackness introduces a subjective experience that embraces both the profound sense of angst and even ugliness, alongside the quest for beauty. Thus, the 'terror' of which Burke writes (1787/1990) – the terror of annihilation of *both* the iwi and the mill – became the sublime motivation to forge a common destiny. For, in the words of Burke, 'terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime' (p. 54). In sum, the aesthetic quest for beauty through the experience of the sublime became the common motivation for reaching agreement to work together in partnership.

The ways in which Bay of Plenty iwi have engaged with Tasman Pulp and Paper is an illustration of the idea of partnership that underpins contemporary understandings of the Treaty of Waitangi. In what follows we explore ways in which instrumental, ethical and aesthetic notions may be integrated under the aegis of the Treaty through a localized lens of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Dialogue around the relevance to contemporary business of the Treaty of Waitangi signed between indigenous Māori and the British Crown in 1840 offers a framework within which to examine the active relationship between aesthetics and ethics. We centre our discussion on the notion that Māori have, through their history of settlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand, maintained lifestyles centered on the *marae ātea*. This open space in front of a meeting house where people gather to be welcomed also provides a space to carry out debate on current issues, to celebrate an important occasion or hold a *tangihanga* (commemoration of the death of a community member). On the marae stands the *wharenui*, which literally means 'large meeting house', a space within which people interact in a vibrant setting that allows for criticism, debate, dialogue and expressions of grief. These spaces, then, present an integral way of life that embraces aesthetics and ethics in a holistic manner. It is this ability to integrate rather than distill and separate that underpins our discussion. In particular, the idea of integration offers a means to carve a future that is sustainable and productive both within the locale that is Aotearoa/New Zealand as well as offering an exemplar for the global business community.

From the outset we acknowledge that much of our discussion will take place within contestable space and that there are contrary opinions within Aotearoa/New Zealand and that these contestations are formalized around debates concerning the value of the Treaty of Waitangi to contemporary society (see for example Moon, 2008). However, we adopt the vibrancy of the *marae ātea* and *wharenui* as places where people of all persuasions are welcomed, embraced, listened to and debated with. The tensional integrity – tensegrity – that is achieved through these spaces and structures presents a means whereby partnership and collaboration can be achieved albeit through dialogue and sometimes vociferous challenge. Furthermore, these spaces represent the tensional integrity between aesthetics and ethics, a place where paradox is accepted without the need to reach resolution; where the past *and* present, along with the living *and* the ancestors inform decision making.

To achieve this dynamic interrelationship requires working with tensegrity. This concept, adopted from structural engineering, was first appropriated as a metaphor for organizational life by Anthony Judge (1979). He argues that 'functional integrity' is achieved when we think beyond the constraints of hierarchy and "management do's and don'ts" or of a mathematically generated set of possible functional combinations' (Judge, 1979, n.p.). Thus neither an ethical rule book nor a strong leader will provide for the development of tensegrity. Instead, organizations require continual relational tension for them to develop and grow so that they achieve their aims and ambitions.

Similarly, and taking her lead from biologist Donald Ingber, Robinson (2005) argues that like the human body, organizational partnerships are in continual tension with outside pressures that pull relationships in different directions, and inside pushers that help stabilize structures amidst that volatility. She also champions the role of integrators, people who continually monitor organizational health.

Integrators know that efficient tensegrities function best in a climate of continuous tension, modified by opposing applications of discontinuous compression. An organization that is under no tension is one that is not growing or producing to the best of its capabilities. Effective integrators not only provide the connective tissue that stabilizes the organizational structure but also monitor the tensional forces at play within and outside the institution (p. 15).

The bicultural environment that is Aotearoa/New Zealand demonstrates a social tensegrity that allows for the expression of ethical aesthetics. Hence contestations around the Treaty of Waitangi present an ideal context for growth and development that does not necessarily require for disagreements to be resolved and finalized, but rather allows for dialogue, interchange and co-creative problem solving.

To explore this dynamic relationship, our method of inquiry is to work with the metaphor of the carver who gradually, over time, seeks ways of working with the material that is given, so that the *whareniui* becomes populated with the narratives that are told through the dynamic shapes and figures that make up the completed works. Thus, in the context of our various ancestories, with affinities in both Māori and Pākehā communities, we chart our own pathway through the tensions and contestations that surround the Treaty of Waitangi in order to offer ways in which we might, with you our readers, collaborate together to carve our world rich in possibility<sup>1</sup>. We also consider the carver an apt metaphor not only because carvings are central to Māori identity and culture, but also because it affords us the opportunity of working with what is given without relitigating past offences and wrongs (Wright, 2010). Thus, in this paper, although we acknowledge the past, our intention is to work within the present as authors engaged in the hermeneutics of making meaning within our given context.

