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**INDIGENISING THE SCREEN**

**SCREENPLAY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS FOR *THE PROPHET***

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

**Masters of Arts**

at

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by

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*Dedicated to*  
*Te Kooti Aikirangi Te Tūruki*

# Abstract

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This thesis tests the hypothesis that it is possible to both decolonise and indigenise the New Zealand cinema screen. Secondary research reveals how those discourses that promoted roles and expectations for Māori within the New Zealand film industry were based principally upon historical colonial ideologies imposed by various means upon the native populous, and subsequently reproduced. These discourses of race, gender and religion perpetuate negative belief systems about Māori and contribute to the reproduction of stereotypical images of Māori, such as the irrational, naive, simpleminded and warlike Māori man, or the domesticated, lustful and sexually available Māori woman.

Research by creative practice advances the project of decolonising the New Zealand screen through the writing of a feature length screenplay based on careful research and intimate cultural knowledge, and by working according to an appropriate kaupapa Māori framework. The resulting screenplay, *The Prophet*, brings to life the multitude of forces that coalesced to shape the life of 19<sup>th</sup> century Māori warrior and prophet, Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki. In his death, as in his life, he remains an enigmatic figure. In written accounts and in Pākehā memories he appears as a violent rebel, mass murderer and religious fanatic. This epic re-telling focuses on the character of Te Kooti, showing him to be a man who accomplished great feats in the face of injustice, adversity and hardship.

A critical analysis of the screenplay reveals how I adopted a unique cross cultural writing approach drawing upon both the 'classic' western narrative structure as well as kaupapa Māori pūrākau oral tradition. I argue that this approach combines effectively to materialise strong anti-colonial perspectives aimed specifically at subverting long-held and dominant colonial discourses. Such an approach to scriptwriting rejects the tradition of being defined, constructed and represented through discourses that serve to promote the interests of the Pākehā majority and, in doing so, urges the utilisation of Māori philosophies, concepts and practices in the scriptwriting/film production process.

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To the Māori people to whom this story of Te Kooti belongs, to the descendants of Te Kooti and to the descendents of the Whakarau, to Rongowhakaata, to Te Aitanga a Māhaki, and to those adherents of the Ringatū faith, I thank you for the inspiration you have, and continue to provide me. Thank you.

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# 1.0 Introduction

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## 1.1 Who Shall Tell Our Stories?

From these first years it became obvious that the camera was an instrument held by alien hands- a Pākehā instrument, and in the light of past and present history another reason for mistrust. It is clear that as early as 1930, the screen was already colonised and had itself become a powerful colonising influence, as western perspectives and stereotypes were imposed on indigenous peoples (Mita, 1992, p. 42-43).

This thesis is the manifestation of countless hours spent examining, analysing and scrutinizing the forces that inform film makers, in particular Pākehā film makers, in their representations of Māori in New Zealand film. It wells forth from a burgeoning realisation that many films made in New Zealand are shaped or marked by colonial discourses of race, gender and religion and which, due to their historical foundation in colonial ideologies, perpetuate negative belief systems about Māori and contribute to the reproduction of stereotypical images of Māori, such as the irrational, naive, simpleminded or warlike Māori man, or the domesticated, lustful and sexually available Māori woman. Such Eurocentric representations continue to find contemporary expression in such feature films as *The Piano* (1993), *Whale Rider* (2002) and *River Queen* (2005) and are sold to the world as authentic depictions of Māori realities.

*The Prophet* stems from an awareness of the potency of Eurocentric projections, and is fuelled by an incessant personal desire to demystify, decolonise and indigenise the New Zealand screen by providing images that are both determined by Māori and that can be identified by Māori as part of their lived and historical realities. By filling the screen with Māori faces, Māori history, Māori culture and Māori ways of looking at life, *The Prophet* ultimately aspires to materialise anti-colonial perspectives by subverting long-held and dominant

colonial discourses. In doing so, it also seeks to unmask those modernist meta-narratives that validate Eurocentric constructions of colonial histories by presenting the “one true” interpretation.

This thesis therefore explores themes of colonisation, dislocation and alienation. The academic framework for this is set out and explored in Chapter One. Through the writing of the screenplay *The Prophet* in Chapter Two, I have tested the hypothesis that it is both possible to decolonise and indigenise the New Zealand cinema screen. My methodology for this is based on an appropriate kaupapa Māori framework that includes careful research and intimate cultural knowledge. Through a rigorous critical analysis of the research I have conducted and the processes which I have followed in writing two drafts of the screenplay, Chapter Three addresses the complexities that have arisen in testing my original hypothesis.



## 2.0 CHAPTER ONE

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### 2.1 Through the Looking Glass: Maori and New Zealand Film

From the outset New Zealand had two remarkable attributes. The first was commonly described as New Zealand's scenic attractions, the second was the Māori, and both were eminently photogenic (Mita, 1992, p.40).

The representation of Māori and the New Zealand Film Industry has been a heated site of contestation for many years. This contestation has been multileveled and has occurred in both the interconnected structural and cultural arenas and therefore analysis of production and representation is more complex than an act of solely deconstructing the images that we are presented with on the screen. What is required is a questioning of the fundamental assumptions embedded within both representation and the processes of production.

Those complexities require interrogation that contextualise Māori people and their representations and explore the types of power relations that are embodied in the context. As filmmaker and noted academic Dr Leonie Pihama (1996) states:

Images of Māori are not separable from the context within which they are positioned, nor are they separable from the relationships that exist within the societal context around them (p. 2).

By raising epistemological questions about the validity of what we consider to be knowledge and more specifically, about who controls and defines knowledge, the assumptions or foundations upon which these visual constructions take place may be revealed. As we shall see, those discourses that promoted roles and expectations for Māori within the New Zealand Film Industry were based upon the prevailing colonial beliefs which were imposed by various means upon the native populous, and subsequently reproduced.

### 2.1.1 A Stranger Stands: Colonisation and Representation

*Kei muri i te awe kāpara, he tangata kē, nāna te ao, he mā*

In the shadow of the tattooed face, a stranger stands, one who owns the earth, he is white.

(Ancient Māori prophesy foretelling the arrival of the British Empire)

(Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 201)

For Māori, as with other indigenous peoples across the world, developments through colonisation brought about fundamental shifts in representation. According to Sociologist David Bedggood (1980), colonists arrived in New Zealand to transplant a ‘vertical slice of British society-economics, politics and ideology’ (p. 22). This colonial expansion was often rationalised through ideologies of race that ‘justified acts of cultural genocide and land confiscation and enabled immigrant settlers to defend their oppression of indigenous peoples throughout the world on intellectual grounds’ (Pihama, 1996, p. 3).

In New Zealand these discourses were articulated in the form of social Darwinism. Darwin’s theoretical and scientific work on evolution seemed to provide a scientific basis to the growing literature on racial difference. This literature was developed and supported by intellectuals and clergymen such as Frederic W. Farrar, who in a paper presented to the Ethnological Society of London in 1867 concluded:

Racial classifications are based on three broad categories; the ‘irreclaimably savage’ who comprise in the main of black stocks; then the ‘semi-civilised’ brown and yellow peoples whose limited capabilities are exemplified best in the ‘utilitarian mediocrity’ of Chinamen; and the Semitic and Aryan breeds who share between them the credit for all the great achievements of human civilisation (Farrar cit. in Biddiss, 1979, p. 141).

Charles Darwin himself, upon visiting New Zealand in 1835, viewed the indigenous Māori as being a 'fearsome' 'warlike' race of people; for Darwin, the Moko, (to propose a translation, Moko could be described as an individual's unique genealogy, spirituality and curriculum vitae uniquely carved onto his or her distinct facial contours) was a particular indicator of an inferior, 'base' nature (Darwin cit. in Desmond & Moore, 1991). This view was supported by the renowned and revered Reverend Samuel Marsden of the Church Missionary Society, who in his journal in 1816 actively condemned the traditional practice of Moko as barbaric:

Tooi informed us that his brother Korro Korro wished him to be tattooed, we told him that it was a very foolish and ridiculous custom, and as he had seen so much of civil life he should now lay aside the barbarous customs of his country and adopt those of civilised nations (p. 167).

Accordingly, Māori were regarded as an intellectually inferior race. Māori reasoning was often described as closer to that of the ape than to that of the civilised European. Early settler Edward Wakefield believed the Māori passion for storytelling had all the sensibility of a primate: 'Nothing can remind one more forcibly of the monkey who has seen the world, than a Māori thus relating news' (Wakefield cit. in Best, 1976, p. 120). Mid-nineteenth-century traveller Arthur Thomson, in his *Story of New Zealand: Past and Present, Savage and Civilised*, employed craniometry to quantify Māori intellect:

It was ascertained by weighing the quantity of millet seed skulls contained...that New Zealanders heads are smaller than the heads of Englishmen, consequently the New Zealanders are inferior to the English in mental capacity... (1859, p. 81-84).

Arising from such assumptions of racial inferiority grew a policy of assimilation whereby the 'savage' would be 'civilised' (Simon, 1982). The ultimate goal of the British administration and colonial government upon annexation of New Zealand would be to 'Europeanise' the barbarous Māori

populous, by attempting to construct a homogenous society where British law and culture would be adhered to and accepted. The colonisers, when thoroughly established in the position as the dominant group then control what is defined as 'valid knowledge,' what knowledge forms are legitimated, the distribution of knowledge and ultimately the control and the ownership of knowledge. This 'knowledge' once validated as superior, is then permeated through all levels of society- the political, economic, environmental, social and cultural.

Frantz Fanon identifies this colonising process in his 1952 work *Black Skin, White Masks*, in which he traces the impact of colonisation on the African mind, spirit and intellect. According to Fanon, the African has been taught to regard white skin as the symbol of a superior culture and civilisation. To see the human race in this way is to view the world 'through European eyes' including the way the Africans perceived themselves (as socially inferior, or worse, as a 'savage' to be 'civilised'). Moana Jackson (1995) refers to this depth of colonisation as the 'colonisation of the soul'. He describes the consequences this has for Māori:

For the Māori the attack on their soul was so terrible it led to a weakening of faith in all things which had nourished it. The demeaning of the values which cherished it, the language which gave it voice, the law which gave it order, and the religion which was its strength, was an ongoing process which ultimately affected the belief of Māori in themselves (p. 11).

As such, the colonisation of the land went hand in hand with the colonisation of the mind. By the nineteenth century colonialism not only meant the imposition of British authority over Māori lands, Māori modes of production and Māori law and government, but the imposition of British authority over all aspects of Māori knowledge, language and culture. Māori world views, common sense, knowledge and ultimately self perception were shaped, manipulated and controlled through formal state institutional structures as well as through everyday experience.

The validation of knowledge, or ideology by the colonial power, which can be briefly described as a 'consciousness which conceals contradictions in the interest of the dominant class' (Larrain cit. in Simon, 1982, pg. 6) is of particular importance. As ideology permeates all representations, the representation of Māori arises as a site of contestation as these ideologically charged versions of reality are a means by which people construct their social being. Colonial ideology is of particular relevance to Māori and to filmmaking. As Pihama explains:

Films that are constructed and controlled by the colonial gaze are dangerous for Māori people. Those films which continue to perpetuate negative belief systems about Māori and which contribute to the reproduction of stereotyped images of our people are dangerous (Pihama, 1994, p. 239).

As Māori were systematically and structurally prevented from negotiating their own definitions from a position of equality, the New Zealand Film industry arises as a key site at which 'representations of knowledge, language and culture occur, and equally a site at which representations of knowledge, language and culture are suppressed' (Pihama, 1996, p.2). Regardless of how Māori might define themselves, stereotypes and prejudice circulate today that have arisen, in part, from a powerlessness to determine self-identity in the public domain. Pioneer Māori filmmaker Merata Mita (1992) highlights the power of an image industry introduced during the colonial period:

From the first years it became obvious that the camera was an instrument held by alien hands- a Pākehā instrument, and in the light of past and present history another reason for mistrust. It is clear that as early as 1930, the screen was already colonised and had itself become a powerful colonising influence, as western perspectives and stereotypes were imposed upon Māori people (p. 42-43).

As such, self-definition for Māori became clouded with the coloniser's representations of the self and others. Linda Smith (1992) contends that myriad whānau, iwi and hapū became defined as simply Māori. Through colonisation, the ethnic label 'Māori' homogenised what was in reality a diverse set of tribal peoples, arguably creating associations of inferiority and obliterating meanings and subjectivities that Māori had ascribed for themselves.

Edward Said has argued that colonialism 'can create not only knowledge, but also the very reality it appears to describe' (1978, p. 94). Through his discussion of the imposition of colonial definitions in relation to the notion of 'orientalism' Said asserts that orientalism is in fact socially constructed by the west, hence that which is considered oriental by the west has been defined as such through western consciousness. Said refers to this process as a western discourse about the 'Other' which is supported by institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles. The final result of such imaging according to Said, is a western portrayal of the east that dominates it by claiming to truly represent it.

Ella Sholat and Robert Stam (1994) comment on how the residual traces of centuries of European domination continue to inform the general culture, the everyday language, and the media, engendering a fictitious sense of the innate superiority of European-derived cultures and peoples. So imbedded is this Eurocentrism in everyday life, so pervasive, that it often goes unnoticed as a form of vestigial thinking which permeates and structures 'contemporary' practices and representations even after the formal end of colonialism. In respect, colonisation is therefore not a finite process, neither is colonisation confined to a period of history, for Māori there has been no end to colonisation. It is not simply part of a recent past, nor does it merely inform a present. Colonisation is the present. In respect, Jackson (1998) comments on how the Eurocentric discourses of the 'dominant cultural body,' continue to inform contemporary New Zealand filmmaking:

Today, colonisation is a process of image making, where we're bombarded by what should be worthy in our lives, and today's scriptwriters, today's controllers of knowledge are the descendants of the old scriptwriters of colonisation (p. 7).

Said's analysis is highly relevant to film making in New Zealand in that Māori are involved in a struggle that is related to images and the ways in which Māori are presented and represented by the dominant voice. Analysis as articulated by Sholat and Stam is relevant to the types of colonial discourses that Māori people struggle with and against, and the types of Eurocentric constructions that have informed and 'continue' to inform film makers, as to how Māori should be represented in New Zealand film.

Such imaging of 'difference' and 'race' by the dominant culture has unquestionably contributed to how Māori are perceived, the ways in which Māori knowledge, language and culture have been constructed, the ways in which Māori have been treated and associated with substandard living standards, poverty, crime, cultural and social deficiencies as well as supposed racial traits that include limited intellectual capacity and prescribed personal qualities and attributes. Pihama (1994) points out the danger of Māori representation being controlled and influenced by the dominant discourses which have their historical foundation in colonial ideology:

If there are no [films] that tell us about ourselves but only tell us about others, then they are saying 'you do not exist' and that is dangerous...If there are [films] about you but they are negative and insensitive so that they are saying 'you are not good,' that is dangerous...If there are [films] that are about you and they are untrue, that is very dangerous (p. 239).

In acknowledgement therefore, all New Zealand films become 'allegories of cultural engagement', and the key analytical task is to study how Māori have over time been textually incorporated into or excluded from the dominant cultures discourse.

### 2.1.2 New Zealand Film: Pākehā Representations of Māori

Martin Blythe and Māori filmmaker Merata Mita provide valuable insight into the historical representation of Māori in New Zealand film through their respective publications, *Naming the Other* (1994) and *The Soul and The Image* (1992). Blythe (1994) acknowledges through his extensive analysis of New Zealand film history the existence of ‘many New Zealands’ which can be best understood chronologically as a series of ‘master narratives’ and ‘social historical models’ for explaining the relationships between Māori and European (p. 5). These ‘allegories of cultural engagement’ can be recognised as three distinct ‘genres,’ which according to Blythe, illuminate issues on race, colonialism, post colonialism, ethnography and national identity in twentieth century New Zealand.

Blythe argues that, during the early part of the twentieth century, the characteristics of cinema in New Zealand, were primarily figured as ‘Māoriland,’ a site for historical imperial, touristic, or ethnographic romances that tell of the unification of the two cultures, usually by relegating Māori to some timeless past or by eulogising their fall into history. At this stage of film production the control lay ‘firmly in the hands of those behind the camera, and the repercussions would continue right up to the present day’ (Mita, 1992, p. 41). These initial fictional films such as *Loved by a Māori Chieftainess* (1913) and *A Māori Maids Love* (1916) became vehicles to transplant imperial ideals and attitudes to intended audiences. For example, the following to-camera introduction from *Hei Tiki* (1935), encapsulates most of the familiar images and stereotypes of Māoriland:

It was my privilege to live four thrilling years among the most extraordinary natives on earth on the North island of New Zealand. I found the Māoris fascinating, their Isle of Ghosts enchanting, their friendship exhilarating, and I’m keen to share with you the pleasure of my experience with them. Forget your cares and problems for a brief interlude and join me on a



voyage to the Isle of Ghosts. You will feast your eyes upon a sight no living white man has seen before (Markey cit. in Blythe, 1994, p. 21).

As a result of cultural distortions, a majority of the early New Zealand fiction films contain material that is ‘culturally insensitive and in some cases downright offensive’ (Mita, 1992, p. 42). The appearance of Princess Mara (Nōwara Kēreti) in *Hei Tiki* offers a pertinent example as she first appears in the film stepping over the prostrate bodies of young Māori warriors (apparently meant to signify her coming of age). Scenes as such were particularly offensive as in a traditional Māori context a woman’s genital region possessed the power to remove tapu (sacredness), thus inducing its opposite counterpart noa (commonality). In the seemingly banal act of stepping over the young Māori warriors, Princess Mara was actually breaking tapu sanctions by forcibly removing the men’s personal sacredness. Such scenes, as perpetrated by Markey, underlined a ‘willingness to invent ritual unconstrained by the anthropological actual with its less photogenic codes and practices’ (Babington, 2007, p. 40).

In the next ‘social historical model’ articulated by Blythe, the ‘Māoriland’ genre was replaced by the myth of ‘New Zealand’ a terrain increasingly marked by segregation, or at least by some acknowledgement that the ‘integration myth’ failed to account for present day conditions. The fascination of white filmmakers with Māori continued and despite initial promise being shown through the 1940 release of Rudall Hayward’s feature film entitled, *Rewis Last Stand*, a romantic drama set against the New Zealand wars of the 1860s, which approached its Māori theme and story with ‘respect for Māori courage and integrity’ (Mita, 1992, p. 44). Feature films such as *The Seekers* (1954) directed by Ken Annakin, continued to objectify Māori life and culture, containing further culturally insensitive material geared specifically to appeal to an international audience.

For example, there is a scene in which Moana (Laya Raki) the chief’s wife, executes a seductive dance routine with little inhibition before a large assembled crowd of Māori villagers and the Englishman *Phillip Wayne* (Jack Hawkins). As

Inia Te Wiata's argues this portrayal 'so alien to how a young Māori maiden of noble blood would have behaved' (Te Wiata, 1982, p. 84) and arises from a scant knowledge of traditional practices by the makers of the film. Mita concurs with this view:

It's exploitative enough even when you know it's about the culture, history and customs. But to go to groups without any depth of knowledge is totally irresponsible. Unfortunately, that is what most filmmakers do in this country (Mita, 2002, p. 32).

The emphasis shifted from period drama to a modern context featuring a racially mixed relationship in John O'Shea's *Broken Barrier* (1952) which explores covert racism in New Zealand society, exposed only when a Pākehā man forms a relationship with a Māori woman. It successfully broke new ground, as the racially harmonious society that many white New Zealanders had believed in was exposed as a myth. *Like Rewi's Last Stand* before it, the story is written from the perspective of a Pākehā New Zealander. However, within the context of its period and the unpalatable subject it presented to the public of Aotearoa, 'the film was indeed a timely portent' (Mita, 1992, p. 44).

In the third and final master narrative of national identity, 'New Zealand' is replaced by 'Aotearoa' Blyth argues that in the 1980's race relations between Māori and Pākehā became significant in the context of wider New Zealand society and heightened by the emergence of increasingly prominent demands for what Donna Awatere called 'Māori sovereignty.' Problems across the cultures were no longer hidden behind the thin veneer of racial harmony or swept under the proverbial carpet. Instead, issues relating to the occupation of Bastion point and Treaty of Waitangi claims were brought out in the open, with the 1985 Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act effecting a distinct change to relations between Māori and Pākehā.

Te Manu Aute, a collective of Māori communicators, was formed in 1986 and a key clause within the constitution of Te Manu Aute highlighted the fact

that Māori needed to have the means of expression for both themselves and to tauwi, (others). Barry Barclay explains:

Every culture has a right and responsibility to present its own culture to its own people. That responsibility is so fundamental it cannot be left in the hands of outsiders, nor be usurped by them. Furthermore, any culture living closely with another ought to have regular opportunities to express itself to that other culture in ways that are true to its own values and needs (Barclay, 1990, p.7).

In the years that followed the formation of Te Manu Aute, Māori made important and significant contributions to the growing film industry as actors, crew, directors and writers in an era of Māori filmmaking highlighted by the revolutionary works of Māori filmmakers Barry Barclay and Merata Mita (Discussed below). Mita and Barclay utilised the strength of film to prove that misconceptions can be modified, and the fixed can be mutable when film is utilised to shift perception.

Contemporary New Zealand filmmaking and perhaps the highpoint of the industry's production have seen many New Zealand films containing Māori content make an international impact. *The Piano*, *Whale Rider*, *River Queen* and more recently *Rain of Children (2008)* now offer images of Māori to an ever-eager global audience. Though highly successful both nationally and internationally, all pre-mentioned films were both written and directed by Pākehā New Zealanders. Although Mita (2002) firmly believes that Māori should be making films about Māori, she doesn't begrudge the international achievements of movies like *Whale Rider* which, though based upon the novel of a Māori author, has a Pākehā director. She elaborates:

The story is Māori. It was written by Witi Ihimaera. It's part of Witi's whakapapa. Whether or not a Pākehā is behind the camera going, 'roll, camera, action' that story belongs to those people and they are Māori. If the film does well, it's good for all of us. I don't think that the debate is

about the fact that Pākehā made the film. I think that the very positive aspects that come out of it for Māori people is what's important to us. Not the intermediate debate about whether or not it's a Māori film (p. 33).

Despite the positive aspects as articulated by Mita, it is worrying that for many international readers of such texts the images received will be the first and possibly only representations of Māori they will ever see. The danger therefore lies in the residual under currents of Eurocentric discourses which continue to support the stereotypes that have been paraded as the way Māori were and are.

For example, the globally successful *Whale Rider* carries inaccurate undertones of a male dominated and intensely patriarchal tribal society to the world. Though supposedly based upon on fact, the *Whale Rider* lies in direct contrast to tribal lore and 'actual' tribal custom. Māori women within Ngāti Porou were extremely liberated, perhaps more so than any tribe in New Zealand, the most striking contrast being that it was 'never' unusual for the hapū (sub tribe) to be named after a prominent woman ancestor. These women were rangatira (leaders) possessing all the relevant leadership attributes pertaining to men, 'inclusive' of the ability to speak on the marae. This point is important as Mahuika (1992) states adamantly that the fact Ngāti Porou women have the right to speak on the marae indicates that they were 'leaders of the fullest sense' (p.48).

Māori society was not patriarchal in the way in which it is portrayed as traditional in the *Whale Rider*, unfortunately, Māori patriarchy is now thought of as being traditional Māori culture. In reality however, Māori society was generally matriarchal. There are numerous examples within Māori oral discourse where gender roles are seen to be fluid. For example, both my esteemed hapū and whare tīpuna (Te Aotāihi and Hinerupe) are named after female leaders. This fluidity of gender roles was considered essential to the well-being of all the tribe. The grand narrative of New Zealand society that depicts traditional Māori society as patriarchal has inscribed upon Māori culture a falseness that is more about western notions of gender inequality than a concern for cultural authenticity.

