This paper proposes the use of prophecy as an investigative tool for landscape analysis and explores how it could produce more culturally meaningful landscape outcomes. It investigates the relevance of indigenous prophecy and how it could inform and guide Landscape Architecture in aspects that engage with Mana whenua, enhance Māori values, preserve and promote cultural mana, and cut across cultural boundaries to create shared and inclusive landscapes. This discussion proposes that the subject may hold crucial information pertaining to the reading of landscapes and have great potential when included within the design process, as prophecy has the ability to weave a thread through time connecting historical context to the present day and to the future.

The research project is outlined, followed by explanation of the development of a methodology involving relevant aspects of design consideration such as post-colonial theory and Māori values and principles for design. When applied to selected land-based prophecies in Auckland, the process showed that unique outcomes are possible.

WHAKATAUKĪ:

If you know who you are and where you are from, then you will know where you are going.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of a prophecy is different to a historical point in time, as it cannot be contained within the moments of its utterance, nor be considered a historical fact. It is not embedded in a time or chronicled within the annals of history and although it may be recorded in a historical manner, prophecy is more like an organic entity that moves within time and evolves within its passing. According to Geertz (1) “Prophecy is not static, but is and always has been used in response to internal and external conditions. It is a way of articulating and defining contemporary events within the context of language and ‘tradition’”. There has been considerable attention given to related landscape topics such as cultural, spiritual, sacred landscapes and more recently shared landscapes. On the other hand, Geertz (2) points out that prophecy is a largely unexplored area. This research therefore takes a step into the obscure and the intangible.

The catalyst for researching indigenous prophecy began during participation in the 2013 IFLA50 Student Charrette, when Ngāti Whātua representatives who attended the final presentation and critique met a design intervention proposing the erection of pou on the Ōkahu Bay breakwater with interest. They connected this design move to a prophecy given by a pre-colonel tohunga named Titahi. This led to the investigation presented in this paper, which addresses the value of indigenous prophecy within landscape architecture and considers how it could be applied within practice.

As a precursor to this research three seminars were presented in 2014 within the Unitec Scala Seminar Series. These featured esteemed kaumātua speaking about three core Māori values in relation to the landscape: kaitiakitanga (stewardship responsibilities), wairuatanga (spiritual connection) and mauritanga (life force or essence). This resonates with Bhabha’s (3) notion of hybridity as being a blurred boundary space of cultural mixing that arises out of the post-colonial period. Therefore the selection and connection between the values explored in the seminars and the post-colonial theory of hybridity are deeply embedded in valuing notions of whakapapa and whānau for all parties (both coloniser and colonised), in reaching towards a ‘third space’ where both groups can function in unity (4). The current research considers these ideas and extends them by contemplating the place and value of indigenous prophecy in landscape practice if it is to be sensitive to operating within this ‘third space’.

This paper will explain how the methods that were used to research indigenous prophecy were developed into an analysis tool, including the relevant theory that establishes its importance within landscape architecture. Within this, the interpretations, metaphors, underlying meanings and implications of the
chosen prophecies will be explored. Emerging out of this research, the development of a landscape analysis tool that is inclusive of prophecy will then be discussed and applied to the prophecies selected for this design-based research project. Finally, the way that a hypothetical design emerged from this process is outlined and related back to both theory and practice, by referencing the theory of post-colonialism, the Resource Management Act (RMA) and the recent adoption of the Te Aranga Māori Design Guidelines by Auckland Council (5).

In conclusion this paper reflects on the value of this iterative process and considers further research and development that could lead to prophecy playing a more prominent role in landscape site analysis and development. It also considers the impact of a prophecy-led design process in creating significant landscapes and landscape elements in Aotearoa.

DEVELOPING A METHOD

The research involved extensive literature review and historical searches to find prophecies that would be relevant to the study. Pre-European prophecy (i.e. before the influence of Christianity) as well as the Māori prophets and their prophecies that arose post-colonisation were considered and two possible prophecies were chosen to investigate due to their interconnectedness and sentiment. Further validation and information was however sought and after obtaining ethics approval, interviews were conducted with well-informed people both Māori and pākehā. Interview participants were knowledgeable about the prophecies, te Ao Māori, the land and Landscape Architecture, stories of the land and people, history, and current events affecting our city that could be linked to the prophecies.

