

## Materializing Reconciliation: Negotiating Difference in a Transcolonial Exhibition

J. R. Martin  
Maree Stenglin  
*University of Sydney*

In this chapter we are concerned with the ways an ideology of reconciliation is materialized in an exhibition space at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington. One of the fundamental objectives of this museum is to “represent the bicultural nature of the country, recognizing the mana and significance of each of the two mainstreams of tradition and cultural heritage, and provide the means for each to contribute effectively to a statement of the nation’s identity . . .” (Museum’s Mission as cited in Bossley, 1998, p. 2). Biculturalism, the concept of partnership between Maori and Pakeha (non-Maori), has its roots in the controversial founding constitutional document of New Zealand, The Treaty of Waitangi. Inside the museum, the ‘physical’ interfacing of Maori and Pakeha takes place in the *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition. This exhibition is subdivided into three main spaces. The first two deal with the fundamental ideas of the Treaty of Waitangi: government, citizens’ rights, and conceptions of land. The third is the *Poringi* exhibition, which presents both the Maori and Pakeha sides of a land rights case that is currently before the Waitangi Tribunal.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate some of the ways difference, struggle, and coexistence are enacted across ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings in three-dimensional space. Section 1 briefly introduces the spatial grammar that will be used to analyze the construction of meanings in the exhibition spaces noted above. Section 2 applies this tool to the analysis of the *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition. The goal



FIG. 7.1. Orbital and serial structures.

of this analysis is to examine how the process of reconciliation is logogenetically enacted through space in a transcolonial museum setting. As analysts<sup>1</sup> we have tried to respond compliantly to the reading position naturalized by the exhibition; the paradox of materializing reconciliation without involving the indigenous custodians of land involved is introduced later in Section 5.

### SECTION 1: TOOLS FOR ANALYZING SPACE

The grammar of space we are deploying here is organized metafunctionally into ideational, interpersonal, and textual dimensions (Stenglin, 2002, 2004). Ideationally we are concerned with two types of structure—orbital and serial. With orbital structure, an exhibit is organized around a nucleus and satellite configuration. The nucleus establishes the reading position for satellites, which are thus dependent on the nucleus for their interpretation. With serial structure, an exhibit is configured as a chain (or cluster), with particles in an iterative relationship with one another. There are relationships between segments, but no one part of the exhibit determines the reading of others.

Interpersonally, we are concerned with binding and bonding. Binding mediates the security or insecurity of space and is represented as a scale grading spaces along a restricted to unrestricted continuum—from extreme openness to extreme closure. Extremes induce claustrophobic and agoraphobic responses, whereas median choices produce comfort zones of safety and comfort, or freedom and possibilities.

Bonding is concerned with constructing the attitudinal disposition of visitors in relation to exhibits; its basic function is to align people into groups with shared dispositions. Bonding is realized in part through symbolic icons (flags, logos, colors, memorabilia, etc.), which rally visitors around communal ideals.

<sup>1</sup>For the record, we read the exhibition as outsiders—as migrant Australians with Canadian (Martin) and Croatian (Stenglin) backgrounds.

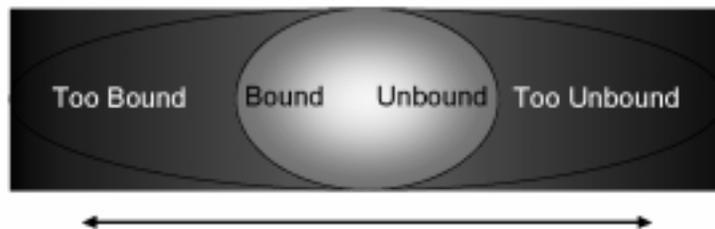


FIG. 7.2. Binding as a scale.

Textually speaking there are several dimensions to consider. Thematic prominence has to do with what comes first in an exhibit, attracting visitors and predisposing them to what's to come. Informational prominence has to do with what is positioned as Given and what as New in bifurcated displays. As with images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996), we associate left with Given and right with New in the western exhibits we have encountered. In addition, exhibition spaces may be bifurcated into high and low, in which case an Ideal to Real opposition is relevant (again following Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

Because we are dealing with three-dimensional space we also have to consider a visitor's movement as it unfolds along a Path and Venue trajec-

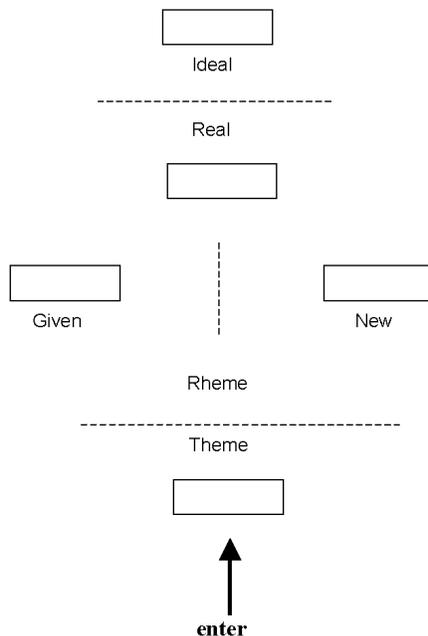


FIG. 7.3. Textual structures.