Those films which continue to perpetuate negative belief systems about Māori and which contribute to the reproduction of stereotyped images of our people are dangerous (Pihama, 1994, p.239).

Pihama's words highlight the role of Pākehā filmmakers in the maintenance and reproduction of images of Māori that reinforce the negative stereotypes and which deny Māori opportunities to construct images that move beyond dominant definitions of who Māori are. For Māori, feature films such as the *Whale Rider* are uncritical and unchallenging of the stereotypes that have been paraded continuously as the way Māori were and are.

As Gary Wilson asserts, to provide a range of stereotypical positions unproblematically and repetitively constitutes maintenance of the status quo. Nothing is challenged or contested, the inequities of representation remain, and the representations of Māori through dominant group constructions continue (Wilson cit. in Fox, 1988). This reflects the role of Pākehā filmmakers in the maintenance and reproduction of images of Māori that reinforce the negative stereotypes and which deny Māori opportunities to construct images that move beyond dominant definitions of who Māori are. Pihama, Barclay and Mita have provided a foundation for the call by Māori filmmakers to take control of their image and representations. This control is located on multiple levels which encompass notions of control, knowledge, representation, and self-determination - an approach to filmmaking which could be defined as a Kaupapa Māori methodological framework.

### 2.1.3 Kaupapa Māori Theory: A Paradigm of Resistance

*Me titiro tātau ki muri hei ārahi tātau ki mua*

We must look to the past to guide us into the future

(Tā Moko artist/carver Mark Kōpua)

Kaupapa Māori theory is a locally derived theoretical framework that challenges Eurocentric ideologies of cultural superiorities by assuming the validity and importance of Māori knowledge, language and culture. It stems from Māori epistemological constructions of the world (Irwin, 1994; Nepe, 1991) and is underpinned in a political context by the notion of tino rangatiratanga (self determination) and the Treaty of Waitangi (Bishop, 1994; G. Smith, 1997). While there are no set criteria, what is important is that, as Linda Smith (1999) points out '[Kaupapa Māori] comes from the tāngata whenua, from whānau, (family) hapū (sub-tribes) and iwi (tribes). It is undertaken by Māori. It is for Māori and it is with Māori' (p. 2). Kaupapa Māori theory incorporates the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society that have emanated from a Māori metaphysical base. It informs Māori about the way in which they best develop physically, spiritually, emotionally, socially and intellectually as people.

Kaupapa Māori is ultimately the philosophy and practice of 'being Māori'. Contemporary expressions of Kaupapa Māori have been summarised by Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1990), as a local theoretical positioning related to being Māori. Such a position presupposes that the 'validity and legitimacy of Māori knowledge is taken for granted and that the survival and revival of Māori language and culture is an imperative' (p.100). These features speak of Māori aspirations, philosophies, processes and pedagogies, which are consistently found within successful Māori interventions. The term intervention is used in this sense to relate to the need to bring about specific positive transformation in the experiences and positioning of Māori. Where much existing written material relating to Kaupapa Māori initiatives is located within the Māori education field,

Kaupapa Māori is not limited to any one sector and is relevant to all aspects of society including filmmaking and film production.

Inherent in Kaupapa Māori is the notion of struggle. Out of struggle comes the desire to critique and transform. Critique is an integral part of Kaupapa Māori theorising. As Graham Smith (1997) writes,

The act of 'struggle' itself is seen to be an important factor in the cycle of conscientisation, resistance and praxis in not only making sense of one's life; but in also transforming it in more meaningful ways, and ultimately re-claiming it (p. 25).

Smith proposed that 'decolonisation' was therefore a necessary part of indigenous people's development. Pihama (1993) relates that decolonisation is a process of revealing ways in which colonisation has influenced beliefs and social practices, that influence and contribute to the social construction of what it means to be Māori, creating power dynamics that privilege the colonising forces. It is through a process of decolonisation that we are able to carefully assess the ways in which colonisation has impacted upon tikanga Māori and the construction of contemporary Māori pedagogy. Decolonisation also enables Māori to engage in discussions related to Māori issues in ways that are supportive and affirming of their worldviews. Kaupapa Māori is a transformative power providing a framework from which to re-conceive our social circumstances, our predicaments, and the multiple experiences of 'being Māori'.

As such, Kaupapa Māori can be seen to affiliate with the Critical theoretical paradigm formulated by the neo-Marxists of the Frankfurt school. The Frankfurt School concentrated on developing the Marxist view that the dominant class in society not only owns the means of material production, but also controls the production of the society's dominant ideas and values (*dominant ideology*). Critical theory holds that the primary mechanism responsible for supporting relations of domination and subordination is ideology. As such, ideology makes its effects felt in all spheres of public and private life determining social practices,

beliefs and opinion. The Critical theory of the Frankfurt School was therefore aimed at exposing the underlying assumptions that serve to conceal the power relations that exist within society and the ways in which the dominant groups construct concepts of 'common sense' and 'facts' that provide justification for the maintenance of social inequalities and continued oppression. The role of critical theory is therefore to investigate the ideological assumptions that underlie 'lived experience' and analyse social processes responsible for the creation of ideological consciousness. Ultimately, the knowledge produced by such practices creates the possibility of enhanced autonomy and justice.

The reclamation of Māori language and culture, the process of decolonisation and the struggle for tino rangatiratanga (Māori self determination) are all part of the transformative aspirations of Kaupapa Māori. To think and act in terms of Kaupapa Māori whilst experiencing colonisation is to resist dominance. Such transformative theorising has provided the foundation for a call by Māori filmmakers to take control of their image and representations. This control is located on multiple levels, each of which relate to the need for the deconstruction and reconstruction of our own images. For Māori filmmakers, this is a particularly important notion, as it supports moves beyond having to accept dominant group assertions of being defined, constructed and represented through discourses that serve to promote the interests of the Pākehā majority and in doing so urges the utilisation of Māori philosophies, concepts and practices in the film production process.



### 2.1.4 Māori Filmmaking: An Indigenous Approach

Accepting Māori philosophies, concepts and practices as valid and legitimate offers the possibility to return to Māori culture to guide Māori filmmakers in the filmmaking processes. Such a vision for film production was advocated by Barclay (2003) who campaigned for an alternative indigenous filmmaking base set firmly in the customs and laws of the community, and highlighting Māori values such as whakapapa (genealogy), whānaungatanga (kinship ties), mana (pride, prestige), manākitanga (caring), aroha (love), tapu (sacredness), mana tūpuna (ancestral prestige) and wairua (spirituality) as foundational concepts for Māori filmmaking. Mita also draws upon her own indigenous epistemology and utilises those Māori philosophies, concepts and practices in the filmatic process:

I can unite the technical complexity of film with a traditional Māori philosophy that gives me a sense of certainly, an unfragmented view of society, and an orientation towards people rather than institutions. This gives me the passion and intensity... it means I'm just not motivated. I'm driven (Mita, 2002, p. 31).

Kaupapa Māori theory therefore provides the theoretical foundation for my own scriptwriting practice. In addition, Kaupapa Māori theory and the utilisation of Māori philosophies, concepts and practices underpins a personal drive to explore the issue of scriptwriting/filmmaking further, namely, the way in which a traditional genre of Māori narrative, in this instance 'pūrākau' (stories, storytelling), can have contemporary application and inform the emergence of a theoretical approach to Māori scriptwriting/filmmaking. This is not in reference to a specific cinematographic style but rather a theoretical base that can inform the filmmaking process. The implementation of a pūrākau approach creates the opportunity to write about culture as well as write culture into the text.

Pūrākau is a Māori expression for stories which contain mythological perspectives concerning the nature of reality and the human condition. Though

now often carrying the negative connotation of untruth as ‘its only a myth’ pūrākau were in actuality, far more than the mere verbalisations of tales, fictional accounts or invented imaginings of a pre-literate society. The art of pūrākau, in union with other traditional narratives forms such as whaikōrero (speechmaking), mōteatea (traditional songs), whakapapa (genealogies), and whakataukī (proverbs) (each with their own categories, style, complex patterns and characteristics) were an integral part of a tribe’s ‘world-view’ or philosophical standpoint (value and belief system) reflecting the ideals and norms of the people and fulfilling explanatory, integrating, validating, historic and socialisation functions. In essence, pūrākau encapsulated and condensed into easily assimilable forms, the epistemological, theological and metaphysical beliefs of the people. The eloquent words of the late Rev Māori Marsden (2003), explain the importance of pūrākau in Māori society:

Cultures pattern perceptions of reality into conceptualisations of what they perceive reality to be, of what is to be regarded as actual, probable, possible or impossible. These conceptualisations form what is termed the ‘world-view’ of a culture. The worldview lies at the very heart of the culture, touching, interacting with and strongly influencing every aspect of the culture. In terms of Māori culture, the myths and legends (pūrākau) form the central system on which their holistic view of the universe is based (p. 55).

In relation to the significance and virtue of its traditional performance and delivery, pūrākau were considered an art form of the highest order, the complex narratives were highly prized, carefully constructed and skilfully delivered by talented and consummate pūrākau artists (storytellers) firmly ‘grounded’ in Māori experience and knowledge. With the power to entertain and engage all age groups, and the fundamental protocols for ensuring authenticity, pūrākau were highly stimulating and appealed to the audience’s aural, visual and emotive senses, arousing the imagination, informing, inspiring, warning and persuading.

The late master carver, Pine Taiapa (1953), beautifully conveys the appeal of the pūrākau artist in traditional Māori society:

Try to picture with me, the scene of old. The dying embers in the meetinghouse at night, the howling wind and the pelting rain – these were the atmosphere for such stories and the lively mind of the listener filled in the gaps. The young fry clinging apprehensively to their scanty, tattered shawls while the story-teller chanted on, kindling the imagination with his vivid word-imagery (p. 3).

Pūrākau was also, crucially a communal activity. The pūrākau artist was conscious that the pūrākau he/she was telling or retelling was not their own (although the way it was told may have been an individual act), and did not exist in isolation to other people or their environment. Rather, the pūrākau belonged collectively to the whānau, hapū or iwi and/or involved other people within whānau, hapū, iwi and whakapapa relationships. Therefore the pūrākau artist had an inherent obligation and responsibility to get the story 'right' otherwise it would be corrected (sometimes in a public arena) if they got it 'wrong'.

Although pūrākau derives from an oral tradition, it can continue to provide the stimulus to write and create in contemporary ways that are culturally responsive. Te Kapunga Dewes (1975) asserts that oral tradition of old can continue to contribute to our present literary activities:

The oral arts in Māori should provide continuity and inspiration for written literature. Far from being irrelevant, the traditional arts challenge us to create with artistic integrity and seriousness, in a manner relevant in contemporary experience and dimensions (p. 54).

This utilisation of traditional narrative structures in film production is an approach already adopted by Mita, who observed a similarity between the oratory traditions of the Māori and the modern conventions of the cinema. Mita asserts that the experience of watching a film within a marae context is not

unlike the attention given to those Māori speechmakers where ‘what the screen communicates is absorbed in a sitting and so carries on the oral tradition with a heightened visual aspect’ (Mita cit. in Conrich & Murray, 2007, p.106).

Furthermore Mita articulates that as the producer or director of a film, she is:

Actually in the position of the person who carried the oral tradition in olden times ... It’s similar in the way the whaikōrero and the stories that are told on the marae to keep history alive and maintain contact with the past. Carrying on the tradition means redeeming the past, redeeming culture (Mita, 2002, p.31).

Like Mita, I believe the implementation of Māori narrative structures such as pūrākau provide an essential foundation for Māori filmmakers, a base grounded in Māori philosophies, concepts and practices. Such an approach to scriptwriting/filmmaking is not only a ‘decolonising methodology’ (Smith, 1999) that seeks to influence the nature of the ‘work’ of Māori filmmakers in culturally harmonious ways, but is simultaneously a pedagogical tool containing and projecting such fundamental Māori concepts as whānaungatanga (kinship ties), manākitanga (caring), kotahitanga (unity) and rangatiratanga (leadership). A pūrākau methodology, when incorporated into a scriptwriting/filmmaking context, therefore provides a way to regenerate cultural ways of knowing, teaching and learning through the medium of film.

The potential for diverse portrayals of pūrākau type stories within film is immense, stories that draw on Māori language, concepts and values, promote Māori filmmakers to write and create in innovative ways. This acknowledgement is of course not a wish to endorse an essentialist notion and declare that ‘all Māori’ adhere to certain ‘Māori’ constructions presented, for increasingly they do not; the reality is varied and complex. Māori academic Tracy McIntosh (2005) asserts that ‘to be Māori is to be part of a collective but heterogenous identity, one that is enduring but ever in a state of flux’ (pg. 142).

The portrayal of pūrākau is not only about issues of textuality, that is how the stories should be written but moreover, the transfer of knowledge, a vessel to arouse the imagination, inform and inspire, warn and persuade, maintain relationships, protocols, rituals and rules. A pūrākau approach to scriptwriting/filmmaking guides us as Māori filmmakers to speak in a language that is not exclusive, but a language that draws on our own ways of seeing, speaking and expressing ourselves in order to bring 'to life' those issues and complexities of our experiences that may be culture specific and local, more universal in nature, or both.

A pūrākau approach therefore encourages Māori filmmakers to produce in ways that not only take into account Māori cultural notions and values but that also enables Māori to express stories, to convey messages, and embody experiences, while keeping Māori cultural notions intact. Such a decolonising methodological approach can challenge those dominant discourses that continue to de-center our experiences, cultural notions and aspirations in ways that resonate and connect to our people. The epistemology of pūrākau is not restricted to the knowledge presented in the stories, but also concerned with the dissemination of the knowledge itself. A pūrākau approach encourages Māori filmmakers to produce films that ultimately act as vessels to positively empower Māori language, instil Māori cultural values, beliefs and worldviews. As Pihama (1994) effectively expresses the enormous transformative power of film:

It is that which I believe calls Māori film-makers to invert the negative constructions that have so long dominated, to assert our own definitions, to present and represent, to create and re-create, to provide the images that we define as part of our realities in ways that we determine. It is we who have most to gain (p.239).

In summary, the current phase in New Zealand's filmmaking has seen a marked increase in the participation and success of Māori. Much of this success may be linked directly to the toil of Māori filmmakers such as Merata Mita, the

late Barry Barclay and the late Don Selwyn, to name a few, who maintained a strong and constant Māori presence within the industry. These Māori filmmakers have provided constant Māori voices and have acted as image guards for the Māori people. They have challenged the ways in which Pākehā filmmakers focus upon negative portrayals of Māori and fought for access to resources and tools necessary for Māori to take control of their own image. For example, their Herculean labours saw the pivotal formation of Te Paepae Ataata in 2007, New Zealand's only national Māori film development organisation. Based in Auckland, Te Paepae Ataata was founded with the intention of ensuring the development of Māori films written, produced and directed by Māori.

Despite such monumental success epitomised in founding of Te Paepae Ataata, the statistics are not telling a good story. Out of around 235 New Zealand feature films made, so far only nine have been directed by Māori. These films are, *Patu* (1983) *Mauri* (1987) *Mana Waka* (1990) and *Hotere* (2001) by Merata Mita, *The Neglected Miracle* (1985) *Ngati* (1986) and *Te Rua* (1991) by Barry Barclay, *Once were Warriors* (1994) by Lee Tamahori and finally *Eagle vs Shark* (2006) by Taika Waititi. The heartfelt words and works of Mita, Pihama and Barclay quoted and drawn upon repeatedly throughout this chapter highlight the continual challenges faced by Māori scriptwriters and filmmakers in their attempts to restore a balance eroded through the colonisation process. They also highlight the urgent need for Māori scriptwriters and filmmakers to evolve those 'anti-colonial perspectives which interrupt dominant colonial discourses' (Pihama, 1994, p.239), and to seek new and more effective ways to fill the screen with Māori faces, Māori history, Māori language, Māori culture and Māori ways of looking at life.

The feature length screenplay *The Prophet* therefore stems from these realisations and understandings, and is fuelled by an incessant desire to demystify, decolonise and indigenise the New Zealand screen by providing images that are both determined by Māori and that can be identified by Māori as part of their lived and historical realities. By filling the screen with Māori faces, Māori history, Māori culture and Māori ways of looking at life, *The Prophet*

ultimately aspires to materialise anti-colonial perspectives aimed specifically at subverting those long-held and dominant colonial discourses, and in doing so, to also seek to unmask those modernist meta-narratives that validate Eurocentric constructions of colonial histories by presenting the 'one true' interpretation. Ultimately, *The Prophet* encourages Māori filmmakers to produce films that act as vessels to positively empower Māori language, and instil Māori cultural values, beliefs and worldviews.

## 3.0 CHAPTER TWO

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### 3.1 Screenplay for *The Prophet*: Draft 2

THE PROPHET

By

Curtis Bristowe

Draft 2

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08/076

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**Note:**

**Dialogue spoken in Te Reo Māori will have English sub-  
titles**

**FADE IN:**

**1. EXT. DENSE NEW ZEALAND BUSH - EARLY MORNING - 1869**

Dawn rays of the morning sun shimmer lovingly through the rooftop canopy of native bush. A picturesque view caressed by a symphony of melodic bird song. It is idyllic if not picture perfect.

Suddenly, 19<sup>th</sup> century BRITISH SOLDIERS and MĀORI KŪPAPA, (Māori fighting for the British) explode in every direction from the bush. Streaming like ants through the dense thicket. With saber and pistol in hand, Colonel WHITMORE strides forth from the undergrowth, his brow drenched with sweat and uniform soiled from the chase. Whitmore is 52 years of age athletically built and battle hardened. As he gazes sternly ahead he radiates a poise and confidence only gained through learned participation in numerous conflicts. Calm and calculated, he points with his saber into the distance and roars to the hundreds of soldiers that torrent past him at breakneck speed.

WHITMORE (RP accent)

Te Kooti! Bring me Arikirangi!

**2. EXT. DENSE NEW ZEALAND BUSH - LATE MORNING - 1869**

Screaming and yelling, musket and pistol fire, smoke and chaos in all directions. MĀORI MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN run through bush amidst the chaos. Dressed in tattered 19<sup>th</sup>

century Māori and European dress they carry muskets, hatchets and other traditional weapons.

A single warrior, TE KOOTI (36), breaks from a group in a rear guard action and turns with his musket to face his adversaries. His face is covered in soot, dust and the sweat of battle. His hair and beard are matted but his eyes shine brightly. With his bare chest heaving, Te Kooti watches helplessly at the spectacle of utter terror before him.

Ngātapa pā burns in the distance, highlighted by a snaking pillar of black smoke. Beneath Te Kooti his overwhelmed disciples are shot, bayoneted, stabbed and tomahawked. All are executed with a bloodthirsty ferocity.

A voice calls Te Kooti's name. It is a Māori MAN, one of his disciples.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti! Te Kooti! We must go! The Government troops are nearly upon us!

Musket shots scream all around them slamming into trees and earth. But Te Kooti's stare remains transfixed. The Man grasps Te Kooti's shoulder.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti please! We must go--

His words are cut short by a musket ball striking him directly in the side of his head, killing him instantly and splattering TE KOOTI's face with blood. An English VOICE screams.

VOICE (O/S)

There's one!

Startled from his fixation, Te Kooti looks up to see a handful of government troops tearing through the bush towards his position. They are close, he is outnumbered, there is no escape.

Te Kooti's soot-blackened face is now splattered with blood and smeared with tears. We remain focused on Te Kooti's face and slowly move towards him, closer and closer towards his eye until we finally disappear into the black of his iris and into total darkness and silence.

**FLASHBACK TO:**

**3. EXT/INT. MĀORI HOUSE - NIGHT - 1830**

The screen is still black. A small flicker of light appears and we move slowly towards it, as the voice of a young boy is heard.

## TE WĒTINI (V.O)

My father's birth was prophesied by a Tohunga matakite (seer) named Te Toiroa. He foresaw the birth of two infants, but that upon birth both newborns would be struck by illness, an illness that would claim one of their lives.

As the light gets brighter images start to take shape, we see that the source of the light is a flickering fire coming from the window of a small Māori raupō (bulrush) house amidst scenic native bush. It is night and the stars above shine brightly.

## TE WĒTINI (cont'd)

The prophecy foretold that if the older of the infants lived, it would be a good sign, heralding a time of health and prosperity for the people,

As we move even closer to the house and eventually in through the window, we find a Māori WOMAN in labour, with two MĀORI WOMEN in assistance. A Māori TOHUNGA (traditional Māori expert) in the corner continuously chants karakia (incantations). From the fire light, shadows are cast on the walls in all directions.

The expectant mother squats over a depression dug into the earth and lined with moss. One midwife is positioned in front of her in what looks like an embrace, her knees pushing gently in a downwards motion onto the mothers pregnant abdomen, applying adequate pressure to assist the birth process. The other midwife swats behind the mother

with hands beneath, ready to guide the newborn into the world.

TE WĒTINI (cont'd)

But the prophecy also foretold that if the younger infant survived, it would herald a coming of great evil to the land. A time of pain and suffering,

The woman gives birth to the newborn, it is lifted by one of the females and fills the screen. The child does not cry but merely remains silent with its wide open brown eyes unblinking.

TE WĒTINI (cont'd)

Te Toiroa named this younger child, my father, Arikirangi.

The Tohunga suddenly ceases his recitation and turns and locks eyes with the newborn who stares eerily back at him unblinkingly. The Tohunga finally speaks,

TOHUNGA

Arikirangi,

**FADE OUT:**

**BEGIN TITLE SEQUENCE.**

Credits roll with a montage of images; archaic shots of 17<sup>th</sup> century Māori and Pākehā; NZ Landscape; words for songs

written by Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki in his own handwriting; various sketches and images of Te Kooti and his followers. The last image is of hands slowly reaching towards the heavens which coincide with the appearance of the words "The Prophet" centre screen.

**END TITLE SEQUENCE.**

**FADE IN:**

**4. INT. MISSIONARY CLASSROOM - DAY - 1839**

It is cold and stale inside the Whakatō Missionary School. A young boy's hand traces the words of a bible he is reading. It is a nine year old TE KOOTI. His concentration is interrupted by the English voice of an Anglican MINISTER.

MINISTER

Arikirangi! Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki! You will learn nothing in the house of the lord if you fail to pay attention!

Startled, the young boy raises his head and speaks,

TE KOOTI

Aroha mai e te matua, kei te--

His words are cut short by the minister,

MINISTER



In the house of the Lord only English shall be spoken!

The boy immediately responds in English,

TE KOOTI

I'm sorry Sir,

MINISTER

So Mr Arikirangi, what consumed your thoughts so entirely, and led you to so blatantly ignore my teachings?

TE KOOTI (respectfully)

Was nothing sir, I was just reading my scriptur--

MINISTER

Please, stand and share them aloud with the entire class.

The boy hesitates momentarily and the Minister now screams at him startling other students in the class who quickly bow their heads in submission.

MINISTER

Stand now boy and speak! I will not ask you again!

Holding his bible in both hands, the boy slowly rises, looks around the classroom at the other children, at the

minister and then lowers his head and begins to read a verse.

TE KOOTI

And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Satisfied with having made an adequate example of the boy, the Minister makes his way back to the front of the room. The boy continues to read from the bible but then slowly closes it and stops speaking. He takes a slow deep breath, makes a conscious decision. He raises his head, and again quotes the passage having committed it entirely to memory.

TE KOOTI

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt. And the new King said unto his people, "Behold, the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us."

The Minister looks back at the boy who now stares directly at him with a fiery intensity and confidence. Taken back, the minister is momentarily speechless.