## The Aesthetic Turn

In contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand society, the Treaty of Waitangi is a constitutional document that enshrines in law the notion of partnership. Inherent in the Treaty, Māori aspirations are set alongside those of the original European colonizers. The continued contestations of the meaning and spirit of the Treaty provide a context that avoids the totalizing demands of one community over another and represents an exemplar for contemporary business on how to maintain productive tension, thereby mitigating the tendency towards control and domination. Thus, it is the pluralism that underpins Aotearoa/New Zealand social identity where Māori (literally meaning ‘the same’) and Pākehā (‘the other’) live in bicultural partnership, that offers an ethics of aesthetics that has global implications.

Notwithstanding our tendency in the West to atomize and categorize activities, thereby codifying practice by standardizing policies, strategies and procedures into ‘best practice’ ideologies, our understanding of the Treaty’s place in contemporary society is by means of integration (Küpers, 2008). Hence the need to separate instrumental, ethical and aesthetic activities into discrete areas of concern is resolved into an integral pathway that investigates the intersection of these ideals (Johansson, 2004). In order, however, to understand how this integration occurs we first explore aesthetics and its role in making sense of fluidity and complexity in organizational life.

The rise of aesthetics within organizational studies has been met with enthusiasm by a growing coterie of scholars. Aesthetics, it is claimed, offers a dimension that has been missing in a discipline that has been dominated by instrumental approaches (Dobson, 1999). It is not surprising, then, that Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, one of the field’s champions, asserts that ‘if the German artist Joseph Beuys...was right in claiming that art is tomorrow’s capital, it seems reasonable to consider aesthetics its new organization theory’ (Guillet de Monthoux, 2000, p. 35).

For Guillet de Monthoux, aesthetics has opened the possibility of organizations acting beyond the rational by embracing *Schwung*. Drawing on the philosophy of German Idealism and in particular the works of Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) and Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854), Guillet de Monthoux argues for a pre-conscious creative drive that enables artists to bring ideas into concrete form. He writes that:

Part of bringing about the object of art has been conscious, for the artist has made skillful use of all the rules, techniques, methods, and tools of art. However, the true driving force of creation, its *Schwung*, says Schelling, will forever remain unconscious (Guillet de Monthoux, 2004, pp. 34–35).

Schiller explores this unconscious dynamic which is ultimately concretized in artifacts by discussing the place of individual freedom within the larger collective that is society. Schiller’s notion of the ‘play impulse’ provides for continual movement rather than a fixed state of being. He maintains that social order cannot be achieved by ethical means alone, for that would mean the invocation of laws that restrict freedom. Rather, it is through the aesthetics of play, the dynamic interaction of form and substance, which creates a cohesive society.

This idea of play is far from the frivolous activities carried out by children when playing games or tricking friends. Rather, it is the essence of what it means to be human. As Schiller declares, ‘Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly Man when he is playing’ (Schiller, 1795/1965, p. 80). Thus the continual movement of being and becoming involves attention to logic *and* ethics which then find their ultimate expression in aesthetics. Schiller claims that ‘though need may drive Man into society, and Reason implant social principles in him, Beauty alone can confer on him a *social character*’ (Schiller, 1795/1965, p. 138, emphasis in the original). For Schiller, then, the concept of play is a *living* impulse that allows for ideas to be continually renegotiated rather than reaching fixed and final meanings.

This notion of the aesthetic has its roots in Greek antiquity in the word *aesthesis* which can be translated as ‘sense perception’ (Sorbom, 1994; Williams, 1983, p. 31). However, according to Dobson (2010), in his reading of Onians *Origins of European Thought*, its etymology is found even further back in the pre-Socratic notion of a sudden inward breath, a gasp. He notes:

Phenomena which manifest or appear with the impact of a prominent or memorable emergence...provoke the involuntary intake of breath...A gasp of this order ‘stops’, as it were, time itself – one is invariably ‘breathless’ before the emergence of the authentically beautiful (p. 393).

Through the gasp, says Dobson, time stops, thereby opening the opportunity for play ‘beyond time’ (p. 393). The gasp is a moment of opening where the eyes actively penetrate *and* take hold of a perception. Onians (1951/1973) describes this paradox by claiming that “‘to breathe at’”, means “‘to look at’”, the eyes being in fact not only passive and recipient like the ears, but active outwardly’ (p. 75).

