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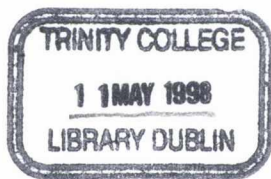
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# **The Intimate Foreigner**

**The Construction of Subjectivity in Maori Novels of the 1980s.**

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English at the University of Dublin,  
Trinity College, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy.



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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Stuart Murray for the excellent assistance and encouragement which he has given me during the writing of this thesis.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my family,  
Liz, Aaron, Naomi, Cushla, and Priva.

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### **Abstract**

This thesis examines four prominent Maori novels in English published in the 1980s, namely Keri Hulme's *the bone people* (1984), Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*, (1986), Patricia Grace's *Potiki* (1986), and Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors* (1990). The principal aim is to analyse the construction of Maori identity both as literary self-representation and as part of a wider process of subjectification in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Maori subjectivity is viewed as imbricated in the ideological assumptions of the dominant Pakeha culture, but as both cultures are considered to be continually re-inventing themselves, 'Maori culture' as a representative category is interpreted as constructing itself through an ongoing negotiation with aspects of 'traditional' culture as well as in opposition to and/or compliance with Pakeha stereotypes of Maori, whether they be valourising or denigrating.

Each chapter analyses different Western institutions, introduced during colonisation, which have functioned as strategies of containment, constantly incorporating and suppressing 'difference' and reiterating authoritative meanings. However, as the colonial endeavour is not interpreted as being a totalising and inescapable system, each chapter also focuses on an aspect of Maori culture which may mimic or parody Western conceptions and form hybrid identities which challenge Pakeha dominance. Present-day political and literary resistance on the part of Maori is consequently read as part of a continual re-negotiation and re-invention of identities from the period of first contact. In particular, emphasis is placed on those 'traditional' forms of Maori culture such as carving, kowhaiwhai painting, and tattooing which in the pre-contact period, are regarded as having granted a sense of tribal belonging and power while simultaneously excluding and disempowering members of rival tribal affiliations. This process was adapted to inter-ethnic relations and, it is argued, continues to inflect the power and expressiveness of current Maori writing. Emphasis

is also given to the appropriation of the common post-colonial metaphor of the home as nation.

The thesis concludes that the self-fashioning with which these novels engage all result in a degree of false consciousness. Ultimately, they slide away from their avowed intentions and promote various forms of ambivalent representations.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the various, and at times, contradictory modes of Maori literary self-representation produced throughout the 1980s. The four novels chosen to exemplify this process, namely Keri Hulme's *the bone people* (1984), Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch* (1986), Patricia Grace's *Potiki* (1986) and Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors* (1990), are each seen to espouse particular facets of both literary self-representation and a broader subjectification which came to prominence in this particularly turbulent decade of Aotearoa/New Zealand's history. The examination of these novels is, therefore, predicated upon an understanding that both the literary construction of Maori identities as 'representative' of the category 'Maori', and the wider processes of Maori subjectification within Aotearoa/New Zealand, are imbricated in the ideological assumptions of the dominant Pakeha culture. It is therefore important, as Peter Hitchcock notes, to:

theorise the subaltern or oppressed through the subject, because to critique the processes of signification at different levels in a society at any moment in history helps to bring to crisis the imaginary relations of the autonomous subject upon which a social hegemony may strongly depend. Such strategic interventions do not posit the substitution of one construction of subjectivity for another, but offer the possibility that the negation of the subject in dominance necessarily effaces the construction of the subaltern as its 'other'.<sup>1</sup>

Such theorising views both Maori and Pakeha present-day subjectivity as constructed within colonial parameters which include aspects of pre-contact Maori and Western culture. These constructions are also continually re-negotiated in the post-colonial context so that an equal emphasis on Pakeha self-invention, negating a Pakeha autonomous subjectivity, serves to forestall the marginalisation and projection of

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Hitchcock, *Dialogics of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) p. 14.

Maori as subordinate. Maori self-representation is, therefore, not predicated upon a resistance which is merely reactive but reveals how various forms of counterhegemonic cultural practice can be active components of social transformation. The departure point, therefore, is the problematic ways in which the present-day Pakeha culture deals with that of the Maori. These include a suppression of Maori heterogeneity through the interrelation of different forms of oppression which serve to determine what may appear as a homogeneous Maori subjectivity. This is not, of course, to assert that there is a simple one-way process of influence between the two peoples. But, while Pakeha identity was from earliest times affected by contact with Maori society, (along with an ambivalent relationship to England) this does not, in itself, create a situation in which it is possible to simply transcend or neutralise the anxious violence of colonial power. The current social relations between Maori and Pakeha, for example, are reflected in statistics which show Maori as being heavily over-represented in the casualty areas of society while also being largely absent from areas which indicate mainstream success. They have higher infant mortality rates (13.1 compared with 6.2 per thousand), lower life expectancy (68 and 73 for Maori men and women; 73.1 and 78.9 for others), higher rates of imprisonment (43 percent of male prison inmates were Maori), and lower educational attainments than the rest of the community.<sup>2</sup> As this marginalisation and disadvantage is itself part and parcel of the dialectical relationship between Western and Maori constructions of identity and tradition, the application of notions of cultural invention to Western discourse and the interaction between indigenous and colonial representations has, as this thesis will show, become a cultural orthodoxy in Aotearoa/New Zealand by the late 1990s. Both traditions, then, are seen as invented in that, as Jocelyn Linnekin argues, 'they are symbolically constructed in the present and reflect contemporary concerns and

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<sup>2</sup> Figures are based on the *New Zealand Official Yearbook 95* (Auckland: Statistics New Zealand, 1995)

purposes rather than a passively inherited legacy.<sup>3</sup> Past self-inventions, and inventions by others intersect in various ways with these present constructions.

Textual analysis, therefore, proceeds in three stages. First, it is necessary to adduce where and how the present situation is inflected by colonialism and its constituent elements of racism, overcategorisation, and deferral to the 'centre'. This perspective is elucidated in subsequent chapters by juxtaposing prominent Pakeha discourses with specific Maori novels. Chapter Two aligns the Treaty of Waitangi with *the bone people*, Chapter Three, missionary discourse with *The Matriarch*, Chapter Four, the literary 'Man Alone' tradition with *Potiki*, and Chapter Five the land wars of the 1860s with *Once Were Warriors*. Second, there is an examination of how the politics of present-day Maori representation by Pakeha (through Pakeha 'popular' discourse and anthropological/sociological research) may interpellate or perpetuate the ideological assumptions of the colonial continuum. Here each chapter contains a critique of Pakeha non-fiction writing on Maori. These include, in Chapter One, an appraisal of both the positive and negative stereotyping of Maori in colonialist discourse and the corresponding present-day containment of Maori within a 'modern primitive' rubric. Chapter Two considers the influence of the ascendancy of a Western language and mythology on the conditions of Maori thought. Chapter Three examines constructions of cultural exceptionalism as they pertain to Maori, as well as the utopian precursors of such constructions in the colonial era. Chapter Four continues the analysis of utopian ideology with an emphasis on the gendered construction of a male culture, while Chapter Five surveys Pakeha interpretations of Maori as uncivilised and lawless.

Finally, how the reading of Maori literary texts may function within such an overdetermined space is examined. Although the subjectivity of all Maori is inevitably constructed within the parameters of the history of the settler endeavour, I do not wish to construct colonialism as a totalising and inescapable system. In consequence, as the

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<sup>3</sup> Jocelyn Linnekin, 'Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 93 (1991) p. 447.

popular re-negotiations of identity are figured in various ways apart from literary texts, other forms of representation which operate as exemplary ethnic texts - - such as figurative painting, carving, weaving and film - - which challenge Pakeha constructions of contemporary Maori primitivism through subversive or hybridised performances will also be afforded consideration. These forms are considered both important and relevant as some of them, such as carving and figurative painting, played a prominent role in resisting Pakeha hegemony during colonial times and, it is argued, prefigure strategies used in the present-day literary construction of identities. Resistance, therefore, as it appears in the Maori novels of the 1980s, is not seen as a manifestation without precedents but as part of a process of continual re-negotiation and re-invention of identities from the period of first contact until the present-day. These non-literary forms also pose, as Hitchcock notes:

against the dominant modes of literary analysis with their dominant objects of cultural critique . . . not a countertradition, but methodologies and cultural artefacts that call into question if not tradition as such then a hegemonic rendering of Western culture . . .<sup>4</sup>

Once again, each chapter concentrates on an aspect of Maori culture which may mimic or parody Western conceptions and form hybrid identities which challenge Pakeha dominance. Chapter One surveys the innovations in Maori carving and kowhaiwhai painting. Chapter Two deals specifically with the spiral in Maori art. Chapter Three analyses the concept of utu and the figurative painting developed in the late nineteenth century, particularly in Rongapai. Chapter Four focuses on the 'traditional' Maori meeting house. Chapter Five concentrates on the practice of tattooing, the haka, and the Maori warrior ethos.

The concept of 'representation' is employed precisely because, while not denying the category of the real, it does not essentialise it as some pre-given

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<sup>4</sup> Hitchcock (1993) p. xv.

metaphysical ground for representation. The relationship between subjectivity and discourse is thereby shifted from a grounding in mimesis to a contiguity with the multiplicity and specificity of the socio-cultural. Because 'textuality is not simply a second-order ideological expression or a verbal symptom of a pre-given political subject'<sup>5</sup>, an understanding of the problems of 'real Maori' do not lie outside all the various 'imagined' constructs in and through which 'Maori' emerge as subjects. It is by negotiating with these mediations and simulacra that some understanding is gained of the issues at stake. Therefore, both 'Western' critical discourse and Maori literary discourse can find it productive to engage with representation as a 'domain with its own substantial political reality and effects.'<sup>6</sup> The contiguity of representation and the socio-cultural allows cultural and social analysis to proceed from an understanding that the strategy of ideology-critique will not suffice to demystify its hegemony, but neither can it be rarified into a new determinism that effectively paralyses any political praxis. This conceptualisation disallows suggestions that an uncontaminated alternative space exists outside the dominant Pakeha discourse from which the subaltern may speak, but maintains that while a 'non-colonialist' space remains a wish-fulfilment within post-colonial knowledge production even dominant discursive systems are diverse and multiply fractured, opening themselves to different pressures in different times and circumstances.

As a result, culture in general is given a broad definition as the product of beliefs and conceptual models of society and as the destination where the trajectory of its desires takes shape, as well as the everyday practices, the contingent realities and the complex processes by which these are structured. Culture, then, appears as the chief matter and consequence of dominant ideological investment, powerfully coercive in shaping the subject; but since it is also heterogeneous, changing and open to

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<sup>5</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994) p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Jacqueline Rose, 'The State of the Subject II. The Institution of Feminism', *Critical Quarterly* 29:4 Winter (1987) p. 12.

interpretation it is also a site of contestation and consequently of the reinscription of subjectivities.

From this perspective, each subsequent chapter considers an aspect of Western culture which has proved formative of the category 'Maori'. Chapter One looks at the ambivalent operation of current Western theories of contamination and their potential to re-inscribe Maori within Pakeha cultural dominance. Chapter Two introduces the effects of European political philosophy, and Chapter Three considers the consequences of the importation of Western religion. Chapter Four returns to political theory with an emphasis on the exclusion of women from civil society and Chapter Five briefly covers the economic history of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the concomitant effects of the introduction of capitalism.

Overall, there is a consideration of both the imaginative construction of Aotearoa/New Zealand and actual Pakeha relations with Maori as being always profoundly gendered. In particular, the ways in which Europeans introduced new ideas about the family and relations between the sexes, is seen to contribute to the emphasis in each of the novels examined on differing forms of familial relations. Each novel, moreover, is epitomised by the construction of a strong woman character who appears to possess a particular redemptive vision. Such constructions may function ambivalently, providing a means by which Pakeha discourse can inscribe the diverse positions of Maori women within a category that imposes a community identity of 'Maori women'. However, they also serve to show how storytelling itself constitutes a significant resistance ritual to *history* and may provide the means 'to restore conflict, ambiguity and tragedy to the centre of the historical (and literary) process: to explore the varied and unequal terms upon which genders, classes and races participate in the forging of a common destiny.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Genovese Fox, 'Placing Women's History in History', *New Left Review* 133 (1982) p. 29.

## **Chapter One:      Pianos in Sealand**

### **Kowhaiwhai in the Sky**

This chapter is concerned with elucidating the principle issues which pertain to any discussion of Maori literature in a post-colonial context. An analysis of the problems involved in perceiving Aotearoa/New Zealand as a post-colonial nation is, therefore, the first issue to be addressed. This leads into a survey of the construction or invention of identities from colonial times to the present-day. Particular emphasis is laid upon stereotypical versions of Maoriness constructed by Pakeha, including those which have been adopted by Maori as a political strategy to enhance their prestige. This necessitates a brief diversion into anthropology in order to contextualise Maori representational strategies in the 1980s as continuing pre-contact inter-tribal political practices. The example of kowhaiwhai painting is used as it had a prominent role in 'traditional'<sup>1</sup> Maori society, was prolifically adopted by Pakeha, and subsequently re-appropriated by Maori as a sign of subversion and transformational possibilities. This is counterpointed by an examination of the construction of the piano as a colonial marker of Western 'civilisation'. Finally, tropes of difference are located within the post-colonial hybrid identities of Maori and the attendant difficulties of constructing a

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the term 'traditional' in reference to Maori society seems unavoidable but at the same time presents a number of difficulties. Anne Salmond, in particular, has described these in her article 'The Study of Traditional Maori Society' (*Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 92:3, 1983, p. 309-332) as, first, that the term 'traditional' is ambiguous in that it has led to 'a method of taking evidence from any point on a 200-year timespan (from James Cook on) provided only that it seemed relatively "traditional" to the observer . . .' Second, 'the implicit equation of "traditional" with a "precontact" way of life is based on an assumption that *the key event in Maori history was the arrival of the European*. In scientific accounts, traditional Maori society has been presented as a stable structure functioning in equilibrium at about 1769, and European contact as a devastating collision which disrupted the structure and confounded its balance.' And third, 'the category "Maori" has been assumed to be a valid and explanatory category for the discussion of life in New Zealand in pre-European times. It is historically well established that the label "Maori" emerged rather late in contact history . . . and there is no evidence that the inhabitants of the various islands of New Zealand, although they knew of one another, conceived of themselves in any sense as a single group before Europeans arrived.' Consequently, I use the term 'traditional' as a relative term depending on the context for its reference. This relativity of reference for tradition ensures that 'the tradition' continues, but is constantly being revalued and modified to maintain its function without any obvious breaks.

multiple voicing of subjectivity which both challenges oppression and shows the constraints on intersubjective exchange, are analysed.

### Aotearoa/New Zealand as a Post-colonial Nation

The 1980s is a particularly appropriate period in which to assess the status of Aotearoa/New Zealand as it was a time of radical change for the country as a whole. On a general level, this decade could be described as the one which saw Aotearoa/New Zealand 'arrive on the international map.' The anti-nuclear stance taken by David Lange's Labour government, Keri Hulme's Booker Prize for *the bone people*, and the enduring image of the sabotaged Rainbow Warrior sunk in Auckland harbour all served to focus world attention on a country which, from an Anglo-American media viewpoint had, until this time, remained relatively peripheral and unnoticed. This cartographical expression is used deliberately to highlight what Graham Huggan has described as:

the exemplary role of cartography in the demonstration of colonial discursive practices (which) can be identified in a series of key rhetorical strategies implemented in the production of the map, such as the reinscription, enclosure and hierarchization of space, which provide an analogue for the acquisition, management and reinforcement of colonial power.<sup>2</sup>

Within Aotearoa/New Zealand itself, however, Pakeha discourse was concerned with repudiating the country's colonial status through the continuing development of two forms of nationalism. The first developed from the need of an originally displaced people to be 'at home', and had sought from colonial times, but most particularly from the 1930s, to construct an identity separate from that of Britain. Colin James has described this process as one in which 'artists, writers, historians, performers assumed

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<sup>2</sup> Graham Huggan, 'Decolonising the Map: Post-colonialism, Post-structuralism and the Cartographic Connection', *Past the Last Post*, eds., Ian Adam & Helen Tiffin (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991) p. 125.

both right and duty to speak for a growing-up New Zealand. Unselfconsciously they demanded and began to deliver a distinctively national expression at odds with the colonial dependency of the prosperity consensus.<sup>3</sup>

The second form of nationalism, bicultural nationalism, developed from the need to overcome both the stigma of earlier assimilationist policies toward Maori and the legacy of colonial guilt. In particular, it was given impetus by the growth from the late 1960s of feminism and Maori nationalism, and culminated in 1983 with the election of the Labour Government whose international policies included the banning of sporting contacts with South Africa and the refusal to permit ships carrying nuclear arms into New Zealand waters. Internal policies included the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1983 and, in 1988, the recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi as having force in law. Such 'new' forms of nationalism, however, were still strongly influenced by the long established ideology of New Zealand as a potential Eden and are reflected, on the one hand, in the construction of an idealised young nation in such naive statements as, 'New Zealand has a really strong place in the world. It is small enough to do and say things it really means without power talk.'<sup>4</sup> This was clearly shown to be untrue in the aftermath of the Rainbow Warrior affair when David Lange was forced to concede to French demands or forfeit trading agreements with Britain which exist on sufferance by the E.E.C. On the other hand, the country's re-alignment with Asia and a South Pacific Forum has contributed to Margaret Mulgan's sense that:

We've made a virtue of being a small nation at the end of the world. We like being a mouse that roars. The proudest time I've ever had when away was when I was in the United Kingdom and the United States in 1987 and lots of people said to me about our nuclear stance 'That's just great what your country's doing.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Colin James, *New Territory. The Transformation of New Zealand 1984-92* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1992) p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Vicki Buck, '300,000 Bosses', *Vision Aotearoa Kaupapa New Zealand*, ed., Witi Ihimaera (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1994) p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Mulgan, 'Reshaping the Myths' Ihimaera, (1994), p. 35.

Where once a sense of inadequacy described as the 'colonial cringe' would have been dominant, now a mouse which roars effectively is set against an ageing and debilitated Imperial lion. This Pakeha identity, however, is also ambivalently placed with respect to a 'modern primitive' construction of Maori as ecologically aware and environmentally responsible. Its colonial forerunner is succinctly summarised by Alan Lawson and Chris Tiffin as one in which:

The male settler is part of the imperial enterprise, its agent, and its beneficiary, without ever acquiring more than associate membership of the imperial club. He is both mediator and mediated, excluded from the unmediated authority of Empire, and from the unmediated authenticity of the indigene. From this half-empowered limbo he fetishizes yet disparages a Europe which depreciates him while envying his energy, innocence and enterprise. Simultaneously, he infantilizes, displaces, and desires the indigene completing the hierarchy of parallel loathing and desire.

The position of the female settler subject is, if anything, even more complex . . . The female settler is a site upon which contending, but also mutually affirming systems of dominance meet: the female settler is simultaneously an object of patriarchy and an agent of imperial racism. Other power structures may intersect with these and it becomes necessary to register the precise organization of multiple systems of difference and interpellation.<sup>6</sup>

More particularly, within Aotearoa/New Zealand the 1980s was the decade in which Maori nationalism challenged the mapping of the country with the revival of the pre-contact principle of *ahi ka*, maintaining a fire on land or keeping the land warm in order to assert one's claim to it. Tribal divisions of land and claims against appropriated tribal lands formed a 'different' map which contested settler rights to inscribe the land solely through Western conceptions of space. This 'mapping' of 'difference' represents one strategy for valorising and empowering that which colonialist discourses have previously labelled primitive and backward. Difference becomes, according to Lawson and Tiffin, 'not the measure by which the voiceless alien fails to be European; it is the measure by which the European episteme fails to

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<sup>6</sup> Chris Tiffin & Alan Lawson, 'Conclusion. Reading Difference', *De-Scribing Empire*, eds., Chris Tiffin & Alan Lawson (London & New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 231.

comprehend the actual self-naming and articulate self.<sup>7</sup> While biculturalism remains a contested form of nationalism within Aotearoa/New Zealand, this Maori empowerment through 'difference' has resulted in an official policy of biculturalism in certain areas, such as the introduction of classes on Maori culture in schools, which has proved problematic for some sections of the Pakeha population. Many, anxious in the face of the Maori Renaissance, and uncertain of their 'place' in the country have begun to address again the old questions of identity which pre-occupied earlier generations of settlers. This process is reflected in the titles of books such as Michael King's *Pakeha: The Quest for Identity in New Zealand*.<sup>8</sup>

This anxiety is all the more pressing in a country where the indigenous population numbers approximately 12% and consequently represents a significant political force. In these circumstances it becomes imperative for the majority population to begin to seriously comprehend the articulation of Maori identity and its associated grievances. In this respect, modest successes have resulted from the determination of Maori resistance, culminating in the motion to make the Waitangi Tribunal retrospective to 1840, passed at the national hui at Turangawaewae Marae in 1984, and given prompt political validation by Labour government flush from its unexpected and long awaited victory. It was this act which Ranganui Walker claims, 'cast New Zealand firmly into the post-colonial era . . .'<sup>9</sup>

However, this definition of 1980s Aotearoa/New Zealand as post-colonial has a number of inherent difficulties which require clarification. First, while the inclusion of settler colonies within the 'post-colonial' is regarded as problematic by many critics, Walker limits the understanding of the term 'post-colonial' to the internal relationship between Maori and Pakeha. This has the result of obscuring the effects of the particular distinctive features of colonial Aotearoa/New Zealand, while Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, for example, comment with respect to settler societies that:

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<sup>7</sup> Tiffin & Lawson, (1994) p. 230.

<sup>8</sup> Michael King, ed., *Pakeha: The Quest for Identity in New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> Ranganui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou. Struggle Without End* (Auckland: Penguin, 1990) p. 254.

Their dominion status in the British Empire, their economic prosperity, their large white settler communities, and their ethnic make-up suggest they are not in many ways comparable to most other colonised territories. Settler societies did not follow the more common colonial path of indirect European control through local, white administrators, missionaries, traders and the military, combined with the systematic exploitation of land, minerals, and labour. Instead, they experienced a large-scale white settlement, autonomous economic and administrative networks and early political independence.<sup>10</sup>

However, as Stuart Hall, Lata Mani and Ruth Frankenberg all note, countries may be post-colonial in different ways.<sup>11</sup> Stephen Slemon, in particular, has made a powerful case for the inclusion of settler societies in the post-colonial on the grounds that their writings articulate dominant concerns within post-colonial theory such as:

an ambivalent position between oppressor and oppressed plus a complicity with colonialism's territorial appropriations in the process of forging a resistance to its foreign rule - - such that resistance had never been directed against a wholly external force. (Slemon) argues therefore that such problematics have been internalised within post-colonial writings, making them in many ways exemplary texts for post-colonial critics who . . . often emphasize the anxiety and forms of resistance *within* colonial authority.<sup>12</sup>

From a generalised Maori point of view inclusion in the post-colonial has consequences which may be interpreted ambivalently in that any form of 'liberation' appears, to date, to inevitably involve a compromise. While legitimate Maori claims can no longer be ignored by the descendants of the settlers Maori are still, for example, inscribed within European derived political and economic institutions.

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<sup>10</sup> Peter Childs & Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997) p. 84.

<sup>11</sup> R. Frankenburg & L. Mani, 'Crosscurrents, Crosstalk: Race, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Location', *Cultural Studies* 7:2 (1993). Reprinted *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory. A Reader*, ed., Padmini Mongia (Arnold, 1996) p. 347-365. Stuart Hall, 'When Was The Post-colonial? Thinking at the Limit', *The Post-Colonial Question*, eds., Iain Chambers & Lidia Curtis (London & New York: Routledge, 1996) p. 242-60.

<sup>12</sup> Childs & Williams (1997) p. 84.

However, what is perhaps more troubling in Walker's assessment are the self-congratulatory implications, which smack of what Peter Hulme has described as the use of the term 'post-colonial' as a 'badge of merit'. The 'post-colonial' in his view 'is (or should be) a descriptive not an evaluative term' which can be used to refer 'to a *process* of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome.'<sup>13</sup> Ranganui Walker, on the other hand, appears to interpret 'post' as meaning 'past', an achieved state beyond colonialism where its effects have apparently been neutralised, and regimes of power are substantively different from colonial structures. Ella Shohat has rightly found this distinction ambiguous as, 'it does not make clear whether this periodisation is intended to be epistemological or chronological. Does 'post-colonial mark the ruptural point between two epistemes in intellectual history or does it refer to the strict chronologies of history *tout court*?'<sup>14</sup>

As a historical period the post-colonial cannot be seen as one in which 'old relations disappear for ever and entirely new ones come to replace them'.<sup>15</sup> A 'now' and 'then' view maintains the colonising/colonised binary and serves to gloss over the ways in which colonisation was deeply inscribed in the imperial metropolis, in the settler community as well as the colonised Maori society. Nevertheless, the post-colonial has some claim as a historical period in that new configurations of knowledge and power are beginning to have specific, 'different' effects within the nation as a whole. These include reversals and displacements in which both Maori and Pakeha rework traditional Maori crafts, urban Maori and Pakeha visit marae and participate in ceremonies, and the pronunciation of the Maori language is de-anglicised, and increasingly included in New Zealand English. This bicultural hybridisation, while it offers a solution to the identity problems confronted by both the descendants of the settlers and alienated urbanised Maori, sits uneasily with the separatist brand of Maori discourse which seeks to preserve an identity supposedly grounded in the pre-modern.

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Hulme, quoted in Stuart Hall, Chambers & Curti (1996) p. 246.

<sup>14</sup> Ella Shohat, 'Notes on the Postcolonial', *Social Text*, 31-32 (1992) p. 101.

<sup>15</sup> Stuart Hall, Chambers & Curti (Routledge, 1996) p. 247.

Donna Awatere, for instance, in her 1983 article, *Maori Sovereignty*, defines 'being Maori' as the possession of a whakapapa, a particular relationship between the past and the present and maintaining the mana of one's ancestors:

The Maori use of time differs from the British culture. To the whites, the present and the future is all important. To the Maori, the past is the present is the future. Who I am and my relationship to everyone else depends on whakapapa (geneology), on my language, on those from whom I am descended . . .<sup>16</sup>

Over and against such essentialism Simon During, espousing concepts of post-culturalism, writes that:

once New Zealand citizens can each be both Maori and Pakeha then they live in a world where simulacra replace what I am calling 'the sacred'. Simulacra constitute a third (early) order of modernity - - neither its necessary triumph over the pre-modern nor its universalism but a 'simultaneous irruption of the Same and the Other' . . . the order of simulacra knows no origins, no facts anchored in a transparent description of the world, no anchored hierarchies, but rather circulations and aggregations of representations . . . But simulacra are only recognised as such when society begins to invent itself - - when, refusing to be persuaded, it rejects the authority of what is inherited, framing the past rather than maintaining it.<sup>17</sup>

While such theoretical formulations have great appeal, as Stuart Hall notes:

while holding fast to differentiation and specificity, we cannot afford to forget the overdetermining effects of the colonial moment . . . we have to keep these two ends of the chain in play at the same time - - if we are not to fall into a playful deconstructionism, the fantasy of a powerless *utopia* of difference. It is only too tempting to fall onto the trap of assuming that, because essentialism has been deconstructed *theoretically*, therefore it has been displaced *politically*.<sup>18</sup>

Hence the American anthropologist Allan Hanson's claim that Maori traditions are 'invented' unwittingly created complications for Maori land claims largely through the

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<sup>16</sup> Donna Awatere, 'Maori Sovereignty', *Broadsheet* (Auckland, 1983) p. 54.

<sup>17</sup> Simon During, 'What Was the West?' *Meanjin* 48:4 Summer (1989) p. 770.

<sup>18</sup> Stuart Hall, Chambers & Curtis, (1996) p. 249.

New Zealand media's misinterpretation of his article. Hanson's original article, 'The Making of the Maori', published in *American Anthropologist* in 1989, discussed key tropes in Maori oral tradition which had been authored by European scholars working within what are now out-moded theoretical paradigms. The article generated considerable controversy in New Zealand with Maori scholars attacking Hanson on the grounds of 'shallow' and 'static' portrayals of Maori culture.<sup>19</sup> Pakeha journalists emphasised the invention of Maori culture at the time of the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Treaty of Waitangi when Maori land claims were being contested. These media portrayals tended:

To apply the cultural invention argument against indigenous claims about tradition; the general public understands 'invented' to mean 'made up', that is, not genuine . . . implicitly authenticity is thus equated with the transmission through time of a tradition, that is, an objectively definable essence or core of customs and beliefs.<sup>20</sup>

The issue of 'authenticity' is consequently problematised by the fact that sections of both the Maori and Pakeha populations see cultural authenticity as the way in which group identity is to be legitimised. Both sides view a presumed continuity with the past as providing validity and genuineness to Maori claims about their cultural identity. Shohat, on the other hand, has suggested an alternative view whereby the past could be negotiated differently, 'not as a static fetishised place to be literally reproduced but as fragmented sets of narrated memories and experiences.'<sup>21</sup> This suggestion would appear to offer a fruitful compromise between theoretical constructions and the claims of authenticity which predominate in 'popular' discourse.

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<sup>19</sup> Allan Hanson, 'The Making of the Maori: Cultural Invention and its Logic', *American Anthropologist* 91 (1989) p. 890-902. For responses to this article see, for example, Matthew Grainger, 'Walker Rejects Analysis as Shallow', *The Dominion* (Wellington, 1990) February 24, p. 1. & Sue Scott, 'N.Z. Historians Scoff at Maoritanga Viewpoint', *Evening Post* (Wellington, 1990) February 24, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Jocelyn Linnekin, 'Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity', *American Anthropologist* vol. 93 (1991) p. 447.

<sup>21</sup> Ella Shohat (1992) p. 109.

Finally, to describe the post-colonial moment according to Walker's formulation means both postcolonialism and colonialism must be understood principally as a political or economic relationship upheld by ideologies of Western progress and racism. This is not to argue that the post-colonial is not concerned on a socio-historic level with challenging the nation-state and revealing the limits of Western conceptions of community and individual, and on a philosophical level of rethinking the construction of knowledge. Such aspects are, in fact, given extensive coverage in subsequent chapters where metaphors of 'family' and 'home' as the nation are analysed as problematically inscribing Maori within Western conceptions of the relationship between the (male) individual and the state, and failing to acknowledge hapu and tribal groupings as units of representation. But what needs to be stressed is that both colonialism and post-colonialism are also, and equally importantly, cultural processes. As Nicholas Thomas writes, 'colonial cultures are not simply ideologies that mask, mystify or rationalise forms of oppression that are external to them; they are also expressive and constitutive of colonial relationships in themselves.'<sup>22</sup>

With regard to early-contact Aotearoa/New Zealand this does not imply that the country possessed a 'coherent symbolic order' with well maintained borders between the two populations. In the late nineteenth century, for example, 'Maorilander' meant European while 'New Zealander' was used to describe Maori. There were, in fact, those who wished to assimilate Maori and stressed the similarities between the two peoples, and those defined by an ethnographic impulse to interpret and collect the culture of a 'dying race' seen as irredeemably effected by a fatal impact. And there were those who adhered to a rhetoric of indelible Maori 'difference' in which the savages' resistance to civilisation and progress would have to be crushed by the unquestioningly superior forces of Europe. As James Belich notes:

The pre-1849 settlers and sojourners were significant in actual history . . . bringing the things, thoughts and genes of Europe to Maori in considerable

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<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) p. 2.

bulk . . . Europeans came to New Zealand for flax, timber and whales; seals, sex and souls. They came in numbers that dwarfed those of the exploring expeditions, and they were much more important direct agents of contact with Maori. The hybrid world this interaction created, 'Old New Zealand' in Frederick Maning's nicely ambiguous phrase, began in the 1790s and survived for many years after 1840, until it was eventually swamped by new tides of settlement.<sup>23</sup>

Coloniser coherence, in this later settler society, was also fractured by its own contradictions and the intransigence of those Maori who refused to accommodate to the 'civilising mission' in its several guises. This resulted in various ways of seeing each other which I will label constructed 'inventions', which still have some resonance today and shape the forms of Maori resistance - - since resistance is always to some extent an 'effect of the contradictory representations of colonial authority'<sup>24</sup> and not simply a 'reversal' of power. These 'inventions' may, of course, have either positive or negative connotations. They may provide essentialist definitions of identity or offer hybrid possibilities.

### **Identities and Inventions**

All meetings between cultures tend to be characterised by stories which each group tells about the other. In the period when the 'contact zone'<sup>25</sup> had not yet been transformed into colonised space Maori initially spoke of Europeans as something approaching 'goblins'. Te Horeta recounted how:

when our old men saw the ship they said it was a tupua, a god, and the people on board were strange beings. The ship came to anchor, and the boats pulled on shore. As our old men looked at the manner in which they came on shore, the rowers pulling with their backs to the bows of the boat, the old people said,

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<sup>23</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples* (Auckland: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1996) p.129 & 139.

<sup>24</sup> Jenny Sharpe, 'Figures of Colonial Resistance', *Modern Fiction Studies* 35:1 Spring (1989) pp. 135-55. Reprinted in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, eds., Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin (London & New York: Routledge, 1995) p. 101.

<sup>25</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992) p. 4.

'Yes, it is so: those people are goblins; their eyes are at the back of their heads; they pull on shore with their backs to the land to which they are going.'<sup>26</sup>

Europeans tended to perceive Maori as 'savages' who lacked 'what we call calm resolution (which) is I believe found in few uncivilised people.'<sup>27</sup> Their dances 'partake of the horrible'<sup>28</sup> and 'they soon work themselves up to a pitch of phrensy; the distortions of their face and body are truly dreadful and fill the mind with horror.'<sup>29</sup> Augustus Earle wrote of Maori on the one hand as true Noble Savages, describing how in one instance:

Their richly ornamented war canoes were drawn up on the strand; some of the slaves were unloading stores; others were kindling fires. To me it almost seemed to realise some of the passages of Homer, where he describes the wanderer Ulysses and his gallant band of warriors. We approached the chief, and paid our respects to him. He received us kindly, and with dignified composure, as one accustomed to receive homage.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, they also approximated that other European invention, the cannibal, which says Earle, 'It was my lot to behold . . . in all its horrors.'<sup>31</sup> In describing the depiction of Maori by European artists from 1840 to 1914 Leonard Bell writes:

Maori could be presented as savages existing at a primitive stage of social development. Maori could be presented as romantic beings, as noble, ignoble, as relics of antiquity, as exotic curiosities, as picturesque, as hostile, as friendly or deferential, as objects of desire or display, as participants in a spectacle, as members of a dying race, as ethnological specimens, as marketable commodities, as antipodean peasants.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> 'Te Horeta Te Taniwha: An Account of Cook's Visit', *The Writing of New Zealand*, ed., Alex Calder (Auckland: Reed Books, 1993) p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Banks, 'Endeavour journal', Alex Calder (1993) p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Augustus Earle, 'Narrative of a Residence in New Zealand', Alex Calder (1993) p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Earle (1993) p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Earle (1993) p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> Earle (1993) p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992) p. 4.

All these varying stereotypes could exist simultaneously but be asserted by different European groups. By the time land had become a fraught issue between Maori and settlers, for example, the retention of large areas of land by Maori was seen as antagonistic to progress, and had little support outside the Aborigines Protection Society. Nevertheless:

It was admitted, however, that at all times the Maoris were noted for their 'fine physical characteristics, their nobility of character when at peace, and their courage when at war'. . . As late as 1892, when the wars were over and the settler lust for land satisfied, missionary John Thornton testified that the Maoris' independence of character, manly bearing and frank manner made them the most attractive of all the foreign races committed to British rule. The verdict of J.A. Froude in 1886, however, is significant of the change which had taken place in lay opinion, for to him the Maoris he saw at Ohinemutu, subdued, corrupted by drink and squatting about all day with nothing to do, were helpless, useless and absurd.<sup>33</sup>

The actual historical forces of imperialism, conquest, and missionary conversion which had contributed to this change in both the actual status of Maori, and the way in which they were perceived, were also elevated to a mythic status by Europeans so as to imply a favourable role for Europeans as masters, rulers, teachers and heirs. These were cherished beliefs important to a European self-image which found itself challenged by the confrontation with 'otherness'. 'There was an over-readiness to assume that (those myths) had happened, were happening or would happen.'<sup>34</sup> They ranged 'from enabling value systems to obscuring lies. Myths are human creations that meet human needs and as such may be created, transformed or discarded as needs or conditions change. Imperial myths benefited the colonizer.'<sup>35</sup>

The Pakeha construction of Maori in terms of recognisable roles, images, models and labels occurs, then, in colonialist discourse in response to specific social imperatives. Its objective, as Homi Bhabha states:

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<sup>33</sup> Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971) p. 185-186.

<sup>34</sup> James Belich (1996) p. 127.

<sup>35</sup> Diana Brydon, 'The Myths That Write Us', *Commonwealth* 10:1 (1987) p. 1.

is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction . . . therefore, despite the 'play' in the colonial system which is crucial to its exercise of power, colonial discourse produces the colonised as social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible.<sup>36</sup>

As the terms of stereotypical versions of Maoriness constructed by Pakeha, and the processes of subjectification they make possible, are to be sought in the dominant modes of ideology (patriarchy, racism, colonialism and capitalism), what needs to be considered in terms of Maori self-representation are the investments of desire and the politics of control that representation both signifies and serves. One of the tasks then required is an alertness to the political process by which Pakeha representations of Maori have become naturalised and ultimately coercive in structuring Maori self-representation. Part of that process has included Pakeha literature, because as Nick Perry comments, 'within the realm of print how the world works becomes how words work.' If this includes the possibility of liberation from stereotypes it has unfortunately registered in the past principally 'as an instrument of control.'<sup>37</sup> Consequently, in his examination of the Pakeha literature between 1938-1965 which includes Maori characters, Bill Pearson has noted the prevalence of a number of stock Maori characters:

The educated high-born Maori young man - - who has no female counterpart; the middle-aged woman, frequently matriarchal or motherly and usually good-natured; the wizened, sometimes tattooed old woman, dignified and inscrutable, sometimes wise, sometimes hostile to Pakeha. The young women are either loyal comic domestics and, in the historical romances, maidservants who act as midwife to the Pakeha heroine, or they are loose and promiscuous. Male characters are even less varied: the flashily dressed young man, the fat good-natured rather lazy middle-aged man, and the occasional wise, dignified elder. These Maori characters are usually proud, with a 'poetic' tradition of myth and war, they are courteous; they are fatalistic and can will themselves to

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<sup>36</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Other Question. Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 70.

<sup>37</sup> Nick Perry, *The Dominion of Signs* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994) p. 110.

die; they can have premonitions of other people's deaths; they are superstitious, and retain some belief in pre-Christian gods; they are childlike and impulsive; they are often lazy, cheerful and good-natured. It is a benign portrait but a patronising one.<sup>38</sup>

With the more publicly expressed resistance of Maori activists in the 1980s these stereotypes have polarised more sharply in Pakeha popular discourse into the 'good' and the 'bad'. The standard Pakeha ideology with respect to Maori and race relations in general is described by Raymond Nairn and Timothy McCreanor as one in which it is maintained that:

Maori/Pakeha relations in New Zealand are the best in the world, rooted as they are in the honorable adherence to the outcome of a fair fight. Mutual respect for each others' strength and tolerance of idiosyncracies has integrated the Maori people into a harmonious, egalitarian relationship with the more recent arrivals; the whole working constructively for the common good. Such a 'story' explains Maori failure as due to their inability to cope in the modern world due to inherent flaws in their character or culture. Maori dissent is arguably cast as the work of a tiny minority of congenital troublemakers who seek to arouse a wide Maori discontent to further their own political ends.<sup>39</sup>

Grievances, expressed by these 'congenital troublemakers' such as Nga Tamatoa, the Young Warriors, in the 1970s, had acquired by the 1980s a much more public profile following such events as the land march, (1975) and the occupation of disputed lands at Bastion Point, (1977-8) and Raglan, (1974). While this meant the Maori challenge to Pakeha hegemony could no longer be ignored, the standard 'story', which presents itself as 'commonsense' tended to become strengthened and tightened. Weedon has described such 'commonsense' as consisting of :

a number of social meanings and particular ways of understanding the world which guarantee them. These meanings which inevitably favour the interests of particular social groups become fixed and widely accepted as true . . . Its

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<sup>38</sup> Bill Pearson, 'The Maori in Literature 1938-65', *Essays in New Zealand Literature*, ed., Wylan Curnow (Auckland: Heinemann, 1973) p. 107.

<sup>39</sup> Raymond Nairn & Timothy McCreanor, 'Race Talk and Commonsense', *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 10:4 (1991) p. 248-9.

power (that of commonsense) comes from its claim to be natural, obvious and therefore true.<sup>40</sup>

Nairn and McCreanor have analysed the 'commonsense' Pakeha discourse surrounding Maori in the 1980s and its division of Maori into 'good' and 'bad' groups. The 'good' are largely historical figures - - old Maori - - who are seen as dignified, courteous and gentle, hard-working, happy and proud of their culture. The 'bad' on the other hand, are seen as unreasonable and demanding. They are not fitting into Pakeha society and are violent, dishonest, lazy and lack pride and dignity. Included in the 'bad' category are so-called 'stirrers' made up of several elements. First, stirrers produce misinformation by telling Maori they are oppressed and encouraging them to be overly sensitive about their cultural heritage. Second, stirrers make trouble where none exists:

Groups of stirrers are widely held to be of left-wing origin and to be inspired, sometimes sustained by foreign agencies and the experiences of minorities abroad. Common among those who are identified as stirrers are Maori leaders and activists, Pakeha liberals, 'do-gooders', and the intelligentsia.<sup>41</sup>

As an extreme minority, therefore, their actions and arguments can be dismissed from serious consideration and the blame for deteriorating race relations falls on stirrers themselves. This allows the fact that many Maori are genuinely disadvantaged to be ignored and Pakeha institutions and social practices to remain unscrutinised. Finally, as the present unrest is seen as a disruption to what is inherently a harmonious society it follows that the majority of Maori are happy with their lot. They can, consequently, be represented as a 'passive, unperceptive group who are gullible enough to be used by agitators for their own ends.'<sup>42</sup>

In drawing these parallels between old and new discourses a qualification needs to be made, just as the concept of colonialism as a totalising and inescapable system

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<sup>40</sup> Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987) p. 77.

<sup>41</sup> Nairn & McCreanor (1991) p. 254.

<sup>42</sup> Nairn & McCreanor, (1991) p. 254.

was earlier qualified. In particular, as Nicholas Thomas warns, to argue for a direct conformity between past and contemporary cultural stereotypes:

not only decontextualises particular expressions of these discourses but risks treating them as historically continuous and pervasive . . . Some colonial discourses may be specifically modern, not codes for denigrating that people have always deployed against their neighbours and enemies. Some also have much longer lives than others.<sup>43</sup>

It is, in fact, those which have the longest life which appear most relevant here, particularly the least denigrating Pakeha stereotypes which Maori have 're-invented' for themselves. I will examine two such examples - - which also play a part in Maori literature in English - - by which the power-knowledge nexus of the dominant Pakeha population has managed the strategic production of specific ideas of the 'self' which subordinate Maori groups then internalised as being 'real'. The first is taken from anthropological writings.

In writing of the nature of cultural invention Allan Hanson describes tradition as:

an invention designed to serve contemporary purposes . . . which vary according to who does the inventing. When people invent their own tradition it is usually to legitimate or sanctify some current reality or aspiration . . . People also invent cultures and traditions for others, and then treat them as if their inventions were the actual state of affairs. When inventors are politically dominant, as has been the case between Western nations and their colonies, the invention of tradition for subordinate peoples is part of a cultural imperialism that tends to maintain the asymmetrical relationship of power.<sup>44</sup>

Hanson traces two inventions pertaining to traditional Maori culture which were propounded by early anthropologists - - the notion of the 'Great Fleet' and the idea that pre-European Maori culture possessed a cult dedicated to Io, a supreme being. The ideological aim of these theories was to pinpoint *similarities* between Maori and

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<sup>43</sup> Nicholas Thomas (1994) p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Allan Hanson (1989) p. 890.

Pakeha so as to enable the successful assimilation of Maori into a European culture. Hanson writes that, 'By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries . . . this ennobled Maori in European eyes to the point where it became possible to entertain the possibility of a link with themselves.'<sup>45</sup> This link was supplied by the idea, developed by Edward Tregear, and elaborated by Elsdon Best, that Maori were Aryans. R. Studholme Thompson, who maintained Maori were Caucasians who had migrated from the Atlas mountains of North Africa, specifically saw his work on Maori origins as being:

the demonstration that the highly-civilised Briton and the Maori, just emerging from barbarism, are one in origin; that in fraternising with the Maori the European undergoes no degradation; in intermarrying with the race he does no violence to the claims of consanguinity.<sup>46</sup>

While these speculations about Maori origins are no longer regarded seriously, the prominent concepts of this tradition - - the cult of Io and the migration stories of the Great Fleet - - still have credence within Maori society. Their reasons for affirming these beliefs are not, however, because they wish to be assimilated but to lend colour to their sense of ethnic distinctiveness and value. Rather than emphasising similarity between the two cultures, Maori seek to be distinct from Pakeha and possess a tradition that *contrasts* with what are seen as the less desirable aspects of Western society. Ultimately, 'the myths that today underpin Maori identity . . . were articulated in complex interrelations with Pakehas that will never be unfolded in a scholarly "true story"'.<sup>47</sup>

The second example is derived from Maori carving practices. Georges-Goulen Le Cam has compared two carvings of the mythological separation of Rangi the sky father, and Papa the earth mother, in order to argue that modern Maori carving is not

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<sup>45</sup> Hanson (1989) p. 892.

<sup>46</sup> Studholme, R. Thompson, quoted in M.P.K. Sorrenson, *Maori Origins and Migrations* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1979) p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Simon During (1989) p. 765.

simply a straightforward revival of traditional cultural practices. The first, the Heretunga lintel carved in the mid-nineteenth century by Ngati Kahunguna is arguably little influenced by European concepts or practices. It is therefore powerfully influenced by the Maori concepts of knowledge as a precious and scarce commodity which must be passed down through the tribal generations with great care. This carving, according to Le Cam, is connected to the myth by:

what could be called the geneological imperative, for the episode of the separation is also concerned, ultimately, with power transfer: the divorce of Earth and Sky is the crucial moment when the law of exclusive transmission is first clearly formulated. This act of violence . . . establishes the mechanics of power transfer (the younger generation can only preserve the ancestral heritage through forceful appropriation).<sup>48</sup>

The lintel is therefore not a figurative representation of the myth but possesses a structural link to it in that its purpose is the transmission of tribal mana through the tribal generations.

In comparison, a modern carving such as *Te Wehehnga o Rangi raua ko Papa*, produced between 1972 and 1975 under the supervision of Cliff Whiting would appear to have a thematic emphasis. Many more details of the myth are represented in a straightforward manner. All the six sons of Rangi and Papa are present along with natural motifs of stars, the moon and birds which suggests a harmonious relationship between human and natural forms. The focus has therefore shifted from:

the exclusive transmission of the tribal mana to the holistic concord between man and nature. The mythic carving is now a medium to put across a message of 'environmental interplay' . . . And the separation of Rangi and Papa is now perceived as the moment when the holistic truth emerges into the open.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Georges-Goulen Le Cam, 'The New Net Goes Fishing', *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 16:2 Spring (1993) p. 47.

<sup>49</sup> Le Cam, (1993) p. 49.