TE KOOTI

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to

afflict them with their burdens. But the more they afflicted them, the more the children of Israel multiplied and grew.

In a breathtaking spectacle the boy seems to take on some otherworldly persona. The words seem to flow from his mouth not as if merely memorised but rather as his own words, his own thoughts his own feelings; they seem to punch from his mouth, each word like bullet fired. The Minister cowers in the volley of the boys words. He steps backwards, his hands clench his desk, the atmosphere is electric.

TE KOOTI

And the Egyptians were grieved because of the children of Israel. And they made the children of Israel to serve with hardship: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.

The children watch in awe as the boy finishes his passage.

TE KOOTI

And their cry came up unto God. And God heard them and cast into Egypt, into the lowly hut of Amram and Yochabel, the seed of a man upon whose mind and heart would be written God's law and God's commandments, one man to stand alone against an empire.

Te Kooti remains standing. The silence is deafening.

The minister, regaining his composure, walks calmly up to the boy and slaps him violently across the face, the boy falls to the floor, his nose spurts blood. The minister turns and walks slowly back to his desk at the front of the room.

MINISTER

Now children, if you please, a recitation of the Lord's Prayer

The children now obviously frightened begin in unison the recitation of the prayer.

CHILDREN

Our lord who art in heaven--

We depart the scene through the classroom window as the children continue to recite the Lords prayer. Their words flow over into the next scene.

**FADE OUT:**

**FADE IN:**

**5. EXT. MERCHANT VESSEL - DAY - 1865**

A beautiful blue ocean; seagulls skip along the water and the sun shines brightly, sparkling upon the waves. On a 19<sup>th</sup> century merchant vessel, the Māori crew, both men and women, scale up and down the rigging. The ship is alive with action. On the top deck, a standing central figure

remains motionless amongst the commotion. It is an older TE KOOTI, now in his thirties. Clean shaven, short haired, and wearing a European style suit, he cuts a striking figure. He calls orders to crew.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Right the headsails! Set the topsails! Heave!

He watches amused as an 11 year old Māori boy ERUERA wrestle to tie down a loose sail that flaps widely. Te Kooti (still chuckeling) walks towards him and helps him restrain the sail. The boy's head is bowed in embarrassment.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

I am sorry matua.

Te Kooti merely smiles, placing his hand on the boys shoulder.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

You have nothing to apologise for e tama, I am aware that you give your all in any task I ask of you.

The boy slowly lifts his head.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Next time remember to look aloft as you pull the line, so you don't pull it too far or too hard and so it doesn't tangle in rigging.

The boy nods listening intently. Te Kooti looks around to see if anyone is watching and leans in towards the boy as if to tell him a secret that none one would know.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I always found it hard to restrain this sail anyway, many a time I found myself in your exact position, thrashing around on the deck like a fish out of water.

Te Kooti makes a funny thrashing gesture rolling his eyes about and waving his arms wildly. The boy laughs.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I have not been always a sailor you know, it was a profession I have had to learn like any other, and like any journey e tama, the first steps are always the hardest.

Te Kooti moves to another line and the boy follows intently. He unties it and again secures it so the boy can again see how he does it.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

You weren't always a sailor?

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No I wasn't, at one time I was close to becoming a priest

The boy is intrigued.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

A priest matua?

Te Kooti chuckles. He moves to another line unties it and offers so the boy can secure it.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes at one time in my life.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

Why did you not? Did you stop believing in god?

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No, no I never lost faith in god, only in his adherents that preached it. I finally realised that many of god's English servants were not doing the work of god. But rather using the word of God to conceal their real intentions.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

What did they want?

Te Kooti bows his head sorrowfully

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Power.

Eruera stares at Te Kooti, not fully understanding his statement.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Now, do you think you would be able to tie that line next time I ask you?

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

Yes Sir, I will.

Te Kooti smiles and places his hand on the boy's head affectionately.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Never bow your head to anyone e tama, no matter who they are. Hold it high and with dignity, for your dignity is yours and yours alone. It can never be taken from you.

Ereuera smiles radiantly at Te Kooti.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

I will matua, thank you.

## **6. EXT. DOCK - DAY**

The merchant vessel is now docked in a busy harbour. The Māori crew members unload various stores from beneath deck to awaiting dockside carts. They work in a well organised and disciplined fashion.

TE KOOTI stands on the dock loading boxes stamped with the word "MURPHY" onto a cart. He stops and calls to the crew on the deck of the vessel.



TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Quickly, get that the cargo from below deck. We have a timeframe to keep and clients to appease.

A Māori man, KIWA, pops his head over the side of the vessel and humorously calls to Te Kooti.

KIWA (Te Reo Māori)

Auē (heck) Te Kooti! Do this, do that, you are worse than my grandmother!

The crew breaks out in laughter. Shaking his head, Te Kooti, looks at the man and chuckles.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Get back to work Kiwa, don't make me come up there.

Kiwa cheekily smiles at Te Kooti and his head pops back out of sight. Te Kooti chuckles to himself, but immediately stops as he spies the approach of two well dressed English men, merchant shipping competitors, HARRIS and READ.

Harris and Read are in their mid fifties overweight and balding. They stride directly to Te Kooti speaking in strong "Queen's English" accents.

HARRIS

Te Kooti, Te Kooti, the proverbial thorn in my side. Are you aware that your petty outfit has

once again undercut our shipping costs and taken the Murphy contract?

Te Kooti attempts to ignore them.

READ

A contract that should rightfully be ours, I suggest that you surrender it this instant to its rightful proprietors.

Te Kooti ignores their taunts and continues to work. Kiwa pops his head over the side of the vessel and spies the two men, his face creases with anger. Te Kooti eyes Kiwa and shakes his head mouthing the words "Kao" (no). Their personal attack heightens.

HARRIS

To think you could run a business? Ha! You're a Māori, the only thing a Māori is good for is standing at the end of a shovel!

Both traders begin to laugh between themselves.

READ

Have you no words Te Kooti? Perhaps you do not speak the Queens English? I dare say your heathen brain could neither appreciate nor comprehend the intricacies of our stoic language.

They again begin to laugh.

Through their bellowing laughter Te Kooti turns to see ERUERA watching silently from the deck of the ship. He has witnessed the entire incident, and fear is etched across his face. Te Kooti's gaze pauses on the young boy, it is as if he sees a reflection of himself in the young boy's frightened face. Te Kooti closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. He turns to face the traders. His words spit anger.

TE KOOTI

You have the audacity to come to me speaking of injustice, but am I not merely exercising the tenets of the very laws that you impose? Do I not have the right to free industry?

Both men are taken back by Te Kooti's words and are momentarily speechless. The crew now stop what they are doing and turn to hear the words of Te Kooti.

TE KOOTI

Does your law not empasise: To take from one because it is thought that his own industry has acquired too much, in order to spare to others, who have not exercised equal industry and skill, is to violate arbitrarily the first principle of association--the guarantee to every one of a free exercise of his industry and the fruits acquired by it?

Both traders are flustered, finally one manages an answer.

HARRIS

How, how dare you speak to me in such an insolent tone. You should show me respec-

TE KOOTI

I am not bound to please you with my answers sir, and so shall speak to you as I see fit.

Enraged and embarrassed, but with no rebuttal, the two men turn tail and hastily scuttle from the dock.

HARRIS

He is not the like the others, he will not be intimidated.

READ

Yes, this will not be as easy as expected.

HARRIS

We must speak to McLean.

READ

Absolutley.

Despite the outcome, Te Kooti watches apprehensively as the two men leave the dock. As they finally disappear from sight, he lowers his head and continues his work.

**7. EXT. BUSH TRACK - LATE AFTERNOON**

TE KOOTI and other members of the CREW approach a group of Māori houses in a small clearing of dense native bush. As they walk they talk amongst themselves laughing and joking. Te Kooti walks beside ERUERA with an arm draped over his shoulder. KIWA retells Te Kooti's quarrel with the traders.

KIWA (Te Reo Māori)

And so there was Te Kooti, challenging these men in their own language! You should have seen it! He was almost as good as me!

The group breaks into laughter and Te Kooti cannot help but smile. Through the laughing he spies a piece of land scorched by fire, in its center grows a small plant. He stares intently at it.

**FLASHBACK TO:****8. EXT. BUSH PATH - 1839**

A 9 year old TE KOOTI walks along a bush path with his stoic father, TE RANGIPĀTAHI. Cloaked in a korowai (traditional feather cloak) with a red blanket wrapped around his waist, Te Rangipātahi's hair is tied tightly in a topknot and adorned with huia feathers. He wears a rei puta (whales tooth) around his neck and his face is creased with deep lines of blue green moko. As they walk Te Rangipātahi looks down upon his silent son and senses something is awry.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

What troubles you my son? You have not spoken since we left the English school.

The young boy looks to his father,

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Father, why must I go to the English school? I do not like it.

Te Rangipātahi looks to the side of the path and spies a piece of land scorched by fire. He leads Te Kooti towards it, and a single juvenile plant that grows in its centre. Te Kooti stares at the solitary plant as Te Rangipātahi kneels and tenderly carries its small leaves.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

This child of Tāne (God of forest) is the Makomako. When a flood or fire strips all life from the earth, the first new plant to grow is the Makomako.

Te Kooti looks at his father then back to the plant which stands solitarily.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

You see Arikirangi, the life purpose of the Makomako is to provide shelter so that other plants may grow. To shield them from harsh sunlight or driving rain.

Te Kooti remains staring intently at the plant.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

When the plants that grow beneath the Makomako are strong enough to survive, the Makomako dies. It scarifies it's own life so that the great giants of Tāne, like the Kauri...

Te Rangipātahi gestures to huge native tress that line the bush path.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

...the Tōtara, the Kahikātea may grow and flourish.

His father now turns to face Te Kooti.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

You are like the Makomako Arikirangi. The years that lie ahead will be years of great change for our people. You must provide them with shelter and protection.

Te Rangipātahi places his arms on Te Kooti's shoulders, looking intently into his eyes.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

To do so my son, you must walk with confidence in both worlds, ours and that of the English.

Te Kooti looks back to the plant and then to his father.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

This is the leadership the future will require my son. These are the sacrifices you must make.

Te Kooti listens intently but a worried expression creeps across his young face.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

But father, I do not know how to lead? How will I know what to do?

Te Rangipātahi smiles and places a hand upon his own heart.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

I will give you the same answer I was given Te Kooti. To lead your people, you must love your people.

He now places his hand on Te Kooti's own heart.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

Your love for your land, for your family, your love for your people. This is what shall guide your actions.

Te Rangipātahi pats Te Kooti's chest.

TE RANGIPĀTAHI (Te Reo Māori)

Always trust in this my son, it shall be your guiding star in the most darkest of nights.



Te Rangipātahi smiles and hugs Te Kooti close to him.

**FLASHBACK FORWARD TO 1865:**

**9. EXT. BUSH TRACK - LATE AFTERNOON**

TE KOOTI stands staring at the solitary plant, a tear rolls down his cheek. His fixation is broken by the words of ERUERA.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

Matua? Is there something wrong?

Woken from his fixation, Te Kooti looks down to Eruera who stands at his side.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No Eruera, I was just remembering some words my father once told me.

Te Kooti smiles at Eruera and they continue walking towards the village in the clearing.

**10. EXT. MĀORI VILLAGE -- LATE AFTERNOON**

The village is a hive of social activity. Māori people tend to gardens, hang meat and fish to dry upon specially prepared platforms, some sit and weave, others play, dance, sing and laugh. TE KOOTI calls to his CREW.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Go, your work is done, your families wait for you.

The Crew, including Eruera, upon hearing Te Kooti's words splinter in all directions. Te Kooti chuckles to himself as he walks calmly through the village taking in all the happenings. On all sides of him people call his name and wave. He radiates as he returns their smiles and greetings. He exudes contentment as he walks, at bliss in his community, surrounded by his people, by those he loves.

#### **11. EXT. MĀORI VILLAGE - GARDEN**

TE KOOTI's wife, IRIHĀPETI, is waist deep in a well-kept communal vegetable garden tended by a dozen men and woman using modern European gardening implements. She is a beautiful Māori woman of olive complexion and striking hazel eyes, on her chin is cut a beautiful blue green moko. She turns and smiles at the approaching Te Kooti. Her face though soft and beautiful, reflects strength and force of will.

#### **12. EXT. MĀORI VILLAGE**

TE KOOTI approaches a young boy in the process of being taught Mau Rākau (Māori weaponry) from two Māori KAUMĀTUA (elders), it is his five year old son TE WĒTINI. Te Wētini spies his father with ravenous eyes but does not move from his frozen on-guard stance. One Kaumātua spots the boy's

sideward glance and turns to see the approaching Te Kooti.  
He smiles and turns to the boy.

KAUMĀTUA (Te Reo Māori)  
E haere! (Go!)

Upon hearing the Kaumātua's words, the excited young boy sprints towards Te Kooti at breakneck speed.

TE WĒTINI (Te Reo Māori)  
Pāpā! Pāpā!

Laughing, TE Kooti lifts his young son into the air and hugs him close. He approaches the elders from whom Te Wētini ran and greets them with long affectionate hongī (traditional greeting).

He turns and approaches his beaming wife IRIHĀPETI, who has walked from the garden to greet him.

TE KOOTI (English)  
Other men said they have seen angels, but I have seen thee and thou art enough.

They embrace and Irihāpeti's arms tightly hold Te Kooti as if she had not seen him for years.

IRIHĀPETI (English)  
It felt as if you were gone an eternity my love, welcome home.

### 13. INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A fire burns brightly. TE KOOTI, TE WĒTINI and IRIHĀPETI lie on woven flax mats upon the bare earth, covered by European blankets. In the background two seated KUIA (old women) softly croon ancient oriori (lullabies) over the sleeping Te Wētini who lies between them. Irihāpeti and Te Kooti converse quietly.

IRIHĀPETI (Te Reo Māori)

The influence of the Hauahau movement grows within our people.

A look of sorrowful anguish creeps across Te Kooti's face.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes, I know, many of our people are disheartened and look for salvation and deliverance.

IRIHĀPETI (Te Reo Māori)

It is said the Hauhau look to turn from English laws and the English god. I have heard rumors that they wish to drive the English from these lands.

Te Kooti shakes his head.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

War with the English will serve no future purpose for our people other than our annihilation. The only true way forward is to forge a lasting

relationship with the English, to show loyalty to their laws.

Irihāpeti's face creases with resentment.

IRIHĀPETI (Te Reo Māori)

But the English wage war on tribes throughout Te Ika a Māui (The North Island), their thirst for land and resources seem unquenchable. It is only a matter of time before their war machine will reach and consume us. We must take a stand, we must fight before it is too late.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes we must fight, but we must fight with our hearts not our hands.

Tears begin to well in Te Kooti's eyes.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

What will the future hold for our children, if we should wage war against the English? The choices we make now will affect all generations that follow. Can you not see that by proving this loyalty to the crown they will have no future grounds to seek retribution?

Irihāpeti's face softens as she hears Te Kooti's words; she reaches across and caresses his tear-streaked face. He holds her hand to his face and squeezes it

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I will not fight against the English Irihāpeti, I will not risk the future of our descendants. We must have faith that there is a place for our people under English Law. That if we adhere to and live in respect to English justice, we will find peace.

Tears begin to also flow down Irihāpeti's face.

IRIHĀPETI (Te Reo Māori)

Many of our people will not understand your actions Te Kooti. Many will think of you as a traitor, an English sympathizer.

A smile pushes through Te Kooti's tear streaked face.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I do not fear them Irihāpeti, as long as I have you at my side, I would face god himself.

They move closer and embrace each other tightly.

IRIHĀPETI (Te Reo Māori)

Be careful, my husband, please be careful.

The Kuia rock back and forth crooning their ancient oriori, their deeply creased faces paying testament to the years of life spent. One gently caresses the face of the sleeping Te Wētini, tears flow freely from her eyes.

**14. INT. DIMLY LIT SMOKEY PUB - NIGHT**

The two English traders, READ, and HARRIS sit in a quiet corner of a smokey, dimly lit pub. They rise to greet another man, MCLEAN, who enters the pub and walks towards them. McLean is 32 years of age and of fair complexion. Dressed in an English style suit, top hat and cane, he is ever the inch an English gentleman. McLean places his hat and cane on a side table, and takes a seat rather apprehensively at the table with the traders.

MCLEAN

What exactly is the purpose of this meeting? I am a busy man.

HARRIS

It is about the Māori, Te Kooti.

McLean looks around the room and moves in closer to speak,

MCLEAN

Not this again! I have told you before that there is nothing that would warrant Te Kooti's arrest, and even to propose the arrest of a man with neither warrant nor reason is a criminal offence!

The traders seem unimpressed with McLean's response. Read grimaces and takes a long swig from the mug he is holding.

READ

These are dangerous times McLean, war is on our very doorstep. If Te Kooti should choose to join with those enemies of the crown and fight against us, many would follow him.

McLean shakes his head in disbelief.

MCLEAN

Enough, I bid you good-day sirs.

McLean rises, picks up his hat and cane and turns from the table to leave. He is halted in his footsteps by the words of Harris.

HARRIS

You know he also speaks out against the sale of Māori land to the government McLean, the very land required for forthcoming English settlers.

McLean does not turn to face the traders, but remains standing, merely listening.

READ

The government needs men of action McLean. Those of weak spirit will not last long in the office of her majesty.

McLean continues standing, the traders recognise they have struck a raw nerve and continue their rhetoric.



HARRIS

Soon the ramifications of Te Kooti's resolve will fall ill upon you personally. Think of your future, McLean, think of your family. It is only one man, one mere man. What does the freedom of one man matter?

McLean finally turns and eyes the two traders; his stare is one of anger and frustration.

HARRIS

Think carefully McLean, choose wisely who you would wish as friends,

Read takes a long swig from his mug eyeing McLean menacingly.

HARRIS

Or as enemies.

Without answering McLean turns and walks from the pub.

#### **15. INT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

TE KOOTI sits at a small table, writing by the light of a lantern. Various books and pages of written text are either side of him. His concentration is broken by noises and commotion and then by a FEMALE VOICE outside the window.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S) Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti! Te Kooti! They have come for you!

Suddenly the front door of his house is splintered and half a dozen colonial troops charge inside the house, scattering everything in their wake. Te Kooti rises.

TE KOOTI

What is-

He is struck from his feet with a violent blow to the face with a gun butt which splits his forehead, spraying blood. His pages of writing scatter everywhere, littering the room.

Irihāpeti runs in and attempts to stop the beating but is slapped violently across the face which sends her sprawling into a wall. Te Kooti agonisingly screams to the guards.

TE KOOTI

No! Please! My wife, do not harm her!

As TE WĒTINI stands screaming, the troops drag TE KOOTI through the pages of his words, leaving a trail of blood upon the white paper.

## **16. EXT. MĀORI VILLAGE - NIGHT**

The troops throw TE KOOTI in a heap at the front of his house and shackle his hands behind his back. One soldier steps forward, it is Captain WESTRUP. In his late thirties, Westrup is a poster child for a military officer. His uniform is pristine and his appearance immaculate. His words are spoken in a crisp and officious manner.

WESTRUP

Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki, you are being arrested on the charge of spying against her majesty Queen Victoria and shall be taken forthwith to await sentencing.

He turns to the troopers.

WESTRUP

Take him away.

IRIHĀPETI, her strength regained, runs from the house in a vain attempt to stop the arrest but is now halted by the voice of her husband. He pleads with her through a bloodied face.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Stop Irihāpeti, please stop, they will hurt you. Our son, our son is alone, please, please go to our son.

Led by KIWA, other Māori have run from their houses, they brandish muskets and other traditional weapons. WESTRUP calls to the troopers who turn their muskets towards the Māori threateningly.

WESTRUP

Stay back! This is an official arrest!

The Māori continue to advance but are halted by Te Kooti.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Stop! They will fire upon you. Return to your homes, please return to your homes.

Kiwa, brandishing a Tewhatewha (two handed fighting staff) calls from the fore of the group.

KIWA (Te Reo Māori)

No Te Kooti! We will not let them take you!

Te Kooti looks to Kiwa.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No, Kiwa, please. I want no incident here. If I am to be accused of a crime we must let the proper processes proceed, we must abide by the English laws.

A look of anguish creases across the face of Kiwa, he lowers his weapon. Helplessly, they watch as Te Kooti is violently hauled to his feet and marched from the village.

From the window of their small house, Irihāpeti watches with a look of utter despair. She cradles Te Wētini who cries inconsolably. Tears stream down her face mixing with the blood that flows freely from her nose and mouth.

#### **18. INT. CELL - EARLY MORNING**

TE KOOTI sits in a cold dank cell filled with Māori men, women and children. With his hands shackled behind his

back, and his face caked with dry blood, he has not slept. Whispering between themselves while gesturing towards Te Kooti, the other prisoners surround him. An agitated MAN finally rises and walks towards the seated TE KOOTI.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

It is you Te Kooti, is it not, the lap dog of the English.

Te Kooti looks up to the face of the man and struggles to his feet.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes, I am Te Kooti.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

Pokokōhua! (Bastard!)

The man erupts punching Te Kooti viciously across the face. Te Kooti is knocked from his feet from the blow landing painfully upon the floor. The man screams down upon him.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

You would choose to fight against your own people you dog! You are a traitor to your own race!

The prisoners watch as Te Kooti wearily struggles to his feet. As blood runs freely from his mouth Te Kooti addresses the man, his voice reflects neither malice nor anger.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I fought not against you my brother I fought  
against the future you would lead us to.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

Ha! The words of a coward!

The man raises his fist again to strike Te Kooti but is  
halted by the words of KAHUTIA who rises from the shadows.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Stop.

An stoic elderly man stands, the morning light highlighting  
the deeply incisioned blue-green lines that curl around his  
chin, cheek and nose, spiraling like mist, arching like  
rivers across his forehead. He addresses the man.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Do not be so quick to judge and dispense justice.  
Can you not see he shares our prison? Can you not  
see that our fate is now his fate?

The man, upon hearing the Kahutia's words, slowly lowers  
his fist. Kahutia walks closer and looks to Te Kooti.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

There is no such thing as chance, Te Kooti. What  
may seem to be merest accident springs from the  
deepest source of destiny.

Te Kooti stares at the Kahutia somewhat bewildered,

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Ours fates are entwined.

The dialogue is broken as Captain WESTRUP enters and bellows officially.

WESTRUP

Hauhau prisoners of her majesty Queen Victoria, you are being taken forthwith by prison galley to Napier to await trial.

Te Kooti painfully walks to the bars of the cell.

TE KOOTI

Captain please, the charges placed against me are fraudulent, I have never spied against the government. I am an innocent.

Westrup glances at Te Kooti.

WESTRUP

There is no mistake; the arrest warrant came from McLean himself.

A look of astonishment cuts across Te Kooti's face.

TE KOOTI

Donald McLean?

Suddenly a dozen guards enter the room. The cell is opened and the prisoners are roughly unshackled and stripped of all personal possessions including shoes. They are given one blanket each which many simply wrap around their shoulders before they are re-shackled and marched from the cell.

**19. EXT. DOCK - EARLY MORNING**

As the prisoners are marched along the dock towards an awaiting prison galley, a voice calls from off-screen.

ERUERA (O.S)

TE KOOTI!

TE KOOTI looks back from the dock to find ERUERA and the entire population of his small village. With small fires blazing under cooking pots, they have obviously arrived in the night and have kept a vigil outside his prison. They do not attempt to intervene in his extradition, but rather sing a tearful poroporoāki (song of farewell) in unison as the women wail in sadness.

Eruera tearfully watches as Te Kooti is hustled aboard the vessel. Quietly he whispers to himself.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

We will be lost without you.