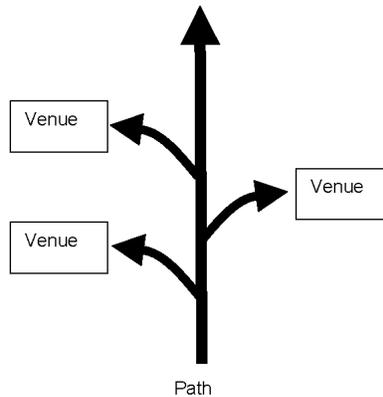


FIG. 7.4. Path and Venue structure (textual meaning).

tory (difficult as this is to represent in a two-dimensional, static display like that in Fig. 7.4). The Path is the route which exhibitions scaffold for visitors, and which deposits them at Venues and guides them from one Venue to another. In addition, we consider Prominence (the way in which aspects of exhibitions are foregrounded over one another) and Framing (the way in which aspects of exhibitions are demarcated from one another).

Confined as we are to a single chapter, we cannot deal with any of these resources in detail here; nor are we able to deal adequately with multimodality—the interaction of space grammar with attendant modalities of verbiage, image, and sound. Our purpose is simply to focus selectively on the spatial configuration of the *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition and open up consideration of the three-dimensional semiosis contributing to the process of reconciliation it enacts.

## SECTION 2: AN EXHIBITION IN THREE PARTS

The enactment of reconciliation in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa actually begins before visitors enter the *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition. On the northwest side of the building there is a rounded jade green protrusion emerging from the building. In fact, this protrusion is the edge of a multistory wedge dividing the exhibition spaces in the museum, with Maori spaces on the right and Pakeha spaces on the left (as we look from outside the museum). Taken as a whole this wedge can be read as a diptych, with the green protrusion acting as a hinge. The choice of color makes the junction stand out against the cream cladding of the exterior walls and also references pounamu or green stone. Pounamu is a rock that is only found in rivers and streams on the South Island, and in



PLATE 7.1. Te Papa museum, showing the protruding green wedge.

Maori culture, it symbolizes everything that is valued because of its unyielding strength (used in weapons), its beauty (used for adornments and jewelry) and its rarity (which make it a highly prized possession). Overall then, the diptych structure both respects difference (the two leaves) and dissolves it (the hinge), resolving Maori and Pakeha with respect to the bonding symbolism of pounamu—an indigenous flavored resolution which we need to keep in mind when considering reconciliation inside the museum in the *Signs of a Nation* exhibition itself.

Inside the wedge, many visitors enter *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* from the southeast, and so experience Maori culture to their left and Pakeha to their right. At the beginning of the exhibition, functioning as Theme, is a pole installation consisting of three clusters of bronze poles. As visitors walk through the poles they hear a cacophony of voices—male, female, young and old—giving their opinions, both positive and negative, on the Treaty of Waitangi. As text panels explain, this treaty “was signed in 1840 by representatives of the British crown and more than 500 Maori chiefs. It deals with ideas vital to modern New Zealand—government, citizens’ rights, and land and cultural heritage.” Embedded into some of the poles are back-lit color photos of groups of Maori and Pakeha people, showing faces for visitors to associate with the disembodied voices. The height and verticality of the poles, moreover, mark the limits of this space and create a sense of partial enclosure, which in turn makes visitors feel Bound.

One reading of this installation would be to treat the poles as a kind of forest, representing precolonial New Zealand—a forest from which we emerge into a monumentally scaled space displaying an enormous replica of the original treaty and looming wall panels with the Maori (left) and Pakeha (right) versions of the treaty. These are configured as a triptych, to which we now turn.

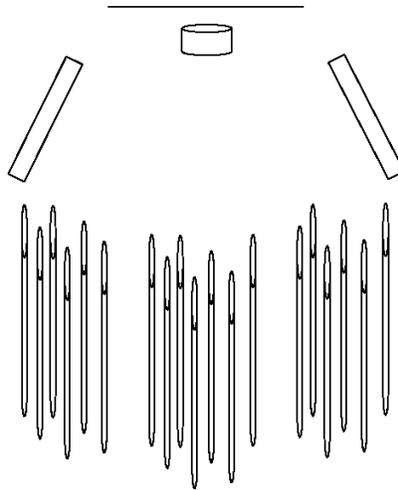


FIG. 7.5. General layout of the treaty triptych.

## 2.1 Treaty Triptych

As Fig. 7.5 illustrates, wall panels and the replica configure the Treaty of Waitangi as a three-dimensional triptych; instead of three hinged panels on an altar or inside a room the lateral panels are angled to form the room (along the walls of the wedge introduced earlier). Following Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) interpretation of two-dimensional triptychs, we read this configuration as a Given (Maori version), Mediator (replica of original bilingual treaty), New (Pakeha version) structure.<sup>2</sup> The treaty replica can also be read as Ideal in relation to a squat round podium with a light box inside it. The light box displays a text panel asking which version of the treaty is the 'real' one. See Fig. 7.6.

From an ideational perspective this podium can be taken as the nucleus of an orbital structure with the three treaty panels as satellites. The nuclear text panel contains the original Maori and English versions of the treaty and a new translation into English by Professor Sir Hugh Kawharu and invites visitors to spot the difference, commenting as follows:

*When the words of the Treaty were rendered in Maori, there were several differences between the Maori and English versions. Today, if we translate the Maori version into modern English, even more differences and difficulties arise.*

<sup>2</sup>Looking beyond the *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition, as we face the triptych the Maori wall as well functions as Theme for all the Maori exhibitions behind it, as does the Pakeha wall for its half of the museum.

