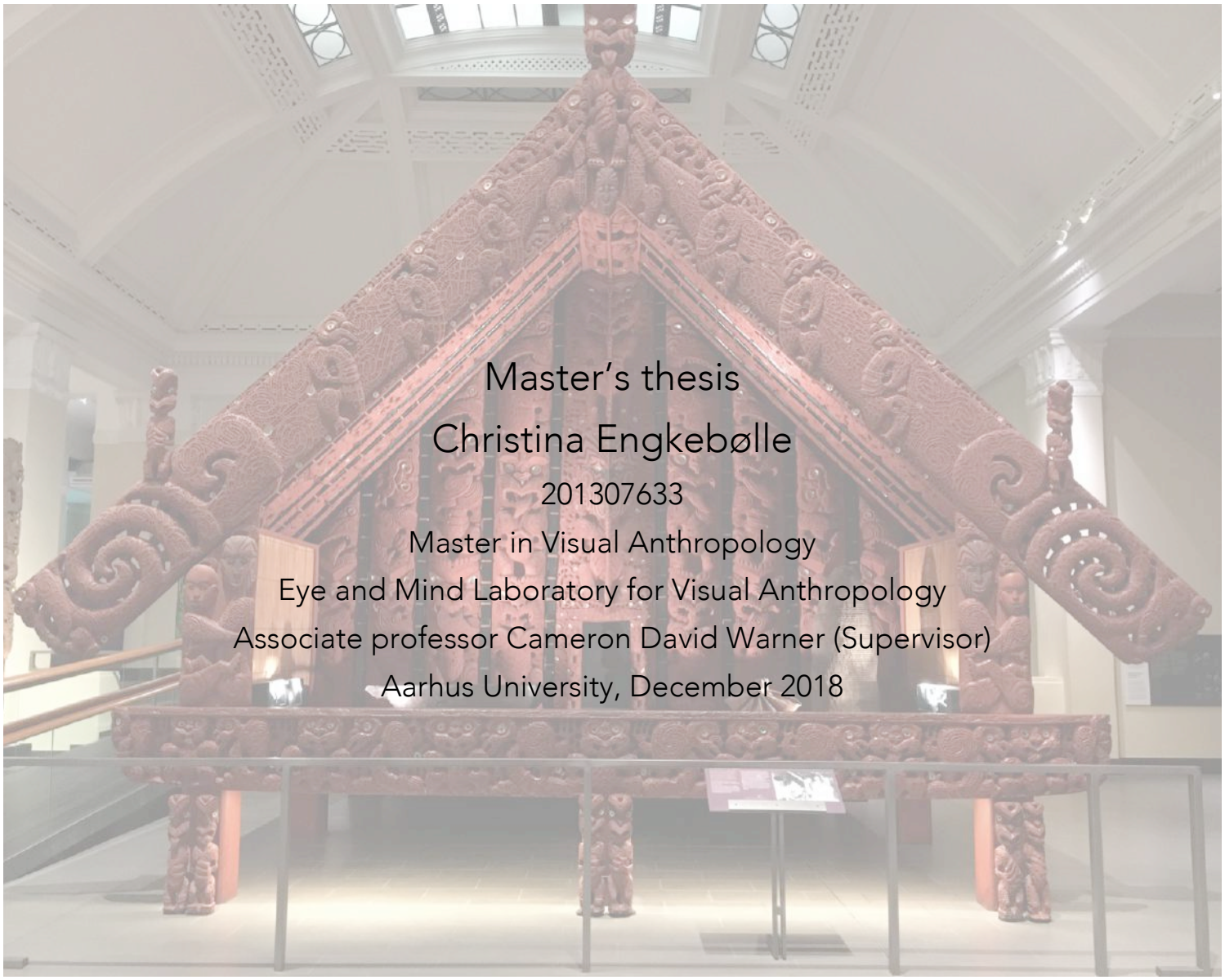
Relational Objects

An Anthropology of Taonga Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand



Master's thesis

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Abstract

This product thesis consists of a catalogue and the present text. The catalogue is composed of workshop material for a new UNESCO collection at Moesgaard Museum in Aarhus, Denmark, about New Zealand Māori and objects. The thesis departs from six months of fieldwork and focuses on *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions). *Taonga Māori* have a history of being exploited and exhibited in museums around the world. The ethnographic museums still face challenges of representation when working towards decolonisation of knowledge and objects. Rethinking representation prompts questions of how to meet the ethical obligations when collecting material for research purposes, and on whose terms the research is done. Focussing on indigenous objects from Aotearoa New Zealand, this research project contributes to creating a foundation for building relationships in and beyond the field, enabling ethnographers engage in postcolonial challenges of representation. Drawing on principles of gift exchange and theories of relations in anthropological research, I examine how relationships are embedded in tangible *taonga Māori*. Through their connection to the wider environment and their relation to people, *taonga* act in *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) as relational objects, fostering relationships between people and objects. Drawing inspiration from experimental research methods, I developed a workshop prototype consisting of teaching material for Danish schools as a part of the UNESCO collection material. Based on this, I discuss the potentials and the limitations for object-based teaching in classrooms as a method of transferring knowledge cross-culturally and transnationally. I conclude that the *taonga* collected for the UNESCO collection can provide a framework for students to critically engage in material culture. In this thesis I explore the *Te Ao Māori* concept of *taonga* by creating an interactive collection, while navigating a framework for dealing with the challenges of decolonisation today. Engaging with objects, I argue, is central in forming new ways of approaching decolonisation. I argue that this can be done by building long lasting relationships with the people we as anthropologists, build relations and create knowledge with in and beyond the field.

Reading Guide

This thesis is a product thesis and thus consists of the present written text and a product. The product is a catalogue comprising different material that I have designed for a workshop held at Samsøegades Skole in Aarhus, Denmark, in September 2018. A UNESCO collection on Aotearoa New Zealand and *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) will be released for schools to borrow in the beginning of 2019 according to an agreement between the UNESCO Collections at Moesgaard Museum in Aarhus, Denmark, and myself. The product can be examined and used separately from the present written part of the thesis, but I encourage the reader to engage with the material in the catalogue anytime before, during, or after reading this text.

Acknowledgements

Many people have made this master's thesis project possible. I wish to extend my thanks to my supervisor, associate professor Cameron David Warner, and to Thea Skaanes at the UNESCO Collections at Moesgaard Museum. Thank you for your guidance and support. Further, I wish to express my heat-felt gratitude to the people in Aotearoa New Zealand who kindly shared their stories with me and guided me through *Te Ao Māori*, the Māori world: Tom Berryman (Ngāti Manawa), Areta Ransfield (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Māmoe, Ngāti Raukawa), Jo'el Komene (Ngā Pohu, Tapuika), Lester Ransfield (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Māmoe, Ngāti Raukawa), Rangimārie (Ngāti Whātua) at the Māori department at Auckland University, Alistair Fraser, Professor David Lowe, Maria Lowe, Associate Professor Martin Lodge, Jacinta Forde, and Stephen Pennruscoe. I recognise that the stories that has been shared with me during my research belong to those who tell them. I am truly humbled by everyone who has contributed to this project and allowed me to share his or her stories with the reader of this thesis and through the teaching material, which will become a part of the UNESCO collection. Thanks to Lorraine Semple with whom I stayed, while I was doing fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand, for always prioritising to listen to my concerns and for inviting me into your home, and to your work place, Fairfield Intermediate School. Thanks to Marie Elisabeth Larsson, Pernille Raaby-Oleson, and the 7th grade students at Samsøgades Skole in Aarhus, Denmark, who have assisted me in carrying out the workshop. Thanks to my good friends and anthropologists Stephanie Louisa Lay Steenberg and Sebastian James Lowe for constantly challenging and supporting me. Finally, thanks to my partner, Rashaad Buksh, and to my family and friends for your constant love and support. There would be no thesis without all of you, so this work is dedicated to you.

Formal Conventions

To ensure respectful usage of the Māori language, *te reo Māori*, which is considered *taonga* (treasures and/or possessions) to Māori, and to recognize the significance of *te reo Māori* in academia, it is important to clarify the differences between English and *te re Māori* terms in the present thesis. I have adopted the guidelines from the conventions of *Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori Guidelines for Māori Language Orthography*[1], to the best of my knowledge in the present thesis, and further acknowledge my position of still learning to navigate in the fields of *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) and *te reo Māori*. Many of the emic key concepts in this thesis are difficult to translate, because of *te reo Māori* originally being a spoken but not a written language. Because I learned about and now describe these concepts in their original context, I will keep referring to the emic Māori concepts throughout this thesis. I will translate their meanings into English, based on translations from the English speaking population of Aotearoa New Zealand. In regards to the use of Māori words in academic English texts, there are no normative standards at this point, although it is an on-going debate. While some scholars choose to italicise all Māori words, others choose not to italicise any Māori words. From consulting with my collaborators in the field, I have chosen to italicise all Māori words such as '*taonga*' and '*whakapapa*' in order to underline the significant differences between English and *te reo Māori*. 'Aotearoa' is the Māori name for the New Zealand, and today the two names are used without differentiation or together, as I do here, both in academia and in the everyday parlance in Aotearoa New Zealand. In *te reo Māori* no words are added 's' to make them plural, which will be clear in through the sentence constructions.

[1] http://www.tetaurawhiri.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/translators-docs/Guidelines-for-Maori-Language-Orthography.pdf, accessed 28 November 2018.

Glossary of Māori Terms

Disclaimer: The Māori terms are specific interpretations according to their purpose for this thesis and thus do not express the extensiveness of meaning associated with the terms below. Definitions of the terms are from various sources including Ryan (1983), www.maoridictionary.co.nz, and from my fieldwork (September 2017 – February 2018).

Ao – World.

Aotearoa – 'The land of the long white cloud', the New Zealand Māori name for New Zealand.

Atua – God.

Haka – Māori war dance/performance.

Hapū – Subtribe.

Hau – Vital aspect of place, person or object.

Hawaiki – The spirit home of the New Zealand Māori.

Hongi – Pressing noses in greeting.

Iwi – Tribe.

Kaitiakitanga - The acknowledgement that humans are guardians of nature and the environment.

Karakia – Speech, chant.

Kaupapa Māori – Māori approach, practice, and principles. A philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society.

Kawanatanga – Governance.

Kia ora! – Hello!

Kōauau – Type of cross-blown Māori flute.

Kotahitanga – The interdependence between humans.

Mana – Prestige, spiritual power, authority.

Manu tukutuku – Māori kite.

Māoritanga – Māori culture, practices, and beliefs.

Marae - Ceremonial centre or meeting house.

Papatūānuku – Earth mother.

Pākehā – Non-Māori/Westerner, New Zealander of European descent, foreigner.

Pepeha – Tribal saying.

Pou whakairo – Wooden carving.

Pounamu – Greenstone/Jade.

Pūrerehua – Type of Māori wind instrument.

Rangatira – Māori chiefs.

Ranginui – Sky father.

Tāne – God of the forests.

Tangata whenua – People born of the land with Māori descent.

Taonga – Treasures and/or possessions, both tangible and intangible.

Taonga pūoro – New Zealand Māori musical instruments.

Tauiwi – Foreigner, European.

Te reo Māori – The Māori language.

Toki – Adze.

Tūpuna – Human ancestors.

Tūrangawaewae - A place where one has the right to stand and rights through their belonging.

Wairua – Spirit.

Wairuatanga - The sacred relationship to the gods and cosmos.

Waka – Māori war canoe.

Wenewene – Finger holes.

Wharenui – Meeting house - main building of a marae where guests are accommodated.

Whakapapa – Genealogy.

Whānau – Family.