While only one particular facet of the tribal world (that ancestors were identified with natural forces) is selected this is a politically apposite choice, or strategy, in an environmentally conscious country where prestige can be gained from an ecologically 'correct' outlook at the same time as bolstering an endangered heritage. As such it may be interpreted as being part of the 'necessary' risk of essentialism, but as a modern rendition of the age-old stereotype of the native being closer to nature it carries with it all the concomitant negative attributes involved in the European nature/culture binary.

James Clifford had described such paradoxes and irresolutions of post-colonial identity politics as offering new opportunities, through reversals and displacements, for improvisation and newly-created combinations which belong to the 'newly traditionally meaningful in the present-becoming future.'<sup>50</sup> However, despite the promise of such formulations what may end up being 'new' in the 'newly traditional' is what Simon During describes as:

a struggle against the injustice and loss that continue into the postcultural era when inequities in employment, health and education continue to be linked to racial difference. Thus the 'Maori culture' built through co-operation and conflict between Maori and Pakeha may be turned against the colonisers' heirs at the very moment that it confined the Maori in an inauthentic authenticity.<sup>51</sup>

This 'inauthentic authenticity' is, of course, not entirely 'new'. It also flourished throughout the nineteenth century. In his book on the Maori tour of England in 1863, for example, Brian Mackrell recounts how Reihana Te Taukawau in particular complained:

about the wearing of traditional Maori garments which the English found so interesting. 'In New Zealand I never liked a mat; - - before I knew Jenkins I disliked all sorts of mats for mostly they are many years old; being not much made now, and the things are nasty, they are often filled with vermin . . .'<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> James Clifford, 'Of Other Peoples. Beyond the Salvage Principle', *DIA Art Foundation. Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, 1. (1987) p.127.

<sup>51</sup> Simon During (1989) p. 769.

<sup>52</sup> Brian Mackrell, *Hariru Wikitoria* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1985) p. 53.

And in his discussion of William Strutt's painting of Hare Pomare and his family painted during this same tour, Leonard Bell comments that the three adult figures in the portrait are depicted in full Maori dress. They were, he states, 'appropriately attired for the occasion - wearing their best dress, as any European would also in a formal family portrait.'<sup>53</sup> While such inventions of Maori by Europeans confined Maori to a folkloricised identity - - as do the 'modern primitive' constructions - - it is possible for cultural inventions to play a positive role and, rather than acting as a strategy for containment, to allow for an elaboration of heterogeneous, contradictory identities through inversion and displacement. This is exemplified particularly by the kowhaiwhai motif which has been endlessly employed in varying ways by both Maori and Pakeha. The kowhaiwhai as a model is a pertinent illustration of such processes as the strategies of confrontation and resistance which operate in the Maori novels of the 1980s also continue, it will be argued, the pre-contact use of kowhaiwhai to empower allies and disempower enemies. The understanding of such processes will be traced through anthropological discourse in the following section.

### **Kowhaiwhai, 'The Piano' and Hybridity**

Allan Hanson has argued persuasively that kowhaiwhai are:

compositional structures of dualism, symmetry, and near-symmetry . . . convey(ing) messages about the Maori view of reality which are also conveyed by homologous forms in mythology and folklore, proverbs, and patterns of social and political relations.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Leonard Bell (1992) p. 91.

<sup>54</sup> Allan Hanson, 'Art and the Construction of Maori Reality', *Art and Artists of Oceania*, eds., Sidney M. Mead & Bernie Kernot (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1983) p. 215.

The particular quality of reality in the Maori construction of the world is, he states, one of 'ambivalent tension between identity and difference, attraction and repulsion, union and separation.'<sup>55</sup> While not dismissing this argument, Nicholas Thomas maintains that a comparison of kowhaiwhai with other Pacific visual traditions reveals they were all originally used in situations of warfare or aggressive competition, and share the characteristic of disrupted symmetry which is 'optically disorientating and therefore psychologically unsettling.'<sup>56</sup> These unstable patterns could therefore be intended to give a sense of power to those presenting them, and to disempower those who are confronted by them.

This interpretation accords with Roger Neich's work on the early or pre-contact kowhaiwhai which Cook's artists record as appearing on canoe paddles from 1769, approximately 70 years before they appeared on the rafters of meeting houses. Neich considers elaborate war canoes to constitute 'the main symbol of group pride'<sup>57</sup> which waned as the prestige from owning European vessels increased. Instead, certain buildings became more important. Christian churches were constructed which incorporated Maori motifs, or as in the East Coast-Poverty Bay area decorated almost entirely in Maori idiom. Likewise, as interaction between Maori and European increased, with a concomitant need for diplomacy and/or confrontation, chief's dwellings were developed into elaborate meeting houses. Thomas argues that:

in this context, kowhaiwhai appear to have been transposed from paddles to rafters and other architectural elements . . . and were *not* 'symbols' . . . but vehicles of collectivity's power. They simultaneously indexed a group's vitality and ideally or effectively disempowered others.<sup>58</sup>

The decorated paddles when in use were not merely the means of propelling a canoe forward but also indexed the vigour of the warriors. Meeting houses, with their

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<sup>55</sup> Allan Hanson (1983) p. 215.

<sup>56</sup> Nicholas Thomas, 'Kiss the Baby Goodbye', *Critical Inquiry*, 22:1 Autumn (1995) p. 101.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Neich, *Painted Histories* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994) p. 73.

<sup>58</sup> Nicholas Thomas, (1995) p. 103.



FIG. 8.—Sydney Parkinson, [three paddles from New Zealand], ca. October 1769. Pen, wash, and watercolour. 29.5 x 22.8 cm. British Library.

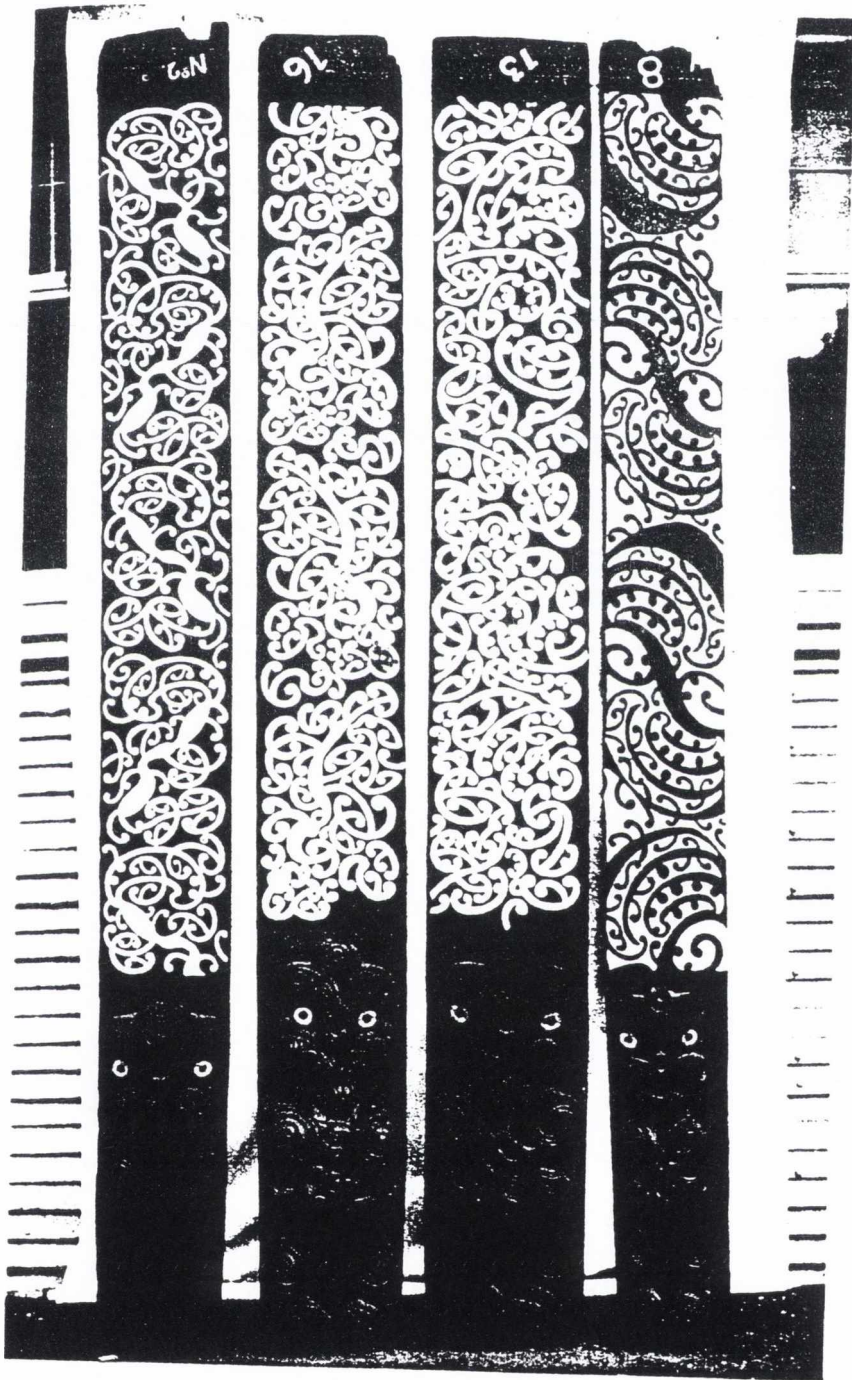


FIG. 1.—Rafters from Te Hau-ki-Turanga, Manutuke, 1842. Te Papa Tongarewa/Museum of New Zealand.

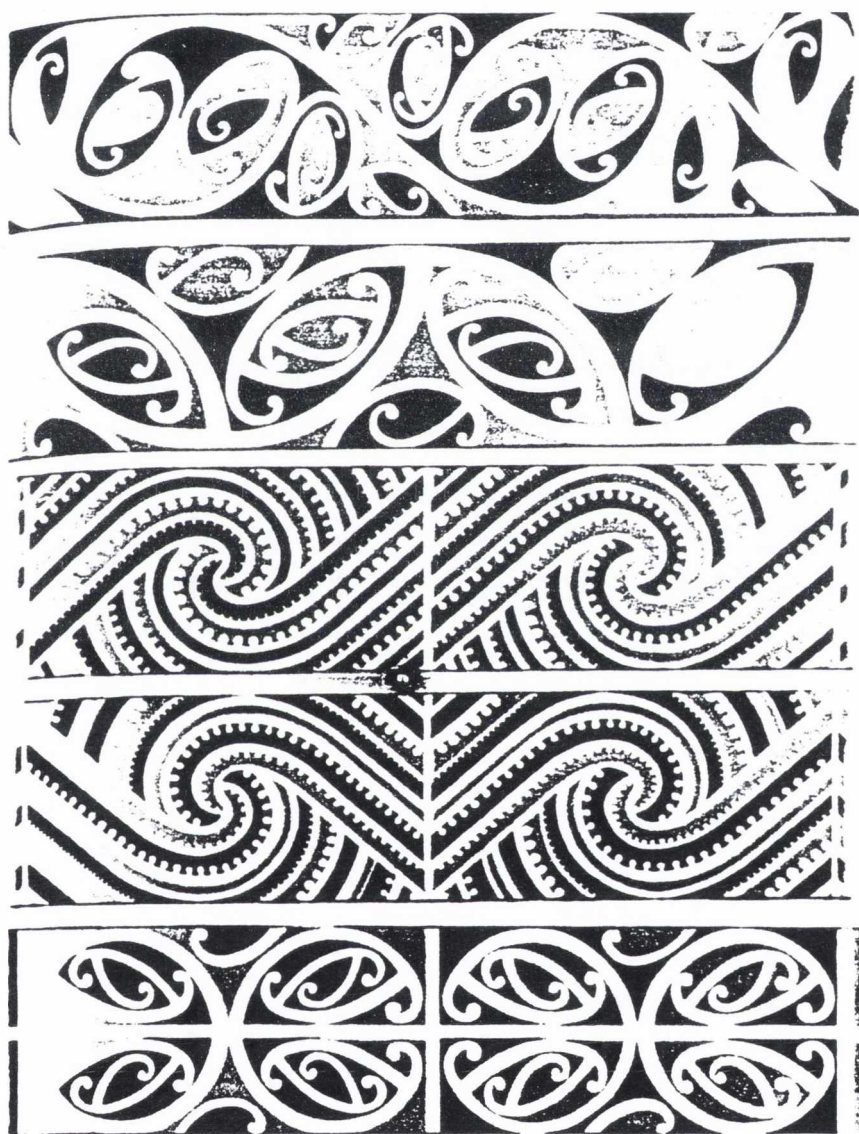


FIG. 12.—'Maori rafter patterns'. From Augustus Hamilton, *Maori Art* (1896-1901; 1977).

complex visual array of carving, tukutuku panels and painting which differ strikingly from each other took over the role of being both unsettling and powerful:

Viewers who identify genealogically with a figure or an array of art forms in a house can, however, move beyond a state of awe, or rather can internalise it and be awed by their own collective power, because they have been generated by the mana and efficacy embodied in the house and recapitulate it. If insiders can incorporate what is initially threatening, outsiders are excluded from this positive dynamic of self-definition and must be at least intimidated.<sup>59</sup>

Carvings also performed the same functions of terrifying and overwhelming - - not just the ancestral figures on meeting houses - - but particularly the sculptures of warriors erected at the palisades of fortified villages. These warriors would in all probability be recognised by those attacking, who may have been confronted by this same enemy in the past. This situation places 'an emphasis on the cultivation and projection of collective power as opposed to the symbolisation of tribal power.'<sup>60</sup>

Over the same period as these changes in the use of the kowhaiwhai motif were taking place in Maori society Pakeha society was beginning to employ indigenous art forms in their effort to see themselves as local and not merely culturally impoverished Europeans. In considering the series of indigenous transpositions of kowhaiwhai Nicholas Thomas argues that they could be viewed as prefiguring the proliferation of the kowhaiwhai motif on objects as diverse as stamps, banknotes, teatowels and the tail of Air New Zealand planes. And if, he states:

this were a useful point it would also be a deeply contentious one because of its suppression of distinctions between intra- and intercultural borrowing - - but what is the difference? - - between transposition within, and appropriation across cultures.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Nicholas Thomas (1995) p. 111.

<sup>60</sup> Nicholas Thomas (1995) p. 111.

<sup>61</sup> Nicholas Thomas (1995) p. 93.

This cross-cultural borrowing has continued for at least a century, having begun with Anton Seuffert's furniture designs, but it is the use of the term 'appropriation' which signals a change in attitude among Maori since the 1970s, and specifically a move from protest concerning the appropriation of land to one which includes cultural motifs, images and narratives as property. Although the Pakeha use of kowhaiwhai as design stripped them of their confrontational energy and dynamism the question remains whether, for example, the use of the koru - - the central figure of the kowhaiwhai - - on the tails of Air New Zealand planes which took to the air in 1965 transporting this indigenous image around the world, is totally contained within settler efforts at self-definition. Do they not also, if not deliberately, at least by default afford prestige to Maori art forms and thereby Maori culture in general?

This type of hybridisation is clearly complex in that although Air New Zealand is specifically a national rather than an ethnic airline the koru pattern has been used as a symbol of modern national empowerment which does not restrict Maori to older settler narratives in which contrasts between past and future, passivity and agency featured prominently. The continuing use of these motifs by both Maori and Pakeha means they are not purely 'primitive' source material of a bygone age. It is possibly, therefore, not an appropriation but a placing of both settlers and Maori equally in a national discourse.

This process may, however, still be interpreted as a strategy of containment operating from within the dominant Pakeha discourse as before voices of unassimilated Maori difference can actually be heard, or power relations changed, the commensal positioning of 'self' and 'other' within a narrative of progress (or progressiveness) must be analysed as possibly adhering to an imperial ontological and epistemological legacy.

This has resulted in a type of post-colonial discourse which seeks to position Maori according to a nationalist thought which was premised on the assumed universality of the project of becoming individuals, on the assumption that 'individual rights' and abstract 'equality' were universals that could find a home anywhere in the world. In other words, that one could be both 'Maori' and a 'citizen' at the same time.

In this case the koru motif would have been utilised as a symbol of the nation envisaged from the settler perspective. Air New Zealand's brochure, in fact, states, 'The Koru, our emblem, has its origins in the natural history of New Zealand. It is derived from the native Maori symbol for new life and replenishment.' While this acknowledges the Maori source of the koru, the conjunction between Maori and 'natural history' is unfortunate to say the least.

It is here that Gordon Walters' koru paintings produced over a thirty year period from the mid 1950s to the mid-1980s prove instructive specifically because of the changing interpretations to which they have been subjected with respect to nationalism. At one time they were praised for their 'international' modernism in that their abstraction and pure form seemed distanced from a nationalism defined through landscape painting and viewed as parochial. Nowadays, however, they are elevated as emblems of bicultural nationality.

However, as a Pakeha artist, Walter's use of kowhaiwhai in a post-colonial bicultural nationalist discourse can, in retrospect, function as the assertion of a claim to legitimacy through a high-minded rectitude which 'justly' includes the representation of its others. This liberal notion of cultural diversity (as opposed to cultural difference) functions as the recognition of *pre-given* cultural contents graspable as an epistemological object. In terms of Maori self-representation it has been construed by Pakeha as an 'awakening to self-consciousness' which is equivalent to achieving fruition of an actual essence held in abeyance during colonial times. The inclusion of this essential indigenism serves to relieve Pakeha guilt but perpetuates control through a 'new' stereotyping which only legitimates those representations which Pakeha see as being authentic.

Such a conception works within a bicultural nationalist politics in which a major prop is to fetishise the 'authentic' and consequently to exclude the diverse and complex voices of Maori people. The Pakeha use of kowhaiwhai as emblems of Maori spirituality are offered back to Maori as eternal verities even though they may not have taken shape earlier than the colonial period. As Robert Young writes:

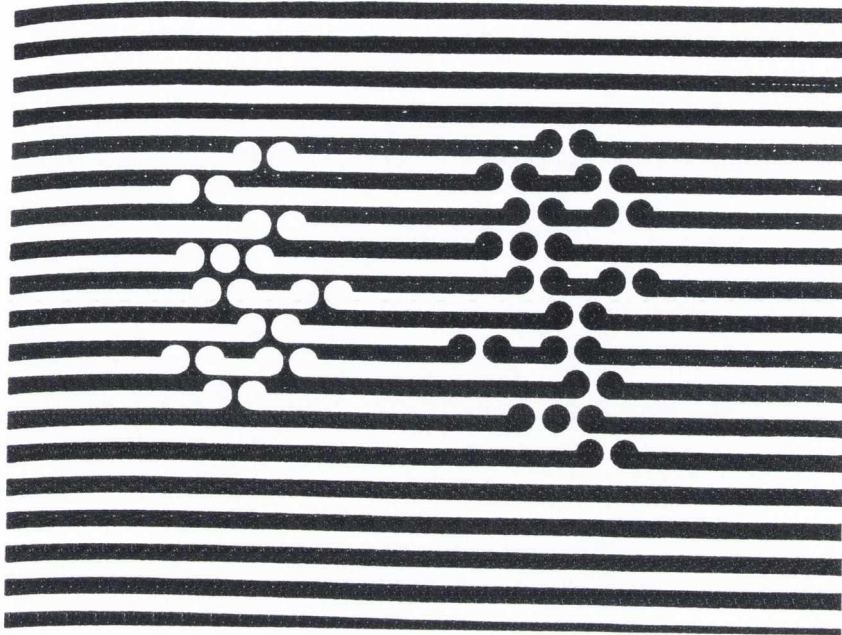


FIG. 5.—Gordon Walters, *Paving No. 1*, 1965. PVA on hardboard. 91.4 x 121.9 cm. Auckland City Art Gallery. Photo: Auckland City Art Gallery.

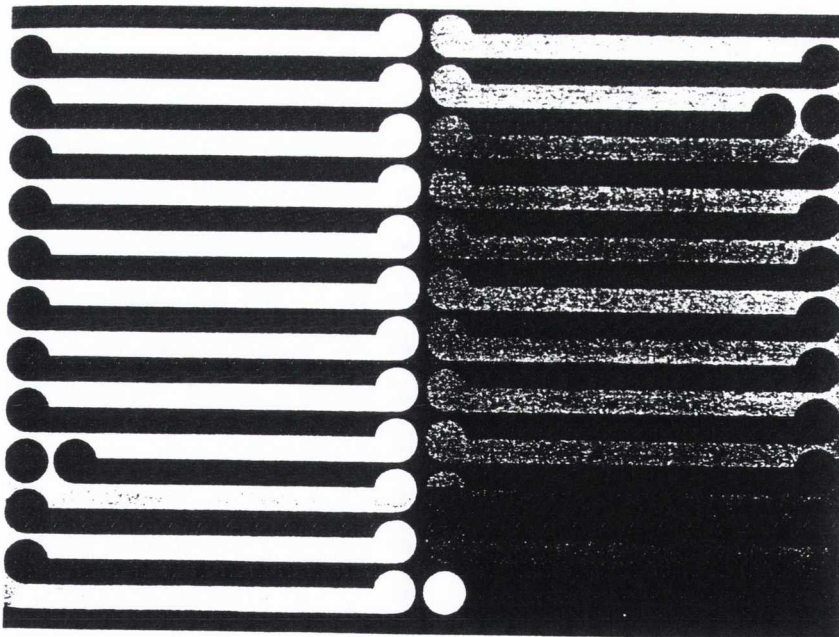


FIG. 6.—Gordon Walters, *Kahukura*, 1968. PVA and acrylic on canvas. 114 x 154 cm. Victoria University, Wellington. Photo: Auckland City Art Gallery.

those who evoke the nativist position through a nostalgia for a lost or repressed culture idealise the possibility of that lost origin being recoverable in all its former plenitude without allowing for the fact that the figure of the lost origin, the 'other' that the coloniser has repressed, has itself been construed in terms of the coloniser's own self-image.<sup>62</sup>

This amounts to a nostalgic assumption that, 'a critique of imperialism would restore the sovereignty for the lost self of the colonies so that Europe could, once and for all, be put in the place of the other that it always was.'<sup>63</sup>

The nativist argument thus simply reproduces a Western fantasy about its own society, now projected out onto the lost society of the other. An 'alternative' then, can simply represent the 'narcissistic desire to find an other that will reflect Western assumptions of selfhood.'<sup>64</sup> In any attempt to turn the other into a self, the anti-imperialist perspective has to come to terms with the fact that the very project of imperialism was to do the very same thing, refracting 'what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other that consolidates the imperialist self.'<sup>65</sup> Post-colonial national discourse can therefore become trapped in endless cycles of self-referentiality in which each rebellion only serves further to confirm the dominance of the master. However:

The koru paintings depend absolutely upon a kind of parity which happens now to have acquired a political life. They create dynamic interactive energy which does not suggest that one term is in the future and the other in the past. It is therefore unsurprising to find the suggestion advanced that the works provide a paradigm for bicultural nationhood specifically because of the unstable alternation of figure and ground, that precludes any hierarchy of black and white. The singular work which the paintings now do, then, is to reinvent a project of settler self-fashioning which had become untenable because it too obviously relegated Maori to a folklorised or anachronistic space. In place of this plainly disregarded hierarchy, biculturalism enabled a new *and/or* which

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<sup>62</sup> Robert Young, *White Mythologies* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990) p. 168.

<sup>63</sup> Gayatri C. Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur', *Europe and its Others. Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature*, vol. 1. eds., F. Barker et al. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1984) p. 128.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Young (1990) p. 165.

<sup>65</sup> Gayatri C. Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry* 12:1 (1985) p. 253.

may make profound and wide-ranging cultural political and economic concessions - while finding new ways of assimilating indigenous authenticity to a renovated and localised settler actor in a space which has become compromised rather than plainly lost or gained.<sup>66</sup>

A further enabling strategy is offered by artist Michael Parekowhai who has re-appropriated one of Walter's paintings entitled 'Kahukura'. Rather than rendering this particular representation of kowhaiwhai on paper or canvas Parekowhai has reproduced it in steel on a far greater scale. Its massive presence has the result of re-invigorating the motif and imaginatively aligning it with the ancestral presences in meeting houses. This appears to function as a statement that koru are Maori visual forms which unequivocally belong to Maori. However, the title 'Kiss the Baby Goodbye' is appropriately ambiguous - - it may be telling Pakeha to relinquish their hold on Maori culture and motifs or it may be saying that it is impossible for Maori to maintain a rigid control over forms which have continuously been re-energised through cultural cross-borrowings for over a hundred years. What Parekowhai's work specifically does however is to restore kowhaiwhai to an indigenous aesthetic of empowering and disempowering. This has its parallels in the changes which Maori writing in English has undergone between the 1970s and the 1990s. Here, Linda Hutcheon's claim has relevance. She argues that:

current post-structuralist/post-modern challenges to the coherent, autonomous subject have to be put on hold in feminist and post-colonial discourses, for both must work first to assert and affirm a denied or alienated subjectivity: those radical post-modern challenges are in many ways the luxury of the dominant order which can afford to challenge that which it securely possesses.<sup>67</sup>

While this assertion was promptly and succinctly responded to by Diana Brydon as affording centrality to European models<sup>68</sup> there do appear to be valid grounds for

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<sup>66</sup> Nicholas Thomas (1995) p. 119.

<sup>67</sup> Linda Hutcheon, 'Circling the Downspout of Empire', *Past the Last Post*, eds., Ian Adam & Helen Tiffin (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991) p. 169.

<sup>68</sup> Diana Brydon, 'The White Inuit Speaks', Adam & Tiffin, (1991) p. 193.

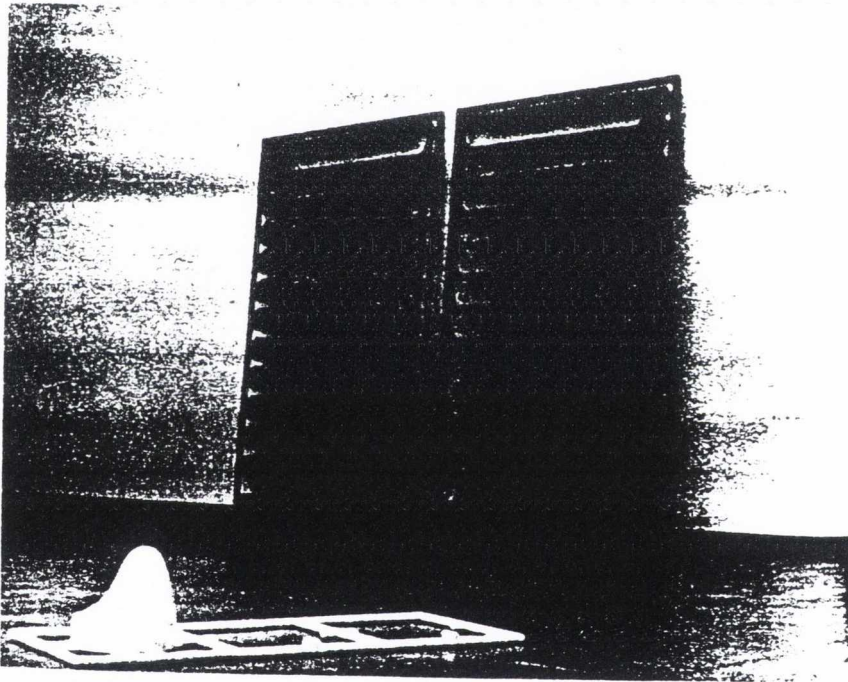


FIG. 16.—Michael Parekowhai, *Kiss the Baby Goodbye*, 1994. Powder-coated steel. Photographed at the Waikato Museum of Art and History/ Te Whare *ō* Waikato, as part of the exhibition *Kiss the Baby Goodbye*, July 1994. The appropriation of Duchamp in the foreground is entitled *Mimi* ("to piss" in Maori).

interpreting Maori literature in English as having moved through several stages. Peter Beatson, for example, sees this literature as moving from a nostalgia for what has been lost through to an active political engagement<sup>69</sup> and Hartwig Isernhagen traces a 'linear typography' from those texts which he says, 'fundamentally aim at *mimetic authenticity* in the presentation of a culture marked as indigenous, or aspects of it, (to) . . . those whose aim is *discursive authenticity*, the creation of a discourse that in itself "stands for" cultural difference.'<sup>70</sup> These critiques do not necessarily inscribe Maori writing within a Western progressiveness but, more pertinently, interpret it as functioning in similar ways to visual art - - that is, reviving the challenge and empowerment strategy common to nineteenth-century Maori representations and combining it with the adoption of Western forms such as the novel. An essentialised imperative such as Hirini Melbourne's claim denies this complicity:

The 'mental universe' of the Maori people is expressed through traditions that reach back to the pre-European world, and the memory of that pre-contact world is contained above all in the language. To write in English as a Maori is unavoidably to accept the conceptual system of another culture. To write in Maori is to maintain contact with the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual ground of the Maori people. It is to be caught up in other undertakings of the world. Only when Maori writers choose to write in Maori, and Maori readers turn in significant numbers to their work, will contemporary Maori realize their cultural aspirations.<sup>71</sup>

Patricia Grace's comment, however, implicitly endorses it:

I'm often asked about the influence of oral tradition and never know what to answer. I'm influenced by everything, including all forms of speech, whether it's conversations, stories, waiata, whaikorero, tauparapara, haka, karanga, chanting, latin plainsong, radio and television commercials and programmes, news bulletins, talks, readings, lectures, sermons - it doesn't matter what. I'm

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<sup>69</sup> Peter Beatson, *The Healing Tongue* (Palmerston North: Massey University, 1990) p. 12.

<sup>70</sup> Hartwig Isernhagen, 'Contemporary Maori Narrative as Intercultural Text', *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 26:2 (1993) p. 138.

<sup>71</sup> Hirini Melbourne, 'Whare Whakairo: Maori Literary Traditions', *Dirty Silence*, eds., Graham McGregor & Mark Williams (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 130.

used to listening, interested in the rhythms of speech and employ these rhythms in my work.<sup>72</sup>

The dilemma of such contemporary hybridisations by Maori is always that the dominant culture can resort to conceptualising Maori representations of 'difference' as having achieved self-expression solely through Western theory's 'unfixing' of the subject. Maori access to the political/ideological scene is then controlled by the 'Western subject' who 'forfeits' a space of representation to Maori at the same time as he views Maori political strategies as reliant on correction and direction from a 'superior' Western theory.

In this respect it is efficacious to examine such ubiquitous symbols of imported European culture as the piano and interpret such 'sea-changes' as they may have undergone as a balancing exercise to the multiple mutations inscribed upon indigenous motifs. The piano has featured in the literature of Aotearoa/New Zealand as a sign of 'civilisation' from colonial times. Jane Mander, for example, has her character Alice Roland in *The Story of a New Zealand River* (1920), described as a 'real lydy', arrive in the country accompanied by a piano. In her journey down-river by punt to join her husband she is specifically identified with this piano: 'The only thing that seemed to belong to her, in that incongruous setting of boxes and mattresses and common furniture, was a piano which was packed in a heavy case.'<sup>73</sup> And still, in 1990, in Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors* it is a piano which exemplifies the social distance between the Hekes and the middle class Pakeha Tramberts. Grace Heke hiding at night in the Trambert's garden listens to the piano and describes the scene as one in which everything takes on a special lustre, 'And everything - *them* - those two standing listening to that one I can only see her hair, the big piano, even the quality of light, the brightness of *their* light they stood in, the lot as clear as day.' When she compares this

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<sup>72</sup> Patricia Grace, interviewed by Jane McRae, *In the Same Room*, eds., Elizabeth Alley & Mark Williams (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992) p. 294-5.

<sup>73</sup> Jane Mander, *The Story of a New Zealand River* (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1974) first published U.S.A. 1920, p. 8.

scene to her family's home, 'The contrast. It didn't seem possible. From grand piano to this. Even *God* wouldn't believe it.'<sup>74</sup> And finally, in Jane Campion's film *The Piano* (1993), what colonising is all about might at first appear to be such actions as bringing pianos into the hard, lifeless New Zealand bush. As Lydia Wevers writes:

When the camera pans back to a shot of the piano on the beach, huge Pacific rollers engulfing it, everything the piano signifies is brought into focus simply because it should not be in the frame: its presence on the beach, in the sea, focuses conceptions of landscape and of culture and brings into play a complex of associated oppositions.<sup>75</sup>

An apparently unproblematic call in the name of nature figures Maori and the unconstrained growth of the bush as morally more satisfying than the tyranny of colonial rule exemplified by Stewart who knows the land is his by the alterations he has worked upon it. He occupies much of his time splitting fence posts and driving them into the ground to mark the boundaries of his possession.

While Stewart ignores the piano, exposed as it is to the elements and 'smelling of salt', Ada when she returns to the beach is transformed by a joyous abandon when she plays it. The instrument, which replaces her speaking voice, is clearly more natural than the original and identified with both the beauty of the landscape and later with the indoor sexual passion between Ada and Baines. Stewart, in continuing coloniser fashion, also seeks to place boundaries on his wife's passion by nailing planks to the window and door and laying claim to his marital chattel. He is, moreover, outraged by Flora's game with the trees, played with the Maori children - - a game which merely amuses the Maori women.

This may appear initially as an introduction to the inevitable stereotypes of native peoples and women being closer to nature and unfettered sexuality. However, Stewart's colonial culture is constantly mocked and parodied by Maori who, dressed in

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<sup>74</sup> Alan Duff, *Once Were Warriors* (London: Vintage, 1995) p. 85-88. First published New Zealand: Tandem Press, 1990.

<sup>75</sup> Lydia Wevers, 'Narrating Landscape in Some Early New Zealand Writing, or Not the Story of a New Zealand River', *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada*, No. 11, June (1994) p. 1.

a mixture of European and traditional clothing, enter to carnival music. Two Maori, with similar hats to Stewart's, mimic his movements and emphasise the absurdity of his formal clothing. So, although the white man appears to be in power, neither Maori nor Ada are simply his victims. Ada's will, in fact, becomes even stronger after Stewart hacks off her finger.

Moreover, as the play within the play makes clear, it is not only a question of what one sees, but also of how one sees it. For, if the Maori tend (as on the beach) to parody the seriousness of the Pakeha, they also unsettle his sense of the purely theatrical by acts potentially quite serious. Yet the political nature of the film is clearly not a call to direct action, for when the shadow play of Bluebeard and his wife are later re-played by Stewart and Ada at the chopping block, the consequent events have an almost anticlimatic quality. The commentary on Stewart's brutality is maintained largely through a repetition of such images as Ada's skirt. As an initial figure of shelter, it progresses to a cold distance, then an utter intimacy and finally to a shroud as Ada is pulled beneath the water by the rope attached to the sinking piano. All these images figure the possibility of inversion and contradiction. Finally, the piano itself is, according to Ada, spoiled - - by the axe marks made by Stewart, by the missing key, and because a passion of another order having being satisfied, the piano playing has thereafter been rendered different. With Ada's consent, the piano is appropriately jettisoned by the Maori who claim it is disturbing the balance of the canoe. Ada, in fact, finds another kind of satisfaction, on another piano with a different tone and with a hand, not whole and recuperated but complemented by a metal finger whose click is a constant reminder of its artifice. Yet satisfaction comes precisely because of this 'difference', this 'self-re-construction'. There is room now for Ada's voice, but again, there is no full recovery, no recuperation, the insistence is on a certain deprivation, and what might appear as bourgeois bliss with the Pakeha Maori Baines, in the garden in Nelson is interrupted by a voice-over, 'At night I think of my piano in its ocean grave,

and sometimes think of myself floating above it. Down there everything is so still and silent that it lulls me to sleep. It is a weird lullaby, and so it is, it is mine.<sup>76</sup>

Rather than possession of the piano Ada is left with thoughts of it and of herself underneath the sea. Her music is punctuated by a freak click, her life by the imaging of her own death. Settler identity, in other words, must inevitably be founded on a sense of loss combined with the artifice of 'appropriating' a local 'difference'. The closing scene is Ada's body floating underwater, her skirts ballooned up over her whole body and her voice reciting the opening lines of Thomas Hood's sonnet:

There is a silence where hath been no sound  
There is a silence where no sound may be  
In the cold grave, under the deep deep sea.<sup>77</sup>

Ada is not sacrificed with her piano, rather Ada's mind's voice speaking as in the first scene and presented in conjunction with a view through her translucent fingers prefiguring the final underwater realm, talks again of silence, but this time in the words of another, that of the poet Hood. It is, in fact, what is silenced which is most significant - - that is, the remainder of Hood's poem:

Or in the wide desert where no life is found,  
Which had been mute, and still must sleep profound;  
No voice is hush'd - no life treads silently,  
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,  
That never spoke, over the idle ground;  
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls  
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,  
Though the dim fox, or the wild hyena calls,  
And owls, that flit continually between,  
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,  
There the true silence is, self-conscious and alone.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Jane Campion, *The Piano* (New York: Hyperion, 1993) p. 122.

<sup>77</sup> John Clubbe, ed. *Selected Poems of Thomas Hood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) p.

<sup>63</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> John Clubbe (1970) p. 63.

Ada's final words can only be understood in contrast to 'the true silence' in these closing lines. Unlike the muteness 'under the deep sea' of which Ada speaks, this other silence has the authority of self-consciousness and a guarantee of certainty and truth. Placed as it is among man-made ruins - - signs of the colonist's will to power - - it refutes all that the film performs.

It is perhaps, then, through the counterpoise of 'flying' kowhaiwhai and 'submerged' pianos that a truly bicultural identity may be figured, one in which a 'different' Maori subjectivity is constructed in a hybrid painting/carving/writing. The novels critiqued in the following chapters will therefore look on Maori self-representation as reviving the nineteenth-century strategies of empowerment evidenced in the growth of complexity in meeting house carving and decoration which continued but re-emphasised the pre-contact process of confronting 'outsiders' and granting reassurance to 'insiders'. This is combined with a use of metaphors commonly employed in post-colonial literature. These include depictions of the human body as a site of violence and the concept of the home as a metaphor for the nation. Bodies are scarred, maimed and mutilated as well as verbally silenced, either through choice or external pressure. Keri Hulme, in *the bone people*, has her protagonist destroy her isolated and solipsistic tower and replace it with a communal home constructed according to the principles of an indigenous spiral form. Witi Ihimera in *The Matriarch* places an emphasis on *Rongapai*, the real and mythical meeting house on the East Coast whose decorations are emblematic of hybrid Euro-Maori art forms. Patricia Grace utilises a more 'traditional' carved whareniui but employs a 'rule-breaking' carver and has the carving completed with a non-traditional form of the potiki in his wheelchair and other 'Western' details. *Once Were Warriors* shifts deliberately to a council house in a deprived Rotorua estate in a move which appears unrelated to Maori architecture. These particular spatial metaphors are viewed as a cross-cultural conception derived from English literary practices and Maori understandings of what constitutes 'knowledge' and political efficacy in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand.

### Tropes of difference

As Graham Huggan has pointed out as a generalisation, contemporary post-colonial texts have frequently ironised mapping as a means of spatial containment and a metaphor for the inflexibility of colonial discourse. A deconstructive reading of maps 'is celebrated . . . as an agent of cultural transformation and as a medium for the imaginative revisioning of cultural history.' Consequently, it can also become a medium which 'allows for the reformulation of links both with and between cultures.'<sup>79</sup>

Theorists and critics have also increasingly turned to spatial metaphors to construct arguments and political approaches. The editors of *Travellers' Tales* for example speak of their Introduction as:

a route map (tracing the most efficient course), or a tour guide (pointing out significant sights and sites). But the tidy helpfulness of an Introduction as metanarrative, or map, threatens to undermine our project. There is no single route through the conflicts and ambiguities attending a range of explosive futures for the relations between travel, community, identity and difference.<sup>80</sup>

And perhaps less positively Paul Sharrad has claimed that 'In the wider field of post-colonial literatures, Pacific literature is a small and new patch of ground.'<sup>81</sup> In asking why there is, in particular, a growing interest in thinking subjectivity through space, Kathleen Kirby answers that:

Space has the capacity to figure many of the different aspects of identity - the psyche as volume, the body as container, discourse as spatial network, groups as closed circles, and the aloof expanses of geography and nation. Space brings together the material and the abstract, the body and the mind, the objective interaction of physical subjects and the elusive transience of consciousness (or the unconscious). Space is our environment, it links us to our environment and seems to fortify a distinction between self and

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<sup>79</sup> Graham Huggan (1991) p. 131.

<sup>80</sup> George Robertson et al, *Travellers' Tales* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> Paul Sharrad, 'Breaking the Silence', *World Literature in English* 29 (1989) p. 152.

environment, girding (and guarding) an interiority. As a metaphysical substrate, space provides the very medium for measuring interconnection and difference, similarity and distance - markers that become important in evaluating the possibilities of coalition or the desirability of separatism. Space, then, seems to offer a medium for articulating - speaking and intertwining - the many facets, or phases, of subjectivity that have interested different kinds of theory; national origin, geographic and territorial mobility (determined by class, gender and race), bodily presence and limits, structures of consciousness, and ideological formations of belonging and exclusion.<sup>82</sup>

While space connects us with the material world it is, at least ideally, a fluid and changing medium whose boundaries are open to negotiation and from this point of view it would appear an excellent metaphor to escape essentialisms without forfeiting concrete political interests. Of course, as previously mentioned, post-colonial discourse also frequently employs more specific tropes such as the family, the body, home and homelessness and travel all of which may be seen as subsections of the overarching spatial metaphor. According to Anne Salmond these metaphors have ancient antecedents in the West and much of Western discourse about knowledge 'characteristically elaborates a series of metaphors about location in a physical landscape, where space-time properties are those of commonsense Western perception.'<sup>83</sup> It would also seem likely as Salmond suggests, that:

from a comparison with Maori talk about knowledge and truth, that our epistemological metaphors are (at least partially) culturally specific, and that our knowledge of knowledge is therefore (at least partially) culturally constrained.<sup>84</sup>

Her analysis of anthropological texts reveals a series of metaphors about location in a physical landscape where, for example, *knowledge is a landscape* entails a further series of metaphors namely *knowledge is territory* and *knowledge has spatial existence* which is linked to a further series of metaphors such as:

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<sup>82</sup> Kathleen Kirby, 'Thinking Through the Boundary', *Boundary 2*, 20:2 Summer (1993) p. 174.

<sup>83</sup> Anne Salmond, 'Theoretical Landscapes', *Semantic Anthropology*, ed., David Parkin (London: ASA Monographs No. 22, Academic Press, 1982) p. 67.

<sup>84</sup> Anne Salmond (1982) p. 66.

*intellectual activity is a journey* (and so knowledge is a destination; *understanding is seeing* (and so knowledge is clear sight); *facts are natural objects* (and knowledge is stored in it); *language is a conduit* (and knowledge is transmitted by it); *intellectual activity is work* (and knowledge is its product), and metaphors about relative weight, width, depth and closure.<sup>85</sup>

These metaphors also enjoy a prominent position in post-colonial discourse so that in his argument for the inclusion of settler societies within the post-colonial Stephen Slemon opens with the statement:

the *territory* I want to *reclaim* for post-colonial pedagogy and research - and reclaim not as a *unified and indivisible area* but rather a *groundwork* for certain modes of anti-colonial work - is that neither/nor *territory* of white settler-colonial writing which Alan Lawson has called the 'Second World'.<sup>86</sup>(my italics)

Or in discussing indigenous writers of the Pacific and their desire to preserve a particular relationship to the land while also taking account of changes wrought by colonisation Cliff Watego writes:

The crucial point occurs in the individual's need to accommodate himself to the idea and nature of change at the inter-society and/or the intra-community levels. Even when that has been done, though, formidable problems remain in interpreting the *direction* of change, whether it represents *progress* or *regress*, how the individual *pictures* his involvement within the process, and how the individual *finds his way towards self-enlightened* contentment.(my italics)<sup>87</sup>

Facts are gathered from the wild and ordered hierarchically by man. According to Salmond, 'they belong to the earth, for someone in close touch with the facts is said to have his *feet on the ground*, to be *down to earth* and *close to the grass roots*.'<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Anne Salmond (1982) p. 67.

<sup>86</sup> Stephen Slemon, 'Unsettling the Empire', *World Literature Written in English*, 30:2 (1990) p. 30.

<sup>87</sup> Cliff Watego, 'Cultural Adaptation in the South Pacific', *World Literature Written in English*, 23 (1984) p. 489.

<sup>88</sup> Anne Salmond (1982) p. 75.

This European metaphor *knowledge is a landscape* suggests that knowledge is an inexhaustible resource based on a 'ground' that can be worked and reworked, observed from different vantage-points and journeyed through by many routes. New fields will always be created, made fertile and settled.

The Maori metaphors for knowledge on the other hand utilise concepts such as *oranga* (necessity for life) and *taonga* (cultural wealth). Knowledge is specifically felt to be finite and vulnerable to destruction. It is a scarce commodity which must be guarded, conserved and passed down in the appropriate manner so as to maintain its sacred power. Knowledge was consequently also referred to as a cloak, as food for chiefs or as something scarce and precious, something possessing *mana* and *tapu*. Salmond writes that:

The most valued forms of knowledge were intimately associated with ancestral power and efficacy. For instance, *kura* as well as referring to knowledge also meant the sacred colour red, a treasure or something cherished, and a chief or man of powers. Other terms for knowledge and belief had connotations of abundant resources and hospitality, the attributes of a man of *mana*; and *kūware* or 'ignorant' also means 'unimportant' and 'low in the social scale'.

It is perhaps not surprising then, that truth (*pono*) was closely tied to situational factors. To make truth claims was also to make claims of power, and so it was important who made an assertion, to whom, on what occasion and in what ritual conditions.<sup>89</sup>

Although Maori speech contains no elaborate spatial metaphors about knowledge both landscape and architecture have definite epistemological significance in indigenous thought though not in a symbolic or metaphorical way. Instead, 'specific knowledge is "bound into" specific landmarks and chiefly houses . . . in a direct and immediate relationship.'<sup>90</sup> Ancestors, for example, claim territory by naming it after parts of their bodies or when travelling across territory would name it after events which occurred there. Allan and Louise Hanson write:

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<sup>89</sup> Anne Salmond (1982) p. 83.

<sup>90</sup> Anne Salmond (1982) p. 84

Traditional history reports that when the Arawa canoe, carrying immigrants from Hawaiki, sailed along the Bay of Plenty coast, its occupants staked their claims to lands they passed by naming it for themselves. One of them designated a certain headland for the bridge of his nose, another named a hill for the belly of his son . . . Places were also commonly named for incidents that occurred to the first person who passed through them, presumably as a means of claiming proprietary rights to the land for the explorer and his descendants. When Turi wandered through Taranaki, for example, he named one spot Hongihongi (Sniff) because he sniffed the soil there; another place he called Raoa (Be Choked) because he gagged on a piece of food there.<sup>91</sup>

Knowledge about a particular place would also be taught there, so that knowledge and place were inseparable, the place and its name being a guarantee of the truth value of what was taught. The question must now be asked that if the European and Maori apprehension of knowledge via spatial metaphors is at least partially different, are those other related metaphors which feature so prominently in post-colonial literary texts such as homes, both broken and restored, imbued with a different truth value and employed in ways which are subtly different from Western modes of representation?

Meeting houses, the epitome of 'home' in the Maori context, may be addressed on ritual occasions as an ancestral presence. Michael Linsey claims:

The Maori intuition that the *whare whakairo*, the carved house, is a living presence is richer than a mere simile; it is beyond the idea of metaphor or representation in a European-educated sense. For the Maori, the house is not *like* an ancestor, it *is* the ancestor.

The Maori comportment of *speaking to* architecture is alien to European-educated ways of thinking. Europeans are permitted to speak to one another, but they may only *talk about* architecture. The respective linguistic comportments, speaking to and talking about are evidence of distinctly different ways of seeing and understanding architecture.<sup>92</sup>

They also relate, I would argue, to distinctly different ways of understanding literary discourse and are irreducibly connected not only to the forms of 'traditional' art

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<sup>91</sup> Allan & Louise Hanson (1983) p. 52.