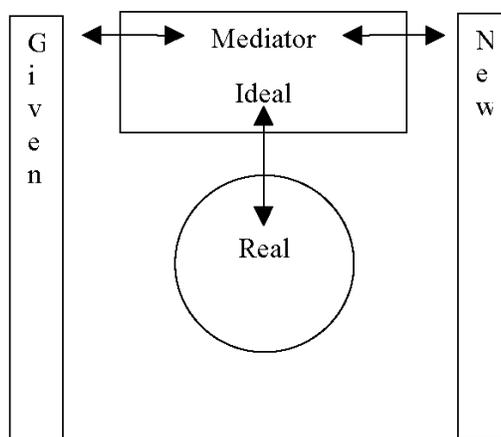


FIG. 7.6. Textual structure of the treaty triptych.

*So which one is the 'real' Treaty?*

*When the Waitangi Tribunal makes a ruling on the Treaty it refers to both the original versions, the Maori and the English.*

The nucleus thus tells us to read the glass replica of the treaty as mediating between the Maori and Pakeha versions—as a negotiation between discourses and cultures, both of which are relevant to rulings about what the treaty means.

Interpersonally, the scale of the space changes dramatically as visitors leave the pole installation and enter the triptych proper. Upon entering, a large and monumentally proportioned volume of space opens up around them. Monumental spaces can make people feel Too Unbound (vulnerable). To counter such feelings of vulnerability, the designers have used dark colors in combination with low levels of down-lighting. These choices are important as they make the space feel more enclosed. Down-lighting, for instance, creates the illusion of lowering the ceiling, while the dark color of the flooring tends to absorb much of the light and appears to advance. Together, these choices have the effect of visually decreasing the voluminousness of the space. They are thus pivotal in preventing the scale of the space from overwhelming the museum visitors' sense of security.

Although the monumentality of the space is not, for the most part, overwhelming, it is a *significant* interpersonal feature of the design choices made for this part of the exhibition. From the point of view of intertextuality, the use of monumental scale can make some important interpersonal meanings. For instance, these choices for scale reference other monumentally and institutionally scaled spaces such as American memorials

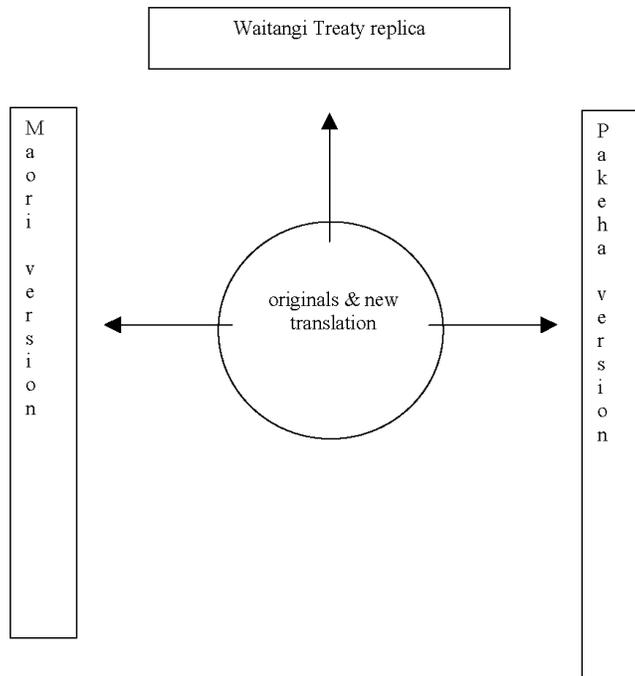


FIG. 7.7. Orbital (ideational) structure of the treaty triptych.

like the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. In doing so, they point to the social and cultural importance of the space—an enclosure housing the founding constitutional document of the nation. Ironically, in this instance, only replicas of the Treaty are displayed in the space.

Accompanying the drop in lighting visitors feel as they enter the triptych is a change in flooring from linoleum to soft carpet tiles. This shift enhances visitor comfort by increasing the degree of resilience felt underfoot; it also signals a textual transition, from the pole installation to the triptych. To reach the next stage of the *Signs of a Nation* exhibition, the visitor literally has to walk beneath the glass Waitangi Treaty panel, which forms the culmination of the Waitangi Treaty space. As visitors walk beneath this glass panel, they pass through a small, Bound, tunnel-like enclosure into a second triptych, to which we turn in Section 2.2.

The Path and Venue trajectory of the exhibit to this stage is outlined in Fig. 7.8. We have included in this diagram two lounges which face the Maori and Pakeha walls respectively and thus contribute to the distribution of visitors from Path to Venues. The four stars represent the nuclear and satellite displays to which the textual meaning of the space is orienting visitors.



PLATE 7.2. Part of the treaty triptych.