Contents

Introduction

On a cloudy afternoon in the beginning of September 2017 — about a week after I had landed in Aotearoa New Zealand — I went to the Māori department at the University of Auckland to meet with Rangimārie, a Māori woman of the Ngāti Whātua iwi (tribe) and hapū (subtribe). She had told me earlier that day to come to her office after she finished work, and join her on her way home to Ōrākei in East Auckland. The purpose of this was for me to see the area of Ōrākei, which is Māori owned land and has been since the 17th century. Rangimārie invited me to come with her to see the Ōrākei Marae (meeting house) located at the heart of the area on the highest point of the hill. We got in the car and drove off in the direction of Ōrākei. As we drove, Rangimārie cheerfully shared history and stories of Māori land occupation. On the way we stopped at a railway station to pick up Rangimārie's niece who was returning home from work on the North shore of Auckland. She got in the car and as we drove off, I listened to the conversation between aunt and niece. They were talking about picking up a package on the way at a nearby location and the niece's dissatisfaction with the New Zealand post delivery system. As we reached the hilly area of Ōrākei and thus Māori land, Rangimārie pulled over and explained how the houses on the left side of the hillside road belonged to her family. As her niece got out of the car, she wished me luck with my thesis, and halfway out the car she turned to me and said: "This is the land of our people: the land that the white people took away from us, and our taonga[1] belong here, not in museums in the West".

Background and Problem Statement

This thesis builds on data and material from my fieldwork, which I conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand from September 2017 to February 2018. The research project started in 2014 with an idea of creating a new UNESCO collection about the New Zealand Māori. At the time, the project did not have a framework or a project manager, but was simply an idea. The UNESCO Collections at Moesgaard Museum in Aarhus, Denmark, are interactive collections for educational usage, primarily for Danish schools. Ethnographer Klaus Ferdinand founded the UNESCO Collections in 1964 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Denmark with support from the UNESCO National Commission. Today the department holds 27 collections with different themes from

around the world collected by ethnographers and anthropologists[2]. In December 2016, Moesgaard Museum invited me to participate in the project.

My fieldwork took place in the North Island in the central region of Waikato, where I was based. The reason for this location was the fact that my gatekeeper prior to the fieldwork had several contacts to members of the Tainui *iwi* (tribe) in the area of Ngaruawahia, a town in the eastern region of Waikato in the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. However, as described above, the fieldwork started in Auckland, the largest and most populated city of Aotearoa New Zealand. Rangimārie was the first New Zealand Māori I met who took me to the land of her Auckland-based tribe and shared her story with me. This was also my first encounter with the resistance towards my position as western fieldworker and ethnographic collector. My (more or less successful) attempts at navigating this position would soon become the foundation of my fieldwork approach. From an analysis of the ethnographic material obtained over six months of fieldwork, the problem statement is as follows:

> My aim is to investigate the *Te Ao Māori*[3] (the Māori world) concept of *taonga* (Māori treasures and/or possessions, both tangible and intangible) in the light of decolonisation, and investigate how New Zealand Māori approach and see material objects in relation to how knowledge is created and transferred cross-culturally and transnationally.

This thesis is situated in a recently debated topic within anthropology today: decolonisation and research amongst indigenous peoples. I seek to examine the complex relationship between humans and objects through an object-based approach to the field and by developing teaching material focussing on New Zealand Māori for Danish schools. By investigating *taonga Māori* as important parts of the realm of *Te Ao Māori* in relation to *Māoritanga* (Māori culture, practices, and beliefs), I argue that building long lasting relationships requires closer attention. The academic studies that engage in understanding the effects of colonialism should let themselves again be inspired by the idea of relations being the foundation for all anthropological enquiries (see for example Corsín Jiménez 2004; Strathern 2014). I suggest that one way of approaching this is by exploring indigenous objects in a different context. Moreover, I seek to question the Western methodology of museum collections in a postcolonial sphere. By reassessing the act of collecting, I enter a debate of representation in postcolonial, transnational, and cross-cultural research and practices within the museum and other educational institutions.

Experimentation in anthropology is often associated with the field of visual anthropology partly because the discipline has evolved as a field specifically interested in the visual (MacDougall 1997: 276). My research project aligns with the experimental approach found in visual anthropology through the focus on objects in New Zealand Māori material culture. The method of communication and the approach to the field both vary depending on the field, data, purpose, and the anthropologist's form of communication. Everything that humans coexist with has had an interest for anthropology, including photographs and artefacts that could represent the "anthropological 'body'", as described by visual anthropologist David MacDougall (1997: 277). Recent anthropological studies within the debate of postcolonial representation focus on the role of the ethnographic museum (Dahre & Fibiger 2015), taking people seriously (Harrison 1991), the ontological turn (Holbraad & Pedersen 2017), and indigenous anthropology and anthropologists in the postcolonial sphere (George 2017). However, there seems to be little written or otherwise disseminated about how to engage in the decolonisation process on a practical and methodological level, when working with indigenous peoples and cultures. I suggest engaging in a postcolonial critique as an important step towards overcoming some of the challenges of representation and decolonisation. This study seeks to contribute to just that by centralising ethnographic objects – tangible *taonga Māori* in particular – in ethnographic research. I will do this by expanding the method of ethnographic collection, as part of doing anthropological research, through collecting material for a UNESCO collection that focuses on *taonga Māori.* The collection will primarily be targeting students in the lower secondary education. The aim for the lower secondary education in Denmark from the Danish Ministry of Education is to prepare the students for further learning, especially through engaging in interdisciplinary projects. Bringing a cross-cultural UNESCO collection into the teaching in schools will propose an interdisciplinary approach to working with objects. The main theme of this collection is building relationships. The purpose of the collection is to raise awareness about how we as humans relate to others, both humans and objects. With this purpose in mind, I let the objects guide me through the field and towards new knowledge. From participating in the making of this UNESCO collection, I have in fact positioned myself within the scope of collecting for museums. As I will argue in this thesis, the concept of the UNESCO Collections is being a medium, which, when used in the right ways, can help broaden the idea of heritage. It further invites the users to understand how the material is conducted with the people, to whom the heritage belongs.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is a product thesis and thus consists of two parts. The first part consists of three chapters. In Chapter One, *Objects in an Ethnographic Context: Te Ao Māori*, I aim to account for the ethnographic field of this research project, Aotearoa New Zealand and *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world), as I have experienced it through six months of fieldwork. The chapter presents the *tangata whenua* (people born of the land with Māori descent), namely the New Zealand Māori, and the importance of *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) and *whakapapa* (genealogy) in social relations. The chapter aims to contextualise this research project within the discourse of object-based anthropology and doing research with indigenous people, the New Zealand Māori and their *taonga*. In Chapter Two, *Encountering Taonga Māori,* I situate my encounters with *taonga Māori* and the significance of objects through my fieldwork in the scope of an object-based approach to a postcolonial field, Aotearoa New Zealand. I discuss the western knowledge paradigm within the ethnographic museum and approaches in anthropological enquiries. Chapter Three, *Transferring Knowledge,* takes my product[4] as its outset for an analysis of the potential uses of my UNESCO collection in Danish schools by drawing on recent anthropological theory on value. I further draw on the outcome of the workshop and methodological theory from museum anthropology, in order to discuss the transfer of knowledge through the *taonga*. Moreover, I examine to what extend object-based ethnography and object-based teachings are beneficial methods to my project.

Product

The second part of this project is a catalogue that functions as a prototype of the new UNESCO collection. It consists of a workshop and teaching material that I have designed and carried out at Samsøgades Skole in Aarhus, 14 September 2018, which will become a part of the UNESCO collection. The catalogue is composed of a suggested lesson plan, a PowerPoint presentation, photos and descriptions of objects collected in Aotearoa New Zealand during my fieldwork, and video clips and photos from the workshop. The UNESCO collection will in the end further consist of a physical box of the objects presented in the catalogue.

Methodological Introduction

My project is primarily focused on communication in the sense, that it challenges forms of communicating anthropological knowledge to both an academic audience, i.e. the written part of the

thesis, and to a school audience through the product. I will examine this in the following chapters. First, I will present the principles that together laid the groundwork for this thesis, the different methodological considerations and ethnographic approaches carried out during my fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Juggling Positions

My job as ethnographic collector for the museum was to gather data and material for the new collection. Upon arrival I emerged myself in the field of the New Zealand Māori and their *taonga* (Māori treasures and/or possessions), through carrying out what can be characterised as a multi-sited fieldwork. In the field I quickly found that tracing the paths of *taonga* would guide me. The methods I encountered in the field inspired me to carry out the workshop in Denmark, which further expanded the sites of fieldwork.

My approach to the field has been dominated by a combination of participatory and observational methods in terms of doing workshops and informal interviews as well as being a "passive participant" (Spradley 1980: 58) in museums and attractions. I followed the multiple paths of the *taonga*, which led me to museums, workshops, and several other places where the objects existed and acted. Being *tauiwi* (foreigner, European) in a Māori context meant that I was offered a position as outsider rather than insider. In other words, I was a guest rather than a host or local (Harvey 2003). This also meant that I had to behave according to my role and position. In many anthropological encounters with a new field of study, the anthropologist more or less intentionally takes on a position of naïve apprentice (Downey et al. 2015). In some situations, the ideal point of entry was for me to take on the role of being an apprentice. I was guided through *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) by attending workshops and working with skilled experts, Areta Ransfield (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Māmoe, Ngāti Raukawa), Jo'el Komene (Ngā Pohu, Tapuika), and Tom Berryman (Ngāti Manawa). My fieldwork was based on forming friendships built on trust and being guided through partnership and collaboration. This meant that taking on the role of an apprentice seemed natural and it allowed for collaboration between the people I worked with and myself (ibid: 191). After returning from fieldwork, I have stayed in contact with the people from Aotearoa New Zealand through email, discussing several questions about the *taonga* from the collection that have arisen since my return. I possessed several positions and juggled between them; being in between

objects and people, different world-views, and roles as being fieldworker, *tauiwi* and ethnographic collector. I had to juggle these positions that were sometimes all present at once.

The Act of Collecting: Ethical Obligations

This fieldwork has been highly dependent on creating trust and building relationships with the people involved in the research project. As presented in the introductory field note, Rangimārie's niece's immediate response to me collecting objects and other material for a museum was scepticism. This incident, being my first encounter with New Zealand Māori, came to be an important one. It prepared me for the expectations from my collaborators who questioned my intentions. Within the first month of fieldwork, I met with a few people, although mostly *Pākehā* (European New Zealanders), and explained my research project to them. They wanted clearer intentions for my research, and they predicted that I was not going to get hold of any *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) in a way that lived up to the standards of ethical obligations within the time frame that I had available. Intentions have to be clear and carefully considered right from the beginning of a research project or any other collaboration with the New Zealand Māori. This seems to be nothing new to anthropological research or ethics, but my focus on intentions was only the beginning of my methodological journey into *Te Ao Māori*. From the colonial history of Aotearoa New Zealand, this research project was characterised by the sharing of knowledge as a result of being open and clear about intentions, research process, and asking the question of on whose terms the research was done. This meant that I had to consult the people at the UNESCO Collections during my first month of fieldwork to sharpen my (or rather our) intentions in order to be able to explain them fully to people. I experienced the clash between the two different views upon collecting and doing research instantly since postcolonial aspects and ethical consideration of indigenous peoples are relatively unquestioned in Denmark compared to Aotearoa New Zealand. The ethical considerations that arose from this, guided my approach to both people and objects in terms of following the ethical guidelines, such as the 'Code of Ethics & Professional Practice'[5] in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The objects gathered and created for the UNESCO collection have been carefully chosen through guidance from the people I worked with. When my collaborators suggested an object or other material they thought would be suitable for the collection, I followed their advices and started researching that particular object. Taking on this role of ethnographic collector in a postcolonial

field, also meant taking on the responsibility of giving back to the people with whom I worked. The most effective method of giving back was through sharing knowledge. I will elaborate on this in the following chapter.

Chapter One: Objects in an Ethnographic Context: Te Ao Māori

Ethnography in Museums

> Materiality is integral to human existence, and to sociality, not an inanimate substrate upon which meaning and culture are built.
>
> —Amiria Henare 2005: 6.