<sup>92</sup> Michael Linsey, 'Speaking to, and Talking About Maori Architecture', *Dwellings, Settlements and Tradition: Cross-Cultural perspectives*, eds., Jean-Paul Bourdier & Nezar Alayyad (Illinois: University of America Press, 1989) p. 317.

discussed so far, but also with its logic in that they are concerned above all with presence and a claim to truth as an assertion of power. This truth and power, however, is partial and incomplete, structured as it is within a post-colonial discourse in which an immanent self-presence and truth is no longer possible but which is enriched by a hybridity which refuses such constructions of pure, whole subjectivity. As Jenny Sharpe explains, 'the colonial subject who can answer the colonisers back is the product of the same vast ideological machinery that silences the subaltern.'<sup>93</sup> The claim is, then, that Maori self-representation, although it cannot exist in an uncontaminated alternative space separated from the dominant Pakeha discourse, nevertheless is fractured by those forms and styles of indigenous representation which interpellate the colonial continuum through the articulation of a specifically located situational difference.

It is in investigating this space of self-representation that Poststructuralist theories of subject formation prove to be very pertinent as they maintain that *all* subjectivity is structured by and upon self-division - - it thereby being impossible for the subject to be purely one thing. This construction disallows the interpretation of any subjectivities, including those of the coloniser and the pre-contact 'to-be-colonised' as consisting of pure, fixed antecedents and insists instead on the irreducibly heterogeneous and contradictory nature of the social antagonisms around which the play of desire, fantasy and identification is organised.

The colonial encounter between two differing discourse communities adds a further dimension in that is at the signifiatory boundary of cultural interaction that 'meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated.'<sup>94</sup> The colonised 'self' is therefore even further deprived of its status as 'master' of meaning, as its various functions are, at least in part, operated by 'other systems'. In fact, 'both coloniser and colonised are in a process of miscognition where each point of identification is always a partial and double repetition of the *otherness* of the self - democrat and despot,

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<sup>93</sup> Jenny Sharpe (1989) p. 143.

<sup>94</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' (1994) p. 34.

individual *and* servant, native and child.<sup>95</sup> This view of subjectivity, in denying the ego a position of control and interpreting human nature as determined by historical, social and linguistic forces, prevents any alteration or transformation in the subject being defined as a re-integration of fragmented self-components.

From a post-colonial perspective, Homi Bhabha describes this fragmented subject as one in which:

the recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. In restaging the past it introduces other, incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition. This process estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a 'received tradition'.<sup>96</sup>

Both the postcoloniser and the postcolonised subjects are, then, entities constructed by contradictory ideological interpellations, very similar in effect to Paul Smith's description of the subject formed by a disordering history, a 'colligation of multifarious and multiform subject positions'.<sup>97</sup> This subject, always in process and suffering conflict, is formed by ideology not in any unitary way but through collections of differing ideological positions.

This subject, however, (as a discursive system) is very loosely 'centred' around certain self-defining discourse patterns that generate conflict. Consequently, those subjects who constitute the category of 'postcoloniser' share the libidinal style of large numbers of speakers loosely united as a community by both the pattern of Western Eurocentric discourse brought to Aotearoa by the colonisers and the present-day pattern of nationalist discourse that structures their identity. An, admittedly very cursory, summary of the general characteristics of this nationalist discourse would first and foremost include a liberal tradition which assumes that the fundamental issue for political theory is the proper relation between the individual and the state. It would view the governing of the country and the dispensation of justice as being most

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<sup>95</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Sly Civility' (1994) p. 97.

<sup>96</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Introduction' (1994) p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988) p. 32.

successful when adhering to British institutional models, and would envisage the claims of nationalism as having priority over those of ethnicity. Moreover, the postcoloniser's discourse in Aotearoa/ New Zealand would also view a society founded upon the Western nuclear family as normative and 'natural'. Maori extended family structures such as whanau and hapu, while sentimentalised as affording a sense of communal harmony and 'belonging', would be denigrated as inappropriate to a 'progressive' capitalist lifestyle.

In transposing such European narratives to Aotearoa the settlers sought to replicate the British model of the state but as this process constituted an act of repetition, Aotearoa/New Zealand came to be defined instead by the difference that distinguishes it. Consequently, the effect of the meeting between two differing discourse communities is not simply one of a subjectivity formed through domination/subordination, but one in which the effect of colonial power is a process of splitting which provides the condition of subjection, - - where the trace of what is negated is repeated as something *different*, so that, 'the concept of cultural difference focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority: the attempt to dominate in the *name* of a cultural supremacy, which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation.'<sup>98</sup>

From a colonial perspective, the consolidation of colonial power and authority was dependent upon 'producing' a Maori subject who would believe in the validity and efficacy of Pakeha institutions. The alienation and self-negation engendered by this process of assimilation became construed as an incompleteness in the humanity of Maori which could only be ameliorated by identification with Pakeha. Consequently it became possible to believe that at the same time as Pakeha institutions were the agents of oppression they could also somehow be turned to for salvation.

It is therefore not a question of being able to retrieve the lost subaltern subject as a recovered authentic voice who can be made to speak once more out of the

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<sup>98</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' (1994) p. 34.

imposed silence of history, because that subject is largely constituted as a subject through positions that have been permitted. These politically interested configurations can only be shored up by strategic exclusions - - by declaring opposition where there is complicity - - so that it becomes imperative to examine how, first, the modulating of opposition into the recognition of complicity might change things, and second, to elucidate the possibility that in the colonial encounter the 'other' is seen to have already been an agent with 'relative' specifiable interests, powers and knowledge.

Resistance, however, cannot simply be a matter of Maori assertion, or the product of a politically desirable Maori intervention. Rather, the 'ideological' as Susie Tharu suggests must itself and *inherently* be viewed as the 'articulation of complex and sometimes contradictory and unevenly determining practices', so that a 'theory of struggle within the ideological'<sup>99</sup> becomes possible. In such a struggle it is not possible to simply rid oneself of the trappings of imperial power, nor to produce alternative or counter-histories which, as soon as they become institutionalised as a structure of knowledge, must perforce become agents of the system they describe. In effect, a subjectivity constructed through resistance inevitably involves conflict on the boundary between self and other. However the pattern of discourse which unites the contemporary Maori community, in as much as it differs from the national discourse, continually constructs and internalises its own particular 'edition' of social discourse which may also, under particular conditions, alter, select and symptomatically enscript the larger national discourse.

The present-day construction of a Maori identity may, therefore, be conceived of as the result of the way a 'different' subjectivity directs itself towards, works upon and processes social interaction. This has produced a *particularity* of current Maori discourse which centres around a rhetoric of group rights, collectivism as opposed to individualism, and a spiritual attachment to the land. This particularity is constructed

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<sup>99</sup> Susie Tharu, 'Response to Julie Stephens', *Subaltern Studies VI*, ed., Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 127.

from European inventions of Maori, and in its non-essentialist form by those 'fragmented sets of narrated memories and fragments' previously quoted from Shohat. Such a counter-history of Maori writing as a critique of Pakeha discourse, although susceptible to recuperation, must nevertheless be risked as an aspect of any radical discourse. The political value of such a discourse of 'being Maori' rests in the fact simply that it exists - - however tenuously and ambivalently - - and which to ignore is to avoid the larger historical and institutional enquiry into the conditions of its possibility. Alterity, in other words, cannot be elicited without charting its historical trajectory, the relations of determination that conspire to produce alterity as the object of a certain discursive practice. However, the task is to explore the contingency of the object as not only the sum of its determinations but also their excess. It insists not only on the projection and introjection which structure identity, but also on the resistance of the object to the subject's identifications. While 'fixity' has construed Maori as always already known, as having attributes which remain unchanged, 'being Maori', on the other hand, is part of an asserted or desired, not an actual, cultural continuity. It is constantly being made and redistributed.

In post-colonial terms, the recognition of this figures as the process whereby the excess actualises itself. It is a process described by Homi Bhabha as one in which the project of modernity is rendered contradictory and unresolved through what he refers to as a 'time-lag' in which colonial and post-colonial moments emerge as both sign and history.<sup>100</sup> Bhabha also offers a convincing account of the subaltern voice enunciating itself through mimicry and parody of the dominant discourse which subverts and menaces the colonial authority within which it necessarily comes into being. It is this enunciation which points to the repertoire of conflictual positions through which the subject is constituted in colonial discourse. It is also enunciation within this space between subjectivities which can initiate the transformation of modernity and its narratives.

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<sup>100</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Conclusion' (1994) p. 246-56.

Bhabha argues that within this fracture the subject-forming strategies of Colonialist Self onto Colonised Other produce an 'impossible object', an impossible subject position for both coloniser and the colonised, because a purely 'colonial identity' is always already overwritten by the differential play of colonialist ambivalence. Therefore the construction of subjectivities within colonial relations must always return to a persistent *questioning* of the frame - - which is at one and the same time the 'space of representation' and the frame of Western modernity.

This space of questioning is the space where colonial subjects become agents of resistance and change. The conditions of post-coloniality itself are located in this space where a politics of polarity can be eluded by entertaining difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. Implicitly, this search for non-repressive alternatives to imperial discourse entails 'not only changes (in) the direction of Western history but challenges its historicist idea of time as a progressive, ordered whole.'<sup>101</sup>

Political leverage within the 'in-between' space is made possible because it is the space where alterity or the subject of cultural difference can resist assimilation and initiate change through the desire for 'an encounter with the ambivalent process of splitting and hybridity that marks the identification with culture's difference.'<sup>102</sup>

The 'unfixing' of the subject has been operative in enabling the Maori analysis of the political construction and regulation of the category 'Maori' - - including the construction of a discourse around the 'necessary risk' of essentialism as a selfconscious strategy for enablement. However, this strategy has proved vulnerable to recruitment by Pakeha as an academic theoretical essentialism which confines Maori political action to a reliance on an ontologically grounded Maori subject. 'Maoridom' is now seeking to extricate itself from an imposed invention of itself as a single homogeneous entity. As Gareth Griffiths argues:

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<sup>101</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Interrogating Identity' (1994) p. 41.

<sup>102</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'How Newness Enters the World' (1994) p. 224.

the mythologising of the authentic in media representations is in many ways a construction which overpowers one of the most powerful weapons in the arsenal of the subaltern subject: that of displacement, disruption, ambivalence, or mimicry - discursive features founded not in the closed and limited construction of a pure authentic sign but in the endless and excessive transformation of the subject positions possible within the hybridised.<sup>103</sup>

The disavowal by white systems of representation of the possibilities for hybridised Maori subjects to legitimate themselves or speak in ways which threaten the dominant culture constitutes a defensiveness which may be posited from the moment of the colonial encounter when the very constitution of 'self' and 'other' was rendered inseparable from their mutual contamination by each other. The defensive process of maintaining the non-negotiable ideological borders derives from that very moment in which self-defence (fear/aggression) and self-affirmation (fear/separatism), in seeking to ward off contamination, reveal themselves as indices of a contamination that has already taken place. Recognition of contamination, then, clarifies the overdeterminations operating in the space of Maori discourse and allows a reading in which Maori texts do not unproblematically 'represent' their culture. At best, they may be seen to speak from certain positions within it as interested participants in ethnic and national debates. Each literary construction of Maori identity can then be viewed as an interested and socially contingent act wrested from competing claims to authority. Maori strategies of identity construction are consequently seen to be formulated in 'the interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference,'<sup>104</sup> both between Maori and Pakeha - - characterised by conflict as well as collaboration - - and between competing claims amongst Maori, who despite a shared history of marginalisation may either form alliances or be marked by dissension.

The crucial critical question which will be addressed in subsequent chapters is, when looking at the Maori novels of the 1980s, whether they give rise to constructions of subjectivity within both a space of 'doubling' and a space of cultural differences in

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<sup>103</sup> Gareth Griffiths, 'The Myth of Authenticity', Tiffin & Lawson (1994) p. 76.

<sup>104</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Introduction' (1994) p. 2.

knowledge and practices. These, it will be argued, must exist side by side as a social contradiction to be negotiated rather than sublated. As Homi Bhabha explains:

The difference between disjunctive sites and representations of social life have to be articulated without surmounting the incommensurable meanings and judgements that are produced within the process of transcultural negotiation. The analytic of cultural difference intervenes to transform the scenario of articulation . . . It changes the position of enunciation and the relations of address within it; not only what is said but where it is said; not simply the logic of articulation but the *topos* of enunciation . . . The subject of the discourse of cultural difference . . . is constituted through the locus of the Other which suggests both that the object of identification is ambivalent, and more significantly, that the agency of identification is never pure or holistic but always constituted in a process of substitution, displacement or projection.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Dissemination' (1994) p. 162.

## **Chapter Two: The Long White Shroud**

### **The Treaty of Waitangi & *the bone people***

In examining the ascendancy of a Western language and mythology on the conditions of Maori literary subjectivity Bhabha's formulation of a space of 'doubling' and a space of cultural difference can also be profitably balanced against similar problems encountered by white settler writers. Such a comparison serves to clarify the positions of enunciation of both Pakeha and Maori and their attendant constitution through projection, introjection and displacement. It is these mechanisms which have given rise to ambivalent identifications within both groups. Consequently, I will read Keri Hulme's *the bone people* against a brief survey of the difficulties encountered by settler writers in finding an 'authentic' language with which to express their experiences as well as the strategies employed by Maori writers in using a 'Maori English'. This leads into a discussion of the myths and metaphors which have shaped the conditions of thought of both Pakeha and Maori and is followed by a section which examines the effects of the Treaty of Waitangi in terms of language and subjectivity. These analyses will then be used to further investigate the construction of Maori subjectivity in *the bone people*.

#### **Language and Myth in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

One of the principle strategies employed by Maori writers in English throughout the 1980s as a means of establishing difference and authenticity has been the use of particular forms of Maori English. Bill Ashcroft has analysed such 'devices of otherness' in the language use of post-colonial writers in the following way:

Apart from direct glossing in the text, either by explanation or parenthetical insertions, such devices include syntactic fusion, in which the English prose is structured according to the syntactic principles of the first language; neologisms (new lexical forms in English which are informed by the semantic and morphological exigencies of a mother tongue); the direct inclusion of untranslated lexical items in the text; ethno-rhythmic prose which constructs an English discourse according to the rhythm and texture of a first language; and the transcription of dialect and language variants of many different kinds, whether they come from diglossic, polydialectal or monolingual communities.<sup>1</sup>

Although Maori writers use many of these forms, a process of essentialising the Maori language developed during the 1980s, based on a Treaty interpretation of the Maori language as *taonga*, and has resulted in the rejection of neologisms. This inevitably restricts the ways in which Maori subjectivity can be expressed by demanding particular forms of Maori English which are claimed to be more authentic than others. This process has at times resulted in a literary discourse which eschews any hybrid forms of language and attempts to maintain a clear distinction between the two languages.

The change in the status of the Maori language and the controversial issues over proper pronunciation, a subject on which feelings run high, are at heart political rather than linguistic issues. On one level the move to revitalise the Maori language through 'language nests' and the passing of the Maori Language Act in 1987, giving formal official status to the Maori language, registers profound changes in attitude toward language. The Maori Language Act followed a Waitangi Tribunal recommendation made the previous year in which it was stated, 'He who speaks the language will understand the movement of the mind.'<sup>2</sup> This stands in stark contrast to European attitudes to the Maori language recorded by Bruce Biggs:

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<sup>1</sup> W. D. Ashcroft, 'Constitutive Graphonomy. A Post-Colonial Theory of Literary Writing,' *After Europe*, eds., Stephen Slemon & Helen Tiffin (Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1989) p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> WAI. 11. Finding of the Waitangi Tribunal relating to Te Reo Maori and a claim lodged by Nga Kaiwhakapunau i te Reo Inc. April 29, 1986, para. 4.3 10.

We find a member of the General Assembly saying in 1857 'I believe that civilisation cannot be advanced beyond a very short stage through means of the aboriginal tongue. The Maori tongue sufficed for the requirements of a barbarous race, but apparently would serve for little more.' Exactly a century later a letter to the Editor of the *Journal of the Post Primary Teacher's Association* echoes the sentiment with 'Maori is a very inadequate instrument for expressing anything beyond the plain and simple facts of primitive life'.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, questions of essentialism have been raised with regard to both the meaning of particular Maori words in current usage which appear in the Treaty and the treatment of the Maori language as a taonga, or treasure with respect to pronunciation. For example, the Maori text of the Treaty makes no explicit reference to 'forests or fisheries'. The Maori word corresponding to the words following in the English text, 'and other properties', is taonga, which Kawharu translates as 'treasures.' The meaning of taonga becomes a matter of some importance therefore. The Tribunal held that it includes language, and specifically in connection with the Treaty, Biggs has said that the basic meaning is 'valuable material possession,' but that the word was used 'to refer to a wide range of valuable possessions and attributes, concrete or abstract.'

Biggs seems to be the only person who has investigated actual usage of the word, as distinct from making assertions about the word from the speaker's own knowledge of the language. Such assertions mean, of course, that no attention is given to the question of whether the meaning of the word has changed since 1840. It is not the sort of word which is likely to change in meaning, though in the course of time, additional things may fall within the class of things to which it refers. Biggs has written:

What then is the meaning of taonga? Does it include such material assets as fisheries and [as became relevant when the question of the protection of the Maori language was considered by the Waitangi Tribunal] such cultural features as language? For reasons that relate to New Zealand's cultural and linguistic isolation during the millennium prior to 1769, Maori nouns with concrete referents are commonly, even usually, used for abstraction that can be seen as metaphorical

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<sup>3</sup> Bruce Biggs, 'The Maori Language Past and Present' (1968) p. 71.

extensions of the basic meaning. This is a feature of all languages, of course, but it is less marked in English, which has always had access to other languages (notably Latin and Greek) from which to borrow its abstract terms. English, for example, calls the increment of money 'interest on the money', Maori refers to the 'fruit of the money' using *hua* 'fruit' for the more abstract meaning. Nowhere is this multi-meaning aspect of Maori words more noticeable than in the vocabulary for the social divisions of the society. The words for 'tribal confederation' (*waka*), 'tribe' (*iwi*), 'subtribe' (*hapu*) and 'extended family' (*whanau*) have as their basic, more concrete meanings 'canoe, bone, pregnancy, birth', respectively.

The basic meaning of the Maori word *taonga* is 'valuable material possession'. Its Polynesian cognates tend to confine their meanings to specific types of highly valued woven garments, and a recent article has suggested that basically the Maori word referred to 'inalienable' wealth, such as weapons and ornaments of greenstone and fine woven cloaks, which, even though they passed from one person to another, remained, in some sense, the property of the original owner. However that may be, the word *taonga* was used to refer to a wide range of valuable possessions and attributes, concrete and abstract. I have drawn 30 or so examples from the nineteenth century non-scriptural texts and found as referents of *taonga*, in addition to greenstone and woven articles, such other material assets as weapons and pieces of land; social and cultural features such as carving, dance, and (interestingly) warfare; personal attributes such as attractive eyebrows. In modern usage a man's penis is referred to politely as his *taonga*.

There can be no doubt that '*o ratou taonga katoa*' can be taken, in strict accordance with the language usage, to include everything subsumed under the English 'forests, fisheries and other properties' and more.<sup>4</sup>

It was submitted to the Tribunal, in support of the language claim, that the word 'guarantee' be taken to involve active steps to ensure that Maori continue to enjoy the full and undisturbed possession of this *taonga*. The Tribunal stated:

We question whether the principles and broad objectives of the Treaty can ever be achieved if there is not a recognised place for the language of one of the partners to the Treaty. In the Maori perspective the place of the language in the life of the nation is indicative of the place of the people.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bruce Biggs, 'Humpty Dumpty and the Treaty of Waitangi', *Waitangi: Maori and Pakeha Perspectives on the Treaty of Waitangi*, ed., I. H. Kawharu (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 310.

<sup>5</sup> WAI. 11. para. 4.2.8.

The Maori Language Act declares Maori to be an official language but does not purport to control the use of either the English or Maori language in everyday transactions. However, the Broadcasting Act 1987 provides a machinery for controlling the language used in public broadcasting and this has been used to inhibit linguistic change in the use of Maori words in English discourse. The underlying basis for the authority's decision was that it:

recognises that to Maori language is taonga. Place names are special and have a spiritual significance which is an integral part of the culture. A place-name is an historical account of that area. It enhances teachings from ancestors which have been transmitted orally from generation to generation.<sup>6</sup>

Nonlinguistic factors such as this have sometimes appeared in earlier incidents involving the interaction of the two languages, often in relation to place-names because nearly all Maori words used in English speech are place-names. Complaints in the 1960s led to a change in radio broadcasting policy about the use of such names, newsreaders speaking English being thereafter required to use Maori pronunciation. The protagonists in these arguments frequently fail to consider that any language changes in the course of time, and it is certain that many place-names, for instance, are not pronounced by modern Maori as they were by the ancestors they call to mind. The Church Missionary Society noted and distinguished between particular sounds and recorded them when printing religious matter from 1836. By 1895, for example, Canon Stack had noticed the change in the aspirated w, saying it 'was introduced by whalers and is depraved Maori.'<sup>7</sup> The current reifying of the language has the tendency to render it static and trapped in an inauthentic authenticity, rather than being a living and malleable tool. A similar process is occurring in terms of borrowings. While the sharp increase in Maori words in English discourse, especially in

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in J. N. Matson (1991) p. 353.

<sup>7</sup> R. B. Harlow, 'Regional Variation in Maori', *New Zealand Journal of Archaeology*, 1. (1979) p. 132.

the field of law, goes unremarked, the transliteration and adaptation of English into Maori discourse is looked upon less favourably. The Maori Language Commission's legal glossary now rarely uses transliteration and in collecting and coining contemporary Maori terminology uses a development of indigenous roots. Waka, meaning canoe, is extended to 'motor vehicle' by the Commission which translates Ministry of Transport as Te Tari mo nga momo Waka Katoa and carpark as papa waka. And although the Maori language Act which established the Commission (transliterated as Komihana) says it is 'to be called Te Komihana mote Reo Maori'<sup>8</sup> the Commission uses the name Te Tawa Whiri i te Reo Maori. These official policies concerning language use inevitably impact upon Maori literary endeavours. Consequently, Witi Ihimaera, for example, writes in a straightforward English, which although liberally interspersed with a Maori vocabulary, results in a stilted documentary style in the attempt to produce a discursive Maori difference:

Her act of assertion would have been regarded as a violation of the tapu of the marae and the tapu of the male. In most other tribes, excluding the matriarch's own and just a few others, the art of the whaikorero was the province of the male. Even in her own lands, the matriarch's rank had to be impeccable to allow her to speak. Wisely, on the marae in Wellington, a place strange and dangerous even to her mana, she at least followed the male orators of the ope.<sup>9</sup>

Patricia Grace employs a quite different strategy, using a fictional portrayal of Maori English which does not sound like a true representation of current Maori English, although it contains features, such as a lack of third-person verbal concord, which do occur in Maori English:

The horse gets a very big fright. My brother fly out in the air you see, because of the big kehua make his horse very wild. And down, down, and splash in the small

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<sup>8</sup> J. N. Matson (1991) p. 357.

<sup>9</sup> Witi Ihimaera, *The Matriarch*, (Auckland: Picador, 1988) p. 111. First published Auckland; Heinemann, 1986.

water. And bang. His head break on that rock there with a big kehua on it. My poor brother, ka pakaru te upoko.<sup>10</sup>

In *the bone people* Keri Hulme employs a number of different strategies in conformity with the novel's avowed intent to depict a bicultural agenda. On one level the Maori language is reified into archaic voices from the past, but on another, well-known Maori vocabulary is included in everyday speech - - referring to a picnic basket as a kete for example. More often however, Maori is used in situations of emotional intimacy figuring it as the language of spiritual contact in opposition to a more mundane English. The use of a glossary of Maori vocabulary at the end of the novel has proved to be one of the more contentious aspects of language treatment. Keri Hulme has been accused by a number of critics of acting as though Maori were no longer a living language and of giving primacy to English by providing non-Maori speakers with translations of Maori phrases. It could equally be argued, however, that the glossary because of its incomplete nature provides as much in the way of mystification as it does clarification. This complex blending of the two languages appears to reflect Chris Prentice's argument that the book was never 'meant to be a Maori novel as such,' but 'rather one that addresses the devastating effects of the colonial past on the present and the future.'<sup>11</sup> However, the particular discursive solutions to racial disharmony which the novel appears to advocate also contains specific constructions of subjectivity which, at the time of publication were enthusiastically received. Arapera Blank, for example, wrote 'Keri's novel has the preciousness of a piece of kuru pounamu . . . ' while Joy Crowley's response was that it had genuinely sprung from the earth of Aotearoa.<sup>12</sup>

It is this claim to authenticity, to an 'essential' Maoriness which raises the first problem. As Homi Bhabha claims, a 'different' culture raises issues of how 'in signifying

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<sup>10</sup> Patricia Grace, *Potiki* (London: The Women's Press, 1986) p. 56. First Published Auckland: Penguin, 1986.

<sup>11</sup> Chris Prentice, 'Rewriting Their Stories. Renaming Themselves', *Span*, 23 September (1986) p. 69.

<sup>12</sup> Arapera Blank & Joy Crowley, Book Reviews, *New Zealand Listener*, 12th May (1984)

the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated and translated in the name of tradition (but) is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory.<sup>13</sup> *the bone people*, despite its occasional use of colloquial Maori expressions in the text, invariably renders the past in spiritually authoritative 'Maori voices' who invoke an unchanging tradition existing in some golden and unsullied time.

The issue which needs to be addressed in this regard, therefore, is the novel's interpretation of tradition. As outlined in Chapter One, tradition tends, on a 'commonsense' level to be interpreted as an isolable body or core of unchanging traits handed down from the past. Tradition is likened to a natural object, occupying space and enduring in time. Society, since it is defined by a distinctive tradition, is similarly modeled after a natural object - - bounded, discrete and objectively knowable. This naturalistic view of tradition, and of society as constituted by tradition, has dominated Western social thought at least since the time of Edmund Burke, who was the first modern theorist of tradition. In his attack on the French Revolution, Burke likened both the State and society to an 'antient edifice' a 'noble and venerable castle' which could be repeatedly renovated to remain the same forever.<sup>14</sup> According to Burke, the French revolutionaries had acted unnaturally by destroying rather than preserving or reforming. In contrast, English reformers adhered to 'the method of nature in the conduct of the State'; they respected 'the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body comprised of transitory parts.'<sup>15</sup> Like the work of later theorists of tradition, Burke's discussion is dominated by the idea of an object - - as concrete as a castle, as natural as a body - - that changes incessantly yet nonetheless maintains an essential identity. Such definitions of tradition tend to posit a false dichotomy between tradition and modernity as fixed or mutually exclusive states. However, as Estellie Smith has pointed out 'traditional' and 'new' are interpretative rather

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<sup>13</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' (1994) p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968) p. 121. First Published London: J. Stoddall, 1791.

<sup>15</sup> Edmund Burke (1968) p. 120.

than descriptive terms: since all cultures change ceaselessly, there can only be what is new, although what is new can take on symbolic value as 'traditional'.<sup>16</sup> In fact, an unchanging 'folk' society never existed. Traditional action, likewise, may refer to the past, but to 'be about' or refer to, is a symbolic rather than a natural relationship and as such it is characterised by discontinuity as well as continuity. It is by now a truism that cultural revivals change the traditions they attempt to revive. This insight can be broadened to argue that the invention of tradition is not restricted to such self-conscious projects. Rather, the ongoing reconstruction of tradition is a facet of all social life, which is not natural but symbolically constituted. Tradition, therefore, must be understood as a symbolic process that both presupposes past symbolisms and creatively reinterprets them. In other words, tradition is not a bounded entity made up of constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present though making reference to the past. These ideas can be fruitfully associated, first, with the use of language in *the bone people*, and second, with the concept of home as it is employed in post-colonial fiction.

As a novel which traces through language use the effects of the colonial past on present-day Aotearoa/New Zealand, *the bone people* is concerned to answer the question, phrased unsurprisingly in cartographical terms by Nick Perry, 'how it is that shifts in dominant social imagery might indirectly map, and in turn be mapped onto, the continuities and changes in our collective life.'<sup>17</sup> Such a question has a history in similar problems specifically related to writing in colonial space. In this regard Dennis Lee comments, '... if we live in space which is radically in question for us, that makes our barest speaking a problem to itself. For voice does issue in part from civil space. And

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<sup>16</sup> Estellie Smith, 'The Process of Sociocultural Continuity', *Current Anthropology*, 23 (1982) p. 131.

<sup>17</sup> Nick Perry, *Dominion of Signs* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994) p. 16.

alienation in that space will enter and undercut our writing, make it recoil upon itself, become a problem to itself.<sup>18</sup>

Both these authors are addressing the difficulties for white settler writers in which 'the texture, weight and connotation of almost every word we use comes from abroad.'<sup>19</sup>

Lee's answer to these problems is to suggest:

Perhaps our job was not to fake a space of our own and write it up, but rather to find words for our space-lessness. Perhaps that *was* home . . . Instead of pushing against the grain of an external, uncharged language, perhaps we should finally come to write *with* that grain.<sup>20</sup>

The language struggles of white settler writers in New Zealand to find a 'voice' with which to express their experiences have been summarised by Ian Wedde:

The history of a literature with colonial origins is involuntarily written *by* the language, not just in it: the development of poetry in English in New Zealand is coeval with the developing growth of the language into its location, to the point where English as an international language can be felt to be original *where it is*.<sup>21</sup>

Mark Williams and Alan Riach however, maintain:

The converse is just as true . . . As a language of domination and exploitation (English) is the most pervasive symbol of the colonial process. It is everywhere a foreigner. These opposed views of the English language as 'original where it is' or as a 'perpetual foreigner' are the extremes between which all specific uses of that language occur.<sup>22</sup>

The question which then stands out is how exactly, between these opposed views, does a post-colonial text 'resist the reincorporation of its discursive practice into an amorphous

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<sup>18</sup> Dennis Lee, 'Cadence, Country, Silence', *Boundary 2*, 3:1 (1974) p. 163.

<sup>19</sup> Dennis Lee (1974) p. 162.

<sup>20</sup> Dennis Lee (1974) p. 163.

<sup>21</sup> Ian Wedde, 'Introduction', *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (Auckland: Penguin, 1985) p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Williams & Alan Riach, "'English" Poetry After Empire', Slemon & Tiffin (1989) p. 102.

universal textuality'?<sup>23</sup> The answer, it would seem, is to be found within those 'shifts in dominant social imagery'<sup>24</sup> with which Perry is concerned. However, the solutions which Pakeha writers developed were largely forged in the 1930s and are not necessarily appropriate to the changed circumstances in the civic space of the 1980s. In fact, the assumptions which sustained New Zealand writing had, Perry claims, by the mid 1980s begun to fragment so that 'it was the fact of transformation which our most sociologically interesting literature grappled with and sought to convey.'<sup>25</sup> In order to alter the dominant social imagery of the working-class inarticulate male, made famous by such writers as Frank Sargeson and Denis Glover, the task became one of reaching beyond this 'range of possible meanings' and was largely 'displayed in the decision to work within, but against, a pre-existing form, or in the effort to construct alternative forms.'<sup>26</sup>

These difficulties are obviously of equal relevance to the processes of Maori subjectification and self-representation in the 1980s. Bill Pearson's prediction of a Maori writing which would be 'distinct in its passion, its lyricism and unforced celebration of living',<sup>27</sup> for example, unwittingly contributed to the construction of parameters within which Maori writers were considered by Pakeha to be authentically expressing a Maori world-view. It inevitably raises the question whether such a 'mapping' of Maori life is adequate to the 1980s with its official bicultural civil space.

Under similar discursive circumstances, the Guyanese writer Wilson Harris has called for a 'radical aesthetic' which visualises post-colonial societies which in the words of Mark Williams 'include renovated versions of the codes of imperial power alongside those of the cultures that have been mutilated by imperium.'<sup>28</sup> Allen Bell, however, sees the

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<sup>23</sup> Williams & Riach (1989) p. 110.

<sup>24</sup> Nick Perry (1994) p. 130.

<sup>25</sup> Nick Perry (1994) p. 130.

<sup>26</sup> Nick Perry (1994) p. 130.

<sup>27</sup> Bill Pearson, 'The Maori in Literature', ed., Eric Schwimmer, *The Maori people in the Nineteen-Sixties* (London: Hurst & Co., 1968) p. 256.

<sup>28</sup> Williams & Riach (1989) p. 104.

linguistic situation in New Zealand as one characterised by a 'double-layered linguistic imperialism. The Maori language is under pressure from New Zealand English and New Zealand English is under pressure by other varieties of English.'<sup>29</sup> In fact, New Zealand is generally considered to be one of the most monolingual countries in the world. According to Bell and Holmes:

English is the first language of 95% of the 3.4 million population - and the only language of 90%, most of whom are of British descent. English dominates all public domains - media, education, government, law - despite efforts to increase the use of the language of the indigenous Maori people . . . Now less than 25% of Maori people (and still fewer younger Maori) can speak their language fluently.<sup>30</sup>

Vigorous efforts are being made to reverse this process through early immersion programmes - - kohanga reo - - bilingual education, and intensive Maori language courses for adults. It is too early to assess the long-term success of such projects, and for the Maori writer of the 1980s the problem of presenting a Maori 'voice' in English remains largely one of working both in and against two forms of social imagery. First, a *dominating* one which seeks to contain Maori within such 'authentic' and romanticising definitions as that provided by Pearson, and second, a *dominant* imagery as outlined by Perry. The struggle for Maori writers to find a 'voice' is consequently seen as one of 'working within' the traditional language of carving and kowhaiwhai painting for their challenging and confrontational power, but also working against this 'pre-existing form' in the sense that the novel, from a Maori perspective, has become a literary/artistic form that is both 'original where it is' while also being a foreigner with respect to traditional society. In order to clarify this process, three central issues surrounding language in Aotearoa/New Zealand which have affected relations between the two peoples from their earliest

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<sup>29</sup> Allen Bell, 'The Politics of English in New Zealand', *Dirty Silence*, eds., Graham McGregor & Mark Williams (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 65.

<sup>30</sup> Allen Bell & Janet Holmes, 'New Zealand', *English Around the World. Sociological Perspectives*, ed., Jenny Cheshire (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1991) p. 191.

engagements with each other, must be traced. The first issue, the question of the change in status, meaning and pronunciation of Maori has already been addressed. Second, the extent to which both languages have influenced each other, producing a Maori English which Maori writers can then exploit in texts which celebrate a Maori 'difference' in a 'different' English is examined below. Third, the issue of translation, which will be considered in connection with the Treaty of Waitangi in the second section of this chapter.

Bill Ashcroft, commenting on the use of such dialect forms as 'Maori English', claims that such writing:

uses language to signify difference while employing a 'sameness' which allows it to be understood. Such difference is signified by language 'variance', the part of the wider cultural whole which appropriates the language of the centre while setting itself apart.<sup>31</sup>

There has been surprisingly little research into the extent and nature of the influences of English and Maori upon each other. The most obvious influence of Maori on New Zealand English has been at the lexical level, with a large number of words for flora and fauna, but this is largely because such words refer to things which are found predominantly in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Where Maori cultural institutions are concerned the picture is far less clear. There has been a marked increase in the use of Maori words in this category in the media over the last ten years or so, but it is not clear how many of them are understood by Pakeha speakers, or how many of them will survive. Words for cultural events - hui, tangi, hangi - are widely recognised, but powhiri, 'ceremonial welcome onto the marae' is only now coming into general cognisance. There are a number of abstract words, such as rangatiratanga, taha Maori, taonga, which have become prominent in recent political debate. Whanau, hapu and iwi are discussed a great deal in terms of current legislation but have not been well known before now.

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<sup>31</sup> W. D. Ashcroft (1989) p. 70.

The effects of English on Maori have been even less well studied. While some commentators have stressed the legitimacy of Maori English, the Department of Education *Handbook for Primary School Teachers* is probably more representative in its claim that:

The language used in many Maori homes is a dialect form of English, in which some of the non-standard usages are due to the influence of the Maori language . . . this distinctive element, which is easily recognised in the speech of many Maori children can distract the teacher's attention from the basis of the dialect which is a very restricted form of the English language.<sup>32</sup>

There is also the possibility that the most significant differences between Maori and other variants of New Zealand English are those which are least accessible to direct observation, that is, that they lie in the areas of semantics and metaphor. Benton suggests:

There are differences at the semantic and especially the metaphorical levels which neither Maori nor Pakeha interlocutors may recognise: that is, that there are (with very minor exceptions) practically identical syntactic and phonological rules governing the English speech of Maori and Pakeha alike, a few semantic differences - mainly in terms denoting certain religious and cultural concepts - but that the figurative codes may be very different.<sup>33</sup>

This supports Anne Salmond's findings on metaphors outlined in Chapter One in which I put forward the proposition that Maori writers may employ common post-colonial metaphors, such as the home, in ways which are subtly different from Western modes of representation and are imbued with a different truth value. This argument can now be extended to Maori political and discursive strategies of constructing 'difference' which find a solution to the *dominating* social imagery for Maori by using a Maori English which is perhaps most clearly seen as a 'double' language - - an English charged with connotations

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Richard Benton, 'Maori English: A New Zealand Myth?', Cheshire (1991) p. 191.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Benton (1991) p. 194.

of Maori religious iconography as well as a Maori language which is 'new', having created neologisms with which to articulate modernity. This doubling embodies tensions of the ancient and the modern, the sacred and the profane. Its development from the early colonial period is revealed in Jane McRae's discussion of new Maori writing in prose where she mentions Karanga Hokianga as being:

an edited transcript (by Father Tate) of the minutes of the Papatupa Block Committee which sat at the turn of the century to debate the rights to land in the Hokianga district. The testimony of claimants recorded in the minutes describes the history of the locality. The minutes were edited by members of the local tribal community while a new meeting-house was being built. Events described in the written texts were depicted in the carvings for the meeting-house (the carvings themselves becoming a public text), and incorporated in songs for the ceremonial opening of the house. The process by which this book came to be published - the reading of the written words of the ancestors and the giving of public expression to their teachings through artwork, song and, finally, a book - exemplifies both the use of writing to generate oral material and the slow, perhaps hesitant, move to publication in print.<sup>34</sup>

Ranganui Walker also recounts how, 'The Maori readily learned the symboling system of the written word since it was easily seen as an extension of their own symboling system in the art of carving.'<sup>35</sup> Carving was not the only symboling system used by the Maori. By elaborate facial moko Albert Moore claims:

the individual Maori also had the imprint of his ancestors on him for the rest of his life . . . The designs followed certain family traditions and were used to create a unique moko pattern for each individual - like an enlarged fingerprint, but far more personal since it gave him a sense of history and identity which others could recognise.<sup>36</sup>

Eric Schwimmer writes:

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<sup>34</sup> Jane McRae, 'Maori Literature. A Survey', *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, ed., Terry Sturm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Ranganui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou* (Auckland: Penguin, 1990) p. 85.

<sup>36</sup> Albert Moore, *Iconography of Religions* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1997) p. 64.

Moko emphasised the sacredness of man. During the time of carving, the patient was strictly tapu, and was fed through a funnel. It would be absurd to suppose that the tattoo was 'just a decoration', concealing the real face underneath. On the contrary, Maori of rank did not get his real face until he was tattooed; thenceforth the tribal self engraved upon him became his permanent mask. The bold convolutions of the tattoo expressed the tribal spirit and indeed the world order, for the two almost symmetrical profiles facing each other, separated by the split in the middle of the design, were a reflection of the cosmic dualism - left and right, earth and sky.<sup>37</sup>

This close affinity between the moko, carving and the myth of Rangi and Papa serves to relate man and all realms of life to one family derived from these common parents. When, in the continuation of the myth, the six brothers fell into dissension it was, as Moore recounts, Tu, the god of war, who overcame his brothers and used their produce - - all except the wind:

Now Tu is also regarded as the ancestor of man, and here we have a picture of man subduing nature to live from its fruits (forest, ferns, fish and agriculture) and yet of man still at the mercy of the storms of nature and human conflict. The myth gives an exemplary model for man as a being who is humanly powerful yet also dependent on powers which establish him in a sacred cosmos.<sup>38</sup>

This mytho-poetic dimension of life is explicitly made visible in the whare whakairo, where, as argued in Chapter One, the profuse decoration with human figures of ancestors is in a sense designed to be spoken to. Although any discursive representations of Maori as close to the sacred are obviously vulnerable to co-option by Pakeha under the 'modern primitive' rubric, the situational difference of 'talking to' architecture has its origin in a distinct difference in the *grand recits* of Maori and Westerner which, it may be argued, has affected their interaction from earliest times and still inflects the drive, purpose and expressiveness of Maori writers in the present day.

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<sup>37</sup> Eric Schwimmer, Quoted in Moore (1997) p. 64.

<sup>38</sup> Albert Moore (1997) p. 60.

This difference is exemplified in the story of the origin of the art of carving which relates how Rua-te Pupuke went in search of his son, whom Tangaroa, the god of the sea had kidnapped. After a long search Rua discovered his son as a carving attached to the gable of Tangaroa's house under the sea. He removed his son and other carvings from the outside of the house and set fire to it. There were, however, other carved figures inside the house, which had the power to speak but were destroyed in the blaze. It is said that because Rua only took carvings from the outside of the house, carvings now cannot speak. This founding narrative of the whakairo which informs us why carvings do not speak suggests they may have spoken once, and of course may still be spoken to as an audience of listeners.

If these ideas are associated with the concept of 'home' in *the bone people* there appears to be a progressive development through a series of buildings which must be taken into account. There is firstly, Kerewin's tower with its associations of isolation and individualism. It is also associated with 'artiface' or culture rather than nature in that in the implicit comparison with the spiral house built at the conclusion of the novel it is non-organic in form. Kerewin deliberately destroys this tower, in much the same way as Burke saw the French revolutionaries destroying a 'noble and venerable castle'. From this perspective Kerewin does not appear to advocate a naturalistic view of tradition.

However, she then moves to renovating the meeting-house at Moerangi, having been charged with this task by 'voices' which appear to unproblematically represent a fixed, archaic tradition. Finally, Kerewin constructs a communal home formed like a spiral, which along with the koru is the most widely used Maori art motif. W. J. Phillipps in fact defines the Maori 'as the one race in the world which has exalted the spiral conception in design to its highest level.'<sup>39</sup> He also draws an interrelationship between the koru and the spiral, seeing them as having evolved simultaneously. He conceives of the

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<sup>39</sup> W. J. Phillipps, 'Maori Spirals', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 57 (1948) p. 30.

simple line koru, when its lower lines are extended, as curling around to form a looped double spiral. If the upper lines at the bulb end of such koru are detached and extended in the same way, an interlocking double spiral results from the process. In a related process, if two simple koru are placed together in an opposing position, with extension of lower curved parts, an interlocking double looped spiral is created. If we accept this interrelationship it is a short step to interpreting the spiral motif as having the same confronting and challenging properties as the kowhaiwhai motif. There is further evidence to support such a claim as the spiral has gone through a similar stylistic elaboration.

Terence Barrow, for example, states:

Politics has obviously influenced surface decoration in Maori art. The progression is from an austerity of sculptural style seen in archaic Maori carving, where surface decoration was limited to a few edge notches and criss-cross lines and chevrons, to the aggressive swirling spirals of Classic Maori art which were elaborated in the nineteenth-century to its final emblazonment in the twentieth-century.<sup>40</sup>

David Simmons, moreover, claims that the spiral which is so prominent in facial tattoos and on carvings of ancestors can be 'read' genealogically:

Where the paramount descent line is through a male line this is shown by a double spiral; where it is female, a single spiral is used. On carved figures, the spirals are usually placed on the shoulders and buttocks. Important ariki (chiefs) have genealogical lines from more than one tribe, thus each will have a unique combination of tribal affiliations. Therefore, a carving may be identified genealogically to the point where only one named chief can be intended.<sup>41</sup>

He also interprets the spirals which appear on lintels representing the separation of Rangi and Papa stating, 'There is a large double spiral between the figures, and two smaller

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<sup>40</sup> Terence Barrow, *Maori Art of New Zealand* (Paris: Reed & UNESCO Press, 1982) p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> David Simmons, *Whakairo, Maori Tribal Art* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1985) p. 17.

spirals each side. These represent the *manawa ora* (soul of life). They signify light coming into the world, light which is also knowledge or understanding.<sup>42</sup>

By adapting these two dimensional spirals to a three dimensional form in the shape of a home *the bone peole* would appear to be a creative re-interpretation of a past symbolism, attributing meaning in the present with reference to the past. The question which needs to be asked, however, is to what extent is this a *creative* reworking of the past in the positive sense of providing a symbolism which is advantageous to Maori in their present circumstances? While the spiral form may symbolise the 'light' of Maori ancestors returning to shine in the present day, the nature of these ancestors as disembodied archaic voices with no actual genealogical links to the non-biological family reduces them to the opposite of ancestors carved on 'traditional' meeting houses. They have become disembodied voices which it is necessary to listen to and obey rather than particular ancestors which are addressed and from whom power may be derived. The deliberate grounding in an organic imagery as a model for the State would also appear to be a major drawback and a comparison with pre-contact Maori architecture interestingly directs us to the image of Maui, the demi-god whose present-day equivalents feature prominently as subversive, hybrid characters in the novels examined in this thesis.

In commenting on precontact Maori religion and the place of Maui in this pantheon James Belich writes:

The close integration of the supernatural and daily life, the sheer mass of gods, and a commendable but somewhat gullible reaction to old Eurocentric dismissals of it can combine to give a false impression of Maori religion. People in prehistory . . . can seem flies caught in a web of sacred forces, groaning under the weight of their own spirituality, lives dictated by the divine. Maui is the appropriate antidote to this. He is usually categorised as a demi-god, between hero and deity, yet several early European inquirers were given the impression that Maui dominated the Maori pantheon, and perhaps in a sense he did.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> David Simmons (1985) p. 54.

<sup>43</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples* (New Zealand: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1996) p. 110.

Maui's activities include, among other things, the invention of rope with which he snared the sun in order to subjugate it to the will of man. It can be difficult for us to appreciate how powerful this primal image of Maui's rope may have been in everyday life of early Maori society. In the days before there were reliable metals, there were only compressive, earth-bound structures in the Maori world. The exceptions were the tensile, fibrous kinds of things like ropes, woven mats, cloaks, fishing nets, eel traps and crayfish pots. Michael Linsey writes that:

Houses themselves in pre-European times derived structural identity from ropes called *tua whenua*. These were slung across the back of portal frames formed by pairs of *poupou* and *heke*, posts and rafters, and then tensioned with large wooded levers against the massive *tahuhu*, or ridge beam. The *tahuhu* and *pou tahuhu* must be massive in Maori house construction, because they must sustain the tension forces induced by the *tua whenua*.<sup>44</sup>

It is arguable that *the bone people* transposes the tensions involved in the construction of such a house into tensions between the three principal characters - - Simon, as Maui, coming to act as 'tua whenua' between Kerewin and Joe. In a similar reading Graham Huggan writes:

Thus, as the relationship between Kerewin, Joe and Simon develops, it becomes more and more apparent that the so-called 'delinquency' of the child is in effect a transposition of the anti-social behavior of his two self-appointed 'guardians' . . . Simon's sneak-thievery, for example, ironically reflects Kerewin's magpie intellectual acquisitiveness, while his frequent flashes of temper and petty vandalism mirror the more sinister physical abuse of his unstable foster-father. Simon's ability to mimic the faults of others, along with his elusiveness, his uncooperativeness and his concerted resistance to social norms indicate the disruptive nature of his mediating role.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Linsey, 'Talking to and Speaking About Maori Architecture', *Dwellings, Settlements and Tradition*, eds., Paul Bourdier & Nezar Alsayyad (Illinois: University Press of America, 1989) p. 326.