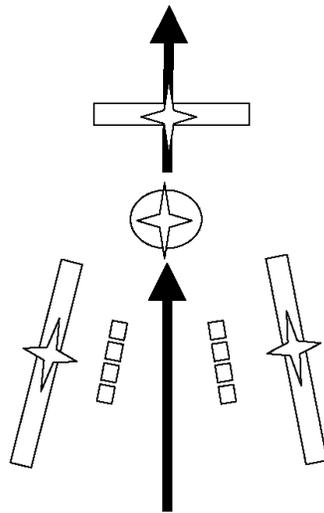


FIG. 7.8. Path and Venue structure of the treaty triptych.

## 2.2 Colonial Triptych

The second triptych consists of three large display cases ('cabinets of curiosities'), hosting a range of objects and with accompanying text panels flagging these as associated with the three main themes of the Treaty of Waitangi noted earlier—government (kawanatanga), citizens' rights (mana tangata), and land and cultural heritage (te whenua me nga tkanga tuku iho). The land and cultural heritage cabinet is Given, citizens' rights is New, and the government display acts as Mediator. See Fig. 7.9.

Unlike the treaty triptych, there is no nuclear panel anchoring the three leaves of the triptych. Instead, in the center of the room there are simply six chairs, three looking forward to the Mediator, and three looking back toward the previous space (textually speaking, the Path vector leading from the first triptych to the second simply deposits visitors in the center of the room). Ideationally, the structure is therefore serial rather than orbital, consisting of three clusters of objects, which are associated with one another as shown in Tables 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3.

Interpersonally, the second space is small, dimly lit, and strongly Bound. It is much smaller in scale than the treaty triptych and firmly encloses the visitor both horizontally and vertically. The ceiling is much lower, and as a result, the horizontal sense of enclosure visitors feel is considerably amplified. Vertically, the space is constructed in such a way that the three display cases function as wall planes. The result is a three-sided enclosure with openings at each corner. The function of these openings is very important to visitor security as they erode the firmness of the enclosure, and in doing so, prevent the space from feeling claustrophobic (too Bound).

Another important design element contributing to feelings of strong Binding is the square shape of the space (since the cabinets are not aligned with the wall planes of the narrowing wedge). Square shaped spaces tend to feel static, rather than dynamic. This means they feel contained, and they

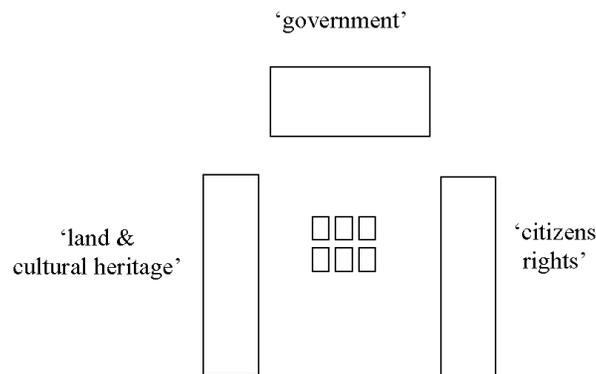


FIG. 7.9. Overview of the colonial triptych.

TABLE 7.1  
Objects Inside the Land and Cultural Heritage:  
Te whenua me nga tkanga tuku iho Display Case

<i>Object(s)</i>	<i>How the Object(s) Relate to the Theme of Land and Cultural Heritage: Te whenua me nga tkanga tuku iho</i>
Theodolite	An instrument used to measure vertical and horizontal angles of the land or boundary lines
Signposts and land poles	Instruments used to indicate physical boundaries
Whenua pot	Maori people bury the afterbirth inside beautifully crafted whenua pots
Heitiki	These are sacred taonga—loosely translated as treasures associated with families—which were buried with the family line in the past
Gold watch	This object symbolizes the European valuation of time as well as scientific precision and technological sophistication
Surveyor's chain	An essential instrument for dividing the land

TABLE 7.2  
Objects in the Government: Kawanatanga Display Case

<i>Object(s)</i>	<i>How They Relate to the Theme of Government: Kawanatanga</i>
Flags of the United tribes of New Zealand, 1834	Symbols asserting the national identity of New Zealand
Huia feathers	White tipped talk feathers that are a sign of mana—power and authority—for Maori people
Whakapapa	An object showing Maori genealogy
Adze of green stone	This is an object owned by a Maori person of high rank
Union Jack	Flag flown after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed to indicate that another colony was gained
NZ Ballot Box	This object symbolizes the vote
The Seal of the Colony of NZ 1841–5	The first public seal used by the Governor of New Zealand
The Seal of the Government of NEW ZEALAND 1852–59	The first parliament of New Zealand received a new seal on which equal weight was given to Maori and Pakeha

are spaces that feel comfortable to 'be' in. One explanation for this relates to the equality of their dimensions, which gives them a sense of stability and equilibrium (Ching, 1996, p. 43).

The overall effect then is somewhat static and contemplative, with stasis materializing the inertia of colonial New Zealand—but with food for thought. The objects in the display cases are bonding icons, and the values they evoke encapsulate the ideologies of the people they belong to. At a concrete, literal level they symbolize the three themes of the treaty: land, government, and citizenship. At a deeper level, they symbolize the contrasting world views of Maori and Pakeha with respect to these themes.