Anthropology was once a discipline centred on objects in museums. In Europe, anthropology was mostly focused on telling the story of the so-called 'Other' through comparative analysis of objects' form, function, and material belongings (Henare 2005: 4). The museum was the place for the ethnographer to tell their stories, often by showing the audience objects collected from a given culture or peoples. The visitors were given the opportunity to experience and learn about the 'Other' through objects, which were often considered to be both aesthetic and exotic. In the early years of ethnography, the role of the ethnographic museum was acting as a window to the world for the so-called 'civilized nations', bringing them closer to the 'exotic Other' (Dahre and Fibiger 2015: 10, 12). Objects in the museums were having their heyday in the early half of the 20th century. However, during the 1960s a change of focus occurred at the ethnographic museums. As a consequence of the world becoming more diverse and multicultural, the museums were forced to reconsider how they disseminated knowledge and who or what they represented, and with what intention. During colonial times the objects were often collected under questionable conditions such as racial supremacy, which the historical collections have been criticised for still representing today (Clifford 1998; Henare 2005; Gabriel 2015). From this, some ethnographic museums turned their attention inwards and shifted their focus from objects to other topics such as multiculturalism, development, and collaboration with the formerly exposed and exhibited people (Dahre and Fibiger 2015: 11). The focus was now more on cultural issues than on objects and their stories departing from western epistemological perspectives. Subsequently, the ethnographic collections were establishing a stronger historical dimension as museums preserved and stored them in depots. This

somewhat elevated the objects to a status of being "masterpieces" that had to be handled with extreme care and placed in depots and magazines (Dahre and Fibiger 2015: 12). It is challenging for the museums to make these historical collections relevant to the contemporary society (ibid.). Despite these 'changes' in thinking, objects are still housed and exhibited in museums today. According to anthropologists Ulf Johansson Dahre and Thomas Fibiger the purpose of the ethnographic museum is to point to similarities and differences between societies, cultures, and people, and seek to include a different world into one's own understanding of society (2015: 18). If this is the goal today, the ethnographic museums still have an important role to play in the postcolonial 21st century. However, they also face challenges that might require serious changes in structure, approach, and ideas of ethical responsibility. So, the question is, on whose terms do museums act? Here I will concentrate on the approach to indigenous objects and the importance of creating and maintaining good relationships with both people and objects. I will elaborate on this later and, for now, solely underline the variety of approaches to material culture within anthropology.

Objects in Anthropology

Objects have raised many different questions since they first played an essential role in the discipline of anthropology. Following anthropologist Marilyn Strathern, there has been a "division of labour between social/cultural anthropologists and those concerned with material culture of the kind that finds its way to museums" (1990: 26). This division characterised the western approach to indigenous material culture and ethnography. There was a focus on art and language, which meant that objects were often studied as signifiers and constructors of meaning (Henare 2005: 4). Throughout the colonial time period ethnographers and explorers have collected indigenous objects and knowledge from the European colonies around the world. These objects have found their way into museums across the globe but without supervision from or collaboration with the indigenous people at play. In *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), anthropologist James Clifford noted some issues with the accommodation of objects for the exhibition *Primitivism* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The objects were either stolen or had been acquired through exchange between the westerner and the indigenous (ibid: 189f.). Many indigenous cultures are still affected by these postcolonial relations, as presented in the new TV series called 'Artefact' (2018). Dame Anne Salmond, New Zealand anthropologist and historian, together with the New Zealand TV station

'Māori Television' made the series, which follows *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) and their history and stories. Salmond sets out to follow some of the *taonga* that are scattered around the world today in museums, in an attempt to communicate the importance of objects to society to a wider audience. In the third episode Salmond speaks with Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (Mārutūhu, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāpuhi), a composer, researcher, and teacher about the *taonga* that today live far away from home in museums in the West. Many of these objects were relocated from their homes to the West on the basis of what Clifford noted in 1998: theft and exchange principles. The *taonga* have their own history, stories, and relationships, which, as Salmond puts it, "does not necessarily travel with them" when they are relocated into a museum or collection[6]. Some scholars have argued that putting objects in museums disturbs the flow of exchange, which would otherwise serve as creating bonds between people (e.g. Appadurai 2013). Others oppose this view. Anthropologist Amiria Henare (2005) argues that objects in museums continue to foster social bonds from within the museums through preservation of the collections. Furthermore, Henare points to the fact that objects in museums do not only tell stories and direct our attention to the past and the present that the objects undeniably represent, but moreover to the objects themselves (ibid: 8f). The visitor in a museum encounters more than representations. He also encounters objects in which social relations and a part of the past are deeply embedded in each and everyone, and thus the objects as they are in this world.

The New Zealand Māori

In this paragraph I will briefly present the ethnographic field Aotearoa New Zealand and the New Zealand Māori. Today, many Māori live across the globe where they have settled and lived for decades and thus might distance themselves from the views presented in this thesis, hence the reason for referring specifically to the New Zealand Māori when speaking of Māori.

Māori are the *tangata whanua*, the first nation people of Aotearoa New Zealand. The legend tells the story of a voyaging people arriving by *waka* (Māori war canoes) around 800 A.D. from their spirit-land home, *Hawaiki* (the distant home), an unidentified location in the Pacific Ocean (Anderson 2014: 16). The land they settled came to be known as 'Aotearoa' meaning 'the land of the long white cloud' in its common translation. Prior to the arrival of *Pākehā* (non-Māori with European descent), Māori lived in kinship groups that were "made up of all the descendants of the ancestors who arrived in Aotearoa (New Zealand) in a particular canoe" (Makereti 1938: 1). Māori

identify themselves as *iwi* (tribe), *hapū* (subtribe), and *whānau* (family). Besides the tribal connections to their people, they have connections and relations to the wider environment that surrounds them, which dates back to the aeon of time: the land, the sea, and the sky through which Māori also identify themselves. For Māori the term 'ancestors' can include both deceased people and highly respected authorities but can also refer to rivers, for example, through the bodies or body parts envisaged in them (Smith 2000: 48). Myths are a big part of their past starting with the legend of *Ranginui*, the sky-farther, and *Papatūānuku*, the earth-mother. They were forced to separate by their son *Tāne*, god of forests, which created the world, as we know it, with separate heaven and earth (Anderson 2014: 16). These myths and spiritual connections tie into Māori cosmology and their understanding of the creation of the universe and their ancestry.

When I first met Tom Berryman (Ngāti Manawa), intermediate schoolteacher and New Zealand Māori, he greeted me by offering his right hand for me to shake while slowly pressing our noses and foreheads together twice, and breathing in deeply. This greeting is called *hongi,* and is a greeting where one shares his breath and *wairua* (spirit) with another person. Tom described to me how the *hongi* creates a space for sensing each other's energies. It is common practice for the New Zealand Māori and is done with people close to you and when first meeting someone. It is the first sign of a lasting relationship between two people. Tom also explained the importance of being able to trace and recite one's *whakapapa* (genealogy):

> You will find that everything comes back to the original beginning. It is appropriate for people to look back to know who they are and where they are now. How did you get there? So you will have to look back. You have to find out where you are from. What connections do you have to the land? Your mum, your dad, your *whakapapa*, your brothers, your sisters; all got you to where you are now. And people watch out for that. As soon as you open your mouth, they'll watch for that.

Whakapapa is usually translated as genealogy but differs from this translation as well. *Whakapapa* "provides explanation for the interconnections to all things" (Smith 2000: 45). It exists as both noun and verb. It is not a lineal decent form, which the term genealogy suggests, but rather views of existence, which includes living things such as birds, stones, humans, gods, and the sea, to mention a few. The verb form of *whakapapa* means to recite in proper order, primarily when talking about genealogies and other relations. *Whakapapa* is a central and integral concept to *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) that makes up history, whether it belongs to humans or objects. Being able to recite

ones *whakapapa* means being able to trace ones kinship and thus describe that person's relations. This concerns both people and *taonga* (Māori treasures and/or possessions). As Tom notes in the quote above, people you want to have some sort of relation to will meet you and expect to learn about your *whakapapa* immediately. When placing objects in museums they often lose their *whakapapa* because it is unknown, forgotten, or getting lost in translation. Subsequently, the foundation for people to understand and relate to the object disappears.

Anne Salmond explains how *Te Ao Māori* is a "relational universe, ordered by *whakapapa*", which emerged "from reciprocal exchanges (*utu*) between complementary powers" (2014: 292). The Māori gift exchange principle known as *hau* (the "breath of life" or energy) is bound to both people and objects and especially to *taonga Māori*. In his study on reciprocity and gift giving, sociologist Marcel Mauss referred to *hau* as "the spirit of things", which seeks to return to its owner or place of origin (1966: 8). Mauss was inspired to write his analysis on spirituality embedded in gift giving and reciprocity based on letters from Māori informant Tamati Ranapiri, to anthropologist Elsdon Best (1907) (Stewart 2017: 4). *Hau* is the life force of the *taonga* gifted from one person to another. It binds persons and objects together. *Hau* expresses itself through the gift giving process as an obligation of exchange: the gift given by one person to another will not only be tangible, but also intangible, because a part of the person who gifted the object is embedded in the gift. This object and "spirit" of the person, will always want to return home to the giver, either literally or in a different form of gift. By giving back to the person who one received a gift from in the first place, the *hau* of the gift is upheld. If the obligation of exchange is not uphold the life force of this person is threatened (Salmond 2014: 292f.). Thus people and objects of *Te Ao Māori* are intertwined and entangled in the wider environment.

Taonga Māori

Taonga in *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) means thing or possession treasured to Māori. *Taonga* does not only refer to tangible things made out of materials such as wood or stone, but can also refer to intangible aspects of culture such as "the Māori language, a native plant or a body of knowledge" (Henare et al. 2007: 47). According to Māori Dictionary, *taonga* might also simply refer to personal goods or properties, which can be argued to contradict the rather romanticised reading of the former description mentioned above. *Taonga Māori* have been displayed in museums all around the world for centuries. According to a research unit at the University of Auckland, there

are more than 16,000 *taonga* in overseas museums[7]. *Taonga* were stolen, gifted, and exchanged between Māori and Europeans after English explorer James Cook arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1769. Some Māori have since tried to repatriate their *taonga*, which they have succeeded in, in some cases. In 2009, bones of over 40 *tūpuna* (human ancestors) were repatriated to their descendants of *Rangitāne o Wairau*, a tribal group in Wairau, at Wairau Bar in Marlborough[8], after they had been at the Museum of Canterbury for more than three generations[9]. In other cases, Māori have come to agreements with the museums as to how *taonga* should be handled and displayed, such as the carved house, *Ruatepupuke*, in Chicago's Field Museum (Tapsell 2014). Others travel to see the *taonga* and keep them in touch with their people (Henare 2005: 25). Many *taonga* in ethnographic museums are registered, and therefore Māori have been able to get hold of positions of some of their *taonga.* However, many are still left exhibited in modern museums today with little information, providing evidence of the colonial expansion (Tapsell 2014), and are thus not accessible to their people. As I will discuss later, this maintains the predominant Eurocentric worldview, which causes an unequal relationship between the western and indigenous peoples. The *taonga* created by Māori communities by certain values and customs have been met with an ignorance fostered by the museums. The museums have long had a focus on "accurate descriptions of the belief systems of colonial nations" (ibid.) rather than on the roots of the *taonga* and the Māori communities behind. Especially the obligations of exchange that follow the gifting of *taonga* do not shine through in museums' descriptions and exhibitions of *taonga.* This can be seen in the light of the idea of having good intentions but not acting according to the ethical obligations of partnership and collaboration on the objects and peoples' terms, and not on the museums' terms.