This process of narrative inquiry provided a clearer approach for the project because it established a valid method to follow and suggested appropriate sites and design possibilities (6). The interviews were manually transcribed and analysed. This led to the site locations revealing themselves in a logical and even predictable way that aligned to the historical events influenced by these prophecies, all of which have shaped Auckland city. It is important to note that the identities of some interviewees have been kept anonymous as per the ethics approval process.

SELECTION OF THE PROPHECIES

The two prophecies chosen as relevant and appropriate for the project are both Auckland based: The first is the well-known prophecy of tohunga matakite Titahi, the second is an obscure prophecy that was made by Ngāti Whātua kaumātua Thomas “Te Puru o Tāmaki” Downs.

The prophecy of Tohunga Matakite Titahi:
Invites the coloniser to share the land with tangata whenua.

What is the wind that softly blows?
the breeze of the northwest, the north,
That drives on our shore the nautilus.

If I bring from the north the handsome
carved post, And place it here in the
Waitematā.

My trance will then be fulfilled.

The billowing sails of the
colonisers ships.

 Invite the coloniser to move from
the north and establish their ‘pou
whakairo’ in this location.

Just prior to Cook’s arrival, the prophecy of tohunga Titahi (see Figure 1) told of a ‘nautilus shell’ coming to these shores (this was said to represent the billowing sails of the European ships), then of a ‘pou wakairo’ that would be established in the Waitematā. According to Kāwharu “It is a metaphor
symbolising a new sovereignty, culture and authority” (7). This prophecy was a key factor in the consideration of Ngāti Whātua and their chief Apihai Te Kawau inviting Lieutenant Governor William Hobson to Tāmaki in 1840, to offer a gift of land for the establishment of a new capital for Aotearoa. From the summit of Maungawhau (Mt Eden), Te Kawau pointed to Opoututeka (Coxs’ Bay) and then to Hobson Bay lying midway on an axis to Takaparawhau (Bastion Point), indicating that all the land in between had been set-aside for the Crown. When the colonising power relocated to Tāmaki they raised a flagstaff on Point Britomart, and according to Hawke (pers. comm. 24 July 2015), “…that ‘pou’ was deemed by local iwi to be the literal fulfilment of the Titahi prophecy”. It is suggested that the act of the land gift, which was inspired by the prophecy, brought about what could legitimately be considered its fulfilment. Following from this it is proposed that the colonial capital of Auckland was established under the influence of the Titahi prophecy.

Ngāti Whātua kaumatua Thomas Downs made a further prophecy in the 1960s (see Figure 2). According to Simmons & Graham this stated, “…when pakeha have the mana to grow a tōtara on Maungakiekie, they would truly become tangata whenua” (8). It has been suggested that a tōtara will be planted on Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), possibly by the end of 2016 (9), signalling the literal fulfilment of this prophecy. However, the prophecy also has a metaphorical meaning since trees are widely regarded as symbolic of unity that is long-lived. Reflecting this, in an interview with Hill, Blair made several propositions, including (10):

The tree on One Tree Hill has been a beacon of hope for unity for this city. (para. 6)

Perhaps it’s the turn of this generation to grow a tōtara on Maungakiekie together. (para. 13)

This would be a big step forward for Auckland. (para. 5)

It is suggested that the underlying premise of the Titahi prophecy can be interpreted as an invitation to the coloniser to share the land with tangata whenua. Further, it is proposed that Downs’ astonishing statement moves the Titahi prophecy beyond sharing of the land toward a ‘oneness’ of cultures which connects directly to the post-colonial theory of hybridity. Amoamo and Thompson consider that “Through hybridity, the ‘in-betweeness’ is transformed to become ‘the third space’ (11); the perspective of cultural production which explores new possibilities of change within political-geographic spaces and demonstrates the fluidity of the boundaries of cultural mixing.” Such notions of ‘sharing’ and ‘oneness’, as indicated by these two remarkable prophecies have therefore been explored through design of the landscape in the selected sites relating to these prophecies, as discussed in the following section.

The prophecy of Kaumatua Tom Downs:
Invites the coloniser to become tangata whenua.

When pakeha have the mana
Respect for the values and rights of Maori.

To grow a totara on Maungakiekie,
Metaphor about the coming together of people in unity.

