

BYRON RANGIWAI

Atuatanga

Ā-tua: that which is beyond...
Out of focus, like a ghostly shadow
An enigmatic shape in the corner of my eye
Behind a veil of dense mist

Atua: the root of Atuatanga
Ancestors, gods, demons, supernatural beings
Deities, ghosts, strange entities
Relics of superstitious regard (Moorfield, 2011)

Incantations uttered by tohunga
Stir up energies, powers surge
Rippling through the matrix of
Atua, tangata and whenua¹

We adopted gospel faith
Baptised and named it Te Rongopai
Washed anew in the springs of our minds
Fed with Te Kūmara o te Ora²

Spiritual beings with supernormal powers (Melbourne, 2011)
Ngā Atua Māori: personifications of God's created work

¹ My thinking around the relationship between Atua, tangata and whenua with regard to Atuatanga and Māori theology has been shaped by the thinking of Pā Henare Tate (2012); please see Rangiwai (2018a) for further clarification.

² Te Kūmara o te Ora was, according to Don Tamihere, Bishop of Te Tairāwhiti (personal communication, 16 March, 2017), a substitute used by the late Venerable Dr Hone Kaa to replace Te Taro o te Ora, the Bread of Life, in Māori liturgies.

Out of Māori and Christian synthesis, comes Atuatanga
Māori theology shaped by Māori spirituality (McKay, 2005)

Coveting and converting the Christian message
Māori immersed the faith in wairua
Tailoring scriptures and liturgies
To satiate our spiritual appetites (Wiremu Kaa, cited in McKay,
2005)

Atuatanga is Māori community reflection
Making sense of and responding to
Te Atua and creation with
Compassionate and loving action (Moeawa Callaghan, cited in
McKay 2005).

Atuatanga is “...all things Atua” (Rangiwai, 2018b, p. 179)
It enculturates the Christian message
Into Māori life
To bring glory to God (McKay, 2005).

References

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