Eruera slowly lowers his head and sorrowfully weeps. His sobs mingle with the cries and wails of grief that wrench from Te Kooti's mourning people.

**20. EXT. DECK OF PRISON GALLEY - EARLY MORNING**

As they sail from port TE KOOTI looks to the passing shoreline to see IRIHĀPETI standing holding TE WĒTINI. She calls out a moving karanga (call of lament) over the waves, which reaches Te Kooti and brings further tears to his eyes. He watches until she is lost from sight.

**21. INT. CELL - NAPIER PRISION - NIGHT**

TE KOOTI stands at the bars of his crowded Napier cell, his head bowed in the darkness. His thoughts are broken by the voice of KAHUTIA calling from inside the cell.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

You shall receive no trial Te Kooti, none of us shall receive a trial.

Te Kooti turns and looks towards the old man who sits huddled in a corner.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

But I am innocent of the charges father, I have done nothing wrong. That is English law, a man is innocent until proven guilty.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

It does not matter if you are innocent Te Kooti, many of us that share your prison are innocent. Those English laws do not exist for those within this cell.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No, No, the English law states that we must receive a trial, a trial so our charges may be heard. We are citizens of the crown and are so entitled to a trial.

Kahutia shakes his head in disagreement.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

For McLean to incarcerate you without provocation is unlikely. You were removed Te Kooti, you were made to disappear.

Te Kooti puzzles briefly upon Kahutia's words then finally understands the true reasoning for his arrest.

TE KOOTI

Read and Harris!

Anger and frustration grip Te Kooti and in frenzy he grabs the bars and shakes them wildly.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

NOOOOO! NOOOO! LET ME OUT!!! I AM INNOCENT! I HAVE DONE NOTHING WRONG! HELP ME! PLEASE HELP ME!

He slowly breaks down and drops to his knees in anguish.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I am innocent, I have done nothing wrong.

Kahutia rises and walks to Te Kooti placing a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

We cannot ask what the fates may deal us, but we can make the choice to accept that fate and to follow it wherever it may lead. It is in our moments of decision Te Kooti, that our destiny is truly shaped.

Te Kooti's slowly rises to his feet and lifts his head. Though his face is streaked with tears, his eyes shine with a steely determination.

**22. EXT. CELL - NAPIER PRISON - EARLY MORNING**

Cold and hungry, chained and under gunpoint, the bewildered prisoners are marched from the cell up to the prison gates. TE KOOTI looks anxiously at the happenings and turns to a GUARD who stands beside him.

TE KOOTI

What is happening? Where are we being taken?

The Guard looks at Te Kooti, an ominous grimace spreads across his face.

GUARD

To hell.

The prison gates open to a torrent of abuse that erupts from a mob that has gathered to meet the prisoners. A MAN screams from the forefront of the crowd.

MAN

There are the Hauhau! Murderers the lot of them!

Neither old nor young is spared from the attack as the prisoners are pummelled with rotten vegetables, spat on and abused as they walk a gauntlet from the prison gates to the Napier shoreline.

### **23. EXT. SHORELINE - NAPIER**

The distraught Māori prisoners wail in pain and terror. The guards without concern move quickly through the disorientated prisoners. They are violently unchained, boarded upon longboats and rowed to an awaiting prison barge.

### **24. EXT. DECK OF PRISON BARGE**

As the ship sails swiftly from shore, a GUARD steps forth upon the deck and speaks loudly to the huddled group of confused Māori, behind him a Māori guard translates the message.

## GUARD

Prisoners of her majesty Queen Victoria, you have been charged and sentenced as enemies to the crown and shall be exiled forthwith to the Chatham penal colony for indefinite imprisonment.

The Māori people look to each other confused, and slowly realise the ramifications of the words spoken, that they are being forcibly exiled from their homeland and may never return. They suddenly fall into despair and utter anguish.

Three people break rank and attempt to flee the vessel. One young man attempt's to leap from the ship; he is shot through the back in mid air, he cartwheels through the air landing awkwardly into the ocean.

A young woman and another young man attempt to rush the troopers. The young woman is shot through the throat and collapses on the deck, blood spewing from her mouth and neck. The other young man is shot through the back of the head the musket ball exploding from his face killing him instantly. He lands uncontrollably in a bloody lump upon the deck.

The women and children begin to weep and wail hysterically. An old woman seated on the deck merely rocks herself and croons a waiata tangi, (song of lament). Another woman, weeping, lacerates herself with a piece of shell. The only one that is motionless is Te Kooti. He stands amid the chaos of crying and wailing, and stares intently at the landscape as it slowly disappears from sight.

**FADE OUT:**

**FADE IN:**

**25. EXT. WAITANGI BAY - CHATHAM ISLAND - DECK OF PRISON  
BARGE - EARLY MORNING**

In dark skies and turbulent seas the prison barge drops anchor.

Chained to the deck and exposed entirely to the elements the Māori cluster together in small groups in a futile attempt to stay warm from the icy wind and rain that cruelly whips their bodies. Many have suffered badly from the journey and exposure. TE KOOTI himself has not journeyed well; he coughs and shivers, clenching his rain-soaked blanket to his body.

The Māori prisoners watch as a long boat docks with the anchored vessel and half a dozen of The Chatham penal colony prison guards (both Māori and Pākehā) board the vessel. The guards, clothed well for the elements, carry muskets on their shoulders, and arm-length whips of platted leather hang from their belts. They are led by a middle aged Sergeant ELLIOTT.

ELLIOTT is of fair English complexion; at 36 years of age he is moderately overweight and reasonably good looking. He is well groomed in an obvious attempt to exude respectability, but this air is undermined by small things: his hair is greasy; his face is not clean shaven; his

unkempt uniform has buttons missing and is stained with splattered food.

Elliott paces to and fro in front of the Māori, eying them with disgust. Without moving his eyes from them he draws his lash from his belt and clenches it tightly within his fists. His façade of respectability is truly broken as his words are harsh and spoken with a strong cockney accent.

ELLIOTT

Welcome to hell, this god-forsaken island is now your new home. Forget who you were and where you came from for you now cease to exist, you are lost to the world,

The prison guards begin to snigger as ELLIOTT walks closer towards the Māori, his fists tightening upon the lash.

ELLIOTT

On this island my word is god and to dispute with god is to ensure my wrath, so do as I tell you or face the consequences.

Te Kooti wearily eyes Elliott; we can see from his expression that it is a figure he is all too familiar with. TE KOOTI looks to the other Māori who fill the deck; apprehension creases their faces.

ELLIOTT

Respect and obedience, children, this is what you shall give me.

Behind Elliott, a middle-aged unkempt man now boards the vessel carrying an old black leather medical bag. It is the PRISON DOCTOR. The sailors, upon seeing the doctor and as if anticipating some event will soon take place, cease what they are doing and turn to watch. Elliott turns to see the doctor.

ELLIOTT

Ah, the doctor's here

The guards now violently move through the Māori forcing them to strip naked.

The doctor casually walks from prisoner to prisoner conducting a quick and rough medical examination. It appears to be a highly anticipated event for the sailors and prison guards, who take ample time in eyeing the naked Māori women.

One particularly attractive Māori woman, ERETI, catches Elliott's attention. In full acknowledgment of their prying eyes, she stands there defiantly, making no attempt to hide her nakedness. Elliott, without taking his eyes off her, turns and mutters to two fellow guardsmen who also stare at her. They talk between themselves. He turns back to the prisoners.

ELLIOTT

Good, good, you're all nice and strong

He turns to the guards.



ELLIOTT

Work them.

The Māori guards scream instructions and, with lashes drawn the penal guards walk into the Māori prisoners, yelling and striking at will, forcing them to move.

**26. EXT. WAITANGI BAY - SHORELINE - LATE AFTERNOON**

ELLIOTT, resting upon his rifle, eerily eyes the exhausted prisoners as they unload boxes, sacks and tools from longboats in the driving rain. He turns and glances behind himself; in the distance he spies a lone figure observing the happenings through an eyeglass. He turns back to a fellow prison GUARD.

ELLIOTT

Right, this is where I show these black bastards who's boss.

In a cockney accent the guard eagerly responds

GUARD

Yeah Elliott, you show them.

Elliott's eyes fix upon the old man, KAHUTIA, who struggles to lift a heavy wooden box from the longboat. A grim smile streaks across Elliott's face, he has found his victim. He lifts his musket and walks towards him.

ELLIOTT

Lift it!

Startled, Kahutia turns to Elliott. He obviously does not understand him.

ELLIOTT

Lift that box now!

Kahutia continues to stand staring bewildered at Elliott.

ELLIOTT

You ignorant black bastard!

In full view of the others, Elliott strikes Kahutia with the butt of his musket square in the face, breaking his nose and knocking him to the floor. Kahutia curls into a ball in pain, holding his face which spurts and streams with blood. Elliott kneels and grabs him by the hair shaking and slapping him violently.

ELLIOTT

You understand me! You understand what I'm telling you ape! You do as you're told!

Suddenly from off-screen a voice calls towards Elliott.

TE KOOTI (O.S)

Stop.

Startled by the sound of an English voice Elliott turns to see TE KOOTI. Te Kooti stands to the fore of a small group of Māori; a similar look on all their faces reflects the same horrible realisation, that one of their Kaumātua (elders) is being beaten.

ELLIOTT

What? Who are you?

Te Kooti puts down the box he is holding and walks closer to Elliott.

TE KOOTI

He does not speak English Sir, he cannot understand you, He is but an old man, I will carry his weight for him.

ELLIOTT

What?

Elliott releases the old man from his grasp who crumples at his feet. He turns towards Te Kooti, drawing a large knife from his boot.

ELLIOTT

Get back to work you shit sack or I'll cut your throat.

By this time other guards have eagerly come to view the spectacle. Te Kooti does not move, he shows no sign of fear.

TE KOOTI

I will carry his weight Sir.

A grim smile breaks across Elliott's face, he walks towards Te Kooti raising his knife. In the background we hear other prison guards eagerly egging on Elliott.

Elliott walks closer to Te Kooti, raising the knife to the level of Te Kooti's throat, his eyes blaze with a murderous lust.

ELLIOTT

You will carry his weight alright you black bastard, you will carry all his weight.

Suddenly a voice in a strong "Queens English" accent breaks the scene. It is the voice of prison commander Captain THOMAS.

THOMAS

What is going on here!

Elliott sheaths his knife and quickly stands to attention. The crowd parts as a seemingly out of place aristocratic and uniformed man walks through the crowd. Thomas is of the same age as Elliott, yet is athletically built and surprisingly good looking. As he walks he eludes an air of educated respectability. He spies the crumpled Kahutia and then looks to Te Kooti.

THOMAS

You (pointing to Te Kooti), do you speak the  
Queens English?

Te Kooti nods his head

THOMAS

Good, (pointing to Kahutia) please take this man  
away and tend to his wounds.

Te Kooti crouches and lifts the crumpled Kahutia in his  
arms. Kahutia flinches at Te Kooti's touch as if expecting  
to be again beaten.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

It is okay now father, I have you, he will hurt  
you no longer.

Thomas turns, and with authority, addresses the watching  
crowd.

THOMAS

This show is over!

The guards and prisoners quickly disperse leaving Thomas  
alone with Elliott. Thomas eyes Elliott as if a parent to a  
petulant child.

ELLIOTT

Sir he was causing a commotion and refusing his  
work duties.

THOMAS (condescendingly)

Do not for a second presume I am one of your dim-witted counterparts Elliott. I can read you like an open book.

Elliott fidgets uncomfortably, as if a child caught in a lie.

THOMAS

What did I tell you Elliott? You were to beat only one prisoner in front of the others. If I had not intervened, you would have injured or killed another.

Thomas moves closer to Elliott.

THOMAS (quietly and menacingly)

Now heed my words Elliott, and heed them well. You do as I tell you, when I tell you, and without question. If one of my stock is killed, or unable to work without my knowledge, by God, you will end up in a grave right alongside side them.

Thomas raises his finger and points it directly into Elliott's face.

THOMAS

Nothing Elliott, and I emphasise nothing shall hinder the process of my promotion off this rock. Do you understand me?

Elliott nods his head in acknowledgement.

ELLIOTT

Yes Sir, I understand.

THOMAS

Good, now the man who intervened in the beating. Tomorrow morning, break him in front of the others. Let them witness firsthand, the fruits of prisoner insubordination.

The prison commander turns heel and walks. Elliott's hands clench into fists as he stares at Thomas. Infuriated, his gaze slowly moves to Te Kooti.

**27. EXT. INSIDE SHELTER - MĀORI PRISONER CAMP - NIGHT**

TE KOOTI wakes under his blanket in a small makeshift shelter of branches and fern fronds, it is cold and raining and his health has further deteriorated. Pale and shivering, he begins to cough. As he removes his hand from his mouth we see that it is speckled with blood. He is startled by a voice.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

Why did you help him?

Te Kooti turns to see the face of the beautiful ERETI crouching beside him.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

Why did you help him Te Kooti? Why did you defy that man?

Te Kooti looks at the woman.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

For the same reason that you defy them, for the same reason that we all defy them. The only thing necessary for the triumph of such evil upon us is to do nothing.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

He will surely punish you

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I do not fear that man, I have met his kind many times

With a puzzled look upon her face Ereti now smiles at Te Kooti, it is a smile of admiration, even affection.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

You are an interesting man, Te Kooti.

Te Kooti merely pulls his blanket tighter in an attempt to stay warm.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

I brought you something,



Ereti places a small amount of food and a cup of water at Te Kooti's side.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Thank you, I have not had a chance to search for food.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

It is alright Te Kooti, you need not explain, I was glad to do it.

Ereti smiles again at Te Kooti and walks from the small shelter. Te Kooti watches the woman as she walks from him. Her look and manner remind him of his wife. His eyes grow heavy and he falls into a troubled sleep and darkness.

**28. EXT. INSIDE SHELTER - MAORI PRISONER CAMP - EARLY MORNING**

TE KOOTI is woken suddenly.

ELLIOTT

Get up!

Te Kooti's eyes open to see ELLIOTT standing above him with half a dozen other prison guards, he kicks Te Kooti's small plate into his face spilling his food and water. Pulling him from his blanket the guards drag Te Kooti to his feet.

ELLIOTT

I've got a job for you.

**29. EXT. FIELD - EARLY MORNING**

The guards bustle TE KOOTI towards a plough that stands idle in the middle of a field. They throw Te Kooti into the mud at the foot of the plough.

ELLIOTT

Right, as you can see we are in a bit of a dilemma here. Cause we have this plough but no horses to pull it.

The other guards begin to laugh.

ELLIOTT

So you can imagine our dilemma when, instead of horses, we got sent monkeys.

Te Kooti has struggled to his feet and stands facing his persecutors.

ELLIOTT

Well boys, what do you think? Do you think an ape can pull a plough?

The guards again laugh.

ELLIOTT

Well monkey? You think you can pull a plough?

The guards move towards Te Kooti, ripping his shirt from his body. They roughly strap him to the plough, he offers

no resistance. Upon finishing, they stand back laughing at Te Kooti, who strikes a strikingly sorrowful image.

ELLIOTT

Well Well, would you look at this pretty picture.

The guards now encircle Te Kooti.

ELLIOTT

Now pull it you monkey! Pull!

Eying the jeering mob, Te Kooti turns to see ERETI and the other Māori who have been standing watching the entire spectacle from a distance. He looks back to Elliot who smirks eerily. Te Kooti knows he means to make an example of him, to break him in front of the others. He bows his head closing his eyes and takes a deep breath. He raises his head,

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Oh my ancestors give me strength.

A look of steely determination slowly etches across Te Kooti's face as his hands clench tightly upon the straps that bind him. With all his might Te Kooti strains on the plough, which has sunk deeply into the mud.

Egged on by Elliot, the guards begin to laugh, jeer, spit and hurl abuse at Te Kooti, who strains tirelessly upon the plough. It is a bizarre and harrowing sight.

Te Kooti drops to his knees and on all fours strains again upon the straps. His eyes blaze with sheer force of will, as if he would die to complete the task.

Slowly the plough begins to move.

The straps bite deep into Te Kooti's shoulders but he does not waver. Each step is utter anguish, but he does not falter; step after painful step Te Kooti drags the plough through the muddy earth.

Elliot and the guards continue their belittlements but as Te Kooti agonisingly continues they slowly cease their laughing and merely stare, bewildered.

Elliot stares at Te Kooti in astonishment. He looks at the guards and other Māori who have also witnessed the entire event and realises that his actions have not had the desired effect.

ELLIOTT

Enough!

Te Kooti does not stop.

ELLIOTT

Enough!

Elliot walks to Te Kooti and kicks him into the mud. He calls to his fellow guards.

ELLIOTT

Leave him!

Elliot along with the other guards, turn tail and walk from the field.

Te Kooti stands and watches as the guardsmen leave. When he sees that they are gone, he collapses in utter exhaustion upon the muddy earth. Ereti along with a group of other Māori run to his crumpled body.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

It is me, Te Kooti, it is Ereti.

Carefully removing the straps from his trembling body, they clothe Te Kooti in a blanket and, one under each arm; slowly help him to his feet. He can barely stand. They slowly walk him back towards his shelter.

**30. EXT. INSIDE SHELTER - MĀORI PRISONER CAMP**

TE KOOTI lies in his shelter, covered in a blanket. He is in a horrible state. ERETI sits beside him and, with a rag, gently wipes the mud from his face

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

Rest now, Te Kooti, the guards focus their attention elsewhere. I will watch over you today. I will not let them take you again.

Te Kooti looks to Ereti, and delirious through pain and exhaustion, sees his wife's face,

TE KOOTI (whispering)  
Irihāpeti

The pain overcomes him and he lapses into unconsciousness and darkness.

**31. EXT. INSIDE SHELTER -- MAORI PRISONER CAMP -- NIGHT**

TE KOOTI slowly awakens, though his face is free from mud he has grown even paler. He turns his head to see ERETI sitting by a small fire beside his shelter. She turns to see his eyes open and puts another branch on the fire, which crackles in the darkness.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)  
You grow sicker, Te Kooti. The old people have tried to help you but they say it is too late, that it is mate Pākehā (European disease). The coughing sickness.

Te Kooti does not answer and his eyes turn to a group of Māori crowded around the shrouded corpse of a small child. They softly lament, crooning waiata tangi and weeping.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)  
A young child died today. He had grown sick from the voyage and did not recover, some say that it is our fate. That we will all die on this island.

Te Kooti stares at the Māori then turns to Ereti and painfully speaks

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I will not accept that fate, Ereti, that I die on this island. I cannot, I will not.

Ereti turns to Te Kooti, her beauty highlighted by the flickering flames of the fire. Tears slowly run down her cheeks.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

I am scared.

Te Kooti's hand reaches from under the blanket and grasps Ereti's.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I see strength in you Ereti, a strength that will inspire others, give them hope.

Ereti's eyes glisten as she looks to the flames, and then back to Te Kooti.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Do not lose this strength; do not let this place take it from you.

A warm smile pushes through Ereti's tears. She caringly rests her hand upon Te Kooti's chest.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

You must not confront him again, you are not strong enough.

Te Kooti merely smiles, the firelight dancing in his eyes.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I do not fear him; it is that man who fears me.

**32. INT. TŪRANGA MAGISTRATE OFFICE - MID AFTERNOON**

MCLEAN sits at a large desk shuffling papers. Oak furniture fills his affluent office and a large oil painting of Queen Victoria hangs from the wall. A knocking at his office door averts his attention.

MCLEAN

Enter.

A SOLDIER enters the room and walks towards McLean's desk.

SOLDIER

Sir, there is a Māori woman here to see you,

MCLEAN (somewhat surprised)

A Māori woman? What is her intention?

SOLDIER

I do not know sir; she wishes to speak with you personally.



MCLEAN

Very well then, send her in.

The soldier leaves and moments later IRIHĀPETI strides in the room. She wears a European styled dress and cuts a striking figure.

IRIHĀPETI

Are you Donald McLean?

Somewhat taken back, McLean pauses before answering.

MCLEAN

Yes I am, may I be of assistance?

IRIHĀPETI

My husband is Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki. He was arrested and sent to Napier with the Hauhau prisoners for trial. It has been days Sir, and I am yet to hear anything of his trial or sentencing.

McLean nervously shuffles the papers on his desk.

MCLEAN

Te Kooti? I am sorry madam but I have never heard of a prisoner of that name.

Irihāpeti stares intently at McLean's face, she knows instinctively he is lying.

IRIHĀPETI

I do not believe you,

MCLEAN

As I told you before, I do not know this man.

Irihāpeti walks closer to McLean's desk.

IRIHĀPETI

What have you done with my husband?

McLean calls out to the guard.

MCLEAN

Guard, guard!

Irihāpeti looks into McLean's eyes and demands an answer.

IRIHĀPETI

Answer me! What have you done with my husband!

A soldier enters the room.

MCLEAN

Guard, please remove this woman from my office.

The soldier grabs Irihāpeti by the arm, she wrenches it from his grip and stares at McLean.

IRIHĀPETI

It does not end here.

She turns and storms from the room, the guard turns to McLean.

SOLDIER

What was that about Sir?

MCLEAN

Nothing, please leave.

The guard pauses and McLean screams.

MCLEAN

I SAID LEAVE!

The guard leaves and McLean slumps back at his desk obviously distressed. He lifts his hand to grasp his papers and notices it is shaking. His vision is drawn to the centre of his desk and the photograph of his family that takes precedence. He stares intently at the photograph of his wife and young children.

**33. EXT. INSIDE SHELTER - MĀORI PRISONER CAMP - JUST BEFORE DAWN**

Te Kooti's eyes open to the cries of the birds signalling the approach of dawn. He turns to see that ERETI has kept a vigil beside him. She lies sleeping upon fern fronds on the bare earth covered with a blanket. Te Kooti's gaze focuses on Ereti. He smiles and places his hand caringly upon her cheek. She moans quietly but does not wake. He struggles to

his feet and, cloaked in his blanket, painfully walks from the shelter.

**34. EXT. MĀORI PRISONER CAMP - JUST BEFORE DAWN**

No one has yet risen. TE KOOTI looks to the other shelters and the sleeping Māori. The embers of last night's fires still smoulder, their wispy smoke merging with the lingering mist that still cloaks the bush. It is peaceful if not idyllic. TE KOOTI limps past the sleeping Māori towards the shore.

**35. EXT. SHORELINE - WAITANGI BAY - JUST BEFORE DAWN**

A solitarily figure, TE KOOTI, stands upon the beach staring across the crashing waves to the distant horizon. We watch as the first rays of dawn push through the thick dark cloud and burst beautifully across the sky.

Te Kooti stares into the distance, intoxicated by the absolute beauty of the moment and tears begin to well in his eyes. He slowly croons a waiata aroha (song of love); it's beautiful air cuts through the silence of the morning, drifting over the crashing waves.

**36. EXT. SHORELINE - TŪRANGA - JUST BEFORE DAWN**

As TE KOOTI's song continues we suddenly see IRIHĀPETI (holding TE WĒTINI) also standing on the beach looking over the waves. Tears run from her eyes as she also stares longingly over the waters to the rising of the sun.

IRIHĀPETI (V/O) (Te Reo Māori)

Whatever darkness you are bound my husband, you must always remember I am with you, I will always be with you, you are never alone.

Te Kooti's song finishes as we look to the horizon and witness the dark clouds suffocate the light from the heavens. Slowly the rain begins to fall.