The gasp creates a fecund moment rich in sensory possibilities, it is this moment that creates opportunities for the kind of play that seeks to make sense of the past and anticipate the future. Inevitably the gasp of aesthetic encounter, embraces ethical considerations. For, although our sense of being in time may be temporarily suspended, we return to our embodied place and act as aesthetically alert ethical agents in time and space.

Perhaps aesthesis is illustrated most compellingly through architecture. Collier (2006) claims that architecture embodies the three elements that Dobson (2007) argues are the basis for all business activity: profit-making, ethics and aesthetics. For Collier, architecture is necessarily functional, but a building’s functions can only be fully realized when it facilitates both ethical and aesthetic engagement. She cites Chicago architect Stanley Tigerman who created living spaces that attended to these elements. She notes that:

[Tigerman’s] vision is of the role that architecture and architects can play in creating an environment that fulfils the needs of people, supports them in the difficulties of their lives and opens their eyes to the possibilities of living together secure in an unstable world. Architects have the challenge and the responsibility of imagining and nurturing a truly human and sustainable home for us all (p. 308).

For Collier, architecture embodies an ‘ethicism’ that links the formal, ethical and aesthetic together in an overarching ethos and pathos of community solidarity. This integration of ethics and aesthetics is also explored by Marcia Eaton (2001). She notes that:

The fact that the rush of life is distilled in art does not imply that art is separate from life. What it means is that the thoughts and emotions of people can be evoked vividly in such a way that applications to real moral life are encouraged (p. 148).

To understand the world into which we are thrown, and the dynamic *Schwung* which provides a means for ethics and aesthetics to play together, we turn to a summary of the history of the Treaty of Waitangi and explore how it came to take its place in the constitutional and social fabric of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

## **A Primer on the Treaty of Waitangi**

European settlement of Aotearoa/New Zealand began shortly after Captain James Cook’s first voyage in 1769 and throughout the early 1800s people from various nations made the perilous journey south (King, 2003), across the treacherous and inaptly named Pacific Ocean. This influx of people led to a number of Northern Māori tribes signing a Declaration of Independence of New Zealand in 1835, as a first move towards securing nationhood and limiting the impact of British settlement on tribal areas. While the deal was acknowledged locally and internationally, Britain wanted a stronger political presence in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The British were, however, outnumbered by Māori ‘fifty to one’ (Kawharu, 1989, p. x) and were in no position to take control by force. Further, the traditional approach of a forceful takeover was not favored at the time (Orange, 1987); so a more peaceful course was sought. The British proposed the development of a treaty, a partnership agreement with Māori, designed to

provide a measure of control over settler behavior, described by James Busby (the British Resident in Aotearoa/New Zealand at the time) as ‘the accumulating evils of permanent anarchy’, and to facilitate a more organized approach to the intended further entry by British citizens ahead of peoples from other interested countries (cited in King, 2003, p. 155). The Treaty was first signed by representatives of the British Government and Māori Chiefs in the village of Waitangi on February 6, 1840 and became known as the Treaty of Waitangi.

An examination of the original English text of the Treaty, and its three main articles, provides a broad perspective on what was originally intended by the British. Article One concerned the legality of Britain as having sovereign rights and legal status to govern the country under the rule of the British Crown. For the British, this first article aimed at providing a form of civil government that would potentially result in a more cultured society and the opportunities expected with such progress. However, Māori believed they were signing an agreement that their status and prestige, their *mana*, would be protected. In reality, Article One smoothed the way for greater British intrusion.

Article Two promised to protect the highly valued assets of Māori, as they were guaranteed ‘the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their land and estates, forests and fisheries’ (Orange, 1987, p. 40). Yet the settlers began to wrest control of parcels of land for farming, which ultimately sparked armed resistance, soon turning to outright war.

The third article, illustrating a humanitarian ideal rarely enacted in colonial times, promised full participation in the new society as Māori were granted ‘all the rights and privileges of British subjects’ (Orange, 1987, p. 42). Hence, the cultural mores and values of Māori were to be protected under law.

In effect, therefore, the Treaty confirmed the legal status of Britain as sovereign but also contained elaborate assurances for Māori about protecting valued possessions as well as promises of opportunities associated with participating in society as British citizens. With such assurances, along with the attraction of a grand ceremony, Māori were persuaded to sign the Treaty, despite the difficulties faced by English-Māori translations (Biggs, 1989).