TABLE 7.3  
Objects in the Citizens' Rights: Mana Tangata Display Case

<i>Object(s)</i>	<i>How They Relate to the Theme of Citizens' Rights: Mana Tangata</i>
A reproduction of the Magna Carta 1215	This charter is a symbol of both democratic government and civil rights
War objects: pith helmet with NZ Pioneer Battalion Badge 1916 British infantryman's webbing 1908 pattern, with bayonet Entrenching tool c 1918 Folding chain handsaw and wire cutters c 1918	These objects symbolize that with rights came duties such as protecting and defending one's country and fighting for it. Pakeha and Maori fought in both WWI and WWII.
Legal objects: barrister's wig c 1990 bound copies of NZ Statues	Objects symbolizing New Zealand's legal system

As for land, British objects reflect their perspective on land as an object—a possession that can be surveyed, bought, and sold. For Maori, on the other hand, land is imbued with cultural values—a place they spiritually bond with (by burying their afterbirth and family treasures, or taonga); it is not something they possess and own.

With respect to government, British objects symbolize their concept of government, evoking their colonial empire (flags, seals) and democracy (ballot box). Maori chiefs on the other hand ruled over extended families, as reflected in the objects that are symbols of a chief's power.



PLATE 7.3. The colonial triptych.

Concerning citizenship, we have only British objects symbolizing the dual notions of rights and duties that citizenship involves. For *Rights*, which have their origin in the 13th-century Magna Carta, we have its reproduction, and the wig—a symbol of law; for *Duty* we have war objects, recalling the expansion and defense of the empire.

This interpretation is co-articulated by the text panels inside each display case, especially the opening paragraphs, which introduce both Maori and Pakeha world views (the choices for Theme, underlined below, make this complementarity clear):

*Land and cultural heritage (text panel)*

For Maori, land was held by a tribe through the mana, or authority, of a chief. For Europeans, individuals could own land, and buy and sell it, as they pleased.

*Government (text panel)*

The British system of government was very different from the Maori way. Maori lived in hapu, or extended families. Each hapu was controlled by a rangatira, or chief. Each chief was an independent ruler.

The British, on the other hand, were governed by an elected central Parliament. The laws made in the parliament were for the entire country.

*Citizen's rights (text panel)*

In Maori society rights depend on a person's position within a tribe. Slaves had no rights. Rangatira, or chiefs, had special privileges.

In British society everybody had the same rights before the Law.

From the point of view of reconciliation, it is significant that the curatorial staff have chosen to display both 'voices' (through text and Bonding icons) alongside each other. Logogenetically speaking, there also seems to be a cause-effect relationship here between this colonial space and the Treaty space preceding it. For example, the Treaty space textually brought the two sides, Maori and Pakeha, together through the Mediator (the glass treaty replica). The colonial space then focuses on dual existence, which is a direct result of the signing of the Treaty. This juxtaposition of cultures not only showcases different world views, but fosters a positive, more open attitude toward reconciliation by avoiding disastrous aspects of colonization (such as the continuing loss of Maori land through government confiscation, the wars of 1860s when Maori tried to defend and hold onto their land, and the large numbers of Maori who died as a result of the diseases the Pakeha introduced). Instead, it explains the fundamental differences in beliefs and values that were the motivation for Maori and Pakeha behavior throughout the colonial period.

### 2.3 Negotiation Diptych

This brings us to the third step in our tour. Path vectors take us upstairs, to the *Poringi* exhibition, which is positioned directly above and beyond the colonial triptych just reviewed. *Poringi* thus stands textually in an Ideal relationship to the reality of colonial New Zealand. Text panels near the stairs preview *Poringi* as ‘the evolving story of Treaty partnership’:

*Poringi* explores how claims under the Treaty of Waitangi are settled today. The story of *Poringi* pivots on the Treaty claim of ‘tribe Te Aupori’. It tells of the grievances behind that claim and Te Aupori’s quest to resolve them.

At the same time you can see how the claims settlement process works, what the Waitangi Tribunal does and how the Crown and Maori settle claims. *Poringi* tells a complex story—one that includes confusion and clarity, conflict and agreement.

And the story is still evolving . . .

Upstairs we enter the exhibition proper, which ends on one level of the green protrusion emerging from the Te Papa museum. Accordingly, *Poringi* is organized as a diptych, once again with Maori on the left (as Given) and Pakeha on the right (as New). Both the left and right walls of the diptych are lined with poles forming a palisade, referencing the fortification of a traditional Maori pa (fortified place). Each pole hosts a two-sided text panel, which can be turned around (less detail on one side, more on the other). The Maori palisade recounts the key phases of the Te Aupouri land claim, whereas the Pakeha panels review the meaning of the treaty, the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal which hears claims against the Crown, the tribunal process, a review of Maori grievances and a comment on confiscation—an indigenous narrative on the one side facing off with governmental process on the other. See Fig. 7.10.

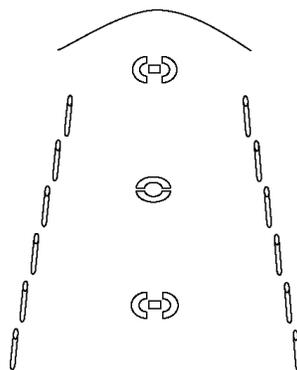


FIG. 7.10. Overview of the negotiation diptych.