**37. EXT. SHORELINE - WAITANGI BAY - JUST AFTER DAWN**

TE KOOTI kneels and sprinkles himself with salt water. After finishing, he painfully rises and walks back towards the encampment. While walking he hears a small cry and laughing coming from the bushes in the distance. With a worried expression Te Kooti turns and walks towards the sounds. As he walks a coughing fit suddenly overcomes him; he drops to his knees covering his mouth, coughing violently. As he removes his hands, they are splattered with dark blood. He wipes it on his shirt and struggles to his feet. Now the voices become clearer,

ELLIOTT (intoxicated)

Who does Thomas think he is anyway? Thinks he's better than me he does, thinks he's better than all of us.

Te Kooti walks closer.

ELLIOTT

Now my love where is my kiss? I want a kiss for starters.

**38. EXT - BUSH CLEARING - JUST AFTER DAWN**

TE KOOTI pushes through the bushes, coming upon ELLIOTT and a group of guards in a small clearing. They have obviously been drinking through the night and are highly intoxicated. Elliot has a semi-naked young Māori girl by the arm and is attempting to kiss her. Te Kooti walks straight from the bush and into their midst.

TE KOOTI

Release her.

Elliott turns to see him.

ELLIOTT (intoxicated)

Well well well, who have we got here boys, it's the mule.

The other guards laugh.

TE KOOTI

Release the child.

Elliot, whose attention is now focused on Te Kooti, rises releasing his grip on the girl who runs in the bush. Te Kooti acknowledges this and keeps Elliott's attention focused upon him.

ELLIOTT

You're giving orders?

Elliott (with bottle in hand) staggers towards Te Kooti and stands in front of him. He is in such an inebriated state he sprays spittle.

ELLIOTT

You're giving me orders you ape?

He pushes Te Kooti, who falls backwards into the mud. The watching guards burst into laughter.

ELLIOTT

Now I'll tell you what, you can stay here in the mud until I say otherwise.

The other guards, obviously enjoying the spectacle, mimic oinking noises.

ELLIOTT

Like a good little pig

The guards laugh louder and Elliott turns to enjoy the joke. Wearily Te Kooti struggles to his feet.

TE KOOTI

No, I am not an animal, I am a man.

Enraged, Elliott drops his bottle and pulls his lash from his belt, he staggers towards Te Kooti.

ELLIOTT

I'll teach you!

His raises his lash to strike, but as he brings it down his wrist is caught by TE KOOTI.

TE KOOTI

No.

Te Kooti pushes Elliott backwards, sending him sprawling into the mud. The guards are momentarily frozen by the spectacle, from the ground Elliott lies frozen, fear is etched across his face.

Suddenly a guard reacts, striking Te Kooti in the lower back with the butt of his rifle, crumpling him to the muddy ground. Another kicks him directly in the stomach and Te Kooti spits blood. Elliott has now struggled to his feet. In the glowing reassurance that Te Kooti is incapacitated, Elliott's face slowly regains its former confidence.

ELLIOTT

Strip him!

Two guards violently strip Te Kooti of his clothes. He lies naked upon the cold earth, still gasping for air. The guards encircle him drawing their lashes.

ELLIOTT

You think you're better than me?



Elliott raises his lash and whips it across Te Kooti's bare flesh, Te Kooti screams.

ELLIOTT

You show me respect!

He again lashes Te Kooti.

ELLIOTT

You show me obedience!

He again lashes Te Kooti.

ELLIOTT

You bastard! You black bastard!

He lashes Te Kooti again and again and again.

In a grotesque spectacle, the drunken guards beat Te Kooti without mercy. Sweat and steam pour from their bodies as their lashes fall again and again on his brutalised body.

With chests heaving, their faces and clothes spattered with Te Kooti's blood, sheer exhaustion brings the beating to an end.

Te Kooti lies prone on the muddy earth, rain pelting his exposed body.

ELLIOTT (out of breath)

Take him! Get him out of my sight!

Two guards grab Te Kooti by the heels and drag him through the mud towards a roughly built dirt floor shack. As they drag him, Te Kooti lapses in and out of consciousness. Beside the path an apparition of his father TE RANGIPĀTAHI stands, he has seemingly come to TE KOOTI in his last moments. Te Kooti gazes at him through a blurred vision.

TE KOOTI

Father

The guards drag Te Kooti inside the tin shed, throw his clothes beside him and, with padlock and chain secure the door.

### **39. INT. TIN SHED**

In the darkness, semi conscious, filthy and covered in his own blood, TE KOOTI lies shivering and coughing blood uncontrollably. It is a horrible sight. Hold on the face of Te Kooti as his eyelids grow heavier and heavier, and his breathing slows. As his eyelids slowly close, the screen goes black and we hear only his laboured breathing. His breathing slows until finally it stops and we are left in darkness and silence.

After a period of silence, a VOICE neither male nor female, softly and caringly whispers from the darkness.

VOICE (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti, huri mai ki au (Te Kooti, turn to me)

There is a pause of silence and again the soft whisper is heard.

VOICE (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti, e taku tama, huri mai ki au (Te Kooti,  
my son, turn to me)

**40. EXT. PATH TO TIN SHED -- LATE AFTERNOON**

Two GUARDS followed by two MĀORI carrying shovels walk the same path to the shed where TE KOOTI is imprisoned, they openly talk.

GUARD 1

How long has this one been in here?

GUARD 2

Oh about a week, the flies should well have him by now.

GUARD 1

At this rate we should be rid of the lot soon enough

The guards reach the shed, cover their noses in anticipation of the smell, unlock the padlock and pull open the door. They look to the floor to where a body should lie but find nothing.

GUARD 1

What the...

From the darkness a figure steps forward

GUARD 1 & 2

AHHHHHH!!

To their horror Te Kooti stands in front of them. His eyes, like night fires in the darkness, blaze with a fierce radiance. Both guards, in absolute shock, stumble backwards. The Māori carrying their shovels drop them and run.

MĀORI

He kehua! He kehua! (a ghost! a ghost!)

Te Kooti walks unaided from the shed into the light. He does not cough, limp, or stumble. He pauses and takes a deep breath of the fresh air. He approaches the guards who cower in fear.

TE KOOTI

You need not fear me. You need fear only God

He walks past them towards the Māori encampment.

**41. EXT. BUSH CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON**

As the shades of night fall Elliott watches a group of decrepit Māori tirelessly clearing and milling native bush. Elliot yells to his fellow guards.

ELLIOTT

I'm going for a walk.

Whistling, a nonchalant Elliot walks from the scene to a dimly lit secluded area, looks around, undoes his pants and squats on the ground, he is startled by a voice behind him.

TE KOOTI

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,

Elliott with his pants around his ankles falls backwards onto his own excrement which smears over his thighs. He looks for his gun, which is out of reach and recoils in horror as Te Kooti walks from the shadows as if death himself.

ELLIOTT

No, no it can't be

TE KOOTI walks closer towards Elliot. Elliott stares as if the devil himself had risen from Hades.

TE KOOTI

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Elliott claws along the ground towards his musket. He grasps it, pointing at Te Kooti and pulls the trigger, but

the shot is wet and does not fire. He pulls back the firing pin and tries again, but to no avail.

Te Kooti walks not to Elliott but rather straight past him. He turns and looks to Elliott before he disappears into the bush

TE KOOTI

You cannot kill a man twice.

Te Kooti disappears in the bush leaving Elliott trembling upon the earth.

**42. EXT. MĀORI PRISONER CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON**

ERETI stands at a shelter stoking the flames of a cooking fire. She looks up to see TE KOOTI standing before her and, in shock, drops what she is doing.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Do not fear me Ereti, it is I, Te Kooti.

Ereti, still eyeing him as if an apparition, slowly walks towards him.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti, is it you? Surely it cannot be you

She reaches out, placing a hand on Te Kooti's chest. A smile breaks across her face as her hand rests firmly on

his chest and passes not through it. Suddenly in a fit of utter joy and affection, she lovingly embraces Te Kooti.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

You're alive, how can this be? How is this so?  
They told us you were dead.

Te Kooti smiles and places his arms around Ereti, returning the embrace.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Answers will come Ereti, but now you must gather the people. I have a message.

As they embrace, we see a lone figure in the distance watching their embrace through an eyeglass. It is THOMAS.

#### **43. EXT. MĀORI PRISONER CAMP - NIGHT**

In the firelight, the bedraggled and decrepit Māori sit facing TE KOOTI. He confidently stands before them, like a lighthouse on a stormy night.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I have a message for you my people.

The firelight dances on the face of Te Kooti, highlighting his eyes which burn with a fierce intensity

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

As I lay close to death, my body brutalised and broken at the hands of our tormentors, I was graced by the presence of the lord's servant, Michael.

The Māori people look to each other in astonishment

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

The archangel told unto me the Lords purpose. That I Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki had been chosen to deliver unto you, the true word of God.

Te Kooti walks closer to the flames. The firelight emblazons his shadow upon the trees behind him, highlighting his appearance and intensifying his words.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

And so in the burning light of God's own presence, I was resurrected. The healing power of the lord flowed into my body, and I was made anew, anew with strength and purpose to serve his will.

TE KOOTI opens his arms to the masses as if to embrace them. His voice grows in volume, building in intensity.



TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Fear no longer my people for I am bound to God,  
and in God shall we be delivered from bondage.  
Long have we wandered in the desert my children,  
by God we shall wander for no longer.

Tears well in Te Kooti's eyes, his voice peaks in an  
exhilarating climax.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

The Almighty has heard our cries my people. In a  
dream he sent me a sign of our deliverance, we  
are to look for two ships anchored in Waitangi  
bay. Their arrival shall signal the Lord's will  
and on that day we shall be free.

The exiles rise in unity, some openly weep, their faces  
openly reflect the emotion of Te Kooti's words. They slowly  
move towards him en masse.

#### **44. INT. CAMP COMMANDER COTTAGE - MID AFTERNOON**

THOMAS sits at a table looking over some papers; the room  
is immaculate, a microcosm of English aristocracy in a far  
flung land. A knocking at the door averts his attention.

THOMAS

Enter.

ELLIOTT

You called for me sir?

Thomas addresses ELLIOTT without shifting his gaze from the papers he is reading.

THOMAS

Yes, how goes the construction of the prison facility.

ELLIOTT

Well sir,

THOMAS

And the prisoners?

Elliot remains standing silently; Thomas immediately recognizes unease.

THOMAS

Well what is it man, spit it out

ELLIOTT

Sir it's that prisoner Te Kooti, over the past months he's been holding gatherings with the prisoners, something religious I think.

THOMAS

And?

Thomas shuffles his papers.

THOMAS

Is it affecting their work output?

ELLIOTT

Well, no Sir, the native timbers are milled and ready for export to the homeland. *The Rifleman* is due to arrive in the morning for loading.

Thomas continues, ignoring Elliott.

THOMAS

Well then, I find the heathen practices of the Māori of little importance Elliott.

ELLIOTT

No sir it's just, I have heard rumors that the Māori Te Kooti speaks of escape.

Thomas finally looks up at Elliott.

THOMAS

Is there truth to these rumors?

ELLIOTT

I don't know Sir, I just want to know what you think.

THOMAS

What you or I believe is of no account Elliott.

Thomas stands and walks to a window.

THOMAS

What matters is if the other prisoners believe there is hope in this man's words.

Elliott looks somewhat bewildered at Thomas's statement.

ELLIOTT

Hope?

THOMAS

Hope dispels fear Elliott,

Thomas looks from the window back to Elliott.

THOMAS

It is through fear that we control them

Elliott finally nods his head in acknowledgement.

ELLIOTT

What action should I take sir?

THOMAS

Hmmm, you say he holds a growing influence within the Māori?

ELLIOTT

Yes Sir.

THOMAS

Hmmm, I cannot risk a revolt or even creating a martyr.

Thomas stares intently out the window immersed in thought.

THOMAS

Despite my judgment that this is mere hearsay, take something from this Te Kooti character, something he cares for, and destroy it. That should send him and his followers a clear and succinct message.

ELLIOTT

Yes Sir.

Elliott turns to walk from the room; he is halted by the words of Thomas.

THOMAS

The woman, take the woman from him.

Elliott acknowledges Thomas's order with a nod, and turns and walks from the room. From the window, Thomas watches Elliott walk the path back to the guard's barracks.

**45. EXT. BUSH PATH - LATE AFTERNOON**

ERETI walks alone. Her hair has grown, she has lost weight, and her clothes seem more bedraggled, but her beauty still shines radiantly. She wearily carries a bucket at her side

as if to collect water. She is startled by ELLIOTT who stands before her. Four more guards step from the bush surrounding her. Ereti's face lights with fear. Elliott walks closer to Ereti, eyeing her from head to toe.

Suddenly Ereti throws the bucket at Elliott, startling him, and turns to try and run. But she is tackled by one of the guards and is then held by the others. Punching, kicking and screaming, the guards drag her back to Elliott. Ereti, still struggling, spits into Elliott's face. He wipes the spittle from his face and then, without hesitation, punches her once then twice then three times across the face, splitting her lips, bloodying her nose, and swelling her eyes. Ereti's cries cease and she falls limp in the hands of the guards that hold her. Elliott begins to unbutton his uniform,

ELLIOTT

You will pay for that.

One guard violently strips the clothes (rags) from Ereti. As two other guards pin her arms to the ground and wrench her legs apart, another guard behind Elliott also begins to disrobe.

**46. EXT. MĀORI PRISONER CAMP - DUSK**

TE KOOTI, carrying firewood, walks through the sombre Māori prisoner camp towards his shelter. His hair and beard have grown and his clothes are worn. He walks past the numerous shelters of the Māori and looks to their quiet sunken

faces. It is stark contrast to his home village as all prisoners reflect illness, malnutrition and exhaustion. A YOUNG BOY, of around 9 years of age limps from a shelter towards Te Kooti. He is malnourished and draped in rags.

YOUNG BOY (Te Reo Māori)

Father, when will the Lord save us?

Te Kooti walks to the child and kneels. He places his hands on the child's shoulders.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Soon e tama, soon. We must wait for the sign from our Lord.

YOUNG BOY (Te Reo Māori)

But father, we have waited for so long.

The child bows his head, purposely not to look at TE KOOTI.

YOUNG BOY (Te Reo Māori)

Some say that we will never be saved.

Te Kooti lifts the young boy's head and looks directly into his eyes. His soft words are spoken with passion and conviction.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

You pay those that would doubt me little attention e tama.

Te Kooti draws the malnourished child to him, and hugs him with affection.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Trust in me, believe in me, I will save you. I will save all of you.

He rises and continues walking towards his shelter. As he walks he looks across to the prisoner cemetery. A mass of makeshift crosses sprout like wooden flowers from the earth.

**47. EXT. SHELTER - MĀORI PRISONER CAMP - DUSK**

TE KOOTI arrives at his shelter and immediately realises something is awry. He turns and speaks to a KUIA (old woman) who stokes a fire beside the shelter.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Mother, where is Ereti?

KUIA (Te Reo Māori)

I do not know, Te Kooti, she was sent to fetch water and has not returned

Te Kooti immediately drops the wood he is holding and runs straight from the prisoner barracks into the bush.



**48. EXT. BUSH PATH - NIGHT**

TE KOOTI runs tirelessly, calling ERETI's name. Finally in the moonlight, he finds her naked body upon the earth. She is motionless, and has been beaten and raped within inches of death. Her once beautiful face is now a bloody pulp. Her young body is now covered with huge bruises, welts, and scratches, and we can see that she is bleeding from between her legs. Kneeling beside her, Te Kooti can do nothing but cradle her in his arms,

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

It is I Ereti, it is Te Kooti

Through a bloody mouth, Ereti struggles to speak.

ERETI (Te Reo Māori)

Hold me Te Kooti, hold me, don't let me go

He holds her to him and rocks her gently, tears flow freely from his eyes.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I am here Ereti, I am with you

Ereti's breathing slowly ceases and she dies in his arms.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Please, Lord, not again, not again.

Te Kooti gut wrenchingly sobs as he holds Ereti's lifeless body to him. He softly kisses her on the mouth, then croons a sorrowful waiata tangi, (song of lament and despair) that echoes through the moonlit night.

**49. EXT. WAITANGI BAY - SHORELINE - JUST AFTER DAWN**

TE KOOTI sits, shovel in hand, staring at the dying embers of the night's fire. A freshly covered grave lies next to him. The sun's morning rays dance upon the calm waters of the bay and the anchored ship that bobs idly within it.

Te Kooti sits immersed in thought, but for some reason his gaze is slowly drawn to the horizon. In the distance the glistening sails of a ship are seen, a second ship. Te Kooti rises and stares at the approaching vessel.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No more shall we toil in torment. It ends today,  
I will end it today.

Tears glisten in his Te Kooti's eyes as he stares intently at the approaching ship which dances upon the calmed waters emblazoned by the rising sun.

**50. INT. GUARDS BARRACKS - MORNING**

The guards, including ELLIOTT, sit inside their barracks, warmed by a blazing fire, sipping tea and happily conversing. Their muskets and whips lie idle against the barrack walls. Māori enter, carrying firewood for the

guard's barracks and proceed to stack the wood. The guards pay them little attention.

ELLIOTT

And so I grabbed her by the hair and--

To their surprise, a steely faced TE KOOTI enters the room, which electrifies with his presence.

TE KOOTI

Long have I prayed that our day of deliverance would come, the day that I would lead my people from bondage.

The guards look to Te Kooti in disbelief,

ELLIOTT

You?

Te Kooti stares coolly at Elliott.

TE KOOTI

This day has finally arrived.

Suddenly the Māori act in unison; they rush in all directions overpowering the oblivious guards, taking their weapons, and firmly securing them with rope.

**51. EXT. GUARDS BARRACKS**

TE KOOTI powerfully strides from the guards' barracks and waves his hand in signal to a lone figure on the roof of the prisoner barracks (still in construction) in the distance. The lone figure awaiting Te Kooti's signal, in turn, waves a roughly made signal flag (a white sheet with a red border.)

**52. EXT. WAITANGI BAY -- DECK OF THE RIFLEMAN**

On the deck of *The Rifleman*, the Māori who are unloading supplies turn to see the signal and immediately rush the sailors

**53. EXT. WAITANGI BAY --SHORELINE**

Māori unloading supplies from longboats, turn to see the signal and immediately rush and overpower the guards.

**54. EXT. BUSH CLEARING**

Māori felling native bush, turn to see the signal and immediately rush the guards.

**55. EXT. GUARDS BARRACKS**

TE KOOTI stands and looks at the unfolding of events, it is an overwhelming success, the island is theirs.

**56. INT. GUARDS BARRACKS**

Out of the sight of TE KOOTI, KAHUTIA picks up a fallen hatchet and walks slowly towards the trembling ELLIOTT. Elliott, sensing his intentions, wets his pants in fear

ELLIOTT

No please, please don't kill me,

Kahutia stares momentarily at the trembling and fear drenched Elliott. He calmly raises the hatchet, and in a powerful downward stroke wedges it to the hilt in the centre of Elliott's skull. Elliott drops to his knees, blood spurting in all directions. He pauses momentarily, and then falls flat on his face.

The other bound guards scream for their lives. Te Kooti, upon hearing the commotion, re-enters the room and is shocked at the murder that has taken place in his absence. He sorrowfully looks to Elliott's motionless corpse, and then to Kahutia.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No father, not like this.

Kahutia bows his head, acknowledging Te Kooti's statement.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

We are not like them; we must not allow ourselves to become them.

Te Kooti walks towards Elliott's corpse; he kneels and closes Elliott's eyelids.

TE KOOTI

May God grant you a peace in death, which you knew not in life.

He rises and looks to the other Māori who have been witness to the entire event.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

As I have told unto you, we are neither thieves nor murderers. Despite the brutality to which we have been subject, there shall be no retribution.

A Māori MAN with hatchet in hand speaks from the fore of the group.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

But Te Kooti, they have taken so much from us.

Te Kooti's gaze locks on the man

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I understand how you feel.

Te Kooti's gaze shifts to the entire group of Maori.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I understand how you all feel.

He walks closer towards the group of Māori who listen to him intently.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Long have we stood amidst the tragic midnight of oppression. To dwell in such darkness for so long, will only breed hatred and malice.

Te Kooti looks to each Māori as he speaks.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

But believe me when I tell you that our struggle for freedom must never be driven by hate and malice. For to struggle as such is to become mere reflections of those we struggle against. It must not be so, we must not forgo our faith, it is our faith which has bought us to this moment.

Te Kooti looks to the bound guards who still tremble in fear. He pauses upon them, then turns back to the Māori and speaks with stern conviction.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Now heed my words; there shall be no looting, arson or retribution. We shall take only those stores, munitions, and money that are needed for our journey.

The Māori nod in acknowledgement, but their faces still reflect hurt and hostility.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Now go, there is much to be done.

The Māori again nod in acknowledgement and run from the barracks. Te Kooti is last to leave, he looks one last time at Elliott's corpse then strides from the barracks.

**57. INT. GUARDS BARRACKS - MIDDAY**

THOMAS, from the window of the locked guard's barracks, stares in disbelief at the exiles who calmly board longboats and row towards the anchored vessel *The Rifleman*. He turns to look at the decrepit guards which share his prison, and then back to the exiles.

THOMAS

How is this possible? How is this possible?

Thomas spies a solitary figure on the shoreline, draped in a blanket, holding a musket. Eerily, as if sensing Thomas's eyes upon him, the figure turns and stares directly at Thomas. It is Te Kooti.

**58. EXT. WAITANGI BAY - SHORELINE - MIDDAY**

TE KOOTI, cloaked in a blanket, holding a musket, stands on the beach and watches longboats carrying Māori prisoners to the awaiting vessel, *The Rifleman*. The voice of KAHUTIA startles him from his fixation.



KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

There are no more to be taken aboard Te Kooti,  
all 297 of our people are accounted for. It is  
time.

Te Kooti looks to Kahutia, who waits aboard the last  
longboat.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes father, thank you.

Te Kooti glances back to the guard's barracks and spies  
THOMAS at the window. Their eyes lock momentarily. Te Kooti  
breaks the gaze, turns and steps from the beach onto the  
longboat.

#### **59. INT. GUARDS BARRACKS**

From the window of the guard's barracks, THOMAS watches as  
*The Rifleman*, with sails aloft, moves slowly from Waitangi  
bay.

#### **60. EXT. TOP DECK OF THE RIFLEMAN - NIGHT**

*The Rifleman* sails in star-studded skies. On the top deck,  
the CAPTAIN secretly talks with the FIRST MATE.

CAPTAIN

I daresay we cannot trust these Māories. Our best  
course of action would be to sail them straight  
into custody, to make for port Wellington.

The First Mate wearily eyes a patrolling Māori sentry then turns back to the captain.

FIRST MATE

I agree captain, I can subtly change course, I doubt that they would notice.

CAPTAIN

Make it so.

The First Mate casually walks to the helmsman, and inconspicuously whispers in his ear.

**61. INT. CAPTAINS QUARTERS -- BELOW DECK**

TE KOOTI sits by candlelight, keenly eyeing navigational charts. Suddenly, he looks out the cabin windows into space; he knows that the vessel has changed course. He runs from the room.

**62. EXT. TOP DECK OF RIFLEMAN -- NIGHT**

With musket in-hand, TE KOOTI approaches the CAPTAIN. The Captain seems flustered by Te Kooti's sudden appearance. Te Kooti forcibly speaks.

TE KOOTI

Why have you changed course Captain.

The Captain nervously fumbles his words

CAPTAIN

Changed course? We have not changed course. You are clearly mistaken.

Te Kooti quickly looks to the stars and then back to the Captain. He speaks with confidence.

TE KOOTI

You lie.

The Captain nervously looks to Te Kooti's musket. Te Kooti reads his glance.

TE KOOTI

If it is fear that drives your actions Captain, you have my word none shall be harmed on this journey.

The Captain, now acknowledging that Te Kooti has easily seen through the lie, concedes defeat.

CAPTAIN

I only feared for our safety.