After the initial ceremony on February 6, 1840, Treaty negotiations and signings continued in various other parts of the country for many months, and although some tribes balked at the idea of British rule, there was a time of peaceful coexistence, before the partnership fractured and war erupted (Belich, 1998). The impact of war along with considerable traumas associated with colonization, were detrimental to the Māori population. Regardless, many tribal leaders remained firmly committed to the promises contained within the Treaty document (McHugh, 1991). This unwavering commitment, in part, explains why the Treaty ‘has been better honored by Māori than Pākehā/New Zealand Europeans’ (Liu, 2005, p. 73). That Māori continue to uphold the spirit of the Treaty is even more surprising given the cavalier attitude many Pākehā New Zealanders show towards the Treaty today, considering it irrelevant to business and society.

Hence, for much of the twentieth century, the Māori population was assimilated into the British colony and the population stagnated (King, 2003). Concerns over Māori welfare, (including endemic poverty, the lack of access to health services and the high representation of Māori in the criminal justice system), along with the Government’s wish to provide a forum for the airing of grievances against the Crown since the Treaty’s signing, led to Parliament passing the Treaty of Waitangi Act of 1975 (Durie, 2003). The recognition of Treaty obligations and the special nature of the ‘partnership’ between two parties – the Crown and Māori – was subsequently reaffirmed by the 1985 judgment of the High Court (Kawharu, 1989), and this judicial acceptance, in turn, has led to the concept of biculturalism percolating into constitutional reforms and political action (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Therefore, in honor of the Treaty of Waitangi, biculturalism is considered as a relationship between Māori and Pākehā. This, however, is cause for angst among recent migrants from countries outside the South Pacific who have little awareness of the bicultural nature of their new society, expecting instead that multiculturalism be favored and misunderstanding the importance of the Māori-Pākehā duopoly. Liu and Hilton (2005) encapsulate the changing fortunes of the Treaty in Aotearoa/New Zealand society:

The example of the rise and fall and rise again of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand shows how an historical event can be the constitutional basis for the founding of a nation at one time (1840), a legal nullity 37 years later, and then remobilised as a social representation with charter status another hundred or so years later (p. 543).

The remobilization described here and the renewed interest in the Treaty’s promise to guide community ideals about justice and fairness did not, however, result. As Pearson (1990) explains: ‘The dream of “two people, one nation” is a dream deferred’ (p. 246). Hence, today the Treaty of Waitangi has become a document on which discussions concerning the identity of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the rights and privileges of all its citizens, including recent migrants, are carried out.

As alluded to earlier, obtaining a Māori translation of the Treaty was not easy, and there are considerable discrepancies between that and the English version. The imprecise translations of key words such as ‘governance’ and ‘sovereignty’, a lack of

knowledge of these concepts by the Māori (Biggs, 1989), and the lack of any united tribal authority (King, 2003), created rifts of understandings. Based on their indigenous language version, Māori anticipated benefits from the relationship. They saw opportunities for trade, education and health care; opportunities that would enhance their ability for future development. Many believed their lands and valuable assets would be better protected under British law and order, and that they had absolute control over all matters Māori. Furthermore, there was no reason to doubt that with their new status as British citizens, they would participate as equals in a safer, more civilized society. For Māori, the Treaty was summed up in the themes of opportunity, protection and participation, while for the British, the Treaty implied sovereignty and governance. As the settler community grew in number and through military conquest, the English translation became the preferred reading of the Treaty and this gave opportunity for manipulation and control.

Unfortunately, as history demonstrates, the gulf between expectation and reality led to perceptions of broken promises, grievance claims and deep resentment, and has kept the Treaty alive at the forefront of Māori struggles towards self-determination. Some believe that Māori integrity has been progressively destroyed as all interactions are based on the Pākehā/New Zealand European model of competition, exploitation and a definition of success which has 'eroded or dominated traditional or radically egalitarian Māori values' (Poata-Smith, 1996, p. 107).

We consider that it is the Māori version of the Treaty that has the potential to provide ethical guidance for business and that there is a need for all Aotearoa/New Zealanders to once again engage with the core principles of the Treaty and to forge sustainable communities. In making this call we acknowledge the voices of many Pākehā/New Zealand Europeans who will discourage our attempts to reengage with the Treaty even though Pākehā have shared the benefits of alienation of Māori land and culture (Awatere, 1984). However, refusing to be silenced by prisoners of ambivalence (Dench, 1986), we adopt the forward looking perspective espoused by Sorrenson (1987):

The spirit of the Treaty transcends the sum total of its component written words and puts narrow or literal interpretations out of place. The Treaty was not to be regarded as simply a tract for its time, a 'Māori' Magna Carta...It was not intended to merely fossilise a status quo, but to provide directions for future growth and development (pp. 177–178).