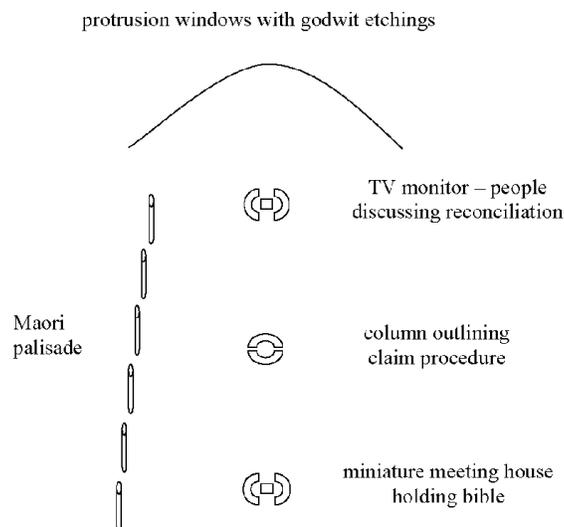


FIG. 7.11. Serial structure of the negotiation diptych.

Down the center of these two series we have another serial structure involving three installations. The first has two tall curved side walls with an iconic Maori meeting house between them. This meeting house contains a Bible (in Maori, on a red cloth). A text panel describes the Bible as representing the contact point between the Te Aupouri people and the Pakeha (the meeting of knowledge systems). The second installation is an even higher column, with text panels running from top to bottom outlining the stages of the claim process (1 Preparing a claim, 2 Prenegotiations, 3 Negotiations, 4 Ratification and Implementation). The third is a much shorter installation housing a TV monitor, which plays video footage of New Zealanders discussing aspects of the reconciliation process. Beyond this monitor are the curved windows<sup>3</sup> forming part of the edge of the Te Papa wedge, including etchings of godwits flying upwards. A panel on the side of the initial meeting house installation explains that this upward flight (or *poringi*) “symbolizes the hope that the journey Te Aupouri and the Crown embark on together will be positive and full of growth.” An outline of the serial structure of *Poringi* is offered in Fig. 7.11 below (omitting the Pakeha palisade for labeling purposes).

Overall then, the treaty and colonial triptych have resolved into a trans-colonial diptych in which the Maori and Pakeha first confront each other

<sup>3</sup>In fact almost everything in *Poringi*, including installations, text panels, and poles is curved, in sharp contrast to the squares and rectangles of the colonial triptych; this makes the exhibition more organic, and thus more ‘alive,’ invoking the process of reconciliation as opposed to the stasis of colonialism.

and then come together at the rounded edge of the wedge where differences dissolve. Above the windows showing the upward flight of the godwits is a Maori reconciliation text, translated into English as a poem. This text sends a powerful message of hope, binding Maori and Pakeha together as they move into the 'throat of the enemy.' The English translation of the text reads:

*Awaken, be alert, together gather flax  
Bind the strong fibre to make a rope  
Secure it to the resting perch of the shag  
Do not falter, we move into the throat of the enemy  
Like the godwit, we are in flight  
The footprints of the leader will show the way  
Follow only them one after the other*

Like the godwits, migratory birds that guided the Maori 'from central Polynesia to the shores of New Zealand 1,000 years ago' (Peterkin, 2004), this poem urges both groups to remain steadfast and alert, and to work together to confront and attempt to overcome the many obstacles that divide them.



PLATE 7.4. The negotiation diptych.

In terms of Binding, there are two very different choices for security in the *Poringi* exhibition. In the first part of *Poringi*, visitors are made to feel moderately to strongly Bound by the firm wall enclosures and the dark levels of lighting. This renders the first space of *Poringi* as a quiet space for reading, and reflection on some very complex issues. Then, as visitors move along the vectored walls of the space, which are angled inwards, they also move toward the second space of the exhibition, a relatively Unbound area (they move, in fact, out of the museum proper and into the Te Papa protrusion). This area is enclosed by a semicircular wall of glass. The glass windows constituting the wall extend from the floor to well above head height, flooding the space with natural light and opening it up to natural and built views of the external environment. There is only a very thin railing separating visitors and the vista outside. This is where the two faces of the diptych, Maori and Pakeha, meet (dissolving into one another in a rounded protrusion rather than running up against each other in an acute angle).

At the same time, feelings of exposure are mitigated to some extent by various factors. The ceiling is painted red—a bright, strong, dominant hue, which advances and encloses the space from above. In addition, the ceiling slopes down at a steep angle, and stops just above the window where the two faces of the wedge meet—once again binding the space below. Of course, though transparent, the walls narrow more in this space than in any other.

These choices for binding can be read as reinforcing the textual organization of the *Poringi* exhibition, which is extremely directive. The angled walls and palisades form vectors leading to the relatively Unbound space just described. In addition, a red pathway is painted on the floor down the center of the exhibition from where visitors enter through the three instal-



PLATE 7.5. Culmination of the negotiation diptych.

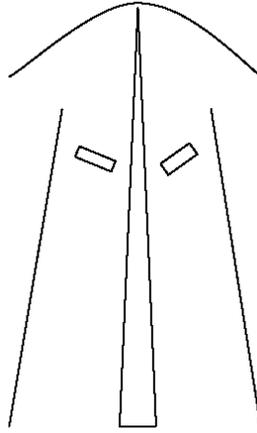


FIG. 7.12. Textual vectors in the negotiation diptych.

lations described earlier and culminating at the glass wall. The Path is broad at the beginning (wider than the first installation) and narrowing to a point thereafter, so that its edges form vectors reinforcing the angled walls and palisades. The text panel on the side of the meeting house and Bible installation describes this vector as a “taiaroa (safe pathway), in the form of a red arrowhead in the floor” that “takes you past the pou (column) outlining the steps of the Treaty settlement process.”