Thinking Through Things: Developing an Object-Based Anthropology

In recent years anthropological scholars studying material culture have been turning back to the essence of the ethnographic museums, namely the objects, and questioned them in new ways. Some of the most significant scholars bringing objects and materiality to the centre of anthropological theory are Alfred Gell (1998), Bruno Latour (2005), and Daniel Miller (2005), who argue for 'things' as significant actors in social and cultural contexts. Objects and the agency of things have since then been approached in different ways and theorised by anthropologists such as Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell (eds.), who suggest a different take on objects. In their book *Thinking Through Things* (2007) Henare et al. argue for an object-based anthropology, which

is not limited to material culture. The aim of the book is to turn attention to the relationship between things and concepts, and question the dominant dichotomy that somewhat distinguishes between the two. The object-based approach recognises objects as they are instead of assuming that they signify something else as an immediate response, which has been, however misleading, the western approach towards objects for centuries. The method of thinking through things suggests to follow indigenous ontological views on objects and to focus on treating 'thing' and 'meaning' as an identity instead of meaning being carried by things, as western epistemology tends to suggest (Henare et al. 2007: 3). They argue that the issues of interpretation when thinking through binary oppositions, such as object versus meaning and, indeed, not as an identity, can be overcome through this approach. Henare et al. seek to provide a complementary methodology for western researchers to take 'things' seriously in ethnographic encounters with, for example, indigenous cultures with different notions of 'things'. They note how anthropologists, perhaps too often, react to their own ethnographic 'revelations' by explaining away through more familiar conceptions and by placing objects at the periphery of both fieldwork and analysis. The result is that "these artefacts are analytically separable from the significance informants seem to 'attach' to them" (ibid: 1). What they advocate for is thus ontology where 'thing' and 'meaning' are an entity rather than oppositions or consequences of each other. The important thing for anthropologists doing research is to notice the many different sets of criteria that exist, which the world can be understood through. By recognising this, anthropology can perhaps avoid familiar dilemmas when trying to analyse and theorise their ethnographic material. The reason for this inspiration from ontology to the theoretical task of the present research project lies within the empirical data collected through my fieldwork. The people, objects, places, and worldview(s) involved in this research project all emphasise the importance of material objects, such as *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions), as equal social actors to humans. Furthermore, as Amiria Henare argues in the introduction to her book *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*, studying objects offers something different to anthropological research than texts or images do (2005: 3f). Engaging with objects opened up for the field of this research project, as I will demonstrate later.

Decolonising Ethnography (in Museums)

In a paper discussing Māori beliefs, Māori scholar Cherryl Waerea-I-te-rangi Smith highlights how missionaries during colonisation ruled out beliefs and ideas, such as *whakapapa* (genealogy) and

the life of 'things', for being unscientific and irrational (Smith 2000: 46-48). These thoughts originate from centuries of ideas of rationality and logic, which dominated the western thought system. In recent time both indigenous, non-indigenous, and western scholars within the fields of humanities have become more aware of how to contribute to decolonising the intellectual world, by focussing on postcolonial and indigenous issues, such as indigenous peoples' rights and developing cross-cultural studies and collaborations (see for example Vakalahi & Taiapa 2013). Relatively new methods such as 'thinking through things' have emerged in the midst of postcolonial literature.

Doing research in Aotearoa New Zealand as *tauiwi* (foreigner) is different today from just a few decades ago. As mentioned in the introduction, this study was initially intended to build upon fieldwork primarily carried out amongst members of the Tainui *iwi* (tribe) of Waikato[10]. Whilst these circumstances changed, I came to learn how I, in my role as a fieldworker, had skipped a few crucial steps before arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand. When speaking to members of the University of Waikato, I learned about the extent of the process prior to doing work with the New Zealand Māori. I needed ethical approval for doing research and, as stated earlier, my intentions had to be far clearer than I first expected. Presuming that to be able to carry out four months of fieldwork, as I initially intended, while collecting objects and material for a museum collection, without meeting the standards of the country's own institutions, was perhaps naïve. Getting confronted with these issues from the beginning of the fieldwork, allocated my anthropological interest to the colonial thought system, which, from the lack of consideration for, or knowledge of, I found myself adding onto. The challenges following colonialism in Aotearoa New Zealand have highly affected the intellectual world as well as educational institutions. Universities, schools, kindergartens, and museums all have guidelines, ethical and otherwise, in regards to including Māori views and practices. The New Zealand School Curriculum is based on the core principles of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (the Treaty of Waitangi), and has a core vision for young people "who will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Māori and *Pākehā* recognise each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring" (*The New Zealand Curriculum*: 8). The Treaty should be considered here in order to understand the importance of building relationships in regards to doing research.

Research Relations: Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is an agreement in both English and *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) between some Māori *rangatira* (chiefs) and the British Crown. About 40 *rangatira* and a British Crown representative signed it at the Waitangi grounds[11] on 6 February 1840. The two versions entail differences in language of crucial importance to how it was perceived by Māori and the British, respectively. The English version entailed the word 'sovereignty', which was translated into '*kawanatanga*' meaning 'governance' in the Māori version. The most noticeable translation to consider here is found in Article Two; the English version ensured Māori 'exclusive and undisturbed possession' of all properties whereas in the Māori version *'te tino rangatiratanga'*, meaning 'the exercise of chieftainship', over all treasured things was guaranteed (Orange 2012). This resulted in misinterpretations and conflicts between Māori and the British and many *taonga* (treasures and/or possessions) were relocated to the West as a consequence. Copies of the Māori version of the Treaty were sent around the country to other Māori *iwi* (tribes) and *hapū* (subtribes), and another 500 *rangatira* signed the agreement by September 1840. Only 39 *rangatira* did not sign it. The Treaty is often referred to as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand, since it was the initial agreement that established British authority and thus had made an agreement with Māori that allowed the British to establish a colony. The authority was later transferred to the New Zealand Parliament. In 1975 both copies were granted the status of being legal documents by the Court of Appeal, which meant that the often-neglected Māori version also had to be considered. During my fieldwork I went to see the Treaty, which is exhibited in the National Library of New Zealand in the capital, Wellington. The showcase temperatures are carefully monitored and lights only come on for a short time when pushing a button, for the viewer to get a glimpse of the Treaty documents. Taking care of the Treaty documents is of high priority at the library. The same goes for the principles of the Treaty. It holds three principles, often referred to as the three 'Ps': partnership, participation and protection. These tie into the guidelines of different institutions, as I mentioned in the previous paragraph. Because of the profound significance and infiltration of the Treaty in all of Aotearoa New Zealand, it is clear that research relations are also dependent on following these principles. My research project thus became a matter of building relationships with the people and objects I worked with, and ensure protection of both, which I will elaborate on in the next chapter.

It should be clear by now that I have no intention of suggesting a definite solution to the many challenges within the debates of decolonising objects and knowledge. Rather, I attempt to

contribute to these, by foregrounding a critical approach and processing of empirical data together with a thorough engagement with the field of study. I will further do so by introducing an extension to the method of collecting, in regards to ethnography in museums within the wider ethical frameworks, which we as anthropologists and humanists are working within, as a result of the challenges of decolonisation.

Chapter Two: Encountering Taonga Māori

It should be clear by now, why doing fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand with an expectation of being able to collect indigenous objects for a western museum collection, is problematic. After diving into the history of the colonial past and emerging myself in the present struggles — political, cultural, or otherwise — I began to understand the possible reason for the niece's reaction towards my project, as I have examined in the previous chapter. The objects that I have collected for the UNESCO collection are all a result of my critical engagement with these underlying power structures that gradually revealed themselves to me. All of the *taonga* (Māori treasures and/or possessions) in the collection are in fact *taonga* because of 1) the knowledgeable people behind the objects, who are connected to them, 2) their *whakapapa* (genealogy) can be recited and not disregarded, and 3) their meaning and value. Based on an analysis of the first part of the product of this thesis, the *taonga* collected for the UNESCO collection, I will here argue that building relationships depend on trust and transparency of ethical obligations.

Representation and Repatriation

Communicating anthropological knowledge reached a crucial turning point for anthropology in the 1980s through what James Clifford and George Marcus have described as the 'crisis of representation' (1986). They criticised the so-called 'writing culture' wherein researchers had a tendency to 'overwrite' the encountered culture or peoples' understandings of certain aspects, with what the researcher found to be 'rational' or 'true' (ibid: 2). In recent time scholars have followed up on this notion from Clifford and Marcus, and highlighted the importance of recognising the people we as anthropologists work with, and involve them in our research projects in possible ways (see for example McCarthy et al. 2015). Visual anthropology, as a university discipline, has sprung out of this dualistic divide between "the mundane material world of things and the lofty cultural

world of ideas and theories" (Adams 2015: 90); the dichotomy that many scholars interested in decolonisation and indigeneity are fighting against, as I have argued earlier. The idea of anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's concept of 'perspectivism', which argues that all beings see themselves as anthropomorphic beings through their souls and thus see other beings as enemies, can help me shed some light on why *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) are the foundation for this research project. Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism suggests a sort of human essence belonging to all animate beings and the variable 'bodies' or physical forms they have depending on the being (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 471). The dedifferentiation between humans and animals is grounded in Amerindian mythology because the "original common condition of both humans and animals is not animality but rather humanity" (ibid: 472). Humanity is then the common point of departure for all anthropomorphic beings. Instead of distinguishing between animals and humans, as western categorisations do, perspectivism takes the subjects' common form of humanity — the human essence — as its point of departure. Then, what is interesting to anthropology is the different 'bodies' in which humanity takes its forms because of the apparent alterations. Perspective is located in the 'body', the form, whereas representation is a property of the mind or spirit, and it is in the power of the soul that the ability to adopt a certain viewpoint lies (ibid: 478). My UNESCO collection has the capacity to go beyond representation by introducing a layer of experimentation with other representational forms and, following Viveiros de Castro's ideas of perspectivism, focussing on objects as a part of what MacDougall referred to as the 'anthropological body'. The users of the UNESCO collection are meant to actively engage with the objects. This is a condition for including the objects in the UNESCO collection, but also in their original context in Aotearoa New Zealand. As a way to go about different issues of proper handling of *taonga Māori* and the postcolonial condition of the whole nation, the collection focuses on objects as actors, same as human actors, which come to life in a symbiosis with people. I will investigate this and the potential uses of the UNESCO collection further in Chapter Three.

Colonial Aotearoa New Zealand has been dealing with *taonga* being relocated from their local contexts, their homes, in many ways for centuries as examined in Chapter One. An example of this is Paikea. Paikea is an ancestor of the Ngāti Porou and Ngāi Tahu *iwi* (tribes) in the most eastern region in the North Island. He is believed to have arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand riding on the back of a whale. Paikea has taken the shape of a *pou whakairo* (a wooden carving) placed on top of Te Kani-a-Takirau *marae* (meeting house) in Tologa Bay in the East coast of the North Island. In

1908 American Museum of Natural History in New York acquired Paikea[12]. He was relocated to the museum and has been there ever since. Last year some of his descendants went to New York with a whalebone pendant to give back to Paikea. Anne Salmond documented this in the Māori Television series, 'Artefact' (2018). Salmond went to New York with the descendants of Paikea and witnessed the gifting ceremony at the museum. A descendant did a *karakia* (speech, chant) and *haka*[13] (Māori war dance), in order to greet Paikea and then tied the whalebone pendant around the neck of Paikea, followed by the whole group chanting in *te reo Māori* (the Māori language). A lot of the descendants cried while chanting or after the ceremony. Then they all greeted him one by one with a *hongi* (Māori greeting) and hugs. The power of the ancestral myth is ontologically integral to each person and to the tribe, because is goes back to the heart of existence. The story of Paikea is embedded in the *pou whakairo* now housed in a museum far away from his *whānau* (family). Despite this, the importance of the relationships between Paikea and his descendants is very easy to grasp from this single episode. Moreover, Paikea is an example of the many thousands of indigenous objects captured and displayed in ethnographic museums in the West that has been assigned a new role. Paikea keeps maintaining the relation to his descendants through the form he takes as a *pou whakairo*, although he is no longer placed on top of the *marae* but in a museum in New York.

The Immediacy of Objects

My first encounter with *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) was in my first week of fieldwork visiting Auckland War Memorial Museum where many *taonga Māori* are hosted. Since then, I visited several museums in the North Island to find inspiration and do research on museums' engagement with the New Zealand Māori when housing their *taonga*. Moreover, I started exploring the relations between humans and objects and found that the *mana* (prestige) of *taonga* opened up for understanding these relations. The *mana* carried in *taonga* is not always visible to the people encountering the object (Royal 2007). Māori Dictionary defines *mana* as being a supernatural force in a person, place, or object. It is the indestructible spiritual power inherited from the *atua* (god, or spiritual power in the form of important ancestors). An example from the UNESCO collection is the *toki* (Fig. 1). This *toki* is a small adze blade made from *pounamu* (New Zealand greenstone). It is shaped like an adze but has black string wrapped around one end in a pattern, which indicates that it is a pendant. *Pounamu* is good to make wood carving tools from and tools to cut down trees, which

were the traditional functions of the *toki*. Chiefs often carried *toki* to symbolize their authority. According to Māori belief, the *mana* of the chief was transmitted to the *toki* once the adze blade was no longer in use giving it another layer of meaning. My first encounter with the *toki* did not reveal much about its *mana*. The knowledge is hidden within the *toki* to people outside of its realm, whereas for the people connected to the *toki,* its *mana* and *whakapapa* (genealogy) reveals itself immediately. The stories of a particular *toki* are only known and shared by certain people. In order to reveal the stories, the person must have a connection, *whakapapa*, to the *taonga*. People can tell the stories but it is entirely up to the right people to share their stories. In museums outside Aotearoa New Zealand, you do not notice the effects of *taonga* in social relations to the same extent as you do on the ground. There seems to be an immediacy embedded in the cultural context, stories, and people behind these objects.