<sup>45</sup> Graham Huggan, 'Opting Out of the (Critical) Common Market: Creolization and the Post-Colonial Text', Slemon & Tiffin (1989) p. 33.

This means the body is conceived as a fundamentally historical and political object. In the novel it is the central object over and through which relations of power and resistance are played out. Bodies in *the bone people* are all damaged to some degree, even at the beginning of the novel. Simon, we learn had strange marks on him when he was first adopted by Joe and his wife. Joe has had polio as a child which has left him with spindly legs and Kerewin is also scarred. Each is also damaged physically at some point within the narrative. Simon, obviously through being beaten, Joe when he jumps off the cliff and Kerewin through her illness. There are also assorted minor scenes of violence throughout - - Joe and Kerewin's fight, the scene in the pub when Kerewin flicks the fly into a man's drink and so on. Physical damage is used to signify the damage which colonisation has inflicted and the damage which its aftermath continues to inflict. One of the most significant aspects of bodies of course is the way we see them, and, in a novel, the way in which characters interpret the appearance of each other. We are given, for example, a great deal of information about Simon's appearance - - he is white skinned and blonde haired, referred to by Kerewin as nasty and gnomish. His hair is long, he wears an earring associating him with another discriminated against group - - the gypsies - - and Joe explicitly says he beats him because he didn't want him to be different. He wanted him to be ordinary, like Piri's kids. He is constructed through his Irishness as a white negro - - one of those instances of racism where the visual index of difference is by any measure minimal and which thereby throws the cultural logic of racism into relief. Noel Ignatiev, for example, clarifies this process in this description of the situation of Irish immigrants in America:

The first Congress of the United States voted in 1790 that only 'white' persons could be naturalised as citizens. Coming as immigrants rather than as captives or hostages undoubtedly affected the potential racial status of the Irish in America, but it did not settle the issue, since it was by no means obvious who was 'white'. In

the early years Irish were frequently referred to as 'niggers turned inside out'; the negroes, for their part, were sometimes called 'smoked Irish . . .'<sup>46</sup>

The anxiety of the racist viewer is revealed in the fact that what is constantly represented as an immediately visible, self-evident difference is in fact internal to the subject. It is an insistence on a difference internal to the constitution of identity which underlies the cultural logic of racism. In such instances of white on white racism, the fantasmatic projection of difference appears as a wishful resolution of a disturbance in the visual field. Charles Kingsley's passage on the poor Irish in 1860 makes a good example:

But I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw along that hundred miles of horrible country. I don't believe they are our fault. I believe there are not only many more of them than of old, but that they are happier, better, more comfortably fed and lodged under our rule than they ever were. But to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if only they were black, one would not feel it so much, but their skins, except where tanned by exposure, are as white as ours.<sup>47</sup>

But Simon is not simply a white negro or degenerate Irish chimpanzee, he is also, through his initial introduction a sort of wilful and rebellious Man Friday. He is both an exile from his European home and lives like an internal exile within New Zealand. In this reading he is both a settler suffering from dislocation and loss through moving to a new home and Maori in that racial minorities live in a condition of internal exile within the nation of which they are citizens. He not only embodies all the tensions of the society but is also given the power to transform and heal the other wounded bodies and selves in the novel. It is this hybrid identity, which even if it is subsumed into Kerewin's dominant voice by the end of the novel, is still the most interesting and promising construction of identity in the novel. Integral to Simon's personality is his refusal to bow to authority. Initially when Simon attempts to teach Kerewin his idiosyncratic sign language the attendant

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<sup>46</sup> Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995) p. 41.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Luke Gibbons, 'Race Against Time: Racial Discourse and Irish History' *Oxford Literary Review* Vol. 13 No. 1&2 (1991) p. 96.

contesting of mana between these two relates specifically to the way in which colonial power with its authority and message, is fractured by a culture that will always accept it differently from how it is given. Simon is being both a native who is attempting to communicate and also mimicking normal communication. Mimicry is ambivalent because it requires a similarity and a dissimilarity, a difference that is almost the same but not quite. From the indigenous point of view it relies on resemblance, on becoming like the coloniser but always remaining different. However, mimicry also produces a disturbing effect on colonial rule. It results in fantasies of menace; but this is a menace produced by, or forced upon, the colonised. With mimicry the authoritative words of the coloniser become displaced as he sees traces of himself in the mimicking indigene. Lacan writes of mimicry that 'it reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage . . . It is not a question of harmonising with the background, but against a mottled background of becoming mottled - exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare.'<sup>48</sup> This positions what is going on within the area of the visual and within a notion of contestation or warfare.

Mimicry is also an assertion of the inappropriate in that, as Bhabha comments, to be anglicised is emphatically not to be English. It is an assertion of similarity and difference and therefore poses a challenge in that the civilising mission supposedly produces a reformed subject but it also produces a threatening caricature of itself. The imitation must always remain distinguishable from the original and so poses two troubling questions. On the one hand, it asks what constitutes the original and preserves its difference from any imitation - - so for example, what is it to be English? On the other hand, it asks what deformation of this original is visible in the imitation, which is never exactly a copy and therefore something more or less than the original. In other words, the

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<sup>48</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'The Line and the Light', *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1977) p. 99.

notion of being an Anglicised subject makes what it means to be English a problem to begin with. It is the process by which the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed. This is menacing precisely because the observer's essence and authenticity are alienated: the surveilling look is returned as the gaze of the partial imitator and to resemble is to threaten the basis of power and discrimination.

A mimic and a hybrid of course have some things in common in that a hybrid is the return of the content and form of colonial authority that terrorises authority with the ruse of recognition, its mimicry, its mockery. The translation of the Bible into Maori, for instance, creates a mimic hybridised word of God, whose authority is now doubled by being reproduced in translation, but its authority is also less than it was in that its authority is now partially separated from the English language it arrived with. *the bone people* opens with the authoritative word of God repeating 'in the beginning.' But Simon's writing of his name with the pebbles from the beach, 'Clare was here' translates the original naming in which he is pronounced to be Simon, producing a second authority which undermines the first. In this way, in the very practice of domination, the language of the master becomes hybrid - neither the one thing nor the other. Similarly, where Simon's voice is ultimately subsumed by Kerewin, it is possible to also read this as Simon mimicking the authority of Kerewin when he begins to think to himself in her distinctive idiom.

However, the political valency of such strategies is lost at the end of the novel when Simon is 'domesticated' and the final emphasis returns to the spiral house which has been utilised in much the same way as the innumerable 'appropriations' of the kowhaiwhai motif have been used by Pakeha in the past, stripping them of their confrontational power and reducing them to mere design. While the use of the spiral motif in *the bone people* indirectly affords prestige to Maori culture by publicising it throughout the English reading world and its massive scale as a house may re-invigorate it much as Pareowhai's

re-appropriation of Walter's painting has done with the koru motif, the ultimate problem remains with Simon's enclosure within this house. As a Maui figure, Simon is reduced to a minor figure much as the Pakeha rendition of Maori 'myths and legends' reduced Maui to a minor figure in the pantheon of gods, thereby metaphorically and actually constraining Maori resistance.

Belich's account of the stories told of Maui's exploits, however, reveals a people who did not perceive of themselves as entirely helpless in their struggle against fate. He writes that:

Something other than fatalism and utter reverence for the divine is also found elsewhere in Maori tradition. Tikao told a story of first contact in which an early European explorer, said to be James Cook himself, was first suspected of divinity because he smoked a pipe. A Maori chief tested this hypothesis by dowsing the explorer with a bucket of water to see if the sacred fire would be put out . . . It is often said that Maori believed the first Europeans, and their death-dealing ships, to be gods. If so, they did not flinch or flee, but fought and traded with gods. After all, Maui had conquered the sun.<sup>49</sup>

It is this attitude which contributed to a continuing Maori empowerment and resistance and an ability to weave together the intertribal tensions and conflicts into new Pan-Maori models, despite Grey's compilations of Maori lore, which resulted in a political and cultural pressure under which Maori individuals began to turn both the discursive elements of their rituals and the narratives entangled around their genealogies into "myths and legends."<sup>50</sup> Grey's collections of Maori myths were used by Pakeha to categorise certain Maori strategies of resistance as 'inauthentic', the crowning of a Maori 'King', for example, serving to 'frame them as "pre-modern" in modern terms.'<sup>51</sup> But, from the Maori perspective, a sense of nationhood grew as an indigenous response to the escalating

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<sup>49</sup> James Belich (1996) p. 111.

<sup>50</sup> Simon During, 'What Was the West?' *Meanjin*, 48:4 Summer (1989) p. 765.

<sup>51</sup> Simon During (1989) p. 527.

untoward effects of colonisation from the 1830s onward and served to interrogate colonial authority in much the same way as a Maori English discourse in the present can question modernity and a Western ontology without necessarily becoming entrenched in a discourse of fixed and unchanging tradition.

### **Language, Subjectivity and the Treaty**

Historically, Linsay Cox writes that from the 1830s:

Maori had begun to explore models of unity: models which would enable international intercourse; models which focussed on political unity by accommodating tribal difference; models which approached the recently introduced notion of Maori nationhood; models which reached out and embraced the significance of sovereignty.<sup>52</sup>

There are now a number of authoritative texts covering the historical resistance of Maori and the eruption of confrontational strategies from the 1970s onwards, but a necessarily very brief summary is given below in order to contextually position the structuring of subjectivity in *the bone people* which, although published in 1984, was written over an extended period of time covering the decade of the 1970s.<sup>53</sup>

Although there was a long history of Maori disaffection with their place in Pakeha-dominated New Zealand, this only became overt and obvious to the general Pakeha public during the 1970s, especially with the emergence of the protest group Nga Tamatoa. In the

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<sup>52</sup> Linsay Cox, *Kotahitanga. The Search for Maori Political Unity* (Auckland: Oxford, 1993) p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> The best known of these texts are Ranganui Walker's *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou, Struggle without End* (Auckland: Penguin, 1990) and Richard Mulgan's *Maori, Pakeha and Democracy* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989). Maori militant resistance in the nineteenth century is covered in Paul Clark, *Hauhau. the Pai Marire Search for Identity* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1975) and political resistance in Linsay Cox, *Kotahitanga. The Search for Maori Political Unity* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1993). A more detailed analysis of present day Maori political strategies, especially Mana Motuhake, is given in Kayleen Hazelhurst, *Political Expression and Ethnicity. Statecraft and Mobilisation in the Maori World* (New York: Praeger Press, 1989).

mid 1970s also, contact was established between Maori agitators and the indigenous peoples of North America, culminating in the Land March of 1975 with its attendant discourses concerning past injustices and the current demand of justice and reparation, of practicing Te Taha Maori, and of Maori as tangata whenua. Then, in 1977 protestors established themselves on Bastion Point, claiming the restoration of the land of Ngati Whatua from whom it had been wrongfully taken. The protestors were finally ejected in May 1978 with the aid of police. In 1979 came the widely-publicised Haka Party Incident in Auckland, followed in 1981 by widespread demonstrations during the Springbok Rugby tour of the country. From 1982 onwards the ideological lessons and organisational expertise gained during the Springbok tour enabled a proliferation of Maori political activity. Protests continued to accompany the annual commemoration of Waitangi Day, while land claims presented through the legitimate channels of the Waitangi Tribunal became prominent in newspaper reports and on television. Most alarming to Pakeha were the discourses of Maori sovereignty published by Donna Awatere and Ripeka Evans in the magazine *Broadsheet* which sought to deny Pakeha a legitimate place in the country.

The Pakeha fear then, in the early 1980s was that of a reorganisation of society that would probably produce anarchy. To a large extent, as Homi Bhabha has noted, the fears replicated in 'this traumatic return of the oppressed (were) those terrifying stereotypes of savagery . . . and anarchy which are the signal points of identification and alienation, scenes of fear and desire in colonial texts.'<sup>54</sup>

Consequently, in the 1980s it was Pakeha resistance to Maori strategies involving the resurrection of the concept of an independent Maori nation which were significant. By redefining themselves not as a subject people, but as part of someone else's nation engaged in a nationalist struggle of their own for sovereignty Maori sought to resist the dominant Pakeha ideology. Nationalist discourse then became split and contradictory and

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<sup>54</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Other Question', *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 72.

Maori could exploit the ambiguous status of the Treaty of Waitangi which could be read as guaranteeing Maori sovereignty and domination over their lands in return for British administration.

The 'nation' as such, then, in as much as it reproduces a British model continues to be a domain contested by Maori, even, - - perhaps especially, - - in the Labour Party's articulation of New Zealand as a South Pacific nation following their election in 1983. This construction which frequently employs Maori iconography to fill the ideological gap left by the attempt to withdraw from a discourse centred on Britain was most evident in the Huia Tuia, Tui Tuia - - unite together in the common bond of fellowship motto for the 1990 sesquicentennial celebrations. This echo of the 'one people' discourse derived from the Treaty of Waitangi also positions the Treaty as itself a production of colonial hybridity which thereby gave rise to a series of interrogations of colonial authority. 'For it is in-between the edict of Englishness and the assault of the dark unruly spaces of the earth through an act of repetition that the colonial text emerges uncertainly.'<sup>55</sup>

The discourse surrounding the present-day political resistance has consequently been most evident in the endless public debates of the 1980s concerning whether the Treaty now symbolised the Original Sin of imperial annexation or the desire for integration, biculturalism or potentially, Maori separatism. But the 'original' moment - the signing of the Treaty in 1840 - - may be interpreted as the formal inauguration of the foreign 'word' in Aotearoa, which to quote Moana Jackson, initiated the imposition of Western philosophical concepts of, 'a word born of a Christian God, a capitalist ethic, a common law, an imperial domain and an individuated manifest destiny.'<sup>56</sup>

From the coloniser's viewpoint, however, it was the means of establishing 'order' in Aotearoa and sought to preserve English civil society with its particular constructions

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<sup>55</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Signs Taken for Wonders' (1994) p. 107.

<sup>56</sup> Moana Jackson, *Justice Ethics and New Zealand Society*, eds., Graham Oddie & Roy Perrett (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992) p. 1.

of law, language and sexuality. It therefore constituted 'the conditions for a beginning, a practice of history and narrative.'<sup>57</sup> This 'sign' of authority was also in Homi Bhabha's words 'a wonder', or in psychoanalytic terminology, an *enstellung*, in which effects are 'not only transposed, as it were into another key, but . . . are also distorted in such a fashion that only an effort of interpretation can reconstitute them.'<sup>58</sup>

As a signifier of colonial authority the Treaty functioned, and continues to function, as part of the *structure* of social determination and as such it has produced particular discourse communities which hinge upon differing interpretations of law, language and who constitute their identity through political forms of resistance. This is not, however, to assume that consciousness of oppression is the means to end it, nor that agency is necessarily an expression of conscious volition. The political unconscious in history and what the Treaty as 'text' was constrained not to say must also be taken into account. From this perspective, as a signifier of colonial fantasy, the Treaty enabled desire to stage its *mise en scene* by metaphorically re-enacting the Oedipal drama in which the Paternal British annexed a Domesticated Maori to 'produce' (a therefore unavoidably 'hybrid') young New Zealand. The most powerful symbol of New Zealand national mythology - - the 'one people' myth - - an ideology of a harmonious society free from racial inequality can be seen to ultimately depend upon assimilation through cultural domination and intermarriage. Maori could consequently become a sub-group contained by boundaries within a nationalistic account of New Zealand identity in which New Zealanders are represented as sharing a common culture because they share common origins in their British roots. This form of nationhood is understood in terms of metaphors of kinship - - it is common descent or domestic genealogies which underwrite the common

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<sup>57</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Signs Taken for Wonders' (1994) p. 105.

<sup>58</sup> J. Laplanche & J. Pontilis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1980) p. 124.

culture on which national identity depends and there is an elaborated narrative of sons who left a 'mother country' to establish a new settler colony.<sup>59</sup>

The 'identity effects' resulting from this oedipal fantasy are also figured via resistance and involve finding a real alternative to the drama whereby a social being who must become a subject can only do so by internalising the particular social rules which are presented as legitimate.

The significance of the Western nuclear family trope is that its claim to legitimacy is presented as 'natural' on two levels. First, the family image with its patriarchal structure could be drawn on to figure hierarchy within unity and could be extended to legitimise exclusion and hierarchy within non-familial formations - - such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism. Second, via the Family of Man, the family:

offered an indispensable trope for figuring what was often violent, *historical change* as natural, *organic time*. Since children 'naturally' progress into adults, projecting the family image onto national and imperial 'Progress' enabled what was often murderously violent change to be legitimized as the progressive unfolding of natural decree. National or imperial intervention could be figured as an organic, non-revolutionary progression that naturally contained hierarchy within unity : paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children.<sup>60</sup>

The 'one people' myth, therefore, is congruent with the argument that the contradictions and anxieties of a society seek a resolution in their myths. According to Barthes, '... myth consists of turning culture into nature, or at least turning the social, the cultural, the ideological, the historical into the natural.'<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991) p. 19-22.

<sup>60</sup> Anne McClintock, 'Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family', *Feminist Review*, No.44 Summer (1993) p. 69-89.

<sup>61</sup> Roland Barthes, 'Mythology Today', *The Rustle of Language* Trans Richard Howard. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) p. 65.

A similar argument concerning the use of myths could be applied to Keri Hulme's *the bone people* and I would like to examine this novel in the sense of a re-working of the Treaty in the 1980s. This involves re-assessing the social determinations which the Treaty has given rise to and by considering the kin-based 'natural' construction of the nation as a re-enactment of the scene of Oedipal trauma, and I will, consequently, regard both the colonial discourse leading up to the Treaty and the post-colonial discourse of *the bone people* as containing constructions of subjectivity which are deeply implicated in ambivalences surrounding language, law, and sexuality which undermine their shared ostensible purpose to enable the formation of an equal bicultural society.

Bhabha's theories of the construction of subjectivity through language, in which the 'daydream is supplementary, not alternative, to acting in the real world' and in which, 'the structure of fantasy narrates the subject of daydream as the articulation of incommensurable temporalities, disavowed wishes, and discontinuous scenarios', are derived from Lacan's Oedipal theories, and add a further dimension to this process.<sup>62</sup> Lacan states that the Oedipus complex is not biologically framed but symbolically cast - - it is the order of language which permits the child entry into subjectivity, into the realm of speech, law and sociality. It is, therefore, through locating the signifier of desire on the cusp of language and law that Lacan opens up a form of social representation which recognises the ambivalent structure of both subjectivity and sociality. Moreover, in his reconsideration of the Oedipal story Lacan also returns to the Athenian drama which he describes as 'the original myth of the city state and the material through which a nation today learns to read the symbol of destiny on the march.'<sup>63</sup> He moves, in other words, from the narration involved in an individual analysis to collective fantasies narrated in a society. The issue thereby becomes one in which psychoanalysis is not just another

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<sup>62</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern' (1994) p. 181.

<sup>63</sup> Jacques Lacan, quoted in Laura Mulvey, 'The Oedipus Myth: Beyond the Riddles of the Sphinx', *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989) p. 190

technique for reading through the phenomenal forms of culture to unmask their 'real' meaning, but a means of analysing the dynamics of culture by recognising the centrality of the unconscious.

Oedipal fantasies, therefore, have an obvious correspondence to the settler endeavour with its 'narcissistic demand for colonial objects, which intervenes so powerfully in the nationalist fantasy of boundless, extensive possessions.'<sup>64</sup> It also has further connotations in that the hero recognises in leaving home that in order to 'become the father' he must avoid his own Oedipal set-up, which invites rivalry and desire, but particularly rivalry with the father. However, the achievement of success - - in the form of power and possessions - - brings back a memory of Oedipal rivalry. With its oedipal twist the repressed returns. Family relations and property relations therefore become condensed so that the word 'possession' inscribes itself in all its meanings - - psychoanalytic, material and sexual. The colonial endeavour, then, betrays a deep conflict in that desire cannot be satiated without conquest, nor power attained without violation. If the hero/colonist does not take that which is *said* to be willingly yielding, he does not rule what he seeks to possess. However, if he successfully conquers, he has failed by committing an act of violation which cannot ultimately be sanctioned.

From this point of view the Treaty of Waitangi cannot represent a simple act of communication between the One and the Other:

The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilised in the passage through a third space which represents both the general conditions of language and the special implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Sly Civility' (1994) p. 97.

<sup>65</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' (1994) p. 36.

As a political discourse the Treaty produces rather than reflects its objects of reference, but the political ideas inscribed within it are ambivalent, emerging through a form of political projection whereby 'the agent of the discourse becomes . . . the inverted, projected object of the argument turned against itself.'<sup>66</sup> It is through reading between the lines of the Treaty that we are made aware of the 'ambivalent juxtaposition, the dangerous interstitial relation of the factual and the projective, and beyond that of the crucial function of the textual and the rhetorical.'<sup>67</sup>

In looking, first, at the Treaty in terms of language it becomes obvious that the notorious problems surrounding it, and its several versions in Maori and English, cannot therefore be interpreted as simply difficulties of translation but also involve questions of political and cultural understanding and the (pre)conceptions both Maori and Pakeha entertain about the role and function of government in their lives. Intercultural communication through language 'must be understood as emerging from the constant state of contestation and flux caused by the differential systems of social and cultural significations.'<sup>68</sup> In this instance it is an understanding of the interpretation of sovereignty or mana of the two peoples which is especially pertinent.

The particular use of language in the Treaty document relates to how these different understandings came to be used in the circumstances of the time, how, in other words, a particular selection of vocabulary is used to either promote or ignore social and political values. Within the space of the 'contact zone' the drafters of the Treaty appear to have actively promoted some values while silencing others.

There are various kinds of silences involved. All societies possess concepts and a language with which to discuss political affairs and while Maori political thought was conducted largely in the language of ritual involving anthropomorphic and mythological

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<sup>66</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' (1994) p. 24.

<sup>67</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' (1994) p. 24.

<sup>68</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'How Newness Enters the World' (1994) p. 227.

terms, that of Britain was in the vocabulary of law, derived in its turn from English constitutional history, the Christian Church, a humanism inherited from the Greco-Roman era and a body of classical political philosophy common to thinkers of Western Europe generally.

On a general level, then, as Peter Cleave remarks:

A culture which is ritual-centred is coming to terms with a culture wherein the writing of history is itself an important mode of social and political understanding. What happened ritually speaking at Waitangi in 1840 may not at all have concurred with what was written and what was agreed to be written.<sup>69</sup>

As the Queen's representative Lt. Hobson saw the Treaty as a document which aligned various authorities - - those of the Empire, Queen, government and the Church of England. Maori discussion of the Treaty, however, evoked its own authorities, those of chiefly and tribal mana.

As an imperial document the Treaty was not jointly drawn up by Maori and British representatives but was drafted in Maori and English by three Englishmen, James Busby the British Resident, William Hobson the Queen's Representative and Henry Williams a missionary. The one Maori and several English versions all differ significantly from each other but are notable for being couched in Biblical language. The Treaty's significance for Maori, as a written document, therefore, was related to their understanding of the Bible. The Treaty begins with the 'liberal regard' of the Queen and ends with the day and the year of 'Our Lord,' so that the cultural impression given is one of a Christian document redolent with ritual in which God, Queen and Country are aligned. To quote Peter Cleave again:

A tripartite structure of authority is firmly established between the Queen, the Pakeha and the Maori residents of New Zealand with the Queen at the apex, and

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<sup>69</sup> Peter Cleave, 'Language and Authority in the Ethnic Politics of New Zealand (Aotearoa)', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 9:3 July (1986) p. 382.

this is evinced in the very format of the treaty which begins with her kind consideration and ends with her giving Maoris the status of British subjects. There is also a firm and consistent alignment of the just constructed 'nation' of New Zealand (Nu Tirani) and England, the two being juxtaposed three times in the text.<sup>70</sup>

The particular terminology employed in the Treaty contained what were to become contentious examples of 'missionary Maori' vocabulary. These terms would have been initially encountered by Maori through their familiarity with the Maori Bible. 'Sovereignty' is one of the most significant words in the Treaty but its obvious equivalent in Maori terms, mana, is not mentioned, kawatanga being used instead. Kawatanga was used in the Maori Bible to mean 'rule' as distinct from 'power' or 'authority' but the drafters of the Treaty, rather than provide a transliteration for 'rule' substituted 'government' and from this produced the transliteration 'kawatanga.'

Five years earlier Busby had convened a meeting at Waitangi of thirty-four chiefs to sign a declaration of confederation and independence. The second clause of this declaration which dealt with sovereignty was written by Busby and Williams and clearly equated the word 'mana' with sovereignty and power. Ruth Ross consequently asks in regard to the Treaty, 'Did they, knowing the chiefs would never sign away their mana to the Queen deliberately eschew the use of this word and concept in their translation?'<sup>71</sup>

'Rangatiratanga' is the other contentious word, and is also a missionary neologism derived from rangatira, chief. The preamble of the Treaty expresses the Queen's wish to respect Maori with regard to their rangatiratanga and their land. The second clause guarantees Maori tino rangatiratanga (absolute chieftainship) over their lands, villages and possessions. Tino rangatiratanga was, in fact, a closer approximation to sovereignty than

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<sup>70</sup> Peter Cleave (1986) p. 387.

<sup>71</sup> Ruth Ross, 'The Treaty on the Ground', *The Treaty of Waitangi, Its Origins and Significance* (Wellington: The Dept. of University Extension, Victoria University, 1972) p. 20.

kawanatanga, and was clearly used in the Lord's Prayer to mean kingdom. Ranganui

Walker argues that:

the guarantee of chieftainship is in effect a guarantee of sovereignty because an inseparable component of chieftainship is mana whenua. Without land a chief's mana and that of his people is negated. The chiefs are likely to have understood the second clause of the treaty as a confirmation of their own sovereign rights in return for a limited concession of power in kawanatanga.<sup>72</sup>

The fundamental contradiction of the Treaty is contained in the fact that the first article gives the Queen kawanatanga while the second gives Maori tino rangatiratanga. In the 1980s this has re-emerged in the debate around:

how to reconcile the right of the Crown to govern, and the guarantee of Maori of their sovereignty in specific matters. It is accepted that the treaty still speaks today so reconciliation of kawanatanga and rangatiratanga must be constantly addressed.<sup>73</sup>

In turning now to an examination of the legal/political effects of the Treaty, it may, in Bhabha's words be succinctly described as a text 'of the civilising mission' written 'in the name of the father and the author, (which) immediately suggest(s) the triumph of the colonialist moment.'<sup>74</sup> But if the Treaty is read as the production of colonial hybridity, then, rather than commanding authority it gives rise to a series of questions of authority. It is the ambivalence or instability in the Treaty which has enabled it to give rise to an attempt at a bicultural agenda and also to provide a rationale for Maori separatism. The 'one people' doctrine can be taken as valid if it is derived from the first article with kawanatanga being interpreted as the supreme authority. But Mana Motuhake can be

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<sup>72</sup> Ranganui Walker (1990) p. 93.

<sup>73</sup> Margaret Wilson, 'Constitutional Recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi', *Justice and Identity*, eds., Margaret Wilson & Anna Yeatman (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1995) p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Signs Taken For Wonders' (1994) p. 105.

afforded equal validity if tino rangatiratanga is the ultimate authority which is not impinged upon by kawanatanga. The Treaty consequently can be seen to say different things to Maori and Pakeha and this is often taken to embody a binary politics between Maori and Pakeha. In other words, it gives rise to two different discourses which are appropriated by those loosely cohering discourse communities formulated through resistance and associated with the postcoloniser and the postcolonised. Consequently, as Kaye Turner writes, 'the Treaty is often interpreted as capable of expressing only the sharply delineated and separated rights and responsibilities of two similarly sharply delineated and separated parties.'<sup>75</sup>

Although the lack of clear terms of reference in the Treaty makes it difficult to construct a definition of the Treaty partners which eschews essentialism and allows for more flexible, hybrid definitions in which citizens are not 'either Maori or Pakeha, and incapable of slipping in and out of these categories,' it is possible that 'the Maori/Pakeha "binary" might, with work, prove capable of providing a supporting platform for the practice of a more complicated politics by more complicated formations and re-formations of partners.'<sup>76</sup>

Although the Royal Commission on Social Policy 1988 emphasised the symbolism of the Treaty as a potentially unifying social force, there has been little in the way of concrete changes in political institutions and processes which gives expression to this potential. This is partly due to the fact that Aotearoa/New Zealand has no written constitution which gives a statement of Treaty status in law. Consequently there has been little work done on detailed forms of law appropriate for expressing the meaning and purpose of a diverse Treaty partnership. The attempt by the Labour Party's Justice Minister, Geoffrey Palmer, to entrench the Treaty in a Bill of Rights in 1985 did not go ahead. As Paul Haveman explains:

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<sup>75</sup> Kaye Turner, 'The Royal Commission on Social Policy', Wilson & Yeatman (1995) p. 79.

<sup>76</sup> Kaye Turner (1995) p. 81.

New Zealand resembles Britain as a unitary state with a representative form of Westminster constitutional monarchy based on a largely unwritten constitution. The Privy Council remains the ultimate appellate body. Any proposal to constitutionalize and entrench rights challenged the essential Britishness of the entire constitutional structure<sup>77</sup>

From the Maori perspective Margaret Wilson claims that:

one of the reasons why Maori have been unable legally to entrench the treaty has been their lack of effective political representation. This has meant that Maori have had only limited influence on legislation affecting their interests. They have been, and remain policy takers and are rarely policy makers. It has also meant that Maori have been reluctant to allow the treaty to become part of a legal system over which they have little influence or control. There has been an understandable fear that the mana (status) of the treaty will be diminished if it is incorporated into a legal system that does not acknowledge their rangatiratanga (authority).<sup>78</sup>

For Maori, in other words, democracy, although achieved, has offered little, so that as a colonised people their project has been largely one of the preservation of a minority cultural identity within the larger polity.

This situation reflects further ambiguities in the Treaty. When drafting the Treaty Busby persuaded Williams to make subtle changes in the wording in order to raise the tone of the gathering. For example, whakaminenga (congregation, assembly) was substituted for huihuinga (gathering) thereby creating the impression of a form of unified Maori state. This Maori version of the Treaty, however, makes no mention of the British parliament. Legalistic concepts of sovereignty were thereby expunged and the power and authority of the Queen produced in its stead. The English version, on the other hand, does mention civil government and is explicit in terms of the chiefs ceding sovereignty to the

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<sup>77</sup> Paul Haveman, 'What's in the Treaty? Constitutionalizing Maori Rights in Aotearoa/New Zealand 1975-1993', *Legal Pluralism and the Colonial Legacy*, ed., Kayleen Hazelhurst (England: Aldershot: Avebury, 1995) p. 88.

<sup>78</sup> Margaret Wilson (1995) p. 6.

Queen. A fundamental irony, however, remains in that the Treaty partners are described as being those of Maori and the Crown. The Crown as the legal entity that embodies the State also of course includes Maori. In the historical transition from British Crown to 'New Zealand Crown' the other partner became the New Zealand government so that the partnership has remained one between the whole and one of its components, Maori. This is a conception of a citizenship community which operates through the systemic exclusion of many who are situated within the social relations of the citizenship community. However those who are excluded have throughout the 1980s been developing a politics of voice which reveals these internal exclusions. For as Homi Bhabha writes, 'the place of difference or otherness, or the space of the adversarial . . . is never entirely on the outside or implacably oppositional. It is a pressure, and a presence, that acts constantly, if unevenly, along the entire boundary of authorisation . . .'<sup>79</sup>

Linda Smith has suggested that the change in Maori political strategy during the 1970s and 1980s is a development 'from resistance as survival and consolidation to resistance as reconstruction and contestation.'<sup>80</sup> These issues of political challenge feed into the concept of proportional representation which formed the basis for the 1996 general election and aimed to provide a biculturalism which is potentially non-assimilative and therefore a voluntary option for Maori.

Group representation is, potentially, an alternative means of achieving equal weighting, but as Anne Phillips writes:

institutionalising group representation seems to conflict with what has been the movement of democracy, which is typically away from group privilege and group representation, and towards an ideal of citizenship in which each individual counts equally as one.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Signs Taken For Wonders' (1994) p. 109.

<sup>80</sup> Linda Smith, 'Te Reo Maori: Maori Language and the Struggle to Survive', *Access*, 8:1 p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993) p. 92.

A guarantee of parity between Maori and Pakeha, or ethnic proportionality, differs significantly from group representation which assumes that a particular Maori group can unproblematically 'represent' Maori as a whole.

Institutionalising group representation has the additional disadvantage in that it implies a narrowness or group closure with its attendant risks of blocking further development and change. Such a move could function to shore up communal boundaries and tensions and prove to be as oppressive as any universal norm. The liberal individualism which underlies democracy requires that a group be treated as though it were an individual. A group, as a corporate individual:

is accorded a clearly bounded integrity and the coherence of a monorational willing agency. This is the kind of agency that requires to be expressed as singular, unambiguous, and, preferably, reasoned purpose. It does not easily accommodate ambivalences, ambiguities, contradictions, incoherencies, multiplicities of intention and purpose. It becomes clear that the liberal conception of the group requires the group to assume an authoritarian character: there has to be a headship of the group which represents its homogeneity of purpose by speaking with the one, authoritarian voice. For this to occur, the politics of voice and representation latent within the heterogeneity of perspectives and interests must be suppressed.<sup>82</sup>

A 'politics of difference' however, by situating the self in relation to a legitimate heterogeneity of perspectives eschews those essentialist assertions of selfhood which depend upon othering both parts of the self and those subjects which are needed to form the negative side of this coherent bounded self. Subjectivity can then be oriented around multiple, contradictory and historically mutable selves and the polity can be reconciled with and dependent upon heterogeneity.

Simon During proposes a similar alternative under the rubric of a 'postcultural' resolution when he writes:

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<sup>82</sup> Anna Yeatman, *Postmodern Revisionings of the Political* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 81.

One has entered postculturalism when, accepting that the construction of a non-modern cultural identity is the result of interactions between coloniser and colonised, of mutual misrecognitions and forgettings, one celebrates the productive energy that is released in these processes. Postculturalism has its politics too. Somewhat in its spirit, a New Zealand identity can be constructed, not simply from a Maori or a Pakeha viewpoint, but by Maori-ising Pakeha formations and vice versa. This social programme counters the Europeanisation of the Maori by constructing a non-essentialist unity across a maintained difference.<sup>83</sup>

This form of polity cannot, therefore, be structured in terms of the metaphors and idiom of kinship. It is approached instead as dialogical matter concerning non-exclusive cultural identities and upheld by the formulation of what legally-sanctioned values Maori and Pakeha must have in common. The role of the state becomes one of constituting the national community rather than, as in a kinship based nationalism, of simply recognising a national community. It is on just such a kinship based nationalism, however, that *the bone people* is structured and it is this point which reveals its weakness as a model of bicultural nationalism.

It also follows in the constitution of the national community that the discourse of 'rights' within the natural law of liberal discourse would give way to a system in which rights would be understood as dialectical and relational, predicated on the right to give voice and to be listened to within the dialogical processes of decision-making. Andrew Sharp argues that the Treaty of Waitangi can function in this regard as it has become 'fundamental law' in respect of the polity shared by Maori and Pakeha.<sup>84</sup> It has become so precisely because it has not been treated as a matter of reparative justice, as a point of reference for the restoration of rights breached by Pakeha in relation to Maori. Instead, Sharpe argues that the Waitangi Tribunal has tended to avoid the clarity and unambiguities of contractual breach and rights talk and made recommendations which are oriented

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<sup>83</sup> Simon During, 'What Was The West?' *Meanjin*, 48:4 Summer (1989) p. 7676.

<sup>84</sup> Andrew Sharpe, *Justice and the Maori* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1990) esp. Chapter Two.

within terms of what changes need to be made in order to be conducive of a bicultural partnership. This is a partnership in which irresolvably different Maori and Pakeha conceptions of justice are to find voice, and in which a shared conception of justice must represent, not a rational consensus, but some kind of negotiated compromise in relation to these different conceptions of justice.

It is Sharpe's conception of the 'principles' of the Treaty which, J. N. Matson claims, is a key element in all the jurisprudence:

It serves to underline that the Treaty is a brief document - a preamble, three articles, a testimonium - standing for a set of embryonic and partly conflicting ideas, which by any normal process of verbal interpretation could not possibly be made to supply answers to specific problems of the vastly different society, existing hundred and fifty years later. The courts and the Tribunal alike, and Parliament itself, in deciding to refer to principles have placed in the forefront the need to get at the spirit and underlying ideas of the Treaty, and to apply them as reasonably and realistically as possible in current circumstances.<sup>85</sup>

To return, now, to *the bone people* the principal questions which need to be addressed are, on the one hand, whether those discourses surrounding the Treaty of Waitangi which function as a determining part of the current social structure serve to further inscribe Maori within the European discursive strategies. Or on the other hand, whether through mimicry and parody of these Western strategies of containment Maori subjectivity is repositioned in a way which is generally regarded by Maori as advantageous to them, either as separatism or as a postcultural agenda involving the nation as a whole. In other words, does *the bone people* in its proposals for a postcolonial bicultural state remain couched in the binarism of the Treaty or does it provide a literary repetition of the Treaty with a difference? Does it advocate a biculturalism which ultimately signifies assimilation or does it construct proposals for a postcultural state in

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<sup>85</sup> J. N. Matson, 'The Language, The Law and The Treaty of Waitangi', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 100:4 December (1991) p. 343-63.

line with those 'new' readings in which the Treaty differs from itself? And, finally, does it use language in such a way as to allow for 'tradition' *and* difference within the construction of a Maori subjectivity as well as a subjectivity which differs from that of the Pakeha without being 'fixed' and tradition bound?

### The Treaty and the bone people

Concerned as it is with seeking resolutions to the damage and dislocation brought about by the colonial encounter, *the bone people* opens with a series of reversals which indicate Hulme's desire to rework the subordination of Maori by Pakeha which in Treaty terms gave kawanatanga precedence over rangatiratanga. Firstly, Kerewin discovers Simon's sandal and shortly after Simon himself. Simon is, as previously mentioned, rather obviously, Friday to Kerewin's Robinson Crusoe, with the sandal and footprints on the beach pointing to one of the most easily recognisable literary encounters signifying imperial-colonial relations. This imperial relationship, typified in those interpretations of the Treaty which see it as laying the foundations for a nation replicating British institutions and founded on kinship and family relations, actually appears to be repeated rather than subverted in *the bone people*. This is achieved through a narrative venture which aims to fuse the personal and the political in order to reveal the horrors of a colonial past and, in doing so, to point the way to an ideal future through a continuation of an ideology of nationalism as a 'natural' community produced at a metaphorical level through the 'family'. It attempts, in other words, to provide a seamless unity between self and society, the family and the nation. Set in the present it refers back to the founding moment of the nation in an attempt to discover and exorcise trauma and set in motion a healing discourse which will inaugurate the rebirth of the self and the state. It is difficult, therefore, to extricate this proposed future from a nationhood understood in terms of kinship. The novel does, however, propose several ways in which this can be achieved. The first is by

subverting the opening to the Oedipal 'master narrative' - - where the founding moment of the nation is the Family Romance, - - as being the 'natural' order of things. So, while Joe's entrance into the tower appears to signify the beginning of the perfect romance:

. . . in a flood of sensation she is aware of the man's felt wool coat, the breadth of his shoulders contrasted with the child's bone-thinness, the blackness of his long straight hair; the half-wonderment, half-weariness of his face. And the fact that he is exactly as tall as herself,<sup>86</sup>

Kerewin is uninterested in any kind of sexual or romantic consummation and explains her lack of interest as stemming from the fact that she is a 'neuter'.

This sexual neutrality is used to suggest that, 'bonds need not be biological, and that some of the most important bonds may not be so - a point which is used to underscore an optimistic blueprint for future relations between Maori and Pakeha.'<sup>87</sup> C.K. Stead, for example, writes that:

what is interesting about the novel is that their bonds exist outside biology. It is the biological pattern imitated . . . that, I think, is the imaginative strength of the work - that it creates a sexual union where no sex occurs, creates parental love where there are no physical parents, creates the stress and fusion of a family where there is no actual family.<sup>88</sup>

Second, the establishment of the new community at the conclusion of the novel with its non-sexual family seeks to reverse the situation of colonial annexation and paternalism through the metaphor of adoption and the lack of 'blood-relationships.' This community which will be 'all connected and all part of a whole'<sup>89</sup> has Joe, Kerewin and

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<sup>86</sup> Keri Hulme, *the bone people* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1985. First published New Zealand: Spiral Collective, 1984) p. 54.

<sup>87</sup> Chris Prentice, 'Rewriting Their Stories, Renaming Themselves. Postcolonialism and Feminism in the Fictions of Keri Hulme and Audrey Thomas', *Span*, No. 23, September (1986) p. 72.

<sup>88</sup> C. K. Stead, *Answering to the Language* (Auckland University Press, 1989) p. 180-1.

<sup>89</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 434.

Simon at its core, Joe and Simon having been offered 'that unlikely gift her name,' by Kerewin - - 'as shelter, not as a binding. No sentiment about it . . . just good legal sense.'<sup>90</sup> This can be read as signifying the formulation of a state which seeks to constitute a national community on a continuing basis rather than simply recognising the existence of a 'natural' nationhood. By providing a legal foundation the way appears to be open for a legalistic shared conception of justice and values between Maori and Pakeha. The possibilities inherent in this construction, however, are left undeveloped and there are no clear indications of precisely how this community will function. The possibilities of dialogic non-exclusive cultural identities, moreover, appear to be undercut by a tripartite structure of authority which has Kerewin at its head. She remains centre-stage in the novel having described herself in regard to Simon and Joe as the 'link and the life between them.'<sup>91</sup> She gives to herself the primary controlling role, having facilitated their reunion because she acknowledges that *her* life has found a new direction. In rebuilding her home after restoring the hall at Moerangi, 'she fulfills the dream vision in which she restores one building and "other buildings flowed out of it." Just as her act of rebuilding the marae leads to "other building," the restoration of her self will lead to the restoration of Joe and Simon.'<sup>92</sup> It is, significantly, she alone who has the wealth to finance raising the wreck and uncover clues to Simon's past. It is she who draws up the plans of the spiral-shaped home/nation which is said to represent commensualism despite the fact that there is no community participation in the design stage of this project. She basically remains 'self-fulfilling, delighted with the pre-eminence of her art, and the future of her knowing hands.'<sup>93</sup> This is a re-enactment of the tripartite structure of authority in the Treaty which has the Queen at the apex, bestowing her 'liberal regard' on Maori, and giving them the

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<sup>90</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 444.

<sup>91</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 424.

<sup>92</sup> Susan Ash, 'The Bone People After Te Kaihau', *World Literature Written in English*, 29:4 (1989) p. 123.

<sup>93</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 7.

status of British subjects. Moreover, the vision in which the three become 'the heart, mind and muscles of something perilous and new'<sup>94</sup> is in its imagery a contemporary version of the conservative and time-worn metaphor of the State as body, familiar from Hobbes, Burke and others.

The irony of the Treaty, therefore, remains, with the partnership between Maori and the Crown being one between the whole and a part of that same whole. In the case of *the bone people* Kerewin, having found a lost Maoritanga, then proceeds to appropriate it and incorporate it into her own vision of commensualism. Maori therefore remain as policy receivers rather than policy shapers. This is particularly evident in her claim that the community forms a 'whole,' echoing the classical liberal bourgeois state which proclaims a structural integrity defended against incursions by the other and operates to uphold the order of the West. It reproduces, 'ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating . . . (which) have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience.'<sup>95</sup> One of Kerewin's aims, for instance, is to 'tie up loose ends'<sup>96</sup> and as these 'loose ends' are concerned with the social and legal positions of Simon and Joe she acts once again in a fashion which subordinates Maori subjectivity to Pakeha institutions and constructs.

Ultimately, the utopian vision of a nation/community in *the bone people* is, like the idealistic humanitarianism which prompted a Treaty-based process of settlement to curb the excesses of the expropriators in the colony, undermined by liberalism's inherent homogeneity of purpose. This demands an authoritarianism which requires individual members to subject themselves to the idea of a common culture. It disallows a politics of difference in which subjects may find their own 'voice,' in which self and identity are understood to exist within particular discursive configurations, and in which

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<sup>94</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966) p. 4.,

<sup>96</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 436.

consciousness is never fixed or finally and permanently achieved, because discursive boundaries change with historical conditions. In such a 'postcultural' selfhood 'identity' or 'tradition' may be invoked to ground claims but they are understood as being non-essential. There is no linear progression, no developmental notion of identity or self. There is instead a constant expansion, a re-evaluation in which the past is revisited in order to move forward, indicating the fundamentally relational nature of identity and negating the assumptions which underlie a singular, fixed and essential self. There is, then, no self as an essence or truth awaiting discovery, revelation or rebirth.

Rewriting the community/nation, therefore, requires rewriting the alignment between individual history and a national history in which progress figures as natural, organic and associated with the development towards maturity within the family. *the bone people* seeks to subvert the Western narrative of history as naturally teleological, an organic process of upward growth through its connection of ideas of rebirth with the spiral form, which is figured not only in the form of a commensal home, but is actually afforded centrality in the novel's meaning and design. The structure is that of the double spiral, a traditional Maori symbol, where beginning and ending are in perpetual interchange. Early in the novel we are told through Kerewin that the double spiral is 'an old symbol of rebirth and the outward-inward nature of things.'<sup>97</sup> Although the idea that change and renewal are specifically a revival and reworking of the past is fundamental to the novel, (the title, for instance, refers to ancestors, the present day three central characters and an audience of 'understanders'), the past is presented ambivalently. On the one hand 'it's past, but we live with it always'<sup>98</sup> and on the other hand it is something to be overcome and bracketed off from present experience, 'a meet end to make a fit beginning.'<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 56.

<sup>98</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 444.

<sup>99</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 436.

The overall narrative frame of rebirth spirals inward for the first three-quarters of the novel which is largely realist. The final quarter spirals back outwards as the more mythic elements come to dominate. The inward movement traces the 'death' of the isolated individual while the outward movement is towards life and community.

Joe moves from prison to a spiritual retreat with the Kaumatua. There he is healed and takes on his prophesied role as keeper of the Mauri, the dormant life principle of the land, which he finally takes back to the ruined tower. Simon moves from unconsciousness back into the world and from hospital to orphanage, resisting being separated from Joe and Kerewin. Kerewin moves from her destroyed tower and enters the world of darkness when she walks off into the night. She undergoes trials of pain with a tumour and eczema, watching the ruin of her body. As she nears death she experiences a moment of extreme consciousness which precipitates her physical and psychological recovery. Her quest, in other words, involves a sense of working down through multiple layers of meaning to uncover a *vital core* which results in ego confirmation. Her revelation is legitimised by the immediate arrival of a mysterious androgynous figure. Kerewin must answer the question posed by the supernatural figure: 'What do you love?' The answer which gives her the 'ultimate treasure' or gift of life is 'not me alone (Simon's) the bright sun in the eastern sky and (Joe's) the moon's bridegroom at night, and me, I'm the link and the life between them.'<sup>100</sup>

In the spiralling movement towards psychic integration the protagonists of *the bone people* are desperately seeking to understand the truth of their individual pasts. And, as these pasts, including the damage inflicted on each character, metaphorically indicate the damage incurred throughout colonisation, the search is also one for redemption of the country as a whole by a reworking of the past.

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<sup>100</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 424.