In adopting this hopeful stance, we again emphasize the key themes of opportunity, protection and participation as the elements that should underpin future, instrumental and ethical business practices informed by the rich aesthetics evident in Māori life and society.

This aesthetic approach to understanding the partnership ideals of the Treaty liberate us as organizational scholars from the constraints of functionalism and the philosophical inconsistencies raised by the privileging of economics over other measures of organizational identity and success. To this end, in his advocacy for aesthetics, Dobson (1999) discusses the detrimental effect of just focusing on technical and moral issues. He argues that promoting ethics because it is economically advantageous, while a laudable business goal, in itself lacks the necessary philosophical tools to understand the paradoxes inherent in a quest for individual wealth maximization while at the same time seeking social solidarity. Thus for Dobson (1999), aesthetics holds the promise for a more sophisticated approach to organizational research and leadership practice because it helps fill the 'metaphysical void left by the collapse of modernity' (p. 59), a void, we maintain, that can be filled by appreciating the aesthetic underpinnings of Māori society.

## **Māori Aesthetics and Ethics**

For Māori, aesthetics are intrinsically linked to social identity and ethical practice. This is most evident in the physical spaces and buildings around which Māori live. The centre of life is the *marae ātea*, the open space in front of a meeting house and *whareniui*, the meeting house itself. As mentioned earlier, we adopt Collier's (2006) view that the integration of ethics and aesthetics is found in architecture and that the *marae ātea* and *whareniui* are structures that embody this integral approach.

The meeting house is of deep symbolic importance. Its A-frame roof is supported by a number of rafters (*heke*) running off a ridge pole (*tāhuhu*) and attached to one or more central columns (*poutokomanawa*). Depending on the location, tribal affiliation and history, the meeting house may act as a body of an ancestor, the belly of a fish or a mythological figure, each which embraces those who enter. Carvings and woven panels which adorn the interior tell the tribe's history, narrating in these sacred artifacts stories which may go back to the origin of Māori in Hawaiki.

Although Māori are ethnically Polynesian, the *whareniui* is uniquely an Aotearoa/New Zealand design. What distinguishes them from their Polynesian counterparts is the porch at the front. The porch begins with a threshold (*paepae*) which provides a boundary for the open space under the porch's roof. People then pass under a door lintel (*pare*) though the main entrance into the meeting house itself. As Brown (2009) describes:

The front...porch represents the mythological world, since it generally faces Hawaiki in the east, which is the land of the gods, legends and the place to which the dead return. In contrast the interior of the house is regarded as the present and living world of the local area. Between these worlds is the threshold between life and death, between the mythological past and the living present. The change between realms is marked by the *paepae* or *pare*. Therefore, passing over the *paepae*, or under the *pare*, is akin to changing states (pp. 53–54).

Thus for Māori the aesthetics of the *whareniui* articulates in a visceral sense the idea of partnership; of joining distinctly different, sometimes contested, and yet equally familiar worlds together. It is this notion of partnership, of acting together for the betterment of society, which informed their desire to enter into a formal and legal relationship with the British Crown. Hence, where the colonists saw an opportunity to enrich themselves individually with the resources that this new land provided, Māori invited the new arrivals into a partnership relationship where all would benefit. Perhaps the notion of an ethically informed aesthetic of partnership is made most profoundly visible in the place that commemorates the initial signing of the Treaty at Waitangi's, *Te Tiriti O Waitangi Whare Rūnanga*.

The aesthetic elements visible in this meeting house represent the ethic of living as Māori. For example, the wooden carvings, the woven wall panels, and the choice of colors, embody the fundamental beliefs, as well as the natural and spiritual ties that provide a blueprint of survival possibilities and a guide to living. In particular, the carvings represent important ancestors and rely to some extent on what Thornton (1959) describes as 'picture-writing' (p. 42) in the sense that narrative meanings are contained in the patterns and symbolic elements that are then offered to the viewer for interpretation.