Kaupapa Māori: Challenging Western Knowledge Paradigms

> During colonisation we have developed quite complex codes to protect knowledge from appropriation including traditional sanctions. Particular knowledge is only appropriate in certain places.
>
> —Cherryl Smith 2000: 48.

Cherryl Smith emphasises the belief that some knowledge is only appropriate in certain places. Since some knowledge is considered *taonga* (treasures and/or possessions) to Māori, it is important to consider how knowledge is communicated to an audience — whether the audience is students of Māori Studies at the University of Auckland, as in Smith's case, or students in a foreign country, as in the case of UNESCO collection in the present thesis. It is important to stress that as well as having views upon *taonga* that are different from *Pākehā*, different views among New Zealand Māori tribes also exist. Amiria Henare notes that these intertribal disagreements are exacerbated by 'tribal essentialism' (Henare 1998 in Henry & Pene 2001: 239). During my fieldwork I found that *kaupapa Māori* research is a growing discipline in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Kaupapa Māori* translates as "*Maori* ways of doing, being and thinking, encapsulated in a *Maori* view or cosmology" (Henry & Pene 2001: 235). *Kaupapa Māori* research is thus research approaches that are embedded in the Māori way of doing, being and thinking in this world, which tie into the Māori cosmology or belief system. Scholars Ella Henry and Hono Pene (2001) have suggested challenging the 'Western Research Paradigm' through introducing *kaupapa Māori* into research strategies. They

note how several scientists and other intellectuals have discussed which knowledge is real and true, and with their arguments situate *kaupapa Māori* research within this debate. *Kaupapa Māori* research can be an alternative methodology and approach for research that includes the traditional Māori worldview (Henry and Pene 2001: 239). The interdependence between humans (*kotahitanga*), the sacred relationship to the gods and cosmos (*wairuatanga*), and the acknowledgement that humans are guardians of nature and the environment (*kaitiakitanga*) together make up the Māori ethics encapsulated in the traditional Māori ontology about human nature; "that is, 'what is real' for *Maori*" (ibid: 237). The Māori guide this approach on their terms, which emphasises the idea of doing research with Māori and for Māori. In the field I found myself in the position of being *tauiwi* (foreigner), which required certain ways of acting towards Māori and *taonga*. I found that situating my research within the Māori worldview provided me with appropriate methods to emerge myself in the field, and act according to the ethical framework, as Smith described in the quote above.

An Encounter with Colonial Shame

In recent time Indigenous scholars have criticised European philosophy and thought of being colonial and exploiting indigenous thoughts (see Todd 2014; Martin 2017; Tahi 2018). According to Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), the critique essentially lies in the dominant Eurocentric discourse on research. Critics point to ethnographers doing research *about* indigenous peoples and not *with* them. Researchers and scholars use indigenous peoples' work and thoughts with seemingly no remorse, and fail to express proper acknowledgement or give credit to them (ibid.). Anthropologist Zoe Todd, stresses the vulnerability of the current situation in both academia and societies concerned with indigenous peoples, and warningly points to a possible turn to re-colonisation at any moment:

> So it is so important to think, deeply, about how the Ontological Turn — with its breathless 'realisations' that animals, the climate, water, 'atmospheres' and non-human presences like ancestors and spirits are sentient and possess agency, that 'nature' and 'culture', 'human' and 'animal' may not be so separate after all — is itself perpetuating the exploitation of Indigenous peoples.
>
> (Todd 2014).

The ontological 'realisations' that Todd refers to are potentially part of exploiting indigenous peoples and thus contribute to the dominant Eurocentric discourse. New Zealand Māori scholar, Georgina Stewart, notices how there seems to be a fairly distinct notion within the social sciences of only being able to fully understand and interpret cultural phenomena within the given culture. She further criticises Mauss' misuse of the concept of *hau* in his theory on gift giving, by arguing that it "is a clear example of Eurocentric appropriation of indigenous knowledge: a concept extracted by social science from its authentic cultural context and re-inscribed within the Western discourses of the modern academy" (Stewart 2017: 1)[14]. Their critique gives rise to a few important questions, which I ought to bring forward here: how can academia give space to more indigenous research in order to overcome the Eurocentric or colonial dominance? How can we study and talk about 'human' and 'non-human' (or animal, object, thing?) without contributing to the Eurocentric dichotomies? How do we live up to the responsibility of our discipline and translate the knowledge and experiences gained from our jobs within the scope of anthropology, and to what extent is this possible?

Two of the biggest challenges for me, as a westerner and anthropologist working in an indigenous context, were translation and communication of indigenous knowledge alongside explaining and living up to my ethical obligations as a researcher. As I have introduced earlier, people often questioned my intentions for doing fieldwork on *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) and collecting for a museum abroad. I had to face these challenges in order to move beyond the colonial shame I found myself facing. Consequently, my approach to the field was characterised by moving beyond the Western project about searching for representations that reflect (a certain) reality as transparently and faithfully as possible (Latour 2002 in Henare et al. 2007: 11). Instead, the challenges guided me towards understanding the concept of *taonga Māori* on their own terms and communicating the knowledge in a Danish context through the UNESCO collection.

Weaving the Wairua Together: Intertwined Relations between People, Objects, and Environments

> As things that bear vital aspects of the people who made and used them and that have their own vitality, *taonga* act as a particularly enduring form of social bond, allowing generations separated in genealogical time to come together.
>
> —Amiria Henare 2005: 5.

Ever since Captain James Cook came to Aotearoa New Zealand, *taonga* (Māori treasures and/or possessions) and other gifts have been exchanged between Māori and Europeans to forge good and lasting relationships. The relations that are created and affirmed by the exchange of *taonga* are the main purpose of the exchange itself: creating long lasting significant relationships with one another. It is a weaving together of the *wairua* (spirits) of the objects and people involved in the exchange. One day when I met up with Tom Berryman (Ngāti Manawa), we discussed the importance of building relationships. We sat down at a café and Tom explained why he spent a long time studying the tribes of the Waikato region, where he now lives but does not descend from:

> Why did I study it? Because it is very important to make connections to the people. When I walk onto the *marae* and tell them about their *marae*, I never do so without finding out the meaning of their meeting house, their *wharenui* [main building of a *marae* where guests are accommodated], because they've named it and given a reason for it. I find out that reason and then in the *kōrero* [speech] I talk about it. And they love it because you took the time to find out. And then they accept it [you] straight away.

Speaking on a *marae*, which is a ceremonial centre or meeting house, is not something everyone can do or is invited to do. There are traditions and protocols bound to how to act in a *marae*. Each one is different and clearly defined because they belong to different *hapū* (subtribes) (Salmond 1975: 31f.). It is the *tūrangawaewae*, a place where one has the right to stand, rights obtained through belonging, and *whakapapa* (genealogy). Therefore, when Tom showed the people at the particular *marae* that he had done his research, he also showed his respect and acknowledgement. He expressed his knowledge of their *taonga*; in this case the carvings on the *marae*. He studied the story of the particular *marae* and thus the stories of the people, and was then able to stand up and speak. After paying his respect, he presents himself to the people he visits as they expect to learn something about him as well. Tom shared his presentation of himself (Fig. 2) with me to present here, as an example of the *whakapapa* information New Zealand Māori share with each other in a situation as described above. The *pepeha* serves as an introduction to Tom through his lineage and relationships to a specific mountain, river, land area, tribe, and family. Only in the very end does he say his name. From the example of Tom, I argue that the connections people make to each other as well as to objects can build long lasting relationships, which are the foundation for understanding each other. It all comes down to the *whakapapa*, ones relationships with everything and everyone. This is what *taonga* can do and are meant to do: foster relationships.

Through my fieldwork I critically engaged with objects and relationships to the New Zealand Māori. When I attended Jo'el Komene's (Ngā Puhi, Tapuika) workshop on *taonga pūoro* (New Zealand Māori musical instrument), he explained how he found no reasons why someone should not be able to make or play the instruments. The perspective from which one thinks, experiences, and approach something is what matters. Therefore, I also had the potential to make and use *taonga pūoro* despite not being Māori. Jo'el explained to me how the educational thought systems of many Pacific Islands and Europe are fundamentally different. In Jo'el's own words the "Māori value system" is different from other systems, especially the Western. How knowledge is created is based on these different value systems, as I will argue later in Chapter Three.

Jo'el further stresses the importance of the function of the instrument when carving a *taonga pūoro*. The form is secondary. Jo'el explains: "The instrument needs to work, which is its primary function. It does not just have to look beautiful; it has to sound beautiful. This is the traditional aspect of *taonga pūoro*". In Jo'el's experience with researching *taonga pūoro* and tracing their *whakapapa*, he notes that the origin of the instruments can be traced back to the natural environment. All the instruments have a connection to the natural environment. The instrument, the material, and the making of it foster a strong relation between instrument, environment, and Jo'el, the maker and practitioner. When attending his workshop I experienced this first hand. I was making a Māori flute named *kōauau* (Fig. 3). The first step was to smoothen the edges and hereafter measure the three *wenewene* (finger holes) from the maker's knuckles on the index finger. This method ensures that the particular instrument is suited to the maker's body. Before making the *wenewene* I had to attempt to get three different tones from the *kōauau* from using only my breath when blowing air into the instrument. Finally, a deep sound came from the *kōauau,* and I instantly moved my lips away from the *kōauau*. At first, I did not understand were the sound came from. Other people in the room turned their heads towards me, and I soon realised that the sound had come from my *kōauau*. I felt instant excitement and relief, when I realised that the sound infiltrating the entire room came from my *kōauau*. It was the first time I was able to play a *kōauau* the right way. As Jo'el had explained to us about deciding what material to make a *taonga pūoro* from, a *taonga pūoro* player should always follow his 'stomach feeling': "if it doesn't feel right, don't do it". It felt right, when I was finally able to play the *kōauau*. I was in sync with the instrument. At that moment the instrument became significant to me: it connected me to the material world through the spiritual world. The relationship between the New Zealand Māori and their *taonga* is

characterised by their connection to the natural environment, as examined above through the examples of Tom Berryman and Jo'el Komene. There is thus an immediate relation between the spiritual and material world of *taonga*. Learning how to make the *kōauau* and care for it — learning its *whakapapa* and relating to it — made it possible for me to gift the instrument to the UNESCO collection, and to pass on the knowledge of making the instrument to others.

As I have explored in this chapter, *taonga* are often handled on the basis of looking beyond the apparent by tracing the *whakapapa* of the particular *taonga.* However, the immediacy of the object may also reveal some of the hidden knowledge about the object and its *whakapapa*. Within the educational systems there seems to be a lack of familiarity with critical approaches to material culture. In this thesis I do not only experiment with forms of communicating knowledge but also challenge object's roles as providers of knowledge in today's decolonisation process. I set out to test this in a Danish context amongst two 7th grade classes in Aarhus, Denmark, in order to investigate how the knowledge of the *taonga* from the UNESCO collection could be transferred cross-culturally and transnationally.

Chapter Three: Transferring Knowledge

> Today it is undoubtedly commonplace to say that cultural translation is our discipline's distinctive task. But the problem is knowing what precisely is, can, or should be a translation, and how to carry such an operation out. (…) To translate is always to betray, as the Italian saying goes. However, a good translation is one that allows alien concepts to deform and subvert the translator's conceptual toolbox so that the *intentio* of the original language can be expressed within the new one.
>
> —Eduardo Viveiros de Castro 2004: 5.