The message which *the bone people* seeks to impart, therefore, is that the indexical evidence remaining from the inherited crimes of the father/coloniser must be traced, interpreted and finally applied to the collective construction of history and mythology. The search becomes transposed into a metaphysical journey into the self, the literal journey of the hero/colonist being replaced by an abstract journey. The journey and its narration parallel the process by which unconscious material is transformed, the necessity for delay paralleling the processes of resistance and negation in psychoanalysis, so that exegesis only comes into being in the final historical narration. Hence Lacan's claim that, 'what we teach the subject to recognise as his unconscious is his history - that is to say, we help him to perfect the present historicisation of the facts that have already determined a certain number of the historical turning-points in his existence.'<sup>101</sup> For Lacan there is in essence no fresh beginning - - the past is usable only if the disorder and damage are kept in view. The psychoanalytic narrative is not one of rediscovering purity but of immersion in history as disorder and disparity. From the community perspective it follows that there can be no recourse to an originary, pure identity. The nation, in this scenario, is envisioned as a project rather than accepted as an already authenticated given and the articulation of difference then becomes a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The characters in *the bone people*, on the other hand, undergo a purging in which entering the disordered regions of the mind or venturing into uncharted areas beyond the confines of society conveys power or status on the return from this initiation. Kerewin makes a deliberate *break* with the past by placing the Book of the Soul in 'the heart of the fire and clos(ing) the range door upon it.'<sup>102</sup> Symbolically this marks the final death of her old self. She

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<sup>101</sup> Jacques Lacan, 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis', *Ecrits* (London: Tavistock Press, 1977) p. 52. Trans Alan Sheridan. First Published Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966.

<sup>102</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 437.

states categorically 'on the funeral pyre of our dead selves, I place a paper replica of what is real.'<sup>103</sup>

The discursive attempt to create an alternative discourse to the sexual, psychical and material nexus of 'possession' or in national terms to replace the narratives which uphold individualism, imperialism, materialism and sexism must die to enable the rebirth of more profound and ancient forces. The forces of individualism and imperialism are apparently undermined by archaic 'voices' chanting in unison which Kerewin hears on a number of occasions but particularly following her recovery when they legitimate her vision for the future. This evocation of an archaic Maori group authority creates a similar impression of an ancient pre-contact unified Maori state to that 'necessary fiction' which Busby constructed through his use of whakaminenga in the Treaty and the earlier Confederation of United Tribes. This, in fact, is a Pakeha interpretation of Maori affairs which ultimately contains Maori as a sub-group within the nation. It is echoed in the representation of a community in *the bone people* which is established in accordance with the atavistic voices who are interpreted and appropriated by Kerewin. As Mark Williams writes in this regard:

Hulme enlarges the concept of mauri from one applied to canoes, rivers, and tribal areas to one that embraces the whole country. As the pre-European Maori had no concept of New Zealand/Aotearoa as a unified entity (although they did see the North Island as a geographic entity, te ika a Maui), it is highly improbable that they would have held that there was a special god for the whole country. . . The notion involves a transcending of tribal affiliations that was not possible till the arrival of the colonists made Maori aware of their unity as well as their differences as a people.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 437.

<sup>104</sup> Mark Williams, 'Keri Hulme and Negative Capability' *Leaving the Highway* (Auckland University Press, 1990) p. 100.

Moreover, it is an illusion that this ancient authority, which unproblematically appears to represent the desires of the nation as having a homogeneity of purpose, is in a position of privilege. By disallowing multiplicities of intention and purpose this Maori authority is reduced to what is largely a Pakeha notion of 'traditional' unchanging spirituality which must be obeyed by preservation and conservation. Maori are reduced to custodians of a heritage which must hold the archaic for the national psyche. This emphasis on the archaic and the 'pure' serves to remove Maori from contemporary political action by implying they should remain 'unpolluted' by the modern. *the bone people* is set, therefore, in a landscape degraded by the European presence:

forests burned and cut down; the gouges and scars that dams and roadworks and development schemes had made; the peculiar barren paddocks where alien animals, one kind of crop, grazed imported grasses; the erosion, the overfertilization, the pollution . . . <sup>105</sup>

Maori have also become degraded. They are 'husks aping European manners and customs.'<sup>106</sup> Implicit in this argument is the concept that radical Maori activists are out of tune with their elders: the elders being the 'true' repository of what it means to be 'properly' Maori. Joe must consequently accept the conveniently passive outlook of the Kaumatua who complacently claims, 'Eternity is a long time. Everything changes, even that which supposes itself to be unalterable. All we can do is look after the precious matters which are our heritage, and wait, and hope.'<sup>107</sup> As Ruth Brown succinctly comments:

Joe becomes the paradigm of the Westerner's Maori - exorcised of all demons (including the desire to be anything other than a factory worker) and patiently awaiting the restoration of the spirit of the land. He thus fits docilely into place as

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<sup>105</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 371.

<sup>106</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 359.

<sup>107</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 371.

a worker within the capitalist state; existing material practices go on unimpeded. The system can demonstrate its regret that the land itself was removed from his ancestors by accepting that the 'spirit' of the land is rightfully his.<sup>108</sup>

Materialism, consequently, while ostensibly disparaged, remains like capitalism unchallenged. The movement of the characters toward 'maturity' does not entail the acquisition of material possessions - - Kerewin, for instance, 'has it all' and yet remains isolated, dissatisfied and unable to create - - the implication being that 'all' in the Pakeha sense is insufficient. This Pakeha 'all' however is not relinquished, but supplemented by the optional extra of Maoritanga. Kerewin, for example, retains her wealth and presumably her sole control over it. Power and prestige remain with her and like the Queen of the Treaty she is able to bestow largesse and entrance into the community/nation. Modern Pakeha thereby continue in a different guise the colonial paternal role of leadership and guidance. On a more detailed Oedipal level, this positions Maori resistance or 'rivalry' with Pakeha as an 'illegitimate' activity rather than one of hybridisation. Just as the narrative of the Oedipal drama, with its grounding in questions of property and inheritance, disordered the true line of inheritance, so the Pakeha appropriation of the land and nation can be read as a disordering of Maori inheritance to their land and rightful place in society. The narrative of *the bone people* has Joe removing himself from Pakeha society and hence from a situation of rivalry with Pakeha patriarchy as he seeks to become a 'father' of the new family/nation. In repossessing his cultural heritage of Maoritanga, Joe acts as representative Maori in rivalry with the Paternal British for possession of the nation. But rather than explicitly demanding his rightful inheritance, he takes back only that part of his heritage - - the spiritual - - which the Pakeha see fit to bestow. The story, then, remains caught within the parameters of patriarchal authority, tinged with the violence of the primal imperialist father.

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<sup>108</sup> Ruth Brown, 'Maori Spirituality as a Pakeha Construct', *Meanjin*, 48 (1989) p. 253.

It also, therefore, remains within the parameters of what is regarded as a Western sexism. While the characters are not rendered as simple reversals of gender stereotypes but exhibit complex mixtures of tenderness and aggression, selfishness and self-sacrifice, they nonetheless finally fall into more or less traditional roles. Joe, as already mentioned, takes on the role of 'father' of the new nation and Kerewin enacts the maternal role of 'Our Lady of Perpetual Succour' engraved on Simon's rosary by saving and caring for a vulnerable motherless child. Her status as 'neuter' which served to portray the non-sexual family here becomes problematic. There is no real resolution of her overriding individualism and isolation - - 'the cold-forged lady'<sup>109</sup> - - and the textual demand for commensualism. By remaining chaste and inviolate Kerewin perpetuates a sense of herself as 'pure' and refusing any form of postcultural contaminated subjectivity. Simon's sexual positioning in the novel is more complex. On the one hand, as outlined earlier, he is positioned as a 'hybrid' in that he figures as indigene through his textual association as Friday, and as foreigner through his connection to Europe and 'junk from the old dead world.'<sup>110</sup> In this respect his muteness is used to point to the articulation of a violent history of dispossession suggesting that it is the trauma of the past which has deprived him of speech. On the other hand his appearance is androgynous and he is described as 'that bloody little freak.'<sup>111</sup> His muteness here signifies not merely the absence of speech but an absolute refusal to produce symbolisation. Touch is the only trustworthy reality gauge he possesses and his identity is confirmed not through his difference to or separateness from others, but through a pre-oedipal interconnection which lacks discrete inter-subjective boundaries. To ground communication in the pre-oedipal phase explicitly requires non-verbal codes and a return to an ideal unbroken world, the world portrayed in the mythological union of Rangi and Papa. The world constructed in the novel, therefore,

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<sup>109</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 460.

<sup>110</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 103.

<sup>111</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 247.

must be sanctioned by an appeal to the Maori myth of origins as first principle. This may be taken to represent a subjectivity formed outside oedipal parameters, Simon remaining stubbornly physical, refusing to reduce himself to Kerewin's language, her categorisations, symbolically enacting in his own body his own structure of meaning. Ultimately this position is undercut by Kerewin who, having hunted for the truth of his story, examining the signs of abuse on his body, repeatedly questioning him and finally uncovering his 'real' name and origins, 'obviates the need to acknowledge (Simon's) silence by achieving a degree of self-enlightenment which putatively enables her to repair the rupture between Maori and Pakeha cultures. Simon's intractability is neutralised and he is reinscribed within Kerewin's voice, and thus finally incorporated into her enlightened personal vision.'<sup>112</sup>

In the failure to acknowledge the essential untranslatability of Simon's silence, the success of the attempt to construct a viable subjectivity outside Oedipal parameters while also supporting the vision of commensualism must be called into question.

Individualism in *the bone people* is equated with despair, isolation and a destructive violence. This form of subjectivity is seen as a defensive resistance in which both Joe and Kerewin are reluctant to identify with a Maoritanga offered as a form of treatment for the delinquent and dispossessed. They appear as either empty vessels or as cluttered by extraneous 'garbage' which must be jettisoned so they can be refilled with traditional values and rewarded with 'roots', pride and self-esteem. Although Kerewin sees life as 'a thing that grew wild' she also sees this attitude as something to be overcome and controlled. She therefore 'supposed there was an overall pattern, design to it.'<sup>113</sup> Her pursued aim to find this pattern is described as like that of aikido, to harmonise and unify all aspects of the world. On the one hand, to connect the individual to the social and natural environment, and on the other to resolve the internal conflicts of the individual

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<sup>112</sup> Susie O'Brien, 'Raising Silent Voices: The Role of the Silent Child in *An Imaginary Life* and *the bone people*', *Span*, 30, April (1990) p. 80.

<sup>113</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 95.

and unify the various dimensions of her existence - - physical, intellectual and spiritual. This enterprise is extended to incorporate the other characters within an overriding myth which seeks to reconcile the disparity between outside appearances and inner psychic reality by aligning the character's emotional lives with outside natural forces, the ebb and flow of thoughts, for instance, coming to correspond to the ebb and flow of the tide. In essence, this is a call to bring back the unified bourgeois subject, this time arrayed in ethnic dress. It requires a kind of imperialism of identity in that we are allowed only one identity and our politics must also have a single meaning. It misreads the psychoanalytic process as being one in which Maori culture as therapy will bring into being a conflict-free complete and achieved identity at will. By portraying characters who heal themselves by rejecting conflict, the novel seems to avoid the arena of political action. Loss of identity can be interpreted as a deficiency in Maori socialisation. It follows that anger at loss of sovereignty and resistance to becoming the proletariat for a capitalist economy can be translated into a psychological malaise. Once again, despite the novel's liberating gestures, wider Pakeha society comes to surround a 'narrower' Maori culture and determine its boundaries.

The use of language in the novel also belies its avowed aim to articulate a bicultural subjectivity by revealing similar ambivalences to those found in the Treaty. When Simon attempts to teach Kerewin 'his' language, she describes his gestures as 'an amerindian opening parley.'<sup>114</sup> This encounter between a physically and psychologically damaged European child and a part-Maori functions in the same way as does the construction of the non-biological family. It becomes analogous in reverse to the encounter between European and indigene, in which Simon as Friday is 'not a submissive servant but a wilful child.'<sup>115</sup> The contesting of mana between these two can, then, be

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<sup>114</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 23.

<sup>115</sup> Margery Fee, 'Keri Hulme', *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English*. 2 Vols., eds., Eugene Benson & L. W. Conolly (London: Routledge, 1994) p. 54.

interpreted as corresponding to the political and cultural difficulties of communication surrounding the Treaty. The consequent narrative desire to subvert and/or replace the earlier, overdetermined narratives of colonial encounter in which the 'word' played a crucial role in the production and maintenance of hierarchies of power is approached by two means.

First, a key role is played by Simon's muteness. Simon is characterised as 'the singer' and the music from his 'hutches' reproduces the organic patterns of the Maori creation myths so that, to quote Graham Huggan:

the regenerative process of Simon's music stands in ironic counterpoint to the Christian paradigms of genesis and resurrection. This 'natural' music thus subverts the imperatives of a culture based on the teachings of - and dependent upon the stable origins of 'the word'; at the same time it celebrates the capacity of the oppressed to make themselves heard in spite of being denied the right, or being dispossessed of the means to speak.<sup>116</sup>

Silence, however, is an ambivalent medium and may function, as it undoubtedly did in the colonial discourse surrounding the Treaty, as an instrument of domination. Without words Simon has little defence against being re-shaped in conformity with the desires of others. Ultimately Kerewin legitimises her social authority 'by effacing the silent subject that facilitated it.'<sup>117</sup>

Second, music is proffered as the non-verbal code of communication. The song is regarded as especially potent, and represents some privileged connection with atavistic voices from the past which heal and absolve. Kerewin encounters this voice when she discovers Tahora Raku, a greenstone pendant. She claims the discovery is followed by a series of nightmares accompanied by a voice. An explanation is later offered by the

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<sup>116</sup> Graham Huggan, 'Philomena's Retold Story', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 25:1 (1990) p. 18.

<sup>117</sup> Susie O'Brien (1990) p. 91.

Kaumātua, ' . . . the dead return as voices and dreams quite often. Sometimes there are very good reasons for their persistence in our world. Sometimes we have failed them.'<sup>118</sup> The restorative quality defining this voice is particularly evident in the prologue where the significance of 'the word' is underscored in the two flashback sections commencing 'In the Beginning.' Anna Smith describes this as the use of an incantatory language which creates a powerful sense of ritual:

Like a primitive chant or magic spell, this brief text calls the story to life and expresses faith in the engendering power of language whose sounds and formal placement enact a powerful textual message: that suffering individuals can be lovingly swallowed up and reconciled in the embrace of a community.<sup>119</sup>

One problem with this incantatory language associated with the re-enactment of archaic rituals is that it becomes part of the 'culture as heritage' syndrome and as such is divorced from language as an explicitly political discourse. But more significantly this language and its message is powerfully reminiscent of Biblical language and the Christian message. As with the language of the Treaty the anthropomorphic and mythological terms denoting Maori political thought are subsumed under Western cultural imperatives in which God, Queen and country are aligned. The obvious equivalent in *the bone people* is the linking between Simon, Kerewin and the redeeming of the land by Joe's acceptance of his role as guardian of the mauri, while Simon's associations with Maui and with Rehua, the golden haired child of Rangi and Papa, are subsumed under a textually more compelling affinity to Christ. He first appears 'like some weird saint in a stained gold window . . . shrouded in the dying sunlight.'<sup>120</sup> With a bleeding foot and a 'halo' of light he seems holy if not whole and his wound may be construed not as a punishment for

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<sup>118</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 353.

<sup>119</sup> Anne Smith, 'Keri Hulme and Love's Wounded Beings', *Opening the Book*, eds., Williams & Leggott (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995) p. 144.

<sup>120</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 16.

transgression but as a source of future power. He is of mysterious origins, possesses a precious rosary and a seemingly limitless ability to forgive any amount of abuse. There is also a strong association between the three characters and the Christian Holy Family with its virgin mother and foster-father Joseph. His final beating-cum-crucifixion is figured as necessary to redeem both the three and the country as a whole. Significantly the story ends at Christmas with a sense that the Kingdom has come.

This kingdom is designated as 'commensualism' which in dialogic terms Hulme has described as exploring the experience of, "living on the edge of two languages", on the edge of two selves named and constructed through language, a condition which (is) perceived as freeing that self from the oppression of a "monologic existence."<sup>121</sup>

The dislocation and despair of the isolated individual's 'monologic existence' is contrasted with the use of Maori as an 'authentic' language in which the more intimate or personal expressions of the self and of feeling can apparently be rendered with ease. While the combination of two languages ostensibly expresses the text's bicultural imperative by encoding difference this particular use of the Maori language denies it any viability in political dialogue and categorises it among the facets of culture as a form of therapy.

In the desire to subvert the conventionally unitary voice of command traditionally associated with the English language each of the three characters is permitted to speak for themselves constructing a narrative of disparate voices. The narrative process emphasises dramatic shifts between interior monologue and objective statements while crossovers between poetry and prose exacerbate the awareness that rigid categorisations are not being respected. However, this textual 'commensualism' is rendered problematic in that within the main body of the text the narrative on occasion moves almost imperceptibly from third to first person. As Chris Prentice notes:

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<sup>121</sup> Keri Hulme, quoted in Maryanne Dever, 'Violence as Lingua Franca', *World Literature Written in English*, 29: 2 (1989) p. 34.

the third person narrative contains passages written unmistakably in Kerewin's voice. Eventually Kerewin also pervades the consciousness of Joe and Simon. Joe is able to imagine in Kerewin's own likely words her reaction to hearing that Simon was a bedwetter, and Simon . . . begins to think to himself in Kerewin's distinctive idiom.<sup>122</sup>

For example, when talking to himself, he says 'Where the unprintable as Kere says did I put that berloody jersey? . . . Yeah, I'd believe it. On the berloody apricock floor.'<sup>123</sup>

Ultimately, the various, disparate voices within the text are assimilated into the overriding idiosyncratic language style associated with Kerewin.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, then, the Treaty of Waitangi which had the semblance of a factual document proclaiming an equal relationship between two peoples also contained projective material which ascribed to the Maori of the time a unified political body, a homogeneous voice and an acceptance of the mana of British institutions and New Testament Christianity. As later events were to prove Maori did not accept *kawanatanga* over *tino rangatiratanga* nor did they uncritically endorse the Christian message but produced prophetic movements which were tribal forms of cultural syncretism integrating Old Testament elements into a Maori conceptual framework.

*the bone people* also sees Maori as the Chosen People but in quite a different way. Here the projections are those of Western society's attraction towards primitivism which constructs Maori as a homogeneous group united by a spiritualism which is distanced from the political, social, and economic realities of life in the late twentieth century. This

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<sup>122</sup> Chris Prentice (1986) p.73.

<sup>123</sup> Keri Hulme (1985) p. 177.

serves to contain Maori as 'the good object of knowledge, the docile body of difference.'<sup>124</sup> Moreover, as Huggan comments:

The ironic counterpoint between Kerewin's discarded possessions and Timon's [Simon's father] re-emergent booty suggests that her previous cultural affiliations have, as it were, merely undergone a 'sea-change': the salvage of Timon's 'treasure' thus reconfirms her residual allegiance to a dominant culture which has absorbed wayward or recalcitrant elements within its own all-enveloping discursive system. In this sense, despite her cultivated eccentricity, Kerewin can paradoxically be seen as embodying the reactionary process of negative creolisation: mainly European, part Maori, she appears to disclaim the former to recuperate the latter but actually assimilates the latter within the former.<sup>125</sup>

Unquestionably *the bone people* continually gestures towards a bicultural identity, but finally remains inscribing Maori subjectivity within Western parameters in very similar ways to the Treaty. Like the Treaty, however, it also has a 'spirit' which introduces possibilities for other options. It is interesting in this regard to compare *the bone people* with the Te Maori exhibition which was hugely successful in New York in the same year as the novel was published. This success was regarded as a major boost for the Maori 'cultural renaissance' and a subsequent related exhibition, Taonga Maori, toured Australia and formed a long-term display in the National Museum in Wellington.

What is striking about both these collections is the exclusion of non-traditional contexts of production and any outside influences. Nicholas Thomas comments in this regard that:

despite the fact that most of the material was 19th century, and was therefore, made and collected during a period of intensive contact and rapid change, it was unambiguously associated through display captions and in the catalogue with a stable, authentic and radically different social universe that is characterised particularly by its holism, archaism and spirituality. The Taonga Maori catalogue reproduces this emphasis on the mystical associations of the objects and thereby

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<sup>124</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' (1994) p. 31.

<sup>125</sup> Graham Huggan (1989) p. 34.

leaves itself vulnerable to appropriation by white society with its craving for non-industrial authenticity.<sup>126</sup>

Ultimately, therefore, its construction of 'Maoriness' as having 'intimate connections' that constitute 'roots, origins and identity' is determined by its difference from an 'alienated' Pakeha identity. The Maoriness evoked here is similar to that incorporated in *the bone people* and as a construction of authentic spirituality marginalises many Maori who must negotiate non-traditional identities in urban contexts. The Taonga Maori exhibition portrays a correct ethnic authenticity against which many urban Maori can be judged as inadequate copies. In being associated strongly with the past, rather than with the contemporary life it ignores the circumstances of many Maori as well as the creative energy which can be drawn from the cross-fertilisation of postcultural identities.

However, this critique neglects the extent to which the exhibitions have played a crucial empowering role in the wider struggle for recognition and sovereign rights and the way in which they have clearly been enabling and empowering. In this respect essentialism rather than being conservative and retrogressive, has played a progressive role creating a degree of prestige and power for Maori that did not exist before the 1980s. *the bone people* has clearly participated in this process but also differs crucially from the exhibition by incorporating pronounced European literary influences including Yeats, Joyce, and Tolkein amongst others. This intertextuality, like the blending of poetry and prose, negates the respect for demarcations which keep things in their 'right place' and unlike the exhibition gestures, if only tentatively, towards postcultural solutions. It is in such instances that Judith Dale's assessment of the novel as unstable and contradicting its own ideas and structures would appear to be a most perceptive critique as such a construction

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<sup>126</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture* (Polity Press, 1994) p. 184.

undermines both Kerewin's claim that her new community forms a 'whole', and her aim to 'tie up loose ends.'<sup>127</sup>

On one level, then, the novel is not simply an attempt to rethink the categories of dominance, but also argues for imaginative intervention in events. The narrative desire to produce an 'authentic' Maori voice by working within and against the dominant Pakeha social imagery is evident in the transformation from the male characters in the writings of Frank Sargeson and Denis Glover to the highly articulate female character of Kerewin. However, Kerewin's dominant idiom subsumes 'other' voices, domesticating Simon and diminishing the political valency of his strategies of mimicry and hybridity. Likewise, in the proposed bicultural nation/community Kerewin's hold on wealth works against any notion of shared resources and maintains the tripartite structure of authority in the Treaty, while purportedly advocating policies of non-assimilation.

Those aspects of the novel which supposedly signify Maori 'difference' such as the use of the spiral motif are equally problematic. As argued earlier, the spiral form is figured as a post-colonial 'home' within the novel, and as an overall novelistic form. It thereby challenges the Western sense of what constitutes home and a novel by continuing the resistance strategies of nineteenth-century Maori and the pre-contact political and social intertribal relations. But the use of the spiral house does not function to the benefit of Maori as it is unrelated to genealogical links and their attendant power. The very basis of mana is thereby removed and Maori subjectivity in the novel is constrained within the parameters acceptable to Pakeha - - that is as ecologically and spiritually aware. This is particularly evident in the novel's invocation of unchanging tradition through spiritually authoritative Maori voices which are not only disembodied but have no known ancestral links to those who hear them. Even when the novel changes the traditions it revives, for example, in the use of a 'national' mauri, it would appear to be a Pakeha idea of what a

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<sup>127</sup> Judith Dale, 'the bone people (Not) having it Both Ways', *Landfall* 39. 4 (1985) p. 414.

national mauri should be. It consequently offers Maori little in the way of a counter-hegemonic voice which could be an active component of social and political transformation. There would appear also to be little in *the bone people*, therefore, which allows for 'tradition' and difference within the construction of a Maori subjectivity. Rather, a homogeneous Maori subjectivity is posited which seeks to contain Maori within a modern primitive construction. Nor does it offer a subjectivity which differs from that of the Pakeha without being 'fixed' and tradition bound. While all constructions of Maori subjectivity are inevitably imbricated in the ideological assumptions of the dominant Pakeha culture, those gestures in the novel towards disruption, mimicry and ambivalence are finally enclosed within the construction of a mythologised 'authentic' subjectivity which forecloses on the creation of those 'excessive' subject positions which may develop within hybridised possibilities.

### **Chapter Three: Utu in Utopia** **Missionaries & The Matriarch**

I would like to turn now to an examination of further nineteenth-century cultural and ideological factors which, like the Treaty of Waitangi, continue to bear upon Maori subjectivity and its literary representations in the 1980s. In particular, this chapter will analyse the utopian ideology of early Aotearoa/ New Zealand as a precursor of present day cultural exceptionalism and its attendant drive to contain Maori within Pakeha constructs of authenticity. Cultural exceptionalism, however, is not solely a Pakeha strategy of containment but is also employed by Maori in their assertions of being a 'special' people by virtue of their 'inherent' spirituality. Such present day forms of spirituality, while claiming 'authenticity' actually have their counterparts in nineteenth-century hybrid forms of spirituality such as the Ringatu religion. Both forms of spirituality are interpreted as acts of resistance produced in response to the hegemony of Western history and missionary discourse. Against the drives towards the 'myth of perfectibility' possible bicultural alternatives are posited. First, the Maori concept of utu as being one of reciprocity rather than a more direct notion of conflict and second, the meeting houses of the late nineteenth century decorated with figurative painting which blended Western and Maori artistic traditions into hybrid and syncretic forms.

Witi Ihimaera's novel, *The Matriarch*, is read against this background as a text which, like the discourse of utu, may figure as either violent revenge or accommodation. In much the same way as *the bone people* was seen to contain ideas and structures which worked against and de-stabilised each other, so *The Matriarch* is interpreted as advocating biculturalism through the character of Tamatea and the textual emphasis on Rongapai while also undercutting these constructions through a rendering of Maori as hapless victims of the colonial endeavour. Where the ascendancy of Western language was stressed in relation to *the bone people* it is

Western history which is examined as formative of the Maori subjectivity portrayed in *The Matriarch*. Ihimaera's cultural method is analysed as one which seeks to produce truth claims in fictionalised form in order to realise the possibility that literature might act as an oppositional cultural agent in the present. The problems with the novel, as I see them, arise because the discursive analysis of colonial power relations are essentialised as a model so that instead of historicising the object of analysis it effectively reads these relations as simply a mode in which Power is manifested. Such a model works against the novel's avowed intent to produce a bicultural solution in literary form for inter-ethnic relations in 1980s Aotearoa/New Zealand.

### Utopian Myths in Aotearoa/New Zealand

The utopian drive which forms part of the background to this discussion of *The Matriarch* is also, of course, strongly evident in the created culture of *the bone people*. This persistent paradisaean vision of the country seems deeply embedded in the culture and refuses against all odds to relinquish its position as over-arching myth. It is revealed, for example, in such instances of 'popular' culture as an advertisement for a Hawkes Bay winery frequently featured in two of the most popular New Zealand monthly magazines, *Metro* and *North and South*. This advertisement states in full page colour 'Legend has it that the garden of Eden was at the meeting place of two great rivers.' It then asks, ' Could it have been the Tutaekuri and the Ngaruroro?'<sup>1</sup> In its use of Maori names and a backdrop of lush rainforest such an advertisement functions on a popular level in similar fashion to *the bone people* by constructing an indigenous Arcadia, distinct, but at home in the Pacific. The danger inherent in this sort of construction was partly analysed in the preceding chapter but is summarised accurately by Mark Williams as one in which:

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<sup>1</sup> This advertisement has been featured throughout the year March 1995 - June 1996. See, for example, *North and South*, March 1996, p. 41.

The native will serve the purposes of an ancient but psychologically devious need among the descendants of the settlers to validate their appropriation of the original inhabitant's land by a further act of appropriation. To claim that one has come 'home' by virtue of having turned away from the European origin to discover the unique values of indigenous culture is in the interests of the claimants more that it is in those of the native peoples themselves.<sup>2</sup>

In this context, the use of a utopian imagery focusing on the nostalgic desire for a prelapsarian state free from conflict compounds the appropriation by envisioning the perfectible society in pre-colonial terms. The perfectly legitimate stress on a contemporary national identity built around a concern with ecological and anti-nuclear issues, on remaining 'in the middle of the planet's good lung'<sup>3</sup> takes on problematic connotations when it places itself, at least rhetorically, in opposition to a perceived materialism and alienation in the industrial societies of Europe and the U.S.A. and seeks to align itself with romanticised versions of pre-capitalist Maori society in which the values of *aroha*, community and spirituality, predominate.

This prevalent representation of a 'Maori condition' which is in some way utopian and not a participant in urban, commercial enterprises conveniently overlooks the economic disadvantage which is still the lot of most Maori. And, as with most Pakeha projections onto Maori, the utopian view contains its own ambiguity. As long ago as 1953 Robert Chapman pointed out in 'Fiction and the Social Pattern' that Pakeha writers have envied Maoris their freedom from those obsessions such as guilt and self-denial associated with a puritan work ethic.<sup>4</sup> To present a utopian image of the supposed 'Maori way of life' expiates Pakeha guilt over the reality of inequality while also maintaining those same structures of inequality.

Ironically, this dream is in fact the complete reversal of the ideals brought to Aotearoa by the settlers confident of British institutions and justifications of a policy of

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Williams, *Leaving the Highway. Six Contemporary New Zealand Novelists* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1990) p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ken Piddington, 'In the Middle of the Planet's Good Lung', *Kaupapa New Zealand, Vision Aotearoa*, ed., Witi Ihimaera (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1994) p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Chapman, 'Fiction and the Social Pattern', *Essays on New Zealand Literature*, ed., Wynstan Curnow (Auckland: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973) p. 97-8.

'amalgamation'. Current examples of the social dream, however, like their previous manifestations, must project their ideals into the future to compensate for current disillusionments. Aotearoa/New Zealand is consequently imagined as having 'the potential for being a model for the rest of the world in how it treats its people, how the people relate to each other, and how it looks after its people, young and old. We are a society that has the potential for being something quite special.'<sup>5</sup>

This cultural exceptionalism has been part of the mythology surrounding the country since early colonial times and was partially created from the need to attract settlers to a colony by professing to offer superior living and working conditions. The popularity of pastoral poetry which evoked pictures of an arcadian countryside deemed to have been destroyed by the Industrial Revolution proved a useful rhetorical weapon in this endeavour. Patrick Evans, for example, comments that:

The scouts the New Zealand Company sent here in the years before the Treaty saw the country through the golden lens of this poetry: even the air breathed a freshness that raised the spirits, one of them said; and another was fascinated by the unchanging nature of the local bush, presumably because in the never-never-land of pastoral poetry nothing ever seems to fade and die.<sup>6</sup>

The settler's idea of a pastoral Eden was not, however, a straight-forwardly egalitarian one. Bev James and Kay Saville Smith argue that:

British immigrants came to Aotearoa in the 1840s and 1850s bringing with them a vision of a classless society. This was not, however, a rejection of inequality. By the 1820s in Britain the word 'class' had become associated not merely with inequality, but with the systematic exploitation of certain sections of the community by others. The attempt to establish a classless society in New Zealand represented a repudiation of this and the notions of 'class interests' with which it was connected. It was a restatement of the 'naturalness' of social inequality. New Zealand seemingly provided an opportunity to re-establish the idea of a mutual dependency, exchange and respect between those of different 'stations'. For the gentry New Zealand was a haven from the apparent menace

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<sup>5</sup> Rosslyn Noonan, 'Voice, Choice and Safe Prospects', ed., Witi Ihimaera (1994) p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Evans, *The Penguin History of New Zealand Literature* (Auckland: Penguin, 1990) p. 19.

of working-class organisation and tensions in Britain. For Britain's new poor New Zealand held out the promise of a higher station. Perhaps more importantly, it offered an opportunity to reassert traditional rights of control over work and the means of survival which had been wrested from them by the onslaught of new industrial divisions of labour.<sup>7</sup>

The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and its 'one people' rhetoric can also be interpreted as part of the utopian dream surrounding the establishment of the colony. The humanitarian movement in England had reached the peak of its activities in the 1830s, and as Claudia Orange writes:

This was expressed in concern to 'protect' native races from the worst effects of uncontrolled European contact - disease, loss of land, degradation, depopulation, and ultimately racial extinction. In New Zealand they hoped to avert this 'fatal impact' to redeem the British record. This 'salvation', however, was not intended to preserve traditional Maori society but ultimately to destroy it and to amalgamate Maori with the settler community. The Treaty laid the basis for this amalgamation.<sup>8</sup>

Utopia in the South Seas, then, was unsurprisingly constructed solely from the settler perspective. What is perhaps most striking about the rhetoric surrounding these utopian notions in an avowedly secular country is the religious terminology in which it is couched - 'The Eden of the South Seas', 'God's Own Country' and so on. The literature of the young colony also tended to both reflect the dream of a better Britain of the south and to perpetuate it, thereby providing some sort of justification for a white settler society. Writers of the time saw both the bush and the Maori as obstacles in the way of 'progress' - something to be cleared and replaced in order to build an egalitarian society. Occasionally the tacit desire for annihilation concealed by the ideology of assimilation or amalgamation in the 'one people' myth erupted in blatant form. George Wilson in his *Ena, or The Ancient Maori*, (1874) is representative of this attitude when he stated, 'the aboriginal is giving place to the stranger; the

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<sup>7</sup> Bev James and Kay Saville Smith, *Gender, Culture and Power: Challenging New Zealand's Gendered Society* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1987) p. 2.

colonizing and aggressively civilizing energies of the latter have quite supplanted the retrogressive customs of the former.<sup>9</sup>

Despite their desire for new opportunities in an antipodean Eden, therefore, few settlers went to New Zealand as an act of deliberate rejection of the society in which they had been raised. Rather than asserting a sense of originality they tended to develop a cultural homogeneity based on Calvinistic principles of hard work and enterprise. Consequently, as Jeanine Graham describes the later situation:

The colony-wide recession of the 1880s revealed that the much vaunted levelling process for which the colony was famed was now something of a myth. Social divisions did exist and they were based upon wealth. This truth was all the more distressing because it was so much at variance with the dream that had prompted so many immigrants to come . . . Now that poverty and privilege had shown themselves to be present, it was time for a new phase to begin. There would be a conscious reaction against those aspects of the imported heritage that were inappropriate and hostile to a now cherished colonial ethos of open opportunity for all. Since the efforts of individuals had shown that it was impossible to protect that code, the state would have to safeguard it.<sup>10</sup>

The egalitarian myth was further enhanced in the 1890s when New Zealand introduced a series of social reforms, giving the country an international reputation as a social laboratory. Progressive labour legislation was passed as well as laws to alleviate the conditions of the poor. New Zealand women became the first in the world to obtain the national franchise.

Writers during this later colonial period were not therefore necessarily disillusioned by the economic recession and regarded current imperfections as providing an impetus to build a better future. Lawrence Jones notes that one expression of this outlook was to apologise for the ugliness caused by clearing the bush while simultaneously justifying it as a means to the end of creating the Pastoral Paradise. He writes that:

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<sup>9</sup> George Wilson, *Ena, or The Ancient Maori* (London: Smith Elder and Co., 1874) p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Jeanine Graham, 'Settler Society', *The Oxford History of New Zealand* ed., W. H. Oliver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) p.144.

As the blackened trees reminded the writers of the former grandeur of the forest, a necessary sacrifice to progress, so the deserted pa was a reminder of that other necessary victim, the Maori. The assumption of inevitable doom is there in the title of A. A. Grace's *Tales of a Dying Race*,<sup>11</sup>

and in *Tussock Land*, Arthur Adams wrote 'as a people the brown Maori must cease, for its destiny was intermarriage with the pakeha, bringing about the New Zealand race of the future.'<sup>12</sup>

The reality of New Zealand society was in fact much harsher than the legislative advances implied. The earlier economic supremacy of Maori had declined. The development of pastoral farming and the dramatic increase in the Pakeha population, the Land Wars and subsequent confiscations of land along with legislation changing communal ownership to individual tenure were all factors which contributed to their becoming a marginalised rural proletariat. For Pakeha, vast tracts of land suitable for sheep farming were now owned by a small number of wealthy buyers with the consequence that 'between the 1860s and the 1880s, a rural itinerant Pakeha population, which flooded the urban areas and roamed the countryside, came to be regarded as a major social problem.'<sup>13</sup> By the 1890s 'violence, drunkenness, gangs of street kids (larrikins), theft, gambling and "idleness" were endemic.'<sup>14</sup>

However, it was order rather than disorder which remained the dominant ideology of the emerging nation and by 1930 O. N. Gillespie could write in the introduction to his anthology of *New Zealand Short Stories*, 'With magical rapidity, bush lands became pastures, plains shone with wheat, towns and cities were built and a standard of material comfort was achieved possibly unequalled anywhere.'<sup>15</sup>

Bob Consedine was later to claim that:

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<sup>11</sup> Lawrence Jones, 'Versions of a Dream: Literature and the Search for Identity', *Culture and Identity in New Zealand* eds., David Novitz & Bill Willmott (Wellington: G. P. Books, 1989) p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur, H. Adams, *Tussock Land*, quoted in Lawrence Jones (1989) p. 192.

<sup>13</sup> Bev James & Kay Saville Smith (1989) p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> Bev James and Kay Saville Smith (1989) p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> O. N. Gillespie, quoted in Lawrence Jones (1989) p. 195.

A significant factor in maintaining the egalitarian myth is that the rich have managed to disguise their wealth and continue to identify with the struggle of the ordinary working person. Until recently people in New Zealand simply did not admit that they were wealthy, and poor people don't easily admit to being poor. The aspirations of people on low incomes are little different from those on high incomes. Political leaders, ruling at the behest of the economic elite, employ a rhetoric which persuades large numbers of people at the bottom of the economic heap that they actually represent their interests. Norman Kirk used to talk of 'the little man' and Rob Muldoon of 'the ordinary bloke'.<sup>16</sup>

It is partly this egalitarian myth which has made it so difficult for Pakeha New Zealanders to see themselves in the role of either colonial oppressors or violators of a potential Eden. However, the potential efficacy of the Maori dialogue of resistance began to reveal itself amid the 1980s nationalism. While many Pakeha who had been hearing and learning of the Maori case were dismissive of or antagonistic to Maori claims, some followed the Maori lead. At first left-wing feminists and anti-racist groups, then with marked impact from the early 1980s, church groups collected especially under the umbrella of the National Council of Churches, began to speak of Pakeha injustice to Maori. The government, especially the third Labour government of 1972-75 and the fourth Labour government of 1984, was attentive to Maori demands though facing constraints that the pressure groups did not. The outstanding success of *the bone people* and Witi Ihimera's *The Matriarch* have to be seen in this context of a criticism of Pakeha values which Pakeha themselves found acceptable. Mark Williams effectively summarises the situation as one in which:

Hulme's novel was addressed to the nation *as a whole* and called for a general change of bearings, a reformulation of the nation itself. In 1984-5 - the extended honeymoon period of the new Labour Government - a substantial section of the populace felt a broad sympathy for this call. The novel's impressive sales figures depended on its confirmation of a core of attitudes which were at the centre of a widespread nationalistic mood :- anti-cosmopolitanism, anti-colonialism, the desire for gods to replace the puritan

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<sup>16</sup> Bob Consedine, 'Inequality and the Egalitarian Myth', Novitz & Willmott (1989) p. 175.

ones the populace had ceased to worship . . . the novel, seeming to oppose the Pakeha, affirms the myth of perfectibility that has sustained their nationalism.<sup>17</sup>

Consequently, the dominant ideology of postwar New Zealand society, continually reinforced by political leaders of both National and Labour Parties, has remained one in which everyone received a fair share of the world's goods and everyone was moving in the same direction. The inequalities which existed were perceived as removable through hard work which would bring appropriate rewards. Even as late as 1992 New Zealand's participation in international yacht racing was endlessly advertised on national television with the refrain 'and the spirit of Endeavour will carry us on . . .'

Jonathan Lamb, however, in his article 'A Sublime Moment off Poverty Bay', brings very different associations to bear on this 'endeavour'. He discusses the difficulties inherent in the construction of a narrative purporting to relate 'real' historical events without actually supplementing the account with the writers' imagination. He cites the example of the various reports given of Captain Cook's encounter with a group of Maori in Poverty Bay on the 9th of October 1769. Cook's own version of events is instructive and Lamb recapitulates them in the following words:

Two days after the Endeavour anchored in Poverty Bay, four Maori were killed by a fusillade from the ship's yawl after a bungled attempt to intercept their canoe . . . three survivors were taken on board, fed, clothed and treated with all imaginable kindness . . . To the surprise of everybody (they) became at once as cheerful and Merry as if they had been with their own friends.<sup>18</sup>

This peculiar conjunction between amiability and violence might almost be taken as emblematic of a binary division or ambivalence underlying the 'prison of myth' of which Sidney Moko Mead spoke in his 1984 Winter Lecture.<sup>19</sup> It can be seen when the 'official' versions of 'first meetings' between Maori and Pakeha which stressed their

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<sup>17</sup> Mark Williams (1990) p. 196.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Lamb, 'A Sublime Moment off Poverty Bay, 9 October 1769', *Dirty Silence. Aspects of Literature and Language in New Zealand*, eds., Graham McGregor & Mark Williams (Auckland: Oxford University press, 1991) p. 101 & 103.

<sup>19</sup> Professor Sidney Moko Mead, 1984 Winter lecture given at Auckland University.

cordial and mutually beneficial aspects are placed alongside the story of continual Maori resistance to assimilation, or their refusal to accept the Pakeha version of paradise. It is present when cracks began to appear in the Edenic fortress during the 1930s when writers such as Allen Curnow, critical of the status quo, saw themselves creating what he later termed an 'anti-myth'. To these writers the intensely nationalistic activity around the Centennial of 1940 was an occasion for acerbic comment, while Maori seized the opportunity to embarrass the government. They publicly drew attention to claims and grievances, Ngai Tahu in particular stressing that the settlement of a claim officially recognised since the 1850s would have been an appropriate gesture in the Centennial celebrations. The division becomes overt in Patrick Evans succinct phrase describing Aotearoa/New Zealand as 'paradise or slaughterhouse', in Pat Hohepa's question whether the Treaty was 'a promise or a betrayal' and in Mark William's summary of the 1980s as characterised by 'violent dualities'. Its literary version, of course, was the striking conjunction of love and violence, aroha and utu depicted in *the bone people*.

### Utu

With the tendency in the 1980s to see the Treaty as having a spiritual value beyond its actual legal status and to define this in terms of Maori vocabulary - taonga, wairua etc., the concept of utu has re-emerged into prominence, and the possible social options for ameliorating conflict between Maori and Pakeha are seen in terms of the complex, overlapping meanings of utu.

In their structural analysis of Classic Maori society Allan and Louise Hanson interpret symmetrical relationships as those based on equivalence or reciprocity.<sup>20</sup> Utu is the active ingredient in maintaining these relationships in that each action on the part

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<sup>20</sup> Allan & Louise Hanson, *Counterpoint in Maori Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983) See in particular Chapter 5, 'Symmetry and Reciprocity'.

of one of the members must be countered with an utu or equivalent response on the part of the other.

Where the exchange was qualitative the utu should be equivalent but not identical to the initial act otherwise the dynamic quality of social life would be lacking.<sup>21</sup> In these instances the relationship could achieve an equilibrium in which gifts and counter-gifts could be exchanged indefinitely.

However, where the exchange was quantitative, there was an inherent instability as the size of the gifts increased with each step of the exchange.<sup>22</sup> The most common outcome of these relationships was for one of the parties to default, and while the relationship could then simply terminate, it frequently remained but its tone altered from one of cordiality to one of hostility. Instead of exchanging gifts the parties involved exchanged insults and injuries. The retaliation for an affront was also called utu, the appropriate utu to an insult was, of course, vengeance. Utu was, then, the hallmark of symmetrical relationships in either their cordial or hostile modes. For this reason, Maori were, according to Hanson and Hanson 'quick to recognise and resent any inclination not to fulfil one's proper obligations of reciprocity; they took it as an insult which demanded an utu in response.'<sup>23</sup> Naturally, at times this resulted in interminable feuds in which the exchange of utu could persist throughout generations.

Obviously the augmenting character of this sort of exchange meant they could not continue indefinitely. There were three options available to Maori under these circumstances. One was reconciliation; the mood of the exchange could be reversed from hostility back to cordiality. Secondly, each party could separate and withdraw from contact with each other and finally, one party could be subjugated by the other.

Subjugation is obviously not considered a viable option for either Maori or

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<sup>21</sup> Hanson & Hanson cite examples of qualitative exchanges as, 'seafood for inland food, greenstone for food, feathers or fine garments for the tattoo artist's skill. The net result of the exchange was that each party acquired something it had not had before.' p. 110.

<sup>22</sup> Hanson & Hanson cite the example of the haraki or feast and quote Raymond Firth as saying, 'The payment must if possible be somewhat *in excess* of what the principle of equivalence demanded, so that the transaction tended to resolve itself at times into an attempt by each party to outdo the other in giving.' p. 110.

<sup>23</sup> Hanson & Hanson (1983) p. 117.

Pakeha in the 1980s. Donna Awatere's *Maori Sovereignty*, however, laid the foundation stone for the separatist option. *Maori Sovereignty*, published as a book in 1984 originally comprised three essays written for *Broadsheet* between June 1982 and February 1983. The first essay, then, appeared just one year after the nation sustained one of the severest shocks to its belief in racial harmony - - the bitter divisions over the 1981 South African Springbok Rugby Tour. Awatere compounded the shock by publicly rejecting biculturalism as insufficient: 'The Maori must not any longer seek a bicultural sovereignty with the white nation . . . All efforts at biculturalism have only resulted in integration and assimilation, bitterness and tears.'<sup>24</sup>

The term 'sovereignty' points to Awatere's use of the Treaty as her authority. This authority derives from a history of opposition to Pakeha supremacy based upon one of a variety of understandings of the Treaty. In the years following the signing of the Treaty Pakeha officials tended to depict the Treaty in a benevolent light, giving Maori reason to believe that what they perceived as an agreement which upheld their mana and described an equal partnership between the two races, was still a viable proposition.<sup>25</sup> Despite continual disillusionment nineteenth-century Maori continued to believe in a Treaty interpretation allowing for equal participation in the governing of the country. In the 1880s they directed hundreds of petitions to the government and sent two deputations to England. Continuing failure did not stop these appeals and Maori protest turned to England and the monarchy again in the twentieth century.

It was, however, largely through this particular interpretation of the Treaty that Maori developed a unity of purpose, leading in the 1890s to the establishment of the Kotahitanga, or Maori parliaments, which aimed to secure legislative recognition and provide for equal participation in state affairs. While this movement declined around the turn of the century, the Kauhanganu, or King's parliament continued to meet and discuss Maori autonomy.

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<sup>24</sup> Donna Awatere, *Maori Sovereignty* (Auckland: Broadsheet, 1984) p. 59-60.

<sup>25</sup> Claudia Orange (1987), see 'Introduction', p. 1-6.

Awatere's radical solution, then, while continuing this tradition of the interpretation of the Treaty in terms of two separate but equal parliaments within the one nation has also come full circle by taking the stance that the Treaty now represents betrayal rather than promise. In the historical exchange of gifts it is Maori who have made all the concessions, and the Pakeha are seen to have defaulted from the obligations outlined by the Treaty. The subsequent 'feud' between the two peoples can best be terminated by radical political separation.

