

Te Whiti o Rongomai has been a very significant figure in New Zealand history and around the world. He paved the way for peaceful protesting movements, showing his influence and impact that he holds. He was a key aspect of the establishment and expansion of Parihaka. And because of all of this the government and media hated him, shaming him and his followers for supporting and believing that they could resist the colonisation of New Zealand. A main part of the government that was heavily against Te Whiti was John Bryce the minister for Native Affairs between 1879 and 1884.

The collective maumaharatanga regarding Te Whiti can be witnessed in the changing viewpoint of the government from the 1800s to the present. In recent times the government has apologised to Te Whiti, for the way they mistreated him, including his 'arrests and detention in the South Island for 16 months without trial', which is evidence of the government's recognition of the wrongs they had committed in the past. In their apology in 2017, the Crown recognised their wrongful actions including the arrest of Te Whiti and the invasion of Parihaka. The fact that the New Zealand government made the apology so long after the events shows the significance of Te Whiti's actions. In addition, the New Zealand government has integrated Te Whiti's story and the history of Parihaka, into the history curriculum. The result of this will be future generations will know who Te Whiti is, what he stands for and what he achieved. This collective maumaharatanga of Te Whiti nowadays contrasts with the perception of Te Whiti at the time. The perspective of the government and the Crown in the time leading up to the invasion of Parihaka was that Te Whiti was a threat, especially by Native Affairs Minister, John Bryce. An article written about Te Whiti and John Bryce from the Wairarapa Stand in March 1881 states, 'What Mr. Bryce and the Major wanted to do was to arrest Te Whiti at the time the Governor had invited the prophet to partake of the hospitality of Government House. He wanted to go in the midst of one or two thousand armed men, and seek a pretext to arrest Te Whiti.' Furthermore, MP John Bryce labelled Te Whiti as 'dangerous and a threat to the government.' Eventually, John Bryce had Te Whiti arrested during the invasion and destruction of Parihaka and held in the South Island. Numerous laws including the West Coast Peace Preservation Act 1882 were created to arrest Te Whiti without charge and hold him for as long as the government wanted. This enabled the government to eliminate the threat he posed while imprisoned since he couldn't participate in rebuilding Parihaka or non-violence campaigns. These actions targeting Te Whiti show he was regarded as a 'dangerous, threatening and fanatical' important figure at the time as the government put so much effort into stopping his impact. All of this shows that the government's collective maumaharatanga of Te Whiti o Rongomai has changed. Whilst the government once regarded Te Whiti as a 'dangerous threat,' nowadays he is regarded as a peaceful leader who was unjustly arrested and imprisoned.

The collective maumaharatanga of the media has also changed. The media now portray Te Whiti as a pro-peace figure who challenged the Crown through his ploughing and fencing campaigns, and his handling of the invasion of Parihaka. But this contrasts with the media's collective maumaharatanga of Te Whiti in the 1800s, whom they described as a rebellious leader who was insane to stand against the Crown. A Taranaki Herald newspaper article from 1881 describes his followers as fanatics, who were brainwashed by his influence into 'rebellious' against the government because they believed he had some 'supernatural power.' Thus the media's perception of Te Whiti has changed from the 1800s until now, from a villainous prophet who rebelled against the government to a peaceful protestor whose ideas saved the lives of many Māori, giving them a place to call home in Parihaka, thus showing his significance.

The impact of Te Whiti o Rongomai and his actions were immense and his non-violence inspired many. A significant part of his impact was the ploughing and fencing campaigns and how he conducted the people of Parihaka stay peaceful while being invaded and welcoming the Crown soldiers who were invading, which was a first around the world in retaliation to a government or group with power. Te Whiti's values opposed land confiscation and advocated peaceful protest in retaliation which he learnt from knowledge (beliefs) passed down from ancestors and learning from other prophets, including Tohu Kahihi. His impacts were evident as he was recognised by Gandhi's grandson and a representative of the Martin Luther King movement who flew to New Zealand to give a descendant of Te Whiti a medal. His relevance nowadays is that he was one of the first non-violence activists, which inspired many in the past, present, and future to do the same. He impacted the lives of many, especially the people in Parihaka; if they had been attacked by the Crown and fought back, they would have mostly died; instead, he saved their lives by convincing them to be peaceful.

Te Whiti o Rongomai was a founder of Parihaka, so without him, Parihaka most likely wouldn't have ever existed. With the town's creation, he supplied a home for Māori who had lost their homes due to land confiscation by the government among other reasons. Te Whiti changed the lives of all these people by giving them a place to live, but with this, they had to live under his ideals. As Te Whiti grew from a young boy to a man, he was taught traditional knowledge from his elders and was introduced to the Bible and Christianity. The values that Te Whiti was brought up with were integrated with how Parihaka functioned. The identities of the people joining Parihaka changed, influencing their future generations. While other places around Parihaka were being attacked and destroyed, peaceful protesting saved the lives of many of Parihaka's people; if they hadn't been peaceful, they would've mostly died. This shows Te Whiti's impact on these people's past, present, and future without creating Parihaka and convincing people to live under his conditions/ideas. Without him, these people would have been without a shelter, community, and place to call home.

The significance of Te Whiti o Rongomai throughout the history of New Zealand is profound, as without him, lives would've been lost, and movements never made. The values of the people of New Zealand government and media have changed drastically over time to now, with the perception of Te Whiti now being totally different to what it was. Our recognition of the impacts and importance of Te Whiti have changed, people look back at the past and wonder why certain things were done. The idea that non-violent protests have so much power is through our knowledge of what has happened in the past with Parihaka and other examples.