Objects' values are different from culture to culture. Does this mean that people simply cannot fully perceive objects from a different culture? As Eduardo Viveiros de Castro states in the quote above, translation is always to betray. Thereby he does not state that it cannot or should not be done, but rather that translation is a difficult and necessary task that requires much attention and precision in order to stay true to the original language and meaning. In this chapter I analyse my second part of the product, namely the workshop that I designed and hosted at Samsøgades Skole in Aarhus, Denmark, 14 September 2018. I will argue that bringing objects into the classroom can create an

environment in which cross-cultural knowledge can be transferred. The idea behind the workshop was to investigate the role of the objects from Aotearoa New Zealand in a Danish classroom setting. Object-based teaching (henceforth referred to as OBT) has recently been proposed by contributors to a special issue of *Museum Anthropology* devoted to innovative strategies for teaching with objects (Adams 2015). Inspired by these visions and path-breaking work on OBT from other disciplines, like that of Professor of biology Helen Chatterjee (2009), this workshop and teaching material goes beyond the university and museum and bring OBT into schools as well. Bringing the users into the process of developing activities and content provided me with an idea of what knowledge was disseminated and how. In other words, which stories the objects told and what knowledge remained hidden. Furthermore, this chapter suggests an approach to working practically and methodologically with decolonising objects and knowledge. A workshop entails collaborative learning where the hierarchy is less obvious compared to a lecture. The host of the workshop is also learning through engaging in unknown material and playing the role of facilitator rather than teacher. The *taonga* (Māori treasures and/or possessions) in the UNESCO collection are all made, gifted or otherwise acquired for the purpose. This does not fully justify the objects being collected for a museum, or for the museum to have the rights of disposal of the objects. What does make this UNESCO collection special is the focus on the process of collecting and creating the objects, which is made possible by my relationships and collaborations with my collaborators in the field. As many western museums, the existing UNESCO Collections at Moesgaard Museum tend to focus more on the objects than the stories and the collaborative processes and relationships of the objects. My product invites the students and teachers to become a part of the processes of understanding and building relations through deeper engagement with objects, which has proven to be an essential ingredient for this study.

Developing a Prototype

In July 2018 teacher and friend of mine, Marie, invited me to host a workshop about Aotearoa New Zealand at Samsøgades Skole in Aarhus. Two 7th grade classes and two teachers would attend the workshop. I divided the day into four lessons of one hour from 8.15-13.25 with a mix of activities focussing on objects and learning about Aotearoa New Zealand. Having little experience in teaching, I turned to the experts on the area, namely the teachers and students. Through my material I suggested content and activities that I found well suited for, but not limited to cross-curricular

teaching, based on guidance from my collaborators in Aotearoa New Zealand. I asked the students and teachers for advice in terms of creating teaching material about Aotearoa New Zealand and Māori in the best way possible. This workshop can be seen as a prototype, following George Marcus' definition; a "prototype is a version of a product, or a set of concepts in material form, far advanced in development, but still open to revision, experiment, and some rethinking, based, in part, on engagement with 'others' (end users, research subjects, nonexperts, amateurs) as inside respondents, if not late-stage partners" (2014: 399). It is an attempt to implement an engagement through experimental approaches in schools. The students and teachers' feedback during and after the workshop would allow me to evaluate the content, structure, and outcome of the activities and the suggested lesson plan for a cross-curricular feature day.

Part One: Exploring Objects

I arrived at Samsøgades Skole Friday morning around 8am. The teacher, Pernille, who was going to join the workshop, greeted me at the entrance to the staff room and showed me to the classroom where the workshop would take place. Marie and Pernille gathered the students in the room and welcomed me to their school. Then the floor was mine. After a brief introduction to the workshop and myself, I greeted the students with a "*kia ora!*", a traditional Māori greeting used widely in Aotearoa New Zealand. Afterwards I instructed the students in doing the *hongi*, the Māori greeting where two people share 'the breath of life' by pressing noses and foreheads together. I introduced them to this greeting for two reasons: firstly, to introduce the students to the first step in Māori culture to create a relationship with another person, and secondly, in order to set the experimental tone of the rest of the workshop. The immediate reactions from the students doing the *hongi* were on feeling strange being so close to another person, especially imagining doing the *hongi* with someone you meet for the first time. The students felt strange about having to greet another person by pressing noses. This feeling was based on not being familiar with greeting people with such intimacy. Afterwards, I explained my first experience with doing the *hongi* with Tom Berryman at the very beginning of our friendship. As described in Chapter One, Tom had explained to me how important the *hongi* was. You share the breath of life and thereby feel each other's energies. In my experience this helped me feel closer to Tom immediately, as if we had created an instant relationship.

We then moved on to the first activity where the students had to explore objects from Aotearoa New Zealand. Throughout the day, the students were to work together in groups. I brought seven packages, one for each group, containing one or two objects. Each group was also given an envelope containing two cards: a set of working questions and instructions for the assignment (Fig. 1 & 2). I asked the students to explore the objects by using their senses: sight, smell, touch, hearing etc. The other questions were about the materials and the functions of the objects. As described earlier, the idea behind the UNESCO Collections is to engage with material culture through ones senses[15]. Through this activity the students investigated objects that, to them, were foreign. As described in Chapter Two, the stories of the objects are not per se visual but might be embedded in the object or even hidden to some people. The students explored the immediacy of the objects by using their senses. One group studied the *toki* (adze) (Fig. 3). As they investigated the object, the students commented on the smooth surface, green colours and the sharp edge of the stone, which they suggested to be gemstone. They further noticed the string attached to the stone. From these immediate responses to the *toki* the group thought it was a necklace or amulet, which might have a certain function, that is, a 'use value', in the capitalistic Marxist term. The group suggested the *toki* could bring luck to the person carrying it. Inspired by the discussions of the questions, the students then had to write a short story about their objects before presenting their findings to the other groups in the classroom. Writing a story challenged the students to relate to the objects and creatively communicate their findings to the rest of the class, who had been studying different objects. The group examining the *toki* wrote a story about a boy who was given an amulet from his father to protect him from bad things happening. When he grew up and had a daughter, he gave the amulet to her to protect her as it had protected him. This is not far from the story of the *toki;* hence the students were able to extract meaning from relating to the characteristics that they found in the object. The students experienced the immediacy through handling the objects and by investigating the objects' tactility, which revealed ideas about the objects' different values.

The structure of the workshop was characterised by an experimental approach to both objects and cultural exploration. I designed the workshop after the method of 'learning by doing' in order to engage the students in the activities and material without having preconceptions playing a role. Few of the students had experiences with Aotearoa New Zealand from travelling there. Thus, the experimental approach of not knowing much about the field of study, before exploring the objects and the history of Aotearoa New Zealand, proved to be beneficial for this project. According to

anthropologist Kathleen Adams, OBT is beneficial for learning because it invites the students to critically engage in material culture and their own aesthetic judgements (2015: 91). Adams' point of departure is primarily her own experience with teaching and being taught anthropology at the university, but I argue that the idea of OBT can be useful in other educational institutions as well. An example from the collection is the *pūrerehua* (Māori wind instrument) (Fig. 4). The group that investigated this object approached it from a presumed use value of the object. They suggested it could be a kite or a fishing rod primarily because of the string attached to the wooden piece. When I revealed to them that the *pūrerehua* is an instrument, one of the students immediately suggested that the function of the string was to swing the wooden piece. This new information about the object quickly made the students able to imagine new scenarios and re-examine the object.

In the lesson that followed I made a presentation on Aotearoa New Zealand in order to contextualise the objects explored in the first part of the workshop. The presentation was held after the first activity in order to stress the experimental character of the activity. The students only knew very little about the objects before exploring them. The idea was to examine how students approach the unfamiliar *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) and what knowledge is needed prior to handling these objects.

Part Two: Relating to Objects and Revealing the Unknown

At the beginning of the third lesson we started out by discussing value in relation to objects. The context for this discussion was objects found in the students' homes in Denmark. I asked the students questions about their own belongings at home, and what value they held. The aim of the discussion was to invite the students to reflect upon the role of objects in their own lives, and to place objects in a familiar context for the students. The students talked about their most cherished objects and possessions. One student said that his PlayStation had value to him because he liked to play games on it. Another student told us about a photograph of her family as her most cherished possession. When I asked her why, she explained how the photo represented her family and that it could not be replaced. One student noted how some objects have economic value by being expensive.

Anthropologist Michael Lambek (2008) argues that 'ethical value' and 'economic value'[16] are linked to each other but are incommensurable because of their distinctive constitutions: the former being relative and incommensurable and the latter being absolute and commensurable. The

PlayStation has an ethical value to the student, as it is a medium for having fun, which is not commensurable with the economic value of the PlayStation. The same goes for the photograph. The PlayStation as a commodity has an economic value that can be compared to other commodities within the same 'meta-value': an absolute standard "against which other values are relative" (Lambek 2008: 141). However, the incommensurability becomes clear when the economic value of the PlayStation is compared to the ethical value it has to the student. The photograph that for one student was her most cherished object did not have the same ethical value to the student cherishing the PlayStation.

After the discussion we moved on to investigating objects from a Danish context. This activity progressed much like the activity concerning the unfamiliar objects from Aotearoa New Zealand, but instead focusing on more familiar objects. Each group were given three objects and a set of working questions (Fig. 5). The objects included a Danish flag, an onion, a cup, a key, a keychain, a seashell, a milk jug, and a hat amongst other objects. While the groups were exploring the objects, I handed out additional information to each group about one of their three objects (Fig. 6). An example of this was a milk jug, which one of the groups first explored without any additional information. Then I told them that I had bought it at a flea market, and it turned out to be more than a hundred years old. The students commented on how the value of the milk jug suddenly changed, because of this new information. A student commented on how it was irreplaceable and thus had more value to me than if it was replaceable, in other words, the ethical value was revealed to the students. The group examining the *toki* (Fig. 3) in the first activity, as described above, found something familiar in this unfamiliar object that, to them, resembled the characteristics of an amulet. On the other hand, the group examining the *pūrerehua* (Fig. 4) had difficulties understanding the function of the object, and thereby the use value of it was hidden. The *whakapapa* (genealogy) and relation to the object was absent or hidden from the students and thus not recognisable for them. The objects need different contextualisation and conceptualisation when they in the future become a part of the teaching material in the UNESCO collection.

Another aim for the workshop was to investigate the restrictions and challenges of OBT. The workshop activities discussed above, demonstrate the potential benefits for teaching with *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) in a Danish context, although there are also limitations. As discussed in the previous chapter, some knowledge is reserved to certain people and objects within the realm of *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) through the different constitutions from which people

experience and think. In order to illustrate this, I will now return to an example. I was able to create and learn to play the *kōauau* (Māori flute) (Fig. 7), because of the guidance from Jo'el Komene (Ngā Puhi, Tapuika) getting me into the right mindset, and from practicing. According to Jo'el, there is a possibility for anybody to learn this process, but it requires good intentions and effort in terms of understanding the interrelation of the wider connection to the environment and the Māori value system. Following Lambek (2008: 139), the incommensurability between Aotearoa New Zealand and Denmark's value systems, has led to misunderstandings. These misunderstandings can produce insights of the incommensurabilities for both parties, and thus function as a way to build bridges for understanding each other. Therefore the different *taonga* can tell different stories in a Danish context, as I have already proposed from the workshop findings. Compared to museum collections housing *taonga* artefacts acquired from local communities, the *taonga* in my UNESCO collection are able to translate the knowledge and concepts embedded in the objects. The objects reveal the process of creation, collaboration, and relations. Moreover, the *taonga* are 'living things' that change over time but are frozen into a snapshot of the moment when put into a collection. This will be made clear to the user of the collection upon completion. The project of creating the *taonga* has been of synchronic character through the simultaneous linkage between Aotearoa New Zealand and Denmark. To further engage with the objects' status as 'living things' transnationally, collaboration between Moesgaard Museum and the contributors to the collection should be agreed upon, so that the objects could be updated (as argued by McCarthy et al. 2015). Following this approach, the museums would be able to involve their partners in their work with material culture and create stronger relationships with both people and objects. When I attended Jo'el's workshop, I only truly understood the stories and relationships that are or become entangled in the *kōauau* (Fig. 7) through making the instrument. This part taught me how to handle and ultimately play the instrument, which brings me on to the last part of the workshop at Samsøgades Skole.