The response of Pakeha to Awatere's approach was not encouraging. As Claudia Orange explains:

To accede to Maori demands for autonomy would indeed be proof that the goal of 'one people' has not been achieved. And for many New Zealanders that remains the most significant aspect of the Treaty, the ideological base for the claim that New Zealand has treated its indigenous race well. Maori protest, therefore, has been regarded as a challenge to the nation's special identity. Yet continuing Pakeha sensitivity over Maori claims suggests that a residue of guilt remains. This gives New Zealand a 'moral imperative' to make the practice in race relationships fit the 'one people' ideal - - paradoxically the very position which many Maori have continued to challenge since the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

This 'moral imperative' generally takes the form of that second possibility, reconciliation and the reversal of hostilities back to cordiality. In practical terms this is expressed as biculturalism. Michael Neil, for example, in 'Coming home: Teaching the Postcolonial Novel' writes that *the bone people* 'in its tentative way holds out the possibility of a genuine homecoming for all the people of this country' but also warns 'we can only hope in the light of the novel's startling political innocence, that this is not merely another reflection from the imprisoning wall of myth'<sup>27</sup>

Hiwi Tauroa, the then Race Relations Conciliator, published in 1982 his report, *Race Against Time*, advocating an initial bicultural agenda for the country (multi-culturalism was the long-term aim) in which there would be 'two cultural foundations'

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<sup>26</sup> Claudia Orange (1987), p. 226.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Neil, 'Coming Home: Teaching the Postcolonial Novel', *Islands*, vol. 35 (1985) p. 53.

to New Zealand society. This construction rejected all aspects of assimilation without actually advocating a separation of State institutions. Its *utu* was one of reciprocity.

The following year, Greg Murphy produced his film *Utu* which set out to explore in greater depth the possible interpretations of, and suitable translations for *utu* into English. Martin Blythe recounts that 'In a publicity release for the film Murphy has translated *utu* variously as "reciprocation" "balance", "revenge" "compensation" "payment", to which reviewers have added "retribution" "atonement" "honour" and "justice".'<sup>28</sup> The film itself is an attempt to come to terms with the complexity of *utu* as a concept.

While the character Te Wheke represents the separatist option, *utu* as revenge against the Pakeha for a hundred and fifty years of history involving atrocities, deception and dispossession, the ambiguous humour and political affiliations of Lieutenant Scott and Wiremu provide for the possibility of a bicultural politics. This biculturalism is constructed in the *utu* at the resolution of the film and provides the alternative metaphor of fratricide to the Pakeha solution of miscegenation. Intermarriage is discounted as a possibility when Te Wheke executes Kura following her relationship with Scott. Martin Blythe sums up this resolution in the following words:

If the execution of one's own brother is the price to be paid for national reconciliation, what greater (self)-sacrifice can be expected of another? This implies a fraternal relationship between Maori and Pakeha which is sealed in blood, *mana* and *utu* and it must humble others present who have personal motives of revenge. Wiremu's gesture is in effect a reduction to silence after the last shot is fired. *Utu* ends with the promise of unity, and there is integrity in that stance.<sup>29</sup>

The metaphor of the treaty as a 'marriage of (in)-convenience', with its implicit sexual and racial inequalities, is replaced by the fraternal *aroha* of qualitative interactions, an *utu* symbolising equilibrium in which there is a dynamic interplay

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Blythe, *Naming the Other* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1994) p. 235.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Blythe (1994) p. 248.

between equivalent, but not identical, exchanges. If this construction can still only exist within a projected utopian domain, it appears to have the advantage of escaping the familiar binary division to open up multivalent possibilities. The crucial question must be, in employing this new signifier, *utu*, in place of the previous 'one people' signifier, does this alter the structures of society in such a way as to give rise to new, less restrictive constructions of subjectivity or does it merely substitute one form of totalising discourse for another?

Where the Pakeha idealisation of 'one people' also reveals a desire to incorporate Maori to the point where they no longer exist as a separate entity, the Maori desire for *utu* while it allows for a 'fraternal' link between Maori and Pakeha, also harbours the desire of a warrior ethos for violent revenge with all its attendant possibilities of escalating violence.

### *The Matriarch (1986) and Historical Discourse*

It is through the negotiations around a desire for bicultural solutions, and the passionately felt anger and need for vengeance, at least in a literary sense, that I would like to examine Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*, seeing its historical analysis as oscillating between a bicultural imperative, figured through the adult character Tamatea and the meeting house Rongapai, and an oppositional stance figured largely through a sense of outrage starting with the actions of missionaries in particular, and interpreting most of the colonising process as a logical series of consequences following on from the missionaries' supposedly wholly negative influences.

Ihimaera has always publicly aligned himself with a politics of biculturalism, believing:

If we don't establish a sense of biculturalism in New Zealand now, which is an equality between Maori and Pakeha in New Zealand then either New Zealand will be completely monocultural, or else there will be another revolution or

retaliation like Te Kooti's and after it there will be another backlash against the Maori people. In both cases Maoris will lose.<sup>30</sup>

Such statements gain authority from Ihimaera's prominent place among Maori writers both as the first Maori writer to publish a collection of short stories in English (*Pounamu, Pounamu*, 1972) and later as a prolific novelist and editor. His early novels *Tangi* (1973) and *Whanau* (1974) and a further collection of stories *The New Net goes Fishing* (1977) were summed up by Winston Rhodes as 'an impressive attempt to communicate between two cultures which, however much they mingle, are likely to remain different until that remote and unforeseeable time when the traditions on which they are based become indistinguishable.'<sup>31</sup>

Following this initial period of success Ihimaera deliberately withdrew from writing for a number of years to forge a new approach which he felt would be more in keeping with the political climate of the time. *The Matriarch*, winner of the Wattie Book of the Year Award in 1986, was the result of this period of reassessment. It has been described as a voluminous historical novel which 'attempts to record the whole response to colonisation, political, military and psychological of the Maori people during the one hundred and fifty years of Pakeha occupation.'<sup>32</sup>

Any critique of the novel as a fictional representation of historical events must engage with the problem of the nature and status of the 'fact' in both history-writing and fiction-writing. It is therefore important to ascertain whether Ihimaera is engaging with history from a standpoint which challenges totalising Western discourses or whether he is seeking to write outside this particular European tradition to bring attention to a specifically Maori epistemology. If the writing is a literary attempt to give voice to all that Pakeha history has 'silenced' it would operate as straightforwardly oppositional and would suffer from the same limitations as the relativist reactions to the conventional notion of authoritative empirical history of which Nicholas Thomas

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted by Roy Murphy in 'A Boy From Gisborne Pens A Success Story in The Big Apple: Reluctant Writer Comes of Age', *Dominion Sunday Times*, June 7th, 1987. p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Winston H. Rhodes, 'Tangi', *Landfall*, No. 108, December (1973) p. 351.

<sup>32</sup> Mark Williams (1990) p. 119.

writes: 'a plurality of interpretations may be seen merely as the obverse of a unitary archive of facts.'<sup>33</sup> But in espousing a *particular* Maori discourse with its own brand of epistemology Ihimaera would be claiming an essential Maoriness at variance to the process described by Homi Bhabha when he states:

Subjects of cultural difference do not derive their discursive authority from anterior causes - be it human nature or historical necessity - which, in a secondary move articulate essential and *expressive* identities between cultural differences in the contemporary world. The problem is not of an ontological cast, where the differences are effects of some more totalising, transcendent identity to be found in the past or the future. Hybrid hyphenations emphasise the incommensurable elements as the basis of cultural identifications. What is at issue is the performative nature of differential identities: the regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, *contingently*, opening out; remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference . . . Such assignments of social difference - where difference is neither One nor the Other but *something else besides, in-between* - find their agency in the form of a 'future' where the past is not originary, where the present is not simply transitory.<sup>34</sup>

On a general level, Ihimaera's writing of a historical novel from the Maori perspective challenges the Pakeha impulse to totalise and contests the Pakeha notion of *continuity* in history and its writing. The old imperialist stories of the supposedly uninterrupted march of 'progress' are fragmented by an epistemological questioning of the nature of historical knowledge. Which 'facts' make it into history? And *whose* facts? And does what actually become fact depend as much as anything else on the social and cultural context of the historian? While it is unquestionably desirable for Maori to write their own history rather than merely being written about, it cannot be presumed that these writings can transcend the colonial framework through which history has been produced in a straightforward and unproblematic manner. It is, however, through the writing of diverse local perspectives that the critique of official versions of history becomes possible. In other words, although history is the recording of an empirical past, the events so recorded are constructed as facts through a process

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<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Thomas, 'Partial Texts', *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 25 (1990) p. 140.

<sup>34</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'How Newness Enters the World' (1994) p. 219.

of selection and narrative positioning. Consequently beside the Pakeha 'official' history, which Ihimaera sees as the distortion of historical facts to accommodate Pakeha perspectives he places the traducing of the Maori people's way of life and world view. The novel's engagement with history as a central political concern is because that history is seen to have denied colonised people a past and therefore also a viable present and future. Ihimaera addresses this different understanding of history between Maori and Pakeha:

Ask who discovered New Zealand and you will be told Abel Tasman. But the answer, as given by Maori history is Kupe . . . And that, quite simply, is why I began to write. To make New Zealanders aware of their 'other' Maori heritage. To convince my countrymen, with love and anger, that they must take their Maori personality into account.<sup>35</sup>

Consequently the meeting between Captain Cook and the Maori in Poverty Bay is also rewritten: 'the glorious birth of the nation has the taste of bitter almonds when we remember that six Maoris died so that a flag could be raised and that the Endeavour had lain in Poverty Bay for only two days and 14 hours'<sup>36</sup>

In order for this oppositional history to escape from merely being a replacement which totalises in much the same manner as the Pakeha history which Ihimaera is seeking to revise, the pose of objectivity and disinterestedness that denies the interpretative and implicitly evaluative nature of historical representation must give way to provisionality. Knowing the past must be seen as a question of representing, that is, of constructing and interpreting, not of objective recording. Histories, as Thomas writes:

do not merely differ and enrich knowledge through complementary diversity. Rather they reflect interests in practical projects, in legitimising or destabilising; . . . But histories are also partial in the sense of being culturally and politically interested, and must be exposed to commentary and debate.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Witi Ihimaera, 'Why I Write', *World Literature Written in English* Vol. 25, No. 1 (1975) p. 117.

<sup>36</sup> Witi Ihimaera, *The Matriarch* (Auckland: Picador 1988) p. 37. First Published Auckland; Heinemann Publishers, 1896.

<sup>37</sup> Nicholas Thomas (1990) p. 145.

When creating a novel which is essentially a dramatised version of history the usual literary strategies employed in this endeavour are those of mimicry and parody, of an ironic rather than ascriptive narrational stance. Ihimaera deliberately mixes fact and fiction, his narrator Tamatea self-consciously introduces characters to the reader and discusses the narrative process. He conjures up characters, issues stage directions and provides these characters with words to explain events to come. All this is justified by Tamatea by claiming authority from his grandmother: 'the matriarch herself would have approved of this. After all, she was the one who turned my own life into fiction from fact'<sup>38</sup> This mixing of fact and fiction in the novel takes place on both an individual and a general level. Tama's personal history is associated with the Maori struggle for autonomy and via the matriarch with Risorgimento Italy. History is linked to Maori mythology, Italian and Greek culture and Classical mythology.

Tama's search for the 'truth' about his grandmother and himself can never be definitely established as there is no reliable source of information. The matriarch herself played around with stories while her husband's 'self-image went beyond idolatry, into the realm of deception.'<sup>39</sup> As for the narrator's own parents, Te Ariki always told 'an edited version of the truth'<sup>40</sup> and Tiana 'kept on changing the rules.'<sup>41</sup> The Pakeha journalist who recalls events for Tama's benefit does not understand Maori so his understanding of what is taking place is compromised. Ultimately there is no direct access to the 'truth' because the narrator's recollection of events is coloured not only by his imagination, but in the psychologist's opinion, by a deliberate self-deception:

My own view . . . is that you're telling me a story, a fantasy, and you have used your intelligence to make it so believable that you believe it yourself. The truth must be simpler, and you are hiding it from me and yourself also . . . I

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<sup>38</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 216.

<sup>40</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 58.

<sup>41</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 54.

would suggest that you were jealous, sexually of your grandfather. The matriarch was a goddess.<sup>42</sup>

In its interpretation of the broader historical picture the novel adopts a similar strategy. Ihimaera acknowledges, 'J.B. MacKay's *Historical Poverty Bay* . . . W. H. Oliver's *Challenge and Response* (which) gave an economic perspective and Anne Salmond's *Hui* . . . Tiaki Mitchell's *Takitimu* was consulted on tribal and genealogical aspects, and Parliamentary Hansards and Maori Land Court records, read in the Turnbull Library, Wellington, have been reprinted in the section on Wi Pere Halbert.'<sup>43</sup> Sections of writing from these sources are slotted together, along with interjections and comments, like garnered images and clippings which finally form a collage. However, the literary process here is one which, I believe, differs significantly from those forms of writing whose debts to other writers serve to debunk fetishised notions of originality and the totalising discourse of epistemological signifiers. Such texts consistently use and abuse actual historical documents in such a way as to stress both the discursive nature of those representations of the past and the narrativised form in which we read them. In Ihimaera's novel, on the other hand, archival sources are used as a backdrop to an alternative, polemical account of history, providing a 'false' version which is replaced by a 'true' one. A rhetoric of outrage functions to discredit supposedly objective and disinterested accounts and ultimately undercuts the narrator's avowed stance in which *all* histories are partial truths. 'All truth is fiction really, for the teller tells it as he sees it, and it might be different from some other "teller".'<sup>44</sup> Those apparently objective and balanced accounts of the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand written by Europeans in which the content appears as a matter of common sense and deductive logic gain their authority from the assumption that realism is an inherently truthful mode of representation. Realism, however, is a point of view about the proper significance of certain events. For Ihimaera, ideological challenges to this version of

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<sup>42</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 409

<sup>43</sup> Ihimaera (1988) Acknowledgements.

<sup>44</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 403.

history, in the form of sarcastic or bitterly angry comments, actually function in much the same way - - as a sort of updated version of realism providing the reader with 'inside' knowledge of what 'actually' happened and effectively drawing the reader in to become an aware collaborator. Here, the narrator seems to be proclaiming is the *real truth*, - - and the distance between the voice of the narrator and that of the author becomes imperceptible. The arrival of the first Europeans is cast from a wholly negative viewpoint:

Then on 7 October, 1769 reports came to the village and spread right throughout the lands of the Te Aitanga A Mahaki of a huge white bird anchoring on the bay. It carried a cargo of gods, like the Takitimu, but these gods brought death, not life.<sup>45</sup>

Pakeha actions in post-settlement Aotearoa/New Zealand are then summarised in one sweeping sentence: 'All these Pakeha strode through the villages, the hundreds of pa sites, smothering the Maori fires and razing the temples of pagan religion.'<sup>46</sup> The Pakeha, whom Ihimaera then addresses as a generalised 'you' can also be imagined as all equally racist and afraid of Maori 'difference':

You might have got close enough to look into the eyes of these people. You might even have seen the outer perimeters of their villages. But beyond that, beyond the darkness, you would not have wished to venture. After all, you would have heard that they ate human flesh. They killed wantonly. They were savages ruled by superstition and beliefs in carved wooden idols . . . So you would have felt it best not to look into the eyes of the natives or into their villages; and you would have made the sign of the cross in thankfulness that religion, Christian religion, was coming to change their ways and the rule of British law was being imposed. Better still, at least they were still mainly *fighting one another* and not yet the Pakeha. And you had the musket.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 102.

<sup>46</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 46.

<sup>47</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 48-9.

The overgeneralisation that all Europeans were racist invaders provides little in the way of help in determining the ramifications of the colonial experience for the present. Such statements tend to collapse history and obscure the complex interactions and tensions of colonial society, to ignore the different aims of missionaries and settlers, and the fact that inter-tribal warfare affected both the missions and the Pakeha settlements. Ihimaera, in fact, undermines his own approach on the same page by turning to address an individual Pakeha who, rather than being afraid of entering a Maori village, married a Maori woman and possibly sold guns to Maori:

(let me address you, my Pakeha ancestor, Thomas Halbert: you married into the Maori people of Turanga and you had children of mixed blood. Could it be possible that, in the burgeoning years, you disowned your Pakeha heritage for the sake of the Maori? Did you encourage your son, Wi Pere, to take up the cause of the oppressed? Ah yes, I divine the seeds there, my Pakeha ancestor. Sympathiser. Pro-Maori. Gun runner.)<sup>48</sup>

It is, however, the missionaries whom Ihimaera pinpoints as fundamental agents in the historical domination of Maori. Their role is negatively implicated in all that followed - - the Treaty, the Land Wars and the general alienation and marginalisation of Maori up to the present day.

### **The Missionary Version of Utopia**

Ihimaera introduces the subject of missionaries as part of a general atmosphere of tension and overt violence in which the spiritual and the material are inextricably mixed:

There had already been many violent clashes and slayings: Maori and Maori, Maori and Pakeha. The former were continuations of earlier conflicts in line with the concept of utu. Those between Maori and Pakeha were frequently

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<sup>48</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 49.

caused by violation of the laws of tapu - even by the evangelists. Increasingly, there were many quarrels and armed raids over land and business transactions.<sup>49</sup>

It is a world where not only is 'the conflict over the land, the tinana, but also over the spirit, the wairua'<sup>50</sup> and is depicted as one of straightforward oppression: '... a world ... pressed upon by a Pakeha thumb, pushing on the tattooed temple and relentlessly cracking and crushing the skull.'<sup>51</sup> There is a sense in which missionaries are seen as having performed the final, ultimate outrage: 'It wasn't good enough just to take away our lands. Oh no, the Pakeha had to take away our souls too! Not only did we have to give up our physical world, we had to give up our spiritual world as well.'<sup>52</sup> Here, all the active verbs are applied to Pakeha and the Maori are apparently purely passive victims who *have to* give up their land and their souls. The result is a sense in which the novel reifies power into a monolithic presence, always already invested in, determined by, and flowing from and back to the dominant cultural and political authorities. The criticism of Pakeha in *The Matriarch* undoubtedly bears witness to the unequal forces of cultural representation involved in the 'contest' for political and social authority in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It thereby also intervenes powerfully in the ideological discourses of Pakeha which attempt to describe as 'normal' the differential and often disadvantaged history of Maori. What the novel fails to do in formulating a critical revision around issues of cultural difference, authority and discrimination is to 'reveal the antagonistic and *ambivalent* moments within the "rationalisations" of modernity.' (my italics)<sup>53</sup>

It is undeniable that the missionaries' aim was to convert Maori. As Ranganui Walker expresses it: 'Unlike the traders, who were motivated only by commercial gain, the missionaries were the cutting edge of colonisation. Their mission was to convert

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<sup>49</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 69.

<sup>51</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 49.

<sup>52</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 71.

<sup>53</sup> Bhabha, 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern' (1994) p. 171.

the Maori from heathenism to Christianity and from barbarism to civilisation.<sup>54</sup> It was, of course, this uncritical identification of Christianity with British civilisation and national identity which was so problematic, as the missionaries' teachings were based on the confusion of technological superiority with moral superiority. As Judith Binney states:

Christianity and civilization still remained inextricably mixed in the minds of missionary and pupil. The settlers held out their civilization as God's reward for faith: 'Once we were as you are, clad as you are, living in houses similar to yours, but you see now we possess all things.' Initiation into a European way of life still remained an ultimate objective. Yate was quite orthodox when he asserted that the virtue of industriousness was a Biblical injunction; only the useful man would be saved, insisted the nineteenth-century capitalist. Consequently the 'real and imaginary' needs of Maoris had to be increased, a 'spirit of trade' excited, and in response to these new and 'artificial wants to which they had never before been accustomed', the missionaries would inculcate new skills and gradually the Maoris would be introduced to middle-class English ways. They were to become civilized and godly mechanics in a world where each man had his place in 'just relation.'<sup>55</sup>

*The Matriarch* tends to compound this confusion between Christianity and civilisation by conflating the desires of the missionaries and those of the settlers. Ihimaera quotes the Rev. T.S. Grace as saying:

The natives . . . have attained a degree of business intelligence beyond what might have been expected in so short a period. Their motto is now: 'Ploughs, sheep and ships,' to establish a civilisation like unto that of the Pakeha. I had had much conversation with some of them individually, but now they appear in a body to lay hold of these ideas with a giant grasp, and, so far, I must say they have continued to work them out with a steady determination such as I never thought them capable of.<sup>56</sup>

The narrator then continues:

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<sup>54</sup> Ranganui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matu* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1990) p. 85.

<sup>55</sup> Judith Binney, 'Introduction' to William Yate, *An Account of New Zealand and of the Church Missionary Society's Mission in the North Island* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1970) p. vii.

<sup>56</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 50.

*Like unto the Pakeha.* But there is an inequality here, a basic obscenity. The Pakeha do not want the Maori to be equal. In the 1860s they did not wish the establishment of anti-selling land leagues throughout Aotearoa. Nor did they view the setting up of a Maori King in the Waikato as anything but an affront to their British monarch.<sup>57</sup>

Such claims fail to distinguish between many settlers for whom indigenous rights were considered a matter only for idealists and the missionary evangelism which presumed a shared humanity with Maori. This undoubtedly entailed an interest in incorporating the other, but had the benefit at least of not viewing the Maori as savages who were irredeemably separate and distant. The supposed unity of purpose in the advance of Western hegemony is described in John Lawrence's words as one in which it was 'intolerable that Christian ministers could equate (the Maori) people with savagery and paganism and therefore quite blithely establish a religion that was just as savage and as pagan.'<sup>58</sup> The claim that the missionaries of their own volition 'blithely established' Christianity in Aotearoa/New Zealand fails to distinguish between the missionaries' avowed intent and their actual effect. It is through such mandates that *The Matriarch* limits its potential as an oppositional agent by addressing the cultural economy of domination from a standpoint which simply reiterates a tautology - - that domination dominates. In fact, at least initially, the missionaries' impact was slight and not necessarily what they had anticipated. Even where they were most active amongst Ngapuhi in the Bay of Islands, they did not have much success until the 1820s.

For the first missionaries, Thomas Kendall, William Hall, John King and their families, life was often precarious. British Protestant missionary activity was still in its first generation and there was no immediate tradition to call upon to help with missionary methodology. In fact, they had little control over the effects of their activities as they were too few in number, but Maori evangelists and the printed word tended to go before them and exert their own influence. The real issue therefore was that of the domination of missionaries by Maori:

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<sup>57</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 50.

<sup>58</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 69.

The missionaries were right in believing that they were permitted to remain in New Zealand for Maori reasons. Nevertheless, independence from the Bay Maoris could be won, but not through arms. When the settlers were able to break their economic dependence upon Ngapuhi and when war-weariness created for them a decisive role in Maori society, that of peacemakers, then the relationship between the mission and the Maoris changed. The year 1828 was the turning point in the North. The Maori attitude altered towards the missionaries only when they ceased to be certain that they controlled the Pakeha and his goods and when their confidence in their ability to choose and manipulate the elements of civilization introduced to them began to fail.<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, missionaries' misconceptions of Maori society and the responses which would be elicited by their ministrations were frequently at variance with the actual situation. Judith Binney writes, for example, of Marsden's understanding of how Maori would respond, saying:

To Marsden it seemed that the 'great doctrine of atonement for sin' would be easily understood by the Maoris because they were taught as young children to understand the principle of payment and reparation - utu. Such false parallels were an easy illusion and the realities of the day to day situations did not modify the basic certainty that the Maoris were more prepared for the acceptance of the gospel than any other 'uncivilised' people.<sup>60</sup>

In fact, the missionary view of salvation had little to offer to Maori with their strong communal identity. The concept of individual repentance and conversion leading to a separation from others was alien to their outlook. Faced with the penetration of this alien way of life, Maori responded with the common reaction of cultural self-assertion and an increased aggressiveness of traditional behaviour largely in the form of an escalation of intertribal warfare. Hongi's attitude towards Christianity was not uncommon - - he considered it a religion possibly fit for slaves but irrelevant for warriors.

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<sup>59</sup> Binney (1968) p. 80.

<sup>60</sup> Judith Binney, *The Legacy of Guilt. A Life of Thomas Kendall* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1968) p. 73.

Later, as intertribal conflict lessened, aspects of missionary influence such as proficiency in literacy were adopted by Maori as a new way of pursuing traditional rivalry and a new source of mana. William Yate spoke in 1835 about 'the thirst for knowledge which has been excited among the New Zealanders . . . Everyone now wishes to learn to read and write.'<sup>61</sup> The desire to own prayer books, for example, led to men walking miles to mission stations and paying high prices for books. Building the largest chapel was regarded as an opportunity for competition and missionaries continually complained about the lack of true believers. This is not, of course, to claim that Maori could speak for themselves in some alternative set of purely oppositional acts or texts. Oppositional discourses of those who are subordinated, however, even though they are vulnerable to the neutralising force of containment, are multivoiced and cannot be denied agency, nor can their subversive resistance be understood *simply* as the product of the dominant culture's power. It is specifically within this area that *The Matriarch's* use of the fact/fiction couplet becomes problematic. On the one hand the assertions of wholesale Maori domination by Pakeha are rendered through an empiricist conception of the past. On the other hand, the narrative desire to construct a bicultural solution through the telling of history as a story which beckons to a utopian future demands a view of the past as a discursive construct. Ultimately, those sections of the text which advocate biculturalism either through Tamatea's personality or the agency involved in the hybrid solutions to domination such as the Ringatu faith and figurative painting are undermined by the strength of the empiricist elements of the narrative. This is made clear in the passages dealing with the question of why large numbers of Maori accepted Christianity in the 1830s and 1840s after initially rejecting it. There were many, varied reasons for Maori conversion in large numbers at this time. War-weariness, depopulation caused by disease, new ways of life and cultural confusions were undoubtedly among them. Trade and European goods also led Maori

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<sup>61</sup> William Yate, quoted in Allan K. Davidson, *Aotearoa/New Zealand. Defining Moments in the Gospel-Culture Encounter* (Geneva: Gospel & Cultures Pamphlet 12, World Council of Churches, 1996) p. 6.

to associate with missionaries. An acceptance of Christianity represented a logical development as Maori became more closely involved in the European world.

In writing of this period Ihimaera asks if the use of native teachers was responsible for missionary success:

Was this why conversion was so successful? By placing the cross in the hands of Maori dupes and telling them to go forth and let the cross shine that the people would be dazzled unto the Pakeha? It may well have been this way. The object of baptism was to have the Maori name suppressed and to receive a new name. It was to become also a partaker of the things of the Pakeha.<sup>62</sup>

The expression 'Maori dupes' implies once again a lack of agency on the part of Maori which is at variance with the dynamic and complex responses to Christianity which evolved. As Binney explains:

Maori responses to Christianity ranged from rejection to total acceptance. Sometimes only one facet of missionary teaching, such as medicine or the idea of the Sabbath as a day of rest, was accepted. Sometimes cult movements produced a new blend of Maori and Christian ideas. Among those who formally accepted missionary teaching there was every variety of belief and practice. There were also those who simply used traditional or Christian ideas or practices as they seemed appropriate.<sup>63</sup>

Ihimaera's use of the term 'Maori dupes' negates both the role of maker of meaning which he later wishes to assign to Te Kooti and the fact that Maori in general made choices concerning their acceptance or rejection of Christianity. In fact, by the 1840s and 1850s missionaries noted that many Maori were not as enthusiastic about the church as they would have wished. In part, the influence missionaries had before 1840 came from their involvement in Maori society and the European political vacuum in New Zealand. After 1840 their authority was undermined and marginalised by the

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<sup>62</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 72.

<sup>63</sup> Judith Binney, 'Part 1, Beginings. New Zealand Before Annexation', *Oxford History of New Zealand*, eds., W.H. Oliver & B.K. Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) p. 38.

growth of the colonial government. For Maori, the relationship between the missionaries and the government authorities both before and after the Treaty was ambiguous while religious instruction offered them little help in combating the colonising movement. It was the source of European secular power which became increasingly important as it became evident that the missionaries' ability to protect Maori from settler pressure for more land was partial and compromised. There were, however, from the outset, tensions between the missionaries and those leading the colonising movement. The missionaries were committed to working with and for the Maori and were seen by the colonisers as barriers to their acquisition of land for settlement.

The Protestant missionaries had at first opposed annexation, but when the influx of colonists made this inevitable, they accepted it and tried to protect Maori interests . . . After 1840 missionaries often defended Maori interests threatened by settler demands. George Clark senior became the Chief Protector of Aboriginies under the first two Governors, Hobson and Fitzroy, and several missionary sons were employed as subprotectors and later as National Department officials. George Clark junior actively defended Maori claims against those of the New Zealand Company. With the outbreak of war in 1860, several missionaries defended Wiremu Kingi's claim to the Waitara.<sup>64</sup>

Yet Ihimaera has John Lawrence claim of the missionaries:

They used their Bibles as swords to split the people in half; . . . to divide them, so that when conflict between Maori and Pakeha came in the 1860s they had the majority of Maoris right in their pockets, singing hymns and asking God's forgiveness upon those other Maoris who had gone astray like tattooed sheep.<sup>65</sup>

Once again, the novel's truth claims appear to be based upon assumptions that history influences the present as a set of real past events rather than constructing an account

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<sup>64</sup> 'Maori and Pakeha. Part II, Growth and Conflict', Oliver & Williams (1981) p. 171.

<sup>65</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 70.

of events in their bearing on currently existing relationships. While the cultural method of *The Matriarch* is undoubtedly based on a desire to unsettle the dominant Pakeha ideology and to undermine its authority, it is only able to do so through the setting up of an alternative truth claim. The novel consequently forfeits its potential to function as a cutting edge within the present, opening up theoretical and political spaces in which to establish discontinuities and difference. The narrative method is, in Bhabha's terms, one of epistemology rather than enunciation. He describes the difference as one in which:

Culture as epistemology focuses on function and intention . . . culture as enunciation focuses on signification and institutionalization . . . The epistemological is locked into the hermeneutic circle, in the description of cultural elements as they tend towards a totality. The enunciation is a more dialogic process that attempts to track displacements and realignments that are effects of cultural antagonisms and articulations subverting the rationale of the hegemonic moment, and relocating alternative, hybrid sites of cultural negotiation.<sup>66</sup>

In contrast, Janet Murray writing of the work at Wanganui of the missionary Richard Taylor during the late 1840s when the settlement was under siege for three months from a war party says:

The arrival of the British officials and soldiers caused the missionary great difficulties, though he himself had urged that a garrison should be sent to Wanganui, hoping that its presence would give protection to his converts . . . Taylor had hoped that his converts would be able to avoid fighting, and he defended them against the criticism of the officers, observing that they were nearly all related to members of the war party. He did not indicate, however, that the Maoris understood that Christian teaching was opposed to fighting. Nor does he appear to have said so to Sir George Grey; indeed he encouraged the latter to assure that the Putiki Maoris, being loyal subjects, would actively participate in the fighting . . . It would seem that Taylor, anxious to comply with Grey, had not at first appreciated the depth of the Maoris' adherence to the Sixth Commandment, but by the end of the siege, he had begun to see the

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<sup>66</sup> Bhabha, 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern' (1994) p. 177-8.

problem of whether a Christian should fight or not more clearly through the eyes of his converts.<sup>67</sup>

As a discourse this understanding of events stresses Maori mimicry of missionary teaching to the point of being more Christian than the Pakeha - - an instance in which, to paraphrase Homi Bhabha to be Christianised is emphatically not to be Christian - - as it is perceived by the West. *The Matriarch*, however eschews mimicry in preference to a mimesis which seeks to disclose or reveal a 'truth' situated in an extra-structural field, 'the real'.

Ultimately, the missionaries' vision of an evangelic utopia in the South Seas, truly 'God's Own Country' floundered largely because their influence was undermined by the behavior of settlers as much as by the creative adaptations of Christianity produced by Maori. The intensification of the war meant that missionaries had to withdraw from areas of strife and their missions collapsed. The missionaries themselves were inevitably caught up in these events and came to support the European side seeing Maori assertions of sovereignty and the defence of their land as conflicting with the authority of the government. Since Bishop Selwyn and some missionaries acted as chaplains to the British forces they lost credibility in the eyes of the Maori and were thus unable to act as mediators or peacemakers.

One of Ihimaera's principal criticisms of missionary actions concerns their role in the drawing up of the Treaty and their ownership of land. In the novel, missionaries are explicitly implicated in the 'deceit' surrounding the Treaty, their vested interests making it unlikely that they would be impartial. In fact, the missionary presence in the country was once again paradoxical in its effects as the very presence of British-based missions constituted a pressure for British intervention. As British subjects the permanently settled mission families were theoretically at least entitled to protection. There had to be a permanent British vested interest in New Zealand before it attracted more than cursory attention and the Protestant missions, despite themselves, were the

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<sup>67</sup> Janet Murray, *The Feel of Truth*, ed., Peter Munz (Auckland: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1969) p. 220-1.

first to create such a vested interest. The missionaries may also be regarded as having played an active pro-imperial role by such activities as aiding the Maori chiefs in writing their letter of 1831 asking for British protection. However, as Peter Adams points out:

The missionaries appear to have had no direct impact on Colonial Office thinking commensurate with their long and intimate involvement with and knowledge of the New Zealand situation. Partly this was because they did not write directly to the Colonial Office, but only to the Church Missionary Society; if their opinions reached the civil servants at all, they did so only through the filter of the society's Lay Secretary, Danderson Coates, and in support of his own views.<sup>68</sup>

Although the narrator in *The Matriarch* makes passing mention of those Maori who either sold land willingly or who contrived to sell land against the express wishes of other family members, land issues are generally interpreted as a straightforward opposition between Maori and Pakeha:

The views of Maori and Pakeha about the future of the country were absolutely incompatible. The government attempted to buy more and more land, urgently needed by the Pakeha settlers; the Maori people considered these attempts to be against their express wish to retain the land.<sup>69</sup>

This incompatibility has its source in the differing attitudes to land between Maori and Pakeha, the Pakeha having a purely utilitarian approach while the Maori have a deep-rooted spiritual attachment to land which extends far beyond its actual use value:

Land means much more to the Maori people than it does to any other New Zealander. To him it has a deep spiritual value. You can realise then the

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<sup>68</sup> Peter Adams, *Fatal Necessity. British Intervention in New Zealand. 1830-1847* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1977) p. 82.

<sup>69</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 238.

frustration the Maori people have had over the last hundred and fifty years as they have seen their lands gradually fall out of their hands.<sup>70</sup>

This claim to an essential identity through spiritual attachment to the land is problematic, especially when placed within the fact/fiction method on which the novel is structured. Literature is here figured as a decipherment of history, as reproduction of 'truth' rather than signification. Rather than 'marginalis(ing) the monumentality of history'<sup>71</sup> the novel interprets the political effects of a socially constructed past as dependent on their authenticity, on their fidelity to the past 'as it really was'.

It is land legislation which is seen as the specific means by which Pakeha have *deceitfully* gained control of Maori land, particularly the Native Land Courts which individualised Maori land ownership and effectively denied Maori any legal redress. There is no doubt that the Native Land Courts were one of the chief means by which Maori land was alienated but the novel once again fails to address the complexities of the situation. By attributing transparently deceitful motivations to the Pakeha legislators the, admittedly paternalistic, but humanitarian drive to include Maori within what were seen as the rights and privileges of citizenship are glossed over. Consequently Maori opposition during the nineteenth century - - the Land Wars, the Hauhau uprising and Te Kooti's - - actions were all the result of Pakeha duplicity. 'Our forefathers had fought and died last century to rectify the inconsistencies and injustices that the Treaty embodies.'<sup>72</sup>

Such interpretations fail to empower cultural and textual strategies because the critical position occupied by the novel attributes to Maori a singular self-image and creates a 'counter-politics of exclusion'. In contrast, the purpose, as Bhabha writes, 'in specifying the enunciative present in the articulation of culture is to provide a process by which objectified others may be turned into subjects of their own history and

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<sup>70</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 235.

<sup>71</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 87.

<sup>72</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 73.

experience.<sup>73</sup> *The Matriarch's* binary politics of 'us' and 'them' denies the agency required for creative and adaptive responses to the message of the missionaries and, during a time of great turmoil, the powerful role of Maori leaders such as Te Kooti in providing Maori with a promise of the rebirth of their autonomy as a people.

### **The Utu of the Maori Prophets**

Ultimately, any view of missionaries as having total power or influence over Maori is undermined by the fact that they were not prepared for the ways in which Maori took the gospel into their own culture on their own terms. These Maori forms of Christianity combined elements of the new imposed religion with aspects of the old. They were derived, in Bhabha's expression, 'from (the) area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilising mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double . . .'<sup>74</sup> Not only did they stem directly from the influence of missionary preaching but their appearance signalled, in itself, a definite rejection of this Christian teaching. The prophet leaders aimed to reassert Maori independence by appropriating beliefs from an apparently powerful religion. Their promised Maori utopia was diametrically opposed to both that of the missionaries and the settlers. As Allan Hanson writes, 'The prophets promised an antipodean recapitulation of divine intervention in history: as God delivered the ancient Israelites from bondage in Egypt, so would He deliver the Maoris from their oppressors and return them to supremacy in their promised land of New Zealand.'<sup>75</sup>

The prophetic leaders who emerged among Maori from the start of European settlement were not, however, a new phenomenon but a continuation of a form of leadership which Binney describes as:

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<sup>73</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern' (1994) p. 178.

<sup>74</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man', (1994) p. 86.

<sup>75</sup> Allan Hanson, 'Christian Branches, Maori Roots', *History of Religions*, Vol. 30. No. 2. November (1990) p. 155.

Derive(d) from the belief that the matakite (seer) is able to communicate with the ancestral spirits . . . The wisdom of the ancestors is received either in dreams and visions, or in cryptic oral pronouncements spoken in a trance-like state. These are thought of either as experiences undergone by the soul in communication with the dead spirits, or as spirit possession.<sup>76</sup>

Rather than being undermined by the advent of Christianity, the prophets' role in colonial Maori society was reinforced by drawing on the Old Testament prophetic tradition emphasised by the Protestant evangelists. The first of these leaders to appear was Papahurihia in Northland, but it is the Pai Marire and Te Kooti with which *The Matriarch* is particularly concerned.

The Pai Marire or Hauhau faith had its roots in the land conflict in Taranaki. Started by the prophet Te Ua Haumene Tuwhekararo, its teachings equated the Maori people with Israelites in their Babylonian exile. Like Papahurihia's followers the Hauhau erected tall flag-poles called nui and hung flags from supporting ropes to proclaim their religious identity, and in some cases their allegiance to the Kingitanga. Te Ua established a religion which was not in itself propounding war but inevitably gave rise to conflict. Binney describes the situation which evolved:

The emissaries sent out by Te Ua to the other corners of the land also became the harbingers of war. It was not that Te Ua preached a war of liberation against the pakeha, nor that his message of peace was distorted by local politics. Te Ua was a religious leader in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, who preached deliverance from oppression in apocalyptic terms. God's messengers were the sword-bearing angels. Te Ua turned these scriptural stories to Maori ends at a time of land confiscation. His emmissaries brought the message of deliverance to the regions where almost inevitably it took on different forms.<sup>77</sup>

The next prophet leader to arise was Te Kooti who belonged to the Ngati Maru of Poverty Bay and in Maori oral tradition he is spoken of as having a series of

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<sup>76</sup> Judith Binney, 'Ancestral Voices, Maori Prophet Leaders' *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, ed., Keith Sinclair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) p. 153.

<sup>77</sup> Binney (1990) p. 162.

'miraculous' escapes from episodes such as being buried alive by his parents in a kumara pit, which associate him with Maui and establish his credentials for his later visitations by the spirit of God. He is essentially a Maori 'hero' testing his followers with riddles and tricks. He is also associated on the Christian side with the prodigal son and is described in the novel by the matriarch in the following words:

He came forth into manhood and he lived in the land of Egypt with his people, but knew not that he was chosen. So he worked for Pharaoh, in the bush and on the farmland . . . And he visited Pharaoh's palace at Auckland, and like the prodigal son, fell into ungodly ways and vice.<sup>78</sup>

The voice of the matriarch is employed to render the life of Te Kooti in epic form, to memorialise his actions and teachings, and it is consequently in the 'Song of Te Kooti' that the narrative attempt to close the gap between mimesis and fabulation becomes most problematic. On the one hand the historical events are related in accordance with a 'textbook' understanding of Te Kooti's life but the language used portrays him in mythic dimensions. In an interview with Paul Sharrad Ihimaera was asked, 'How do you cope with the critical theory that there is no essential identity to go back to - that constructions of what is Maori are as much a product of interbreeding with nineteenth-century Romantic ideas of nationalism as constructions of what is Pakeha?' Ihimaera's reply was, 'Well, does that really have currency? . . . to recover the source of our heritage, what we need to do is to deconstruct all the literature which Sir George Grey collected, for instance, to get back to the original, not the reported, sources.' Despite decades of demonstrations that history is a construct Ihimaera appears to persist in adhering to an alienating fetishism of the 'real'. Yet in the same interview he also claims a place amongst magic realist writers - - '*The Matriarch* was the one where I tried to blend those magic realist techniques in the same way that some of the South American writers were doing.'<sup>79</sup> The choice of magic realism, which he specifically equates in

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<sup>78</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 134.

<sup>79</sup> Paul Sharrad, 'Listening to One's Ancestors: An Interview With Witi Ihimaera', *Australian and*

this interview with Te Kooti seems an anomalous one, as magic realism is broadly defined as a technique of combining realistic depictions of events and characters with elements of the *fantastic*. To place Te Kooti's beliefs, strategies of resistance, guerrilla warfare and later contributions to Maori culture within the category of the fantastic sits uneasily with the prophetic tone of the novel which ostensible seeks to establish Te Kooti as an honorable figure wronged in Pakeha versions of history. Te Kooti is introduced to the reader, for example with strongly prophetic overtones:

With a ponderous rumbling, like iron gates closing, the sun began to go out. But it was not yet total eclipse. There was still a further divination to come, a stirring in the shadow of the fall of Waerenga-a-Hika. The pa was the hinge of fate for the Maori coast, but the gates were not yet closed. Standing there, pushing the gates open was a man and another religion: Te Kooti Rikirangi te Turuki was the man; Ringatu was the religion. Pakeha, we did not belong to you yet - not yet.<sup>80</sup>

His credentials as a religious leader are then recounted by the matriarch in similar visionary language:

His name was Te Kooti Rikirangi Te Turuki and Jehovah chose him at birth to lead His Children of Israel, the Maori nation, out of the land of the Pakeha, out of slavery to Egypt. This he did do, as Moses did also, when Moses opened the Red Sea and led his people to Canaan. It was Te Kooti that the tohunga, Toeroa, said to the mother of Te Kooti, 'Your unborn child will be a son whose fame will reach to the four corners of the earth for good or evil.' Indeed, so it has come to pass that this fame for goodness spread as foretold. But also did his fame for evil, for it was the Pakeha who first themselves began the evil by denying Te Kooti his blessedness.<sup>81</sup>

The Te Kooti uprising is portrayed in *The Matriarch* as the morally justified reaction of a man who, deprived of justice acted solely in self-defence. The killing of settlers

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*New Zealand Studies in Canada*, Vol. 8 December, 1992, p. 89.

<sup>80</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 83.

<sup>81</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 133.

and Maori at Matawhero is, moreover, portrayed in a stark realism. The graphic details of the killing of predominantly white families during the Matawhero 'retaliation' are purposefully explicit. Roy Murphy says of Ihimaera in this regard: 'One of his primary motives in writing *The Matriarch* was revenge on the European. He wanted to hurt the European reader . . . that was why he wrote in such graphic detail about the deaths of the mostly white military men and their families.'<sup>82</sup> Such a moralistic rhetoric of outrage bears little resemblance to the magic realist tradition. Rather, the narrative strategy is one which foregrounds a binary opposition between Maori and Pakeha, and serves to situate contemporary Maori as a people with a history of virtuous struggle. This claim is backed up by recourse to various versions of spirituality. On the one hand Maori 'show a high plane of thought similar to the philosophical speculations of the earliest Greek Philosophers - Empedocles, Anaximander and others'<sup>83</sup> and on the other they are associated through the use of Biblical prose to the Jews under the yoke of Pharaoh. Their struggle for freedom is seen as a religious one and along with their spiritual attachment to the land serves to legitimate such actions as Te Kooti's by association with the sacred quality attributed to the massacres committed by Jews in Canaan. This claim to a virtuous superiority implicitly legitimates their present-day struggle with the government also. The matriarch tells the story of Te Kooti to the child in the meeting house, Rongapai, saying:

E mokopuna, listen to the song of Te Kooti. You will learn in the listening why you have to hate and, then, why you must learn to forgive. For what happened to Te Kooti is what has happened to all of us and will continue to happen unless we fight on and hold to the truth.<sup>84</sup>

Later she associates Te Kooti as a visionary committed to peace with the continuing struggle of Maori for equality, seeing the present-day struggle in religious terms:

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<sup>82</sup> Roy Murphy (1987) p. 13.

<sup>83</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 252.

<sup>84</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 133.

And after the prophet ascended into heaven, the people continued his works. And they were the works of peace and not of war. And that is why I have tried to teach you how to hate and then how to forgive. But oh, e mokopuna, it is still so hard to remember the ways of peace for Pharaoh is still without and we remain in the land of Egypt. Nevertheless, we must always endeavour to fulfil the prophet's vision, which is to bring the Word of God to His peoples, as did David, the prophets and the apostles.<sup>85</sup>

It is this need to espouse the Maori cause through a competitive comparison of virtues which is problematic. Utu is figured as a straightforward revenge of the victimised against the oppressors. There is little room in this account for ambivalence on either side. To interpret the actions of European settlers, missionaries and government officials as deliberately and consciously destructive and deceitful fails to appreciate those instances of contradictory belief, doubly inscribed in the deferred address of colonial discourse, - 'to be the father and the oppressor; just and unjust; moderate and rapacious; vigorous and despotic (which) . . . raise questions about the symbolic space of colonial authority.'<sup>86</sup>

The novel gained notoreity for its 'borrowing' of a passage from Keith Sorrenson's contribution to *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand* but its claim to truth is largely compromised by drawing on an archive, itself composed of texts, which can offer no *direct* access to the past, but only a textual refiguring of the brute event. While past events existed empirically, in epistemological terms we can only know them today through texts. In this sense both the Pakeha historians such as Sorrenson and Ihimaera's accounts contain 'truth' in the sense that they can each give *meaning* to past events. What they cannot do is give *existence* to these past events through representation. In Linda Hutcheon's words 'History is not "what hurts" so much as

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<sup>85</sup> Ihimaera, (1988) p. 177.

<sup>86</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Sly Civility' (1994) p. 96.

"what we say once hurt" - for we are both irremediably distanced by time and yet determined to grant meaning to that real pain of others (and ourselves).<sup>87</sup>

This interpretation necessarily conceptualises history from a European perspective. Ihimaera has, on the other hand stated, 'This matter of starting from the past is not as you might think. For Maori people the past is not something behind us. It is before us, a long unbroken line of ancestors whose guidance must be accepted and to whom we are accountable. That is our implicit contract.'<sup>88</sup> This implies a different approach to history from that of the European and includes myth and fantasy as literary strategies for representing the Maori world. Although within these terms magic realism could conceivably be an appropriate description, the combination could perhaps more appropriately be termed 'representations of pastness.'<sup>89</sup>

Ihimaera's various narrative voices, and in particular the different modes of narrative existence given to the narrator - - for example, as a young boy or a husband and father - - all of which allude to other stories and other modes of story-telling have a historical parallel in the myth-narrative histories or kapu whakaari of the Ringatu tradition. In this doctrine myth and history were intertwined and new myth-narratives were produced. Binney describes them as:

narratives which recorded events, but which interwove into the perceptions of these events both the traditions of *matakite* 'foresight', and the hermeneutic principles of explanation of the scriptures. These oral narratives are structured and patterned accounts with their own criteria of relevance, sequence and causation.<sup>90</sup>

These myth-histories combine, on the one hand, the Maori conception of history in which the wisdom of the ancestors lives in the present, and is expressed through

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<sup>87</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989) p. 82.