TE KOOTI

Heed my words Captain. I hold no ill-will towards you, or your men. Now please, revert to the previous course, to the sheltered cove, Whareongaonga.

The Captain calls to the helmsman and the vessel reverts to his previous course. Te Kooti again looks to the stars and, satisfied, turns to the Captain.

TE KOOTI

Thank you Captain.

Te Kooti looks once more to the Captain, and then returns below deck.

**63. EXT. TOP DECK RIFLEMAN - MID MORNING**

TE KOOTI stands as a solitary figure on the top deck. Beneath him the Māori have crowded together at the bow and look anxiously to the horizon.

Slowly and surely, like a great fish rising from the depths, the east coastline of the north island rises from the Pacific Ocean. Suddenly there is delirious celebration: some laugh, some cry, others sing and dance. It is an amazing spectacle of joy.

Te Kooti stands on the deck and watches the Māori rejoice at the sighting of their homeland after so long in exile. As tears run down his cheeks, he speaks to himself.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

And there is hope in thine end, said the Lord that thy children shall come again to their own border.

The Māori continue to jubilantly rejoice.

**64. EXT. RIFLEMAN ANCHORED -- WHAREONGAONGA COVE - LATE  
AFTERNOON**

*The Rifleman* is anchored in a small cove. Long boats loaded with prisoners and provisions; slowly make their way to shore.

**65. EXT. TOP DECK RIFLEMAN**

TE KOOTI is the last to leave the vessel. He watches as many Māori, spurred through anticipation, leap from their longboats and swim frantically towards shore. Upon reaching the shore, it is again a moving spectacle of utter adulation. Many grasp the earth and sand as if it were a long lost lover, they hold it to their faces and body, and openly weep.

Te Kooti approaches the CAPTAIN, he hands him a bunch of letters bound with string.

TE KOOTI

I have written letters for you and your crew exonerating you for any misconduct that you may be accused of. I have also included six pounds within each envelope that will hopefully recover any lost wages.

The Captain stares at Te Kooti, and then at the letters. He is seemingly lost for words at Te Kooti's actions.

TE KOOTI

Goodbye Captain, may God grant you swift passage.

Te Kooti leaves the ship and boards the last longboat.

**66. EXT. SHORELINE -- WHAREONGAONGA COVE -- DUSK**

TE KOOTI reaches the shore and steps onto the beach. En masse, the exiles stand to meet him. They stare at Te Kooti with a look of utter devotion and affection. From the crowd the YOUNG BOY limps towards Te Kooti and embraces him.

YOUNG BOY (Te Reo Māori)

You saved us father, you saved us.

Te Kooti embraces the child, and suddenly, in a moving spectacle, the exiles in unison move towards Te Kooti to touch and embrace him.

Te Kooti releases the boy, and with his arms outstretched offers them to the masses.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

So have we been delivered from bondage my people,  
so hath the hand of the Lord freed us from the  
cruel hands of oppression. We are free my people,  
we are free.

Te Kooti watches as some exiles upon hearing his words, kneel to pray. He swiftly reacts.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No! Do not kneel to pray. We shall never kneel again; from this day forth we shall stand and lift our hand to the heavens, to give prayer to our father.

It is an amazing sight as, in the dying light the sun emblazoning the ocean in a multitude of colour. The exiles raising their outstretched hands to the heavens, jubilantly rejoice.

**67. EXT. SHORELINE - WHAREONGAONGA COVE - NIGHT**

TE KOOTI sits alone by a camp fire cloaked in a blanket. He stares intently into the dancing flames, immersed in thought. His head rises and he looks across the Bay towards the flickering lights of Tūranga (Gisborne). He talks to himself.

TE KOOTI (V/O) (Te Reo Māori)

I am so close to you Irihāpeti. I can feel you, and though my heart yearns more than anything to return to you, I cannot.

Te Kooti stares at the Māori people that lay sleeping in makeshift shelters all around him.

TE KOOTI (V/O) (Te Reo Māori)

My duty first lies with these people, my people.  
I must take them inland, to land where they will  
be able to settle peacefully, free from  
persecution.

Te Kooti stands and picks up two objects on either side of  
him. In one hand is the bible, the other hand is a musket.  
He again looks to the flickering lights of Tūranga and  
speaks,

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Love must be as much a guiding light as it is a  
flame.

He turns and walks into the darkness.

**68. EXT. BUSH TRACK - MORNING**

A group of a dozen mounted colonial troops gallop their  
horses through the bush.

**69. EXT. BUSH CLEARING - WHAREONGAONGA COVE - MORNING**

On the appearance of the mounted troops, Māori run with  
their children to safety; others grab their muskets and aim  
them at the approaching horsemen. The horsemen stop and one  
man rides forth; it is Captain WESTRUP.

WESTRUP

Te Kooti, show yourself! Show yourself!



The crowd parts and TE KOOTI armed with a musket walks to face them. Westrup in an officious manner, addresses Te Kooti.

WESTRUP

Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki, by order of the resident magistrate McLean, I order your immediate surrender.

Te Kooti stands adamantly, and speaks with conviction.

TE KOOTI

We were exiled and imprisoned unjustly on the Chatham Islands. We received neither charge nor trial. All we are guilty of is of freeing ourselves from this injustice.

Te Kooti's words fall on deaf ears, as Westrup looks on unimpressed.

TE KOOTI

We have at all costs avoided violence, all we wish is to travel to a place where we may live our days, unmolested and in peace. That is all we ask, that is all we seek; we wish neither conflict nor bloodshed.

Ignoring Te Kooti's words, Westrup merely repeats himself.

WESTRUP

By order of the resident magistrate Donald McLean, I order you to surrender immediately.

A tension grows across Te Kooti's face; he knows that this man will not hear reason.

WESTRUP

Well?

Te Kooti turns to gaze upon his downtrodden people. He takes a deep breath and then turns back to Westrup.

TE KOOTI

We will not surrender

WESTRUP (in disbelief)

What?

TE KOOTI

What we possess is what god has given; what has transpired was god's will. I will surrender neither myself nor my people back into slavery.

Westrup is flabbergasted, he heaves the reins, turning the horse.

WESTRUP

You dare contest the laws of the British Empire?

TE KOOTI

What right does the British Empire possess to decide my fate? Man shall be ruled by law of God, not by the will of other men.

Captain Westrup stares bewildered at Te Kooti, joins the others, and gallops away.

**70. INT. TŪRANGA MAGISTRATE OFFICE - MID AFTERNOON**

MCLEAN sits at his desk sorting paperwork. He looks up as WESTRUP enters his office.

MCLEAN

So we have them in custody Captain?

MCLEAN

No Sir, Te Kooti refused to surrender

MCLEAN

What?

McLean rises from his desk gazing with apprehension at Westrup.

MCLEAN

How many are with him?

WESTRUP

Around 300 Sir, an emaciated band of men women and children. They mean to trek inland.

McLean bows his head shaking it in disbelief.

MCLEAN

My god.

He again looks to Westrup.

MCLEAN

What action would you propose Captain?

Westrup eyes McLean with a look of astonishment.

WESTRUP

Sir, they are escaped Māori prisoners who have refused to surrender. I propose to lay in ambush and dispose of them.

McLean's eyes glaze over, slowly he walks to the window eyeing the pedestrians that file past.

WESTRUP

There is also the second problem of Te Kooti's people Sir. If they should find out he has escaped, without doubt they will join with him. I further propose that suppressive action must also be taken against them.

McLean continues to stare from the window, he does not answer.

WESTRUP

Sir?

McLean still does not answer.

WESTRUP

Sir?

McLean finally answers Westrup, though does not face him.

MCLEAN

Make it so Captain.

Westrup turns and marches from the room. McLean gazes from the window into the distance.

**71. EXT. DENSE NEW ZEALND BUSH - MIDDAY**

A Māori scout creeps stealthily through the dense bush. He spies WESTRUP and his resting force of around sixty mounted soldiers heavily armed. Upon seeing them he turns and runs back into the bush.

**72. EXT. BUSH TRAIL - LATE AFTERNOON**

The exiles in wagon trail formation, snake their way along a rugged bush track. Men carry heavy provisions, women carry children; elderly stumble with walking sticks; TE KOOTI walks carrying a small child, a musket slung from his shoulder.

Te Kooti watches as the same scout who spied WESTRUP's force approaches him. The scout whispers quietly to Te Kooti.

**73. EXT. COLONIAL ENCAMPMENT - BUSH CLEARING - DUSK**

With tents slung and cooking fires burning, the colonial force readies itself for the night. WESTRUP warms himself by a crackling fire, sipping tea from a tin mug. He stares intently into the dense bush, which due to the failing light, slowly grows in shadow. He calls to a nearby trooper.

WESTRUP

When exactly are we expecting them?

TROOPER

It should be sometime tomorrow afternoon Captain. They have elderly, women and children, their progress will be slow.

Westrup's stare again shifts to the bush and the darkening shadows. He eyes intently a particular shadowed piece of native bush. Shaking his head, he concedes it is nothing.

WESTRUP

Good, good, the less time I spend in this blasted wilderness the better

With one last swig Westrup finishes his tea. Taking a deep breath, he calmly makes his way back to the centre of the camp.

**74. EXT. DENSE NEW ZEALND BUSH - DUSK**

A solitary TE KOOTI, cloaked in dense bush, eerily stands in shadow and carefully watches WESTRUP sipping coffee. Cold shadows are cast on Te Kooti's face, the warmth and emotion that it usually exudes seems lost. He coolly stares at WESTRUP.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I told you of our peaceful intensions which you heeded not.

As Te Kooti speaks, armed exiles under the cover of darkness move stealthily through the dense bush encircling the encampment. They take position and carefully aim their weapons at the unexpected soldiers.

Te Kooti ominously raises his hand in the air in signal. Cloaked in the shadows behind Te Kooti, dozens of exiles wait with weapons aimed.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I will fight with all my power to defend my people.

As Westrup turns to make his way back to camp, Te Kooti drops his hand.

**75. EXT. COLONIAL ENCAMPMENT - BUSH CLEARING - DUSK**

Suddenly, a blaze of musket fire erupts from the bush to the forefront of the camp. In all directions soldiers fall dead and wounded. Miraculously unscathed, WESTRUP dives for cover as musket balls fly in all directions.

WESTRUP (in shock)

By god it's an attack! How on earth did they know where we were?

Westrup looks to the source of the musket fire and for a split second he sees TE KOOTI show his face and then disappear into the darkness.

WESTRUP

Te Kooti.

WESTRUP attempts to rally his men.

WESTRUP

It's a frontal assault, a single force. Dig in and centre your fire to the forefront.

The soldiers do as ordered. Suddenly, from both the left and right flanks of Westrup's force, musket fire erupts. The troops are caught in the deadly crossfire and drop like flies. Westrup is overwhelmed and does not know what order to call as the musket balls fly and his troops are routed. In disbelief he talks to himself.



WESTRUP

By god, we will be slaughtered.

He calls to the remaining soldiers.

WESTRUP

Run! Run for your lives! Retreat! Retreat!

The soldiers, leaving their horses, weapons, ammunition and provisions along with Westrup, flee for their lives into the bush. Musket fire slowly ceases and through the smoke a steely faced Te Kooti emerges with other members of the exiles

Te Kooti stands in the centre of the encampment, now empty of troops. He looks to the horses, weapons, ammunition, and provisions left by the soldiers. Around him the exiles begin to rejoice at their victory. A WOMAN calls to Te Kooti.

WOMAN (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti, Te Kooti we are victorious!

Te Kooti does not respond, rather he looks to the dead and wounded exiles being carried into the campsite. He silences those that would celebrate with the raising of his hand.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

God has helped us this day and cleared our path.  
But tonight we shall not rejoice. Tonight we  
grieve the first of us that have fallen.

Te Kooti looks to a scout.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Return and fetch our elderly and children, inform them that our journey continues.

The scout runs into the bush as Te Kooti walks to an idle shovel by a fallen exile and proceeds to dig a grave.

KAHUTIA walks to Te Kooti and addresses him out of earshot of the other exiles.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

It was a decisive victory today Te Kooti. The English ran like maggots from a fire.

Te Kooti takes a deep breath and looks to Kahutia

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes father, but they are not defeated. It is only the head we have maimed today, and although we have deprived it of some teeth, the body still lives and will pursue us again.

Kahutia nods his head in agreement.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

We must hasten to where it cannot reach us.

Te Kooti spies a teenage exile walk from the bush holding a musket; he is no more than a boy. Te Kooti's eyes lock on

him momentarily, he then bows his head and continues digging.

**76. INT. TŪRANGA MAGISTRATE OFFICE - MID AFTERNOON**

A knocking at his office door averts MCLEAN's attention.

MCLEAN

Well?

The soldier pauses uncomfortably, as if not wanting to disclose his information

SOLDIER

Sir, Westrup's force was routed by Te Kooti.

Utter astonishment streaks across McLean's face.

MCLEAN

What! How is this possible?

SOLDIER

Sir, survivors are giving varying accounts of the conflict. It appears Te Kooti spied our ambush and countered it with an attack of his own.

McLean, still in shock, walks to the window shaking his head in disbelief.

MCLEAN

How can a decrepit mob of prisoners defeat a force of trained government troops?

McLean pauses at the window, his face creased in thought. He worriedly murmurs to himself under his breath.

MCLEAN

My God, if Te Kooti can defeat Westrups force, what might he be capable of?

McLean turns back to the soldier.

MCLEAN

I want you to ride with haste to Napier and Colonel Whitmore. He is a war veteran and has a force of over 120 infantry. Inform him of our plight and that we require urgent assistance.

SOLDIER

Yes Sir, right away Sir.

The soldier runs from the room as McLean slumps back at his desk.

**77. EXT. RUAKITURI RIVER BED - LATE AFTERNOON**

Colonial troops casually walk along the riverbed beside the high flat of the riverbank. They are led on horse back by Colonel WHITMORE and Captain WESTRUP who rides on his right flank. Whitmore turns to Westrup.

WHITMORE (RP accent)

So Captain, what can you tell me of our adversary?

WESTRUP

His is a Māori rebel sir, named Te Kooti. He led a brazen escape from our Chatham penal facility and is attempting to lead the escaped prisoner's inla-

WHITMORE

No Captain, you misunderstood my question. What can you tell me of our adversary?

WESTRUP

Sorry sir?

WHITMORE (RP accent)

Our adversary Captain, his background, his schooling, his occupation? What can you tell me of the man?

Westrup seems somewhat surprised at the question posed.

WESTRUP

Sir I know nothing of the man and need know nothing of the man, he is a Māori savage.

They approach a small island clad in dense bush. It sits dead centre of the river bed, with the river curving on either side, they pay it little attention.

WHITMORE

Overconfidence can be disastrous if you indulge it Captain, for it traps you in an illusion of superiority. I thought your last defeat at this man's hands would pay testament to this fact.

Westrup wriggles uneasily in his saddle as the troops draw closer to the island.

WHITMORE

To know your enemy you must look beyond their appearance Captain, to the things they do and the ways they do them. If we understand the way our enemies think and how and where they obtain their knowledge, we have an adequate means to defeat them.

Whitmore eyes Westrup intently as he speaks.

WHITMORE

To underestimate your enemy Captain, is to conspire your own demise.

A flash of movement on the island ahead suddenly averts Whitmore's view. He immediately raises his hand calls to the troopers.

WHITMORE

HALT!

The troops stop dead in their tracks. There is an eerie silence as Whitmore stares unblinkingly at the island. Westrup rides alongside Whitmore.

WESTRUP

Sir? Did you see something?

Whitmore does not answer

WESTRUP

Sir?

Suddenly musket fire erupts simultaneously from the small island and from dense bush on the right flank, spewing death upon Whitmore's force. Westrup is struck from his horse by a musket ball to the chest. He is killed instantly.

WHITMORE

WESTRUP!

As musket balls scream in all directions, Whitmore focuses, looks to the left riverbank and attempts to rally his men,

WHITMORE

We must get out of this riverbed! Make for the left flank and cover, Move!

In the harrowing musket fire the colonial forces cross the shallow riverbed and desperately attempt to scramble up onto the left flank of the riverbank. Suddenly they are besieged by fire from hidden fighters in the dense bush. The troops are blasted back to the riverbed and wither in a murderous crossfire.

WHITMORE

By god it's a pincer movement. He's split his force into three groups and outflanked us; he outflanked us.

A shot strikes Whitmore in the arm, knocking him from his horse.

He lies on the ground and looks to his bewildered troops who fall like flies in all directions. He realises that the battle is lost.

WHITMORE

Retreat! Retreat!

The soldiers, hearing Whitmore's words, run for their lives in all directions.

From a concealed position, Te Kooti looks to the riverbed where dozens of soldier's bodies lie dead and dying. He spies Whitmore lying on the riverbed and walks from the safety of the bush towards him.

Whitmore spies Te Kooti, reaches for his side pistol and points it at Te Kooti, who does not flinch. Whitmore's pistol misfires; he tries it again, and it again misfires. Te Kooti walks towards him.

TE KOOTI

I am the man you seek.



Whitmore's eyes search for another firearm but there are none within reach. He rises and attempts to draw his saber from its sheath but is stopped in his tracks by Te Kooti, who raises his shotgun menacingly and points it towards him.

TE KOOTI

I only wish to talk but will fire upon you if attempt to attack me.

Whitmore's hand releases the grip of his saber and he stands silently. Te Kooti lowers his shotgun.

TE KOOTI

I conclude from your uniform that you are a Colonel. I hope as an educated man you are one of reason.

Colonel Whitmore remains silent, wearily eying up Te Kooti and the numerous exiles that slowly emerge from their concealed positions.

TE KOOTI

These deaths today need never have happened, and need never happen again. Cease the attacks against us, leave us to settle in peace.

Colonel Whitmore's eyes search for escape, finally he speaks.

WHITMORE

If you are a man of intelligence, you would know that what you ask is impossible.

He grabs the reins of a rider-less horse that wanders near him.

WHITMORE

By refusing to surrender you have foolishly entered into a battle with a foe you can never hope to defeat.

Whitmore mounts the horse and pulls on the reins turning the horse to face Te Kooti.

WHITMORE

There can never be peace against such a foe.

He pulls on the reins, turning the horse.

WHITMORE

You either submit, or the only peace you will find will be that found in the cold shrouds of death.

Whitmore lashes the horse with the reins and gallops away.

**78. EXT. PUKETAPU CAMPSITE - NIGHT**

TE KOOTI stands watching the lamentation of the exiles that were killed in the day's battle. KAHUTIA approaches him.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti, our messengers have returned with news from the neighboring tribes.

Kahutia hands Te Kooti two letters.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Thank you, father.

Te Kooti opens the first letter and reads. His face shows that the contents are not favorable. He opens the second letter and upon reading it, suddenly bows his head.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

They have refused our request father, we shall be attacked by them if we enter their territories. Both tribes fear retribution from the government if we are allowed to enter.

Kahutia grimaces but nods his head in acknowledgement.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Their worries are justified Te Kooti, we must respect their wishes. We must not cross into their territories.

Te Kooti lifts his head.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes father, but that means we can journey inland no further. With no way forward we are cornered here at Puketapu. Without support we stand alone and defenseless.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Without doubt the English at Tūranga (Gisborne) will soon assemble another force and attack us.

Te Kooti's gaze again shifts to the lamentation of the exiles.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes father, if we remain here, we will die.

**79. EXT. PUKETAPU CAMPSITE - NIGHT**

Te Kooti sits alone by a fire reading his bible. The crumpled letters lie beside him. He talks to himself.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

How shall I find thy road through the wilderness, Lord? How shall I find water in the desert for my people?

As he reads, frustration and anger start to build within Te Kooti. Suddenly, it boils to the surface. Te Kooti snaps

the bible closed and slams his fist upon it. He calls into the night

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

AAAAHHHHH!! Why do you English hound me so? Why can you not let me alone? What more do you want from me! Have you not taken from me everything?

His hands clench into fists, he shakes them at the night.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

What would you have me do? Await here at Puketapu to be attacked again by your soldiers? Surrender myself and my people back into incarceration, into extradition? No, never, that is a fate worse than death!

Te Kooti, in anguish, calls into the night.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

What choice have you given me!

He holds his hands to his face, and closes his eyes trembling. Quietly he whispers to himself.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

What choice have you given me?

Slowly Te Kooti's eyes open and he rises to his feet. Eerily the shadows cloak his features and only his eyes blaze in the night's fire.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I shall not surrender and I shall not wait idly at Puketapu, a lamb to your slaughter. If it is war you so ravenously seek, it is war I shall take to your doorstep. It is war I shall wedge in your throat.

Te Kooti's eyes blaze with intent.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I shall return to Tūranga (Gisborne) and strike at your heart.

**80. EXT. DENSE BUSH TRACK - DUSK**

The exiles, led by TE KOOTI, snake through bush towards the lights of Tūranga. They come across a boy drawing water from a spring. Te Kooti immediately recognises him as the boy ERUERA.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Eruera! Eruera!

The boy turns, startled, but recognises Te Kooti and runs to his open arms. He immediately breaks down crying as Te Kooti embraces him.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti, Te Kooti, they told us you were dead.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I am very much alive, what can you tell me of my wife, my son, our people?

Eruera sorrowfully bows his head.

**81. EXT. MONTAGE SEQUENCE OF TE KOOTI'S VILLAGE - DAY**

- A) Led by WESTRUP, colonial troops sweep through the village in a grotesque scene of wanton death and destruction.
- B) KIWA runs from his home brandishing a tewhatewha and is mown down in a hail of musket fire.
- C) IIRHĀPETI is dragged from her home, kicking and screaming she strikes a solider and is shot.
- D) TE WĒTINI and other women and children are chained and taken by the troops from the village.
- E) The whole village is alight with flames, littered with bodies.

We move away from the last image, further and further until we find that the image is in fact in Te Kooti's tear-filled iris, as if he had witnessed the entire event himself.

ERUERA (Te Reo Māori)

I managed to escape with my life from the soldiers, but I do not know the fate of the others.

Some exiles collapse in grief upon hearing the boy's words. A cold vacant expression moves over Te Kooti's face.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Go, find safety.

In a daze Te Kooti walks past the boy towards the flickering lights of the Tūranga.

**82. INT. MCLEANS HOUSE - NIGHT**

MCLEAN sits at a lamp-lit table eating with his wife and three children. His attention is averted by a knock at the door.

MCLEAN

Who could that be?

McLean walks down a small hallway towards the door. Through the glass he can make out a shadowy figure that knocks again.

MCLEAN

Who is it?

He opens the door to find TE KOOTI standing before him with a double-barrelled shotgun.

TE KOOTI

I have come for you.

Te Kooti opens fire; both barrels hit McLean directly in the abdomen: he flies backwards into a small side table. On either side of Te Kooti his disciples stream through the



door and run down the small hallway to where McLean's family is. We hear screaming, gunshots and tomahawk blows as McLean's family is murdered.

With a cold vacant expression, Te Kooti calmly reloads his shotgun and walks towards McLean. McLean, violently coughing blood, looks down in disbelief at the blood that spurts freely from his abdomen. He looks up at Te Kooti in further disbelief.

MCLEAN

You?

Te Kooti aims the shotgun at McLean's face; he calmly pulls back the firing pins.

TE KOOTI

I will judge you McLean. You shall be fuel for the fire, your blood shall flow throughout the land. You shall not be remembered, for I, the Lord's mouthpiece, have spoken.

With a steely look Te Kooti pulls the trigger. The sheer force of the shot decapitates Mclean splattering Te Kooti with blood. Te Kooti stares at McLean's twitching corpse, and the blood that pools slowly around his own boots.