Part Three: Creating and Understanding Cultural Objects

After recess I walked into the classroom with a feeling of having accomplished all I wanted from the first two parts of the workshop. Now we were going to build *manu tukutuku* (Māori kites), which the students were able to take home at the end of the day. During fieldwork I attended a workshop at Waikato Museum *Te Whare Taonga o Waikato* in *Kirikiriroa* Hamilton, building *manu tukutuku.* It was a part of a school holiday activity that the museum hosted with Te Rangi, a local

Māori woman from a local *marae* (meeting house) in town. Te Rangi taught me how to make the particular *manu tukutuku* that will become a part of the UNESCO collection. After I finished my *manu tukutuku*, Te Rangi asked me to help others who needed help with building their kites. Engaging in the building process of the kite allowed me to talk about (to the New Zealand Māori) treasured knowledge. This experience inspired me to include an activity of building *manu tukutuku* as a part of the workshop. The material needed for the activity would be easily accessible from anywhere in the world and thus not dependent on the natural environment at the present location. The kite building activity at Samsøgades Skole proceeded accordingly. We used wooden sticks, papers from old magazines, conventional string, and tape to make the kites. I explained and showed the students the steps. Building *manu tukutuku* engaged the students in the process of making an object, inspired by the concept of *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions), where the relation between a person and object is made stronger.

According to a report on intellectual property and safeguarding cultural heritage in the South Pacific, one of the main purposes of museums is "sharing of knowledge" (Talakai 2007: 48). The objects weave the museum and the schools together because the two institutions share a common purpose, namely the sharing of knowledge. Peter Bjerregaard, Senior Advisor at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo, highlights how museums are about going beyond a characteristic of representing knowledge and onto generating knowledge (2015). The kite building activity served as an important element for translating and sharing knowledge respectfully by engaging the students in the making of the object. According to anthropologist Robert Foster (2008), 'value creation' — although arguing within the realm of commodity production and consumption but drawing on the principles of gift exchange outlined by Mauss — is increasingly important for the user of the product (or object) to create emotional relations and personal investments to the product. Following Foster, I argue that actively engaging the students in these processes enabled the students to relate to the kite once they had invested them with themselves. The concept of *taonga Māori,* as something that is treasured to Māori, could be translated into a Danish context through engaging the students in the value creation they experienced from building kites.

When engaging in Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori, and objects, Moesgaard Museum and I should follow the ethical obligations of their museums' standards concerning intellectual property and cultural heritage. Inspired by the policy of museums in Aotearoa New Zealand, I have introduced an addition to the UNESCO Collections that focuses on *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) of

taonga Māori through my continuous involvement with and care for the objects. The *taonga* are looked after properly, for example by following certain instructions from the *taonga pūoro* (New Zealand Māori musical instruments) makers on cleaning the instruments. Furthermore, the collection focuses on the process of building relationships amongst people and objects. The students learning about the making of the *taonga* provided them with an idea of the relations the New Zealand Māori have to their *taonga*. This was the beginning for the students to be able to handle the objects in the collection themselves.

Evaluation: Collaboration and Relation

After the workshop Pernille, Marie, and I went back to the staff room. We sat down to evaluate the day. Some of the immediate responses from the teachers were about the content being very useful for cross-curricular teaching, and that the flow of the different elements of the workshop were suitable for a full day of teaching. They suggested a few things to consider for the teaching material: both teachers and students appreciated the fact that I, as the collector of the material for this workshop, was the host of the workshop. The information and experiences that I gained from the fieldwork, such as stories connected to the objects, should be archived as a part of the UNESCO collection, for the teachers to be able to use it in the classroom. Marie asked me how she would be able to do the workshop without my knowledge and engagement. They suggested including a PowerPoint presentation of Aotearoa New Zealand, like the one I used for this workshop, in the collection, as an element of the teaching material ready to use. Developing these components for the UNESCO collection will be a part of the future work with Moesgaard Museum in collaboration with both teachers and my collaborators from Aotearoa New Zealand. Building further on the question of what ethnographic museums or collections are good for today, and bringing objects to the centre of the anthropological methodology and research, can create increased cross-cultural understandings. The users of the UNESCO Collections are asked to activate the objects by participating in the activities suggested in the collection or suggested by the objects themselves when engaging with them. The role of the user is intended to be like that of a viewer in an art gallery, as explained by anthropologist Lauren Reid (2018). When stepping into an art gallery the viewer expects to encounter works that one has to engage with and make an effort to comprehend. Compared to a collection of objects exhibited in a museum, this type of collection invites participation and exploration.

Through my fieldwork I made the choice of engaging myself in the world of the New Zealand Māori and their *taonga* (Māori treasures and/or possessions). The concept of *taonga* and principles of the New Zealand Māori are heavily embedded in *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world). Therefore, when introducing the objects into a Danish context it is important to consider how a translation of the conceptualisations will be and what naturally will be transformed, following Viveiros de Castro (2004: 5). Returning to the current debate on repatriating objects that are scattered around the western world's museums to their origin or home and people, this UNESCO collection serves as a critical engagement with these postcolonial challenges. As I have discussed here, this collection is highly influenced by my relationships to the people with whom I worked, and continue to work with throughout the process of completing the work of the UNESCO collection. Since *taonga* relate to people and vice versa, the main focus of this collection is on the creation of long lasting relationships through *taonga*. The workshop showed that all the students were able to do just this. My hope for this collection is to inspire Danish schools to critically engage in the material part of the world that makes up a great deal of our human lives. Through the example of *taonga Māori* I hope to create teaching material that brings objects to the centre of the learning environment, and challenge how we as human observers of the material and natural world, engage with objects through reciprocal relations and responsibility.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have investigated *taonga Māori* (treasures and/or possessions) as integral elements of *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) and how they foster relationships. My project has been twofold. Firstly, I intended to investigate the complex relationships between people and objects through engaging in an analysis of *taonga.* I drew on scholars from within material culture who have been prominent in studying objects and their roles in anthropology, to open up for the broader reasoning for entering the field of objects and thus *taonga Māori*. While conducting research in Aotearoa New Zealand, I have uncovered postcolonial issues of museum collections and representation of indigenous peoples and objects. The challenges within anthropological enquiry of indigenous objects are in this thesis found within the misleading approach to objects as signifiers or creators of meaning, which separates them from the holistic and inclusive worldview they are connected to. I discovered that *taonga* could be characterised as relational objects because they are created in relational processes, through their connection to the wider environment, including people.

Subsequently, they have the ability to foster relationships from acting in relational contexts between people and objects. To engage in understanding how to handle *taonga Māori* according to the ethical obligations, I opened up for understanding the processes and relations embedded in *taonga* and the creation of them, which was guided by experts like Tom and Jo'el.

Secondly, I asked the question of how to transfer knowledge that is culturally bound to certain objects and people into a different cultural and national context. The objects for the new UNESCO collection are all products of my interaction and engagement with them in the field and beyond. I have argued how my connections and relations, my *whakapapa* (genealogy), of being co-creator, have tied into the *whakapapa* of the *taonga*. From our collaborative project of creating a UNESCO collection I have engaged in a post-colonial critique of the questionable methods, from which objects have been collected and represented during colonial time, and in some instances still are today. The collection does not aim to represent the New Zealand Māori through their *taonga*, but rather present the objects themselves and the stories they can tell. I have developed a method for cross-cultural and transnational teaching that goes beyond representation and opens up for further investigation within the fields of exchange and representation in a decolonisation process. I have engaged in what I have referred to as an obligation of exchange by collaborating with people and sharing knowledge, which are based on upholding long lasting relationships. Bringing objects into the classroom can create a culturally safe environment for both objects and people, where *taonga* can flourish and create relationships between people and objects.

The on-going decolonisation process is still a challenge. I have argued how acknowledging different worldviews in research methodology can be beneficial to anthropological research, when it comes to studying indigenous objects and cultures. From this, we are able to move beyond mere representation towards trying to understand the phenomena as they are in this world, instead of using substitutes based on Eurocentric discourse and epistemology. One might argue that this approach is the job of all anthropologists and thus nothing new per se. Therefore, I suggest taking a step back (or forwards) towards the very foundation of anthropological interest, social relations, and stress the importance of building relationships. The relationships with the people with whom we work should be nourished before, during, and after fieldwork. This research project has been an attempt to engage in the challenge of representation within the present decolonisation process. The relational framework invites ethnographers to face the challenges now, before they show up in the future haunting our present and past, and then only serve as reminders of what should have already

been done. Alongside the project of decolonising objects and knowledge, we should investigate other ways of creating and sharing knowledge. Exploring new ways of engaging with objects is essential to this challenge.

Notes

[1] Māori treasure and/or possession.

[2] "Om UNESCO Samlingerne", UNESCO Samlingerne, http://unescosamlingerne.dk/content/om-unesco-samlingerne, accessed 10 October 2018.

[3] *Te Ao Māori* translates as 'the Māori world' referring to aspects of the realm of the New Zealand Māori, including but not limited to culture and beliefs.

[4] My product is the material for the workshop that I designed and held on 14 September 2018, in Samsøgades Skole, Aarhus, Denmark.

[5] "Code of Ethics & Professional Practice", The Museums of New Zealand Inc. 2013.

[6] "Artefact", series 1, episode 3, 00:36:14.

[7] "Virtual Repatriation: A database of Māori taonga in overseas museums", maramatanga.co.nz, http://www.maramatanga.co.nz/project/virtual-repatriation-database-m-ori-taonga-overseas-museums.

[8] The *iwi* (tribe), *Rangitāne o Wairau,* is located in the north-eastern region of Marlborough in the South Island, Aotearoa New Zealand.

[9] "Artefact", series 1, episode 1, presented by Anne Salmond, screened 7 May 2018, http://www.maoritelevision.com/tv/shows/artefact/S01E001/artefact-series-1-episode-1, accessed 16 June 2018.

[10] Region in the upper North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Most of my fieldwork for this research project took place here.

[11] Located in the Bay of Islands in the North Island, the Waitangi Treaty Grounds are known as one of New Zealand's most important historical sites.

[12] Information and registration of the ancestral figure Paikea can be found here: https://anthro.amnh.org/anthropology/databases/common/image_dup.cfm?catno=80%2E0%2F%20%20615, accessed 23 November 2018.

[13] *Haka* is a type of ancient Māori war dance traditionally used on the battlefield, as well as when groups came together in peace. Today the *haka* is performed as a posture dance performance in ceremonies and celebrations to show the importance of the occasion and to honour guests.

[14] HAU Journal has been accused of reproducing structural violence of colonisation through their western approach to indigenous knowledge and concepts, which the community claims the journal is misusing. According to the critics, there are no credits given to the Māori, no consultancy, no clear intentions, and no demonstrations of sound actions, which arguably precede building relationships.

[15] According to the UNESCO Collections' website, the purpose of the collections are for the students to 'touch, smell, see, listen, and relate actively to the world' (my translation), http://unescosamlingerne.dk/content/om-unesco-samlingerne.

[16] Concepts of value proposed by David Graeber in his work *Toward an anthropological theory of value: the false coin of our own dreams* (2001).

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Appendix

Fig. 1. *Toki.* Adze and pendant made from pounamu (New Zealand greenstone).

Fig. 2. Tom Berryman's *pepeha* (tribal saying, presentation of family and tribal affiliations). Text and translation by Tom Berryman.

Ki te taha tōku māmā.	Side of my mum.
Ko Tawhiuau te maunga.	Tawhiuau, the mountain.
Ko Rangitāiki te awa.	Rangitāiki, the river.
Ko Tipapa te marae.	Tipapa, the marae.
Ko Ngāti Manawa te iwi.	Ngāti Manawa, the tribe.
Ko Tangiharuru te tangata.	Tangiharuru, the chief.
Ko Berryman te ingoa whanau.	Berryman, the surname.
Ko Tame tōku ingoa.	My name is Tom.
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.	Greetings to you, to you (excluding speaker), greetings to us all (including speaker).

Fig. 3. Making the *kōauau*, Māori flute, at Jo'el Komene's workshop.

Fig. 4. Envelops for each group for Activity 1.