<sup>88</sup> Witi Ihimaera interviewed by Mark Williams, *In the Same Room. Conversations With New Zealand Writers* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992) p. 221.

<sup>89</sup> Elizabeth Tonkin, 'History and the Myth of Realism', *The Myths we Live By*, ed., Raphael Samuel & Paul Thompson (London: Routledge, 1990) p. 27.

<sup>90</sup> Judith Binney, 'Myth and Explanation in the Ringatu Tradition. Some Aspects of the Leadership of Te Kooti Arikirangi and Rua Kenana Hepetipa', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 93 No. 4 December (1984) p. 345.

inherited mana, with the tradition of matakite. Particular individuals who have the power of matakite are believed to have received this gift from an ancestor, and it therefore represents a way of bringing the past into the present as prescience.

On the other hand, Te Kooti introduced into this Maori framework the prophetic heritage of the Bible which, with its particular notions of fulfilment and redemption added a further dimension to his followers' understanding of the future. The world view projected by these myth-narratives is one in which divine forces intervene in human affairs and in this sense are a continuation of the Maori mythological tradition. A further influence on these myth-narratives was the Biblical prophetic narratives of the Israelites in which events are frequently revealed to be the fulfilment of earlier utterances. The Ringatu myth-narratives are, according to Binney:

stories which recall a living history and suggest how the mana is conveyed from one generation to another. In these narratives there are often specific details which operate as the guarantees of the veracity of the story. There will be particular place names and particular ancestor's names. There will be several versions, therefore, in which these particulars all shift, for genealogy and tribal affinity orders Maori history. It does not matter that there are contradictions in the narratives, and even in the verifying details. For the purpose of the narrative is to validate the claims of the group to whom the narrator belongs.<sup>91</sup>

In this respect the effect of the prophetic leaders was similar to that of the missionaries in that it was both divisive and unifying. Those Maori who followed the prophet were unified in their resistance against Pakeha but often at odds with those tribes or hapu who rejected the prophet's teachings. Binney recounts how to this day there are two different versions of interpretations surrounding the actions of Te Kooti which stem from tribal rivalry.<sup>92</sup> Hence, by emphasising the legends attached to his own canoe, the Takitimu, Tamatea uses his mythic ancestry for political ends in the battle with tribal rivals, the aim being to maintain power and self-esteem. Much of the conflict between

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<sup>91</sup> Binney (1984) p. 383.

<sup>92</sup> Binney, (1984) p. 364 - 7.

himself and his grandfather, the matriarch's husband, stem from the fact that grandfather Ihaka did not remain true to the Ringatu religion. Tamatea says:

Soon after her death grandfather had been converted to a new religion, and such was the power of his grip on the family that he had persuaded them all to turn away from the faith of Artemis to the new faith. And the new faith dressed them all in white and led them down to the Waipaoa, where they were baptised by immersion like doves drowning in the water. All had been forgiven him, grandfather, but I could not yet forgive, even though I realised that the new religion was still as much a force of spiritual strength to the family as the old religion had been.<sup>93</sup>

In its adherence to the Ringatu tradition much of the language of the novel has a ritualistic incantatory quality which follows that of the oral tradition and employs many of the devices used by Te Kooti in his narratives. These stories largely consist of whakapapa in which history not only becomes a continuation of mythology but the mythical elements were designed to be comprehensible only to his adherents. They are, consequently, largely structured around parables, riddles, and oracles, many adopted from the Bible, which remain enigmatic to outsiders who are cautioned about the ambivalent truth-value of the stories. Te Kooti's myth-narratives (and *The Matriarch* if it is accepted as following this tradition) are concerned with maintaining and passing down mana within Maori society but they are also, as part of the Ringatu tradition derived from Old Testament Christianity 'almost the same but not quite'<sup>94</sup> as the biblical stories they mimic and therefore 'pos(ed) an immanent threat to both "normalised" knowledges and disciplinary powers.'<sup>95</sup> From this perspective Ihimaera does portray Maori culture as not existing only *in relation* to the dominant culture. Its value is not merely negative and adversarial, but is also that it presents to those who live within it an order of positive and interlocking meanings that are self-sufficient.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ihimaera, (1988) p. 226.

<sup>94</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 86.

<sup>95</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 86.

<sup>96</sup> Mark Williams (1990) p. 116.

The novel as a whole is structured around Tamatea's powers of prescience inherited from the matriarch, and revealed in either visions or dreams. The visions are of the matriarch and are accompanied by kowhaiwhai patterns emphasising the genealogical link between the two characters:

Then, suddenly, it seemed that the clouds changed and I was walking on a long ago day with the matriarch. The kowhaiwhai in the sky swirled a pattern of calm, such calm. And she was there sitting with the child, looking across the greenstone land.<sup>97</sup>

Or on another occasion:

The clouds swirling through the sky, casting strange patterns like fleeting kowhaiwhai designs across the earth. E mokopuna, listen. The mana and the tapu still remain, in the land, and in Waituhi and in the iwi of Te Whanau A Kai. It is in Rongapai also. It is not something that can be seen with the eye, e mokopuna, but with the heart and the soul and the intellect. The clouds ever, ever changing.<sup>98</sup>

Tamatea's dreams are, in general, nightmares and are said to have begun when, as a small child, he started to spend week-ends with the matriarch. He recounts a dream set in Rongapai in which a vision of the matriarch constantly changes into his mother, Tiana, who appears as a medusa figure and plunges a knife into his heart. From this dream he deduces that the manner of his birth 'had something to do with that strange pattern of words: "I have made him into a likeness as unto me"<sup>99</sup>

Finally, the reader discovers that the entire narrative search by Tamatea into his past has been initiated by a prophetic dream set in Venice and which propels him to return to New Zealand. This power of prescience is not restricted to visions and dreams but also incorporates the meeting house, Rongapai, which Tamatea sees as

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<sup>97</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 108.

<sup>98</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 110.

<sup>99</sup> Ihimaera, (1988) p. 127.

providing a model of a bicultural future in much the same way as those who originally designed and decorated it may have looked with hope into the future.

### **The Meeting House as Bicultural Symbol**

According to Tamatea when it was built:

Rongapai revealed a world out of kilter, spinning of its axis and out of its own orbit around the sun that Maui had tamed, ripping other galaxies apart and, in the process, severely damaging its own. But, ah, it was not hopelessness that the young painters showed; rather, faith, like the Children of Israel in bondage and yet being uplifted by their prophet, their faith in God and in the Canaan of their dreams. And Rongapai was painted in the dream's likeness and in the likeness of the people of Te Whanau A Kai.<sup>100</sup>

Tamatea describes Rongapai as blending the old ways with the new:

The gravity and reverence for the past were evident on all rafters, painted in the typical designs of the kowhaiwhai, bold red, white and black curvilinear designs . . . The same reverence was also evident in the reed work . . . The basic concept of the interior illustrations, whether carved, painted or woven, conformed to the outlines of tradition. But it was the filling in that was different . . . unveiling the subconscious of the Maori, the persona, in highly romantic and yet realistic terms . . . it was not hopelessness that the young painters showed; rather, faith . . . The dream was of a new, brave, world, the new Eden where the kowhaiwhai was emblemished with new colours, where painted spirals and floral patterns provided a panacea for war and a prayer for peace. It was the kind of dream that people associate with the psychedelia; it placed the Maori in the position of centrality but gave him the moko of the Pakeha.<sup>101</sup>

The meeting house, both through its actual presence and through its restoration, is seen as playing a similar healing role in the present day:

Almost a century had passed since the house had been built. Yet the suffering of the Maori nation still persisted. The suffering was among the children's children of the generation of Te Kooti . . . I like to think that for those who

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<sup>100</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 191.

<sup>101</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 190 -91.

worked on Rongapai, on the cathedral at Waituhi, that the power for goodness was laid upon their heads and that the very real and black holes of their souls were healed of anger and confirmed with forgiveness. And, out of that forgiveness, I pray that the strength to recreate the Maori nation has come again. Ah yes, e Rongapai, it is still true. You still hold up the sky so that we may live on this earth and within this cleft of air and light. We still live. We still breathe. We are still Maori.<sup>102</sup>

A bicultural solution is depicted here as following the pattern of Te Kooti's life in his movement from guerrilla fighter to a commitment to peace, from an utu of revenge to one of reconciliation. Rongapai was, in fact, built in fulfilment of one of Te Kooti's prophetic utterances concerning peace. Binney describes the context in which Rongapai came into existence:

In the Waikohu district there are four meeting-houses built on the old route from Opotiki to Gisborne whose names derive from Te Kooti's prophecy for the region. Four elders, one from each of the four communities, rode through to Te Kuiti to ask Te Kooti for the next ra to be held among them, as was customary at the time. But Te Kooti replied, 'Let the rich have their ra; but one day you will come in.' And he commanded them instead to go back and raise up the gospel, the new and gentler faith, and the love of God: 'Hoki atu. Whakahaungia te rongapai i runga i te ngawari me te aroha.' Each elder took one word for his house. Whakahau was erected at Rangatira near the bridge. The more famous house, Rongapai, was 'built' by one of the riders, Wi Pere, M.H.R., at Repongarere near Waituhi. Ngawari was 'built' near Puha by Oriwia Tuturangi Waitiri, the only woman among the four.<sup>103</sup>

In order to understand the significance of the Ringatu meeting houses and the innovations they brought to Maori society it is necessary briefly to describe the earlier type of meeting house in which the events of history were not directly depicted, but where each carving represented a timeless ahistorical ancestor figure who called forth a selection of stories concerning his exploits. As Sidney Moko Mead explains:

Carving was not used to show up differences in age - every ancestor is ageless - nor to mark or commemorate, except in a very general way, important moments in the history of the nation or the tribal group. Traditionally, mythic

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<sup>102</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 194.

<sup>103</sup> Judith Binney (1984) p. 375.

events and value statements were more likely to be symbolized than historical events.<sup>104</sup>

Not only did the meeting house symbolise a model of the cosmos, but each house expressed an ideology of group identity through time. Michael Jackson writes in this regard:

In effect the house not only symbolised the unity of the tribe and the common identification of its members within it, but it symbolised the continuity of the tribe, maintaining the past as part of the living present and thereby assuring the continuation of the past, through the present, into the future . . . the whole house was more than just a metaphor for the tribe's integrity; the relationship was far more one of metonymy. The unity of the tribe within the house must be contrasted with what may often have been an actual or inherited disunity outside the house . . . Evidence available allows us to make the observation that figures far removed from present time tended to find their representation within the house while figures closer in time to present events tended to be depicted outside the house. Thus the further one went into the body of the house the closer to ancestral time one got. The movement into the house symbolically parallels the progression of events in time which the Maori conceptualised as a constant regeneration and ritual recapitulation of the heroic past. The Maori attempted to make the present and future accord with the idealised model which was the legendary past, to make all time one.<sup>105</sup>

The power of the meeting house as an expression of group identity is evidenced in the way in which groups who wished to assert independence from within larger groups would express this through the building of a new meeting house containing particular carved ancestors to whom allegiances were claimed. This served to announce to other groups, opponents or otherwise, the specific distinction being made between hapu and family groups.

During the period at the end of the Land Wars and Te Kooti's move into a religion of peace, the concept of the meeting house was undergoing drastic changes in

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<sup>104</sup> Sidney Moko Mead, 'Becoming Maori Art', *Te Maori*, ed., S. M. Mead (New York: Abrams, 1984) p. 64.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Jackson, 'Aspects of Symbolism and Composition in Maori Art', *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-Land en Volken Kunde*, Vol. 128, 1971 p. 60-1.

response to tribal and religious realignments. In these later meeting houses built after the 1870s, especially those with figurative painting inspired by the Ringatu church, the ideology of group identity is often expressed through the use of a specific history which proclaims a religious and tribal identity and an identity in opposition to that of Pakeha. The anxiety to assert a stable ethnic identity during this period of rapid change meant that the new art was claimed as 'traditional' in much the same way as the Ringatu religion came to be seen as traditional. As Robert Neich writes:

Through all these vicissitudes, the meeting house emerged as the pre-eminent symbolic vehicle for the expression of the peoples' view of themselves and their place in the new world. In many houses built at this time, figurative paintings gave a new flexibility and eloquence to this expression, not previously attainable in the more restrictive medium of woodcarving.<sup>106</sup>

Painting had had a low cultural value in Maori society at the time of European contact. It was carving and tattooing which were prestigious and therefore strictly governed by the rules of tapu. Painting therefore was less circumscribed in terms of innovation and more able to respond to changing historical circumstances.

The new art of the meeting house was also, in part, the result of the acquisition of literacy and was especially associated with the writing down of records by the Land Courts. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century the Land Court was actively engaged in forcing Maori to define their identity in more linear historical terms, thereby fixing it into an 'authorised' form. Ann Salmond states:

The studies of Maori Land Court records hint that tribal territories and tribal groups were crystallised and then frozen by the early Native Land Courts from a pre-bureaucratic situation of flux, and in all of these studies, diversity and continuity in change is conspicuous.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Robert Neich, *Painted Histories Early Maori Figurative Painting* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993) p. 2.

<sup>107</sup> Ann Salmond, 'The Study of Traditional Maori Society', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 92, No. 3, 1983, p. 323.

As a result of the transformations which took place in the traditional scheme many of the houses with figurative paintings are conveying very specific messages about the identity of their owners. Consequently the messages being conveyed are quite unlike those of earlier houses in which the same message was basically repeated but using locally relevant genealogies. Robert Neich writes of these new houses:

Most importantly, myth and history were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, these new single narratives had the characteristics of both myth and history, and could function as myth in certain situations and as history in others. These narratives linked events in Hawaiki and the migration to New Zealand with historical happenings in New Zealand right up to the most recent past, all in one single story.<sup>108</sup>

By forging a synthesis between myth and history Te Kooti constructed an outlook for his followers through which they could locate themselves as both individuals and a group within a progressive history moving towards fulfilment and redemption. To quote Neich again:

Thus for a people who had ceased to live their history in the sense of repeating archetypal situations, this new history as a text became an objective entity external to the participants and accessible to alternative interpretations. People whose lives had been changed forever by the intrusive events of history now turned to that history in order to find themselves and to find out how others perceived them. From this perspective figurative painting can be regarded as a hermeneutic response by groups seeking to interpret their own special historical experience. This developing historical consciousness had the effect of distancing the Maori people from their traditions while also still separating them from the European world that they were trying to grasp and understand. Hence, figurative painting was their hermeneutic response to both these distances, seeking on the one hand to interpret their historical past, and on the other to appropriate the symbolic systems of the European world to their own life.<sup>109</sup>

The meeting house and its concepts were central to Ringatu thought, with many of Te Kooti's myth-narratives constructed around the image of a meeting house and its role.

It has also been suggested that the paintings in Rongapai may have particular

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<sup>108</sup> Neich (1993) p. 153.

<sup>109</sup> Neich (1993) p. 157.

meanings. The paintings of trees and foliage, for example, are understood to be symbolic of the land and Te Kooti's stand against the selling of Maori land. There may also have been specific meanings associated with particular plants and elderly Ringatu believers claim associations between leaf colours, the ripeness of fruit and the Ringatu harvest festivals. They could also relate to the Biblical symbolism of certain trees while the herbs depicted may be in reference to the faith-healing which took place in Rongapai.

In the portrait paintings both Maori and Pakeha are depicted in a mixture of clothing. Maori may be dressed in European clothing but with a moko or holding a Maori weapon. In general, it would seem that it is status and outlook on the world which is being stressed rather than racial difference. Details of hairstyles and ornaments, for example, were easily recognised as markers of status by a late nineteenth-century audience. Portraits of women in Rongapai have prominent chin tattoos emphasising the importance in the area of powerful and prominent women ancestors. In attempting to assess the overall achievements of Te Kooti, F. Davis writes:

In establishing the Ringatu faith, Te Kooti achieved more than any other single individual in bringing the Christian faith and Maoritanga together, in a complementary relationship. He used the church he founded to preserve and foster the arts of poetry, song and oratory, and to revitalise the communities wherein he resided. More than anyone else at the time, he promoted the continuation of carving, tukutuku and kowhaiwhai, and was directly responsible for the building of several fully carved and decorated meeting houses.<sup>110</sup>

In seeking for a similar complementary relationship between Maori and Pakeha in *The Matriarch* the reader, when confronted with the personality of the matriarch herself, finds little which appears to offer compromise but rather an evocation of a world unsullied by Western intervention. As Mark Williams describes it:

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<sup>110</sup> F. Davis, 'The Influence of Te Kooti on Maori Art', *Education* Vol. 25. No. 4, 1976, p. 28.

In her the old world survives into the modern, not as superstition or nostalgia but as power and resilience. The ground on which she chooses to assert herself as a Maori is uncontaminated by that sense of self-hatred which haunts the attempts of colonised peoples to define and assert themselves. It is true that the matriarch knows from the time she enters adulthood that, as a colonised person, she is a 'slave'. But, because her *imagination* has retained a connection to the spiritual world, because she spans the world of opera and actuality, her possession of her Maoriness is unassailable. Neither Te Kooti nor Wi Pere, lineal ancestors of the matriarch, who represent respectively violent public resistance to and private rejection of Pakeha hegemony and who dramatise those separate Maori responses to colonisation, holds as securely as the matriarch does the keys to that world where the shadow of the Pakeha has not fallen. The matriarch allows Ihimaera to present a perspective that is outside Pakeha-ordered reality.<sup>111</sup>

She is mostly described in superlatives - - 'Hers is a blinding presence, imperious and commanding, bidding me forever forward to battle with the world of the Pakeha.'<sup>112</sup>

Time after time she exhorts her grandson to 'become a Pakeha, think like him, act like him, and when you know you are in his image then turn your knowledge to his destruction.'<sup>113</sup> There are no clear indications in the text, no signs of authorial approval or disapproval of this character who has no 'qualms about devouring her enemies with the mandibles of a giant spider or of including sexual initiation in the education of her mokopuna.'<sup>114</sup> Yet this same character with her fanatical drive for power and prestige was chosen by Wi Pere 'to carry on his fight.'<sup>115</sup> Wi Pere's parliamentary arguments are demonstrably for solutions to the issues of land sales that would neither 'estrangle the two races' nor 'stir up fighting between them.'<sup>116</sup> Wi Pere's methods are consistent with the strategies publicly advocated by Ihimaera. 'He has said publicly he identifies with Wi Pere for he worked from *within* to make change.'<sup>117</sup>

Ihimaera, despite his angry rhetoric, does not question the Pakeha right to live in Aotearoa/New Zealand nor does he repudiate Western culture as such. What he

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<sup>111</sup> Mark Williams (1990) p. 127.

<sup>112</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 207.

<sup>113</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 427.

<sup>114</sup> Peter Beatson, *The Healing Tongue. Themes in Contemporary Maori Literature* (Palmeston North: Sociology Dept. Massey University, 1990) p. 53.

<sup>115</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 364.

<sup>116</sup> Ihimaera, (1988) p. 336-7.

<sup>117</sup> Atareta Poananga, 'The Matriarch' review in *Broadsheet*, No. 145, December, 1986. p. 26.

does question is its social and cultural dominance. The desire for bicultural solutions which on the surface appear to have little weight in the narrative are given substance through the personality of Tamatea and in the symbolism surrounding the legendary but real meeting house Rongapai. Te Rongapai he writes was established by Wi Pere as a 'tribute to Te Kooti's struggle to retain Maori identity during the years of the whirlwind.'<sup>118</sup> The story of its building, and the likening of the ridgepole to the cross in *The Dream of the Rood*, are related by the matriarch and it is these two characters, the matriarch staunchly asserting Maori values and Wi Pere attempting to negotiate a bicultural solution through a governmental position, who are brought together in the symbolism of the paintings within the meeting-house.

It is the adult Tamatea, however, who has integrated the positive values of both cultures enabling him to 'bestride both worlds, to be a taniwha to both Maori and Pakeha'<sup>119</sup> who is allotted the narrative task of describing the architecture of the house and who interprets the paintings as having begun 'from a traditional premise and were then embellished with the appogiaturi of the oppressed.'<sup>120</sup> The triumphant beauty, the healing power of Rongapai is expressed in the 'moko patterns of the young painters, the astrological signs, the nautical inscriptions, the whimsical patterns of playing cards, the signs of vivacity, of life rather than death, of renewal rather than recession.'<sup>121</sup> Here there is an explicit contrast to the description of the arrival of the first Europeans who were said to bring death rather than life. However, what the novel fails to achieve in its need to champion Maori in an adversarial relationship to Pakeha is to give voice to the subtle connections which exist between the past and the present. The building of Rongapai which Ihimaera describes as the Sistene Chapel of the Maori, while part of the religious opposition to Europeanisation, was also intimately connected to it. Figurative painting, for instance, was probably introduced to Maori largely by the missionaries. Missionary periodicals were circulated throughout the country and

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<sup>118</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 135.

<sup>119</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 27.

<sup>120</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 190.

<sup>121</sup> Ihimaera, (1988) p. 193.

illustrated Bibles, children's books and posters for use in Sunday Schools were readily available from the Missions. Likewise, Te Kooti's ability to blend Maori and Christian beliefs was the result of his mission education at Poverty Bay. He belonged to the first generation of Maori who were literate and possessed a detailed knowledge of the Scriptures. Both Te Kooti's religion and the figurative painting it gave rise to could, therefore, be described as 'near' to their Pakeha equivalent, but 'different' and not simply their anarchic disruption. The gestures towards a discourse of biculturalism Ihimaera leaves relatively undeveloped in the novel, indicating perhaps more than anything the political climate in which it was produced. By the mid-1980s the need for *the* definitive Maori novel, something of epic proportions which set the record straight and gave expression to the Maori sense of frustration at the slow pace of change, was keenly felt. Ihimaera's novel with its specific economic and political criticisms of Pakeha, and largely unidealised present-day characters concerned with every-day problems offers a much more explicit and focussed critique than those writings (including much of Ihimaera's earlier work) which sentimentalised a pastoral lifestyle and escaped from harsh realities through the compensation of a utopia constructed in the spirit world.

For many Pakeha, such a piece of writing constituted a 'problem novel' representing the possibility of history repeating itself, of a violent *utu* such as Te Kooti's 'retaliation' at Matawhero erupting in the 1980s. It raised fears of returning to an earlier historical movement, that the Maori rejection of the 'one people' myth would become a rejection of the bicultural aspirations of a democratic common culture. The *utu* of reconciliation through 'brotherly sacrifice' appeared to be a fading dream.

### **Utu in the 1980s**

However, the influence of the missionaries on both Pakeha and Maori has had many unforeseen consequences and Ihimaera's contention that the changes they wrought

still have reverberations today may well be true, but in ways which neither he nor the missionaries themselves could have anticipated.

From the point of view of the early settlers, religion in the new country suffered from the same problems of transplanting culture in general. The religious message of incarnation, redemption and resurrection expressed in the Christmas and Easter stories was interwoven with customs that originated in the historical and geographical contexts which they had left behind. The liturgical year corresponds with the seasons of the northern hemisphere, Easter coinciding with Spring and the renewal of nature and Christmas falling during the mid-winter solstice with many aspects shaped by pre-Christian influences. In the southern hemisphere this transplantation of northern patterns of thinking and acting gave rise to an identification among church-attending settlers with the Israelites in exile in Babylon who remained faithful to the memory of their worship in Jerusalem. John Macfarlane, the first Presbyterian missionary in New Zealand, for example, took as his text for his first sermon in New Zealand the psalm 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning...' The problems which confronted the exiled Israelites were the same as those of the settlers: how to sing the lord's song in a strange land.

In the context of the 1980s, the descendants of the settlers no longer find the land strange in the same way and people were beginning to worship in ways which reflect the seasons and geography of the southern hemisphere. The pohutukawa with its bright red December blooms has become a symbol for the advent season incorporating the recurring Maori legend of the pohutukawa at Te Reinga, the departure point for the spirits of the dead. Ironically, it was probably the pohutukawa which was amalgamated by the first Maori colonial prophet Papahurihia into the 'straight' tree which must be climbed to reach aotea, heaven. This heaven specifically excluded Pakeha as Binney comments:

The heaven of Te Atua Wera specifically excluded the evangelical missionaries. Those who had tried to impose heaven and hell as a system of rewards and

punishments on Ngapuhi were shut out of the promised land, a heaven conceived by the new prophet, to be 'flowing with milk and honey'.<sup>122</sup>

Rather than Christianity being, in *The Matriarch's* terms, a foreign imposition Maori Christianity was asserting its own character within the denominations. Whakahuihui Vercoe, the Anglican Bishop of Aotearoa addressed an audience at the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary commemorating the signing of the Treaty which included Queen Elizabeth II, the governor general, the prime minister, and overseas diplomatic representatives with these words: 'By the rivers of babylon we sat down. There we wept when we remembered Zion.'<sup>123</sup> He then offered an alternative in Maori which translates as 'By the waters of Waitangi we sat down. We cried when we remembered Zion.' Ironically, Bishop Vercoe chose his text from Psalm 137, the same one that John Macfarlane used in February 1840 to remind the early settlers to remain faithful to the beliefs of their mothers and fathers.

Maori influence on Christianity was also strongly represented in Piri Sciascia's 1984 comments:

Carved meeting houses are used in some tribal areas as churches; in other areas carving and weaving tradition with its own mythology have entered into the churches of our land. Recently a minister of the Anglican communion, who is also a carver, has helped bring together the church and the meeting house, thus unifying Christian and Maori architecture. The carving in the traditional house represents both ideologies simultaneously. St. Peter, the fisher of men, is also Maui, the fisher of lands. The wharetipuna (ancestral house) has carved 'ancestors' among whom are the founding fathers of the church. The church also represents a canoe, the spire serving as taurapa (sternpost). The koruru Gable figure) which is usually an ancestral figure is replaced by a tauihu (canoe prow) which is adorned with the koru adopted by Air New Zealand on its 'canoes'. The greater significance is not, however, in the artistic forms and symbols created, which are intentionally open to dual interpretations, but rather that the church now has ministers who have not only ceased voicing disapproval of Maori art, but who are innovative Maori artists themselves.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Judith Binney, 'Papahiuhiu. Some Thoughts on Interpretation', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* Vol. 75, 1966. p. 323.

<sup>123</sup> Whakahuihui Vercoe, 'By the Rivers of Babylon', *Te Ao Marama* ed., Witi Ihimaera (Auckland: Reed Books, 1993) p. 83.

<sup>124</sup> Piri Sciascia, 'As The Old Net Piles Up On Shore, The New Net Goes Fishing', S. M. Mead (1984) p. 163.

However, in general, it is the churches which find themselves nowadays to be minority groups in a society which is largely uninterested in formalised institutional religion, and it is Maori who appear almost to be taking on the role of priests of public ritual, guardians of civic spirituality and offerers of the nation's prayers. Ironically, where once the main function of the missionaries was to try to prepare Maori for a secular world through the teaching of literacy and trades, the official biculturalism of the country has opened up the possibility, and frequently the expectation, that all appropriate occasions will be marked by Maori ceremonial protocol. Nor is this confined within the country. The day before a Maori group were to perform at Kiri Te Kanawa's concert in the Royal Albert hall rehearsals were stopped while the kaumatua performed a whakanoa, calling on spirits to welcome the Maori group who were strangers. Likewise, the Te Maori exhibition opened in New York with a spectacular karanga at dawn.

In New Zealand itself, which is officially a secular society with no state church and in which state-sponsored religious acts have been confined to a very few official occasions such as Anzac Day commemorations, the inclusion of karakia in the business of government departments, state corporations, tribunals and municipal councils has sharply divided the New Zealand public. Karakia are clearly religious acts addressed to a transcendent being or beings and as it is Maori 'tradition' that no official gathering can commence without karakia, prayer in public places is showing signs of becoming an almost obligatory civic activity. Teachers' unions and parent teacher associations who hold their conferences on a marae will start each session with karakia led by tribal elders while state colleges and universities frequently follow Maori protocol in their main ceremonial functions.

It is the complexity of such issues which *The Matriarch* with its binary oppositions fails to adequately address. The novel's espousal, for instance, of Maori spiritual attachment to the land is presented as an unproblematic truism and consequently cannot raise issues over whether Maori aspirations are conveniently

contained within such permitted expressions of difference without the concomitant need to address economic disadvantage. This aspect is most discernible in the Pakeha audience response. If the rituals go on for longer than usual or include references to political protest, sections of the Pakeha audience are likely to make accusations of Maori 'take-over' and walk-outs are not unknown. The novel's attempts to figure biculturalism are similarly limited in that while these spiritual activities may advance Maori aspirations and bestow a certain level of prestige, they raise issues over the public compulsion to engage in the religious rituals of others.

Some opposition has, however, come from academic institutions. Peter Munz, for example, in a letter to the *New Zealand Humanist* questioned the appropriateness of his university's holding of graduation ceremonies on a marae, since marae represent a conception of knowledge as traditional, sacred and exclusive rather than open to everyone and founded on notions of critical research.

It would appear that what John Lawrence in *The Matriarch* saw as Pakeha amusement at Maori adaptations of Christianity: 'The ironic thing is that Europeans today are amused at the Maori versions of Christianity as set up by the Ratana and Ringatu movements,<sup>125</sup> has ironically turned back to anxiety as Maori spirituality and Maori art forms, while refusing subordination to a traditionalist aesthetic are still irreducibly connected to the logic of traditional art forms in expressing, above all, presence. Present day Maori artists such as Paratene Matchitt have returned to the hybrid iconography of nineteenth-century religious prophets like Rua and Te Kooti as a way of re-evaluating current political relationships. Matchitt's 1993 work in Civic Square in Wellington has re-created Rua and Te Kooti's flags and icons in monumental form so that the viewer in Thomas' words 'is haunted more by the mysterious potential of a strand of Maori history that is still to run its course.'<sup>126</sup> Whether this course will be an utu of revenge or reconciliation remains to be seen, although Sciascia appears to be optimistic in writing:

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<sup>125</sup> Ihimaera (1988) p. 133.

<sup>126</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Oceanic Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995) p. 201.

Central to the work of the creative artist is a human quality which has been highly valued in Maori society. This value is *utu*, a term which is generally understood to mean 'revenge', but an equally important part of its meaning is 'to respond' or 'to make response'. It is a value central to Maori life and a Maori way of living. It is a spiritual course which, when fully valued, leads to an expression of life that is demanding, engaging, open, spontaneous, and above all personal.<sup>127</sup>

In more prosaic terms such a concept would appear to be in accord with Homi Bhabha when he writes:

Narratives of historical reconstruction may reject such myths of social transformation: communal memory may seek its meanings through a sense of causality shared with psychoanalysis, that negotiates the recurrence of the image of the past while keeping open the question of the future. The importance of such retroaction lies in its ability to reinscribe the past, relocate it, *resignify it*. More significant, it commits our understanding of the past, and our reinterpretation of the future to an ethics of 'survival' that allows us to *work through the present*. And such a working through, or working out, frees us from the determinism of historical inevitability repetition *without a difference*. It makes it possible for us to confront that difficult borderline, the interstitial experience between what we take to be an image of the past and what is in fact involved in the passing of time and the passage of meaning.<sup>128</sup>

*The Matriarch's* construction of subjectivity, however, appears to provide little which would free either Maori or Pakeha from the 'determinism of historical inevitability'. Its counterpolitics disallows the development of contestatory subjectivities that can be empowered through erasing a politics of binary opposition. While it seeks to authorise the cultural hybridities of the Ringatu tradition and the figurative painting of Rongapai which emerged within a time of historical transformation, these hybrid possibilities remain undeveloped in the novel. The confrontational and empowering qualities of the novel also remain, in terms of *utu*, purely antagonistic rather than affiliative. The social

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<sup>127</sup> Piri Sciascia (1984) p. 161.

<sup>128</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Culture's In-Between', *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed., Stuart Hall & Paul De Gay (London: Sage, 1996) p. 59-60.

Imaginary portrayed is consequently unable to produce repetition with a difference but remains caught in a singular self-image of victimhood for Maori whose 'authenticity' is derived from a construction of eternal belongingness. As Bhabha comments:

To reconstitute the discourse of cultural difference demands not simply a change of cultural contents and symbols; a replacement within the same time-frame of representation is never adequate. It requires a radical revision of social temporality in which emergent histories may be written, the rearticulation of the 'sign' in which cultural identities may be inscribed.<sup>129</sup>

Such an essentialised identity contains little promise of revising and reconstructing the utopian myths which have characterised the history of colonial and post-colonial Aotearoa/New Zealand, and consequently fails to escape the constructions of authenticity implicit in the cultural exceptionalism of both Maori and Pakeha with its nostalgic desire for a perfectible State free from conflict.

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<sup>129</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern' (1994) p. 171.

## **Chapter Four: Alone and Fretfully Sleeping** **The 'Man Alone' Tradition & *Potiki***

Having examined the hegemonic impact on Maori subjectivity of the Pakeha language, mythology and history it is a logical step to combine these factors in an analysis of the Pakeha literary heritage and its impact on the self-representation of contemporary Maori. The dominant mode of Pakeha writing since the 1930s has been the realist 'man alone' school, with its derivations in the nineteenth-century masculine frontier experience. This tradition has obviously had an impact on Maori self-representation and, in part, the influence is traced through the constraints placed upon Maori artists to conform to Western conceptions of the artist as an individual set apart from society as well as demands to produce work which complied with Pakeha notions of 'proper' Maori art. *Potiki* is seen to be working both within these pre-existing forms and subverting them through mimicry. This concentration on the individual is then countered by an examination of the 'family man' and the gendered nature of civil society which is likewise mimicked in the novel and consequently made different. This is achieved through an infusion of the Maori sacred realm into the Pakeha secular realm.

### **The Frontier Man Alone and his Heritage**

In his essay 'Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present', Louis Marin writes of two visions which he claims:

correspond quite well to what the name *Utopia* has constantly and repeatedly signified since 1516, the year of its appearance as the title of Thomas Moore's book at the very dawn of our modernity: on the one hand, a free play of

imagination in its indefinite expansion measured only by the desire, itself infinite, of happiness in a space where the moving frontiers of its philosophical and political fictions would be traced; on the other hand, the exactly closed totality rigorously coded by all the constraints and obligations of the law binding and closing a space with insuperable frontiers that would guarantee its harmonious functioning.<sup>1</sup>

This ambiguity surrounding the notion of 'frontier' as both a defensive front and a site of expansion is further described by Marin in relation to utopia as follows:

Utopia develops and displays a virtual or potential spatial order: it offers to the beholder/reader an ambiguous representation, the equivocal image of significations that are contrary to the concept of limit. On the one hand, it offers the synthetic unity of the same and the other, of past and future, of this world and the beyond - and the frontier would be in this case the place where conflicting forces are reconciled. On the other hand, it offers the active tracing of differences, the indefinite fight between opposite forces - and in this case the frontier would be a gap, a space 'in-between' which could not exist except by the encountering of violent and resisting forces.<sup>2</sup>

This formulation is particularly useful in describing the establishment of the orthodox New Zealand ideology in which a utopian New Zealand as a 'Better Britain of the South Pacific' functioned as a unity which sought to reconcile the old with the new by culturally and politically establishing a civil society. It was also a place of 'difference', where the frontiersman could assert his resistance to the 'effeminate' and 'civilising' influences of metropolitan urbanisation and industrialisation. Both outlooks contained significant gender bias. Politically, civil society, as it developed from social contract theories, is constituted through the 'original' separation between the modern public or civil world and the modern, private or conjugal and familial sphere, that is, a division between the public and the private in which women's role is in the private sphere and that of men in the public.

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Marin, 'Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol.19, No. 3, Spring (1993) p. 403-4.

<sup>2</sup> Marin (1993) p. 412.

On an individual level, early immigrants also inevitably brought with them unquestioned assumptions of sexual identity associated with a rural past. As Jock Phillips writes:

Victorian Britain, like all Western societies, sustained a belief in the subordination of women to men, and much of the male stereotype in New Zealand was clearly an amplification of the 'Home' experience. But what was amplified and what was discarded depended very much on the particular conditions here so that a distinctive male stereotype, a regional variant of Victorian British attitudes, emerged in the colony. There is evidence that even before arriving here, migrants thought of New Zealand as distinctively a 'man's country.'<sup>3</sup>

It was clear that in the 1950s the contemporary portrayal of gender was still very much based on this ideology. In his 1952 sketch of New Zealand behavior, 'Fretful Sleepers', however, Bill Pearson acerbically describes what he considers to be the most notable characteristics of the 'New Zealand personality' at that time. He portrays the New Zealander as one who has:

shrugged off responsibility and wants to be alone. There is no one more docile in the face of authority. He pleads rationalisations, 'doesn't want to make a fuss' or 'make a fool of himself,' but generally he does what he is told, partly because everyone else is doing it, partly because he wants to be sociable and co-operate in a wishfully untroubled world.<sup>4</sup>

It is the conjunction of these two contradictory desires, to be 'left alone' and also to 'co-operate in a wishfully untroubled world' which are particularly striking as they epitomise the two persistent strains of the mythology surrounding the Pakeha male carried over from the nineteenth century, those of a continuing utopian yearning and the frontier 'man alone' tradition. The utopian element gained its expression through the rise of the Liberals, following the depression which lasted with varying intensity from 1879 until 1896, and was continued by the welfare legislation of the Labour party

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<sup>3</sup> Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male. A History* (Auckland: Penguin, 1987) p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Bill Pearson, 'Fretful Sleepers', *Landfall* No. 23, September (1952) p. 202.

during the first half of the twentieth century. The frontier 'man alone' tradition is traceable in the development of a masculine ethos maintained by an ideology which promoted rugby, soldiering and an egalitarian mateship as the defining characteristics of a masculinist New Zealand identity. The two strands tend to converge in the personalities of the country's Prime Ministers from the 1890s on. As Keith Sinclair writes of the political changes which took place at the time:

In December 1890 backed by the unions, the Trades and Labour Councils and the Knights of Labour, by the hungry and the land-hungry, by recent immigrants, the Liberals were swept to office . . . With their defeat in the 1890 election, and after Ballance's victory over the question of appointments to the Legislative Council, the rule of the early colonial gentry, with their public school or university background, their Latin tags and cultivated English speech, their sheep-runs and their clubs, was done. Rarely, since that time, has any member of the former oligarchy held influential political office, rarely have Prime Ministers been either wealthy or well-educated, though a few have been well-read. The democracy was in power and the politician had to be, or at least to seem to be, if not a common man, then one of the common colonists. He should be big, preferably loud, certainly hearty; not on any account should he be suspected of feeling superior to the voters by reason of culture or fastidiousness.<sup>5</sup>

To a certain extent this change in the ruling personalities is reflected in a distinction which James Belich draws between utopianism and arcadianism in nineteenth-century New Zealand. He writes:

Arcadianism, involving native natural abundance and steady, natural, farm-led growth powered by virtuous individuals, contested with utopianism: abundance stemming from the British insemination of raw New Zealand nature, and fast, artificial, town-led growth powered by progressive collectivities. In the colonising era, 1840s-80s, it was utopianism that predominated; only to be retrospectively replaced with arcadianism as a new present rewrote history to suit itself. But, characteristically, the crusaders wanted to have their cake and eat it: both Better Britain and Arcadia, and Great Britain and Utopia. That the latter pair outpaced the former in the colonising era, and that the reverse happened thereafter, was not planned by them.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* (London: Pelican Books, Revised Edition, 1988) p. 171.

<sup>6</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples* (Auckland: Allen Lane Penguin Books, 1996) p. 306.

In keeping with this distinction Belich interprets the arcadian 'man alone' as a yeoman:

At the core of the Pakeha prospectus, of the folk history of New Zealand settlement and of colonial arcadianism in general was the yeoman - the sturdy settler of small means who hewed his own farm from the wilderness. The ideal yeoman had several interconnected roles. Morally, he was the guarantor of rural virtue, the hero of Arcadia, the 'backbone' of Better Britain. Practically, he was to be the cutting edge of progress in the hinterland, breaking in difficult country, particularly the bush, and bringing it into production. There was also a military role. The archetypal yeoman was very similar to the archetypal armed Briton, whose military virtue was inherent, not taught. The two intersected very neatly in the military settlers, whose ideological forebears can be traced back to Ulster and Rome. Nature and the natives were to be conquered by the very same people.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most significant social differences in creating the New Zealand variant of the male stereotype was that more young adult European men than women were attracted to the colony, resulting in a higher ratio of men to women until the First World War. An obvious consequence was the relatively large male population who remained unmarried and without family responsibilities. There was, however, a specific divide in these statistics between towns and rural areas. Phillips writes that:

In the four main centres and their attached suburbs in 1891 we find over 11 adult women for every 10 adult men, while in the rest of the country there were seven adult women to every 10 men. The heart of the male culture, then, was not found in the cities but in the rural and frontier regions in New Zealand.<sup>8</sup>

In its repudiation of a metropolitan habitat, this male culture sought to establish an independence in an arcadia where physical prowess and endurance were the defining characteristics. As Miles Fairburn argues in connection with the colonial language concerned with upward mobility:

It insists that the best place for the labourer or anyone for that matter to win independence is in a rustic setting where he alone confronts raw nature without

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<sup>7</sup> Belich (1996) p. 383.

<sup>8</sup> Phillips (1987) p. 10.

institutions to assist him, without others to collaborate with him. The more remote the district and the closer to its virgin state, the less it would be converted into private property and the cheaper the land would remain.<sup>9</sup>

The major advantage of this lifestyle was that 'with nature's bounty so accessible they did not have to engage in collective enterprise to accumulate wealth.'<sup>10</sup> The 'land of milk and honey' it appears was an 'isolated white males only' club in the countryside. This accords with the argument put forward by Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith that throughout the nineteenth century, 'Pakeha colonial society was evolving a national and cultural ethos based on masculine characteristics forged in combat with nature.'<sup>11</sup>

The type of work readily available to early colonists frequently consisted of either lonely work in sheep districts or tree-felling in the bush areas, or relied on collective male action such as shearing and mustering sheep. In such a context, relations with other men formed the basis of men's social existence. Male mateship and self-reliance became the cement of everyday life. By extension, because frontier life was such a formative experience in early New Zealand it inevitably constituted a significant portion of the emerging national identity of the 1890s. David Hamer writes:

The pioneers were admired and their contribution to the founding of a nation marked by, for example, the rhetoric that accompanied the enactment of old age pensions in 1898. As more and more districts reached such milestones as the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the first settlers, there were many pioneer celebrations. Most early settlers had been young people, yet the modern image of them tends to be one of venerable greybeards. This image was formed during the many celebrations of the pioneer achievements and lamentations over the poverty and distress into which some of the surviving pioneers had fallen. With the passing of the pioneer generation and the slowing down of immigration, the population 'aged'. Nostalgia for the pioneer era reflected an awareness of how much New Zealand had changed.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1989) p. 55-6.

<sup>10</sup> Fairburn (1989) p. 56.

<sup>11</sup> Bev James & Kay Saville Smith, *Gender, Culture and Power* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 26-7.

<sup>12</sup> David Hamer, 'Centralisation and Nationalism', *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, ed., Keith Sinclair (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1990) p. 144.

However, according to Phillips, this pioneer legend was shorn of its less savoury aspects:

As the pioneer entered into the realm of national mythology two crucial elements of the experience were ignored. First, the pioneer of the later legend had become a married man, a settled farmer whose battles against the frontier environment were now shared by his noble wife. There was little mention of the large numbers of unmarried footloose drifters of colonial society. Secondly, the official legend emphasised the pioneer's work achievements, his transforming of a wilderness into a garden. There emerged a crucial moral distinction in nineteenth-century New Zealand between the industrious frugal settler, the man who married and settled down in a hard-working family existence, and the drifter or ne'er-do-well, the unmarried man who carried his swag from one job to another, swearing, gambling, knocking down his cheques at the pub, and offending society.<sup>13</sup>

While Phillips tends to construct binary divisions which are somewhat too neat, ignoring, for example, the possible existence of unmarried men who settled on a small farm and laboured long hours, and the numbers of married men who deserted their dependants during the 1860s and 1870s when low wages and unpredictable employment rendered the support of a family difficult, it is certain that with the development of cities and an economy based on agriculture, servicing and small industry, the anti-social characteristics of the frontier male were regarded with less tolerance. Marriage, in particular, was promoted as a means of 'settling down' a drifting male population dependant on casual labour.

Consequently, there had developed by the early twentieth century an ideology which contained two different roles for men, which James and Saville Smith have named the Family Man and the Man Alone. The Family Man, who was actively promoted by the state as a means of maintaining order, included those desirable attributes of the Man Alone - strength, reliability and ambition - but excluded those which threatened order:

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<sup>13</sup> Phillips (1987) p. 39-40.

Qualities associated with the Man Alone such as independence, egalitarianism, and loyalty became increasingly tied to anti-authoritarianism . . . the determination to maintain control over one's own labour and intra-class loyalty were real barriers to, and inconsistent with, the development of the well-regulated labour force required by industrial capitalists.<sup>14</sup>

The attempt to contain and 'civilise' the disruptive aspects of the pioneer spirit was achieved through the promotion of such activities as playing rugby and a glorification of the valour of New Zealand soldiers from the Boer War to the Second World War in Anzac Day parades and services. Phillips writes that: 'as early as 1882 rugby football was being described in a local paper the *Grey River Argus* as "the national game", and by the mid-1890s only 20 years after its introduction, there were over 50,000 players and over 300 teams affiliated to the Rugby Union.'<sup>15</sup> Team spirit and egalitarianism in rugby were regarded as essential for 'character-formation', and the establishing of the national All Black team and its successful 1905 tour of Britain started a national identification with the game which remained relatively unchanged for sixty years.

Likewise, the first war to be fought by New Zealanders on foreign soil, the Boer War, initiated a view of male identity in which military prowess was a central element. One of the principal immediate effects of this war was the implementation of the cadet system in schools and, by 1904, compulsory military drill for boys over the age of twelve. Phillips argues that:

By 1914 Pakeha men had been taught that war was the acid test of their masculinity . . . they had been told that a disciplined heroism in the battles of the Empire was a defining male experience. In the example of the Boer War and even the conquering All Blacks they had learnt that because of their pioneering past New Zealand men had a special contribution to make in these Imperial struggles.<sup>16</sup>

While it can be argued that heroism in war was regarded in a similar light in most Western countries at this time, significantly, as a proportion of the total white male

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<sup>14</sup> James & Saville Smith (1989) p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> Phillips (1987) p. 88.

<sup>16</sup> Phillips (1987) p. 158.

population, New Zealand sent more men to the First World War than any other country in the Empire except Britain. Despite the long lists of dead appearing in newspapers and the returning wounded, heroic soldiers continued to be seen as essential to New Zealand's pride in itself as a nation. The legendary exploits of these soldiers at Gallipoli became enshrined in Anzac Day celebrations with the ultimate effect of re-emphasising the sense of New Zealand as a man's country. In the Second World War this sense of nationhood and national pride was strengthened as New Zealanders fought in their own division under their own commander. The post war years saw RSA clubrooms being built throughout the country and war memorials and war memorial halls were erected in most towns. Huge turn-outs at Anzac Day parades remained the norm until the 1970s.