**83. EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

TE KOOTI now stands silhouetted by MCLEAN's house which blazes ferociously behind him. He looks out to the numerous

burning houses of Tūranga and the gunshots and blood curdling screams that echo through the moonlit night. As he speaks, the light of the blazing houses dance eerily like hell fire in his eyes.

TE KOOTI

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore.

**84. EXT. DESTROYED MAORI VILLAGE - MORNING**

With KAHUTIA at his side, TE KOOTI walks the same path towards his village as he did earlier. In eerie silence, they pass the burnt hulks of houses and rotting communal gardens.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

All I loved was here father, all I cared and lived for.

Te Kooti reaches the burnt ruins of his home. He kneels and places down his shotgun. His hand reaches down and grasps a handful of earth and ash.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

I wanted to believe father, that there was a place for our people under English Law. That if we adhered to and lived in respect to English justice, we would find peace.

Te Kooti slowly pours the earth from his hand and looks to the burnt remains of his village.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

But there is no place in the English system for our people; there shall never be peace for our people under English law.

Te Kooti picks up his shotgun and rises. He turns to Kahutia.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

History has proven father that there comes a time in the life of any nation when there remains only two choices, to submit or fight.

Kahutia nods his head in agreement.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

That time has now come to our people.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Yes father, we have no choice but to fight.

Te Kooti looks into the distance.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

It is here on our own soil, under our own terms we shall make our stand against the English. It is here that we shall face and defy them.

**86. EXT. NAPIER - MORNING**

In a large parade ground, over six hundred colonial troops stand amassed in regimented lines. Colonel WHITMORE strides to the forefront to address them.

WHITMORE

I have received word that Te Kooti has attacked and sacked Gisborne, executing all who conspired in his incarceration and the confiscation of his lands.

There are sighs of disbelief from the soldiers

WHITMORE

In doing so he has destroyed the entire military presence stationed in Gisborne.

There are more sighs of disbelief. Whitmore paces to and fro in front of the soldiers.

WHITMORE

Our scouts tell us that Te Kooti has fortified himself and his forces in an ancient Māori pā to make his stand. We have received our orders and tomorrow we march to Gisborne to face and crush him.

The faces of some soldiers reflect apprehension at Whitmore's words.

WHITMORE

I speak to you now to reiterate that this enemy is not to be underestimated.

Whitmore stops pacing.

WHITMORE

Despite our superior numbers, training and firepower, do not expect an easy victory against him. Be prepared for war and death gentlemen. For it is exactly what you shall receive.

**87. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - FIRST PALISADE LINE - DUSK**

TE KOOTI stands alone and looks from the palisades of Ngātapa pā to the flickering lights of the multitude of camped colonial forces. Tears well and begin to run down his cheeks. His eyes close and he breathes deeply, he slowly calms and regains his composure.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

My Lord, give me the strength to tell them.

He turns and walks from the palisades.

**88. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - NIGHT**

In the blazing firelight TE KOOTI addresses his people.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

My people, last night the Lord visited me in a dream and blessed me with a vision. The vision of the outcome of the battle that stands before us.

The exiles listen intently, intoxicated by Te Kooti's words.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

The lord showed unto me that it is a battle in which we shall not be victorious. It is a battle in which many of us will lose our lives to its fury. But the Lord also showed me that I shall escape from this battle alive, and shall never be captured by government forces.

There is silence, then in reply a lone KUIA stands from the ranks of the exiles

KUIA (Te Reo Māori)

Long have I prayed that before death closed my eyes, I might behold the deliverer who will lead us to freedom. You are the chosen one, Te Kooti. The Lord has brought you to us.

Te Kooti slowly walks through the exiles towards the Kuia, his head bowed. The Kuia lovingly places her hands on Te Kooti's head and caresses him gently. She lifts his face and looks into his tear filled eyes,

KUIA (Te Reo Māori)

We are your people Te Kooti. We have lost as you have lost, we have journeyed as you have journeyed, and we have fought as you have fought. If this is our time, so be it. We stand by you and we will fall for you. For you must survive Te Kooti, for while you live, there is hope.

The Kuia gives Te Kooti a long affectionate hongī.

**89. EXT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - COLONIAL ENCAMPMENT- MORNING**

It is early misty morning as WHITMORE looks from his tent to the palisades of Ngātapa pa. He turns to his Captains

WHITMORE

Are the troops in position?

The captains all nod in agreement.

WHITMORE

Good, give the signal to advance

**90. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - FIRST PALISADE LINE - MORNING**

The heavens open as TE KOOTI watches through the sights of his musket the colonial force slowly advance. KAHUTIA lies next to Te Kooti, he calls to the exiles that share his trench, old and young, men and women.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Ready yourselves! It has begun!

**91. EXT. NGĀTAPA PĀ -- MORNING**

As the first wave of troops creep forward on mass, musket fire suddenly erupts from the first palisade line of Ngātapa pā, cutting a swath of death through the colonial ranks. Under the harrowing fire, the colonial troops bravely continue to advance, returning mountainous fire into the pā.

**92. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - FIRST PALISADE LINE - MORNING**

Musket balls slam into the palisade posts as TE KOOTI runs fearlessly through the trenches, he is dragged down by KAHUTIA as a shot blasts into a palisade post millimetres from Te Kooti's head.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

You must flee Te Kooti, while there is still a chance to escape.

Te Kooti shakes his head.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

No father, I will not leave.

Kahutia acknowledges Te Kooti's answer with a nod then screams to the exiles that share the trench.



KAHUTIA

We must hold them back! They must not reach  
mortar range. Fight! Fight!

Te Kooti turns and fires his musket, striking a running  
trooper in the chest and knocking him from his feet. He  
then ducks back into the trench to reload.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Hold them back! Hold them back!

**93. EXT. NGĀTAPA PĀ -- MORNING**

WHITMORE looks to the palisades of Ngātapa pā and the  
advancement of the troops.

WHITMORE

You no longer have the bush to hide you TE KOOTI.  
You have nowhere left to run.

**94. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - FIRST PALISADE LINE - NIGHT**

TE KOOTI falls exhausted into a trench and reloads his  
musket. He peaks over the trench and assesses the distance  
of the troopers. He talks to himself.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

They are too close.

He calls to an exile WOMAN near him.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

We must fall back to the second palisade line.  
The first is too badly damaged to hold a second  
attack. Tell the survivors to fall back.

WOMAN (Te Reo Māori)

Yes Te Kooti!

The Woman races down the trench as KAHUTIA approaches Te Kooti.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Major Ropata Wahawaha has joined the ranks of the  
English. He commands over 350 Māori kūpapa. We  
now face an attacking force of over a thousand  
men.

TE KOOTI looks to the dead and wounded exiles that line the  
trench.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

And our losses father? How many have fallen?

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

We have suffered heavily. We now fight with a  
little under 200 men and women.

Te Kooti shakes his head in anguish.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

So few against so many.

Te Kooti looks back to Kahutia whose face is streaked with determination.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

We will hold them Te Kooti.

**95. EXT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - NIGHT**

WHITMORE looks from a field tent to the breached outer palisade of Ngātapa.

WHITMORE (V/O)

You fight bravely, Te Kooti, but as you fight I surround you, sealing your escape.

Cloaked in the darkness, colonial troops creep stealthily through the dense bush, encircling the fortress.

WHITMORE (V/O)

You are outnumbered and outgunned Te Kooti, why do you still fight?

He turns to see soldiers cleaning and preparing mortars for use.

WHITMORE

This pā shall be your grave.

**96. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - SECOND PALISADE LINE - MORNING**

The early rays of morning rise and the fighting again commences. A WOMAN screams from within the second palisade the trench.

WOMAN (Te Reo Māori)

Fight! Fight! We must keep them back! They must not gain ground!

In unison the exiles fire repeatedly upon the hundreds of colonial troops which break again and again against the pa. Heavy colonial musket fire pours through the palisade line, exiles are practically minced, their faces blown off, their limbs severed.

As musket balls slam into palisade posts, KAHUTIA crawls to the slumped TE KOOTI who reloads his musket.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti, we have used near all our musket balls. We have not enough to repel another onslaught.

Te Kooti's head bows in thought and contemplation, he looks to Kahutia.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

We must use anything father,

Kahutia nods his head in acknowledgement.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Yes, we must melt any metal we have, spoons, buttons anything. Once that is gone we use stones or rocks.

Kahutia turns and crawls back along the trench as Te Kooti rises and fires a shot.

**97. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - SECOND PALISADE LINE - DUSK**

The sun begins to set on the second day as TE KOOTI looks to the ruins of the second palisade line. He realises that there are too few defenders and the palisade too damaged to sustain another attack. He calls to those that share his trench.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Retreat! Retreat to the inner palisade!

In the dying light on the second day, the exiles retreat to the inner palisade of Ngātapa pā. The final defensive position.

TE KOOTI is the last to leave the second palisade trench and, before leaving peers through the cracks at the encroaching colonial force. To his sorrow he witnesses mortars dragged forth.

**98. EXT. NGĀTAPA PĀ -- NIGHT**

Two colonial troopers sit by a mortar preparing for the bombardment that will commence in the morning. Suddenly soft voices are heard. SOLDIER 1 turns to SOLDIER 2

SOLDIER 1

Do you hear that?

The other soldier nods in acknowledgement.

SOLDIER 2

It's coming from inside the pa.

SOLDIER 1

Sounds like praying.

The melodic prayers of the exiles float on the night breeze reaching all the camped colonial troopers. WHITMORE looks from his tent to the haunting sound that reaches from the breached palisades of Ngātapa pā and echoes through the moonlit night.

**99. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - THIRD PALISADE LINE - MORNING**

On the morning of the third day the mortars begin to pound the pā ceaselessly. The exiles desperately try to defend, TE KOOTI watches, helpless and grieved, as many are blown to pieces, legs amputated, heads removed from shoulders. He knows that they cannot withstand the bombardments in the open. He screams a retreat.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Back to the bunkers! Retreat to the bunkers!

The remaining Ngātapa defenders retreat into underground makeshift bunkers as Te Kooti and a skeleton crew remain to return fire.

**100. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - THIRD PALISADE - NIGHT**

Night falls and the bombardment finally ceases, KAHUTIA crawls to the exhausted and battle weary TE KOOTI.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

The soldiers have found our water supply and severed it Te Kooti. We have enough water for another day at most.

Te Kooti nods his head in acknowledgement.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

Thank you father.

Te Kooti turns to look through the palisade but is averted as Kahutia places a hand on his shoulder.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

I knew your father Te Kooti,

Te Kooti looks at Kahutia.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)  
My father?

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)  
Yes, he was a great man. It is a shame death took  
him so young.

Te Kooti bows his head in sorrow as KAHUTIA continues.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)  
You have lived a life, which honours your  
father's name.

Te Kooti slowly lifts his head, his eyes are filled with  
tears.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)  
Whatever our destinies may hold, I am honoured to  
have stood at your side.

Kahutia moves forward and gives Te Kooti a long  
affectionate hongī. As they hongī Te Kooti speaks.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)  
No father, it is you who honour me.

Kahutia nods in appreciation then turns and crawls back  
down the trench into darkness.



**101. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ BUNKER - DAY**

Inside the dimly lit bunkers, the few remaining exiles huddle with the young children and elderly who have held refuge there since the beginning of the fighting. The rain of mortar fire is unceasingly and deafening. The children scream and wail and many adults just hold their heads and rock back and forth.

**102. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ BUNKER - NIGHT**

As night falls the shells slowly cease. Suddenly, as if an apparition, TE KOOTI enters the bunker. He is near black with soot, with only the whites of his eyes shining brightly.

TE KOOTI (Te Reo Māori)

Come with me.

**103. EXT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - DUSK**

Colonel WHITMORE watches as Ngātapa is pounded into rubble by the endless mortar fire. He turns to a CAPTAIN.

WHITMORE

Is the pā fully surrounded?

CAPTAIN

Yes sir, only the back of the pā is left unguarded. It is a sheer vertical cliff of over a thousand feet, impossible to descend.

WHITMORE

Good, good, tomorrow morning we shall attack in full force in a frontal charge, the defences are destroyed and open, and their numbers few. There shall be no escape.

**104. EXT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - MORNING**

The colonial troops wait amassed ready for the final assault. WHITMORE stands at the forefront with his pistol and sabre drawn. He turns to his men

WHITMORE

Ready men, today we shall strike at--

His attention is taken by a clear WOMAN's voice calling from within the pā; it cuts through the morning silence like a knife.

WOMAN

Te Kooti is gone! Te Kooti is gone! Do not shoot!  
Do not shoot!

The voice repeats the same message.

WOMAN

Te Kooti is gone! Te Kooti is gone! Do not shoot!  
Do not shoot!

Bewildered, Whitmore and his siege party slowly advance through the rubble.

**105. INT. NGĀTAPA PĀ - MORNING**

WHITMORE looks in disbelief at a small party of women and children and elderly huddled together in fear. The pā is empty.

Whitmore walks towards the small party.

WHITMORE

What happened here? Where are they? Where is he?

A WOMAN stands and speaks in pigeon English.

WOMAN

They gone,

WHITMORE

What? How?

WOMAN

In the night they make rope from vines. They climb down cliff.

As the woman finishes talking a look of astonishment cuts across the face of Whitmore, he talks to himself.

WHITMORE

But that cliff is over a vertical drop of over a thousand feet, it was driving with rain last night. How could he possibly accomplish this with elderly, women and children?

He turns to his Captains.

WHITMORE

Inform your men that we are leaving immediately in pursuit of Te Kooti. Travel light, take only those arms and ammunition necessary. Te Kooti and his followers are exhausted and dehydrated. They will not have got far.

The Captains bark orders to their troops

**106. EXT. DENSE NEW ZEALAND BUSH - EARLY MORNING**

TE KOOTI runs tirelessly through the dense bush. He looks to the numerous exiles which surround him, they are all in terrible physical condition. He is overcome with conflicting emotion, pride respect and admiration for his people but also sadness, despair and anger. Suddenly, a musket ball flies past him striking a tree to his left. Startled, Te Kooti turns to witness hundreds of colonial troops swarming through the dense undergrowth towards them. KAHUTIA screams to the exiles.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

The troops are upon us! Into smaller groups!  
Split into smaller groups! Protect Te Kooti, he  
must escape!

Te Kooti breaks from a group in a rear guard action. With chest heaving, Te Kooti watches helplessly at the spectacle of utter terror before him. In all directions his

overwhelmed disciples, though fighting bravely are shot, bayoneted, stabbed and tomahawked.

A voice calls Te Kooti's name. It is a Māori MAN one of his disciples.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti! Te Kooti! We must go! The Government troops are nearly upon us!

Musket shots scream all around them slamming into trees and earth. But TE KOOTI's stare remains transfixed. The MAN grasps Te Kooti's shoulder.

MAN (Te Reo Māori)

Te Kooti please! We must go--

His words are cut short by a musket ball striking him directly in the side of his head killing him instantly and splattering Te Kooti's face with blood. An English VOICE screams.

VOICE (O/S)

There's one!

Startled from his fixation, Te Kooti looks up to see a handful of government troops tearing through the bush towards his position. They are close, he is outnumbered, there is no escape.

Te Kooti's soot-blackened face is now splattered with blood and smeared with tears. We remained focused on Te Kooti's face and slowly move towards him. In a split second, Te Kooti's face suddenly focuses: in a blinding movement he turns and fires at one trooper striking him in the chest knocking him from his feet. He throws the musket with the bayonet, striking another trooper square in the chest, also knocking him from his feet.

He swiftly pulls a tomahawk from the small of his back and parries the bayonet charge of a charging colonial soldier delivering a death blow to the back of the trooper's skull. He parries the bayonet charge of another soldier by leaping directly into the air and, upon landing, delivers another death blow to the skull of the trooper. Musket fire erupts from the bush leveling the remaining pursuers. A handful of exiles led by KAHUTIA have returned for their leader. Kahutia calls out.

KAHUTIA (Te Reo Māori)

RUN TE KOOTI!

Te Kooti stands, chest heaving. His face reflects neither fear nor panic, but merely a steely determination. With his followers in tow, he turns and runs into the bush. We watch the back of the men running in slow motion

TE WĒTINI (V.O)

Over the next three years my father was relentlessly hunted by government forces who mounted numerous ruthless expeditions against him. However, true to his prophecy my father continually avoided capture by all Government forces amassed against him.

As the men one by one disappear into the bush Te Kooti is the last. He turns and looks directly into the camera.

TE WĒTINI (cont'd)

The prophecy of my fathers birth told of a heralding of great evil to the land, a time of suffering and misery. Many believed that my father's birth heralded this evil, but I do not.

He turns and runs in slow motion into the dense bush.

TE WĒTINI (cont'd)

I believe the prophecy foretold the birth of a special man to guide us in those times of evil, to provide hope when war and death was so unwillingly forced upon us.

Te Kooti disappears into the bush and is lost from sight. The screen fades to black. Only TE WĒTINI's words echo in the darkness.

TE WĒTINI (cont'd)

My father once told me that to help your people  
you must love your people, and perhaps in the end  
it is that simple. My father accomplished great  
feats because he loved his people, and where  
there is great love, there are always miracles.

**END:**



## Glossary

Hongi:	Traditional greeting
Huia:	Extinct native bird
Karakia:	Incantations
Karanga:	call of lament
Kaumātua:	Māori elders
Kehua	Ghost
Kūpapa	Māori fighting on side of British
Korowai:	Traditional feather cloak
Kuia:	Old women
Māori:	Indigenous New Zealanders
Mate Pākehā	European disease
Matua:	Father, form of address for any older male figure
Mau Rākau:	Māori weaponry
Oriori:	lullabies
Pā	Fortification
Pākehā:	New Zealanders of European descent
Pāpā:	Transliteration for father
Pokokōhua :	Bastard
Poroporoāki:	Song of farewell
Raupō:	Bulrush
Rei puta:	Whales tooth
Tama:	Son, form of address for any younger male figure.

Tāne:	God of forest
Te Ika a Māui	The North Island
Te Reo Māori:	Māori language
Tewhatewha	Two handed fighting staff
Tohunga:	Traditional Māori expert
Tohunga matakite:	Seer
Tūranga	Gisborne
Waiata tangi:	Song of lament
Whareongaonga:	Sheltered cove close to Gisborne.

## 4.0 CHAPTER THREE

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### 4.1 Critical Analysis

#### 4.1.1 Indigenising the Screen: A Decolonisation Project

Every culture has a right and responsibility to present its own culture to its own people. That responsibility is so fundamental it cannot be left in the hands of outsiders, nor be usurped by them. Furthermore, any culture living closely with another ought to have regular opportunities to express itself to that other culture in ways that are true to its own values and needs (Barclay, 1990, p.7).

The feature length screenplay *The Prophet* was written in an attempt to contribute to a decolonisation and indigenisation of the New Zealand cinema screen. This personal desire was a manifestation fuelled through hours spent examining, analysing and scrutinising the forces that inform film makers, in particular Pākehā film makers, in their representations of Māori in New Zealand film. This analysis concluded that many films made in New Zealand are, and continue to be shaped or marked by colonial discourses which perpetuate negative belief systems about Māori and continue to contribute to the reproduction of stereotypical images of Māori. The writing of the feature length screenplay *The Prophet* therefore aspired to materialise strong anti-colonial perspectives aimed specifically at subverting those long-held and dominant colonial discourses, i.e. the irrational, naive, simpleminded and warlike Māori man, or the domesticated, lustful and sexually available Māori woman, misrepresentations which still hold prominence in many New Zealand films.

Subverting these misrepresentations may be linked to a decolonising project. Mita (1994) presents such a project as a process which involves decolonising the screen, demystifying the process and indigenising the image (p.19). Such an approach rejects the tradition of being defined, constructed and

represented through discourses that serve to promote the interests of the Pākehā majority and, in doing so, urges the utilisation of kaupapa Māori philosophies, concepts and practices in the process. Such a decolonising approach also underpinned a personal drive to explore the issue of scriptwriting further, namely, the way in which a traditional genre of Māori narrative, in this case pūrākau, can inform the emergence of a theoretical approach to filmmaking and participate in decolonising western notions that indigenous oral traditions are simple expressions of a primitive culture. The implementation of a pūrākau approach therefore creates the opportunity to write about culture as well as write culture into the text, an important view shared by Mita:

For Māori and the indigenous people around the world who have their spirituality continuously under attack, sharing their dreams and visions of others is an experience beyond the self. The value of that should not be underestimated (Mita, 1994, p.40).

#### **4.1.2 Re-presentation: Challenging the Old**

Crucial to this decolonisation project was the deconstructing of the types of images that have been offered to constitute 'Māori'. This approach was a process of deconstruction which highlights the effects of perpetuating particular definitions of 'being Māori' and how those in turn validate and support particular constructions of 'being Pākehā.' What has come to 'count' as 'difference' are those differences which distinguish Māori from Pākehā; that is, physical characteristics, the language and the culture. Although the struggle for Māori in terms of their differences has often been defined both historically and contemporarily in terms of perceived racial characteristics, these beliefs have played a major part in how Māori are viewed today. Eurocentric representations of 'difference' continue to find form and contemporary expression in internationally successful feature films which are sold to the world as authentic depictions of Māori realities.

Such a decolonisational approach to scriptwriting meant ultimately utilising Māori values such as whakapapa, (genealogy) whānaungatanga, (kinship ties) mana, (pride, prestige) manākitanga, (caring) aroha (love), tapu, (sacredness) mana tūpuna (ancestral prestige) and wairua (spirituality) as foundational concepts for correcting these past misrepresentations and providing the positive imaging that destroys those stereotypes of Māori that have arisen from cultural appropriation. This fundamental approach to Māori filmmaking emphasised by Mita:

The Māori filmmaker carries the burden of having to correct the past and therefore be concerned with demystifying and decolonising the screen. The expectation of positive imaging means destroying the stereotypes that comes from cultural appropriation and clearing the refuse out of oneself in order to make a fresh new start (Mita, 1994, p.49).

Ultimately *The Prophet* aspired for both Māori and Pākehā to look to the screen and see representations of Māori never seen depicted before, representations that challenge all their epistemological assumptions in relation to the roles and expectations of Māori men and women in our society. There are numerous scenes in *The Prophet* that effectively encapsulate this sentiment and highlight the decolonisational approach taken in the scriptwriting practice. These scenes I shall juxtapose against examples from recently successful films *The Piano*, *Whale Rider*, *Once Were Warriors* (1994) and *River Queen*.

Primitivist discourses in relation to race frame Māori as outside culture, as irrational, naïve and simpleminded in Jane Campion's *The Piano*. For example, when the bluebeard shadow play is performed a group of Māori leap onto the stage to rescue the female performers. When Ada and her daughter arrive on the beach in New Zealand, a perplexed Māori character is seen rubbing his finger blindly across the words carved in the side of the wooden crate. Later on in the film a group of Māori men are caught violently thumping the keys of the piano in "dumb" incomprehension. On the whole the Māori characters remain marginal

to the central narrative. The perception of Māori people given in *The Piano* is that Māori were “naive, simpleminded, lacked reason, acted impulsively and spoke only in terms of sexual innuendo, with a particular obsession with male genitalia” (Pihama, 1994, p.239).

In direct contrast, there are numerous scenes in *The Prophet* in which Te Kooti along with other Māori are depicted consistently as deliberate, articulate, eloquent and intelligent. Such examples being the scenes in which Te Kooti uses his intellect and mastery of the English language to successfully battle and defeat the traders, Harris and Read, or when Te Kooti’s father Te Rangipātahi critically and thoughtfully imparts wisdom to his young son, highlighting the forces that play upon their lives and the lives of their people. Throughout the length and breadth of *The Prophet* there are innumerable scenes where Te Kooti uses his intellect, critical reasoning, and eloquence to talk, reason, guide, persuade, support and protect his family, his people and followers. Such scenes were written specifically to challenge the primitivist discourses in relation to race, that frame Māori as irrational, naïve and simpleminded.