The only textual feature mitigating this imperative is the placement of two small benches, at 180 degrees to the vectors, facing the third installation (the video monitor); these can be read as contributing to the framing of the first Bound part of the *Poringi* exhibition against the second, and as encouraging visitors to linger a little to listen to a range of voices before moving into the relatively Unbound protrusion. See Fig. 7.12.

As we can see then, the interpersonal and textual structure of the exhibition contributes strongly to *Poringi's* message of hope. Interpersonally, visitors are increasingly Bound, and then released; textually, visitors are channeled past the palisades and through the installations to the spiraling godwits and the view outside. Transcolonial New Zealand is thus spatially constructed as a world of freedom from the past and possibilities for the future—we experience spatial release. At the same time the intersection of the narrowing walls and ceiling, together with the slope of the ceiling, its color and the strong lighting direct the visitor's attention to the reconciliation text; the space binds visitors and directs them to the words of the poem, thereby bonding them with its message. Thus transcolonial New Zealand is additionally constructed as a world of struggle requiring strength, leadership, and determination—we experience spatial focus.

**SECTION 3: LOGOGENESIS**

Like all texts, the *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition is a process. Globally speaking, the process here is mapping history: The exhibition as a whole unfolds through time, from the past, through the present to the edge of possible futures. Our tour began with the pole installation, which we read on one level as symbolizing the heavily forested precolonial New Zealand. From there we moved through the treaty triptych, which explored the meanings of the treaty of Waitangi in its Maori and English versions. Passing under the giant treaty replica we moved on to the colonial triptych, which invited us to reflect upon the legacy of the treaty for Maori and Pakeha as far as land and cultural heritage, government, and citizens' rights were concerned. From there we moved upstairs to the *Poringi* exhibition, which took us through one aspect of the contemporary reconciliation process (featuring an ongoing land claim) before releasing us to the challenges of transcolonial futures.

Beyond chronology, the *Signs of a Nation* exhibition was constructed as a process of negotiation. We began with a play of voices in the pole installation, followed by an attempt to open up the meaning of the Treaty of Waitangi in the treaty triptych. The consequences of modernity's reading of the treaty were then explored in the colonial triptych, from both Maori and Pakeha perspectives. Upstairs, *Poringi* tackled the issue of reconciliation proper, beginning with an installation symbolizing the accommodation of Indigenous and Christian world views (a Maori translation of the Bible inside a miniature Maori meeting house). *Poringi* then addressed contested differences and the tribunal processes designed to facilitate a resolution (facing palisades, the negotiation process column). As we leave *Poringi* we are again treated to a play of voices (on the TV monitor), before the inspiring symbolism of the godwits and hortatory poem.

In Halliday and Matthiessen's (1999) terms then, logogenesis mirrors phylogenesis—the unfolding exhibition symbolizes cultural change (through phases of history and processes of reconciliation). Unfolding space co-articulates this message at every turn. Maori are to the left as Given, Pakeha to the right as New, their walled confrontation mediated by the treaty replica and government cabinet before being resolved as union in the curved glass walls culminating the exhibition. We walk under the Ideal of the Treaty replica into Real colonial New Zealand, a space bound by treaty consequences. We ascend from this reality to the Ideal of negotiation processes, which bind us toward resolution before unbinding us beyond, and so on. We won't rehearse every materialization of this coarticulation here. Our point is simply that space functions as a modality that constructs meaning in this exhibition space, that it interacts with other modalities and that discourse analysis has to attend to space grammar as part of

a comprehensive reading of meaning in multimodal texts of this order. *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* materializes reconciliation as a process, using verbiage, image, sound and spatial configuration to do so. The power of its message comes more from the conscious, next to conscious and subliminal synergy of these modalities than from the contribution of any one modality on its own.

#### SECTION 4: SPACE GRAMMAR

Our social semiotic tour of *Signs of Nation* has of course been a limited exercise. Intermodality has scarcely been considered, and we have only been able to deploy parts of the space grammar we see as such a generative resource in exhibitions and other multimodal texts in which spatial configurations make meaning.<sup>4</sup> Clearly there are limitations to publishing analyses of three-dimensional texts on a two-dimensional page. Beyond this, textual meaning in exhibitions involves movement. What we really need is three-dimensional modeling strategies, involving film and/or animation.

Nonetheless we hope to have offered readers glimpses of the special affordances of spatial configurations as far as meaning is concerned (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Building on the work of O'Toole (1994) and of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996),<sup>5</sup> we have taken metafunctions as point of departure (after Halliday, 1994). But unlike them we have tended to reason more from the types of structure associated with metafunctions (Halliday, 1979, Martin, 1996) than from types of meaning as we have come to know them in functional grammars of English and other languages. Perhaps the greater the degree of complementarity between language and another modality, the wiser this analogizing strategy may be. The kinds of ideational meaning in particular outlined in Halliday (1994) seem much harder to generalize across language, and, say, music or space<sup>6</sup> than across language and image as in much of the research that inspired us (Lemke, 1998; O'Halloran, 1999; see also Ravelli, 2000).