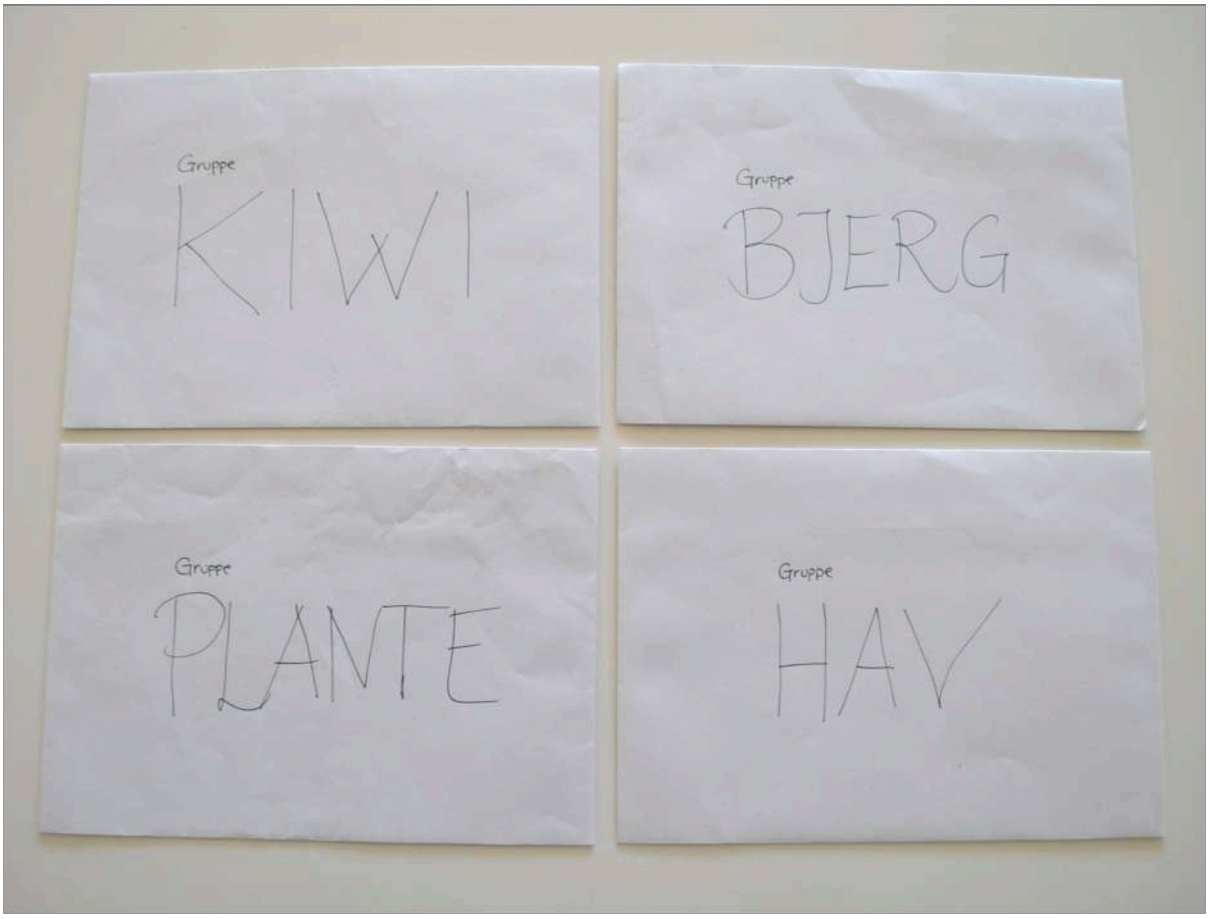

Fig. 5. Instructions for Activity 1 and assignment questions.

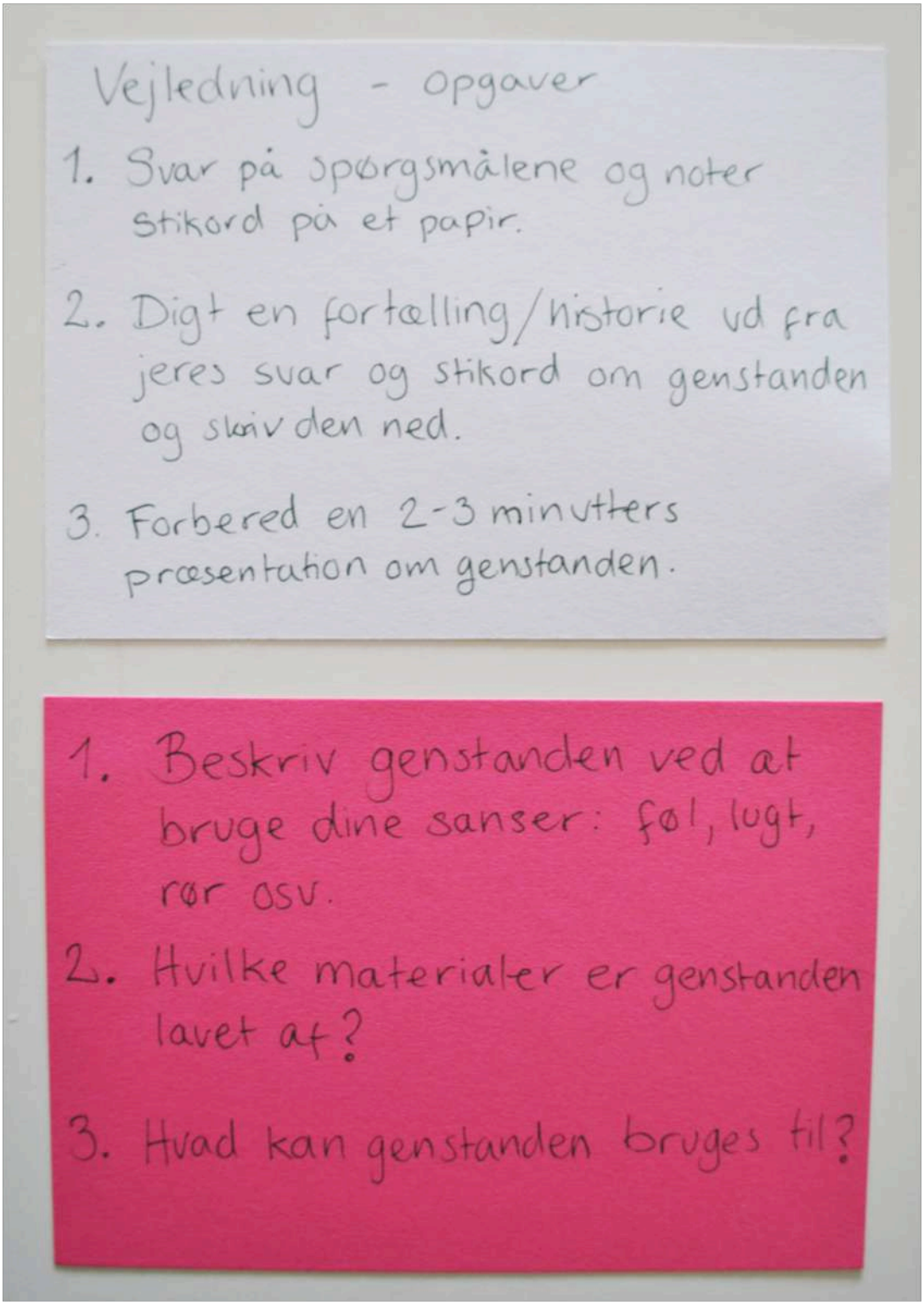

Fig. 6. *Pūrerehua.* New Zealand Māori wind instrument made by Jo'el Komene (Ngā Puhi, Tapuika) and Christina Engkebølle.

Fig. 7. Questions for Activity 4.

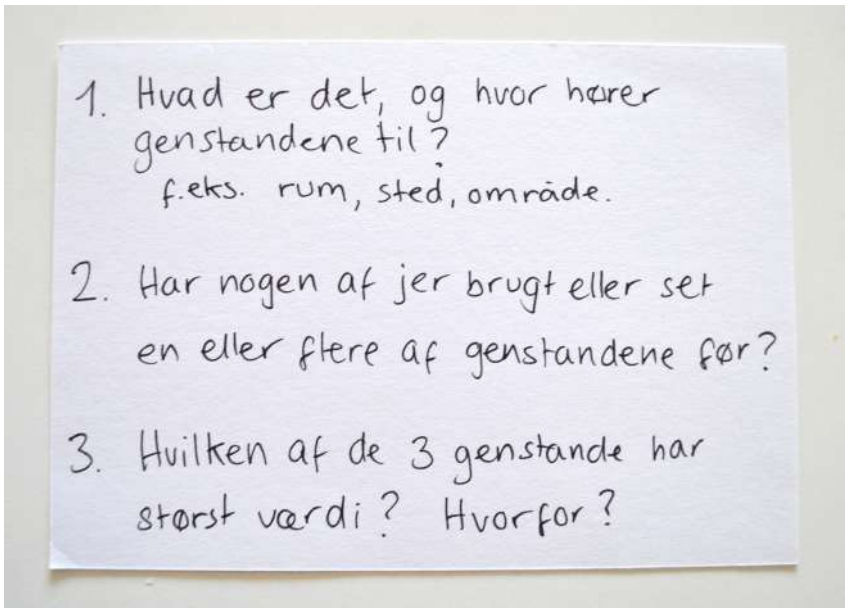

Fig 8. Example of the additional information given to each group, about one of their three objects in Activity 4.

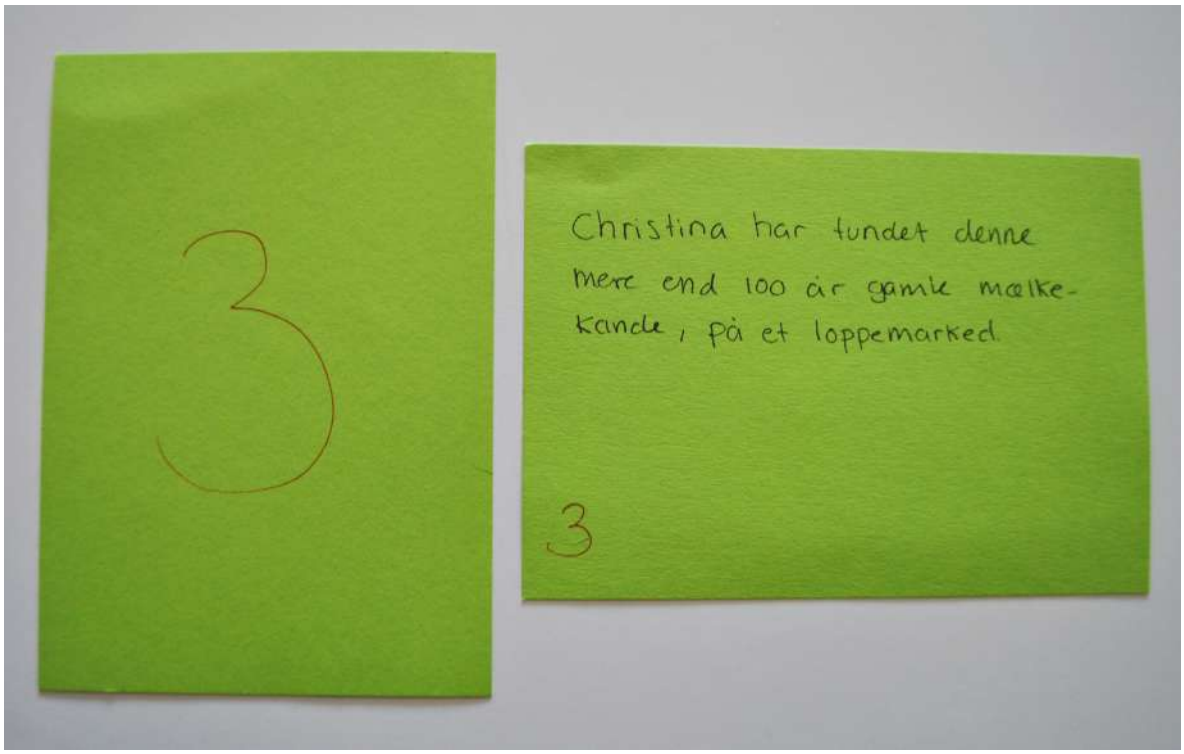

Fig. 9: *Kōauau*, cross-blown Māori flute.