Stereotypical representations perpetuated by *Whale Rider* and the *River Queen* also serve to define Māori women in line with particular roles, expectations and practices based in discourses of both racial and sexual inferiority. In *Whale Rider*, Niki Caro’s screen adaptation of Witi Ihimaera’s novel for example, carries inaccurate undertones of a male dominated and intensely patriarchal tribal society to the world. For example, the central protagonist Paikea, (Keisha Castle-Hughes) though obviously demonstrating leadership attributes and abilities, is denied and chastised purely because of her gender and this chauvinism is then falsely authorised within the film as being deeply rooted in tribal history and custom. Even when Paikea is eventually accepted and affirmed as being a tribal leader it is only ever perceived that this is because Paikea is ‘special,’ thus implicitly indicating that no other women was deemed worthy of this male dominated position until this particular juncture in time. Throughout *Whale Rider* Māori women play no part in any major decision

making processes, which are entirely male dominated, and their roles are rather reflected in the underlining colonial projections of domesticity and subservience.

Further reinforcing these stereotypes, the representation of women in *River Queen* varies drastically between the two depicted cultures, Māori and Pākehā. Firstly, the main protagonist of the film Sarah O'Brien (Samantha Morton) is portrayed as a self-sufficient independent, self-governing heroine, unrelent on a man to survive. In contrast, Māori women are portrayed throughout the film as one dimensional and subservient to Māori men. Several scenes illustrate this, such as those where Māori women gather around the Māori chief Te Kaipō (Temuera Morrison) to dote on him while he is recovering from illness; The Māori women's whole purpose is encapsulated in their reverence of the chief and his mainly physical needs. In the scene where Te Kaipō takes another allied chief's wife to bed, once again we see Māori women depicted as possessions and sexual objects with their character or motivations overlooked. Furthermore, the distinction between Sarah a white woman and the 'other' Māori women is further highlighted as she shares a dream with the chief therefore portraying Sarah as relatively equal within the context of a monarchical hierarchy, when Te Kaipō bestows her with the honour of Queen naming her 'Queenie'.

In direct contrast, there are numerous scenes in *The Prophet* in which Māori women are depicted as articulate, intelligent, strong, passionate, self-sufficient, independent and self-governing. Pertinent examples include the scenes in which Irihāpeti utilises her intellect, critical reasoning, and eloquence to debate, reason, guide, persuade and challenge Te Kooti's decisions, or when she verbally challenges the powerful Pākehā McLean in his own office. Other scenes on the Chatham penal colony depict another strong female character, Ereti, who again exudes intelligence, strength, valour, bravery and courageousness. Throughout *The Prophet* there are numerous scenes in which Māori women are depicted as equals, living, working, leading, fighting and dying alongside their male counterparts. Such scenes were again written to directly

challenge those roles, expectations and practices that frame Māori women as naïve, simpleminded, domesticated, lustful and sexually available.

*The Prophet* also sought to counter those representations of Māori depicted in the film *Once Were Warriors*, written and directed by Māori. *Once Were Warriors*, based upon the novel by Alan Duff and directed by Lee Tamahori recasts the physically violent savage by centring on the sociopathic violence of Māori father Jake Heke (Temuera Morrison) and its effects on his immediate family. Unfortunately, as its title suggests, the film intimates that the inherent violence of Māori male was, in pre-colonial times, appropriate for a noble warrior culture but today has become a natural symptom of urban Māori dysfunction. *Once Were Warriors* failed to identify the process of colonisation and its policies of assimilation as a causal factor in the Heke whānau fragmentation and dysfunction. In doing so the apportioning of blame is therein left upon the victims of the colonial process. The effect of this is to question the morality of Māori culture and society, more specifically Māori males, especially fathers and leaders.

Again the *The Prophet* sought to counter those representations of Māori men as unintelligent, emotionless and physically violent. Through numerous scenes in *The Prophet* Māori men are depicted as firmly in touch with their emotions and unafraid to express them. Te Kooti in particular is portrayed as outwardly loving, caring and affectionate towards his wife, his child, his family and friends. Though violence by Māori men is of course depicted in *The Prophet*, unlike *Once Were Warriors*, violence is only ever represented as a final last ditch means to protect, defend, shield and shelter themselves, their families and those they love from impending harm or unavoidable danger. The grand narrative of New Zealand society that depicts Māori men as emotionless, uneducated and physically violent has inscribed upon Māori culture a falseness that the feature length screenplay *The Prophet*, desperately strives to remedy.

Those scenes of misrepresentation depicted in *The Piano*, *Whale Rider*, *Once Were Warriors* and *River Queen* highlight the types of colonial discourses



that *The Prophet* struggles with and against, the types of colonial discourses that have informed film makers, in particular Pākehā film makers, as to how Māori should be presented. These are the types of Eurocentric expressions that still find contemporary form in current feature films and are then sold to the world as an authentic depiction of Māori realities. These are the portrayals that add to the perpetuation of belief systems that undermine not only the Māori position in this country but also Māori intelligence.

#### 4.1.3 Western Narrative Structure & Pūrākau: A Cross Cultural Approach

In the writing of *The Prophet* I adopted a unique writing style to address these past misrepresentations, drawing upon both the 'classic' western narrative three-act story structure as well as kaupapa Māori pūrākau oral tradition allowing a cross cultural approach. Such an approach was utilised to best maximise the deconstructing of the types of images that have been offered to constitute 'the Māori' image. This specific approach would prove to be vitally important as my theoretical knowledge in relation to the scriptwriting practice would provide the foundational craft base underpinning my pūrākau creative approach. This pūrākau approach to scriptwriting is not in reference to a specific cinemagraphic style but rather to a theoretical base that can inform the scriptwriting process. It is therefore pertinent at this juncture to briefly discuss the dual narrative approaches adopted in *The Prophet*.

Screenplay may be seen to be a frame around which a house is built. Everything hangs off that frame. The blueprint for that frame is the story structure. If the blueprint/story structure is flawed, so too will be the frame/script and, ultimately, any construction/film built around it. Filmmakers may vary in degree to which they agree with these sentiments, but the fact is, story structure is at the centre of script development. Screen drama is about storytelling and at the heart of storytelling is structure. Over the decades scriptwriters have wrestled with the idea of how to best realise structure in the

script. Over time a structural paradigm has therefore evolved, based on the classic Aristotelian three-act structure that dates back at least as far as ancient Greece.

The massive increase over the last twenty years in the number of books dealing with screenwriting and incorporating this paradigm in one form or another has resulted in the elevation of the paradigm to the level of orthodoxy. The paradigm can be seen to have taken on the dimensions of a model, the key points in which have to be 'hit' by the writer in order for the story to be considered to be told 'correctly.' The three-act story structure basically reads as such:

### **ACT I**

This part of the story introduces the main character, the dramatic premise, and the dramatic situation.

- **Main character:** the person in the story who has a need/objective to fulfil and whose actions drive the story.
- **Dramatic premise:** what the story's about.
- **Dramatic situation:** the circumstances surrounding the action.
- **Inciting Incident:** an event that sets the plot of the film in motion. It occurs approximately halfway through the first act.

### **ACT II**

- **Obstacles:** In the second act, the main character encounters obstacle after obstacle that prevent him from achieving his dramatic need.
- **First Culmination:** a point just before the halfway point of the film where the main character seems close to achieving his or her goal/objective. Then, everything falls apart, leading to the midpoint.
- **Midpoint:** a point approximately halfway through the film where the main character reaches his/her lowest point and seems farthest from fulfilling the dramatic need or objective.

### ACT III

- **Climax:** The point at which the plot reaches its maximum tension and the forces in opposition confront each other at a peak of physical or emotional action.
- **Resolution:** The brief period of calm at the end of a film where a state of equilibrium returns.

**Plot Point:** The three acts are separated by two 'plot points'. A plot point is an event that thrusts the plot in a new direction, leading into a new act of the screenplay.

(Field, 1984)

Among the most well respected writer/teachers promulgating this narrative structure are Syd Field, Linder Seger, Robert McKee and Chris Vogler. These are four writer/teachers of screenwriting, whose articulations have done more to define and entrench the paradigm, than have any other influences. All of these key writers acknowledge the three-act structure as being at the heart of the screen drama story structuring, and acknowledge its roots in ancient Greek storytelling. Despite variations in terminology, the four writer/teachers scriptwriting models all advocate the basic Aristotelian three-act structure. Although the authors may also vary in degree to which they espouse the importance of character to story in comparison to structure, all can be seen to reinforce the dominant orthodoxy of film story structuring. Though the three-act structure will not guarantee a good screenplay or a good film, all good screenplays are said to fit into this paradigm.

Chris Vogler in his 1999 book *The Writers Journey: Mythic structure for storytellers and screenwriters* takes the three-act structure and relates it to archetypes of the collective unconscious that pre-occupied Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. I utilised the Vogler journey in the writing of *The Prophet*, which fitted neatly into his matrix, consisting of eleven stages. The mythically flavoured titles apart, Vogler's matrix of course tallies closely with the established three-act

Paradigm previously articulated. I have therefore listed the matrix and attached the corresponding stages of the *The Prophet* illustrating how the screenplay integrated efficiently into the Vogler matrix.

### **(Act 1)**

(Approximately 30 pages)

- **Ordinary World** (Te Kooti at home)
- **Call to Adventure** (Irihāpeti tells Te Kooti of the Hauhau movement))
- **Refusal of the Call** (Te Kooti refuses to fight with the Hauhau)
- **Meeting with the mentor** (Te Kooti is unjustly arrested and meets Kahutia in prison)
- **Crossing the fist threshold** (Te Kooti is exiled to the Chatham penal colony)
- **Test, allies, enemies** (Te Kooti's incarceration on the Chatham penal colony)

### **(Act 2)**

(Approximately 60 pages)

- **Approach the innermost cave ordeal** (Te Kooti's contracts tuberculosis and is isolated to die)
- **Reward** (Te Kooti miraculously recovers, leads a daring escape back to New Zealand and then treks inland to find safety)

### **(Act 3)**

(Approximately 30 pages)

- **The Road Back** (Te Kooti returns to Tūranga for vengeance)
- **Resurrection** (Te Kooti is cornered at Ngātapa but prophesies his survival)
- **Return with the elixir** (Te Kooti miraculously escapes death)

(Vogler, 1999, p.33)

Vogler's Matrix and therefore the three-act paradigm proved to be a useful story structuring tool in the practice of writing *The Prophet*, most particularly as a tool of reference at the initial story structuring and editing stages. The three-act structure provides a means for realising a theme and of telling a story that is driven by characters, as long as it is not applied as a formula, but rather as a guide, to be applied and varied according to the individual story. This view for scriptwriting is emphasised by Vogler (1999):

The conscious awareness of its patterns may be a mixed blessing, for it is easy to generate thoughtless clichés and stereotypes from this matrix... But if writers absorb its ideas and re-create them with fresh insights and surprising combinations, they can make new forms and new designs from ancient, immutable parts (p.34).

The three-act structure was of most practical value when used as a tool for maintaining story momentum, its usefulness being in its capacity to act as a guide for helping maintain focus on the central narrative. But again, the paradigm only provides a framework, alone it merely stands as a shell. The creative energies of the writer must provide the material to fill this shell, to give it shape and form, a view again emphasised by Vogler (1999):

At the core of every artist there is a sacred place where the rules are set aside or deliberately forgotten, and nothing matters but the instinctive choices of the heart and soul of the artist (p. 35).

Therefore the structurally sound three-act paradigm provided the foundational craft base underpinning my pūrākau creative approach to scriptwriting. This is not only a decolonising methodology, but is simultaneously a pedagogical tool containing and projecting fundamental Māori concepts, through the utilisation and promotion of stories that draw on Māori language, concepts and values. A pūrākau methodology, when incorporated into a scriptwriting/filmmaking context, therefore provides a way to regenerate

cultural ways of knowing, teaching and learning through the utilisation of the medium of film as a pedagogical vessel to reiterate examples of appropriate morals and social conduct. Such a layered vision for scriptwriting/film production directs the approach advocated by Barclay who campaigned for an alternative indigenous filmmaking base set firmly in the customs and laws of the Māori community.

Through a pūrākau approach the imagery of Māori people in *The Prophet* is located firmly in Māori constructions and, hence, we receive all the layered messages both subtle and overt, and which coalesce to express Māori values. For example, throughout the length and breadth of *The Prophet* the communal living and working environment of Māori is emphasised and celebrated, also emphasised and celebrated are the close interconnected relationships Te Kooti holds and shares with his friends, family and extended family and the strength that is seen to be gained from such close relationships. The representation of communal living in *The Prophet* highlights such fundamental Māori concepts of whakapapa, (genealogy) whānaungatanga, (kinship ties) mana, (pride, prestige) manākitanga, (caring) kotahitanga, (unity) and aroha (love). Such representations and concepts contrast markedly with the way Pākehā view the world, for the western ideal of the isolable individual as a free agent is antithetical to Māori social values. No person stands alone in the Māori worldview. Somewhere there is a group to which the person belongs, from which he/she derives a meaningful identity and without which there is no sense of wholeness.

Other scenes, such as Te Kooti's constant reverence of ancestors, highlight other fundamental Māori principles such as tapu, (sacredness) mana tūpuna (ancestral prestige) and wairua (spirituality). These spiritual attitudes again lie deep in Māori worldviews. Māori are imbued with a deep sense of the sacred in ordinary everyday life, and the spiritual touches life in all its dimensions. Such a view does not recognise the binary categories of sacred and secular. The late Rev Māori Marsden, a notable Māori theologian, concluded that while the Māori thought of the physical sphere as subject to natural laws, these could be affected, modified and even changed by the application of the higher laws of the

spiritual order. Therefore Māori reality is rooted in the physical and the metaphysical, the spiritual and the material, and both must be considered when change and development are contemplated.

The portrayal of pūrākau narrative is therefore not only about issues of textuality, that is how the stories should be written but moreover, the transfer of knowledge, a vessel to arouse the imagination, inform and inspire, warn and persuade, maintain relationships, protocols, rituals and rules. The epistemology of pūrākau is therefore not ultimately restricted to the knowledge presented in the stories, but is also concerned with the dissemination of the knowledge itself. This is ultimately what a Pūrākau approach strives to achieve. Pūrākau encapsulate and condensed into easily assimilable forms, express the epistemological, theological and metaphysical beliefs of the people. The underlying values and principles adopted from pūrākau are vitally important for Māori to survive harmoniously within their environment, both spiritually and physically.

#### **4.1.4 The Way Forward: Next Steps for *The Prophet***

The way forward for *The Prophet* is to firstly realise that there is much work still to be done. The biggest challenge faced when writing *The Prophet* was trying to ‘get inside the head’ of Te Kooti and this still remains the biggest challenge. Te Kooti is and remains an enigmatic figure. The more complexity I can provide to the Te Kooti character the more successful the overall story will be. If I fail at this task the screenplay will also necessarily fail, for the entire story hinges on the central protagonist Te Kooti. He single-handedly, holds, carries and maintains the flow of the entire film. This next step will therefore require further research into Te Kooti and the research must include conversations with adherents of the Ringatū faith and members of Te Kooti’s tribe. Undoubtedly, through further research into uncovering the heart, soul and mind of the man, further insights will be provided into his personality and his psyche. This will allow me to better understand, appreciate, and therefore write about the man who helped forge a

nation of followers and detractors, from the natural resources around him and the new technology he learned to master with intelligence, hard work and shrewdness.

Also, in the acknowledgement that language is perhaps the single most important factor in the transference of culture, *The Prophet* and its largely Māori language content, will perhaps provide the most powerful tool in the empowerment of Māori cultural values, beliefs and worldviews. Therefore an overwhelming responsibility also resides in the type of Māori that is spoken in *The Prophet*. Scholars today hold that Te Reo Māori was more poetic, akin to Elizabethan English if one were to translate Māori using the appropriate language style. Others say it was a style of Te Reo Māori based on biblical English. Whatever the answer, I must have extensive discussions/debates with kaumātua, with scholars, with Ringatū leaders. Whatever I do, I cannot sell the language short because then I will also come up short before my stated goals for making this film. Māori was Te Kooti's first language and authenticity for that period is crucial. It will enhance the quality of the film, and raise the bar for future Māori films. The language needs to be restored to its poetic and proverbial beauty onscreen.

At the moment the screenplay is also missing appropriate Māori symbolism. Māori are deeply influenced by the omens of the natural world and natural signs are considered highly significant. Māori hold pertinent beliefs in relation to the flashing of lightning, the crashing of thunder, the movement of clouds, the blowing of winds and the falling of rain. The movements or appearances of lizards, dogs, birds, insects, trees, rocks, rainbows, comets and stars all offered pertinent signs and omens. I believe the incorporation of this symbolism will provide a crucial layer to *The Prophet*, adding hidden meaning that will add lustre and depth to the screenplay. Crucially, this symbolism lies deeply rooted in the Māori spiritual world.



#### 4.1.5 A Call of Destiny

I am a spiritual person and despite the ever imposing beliefs of an increasing secular society, I am, and continue to be a passionate believer that there are greater forces at play in the universe and that the fates sometimes collude for a particular reason and purpose. Destiny is the word that is often used in this context and I cannot think of a more fitting expression to describe the circumstance enveloping my thesis. Therefore it is important I believe that at this juncture, to share with you the story of my great grandmother Ereti Puha, and the events surrounding her childhood which have directly influenced the writing of *The Prophet*.

My great grandmother was a woman named Ereti Puha, born in the 1860s to Rīpeka Taniwha and Netana Puha who hailed from Te Aitanga ā Māhaki, a tribe of Tūranga (Gisborne). Unbeknown to me at the beginning of my thesis was that Ereti had been a young girl when Government forces had crushed the Pai Mārie (Hauhau) religious movement in Tūranga at the battle of Waerenga-a-Hika in 1865. Afterwards Ereti's parents, along with her grandparents and the majority of her relations, were arrested and imprisoned by the government forces then exiled on mass with Te Kooti to the Chatham Island penal colony. While incarcerated Ereti's mother had succumbed to the conditions on the island and had died at the Chatham penal colony.

It was upon learning this story of my great grandmother that I finally understood why the inspiration to write about Te Kooti had come to me. My ancestors been aboard that prisoner barge with Te Kooti, they had suffered as he had suffered; had lost as he had lost. It was then that I truly realised that this film was not only about a 19<sup>th</sup> century Māori prophet, it was a story about myself. On finding this whakapapa (genealogical) connection I was now 'connected' to the story and no one, by any means could ever remove that connection I now possessed. I felt special, I felt chosen. This story was as much a part of me, as I was part of the story.

## 5.0 Conclusion

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If the question was posed if being Māori played any role or held any significance in relation to the writing of *The Prophet*, I would answer quickly and without hesitation 'yes' Being Māori and being aware of mātauranga Māori concepts gave me valuable insight into the scriptwriting practice and provided important direction and guidance at all times throughout my the process. The utilisation of such concepts, concepts which hold such significance in my life also served to constantly remind me that this was a story of the people and for the people, I do not own this story but I held a vital responsibility to get the story right, to do it justice and to the best of my abilities. Also of huge personal importance in the writing of *The Prophet* was the finding and reaffirmation of my Māori whakapapa (genealogical) connection to the story. Knowing that my ancestors were part of this story only intensified the feeling of obligation and commitment that had already existed. Perhaps this is a feeling that someone without this whakapapa (genealogical) connection might not have felt. I am, and continue to be an ardent believer that I was merely the medium for my ancestors to tell this story through me.

Ultimately for myself, I believe this thesis represents an important reference tool, which future writers can employ. The long-term value of this study, I believe, is in its potential as a practical reference source which writers may use to inform their structuring decisions. It is a source they can refer to show that Māori philosophies, concepts and practices can be useful in practice and, importantly, how. Ultimately, this thesis represents an exemplar which future Māori writers can utilise and employ in the writing process to battle those representations that are still held up as Māori realities. Without doubt there are many more steps to be taken in *The Prophet* but I believe and continue to believe that this film will be made, and will be the first epic Māori film of its kind to ever be made in New Zealand film. The invested commitment, time and energy has been taxing both physically and mentally but I know that there are far greater

ramifications involved in the writing of this screenplay that supersede any personal wants or needs, for Te Kooti was a messianic leader of great significance to our nation. His legacy adds lustre to our country's history and he lives on by word and deed in the hearts and minds of Māori people. His story needs to be told, his story needs to be remembered.

Finally, as a Māori man with a political and cultural interest in the construction of images, there are clearly struggles involved. The struggle for control of these images parallels Māori struggles for resources, support, and acknowledgement of work produced in other spheres. Despite these struggles, I am driven by the knowledge that, just as films can be negatively detrimental, they can also be enormously empowering. It is that which drives me to engage in the struggle and, in doing so, to question the epistemological assumptions from which many Māori and Pākehā continually construct their realities. The power of film, when used responsibly, can be a humanising force in an increasingly material world, and can act as a powerful catalyst for positive societal change.

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# Filmography

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## Glossary

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<b>Aroha:</b>	Love
<b>Aotearoa:</b>	Land of the long white cloud, New Zealand
<b>Haka:</b>	Chant, the performance of which achieves collective preparedness and unity of purpose
<b>Hapū:</b>	Extended kin group, consisting of many whānau.
<b>Iwi:</b>	People; descent group, consisting of many hapū.
<b>Kāinga:</b>	Community
<b>Kaumātua:</b>	Māori elders.
<b>Kotahitanga:</b>	Collective unity.
<b>Kuia:</b>	Elderly female relative; elderly woman; ancestress.
<b>Mana:</b>	Prestige; standing.
<b>Mana Tūpuna:</b>	Ancestral Prestige
<b>Mana wahine:</b>	Women's status.
<b>Manākitanga:</b>	Caring.
<b>Māori:</b>	Indigenous New Zealanders.
<b>Marae:</b>	Focal point for hapū meetings and events.
<b>Mātauranga:</b>	Knowledge
<b>Mauri:</b>	Life force.
<b>Moko:</b>	Body adornment.
<b>Mōteatea:</b>	Chants recording iwi histories and knowledge.
<b>Ngāti:</b>	People of.
<b>Ngāti Porou:</b>	Upper East Coast North Island tribe.
<b>Noa:</b>	Common, profane.
<b>Pākehā:</b>	New Zealanders of European descent.
<b>Pūrākau:</b>	Storytelling, Storytellers
<b>Rangatira:</b>	Leader
<b>Rangatiratanga:</b>	Leadership.
<b>Ringatū:</b>	(upraised hand) Religious faith founded by Te Kooti.
<b>Tāne:</b>	Man, male.



<b>Tāngata whenua:</b>	People of the land, Indigenous people.
<b>Tapu:</b>	Sacred, sacrosanct.
<b>Tauīwi:</b>	Others.
<b>Te Reo Māori:</b>	Māori language.
<b>Tikanga:</b>	Māori law; Māori custom; Māori philosophies.
<b>Tino rangatiratanga:</b>	Self determination.
<b>Tohunga:</b>	Traditional expert.
<b>Wahine:</b>	Woman; female.
<b>Wahine Toa:</b>	Female warrior.
<b>Waiata:</b>	Song.
<b>Wairua:</b>	Spirituality, spiritual world
<b>Whaikōrero:</b>	Traditional speechmaking.
<b>Whakapapa:</b>	Genealogy.
<b>Whakataukī:</b>	Proverbs.
<b>Whānau:</b>	Kin group.
<b>Whānaungatanga:</b>	Kinship ties.
<b>Whare tīpuna:</b>	Ancestral house.