The Te Tiriti O Waitangi Whare Rūnanga is the aesthetic embodiment of Māori commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and its location offers a unique reference point for all Aotearoa/New Zealanders. Completed in 1940, the *whare whakairo* (carved meeting house) provides a unifying function as recognizable tribal styles from various iwi 'whose ancient forms of carving were still extant' were incorporated into the design (Walker, 2001, p. 351). The meeting house was the brain child of Sir Āpirana Ngata (1874–1950), a highly revered orator and Member of Parliament from 1905–1934. Ngata believed that the construction would serve two main purposes; firstly as a publically accessible monument to Māori spirit and strength of character and secondly as a place for Pākehā to develop their understandings of the Māori point of view. Because it was built on the site of the 1840 Treaty signing, Ngata believed it would necessitate visitors breathing in and seeing Māori aesthetic values, giving opportunity to reflect on the journey that all citizens had taken to reach this moment in time.

In effect, Ngata used the aesthetics of the meeting house to enhance his strategy of 'rapprochement between Māori and Pākehā' (Walker, 2001, p. 214). This possibility is supported by Neich (1994) who explains that meeting house art functioned to represent the ideology of the group in a purposeful manner and although the populace did not always live up to the ideals in their struggle for life, within the confines of the house 'all the resources of art could be marshalled to keep this ideal before the people' (p. 147). In this way, the *whare* at Waitangi can be seen as an ethical totem, that 'stands both literally and conceptually at the heart of Ngata's engagement with politics, Pākehā, and the unification of Maori as a cultural and political force' (Skinner, 2008, p. 27); a living symbol of the nation's integration under the banner of bicultural partnership.

In order to fulfill the need to be both authentically Māori and at the same time being invitational for Pākehā, Ngata insisted that the carvers balance artistic license with traditional requirements of customary *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world), and the constraints of perpetuation and preservation (Skinner, 2008, p. 25). In this way the carvers worked within the dual notions of tradition and modern sensibilities. Brown (1999, p. 254) notes that Ngata deliberately chose a more traditional architectural model, one that Pākehā equated with 'static ordered and loyal societies'. In essence, the designs for the *whare whakairo* at Waitangi emphasized a more prescribed approach precisely because Ngata wanted to favor a style which 'could address more than one audience at the same time, giving each what they needed, while alienating neither' (Skinner, 2008, p. 41). Thus the *whare* embodies in its architecture and carved artifacts the essence of what it means to be bicultural.

In order to convey to our readers this sense of aesthetic engagement we narrate the experience of one of us in a visit to the *whare whakairo* at Waitangi:

I visited the *whare whakairo* at Waitangi with the intention of feeling the *whare's* ambience and discovering how it impacted on my sense of personal history and identity. Although I was immediately struck with its beauty, my most conscious moments were spent contemplating the experience of being overwhelmed. My most unexpected reaction was to the sanctity of the interior. I am not a religious person but I recognized a truly spiritual element in the thickened air – I spontaneously drew breath and mouthed a silent '*Tihei mauri ora*' (the breath of life) to give thanks to the *whare's* creators.

I consciously slowed my breathing and while pivoting in the middle of the room I considered the grand stature and size of the *poupou* (wall panels), and their placement on all internal walls as silent sentinels to the might of Māoridom. The colorful roof panel connections between the *pou* heightened the sense of formidable power. I began to question the conceit of the British colonizers in attempting to penetrate and undermine the mana of such a proud people.

I then moved to each panel in turn to inspect in detail the finer work of the carvers. I understood that the spirals deeply etched into the *tiki* figures reflected the chiefly powers as described by Thornton the year I was born – ‘warlike in battle, and creative of offspring and food in peace’ (1959, p. 42). I searched for eels (*tuna*), fern fronds (*koru*), and the owl (*ruru*), and noticed how they were entwined with symbols of humanity. The *mauri* or spiritual essence in each carving fought for my attention, but the intended meanings were unfathomable. What was apparent, even to my untrained eye, was the invincible link to the whole of humanity, and I pondered on what had been lost through the process of colonization.

I searched for the *poutokomanawa*, the supporting pole by the front entrance, that according to Skinner (2008, p. 38) had been adapted from one carved for a whare at Whanganui, my own *whakapapa* [genealogy], and I briefly imagined the chief, statuesque, defiantly watching over the river. This reflection unearthed an acute feeling of loss, for my *whanau* [extended family], especially for my grandmother who lived on the Whanganui River. I knew that this visit, although it would not unearth all the secrets of my whakapapa, was a sublime moment that reaffirmed my abiding respect for Māori. I was taken by a sense of awe and wonder while at the same time experiencing an invitation into partnership. This heightened response reminded me of Ruskin’s discussion on why this place ‘stirred’ me (De Botton, 2002, p. 235). I was taking the time to notice, rather than to look. This place, this discovery, this possibility, has the potential to ‘jolt’ us all towards a future of mutual respect and partnership, and I felt that this journey could begin, again, at Te Tiriti O Waitangi Whare Rūnanga.