Then he will truly be tangata whenua
Our two separate cultures will merge and a new people will emerge.

SELECTION OF SITES
The two chosen prophecies generated 5 sites for design (see Figure 3 for historic map showing site location), with the first four developing out of the Titahi prophecy. Of these, three of the sites were determined by the invitation extended by Ngāti Whātua and chief Apihai Te Kawau to Hobson and the Crown. These sites formed the boundary markers of the land package for the establishment of a new capital city for Aotearoa and a new British colony. The
locations are: Opoututaka (Cox’s Bay, Westmere), Maungawhau (Mt Eden) and an extension of the axis through the Hobson Bay boundary marker to Takaparawhau (Bastion Point) – the tūrangawaewae of Ngāti Whātua Ōrakei.

The fourth site was developed from the place where the colonisers erected their flagstaff on Point Britomart. This is considered by iwi to be the pou whakairo of the Titahi prophecy. This location was where the British established their military base, Government house, Supreme Court and a Church. As the cornerstones of imperial rule these established Auckland as the epicenter of colonial power in Aotearoa. The location is Te Reenga Oraiti or Point Britomart, which is now Quay Street.

The final site was derived from the Downs prophecy, which, according to Williams (pers. comm., 25 July 2015) “… flowed out of the Titahi prophecy”. This is the site of Logan Campbell’s tomb and monument. It is also the historic and iconic location of two very significant trees (an original tōtara and the more recent Monterey pine) as well as being the intended site of a future tree that will, according to the prophecy, symbolise the melding of two cultures onto one. This location is Maungakiekie or One Tree Hill.

Site Selection:

DEVELOPING MODELS TO CONNECT THEORY AND PRACTICE

The research focused on developing an applied method to connect prophecy with processes of landscape analysis and to then test this by design application. An essential part of this was combining core Māori values, as expressed in the Te Aranga Design Principles (12) and the Resource Management Act (RMA) (13) with the concept of ‘hybridity’ as discussed by Bhabha in post-colonial theory (14).

Core Maori Values and Principles

Kaitiakitanga  Gaurdianship

Kotahitanga  Collaboration

Mauritanga  Life, Freedom
The method evolved through consideration of three key aspects, as identified in the previous paragraph. Figure 4 illustrates the key Maori values and principles (three of which were explored in the Scala Seminars in 2014), while Figure 5 shows Te Aranga Design Principles and Figure 6 the relevant areas of the RMA. Figures 7 and 8 focus on post-colonial theory and hybridity, showing that a state of biculturalism (where we may presently be situated) can lead to a position of cultural blending if both cultures can align in a mutually beneficial way. From this a model (see Figure 9) distills the three key aspects into a set of questions that determine the suitability of a prophecy for inclusion as a site analysis factor. In the case of the prophecies chosen for this project this process, in combination with guidance from the interview findings, validated their inclusion.
The design process began with the selected sites and as the design concepts and interventions were formed, they were considered in light of the diagrams (Figs 4-8) to test their robustness – i.e. did the designs reinforce, strengthen and support core Māori values, hybridity, the prophecies and the history that followed. This was important to ensure the designs were inclusive and culturally meaningful. As a result it is believed this process could also be useful within other cultures as an analysis and design tool, hence contributing to our knowledge of cultural, spiritual and shared landscapes.
DESIGN PROCESS – TESTING THE METHOD