In addition, for interpersonal meaning we have been more influenced by work on feeling than work on dialogue (Martin 2000a, 2000b, 2001);

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<sup>4</sup>We of course regret the publisher's limitation to black and white images, when color is such an important aspect of spatial design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2002).

<sup>5</sup>See also Baldry, 1999; Barthes, 1977; Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, & Tsatsarelis, 2001; Lemke, 2002; Royce, 1998; Stenglin & Iedema, 2001; Unsworth, 2001; van Leeuwen, 1999; van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001.

<sup>6</sup>For space and language, ideational analogies work best at the level of field, where buildings as institutions of various kinds correlate with Martin's 1992 concept of field as a set of activity sequences oriented to some global institutional purpose—space is obviously designed to enable these activities.

thus our concern with binding and bonding in the interpersonal realm (as opposed to say commands and offers as in Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). And for textual meaning we have gestured toward a more dynamic perspective, involving Path and Venue, by way of implicating the unfolding texture of meaning through movement in three-dimensional space.

Perhaps the best way to sum up the distinctive affordances of space in relation to other modalities is to consider the way in which it envelops us. We listen to spoken language and music; and we look at signed language, writing, and images. But we feel space—it surrounds us absolutely. It's not just something we make part of us (by hearing, reading, observing, and thus consuming it); it makes us part of it. All modalities materialize (as sound, squiggles, movement); but space materializes around us<sup>7</sup> (it contextualizes us). It's home, it's work, it's play—the meaning system in which we make the other meanings. Not just the environment of our semiosis, but the semiosis of our environment—an affordance of monumental dimensionality, which we are just beginning to open up here.

One further aspect of the *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition we would have liked to develop is the question of symbolism—both in relation to the invocation of ideational meaning and the bonds of affinity that symbolic attributes construe. What does the Te Papa wedge say, for example, about Maori and Pakeha relations in New Zealand? Who does this confrontation exclude (e.g., migrants from Europe, North and South America, Africa, and Asia)? How does the Bible in the meeting house construct first contact between missionaries and the Te Aupori people? How does it make us feel about that contact and where it might now lead? There are of course layers of meaning in any text; but in *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* there are layers upon layers. On this somewhat mystical note, we'll conclude, pining for the intermodal theory which will in time reconcile one grammar with another and explain how the meaning of two or more modalities is so much greater than the sum of their parts.

## SECTION 5: LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

On whose authority do we design to reconcile? As introduced earlier, *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* is part of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington. The museum houses sacred objects (*taonga*) from all over New Zealand and regularly invites their Maori custodians to Te Papa to commune with these objects and interpret them for visitors. However, for Maori this involves establishing a *marae*, or meeting

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<sup>7</sup>It is perhaps only music that can envelop us in comparable ways; but even there, the effect is more aural, and less physical (the 'wall of sound' is metaphorical, not real).

ground, where visitors can be received. And by Maori custom this can only be done properly by involving the custodians of the land on which the marae will be established. As Tapsell<sup>8</sup> (2001) explained,

... even though our taonga exist in national museums they still remain under the mana, the authority of those who belong to the land upon which those buildings stand. It matters little who have placed our taonga in those museums, what does matter is how they are spiritually protected. Only the tangata whenua (local kin group) are qualified to fulfil that role. (p. 118)

Tapsell argues that museums like Te Papa have focused on building a physical marae space, without properly attending to its spiritual dimension—for this the ancestral authority of the tangata whenua has to be obtained. His recommendation is that reconciliation has to begin closer to home, involving partnerships with local indigenous people at governance level in national museums. For Te Papa this would mean taking responsibility for the local Te Ati Awa, Ngati Tama, Ngati Mutunga, and Ngati Toa tribes—the last of which, as of 2001, had an outstanding treaty claim against the very land and sea upon which Te Papa was built.

Tapsell's resistant reading of Te Papa underscores the senses in which reconciliation cannot be simply physically constructed, however cleverly a space is designed. This is where bonding becomes crucial. In *Signs of a Nation: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga*, the Crown has attempted to transcend local history. But according to Tapsell, this means that from a Maori perspective, bonding breaks down. The space itself lacks the authority to negotiate reconciliation because Te Papa's relationship with local Maori has not been reconciled. For this authority, Tapsell (2001) recommends the example of the Auckland Museum, which has "a complementary and effective Maori governance system that leads the world regarding issues of Indigenous people partnerships" (p. 119).

The key point we can take from this reprise is that as with all modalities of communication, context is crucial. It matters where a multimodal text is coming from—its past in relation to possible futures. And it matters where the text is taking place—its local context and all the meanings there at risk. Space grammar has to tune in to the many dimensions of this semiotic terrain. And herein lies a further challenge for 21st-century social semiotics—how to reconcile genesis and systematicity (diachrony with synchrony as it were). Focusing multimodal analysis on sites where people try to make the world a better place may be one useful way of spurring this dialectic along.

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<sup>8</sup>Dr. Paul John Tohi to Ururangi Tapsell comes from a tribal background of the Te Arawa people of Totorua and is a professional anthropologist and curator.

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