This narrative of visiting a site important to the identity of all Aotearoa/New Zealanders contains within it the concepts envisaged by its designer Sir Āpirana Ngata. Here the pragmatic notion that it is better to work together than in opposition to achieve a sustainable and mutually respectful sense of ethical existence as a nation is embodied in the architecture of Waitangi marae and whareni. Visitors have a visceral sense that it is by being in partnership with the natural environment *and* with each other in community solidarity that provides the means to achieve a sustainable future.

The whare whakairo is much more than a museum of Māori identity (Skinner, 2008); the unique power of the whare is its aesthetic of ‘taonga tuku iho’ (a treasure of Māori heritage). And this is, as Ngata intended, palpable (Ellis, 1998, p. 86). The monumental achievements of the physical craftsmanship are equally matched by the spiritual dimensions of community connections that made the whare’s creation possible. In essence, the project was pan-tribal and bi-cultural in its conception and construction, as the land, resources, and labor were gifted from various sources throughout the country. As such we think that a visit to the whare whakairo has the potential to spark a more determined understanding of the possibilities provided by the Treaty of Waitangi. Therefore the aesthetic representation of ethics, as embodied in the carved symbols and woven images, as well as the unique materials and styles of work, create a powerful aesthetic experience rich with possibility. Furthermore, we maintain that these possibilities are encapsulated in the three articles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

## **Treaty Ideals**

In this section of the paper our aim is to explore the kinds of ethical and aesthetic values that are embedded in the Treaty, values that may offer leaders both locally and globally a way of strengthening partnerships between their organizations and the communities within which they operate. In spite of the contestations around and the rise and rise of the so-called ‘Treaty industry’ where special-interest groups within Māoridom are seen to receive unfair financial advantage while at the same time holding up the settlement process, by unnecessarily focusing on their grievances (Tunnah, 2002), our emphasis is on the business community and its responses to the ethical and aesthetic ideals highlighted within the Treaty.

The Treaty of Waitangi contains within it concepts that provide the tools with which to carve partnership relationships in business in particular, and society in general. Yet it has been the business sector’s reluctance to see the Treaty’s relevance which is our concern. What is required is for an aesthetic approach that is keenly aware of the ethical implications that underpin organizational strategy and leadership, and an acknowledgment that the Treaty offers concepts of engagement relevant to

business that promote self-expression and partnership; growth and sustainable practice; an integration of aesthetic elegance and ethical behavior.

In particular, three concepts articulated in the Treaty are of significance to contemporary business and may help leaders move beyond the tendency to dominate, and pursue an alternative ethical route guided by the aesthetics of partnership encapsulated in the conjunction ‘and’ (Barry & Rerup, 2006).

Achieving partnership requires, however, the deft touch of the carver who through gentle persuasion creates shapes and figures out of timber that sometimes constrains and at other times yields to the knocking mallet and sharpened tools. The bicultural environment that is Aotearoa/New Zealand demonstrates a social tensegrity that is embodied in the carver’s craft and which allows for the integration of ethical aesthetics. Indeed, as the business community looks beyond favoring economic rationality over other societal values, organizational leaders may begin to see the creative potential that is enshrined in the Treaty and look for ways of carving a future out of the rich material that is presented through partnership.

For example, the most contentious concept of *kāwanatanga* (sovereignty) which is contained in the first article of the Treaty presents an opportunity to see beyond the business mantra that ‘this is about winning, winning, and winning’ (Freeth, 2006). Of importance to Māori in the term *kāwanatanga* is the preservation of *mana*; of guaranteeing the continuance of their prestige and pride. The classic business approach of claiming sovereignty and wresting control of resources, as seen in the Crown’s approach to the concept, we think is unethical. However, if protecting the *mana* of staff is an important ideal, we might renounce a winner-takes-all approach and seek ways in which a climate of collaboration and interrelationship may occur.