In a bold gesture that also incorporates little known history about Auckland, the main element of the design is the siting of pou in key locations. The rationale is the challenge issued during the course of the interviews conducted within this project to re-evaluate the common and historical perception of pou. From this emerged a redefining of the traditional function of pou as mere boundary markers into a contemporary expression of cultural identification. In line with this each pou enlarges in size relative to the context of the site. For example, the pou on Maungawhau (Mt Eden), Takaparawhau (Bastion Point) and at Te Rerenga Oraiti (Point Britomart) are increasingly tall and massive structures as determined by their surroundings. In a redefining of their function this transforms a simple marker into a structure that people can enter and fill with life, so that they become buildings that have a living purpose. Similarly, the non-living imperialist obelisk on Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill) will find future balance once the living totara has grown, and it will connect to the comparatively sized pou intended for Maungawhau (Mt Eden). The pou on Takaparawhau (Bastion Point) will bring equilibrium to the monument bearing the tomb of Sir Michael Joseph Savage while also representing the endurance of Ngāti Whatua through and beyond colonisation.
The structure envisioned for Te Rerenga Oraiti (originally Point Britomart) is positioned at the end of Bledisloe wharf. This is on a direct axis to where the original flagstaff is deemed to have been located on Point Britomart bluff, according to historic renderings (Figure 10 from Governor Grey’s Collection, Auckland Library). This provides respectful recognition of our colonial past and contains the embodied meaning that is invested in the flagstaff for both Māori and Pākehā. In this location, and in scale with its surroundings, a monumental pou is intended, comparable in size to the Statue of Liberty but exemplifying the culture and heritage of Aotearoa. It is predicted this monument would be a symbolic structure that establishes itself as an iconic symbol of Aotearoa, as other international structures have become, worldwide.

Quay Street and the wharves have historically been a highly contested area even prior to colonisation and this tension continues by way of public access versus port activities. Point Britomart was quarried to create the port so this design proposal ‘reclaims’ the area for public use. Moon (pers. comm., 6 July, 2015) points out this would be:

… in the heart of the gifted land, the colonised space, commercial space, and industrial space. A statement of indigenous reclamation can be made, literally on this reclaimed land – reclaiming notions of indigeneity in the centre of this post-colonised area of the city, this time for social space.

This would prevent Ports of Auckland from encroaching further into the city and may provide a future opportunity for its relocation.

A crowning feature of these pou is the positioning of a light beacon on their tops, including the Maungakiekie obelisk, since this is a symbol of integration between the colonised and coloniser towards ‘hybridity’ as a nation. The beacons create a pillar of light directed straight up, rendering the sites visible by night as well as day and forming a terrestrial constellation of iconic landmarks that suggest navigation of the city. Each pou is a special site-specific monument whose light beacons, when seen as a whole, forms a different type of monument, which would give the city a special point of difference. This reminds Aucklanders and informs visitors that the city was founded on a prophecy of sharing and has been offered a prophecy of unity for the future.
CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

Literature and historical reviews, research of post-colonial and prophetic theory plus targeted interviews and incorporation of core Māori values enabled the formulation of an analysis tool to aid design of culturally meaningful landscapes. A design process then tested this analysis tool on selected sites, which clearly showed that indigenous prophecy could be a significant driver for design. By maintaining continuity of design moves including large-scale pou and light beacons (plus other elements not detailed in this paper), each site builds on the next to create a significant monument for Auckland city that is guided by prophecy.

The development and use of the analysis tool is considered useful, due to the iterative process it created so that the meaning of the design interventions resulting from the tool were re-evaluated against the three key aspects. However, this is considered to be initial research only, with more time needed to test and refine this tool. For example applying it to other narratives such as histories, stories, legend and myth by Māori and other indigenous cultures or by applying it to other designers’ work.

In conclusion this project represents a valuable initial study into the topic of landscape and prophecy, which is significant for the following reasons:

- The creation of a prototype methodology template of application that may be transportable to other indigenous cultures.
- A new contribution to the body of knowledge of landscape architecture aiding analysis and contextualization of landscape that could possibly be applicable, too and used by related disciplines.
- The prophecies chosen influenced our city’s history; the layers are hard to retrieve. Therefore another important element is the recovery of knowledge informing a fresh historical perspective.
- A cross-cultural approach was employed containing elements of the indigenous and European that explores the Post-colonial theory of ‘hybridity’ demonstrating how it could be applied to landscape.
- Using the design theme of ‘hybridization’ a technique of redefining cultural artifacts emerged, modernizing and giving new expression to traditional use and functionality.

The design outcomes of this research are ambitious and polemic, reflecting that this project developed a direction of its own, seemingly following the spirit of the prophecies wherever they led. While there were occasions of doubt, the outcomes support the notion that prophecy is a subject worthy of attention and consideration.

This project has provided a unique way to reconnect with past knowledge and generate a different perspective of design that allows prophetic historical narratives to manifest into everyday life. The design results from testing the analysis tool are symbolic of the past and the future and encourage a deeper appreciation and understanding of landscape for Māori and Pākehā in Aotearoa.

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**FOOTNOTES**


