

Artist Interview

A & O

Paemanu

Tahi: In an earlier conversation we ask the question about the fundamental difference between to “occupy” and to “own”. How can we make sense of the difference between these two concepts in relation to what we doing here is occupancy a form of ownership?

Rua: What did you say Ross about Ngāi Tahu as opposed to...

Toru: Well the notion of ownership isn't one that iwi, not in that sense, subscribe to well especially not for places, it is more one of nohoanga. It is occupation.

Rua: So, ownership is different from occupation eh, occupation suggests something that's more temporary, does it?

Toru: Yes, in that regard it does but the term nohoaka actually means more than just temporary. Temporary suggests a one off relationship. Nohoaka is a sense of being transitory, of moving through but in the context of nohoaka sites, returning back to is of paramount importance. It is not just the temporary it is the constant relationship with and coming back to a place. Another way of thinking about nohoaka is through the concept of ahi kaa. There is more longevity to it. So you could be occupying for a much longer period of time. But what I'm saying is that occupation is a notion of how you can think about where you are. Whereas, ownership is a whole different notion that changes the relationship of where you are and about what you think it is where you are.

Rua: Yeah I guess ownership wasn't the right word. I think for me occupation suggests that you're a visitor because you are occupying the space...

Toru: Yes and the word Houpunui, is another term that we use in this regard and is a sense of being transitory and much more as in staying for a little while. So we thought of using that word as well. So that idea of camping but it wasn't enough because occupation implies activity and an extended period of time.

Whā: So I suppose that all those caves that they used to “occupy”, they couldn’t stay for longer because there was only certain times of the year that they could go because it was too cold is that right?

Toru: And they were places that were shelters; They were places to be stopping off places on a migration. So I mean, how do you think about that staying in occupying on an annual for a biannual or a tri-annual basis and they would keep going back. And those places were occupied on an ongoing basis...



Rua: ...mmm... So maybe that's the occupation that we're doing.

Toru: ... So you occupy your summer country home at certain times...

Rua: yeah and you go back...

Whā: ...It's like a migration... when you come back from up north.. "Found a cave along the way it's just up from those carvings"... *Laughs*

Laughter....

Toru: So it's a different way of thinking about what those things are.

Rua: Yeah so always going back...

Toru: But keeping in mind the migration and the nohoaka, ownership is a different kettle of fish.

Tahi: Yes of course and the word noho itself means just to stay... to sit

Toru: Yeah and we did think about that idea of houpuni of this being a camp for quite a while.

Rua: so why did you choose...

Toru: ...We were looking for a word that held the concept to stay, and to work while you stay ... And to occupy this place over period of time and use as nohoaka, where we stay for a period of time and we live and we work. We are in residence for a while. And for me that's a stronger statement than to use the word houpuni, which means you're just camping.

Others: ... hmm yeah.

Toru: ... It's the context around what you are doing, and the place that you are in, and the people that you are spending time with and the relationships and the conversations. So it's important to reiterate that you are occupying and with occupancy comes responsibilities, and the responsibility that we undertook was what to name this place, and by naming we set the kaupapa in how we behave and how we undertake our work.

Rua: That's so interesting because with naming, that's how understand our relationship to a place. That's like that sense of ownership by naming a space "I'm going to name this place New Zealand that I own ..."

Toru: And that's what our ancestors did. But we didn't call it ownership. We called it consecration. When we consecrate this place we give it the respect that it's due by giving it a name, by naming.

Wha: and it's the wakapapa, somebody may have done a certain thing in that place...like somebody did a mimi there and *Laugh* and it was named after that place she had a mimi at..

Tahi: ...Mimihau...

Whā: ...and that's a process...

Rua: And when you talk about whakapapa that's the difference between the "O" and the "A" eh.

Tahi: Yep and I think that's exactly what we mean when we talk about ownership and the difference between those words for example noku and naku..

Rua: Yeah you come from the land... or; yeah.

Tahi: So we never really claim ownership of the land but we are of the land therefore it owns us, so when we occupy we understand that we have that relationship with the land that will continue when we leave. And I suppose there are two continuations here, the land will continue even if we're not here the land itself and what the place is will continue, but also the relationship will continue even when we're apart from the land.

mmm...