This, though, raises the question of the meaning of the key term of the second article of the Treaty: *tinō rangatiratanga* (self-determination). Here the Western view of the autonomous self, acting independently, is to misunderstand the importance of the term, for *tinō rangatiratanga* implies a collective self which acts for the betterment of the group. Hence individual creativity is vital *and* group solutions to problems facing the business are equally valued. Innovations are not just individual achievements but rely on the concerted efforts of collaborative teams who are engaged with each other co-creatively in a continual search for workable solutions that sometimes only develop over a sustained period of creative thinking, trial-and-error experimentation and the openness to keep inquiring into possible new solutions (Grint, 2005).

The tensegrital integrator that enables *kāwanatanga*, *mana* and *tinō rangatiratanga* to work productively and ethically together is contained in the third article of the Treaty in the concept of *tikanga* (culture and customs). This concept embraces the aesthetics of the Treaty under notions of cultural values, protocols, customs and identity and it is *tikanga* that establishes the uniqueness of the organization. However, *tikanga* takes time and effort to maintain. For instance, the tendency for organizations to downsize in their efforts to balance budgets is ethically flawed. Rather than delivering the desired efficiencies, we think cost-cutting drives are mechanisms of control which create a climate of fear and retribution, especially when programs fail to achieve their intended goals. Under the rubric of *tikanga*, leaders would want to communicate to staff that their contribution to the organization’s unique identity is valued and that while costs are an important consideration, experimentation and trying new things without necessarily achieving immediate market success (McGrath, 1999) is vital to preserving cultural vitality, the *mana* of the enterprise.

## Conclusions

In this paper we have examined Te Ao Māori, focusing on its ethical and aesthetic dimensions. We have contextualized within the focal point of *tikanga* Māori, the *marae ātea* and *wharenui* as vehicles through which the instrumental, ethical and aesthetic elements of Māori come together as a complete whole. This is all held together by the overriding idea of partnership that guides the bicultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand and can, by extension, provide a model for enterprises around the globe to embrace an aesthetics of ethics. We have maintained that the place of its signing in Waitangi and the Treaty itself offers means of business engagement that promote self-expression and partnership, growth and sustainable practice, a mix of aesthetic elegance and ethical behavior. That the Treaty’s currency to contemporary society is still debated is evidence of its potency as a guide to achieving an aesthetic of ethics.

Our discussions of the Treaty of Waitangi have both local and global implications (Barber, 1996), and we believe that the ideas we have outlined preserve local identity as well as achieving universal relevance. Hence, notwithstanding the abuses by those who misunderstand the partnership implications, the Treaty contains concepts that enable aesthetics and ethics to come together to achieve mature relationships and assist business organizations contribute to community development.

The kind of aesthetics that characterize Te Ao Māori have liberatory potential in that they are able to free organizations from the constraints of functionalism and the philosophical inconsistencies raised by the privileging of economics over other measures of organizational identity and success. By making this statement, we advance Dobson’s (1999) assertion that modernity has collapsed and that business is searching for a new and enlightened trajectory informed by aesthetics, by going back to the tribal

roots of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Paradoxically, though, this is not with the intent of retrogression and of valorizing pre-colonial Aotearoa/ New Zealand, but with the anticipation of the *avant guard* artist who seeks new and innovative expressions.

The ideals that underpin Māori society and the integration they achieve is, we think, exemplary for contemporary businesses which seek to live beyond economic and instrumental ends, as shown in the new relationship forged between Bay of Plenty iwi and Tasman Pulp and Paper. This relationship exemplifies ways that enhance social interaction and solidarity. Thus the concept of the ideal of the ‘triple bottom line’ (Harmon, Bucy, Nickbarg, Rao, & Wirtenberg, 2009, p. 93), where economic, environmental and social elements are all included as important business goals, does not go far enough in assisting organizations move beyond modernity’s penchant for privileging measurable variables of an organization’s performance rather than offering a new and enlightened way forward.

The questions that have driven this rise of aesthetic awareness resolve back to the existential question posed by Michel Foucault, who asked: ‘Couldn’t everyone’s *life* become a work of art?’ (Foucault, 1991, p. 350, emphasis added). Organizational scholars have gone further and posited that if life itself is to be lived artfully, could this notion be extended beyond the individual to the corporate? Furthermore, ‘What happens if we understand the raw materials of everyday lived cultures [including organizations] as if they were *living art forms*?’ (Willis, 2000, p. ix, emphasis added).

The assumptions, then, that guide developments in the field are that organizations are cultural products which can be approached and interacted with in the same ways as works of art, and further, that aesthetic ideals provide the tools for social action leading to the revitalization of organizational life. We need to carve a common destiny together: business and society sensitized to environmental and social well-being and to enhancing the mana of all participants in the possibilities that partnership implies.

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