In his disaffected summing up the product of such a society as an 'average chap', Pearson offers the following description:

He is manly - that is he is tough and not too talkative. He seldom shows emotion except anger and resentment: he drinks his beer fast but prides himself that, even full of beer, his reserves won't change. He can spend a rewarding evening drinking after hours, talking football and racehorses: he can't tell you why he drinks - for the company, he'll say; but why does he drink so fast? For fear of being thought slow to pay his round. Why then does he show no pleasure in drinking? Because his principle is moderation, not in the amount he drinks, but in his reaction to it. . . It is in the pub - and in his football club and on the racecourse - that an important part of his life is lived. His private life, at home, is in the vegetable garden and the workshop. For the rest, his home life is a perpetual requisition of jobs to be done, of watching what he says in front of the children . . .<sup>17</sup>

Although Pearson's 'average bloke' is implicitly Pakeha, rugby and a contribution to the World Wars was also the principal means whereby male mateship between Pakeha and Maori was established. Maori players had been members of rugby teams from earliest times and the Maori Battalion in World War II achieved fame for its valorous deeds in the campaigns of North Africa and Italy. The further two elements of the

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<sup>17</sup> Pearson (1952) p. 215.

'rugby, racing and beer' trilogy were also promoted as proof of an equality between the two peoples who continued to be seen as male only. By the 1980s Keri Hulme could describe the scenario sarcastically:

There is an adman's version of New Zealand, made for both home consumption and export. There is this sweet unpolluted little country at the end of the world, full of glorious scenery and sheep. It is populated, by and large, by two races who get on very well together. The Pakeha stereotype is of a practical, unimaginative but fair-minded bloke, easy-going - 'She'll be right, mate' - and keen on his rugby, racing and beer. The stereotype Maori sings very well, and had a great sense of humour. He's very community-minded (his own community, that is), good at driving anything, runs to fat in middle-age, and doesn't worry about tomorrow at all. He's keen on rugby, racing and beer too. And, as the adman is fond of emphasising, the two races get on together *very* well. Paradise in the Pacific, right?<sup>18</sup>

John Rangihau is more damning in his summing up of the situation when he states:

'Unfortunately the areas where Maoris congregate are places like the local pubs or the racecourses. That, to me, is an indictment of our total society; these are the only places where Maoris feel they are on eyeball to eyeball level with the rest of New Zealand society.'<sup>19</sup> Such a myth of egalitarianism served to gloss over the disparities in wealth and economic and political power, and it has only been since the male mythology began to fragment that the old fictions of a racially harmonious society have also disintegrated and radical Maori leaders have been able to emerge. The parallel process in the literary world has seen the 'man alone' mould broken and from its fragmentation, new forms and styles arising.

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<sup>18</sup> Keri Hulme, 'An Introduction to Bicultural Poetry in New Zealand', *Only Connect. Literary Perspectives East and West*, eds., Syd Harrex & Guy Amirthanayagam (Honolulu: Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English, 1981) p. 293.

<sup>19</sup> John Rangihau, 'Being Maori' *Te Ao Hurihuri, The World Moves on*, ed., Michael King (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1981) p. 167.

## The Literary Man Alone and the Maori Artist

Before the 1930s many of New Zealand's best-known writers, such as Katherine Mansfield, Jane Mander and Jean Devanny, were women, but by the 1930s and 1940s a group of young male writers were emerging who, in their bid to express a distinctive New Zealand identity, repudiated what they perceived to be feminine attributes in the country's previous writings. A.R.D. Fairburn, for example, circumscribed Mansfield's greatness in these terms:

You must not expect power and virility from Katherine Mansfield . . . though she is capable of sturdy realism . . . (B)ut let us thank the gods for giving us at least one writer of genius, even if she was a woman.<sup>20</sup>

The difficulty which women writers presented, as W.H. New comments with regard to Mansfield, was that 'In terms of the day, she received international recognition, and therefore must be good, but she was a woman, and therefore could not adequately represent New Zealand.'<sup>21</sup>

The writers involved with the literary journal *Phoenix* - - Allen Curnow, R. A. K. Mason and James Bertram - - also sought to distance themselves from both Georgian romanticism and the attempts to achieve a national identity through the use of Maori legends and local flora, which were prominent in Quentin Pope's 1930 poetry anthology *Kowhai Gold*. Instead, they identified themselves with social realist and modernist work being produced in England by writers such as W.H. Auden. Mark Williams comments on this period of New Zealand writing:

Frank Sargeson set his stylistic stamp on a way of writing that was held to be distinctively New Zealand and to provide the basis for a New Zealand tradition

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted in W. H. New, *Dreams of Speech and Violence The Art of the Short Story in Canada and New Zealand* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) p. 139.

<sup>21</sup> New (1987) p. 139.

in the short story by virtue of the accuracy with which his stories reflected peculiarly New Zealand realities. In particular, he turned to the speech of working class New Zealand males - drifters, rural workers, the unemployed - as the chief repository of a national form of the English language . . . What is curious is the degree to which the attempt to fashion a *national* literary tradition relies in the case of fiction, as in that of poetry, on contemporary English models. The non-New Zealand sources of Sargeson's narrative technique and style are usually located in Henry Lawson or Sherwood Anderson, but his prose style like that of other important New Zealand writers in the 1930s and 1940s, is strikingly similar to the ruling English style.<sup>22</sup>

The 'authentic' literary identity of the New Zealand male was, therefore, a hybrid construction derived in part from mimicry of the current literary fashion in England which stressed a plain simple style and a left-wing political and moral outlook. What was particular to the New Zealand fiction of the time, establishing its difference from metropolitan concerns, was the predominance of working-class protagonists who were presented as anti-social and corrupted by city influences. Paradoxically, this 'man alone' figure was derived from the pioneer who was actually in danger of insanity from his isolation. Lawrence Jones comments on this situation:

It is in (the) context of the difficulties faced by pioneers that Man Alone first begins to appear in New Zealand fiction. Even the happy-go-lucky Baines comments that 'a man requires to have his heart in the right place to live alone among the great trees' of the North Island bush while MacCarties' Arthur Barton complains of Central Otago that . . . 'insanity is extremely likely to overtake any man of intelligence who lives by himself in such vast solitudes as these.'<sup>23</sup>

Many of the contradictory qualities of the 'man alone' are revealed in John Mulgan's 1939 novel *Man Alone*,<sup>24</sup> whose hero Johnson arrives in New Zealand only to have the myth of a South Seas paradise deflated by being confronted with ugliness and

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<sup>22</sup> Mark Williams, 'Literary Constructions of Oral Culture', *Dirty Silence Aspects of Language and Literature in New Zealand*, eds., Graham McGregor & Mark Williams (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 79-80.

<sup>23</sup> Lawrence Jones, 'The Novel', *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, ed., Terry Sturm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> Patrick Evans claims that both Mulgan and Robin Hyde were responsible for the 'Man Alone' tradition. See *The Penguin History of New Zealand Literature* (Auckland: Penguin, 1990) p.129-30 & 185-6.

squalor. The economic freedom which he finds, allowing him to work where he likes and leave when he chooses also turns out to be precarious, and with the coming of the depression, is lost.

On the one hand Johnson, although an immigrant, is the stereotypical Kiwi bloke, inarticulate, unemotional and pragmatic. Both mentally and physically tough, he is able to pit himself against nature and through surviving the rite of initiation which loneliness and physical hardship impose, he earns his freedom. Such an image of masculinity which is complete in itself is a romantic location where the wish for a unified masculine identity can be fulfilled. On the other hand, he is associated with Christ-like or redemptive figures bearing witness against society. Mason's poem 'On the Swag', for example, presents the swagger as Christ, and Denis Glover's Awawata Bill, like an Old Testament prophet, spends forty years in the wilderness. By 1957 E.H. McCormick in his *New Zealand Literature: A Survey* could declare that Mulgan's Johnson 'is the man alone, the solitary, rootless nonconformist, who in a variety of forms crops up persistently in New Zealand writing - as the "hatter" of mining yarns, as Philosopher Dick, as Awawata Bill, as the Shiner of John A. Lee's sketches.'<sup>25</sup>

Although such an image is in C.K. Stead's words 'a piece of frontier mythologising'<sup>26</sup>, from a sociological perspective the prevalence of such characters in New Zealand fiction is attributed by Robert Chapman to the society in which young men were growing up. In 'Fiction and the Social Pattern' he suggests that the social pattern of growing up male in New Zealand is characterised by a period of rebellion when:

in the general strain of parentally unguided adjustment, some extra shock may prove too much for the individual. Then . . . one arrives at the point of departure for the New Zealand odd man out, the New Zealand bachelor, the social stray, the 'Man Alone'. The lessons of male companionship, the dominant mother, the emphases of latent homosexuality and family conflict all join to

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<sup>25</sup> E. H. McCormick, *New Zealand Literature. A Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) p. 130.

<sup>26</sup> C. K. Stead, 'John Mulgan: A Question of Identity', *In the Glass Case* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1981) p. 77.

produce for many an insuperable barrier to companionship with women and marriage.<sup>27</sup>

From another perspective, therefore, the 'man alone' is also seeking fulfillment through male mateship. Hence, although the bush is a hostile force threatening Johnson's life in *Man Alone* it also protects him from the worse threat of human society, a society which has provided mateship in the worker's marches in Auckland and one which he seeks to return to by joining the Republican side in Spain because 'there were memories of men he had known and liked . . . men moving, making something together.'<sup>28</sup> This contradiction in the 'man alone' figure is never resolved although James K. Baxter brings a final piece of romanticisation to bear in his 1954 Third MacMillan Brown Lecture at Victoria University when he equated the man alone with the figure of the artist. For Baxter, the artist is a conscious 'man alone' whereas other 'men alone' are unconsciously so:

The symbol of *Man Alone* is thus objectified as the hobo, the social outcast, both criminal and creative, which the artist tries to reintegrate in his view of the world . . . The hobo or eccentric, however, has not chosen his role of isolation: it has been forced upon him by his inability to cope with the pressure to social conformity.<sup>29</sup>

However, their conditions are sufficiently alike that they 'must share in some degree the same tensions.' One consequence of this affinity, as Baxter points out, is that 'the act of sympathy with the Man Alone who has incurred the disapproval of society is a basic element in many works of art.'<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Robert Chapman, 'Fiction and the Social Pattern', *Essays on New Zealand*, ed., Wynstan Curnow (Auckland: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973) p. 89.

<sup>28</sup> John Mulgan, *Man Alone* (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1969) p. 53-6 First published London: Selwyn & Blount, 1939.

<sup>29</sup> James K. Baxter, Quoted in Roland F. Anderson, 'The Rise and Fall of the "Man Alone"?' *Ariel*, Vol. 16, No.4, October (1985) p. 83-99. A number of New Zealand films produced in the 1980s also reproduce this pattern of a man alone who does not conform but is identified with by the audience. See for example, *The Quiet Earth* (1986) & *Smash Palace* (1982).

<sup>30</sup> Anderson (1985) p. 87.

The early Pakeha artist in New Zealand, however, was not just a man alone in the sense of someone set apart but was also frequently working alone in an empty landscape. Consequently for M. H. Holcroft, the predicament of the 'man alone' is not so much social as environmental; New Zealanders, he writes, 'will not become secure in their inner lives until they feel around them an environment of the imagination in which the familiar and the strange are brought into a balanced relationship.'<sup>31</sup> A relationship with the landscape was undeniably important to the early artists of New Zealand, not only those attempting to create a literary home, but also those who were working in the visual arts. Many of these artists actually played an important part in the process of establishing a variant of Anglo-Saxon society in New Zealand, and in their search to belong adapted the nineteenth-century British watercolour, with its focus on landscape and topography, while also using the particular light which differentiated the landscape from that of England as a means of idealisation. This idealisation, however, was balanced by the undeniable emptiness which underlined the problems of belonging. Samuel Butler wrote in 1855, 'Never shall I forget the utter loneliness of the prospect - only the little faraway homestead giving signs of human handiwork; the vastness of mountain and plain, of river and sky.'<sup>32</sup> In such well-known artists as Charles Heaphy and William Fox the feeling of an empty landscape is unmistakable. Even in the mid-twentieth century Colin McCahon's religious paintings placed in an austere New Zealand landscape have a feeling of grim longing. The poet Basil Dowling reacted to McCahon in the following words,

The land, until it hugs their bones  
Looks on not caring for the fate  
of those who walk like foreigners  
lonely and inarticulate.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> H. M. Holcroft, *Creative Problems in New Zealand* (Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1948) p. 24.

<sup>32</sup> Samuel Butler, *Erewhon or over the Range* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954) p. 16. First Published London: Tribner & Co. 1872.

<sup>33</sup> Basil Dowling, 'On Some Painting by Colin McCahon', *Nowhere Far From The Sea*, ed., Helen M. Hogan (Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1971) p. 38-9.

The solution of the Maori artist to this sense in which everyone is 'like' a foreigner and so always involved in a struggle to be local was not situated in a 'man alone' construction. In contrast to the Pakeha artist the Maori carver in both pre-contact times and arguably throughout the nineteenth century was in fact much more of an establishment figure. Carving was regarded as one of many skilled activities and carvers were not set apart from other skilled experts. However, European interest in Maori carving brought with it attendant European attitudes. As Robert Neich says:

European criticism and methods of payment for Maori carving continually stressed the formal aspect of the art at the expense of any semantic communication. This criticism was founded in an antiquarian museum mentality attached to the forms of the past, and all new work was judged on the criteria of earlier forms. Carvers were regarded as artists in the European post-Renaissance sense, as rare souls set apart from other men. They could be graded according to their ability to produce standard 'correct' carving form. Carving was treated as an object, to be bought and sold for a certain price according to the area covered or time taken, and payment could be withheld when the patron was not satisfied.<sup>34</sup>

Much of the sale of Maori art took place within the context of the tourist industry, particularly in Rotorua from the 1880s where renowned Arawa and Ngati Tarawhai carvers produced work for European tourists and tourist shops as well as for their Maori clients. Neich comments that 'the usual strong stress on the separation between traditional and commercial genres of an art was apparently not a feature of Ngati Tarawhai carving in this period.'<sup>35</sup> However, the amount of work being produced in this area along with its reputation as a centre of traditional carving meant that the Ngati Tarawhai carving style was accepted by Europeans as the authentic Maori carving style.

By 1897 C.E. Nelson, who owned a large hotel in Rotorua, had joined forces with Augustus Hamilton, director of the Colonial Museum in Wellington and an

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Neich, 'The Veil of Orthodoxy', *Art and Artists of Oceania*, eds., Sidney M. Mead & Bernie Kernot (Palmeston North: Dunmore Press, 1983) p. 252.

<sup>35</sup> Neich (1983) p. 254.

'authority' on Maori art, to employ Maori carvers to build a meeting house for display to tourists. Neich explains the consequences:

Between them these two men set up an orthodox doctrine of what 'unchanging traditional Maori culture' should be like. Furthermore, they had the economic power and influence to enforce this orthodoxy on the Ngati Tarawhai carvers. At the same time other European experts were constructing an orthodox account of the traditional Maori discovery and settlement of New Zealand. A basic tenet of both these orthodoxies was that Maori culture had virtually remained unchanged throughout a long history and was only then becoming decadent as a result of European contact. These experts saw their mission to be the preservation of pure ancient Maori culture. So well did these orthodox views take hold that it is only now that both the Maori and European public are emerging from their sway to understand a more dynamic view of the adaptability and innovativeness of Maori culture.<sup>36</sup>

The conservative orthodoxy which these men established overlooked tribal and regional differences and produced 'representative Maori art' by demanding that carvers copy forms, especially those from Hamilton's book, regardless of their original context. The men's continual stress on these Rotorua carvers as the last remaining traditional carvers also served to make them self-conscious of their position as artists in the European man alone sense.

While Europeans were strongly critical of new forms which did not conform to their own concepts of Maori art, carvers did actually produce innovative work beneath what Neich describes as 'the veil of orthodoxy'. Carvers experimented with oblique views of figures and perspective representation. Neich argues that these experiments were probably produced:

in answer to the specific demand from both Maoris and Europeans for the plausible pictorial narration of sacred events. The new audience wanted to know not only what happened in mythical times, but how it happened. The increasing expulsion of meaning from the embodied aesthetic of carving accompanied by the developing narrative function of the compositions, caused previously unconscious connotations to be more frequently verbalised and brought to consciousness . . . Experience of European patronage made the

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<sup>36</sup> Neich (1983) p. 225-6.

carvers self-conscious of themselves as artists and their carving as art in the European sense. European stress on the value of the image for its own sake strengthened the concept of carving as a formal art and caused a shift in the Maori aesthetic towards certain aspects of the European aesthetic. This involved a change in the total framework of space and time in which Ngati Tarawhai carving was based, tending to relegate the timeless ancestors to an instant of time past and revealing their diminishing relevance to the present.<sup>37</sup>

During this same period Maori became increasingly aware of the significance of Pakeha political power in their own lives, and they became more effective in their use of political techniques borrowed from the settlers. The Kotahitanga was the result of this synthesis of elements from both cultures in that while containing anti-European elements and wishing to establish a Maori control over Maori affairs, it was also implicitly based on European forms of government and European laws. It was in the Kotahitanga that Apirana Ngata first acquired his political skills, and as Member for Eastern Maori in the New Zealand parliament he launched a campaign to reinvigorate the building of meeting houses which had declined considerably by the early 1920s. A national Maori consciousness was developing at this time under the influence of the Young Maori Party. Maui Pomare, Peter Buck and Apirana Ngata all promoted an image of the Maori past that would be acceptable to Pakeha while giving pride to Maori and promoting a modern Maori identity. Such a political strategy necessarily glossed over tribal and regional differences and sought to re-establish wood carving as a prestigious 'national' Maori art despite the fact that figurative painting was probably the most vigorous of the Maori visual arts.

Ngata conceived of a School of Maori Arts at Rotorua which was established by an Act of Parliament in 1926 and became operative in 1928. The first director of the school was Harold Hamilton, son of Augustus Hamilton, who had inherited his father's conservative views. The first carving tutor, Eramiha Kapua, likewise was from the conservative section of the Ngati Tarawhai tradition so the 'orthodox' approach to Maori art remained unchallenged. In much the same way as Te Kooti, Ngata

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<sup>37</sup> Neich (1983) p. 263-4.

consciously used the construction of meeting houses 'as a vehicle to uplift his people, to advance their self-esteem and their sense of identity as Maori. But unlike Te Kooti, who boldly encouraged new directions in all the arts of the meeting house, Ngata looked back to traditional examples for his model.'<sup>38</sup>

Although he believed that Maori art would return to being innovative once the basic skills were regained, the effect of the conservative agenda of the Rotorua School was that the particular innovations of Te Kooti such as figurative painting virtually ceased. It was replaced by a standardised 'national style' of carving with almost no noticeable political or religious message.

The Ngati Tarawhai were affiliated to the Arawa tribe who had been allies of the Pakeha during the Land Wars and hence they were ideal candidates for the production of a 'national' art, unlike figurative painting which was so closely associated with the political and religious resistance of Te Kooti. Ngata, in fact, actively repudiated all that Te Kooti stood for in his desire to promote the Maori cause and to construct an image of Maori which would heal the bitterness left from the Land Wars. In *The Matriarch* Witi Ihimaera quotes Ngata as saying:

Te Kooti is the last and greatest representative of the worst side of the Maori character - its subtlety, cunning and treachery; its cruelty and love of bloodshed; and its immorality and fanaticism. His character had no relieving trait; no anecdotes of liberality or magnanimity extenuate the horror we must feel for him. It was not to be wondered at; he was not a chief. In all his schemes and undertakings there is lacking the kindly liberality, the magnanimity, the true dignity of the Maori chief.<sup>39</sup>

It is the relationship between these diverse elements, the artist as 'man alone', traditional Maori art and the myth-narratives of Te Kooti which will be examined in the following section in regard to Patricia Grace's *Potiki*.

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Neich, *Painted Histories* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993) p. 118.

<sup>39</sup> Witi Ihimaera, *The Matriarch* (Auckland: Picador, 1988) p. 196.

### *Potiki* (1986)

The issue which needs to be addressed, in respect to *Potiki*, is whether the novel constructs a Maori subjectivity which claims to represent both a traditional Maori world and difference. The novel may be read as a logical extension of Ngata's philosophy in the sense that Grace produces 'representative Maori art' which is national in its appeal. European influences are evident in her self-consciousness as an artist producing a narrative which grounds identity in a linear history and storytelling derived from a Western tradition. Her combination of these elements with mythology, however, bears a close resemblance to Te Kooti's strategies of resistance although they are expressed through her use of concepts solely connected to a 'traditional' meeting house - carving, weaving and the ancestors.

Grace herself has drawn an analogy between her writing and other, traditional Maori art forms. 'Writing', she maintains, 'can be likened to both carving and weaving. A writer, like a carver, seeks to reveal what is within. A writer, like a weaver, selects the strands, and works them together.'<sup>40</sup> Such an assertion could be read as a claim to authenticity, to a form of Maori being which, like Augustus Hamilton's constructions, saw Maori art as ideally timeless and unchanging. Early critical response to Grace's writing has, in fact, tended to reinforce notions of authenticity and a straightforward opposition to Pakeha, in much the same fashion as those cited earlier in relation to Keri Hulme's *the bone people*.

Elizabeth Webby writes that *Potiki* is 'a book that comes closer than any I know in adapting an alien form to the expression of Maoritanga'<sup>41</sup> and Keri Kaa states, 'For me Patricia's stories have a haunting loveliness. My responses to them vary from shrieks of delight, to solemn agreement, to tears, to acceptance because the style of

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<sup>40</sup> Patricia Grace, interviewed by Jane McRae, *In The Same Room*, eds., Elizabeth Alley & Mark Williams (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992) p. 289.

<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Webby, 'Amazing Grace', *Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English* Vol. 1 (1989) p. 76.

writing is such that I can feel and dream and get into the heads of her characters.<sup>42</sup>  
Grace herself seems to espouse a similar desire for authenticity when she claims, 'I want to explain to people who we are. I hope the stories show aspects of a way of life that is essentially Maori and give them some insight into what it is to be a Maori.'<sup>43</sup>

The issue which must be addressed therefore, is, does this construction of social difference function simply as a self-confirming other, or does it also elicit a recognition of incommensurabilities as expressed by Homi Bhabha:

Cultural difference marks the establishment of new forms of meaning, and strategies of identification, through processes of negotiation where no discursive authority can be established without revealing the difference of itself. The signs of cultural difference cannot then be unitary or individual forms of identity because their continual implication in other symbolic systems always leaves them 'incomplete' or open to cultural translation . . . Cultural difference is to be found where the 'loss' of meaning enters, as a cutting edge, into the representation of the fullness of the demands of culture . . . Cultural difference emerges from the borderline moment of translation . . . The transfer of meaning can never be total between differential systems of meaning, or within them . . . it is the articulation through incommensurability that structures all narratives of identification, and all acts of cultural translation.<sup>44</sup>

*Potiki* is, in effect, a simple almost archetypal story of the Tamihana family and their struggle to retain their land and work on it undisturbed by the Pakeha world of materialism and 'progress'. This aim is disrupted by the intrusion into their lives of a developer, Mr Dolman, who wishes to buy their land and transform it into a tourist resort. When legal means fail, the urupa is flooded and the whareniui burnt down in an effort to bully the Tamihanas into submission. Finally, Tokowaru, the crippled potiki of the title, is killed by explosives attached to the door by which he enters the whareniui. His spirit, however, remains and recounts the final chapter.

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<sup>42</sup> Keri Kaa, 'Patricia Grace. Aspects of her Stories in "Waiariki" and "The Dream Sleepers"', *Spiral* (1982) p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Patricia Grace quoted in Ken Arvidson, 'Aspects of Contemporary Maori Writing in English', McGregor & Williams (1991) p. 117.

<sup>44</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Interrogating Identity', *The Anatomy of Racism*, ed., David Goldberg (University of Minnesota Press, 1990) p. 313-317.

The novel is also a fictionalised history of Pakeha acquisition of Maori land which 'it has been said . . . was an excuse to scatter the people, destroy their homes and take the land.'<sup>45</sup> The focus is on the 1970s dispute over the Raglan Golf Course. This Maori land, which included a urupa, was requisitioned for use during the war but was later made into a golf course rather than returned to its rightful owners. After a protracted struggle the land was returned but not without payments being made for 'improvements' to the site. In the novel the fictional achievement of the Te Ope people in regaining their land prefigures the Tamihanas retaining theirs.

This fictionalised account is, however, framed by an elaborate myth of creativity and historical events are interpreted through their mythological counterpart. The prologue establishes the primacy of the Maori cosmology in which Te Kore, the realm of potential being is understood as a womb from which the seeds of the universe and all created things come into being. Te Po is the realm of becoming into which the primal energy of Te Kore passes via Te Waipuna Ariki, the divine spring and onwards to Te Ao Marama, the world of light and being. This mythological series of events predetermines an earthy equivalent in which Maori political activism proceeds from a time of silence and invisibility, to a 'creeping forward' and finally 'a standing, a springing, to an outer circle'. Then comes the expulsion of breath, the sneeze associated with the commencement of breathing in the newborn, 'Tihe Mauriora'.<sup>46</sup> The story of the carver in the prologue is also couched in a narrative concerned with birth, his work being to 'bring forward what was already waiting in the womb that is a tree'.<sup>47</sup> Birth, however, is intimately connected to death, so his carving 'is as though a child brings forth the birth of a parent because that which comes from under the master's hand is older than he is, is already ancient'.<sup>48</sup> The carver as a vehicle through which the gods speak also possesses prescience and can produce a carving which contains a space to be filled in a future time.

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<sup>45</sup> Patricia Grace, *Potiki* (London: The Women's Press, 1987) p. 79.

<sup>46</sup> Grace (1987) p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> Grace (1987) p. 7.

<sup>48</sup> Grace (1987) p. 8.

As the novel moves forward into the present-day conflict is figured through the mythical discord between Tumatauenga and Tawhiri so that:

All that could be remembered was that Tumatauenga withstood all challenge in the beginning, and that he has stood astride the earth ever since and will forever. There was no comfort in remembering it. There was no comfort in remembering that Tu became stronger, not weaker with challenge. The onslaught by Tawhiri caused Tu to place his feet even more firmly on the earth.<sup>49</sup>

The Maori, and Roimata in particular, are associated with the seagulls, the companions of Tawhiri, who, 'walk the edge, and from the edge fly out, testing and living out their lives.'<sup>50</sup> The seagulls, who are free 'except from hunger and anger' are not, however, 'destined to rage in the void forever; they are the inheritors of the shores where they take up death and renew it' for although 'the shore is a place without seed, without nourishment, a scavenged death place . . . there is freedom to search the nothing, the weed pile, the old wood, the empty shell, the fish skull, searching for the speck, the beginning - or the end that is a beginning.'<sup>51</sup> The Maori, in other words, are not predestined to remain landless and dispossessed but will find their 'own standing place'. This use of 'concrete imagery to convey abstract meaning'<sup>52</sup> is according to Joan Metge typical of stories which have been handed down by oral transmission.

They include:

myths couched in highly symbolic language dealing with the making of the world, the canoe migrations to New Zealand, the doings of ancestors, right up to the present, and relations with Pakehas. However remote in time the events recounted, Maori story-tellers always make them relevant to their present concerns and not merely an echo from the past.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Grace (1987) p. 45.

<sup>50</sup> Grace (1987) p. 23.

<sup>51</sup> Grace (1987) p. 18-23.

<sup>52</sup> Joan Metge, *The Maoris of New Zealand. Rautahi* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Rev. Ed., 1976) p. 267.

<sup>53</sup> Metge (1976) p. 267.

This oral literature is governed by the Maori conception of time in which, Metge explains:

Maoris . . . describe the past as '*nga ra o mua*', 'the days in front', and the future as '*kei muri*', 'behind'. They move into the future with their eyes on the past. In deciding how to act in the present, they examine the panorama of history spread before their eyes, and select the model that is most appropriate and helpful from the many presented there. This is not living in the past; it is drawing on the past for guidance, bringing the past into the present and the future.<sup>54</sup>

If *Potiki* is interpreted from the perspective of oral literature, as a series of narratorial stances, or spoken chapters, then the mythological content and the voice of Tokowaru can be seen to control the earthly events which take place in the confrontational plot. Tokowaru's narrative times move about, sometimes coinciding with plot time, at other times retrospective. At times he appears so distanced from present-day time that he transforms the conflict between the developers and the Tamihanas into an oral myth rather than fictionalised history. The flooding of the gardens and urupa is related as a 'water story' which:

was like looking out on the long-ago time when the goddess in anger, had set the world on fire to punish her descendant for his tricks. And the uri was afraid and had to call out to hard rain and lashing rain to save him and save the earth. It was like looking out on that long-ago, drenched-earth time. Between them the goddess and the uri had been able to give fire as a gift, a taonga for the people. But, if what happened to our land in the time of rain was like what happened in the long-ago time, what was the wrong that was being punished? Was there a taonga that would be gifted as a result? Was there some good that would come from what was not good?<sup>55</sup>

In this way Tokowaru transforms a current catastrophe by absorbing it into a prior mythological one, present-day details taking on sacred qualities. In the same way the burning of the wharenuī is transmuted into 'a story of colours and it is also a story of

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<sup>54</sup> Metge (1976) p. 70.

<sup>55</sup> Grace (1987) p. 115.

sounds.<sup>56</sup> The rebuilding of the whareni is then related as a story in which the ancient skills of carving and tukutuku weaving have not been lost. It is a perspective on events which states that as long as stories can be told, death and destruction can be overcome and re-created continuously through the generations as an ongoing narrative. The past, consequently, is not fixed behind one, in a European sense, but by being remade verbally is altered in the present and also becomes the future. The text, in other words, is actually performing Maori concepts of time, life and death rather than narrating them. This is made particularly clear by the final chapter in which Tokowaru, as an ancestor and a carving, relates the details of his own death saying:

There is one more story to tell which I tell while the house sleeps . . . There is one more story to tell but it is a retelling. I tell it to the people and the house. I tell it from the wall, from where yesterday and tomorrow are as now. I know the story of my death. I tell it from the tree.<sup>57</sup>

The carving made by James of potiki with its 'small shelled ear that listened to the soft whisperings' and its 'wide mouth . . . and talking storytelling tongue'<sup>58</sup> is, in post-death time, animate and speaking, and in fact, as it is impossible to pinpoint the exact time in the narrative when Tokowaru died, it is feasible to assume that much of the novel has been narrated from the dead by a speaking carved ancestor. This, in itself, is evidence of the unfixing and re-speaking of past stories as it is a new variation on the myth, related in Chapter Two, whereby Rua rescued his son from Tangaroa's house under the sea, where he had been transformed into a carving. In this story carvings were said to have lost the power of speaking as those which could speak were destroyed in the fire started by Rua. In a further innovation, Grace presents the meeting house not just as a living presence which can be addressed, but as a living, breathing and *communicating* presence. In this ancestral house, which is responded to as a parent, there is not only 'warmth in under the parental backbone, enclosure amongst the

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<sup>56</sup> Grace (1987) p. 134.

<sup>57</sup> Grace (1987) p. 181.

<sup>58</sup> Grace (1987) p. 171.

patterned ribs' but also a 'drawing in of breath and a sighing'.<sup>59</sup> The house 'stirs within' and 'murmurs'. The language in which the house speaks is not directed at the reader, but is filtered through the consciousness of Tokowaru who listens with a 'large and cupped ear to hear and know the wisdom of the world' and with a 'small shelled ear to the quiet lamentations'<sup>60</sup> which he does not necessarily translate directly. Only as an ancestor, in 'this place of now, behind, and in, and beyond the tree, from where I have oversight'<sup>61</sup> can he hear the footfalls of the 'shadowless forms' and see the tekoteko 'moving in silently beside them'. There is, therefore, a gap between the 'story' that Tokowaru is hearing and the story the reader is reading. As Anne Salmond has explained in reference to the Maori understanding of knowledge:

knowledge (*maatauranga* or *waananga*) is jealously guarded by chosen individuals and those who hold it are often reluctant to 'give it out'. Once knowledge comes into man's possession, however, the elders and ancestors, the task is to pass it down to succeeding generations in such a way that its power is kept intact. In the past this meant that such knowledge was, and sometimes still is, taught in seclusion, often in the dark and well away from food, women, and other threatening influences.<sup>62</sup>

Judith Binney has traced this attitude toward knowledge as sacred and only available to those especially chosen in relation to Te Kooti's myth-narrative. She writes:

Te Kooti consistently used parables (*kupu whakarite*) as a method of teaching. The opacity of many of these stories was intentional. It is not that the meanings have been lost. They are warning stories (*kupu whakatupato*) for those who can understand. They are oracles with hidden significance.<sup>63</sup>

*Potiki*, therefore, can be interpreted as a text similar in intent to those of Te Kooti, and as Binney explains 'Because the narratives are believed, they have the same value and

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<sup>59</sup> Grace (1987) p. 88-96.

<sup>60</sup> Grace (1987) p. 171.

<sup>61</sup> Grace (1987) p. 183.

<sup>62</sup> Ann Salmond, 'The Study of Traditional Maori Society: The State of the Art', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 92, No. 3, December (1983) p. 319.

<sup>63</sup> Judith Binney, 'Myth and Explanation in the Ringatu Tradition', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 93, No. 4, December (1984) p. 347.

effect as any other system of explanation: they are acted upon. The narratives not only explain history; they also generate history.<sup>64</sup> From the perspective of the Western reader Reed Way Dasenbrock has described this process of refusing knowledge as a 'culturally specific defamiliarization' in which 'writers choose to make moments of their work more difficult to understand, less immediately understandable . . .'<sup>65</sup>

The argument that *Potiki* re-enacts the process of guarding particular forms of knowledge from outsiders is derived from a premise that a culture is coterminous with a bounded social unit. If this is so, then as Anne Salmond has suggested, our knowledge of other cultures must be partially constrained. It also follows that the Maori conception of knowledge as finite, vulnerable, sacred and associated with ancestral power produces a situation in which to make truth claims is also to make claims of power. The 'double discourse' which is produced in *Potiki* therefore speaks of Maori as humanly powerful but also dependant on, and interacting with, powers which have placed them in a sacred cosmos.

However, when cultural identity is a means of structuring political relations, as it is in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the pressure on Maori to reflect upon and define their lives according to a Maoritanga which conveys a mandate of the past, must result in a level of self-consciousness which positions their culture as external to them, as symbol of cultural exceptionalism. And consequently, as Bhabha comments, 'the question of representation of difference is therefore always also a problem of authority.'<sup>66</sup>

Such a process in the 1980s has obvious parallels with the literary construction of nationalism in the 1930s, epitomised by the 'man alone' tradition. This construction was to a large extent self-consciously created and gained its authority from the adoption of specifically chosen British literary models which would lend credence to the developing masculinism of Pakeha writing. Patrick Evans has described these

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<sup>64</sup> Binney (1984) p. 345-399.

<sup>65</sup> Reed Way Dasenbrock, 'Intelligibility and Meaningfulness in Multicultural Literature in English', *PMLA*, Vol. 102, No. 1, January (1987) p. 14.

<sup>66</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man', *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 89.

1930s writers, for instance, as 'obsess(ed) with the war . . . seeing themselves as soldiers and their task as some kind of military mission. In this they affirmed their masculinism, for they were at heart a group of Kiwi blokes . . .'<sup>67</sup> This 'mission' to create an 'authentic' New Zealand literature laid a stress on the whole, idealised and romanticised male body, which was identified with the indigenous landscape portrayed as raw, isolated, and covered by dense and at times threatening bush. Its ultimate expression may be seen in the hunting and fishing anecdotes of a later writer such as Barry Crump. As Kai Jensen remarks however, 'It's possible that writers like Sargeson, rather than simply recording and reflecting popular masculinity . . . actively shaped a tradition about New Zealand manhood, which was then picked up, amplified and broadcast by popular writers such as Crump and Sam Hunt . . .'<sup>68</sup> The irony was that novels such as Mulgan's *Man Alone* which actually set out to be critical of New Zealand ended up being interpreted as endorsing this 'essential' version of manhood. Being constructed against a social background of rural life and a nationalism nostalgic for the pioneering spirit left such writings open to appropriation by a culture seeking such symbols of cultural exceptionalism. Pakeha New Zealanders' perceptions of themselves and their country were consequently coloured for several decades by these concepts which also produced a literary climate that alienated women writers, leaving them outside the literary tradition as truly 'women alone'. Evans, for example, records Frank Sargeson's response to both Robin Hyde and Janet Frame, 'One thing I clearly remember about these two women. A spot of house-work or cooking was not for them.' The implications, as Evans notes, 'are obvious: women should cook for men, not pretend to write; and what they do write is crazy stuff, odd, expostulatory, hysterical and not to be taken seriously. This view was part of a system which suppressed much women's writing during the lifetime of the *Phoenix* generation.'<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Evans (1990) p. 77.

<sup>68</sup> Kai Jensen, *Whole Men. The Masculine Tradition in New Zealand Literature* (Auckland University Press, 1996) p. 17.

<sup>69</sup> Evans (1990) p. 84.

With the rise from the 1970s of both Maori and women's writing, the realism of the post-war novel which relegated women and Maori to the margins was obviously not a viable model for these groups to emulate. Feminist publications such as *Broadsheet*, *Womenspirit*, and the *Spiral Collective* were founded in this period and were also linked to the growth of Maori political and literary consciousness. Maori women, for example, wrote for *Broadsheet*, and *the bone people* was initially published by the Spiral Collective. There were, however, differences in the experiences of these two groupings. Pakeha women, if relegated to a minor position, had at least had some sort of place in the literary tradition of the country whereas Maori had only had a place as subject. Whereas Pakeha women writing in English had had an audience, even if only a small one, Maori, and Maori women in particular, had had none. The growth in a publicly visible Maori political consciousness and its concomitant expression of identity in literary form required, therefore, an authoritative representation of difference to establish its 'authenticity' in much the same way as the literary masculine nationalism had had to construct itself in the 1930s. The ethnic strategies employed by Maori to represent themselves as 'special' were reliant on hybrid forms of expression just as the 'man alone' was almost the same as his English literary models but not quite. For Maori working within a mandate of the past, hybrid forms evolved from the appropriation of discourses by which Pakeha had objectified Maori culture. These have been traced in preceding chapters, beginning with anthropological interpretations of Maori origins and the ethnographic collecting of Maori narratives and genealogies from 'native informants' and their collation as 'myths and legends.' Patricia Grace, for example, uses the canoe migration theory in *Potiki* in the passage describing the tangi for Hemi's mother:

Come forward, come forward. Beach the great canoe of that place. Bring with you the many deceased from there, from that mountain and that river, being the deceased of the many ages of the past and present and the many parts of this land. Many are the dead, as many as the myriads of stars. Assemble the

many deceased from there, with the many deceased of the place where we now stand.<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, the acquisition of literacy and the policy of the Land Court of 'fixing' genealogies which previously had been manipulated for political purposes both served to define Maori identity in European linear historical terms. The development of figurative painting was consequently interpreted as largely an expression of the fact that Maori had ceased to live their lives as a repetition of archetypal situations and sought, in part, to interpret their historical past through a Western symbolic system.

The subsequent development of Maori nationalism and a 'national' art in the Rotorua Carving School operated as a Pakeha strategy of containment, restricting Maori art to what was considered non-decadent, pre-contact styles which were enforceable by the economic power of patrons. It also allowed for innovation and experimentation derived from the need for a continuing development of a narrative function in the compositions. This in itself was the result of Pakeha cultural and political pressure.

*Potiki* arguably represents the culmination of this process of cultural objectification which Jocelyn Linnekin has described as 'a process whereby culture becomes a thing outside the individual, to be contemplated, discussed and reflexively modified.' Linnekin argues further that 'objectify(ing) culture in this way can usually be traced to Western concepts but they have been incorporated into the conceptual framework of non-Western peoples.'<sup>71</sup> The novel however, also represents the culmination of a literary resistance to this process, as it can be read as being constructed from several layers of mimicry. From this perspective it seeks to establish a representation of Maori subjectivity which is similar but not quite the same as Pakeha stereotypical representations of Maori. As a representation of Maoritanga it mimics the Pakeha notion of a homogeneous Maoridom, spiritual, caring and united by

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<sup>70</sup> Grace (1987) p. 27.

<sup>71</sup> Jocelyn Linnekin, 'The Politics of Culture in the Pacific', *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific*, eds., J. Linnekin & L. Poyer (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990) p. 150-1.

aroa, through the dominating textual presentation of an idealised and 'sentimentalised' family. This camouflages the often fraught relations between, for example Hoani, who advocates putting aside anger because 'wrongness always returns to the wrong-maker',<sup>72</sup> and Tangimoana, who 'saw the strength of a bending branch to be not in its resilience but in its ability to spring back and strike' and therefore 'did not look up . . . but turned and walked away.'<sup>73</sup> But, like the myth-narratives which it also mimics, it seeks to validate the claims of Maori through the continuation of the primacy of a Maori prophetic tradition. However, 'the menace of *mimicry* is its *double* vision'<sup>74</sup> the combination of the confrontational plot in present time and its cryptic counterpart which mimics the positioning of Maori in a redemptive universe. Consequently it 'repeatedly turns from *mimicry* - a difference that is almost nothing but not quite - to *menace* - a difference that is almost total but not quite.'<sup>75</sup> The fact that Pakeha 'think differently in their heads and have different importances'<sup>76</sup> implies that Maori also think differently and from a Pakeha perspective are unknowable. Such a construction as a deliberate political strategy denies a Maori identity in which there has been continual implication in a Pakeha symbolic system, taking the 'necessary risk of essentialism' to produce an inauthentic authenticity which by its 'continuing manipulation of symbols to create new meanings . . . emphasises cultural creativity and the dynamics of imagining entailed in the processes of historical transformation.'<sup>77</sup>

This cultural creativity is textually given form in *Potiki* through the linking of Tokowaru with Maui, as *the bone people* also linked Simon and *The Matriarch* linked Te Kooti to Maui. It is this conjunction which forms the correlation between the oracular myth-narrative and its enclosed confrontational plot.

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<sup>72</sup> Grace (1987) p. 141.

<sup>73</sup> Grace (1987) p. 141-152.

<sup>74</sup> Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 88.

<sup>75</sup> Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 91.

<sup>76</sup> Grace (1987) p. 99.

<sup>77</sup> Margaret Jolly & Nicholas Thomas, 'Introduction. The Politics of Tradition in the Pacific', Special Edition *Oceania*, Vol. 62, No. 4, June (1992) p. 242.

Tokowaru's symbolic significance is made explicit when he is seen through the eyes of the Pakeha Mr. Dolman, 'What (Dolman) saw was brokenness, a broken race.'<sup>78</sup> Tokowaru symbolises the impact of colonisation on the Maori, his misshapen body functioning in the same manner as the damaged bodies of *the bone people*. His full name, Toko i te Marama, is given to him by Granny Tamihana in memory of his great granduncle and alludes to one month during the 1918 influenza epidemic when eight Maori children in the area died of an imported Pakeha disease. Tokowaru's existence, then, stands in counterpoint to both those who died in the epidemic and to an era when Maori were generally considered to be a 'dying race'. A toko is also an elaborately decorated wooden figure that served as a material symbol of a Maori god, and like Simon of *the bone people* the character Tokowaru is associated with Christ.<sup>79</sup> The fact that he is born to a woman named Mary, his father remaining a mystery, although he may possibly be a tramp, Joseph Williams, alludes to the Christian myth, but his mother's mental handicap explicitly relates to beliefs in traditional society that align handicap not to intellectual inferiority, but to an intuitive insight into life. Mary's contact with the spirit world is signified through her ability to commune with the carving of the ancestor in the wharenuī where 'they put their arms round each other, holding each other closely, listening to the beating, the throbbing and the quiet of their hearts.'<sup>80</sup> After the burning of the wharenuī, Mary sat among the debris with the carving. 'She had pulled him from the ash, put her ear against his chest, and begun, softly to sing. So Mary and her man were the first new breath.'<sup>81</sup> It is Mary and the Maori ancestor who breathe new life into the community, not the Christian God.

As a Maui figure, Tokowaru's life is also an enactment of several of Maui's adventures, in which he caught a big fish, brought fire to mankind and caused a flood. Each of these stories is placed in opposition to Biblical stories. Tokowaru's big fish provides food for the multitude, and the flood, unlike the Biblical one, allows survival

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<sup>78</sup> Grace (1987) p. 102.

<sup>79</sup> David Lewis & Werner Forman, *The Maori. Heirs of Tane* (London: Orbis, 1982) p. 35.

<sup>80</sup> Grace (1987) p. 22.

<sup>81</sup> Grace (1987) p. 154.

for all and aid from others. The fire which destroys the wharenuī, likewise, while symbolising the disjunction caused by colonisation, results in renewal. Maui's final adventure, the attempt to obtain immortality for his people, in which he entered the toothed vagina of the goddess of death, is mirrored by Tokowaru's death when he enters the wharenuī through his own special door. Significantly, unlike Simon who survives physically but is incorporated into Kerewin's spiral house Tokowaru, in the logic of the novel, lives on as a carved ancestor free from both the connotations of sacrificial victimhood and inclusion in Pakeha discourse. From his position of all-knowing he is the possessor of truth and power and able to exclude Pakeha from a Maori discourse. Significantly, also like Tamatea of *The Matriarch*, Tokowaru is described as a taniwha 'who somehow gave strength to them all.'<sup>82</sup> However, whereas Tamatea functioned as point of contact between Maori and Pakeha, establishing a bicultural imperative, Tokowaru is more strongly associated with the belief that lizards could house an atua, an unseen animator from the godly world through whom the human world received its energy. His positioning is therefore one between the Maori spirit world and the Maori mundane world as opposed to a positioning between the worlds of Pakeha and Maori.

Such a symbolic alignment places Tokowaru at the centre of the creative process and this is underlined through the metaphor of childbirth and its associations with blood and the spiritual world. Maui was purported to have been born during menstruation, a time of intensified activity at the female conduit between the two worlds. Menstruation, like childbirth and death, was a highly tapu time and the Maori word meaning menses is also 'atua'. Blood as a fluid crucial to life and strength, was an important repository of atua influence and therefore an effective medium for the transfer of tapu. Consequently, Grace elucidates the movement in the novel from a fallow period 'when the seed (is) buried in the land' to a time of activism which 'would produce the root hidden for a time when it would be needed'<sup>83</sup> through the

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<sup>82</sup> Grace (1987) p. 67.

<sup>83</sup> Grace (1987) p. 110.

interweaving of a gendered symbolism surrounding birth, death and blood. This series of metaphors risks constructing a subjectivity for the woman characters which is grounded in a discourse of the 'natural' and essential. Roimata, for example, defines her womanhood within the role of wife and mother. Her introduction of herself in Chapter One is that of Hemi's wife and the mother of four children. 'Blood', she states 'is life, and you have a life of blood. In hefty knots it thrusts out between the thighs, and the child born of it sneezes to live or lives, screaming the night in two . . . Birth is only the beginning of pain to which there is no end.'<sup>84</sup> This pain achieves its peak with Tokomaru's death and causes her to question her own attitudes, 'all that we need is here, Hemi says. Its true and there's comfort in knowing it, but is there enough comfort, even considering that I am, have always been an ever-patient watcher of the skies?'<sup>85</sup>

Her waiting is rewarded, however, when she discovers 'the glimmer, that rose and fell in bloodshot drops, and . . . became written, stained upon the eye.'<sup>86</sup> In consequence she accepts the active intervention of Reuben and Tangimoana challenging not just the Pakeha but also those Maori who did not endorse direct action or challenge Pakeha dominance. The older people of Te Ope, for instance, who did not initially support Reuben in his efforts to regain their land because, 'the way it was now, as a park, it could be used by everyone, that's the way of aroha',<sup>87</sup> are viewed as trapped within a death-like rationalisation ultimately derived from acceptance of a Pakeha notion of what it means to be Maori.

As this change is contingent on Tokowaru's death, so the earlier changes in Roimata's life ensued from the death of her father, and resulted in a further 'death' by assimilation into a Pakeha lifestyle. Her rejection of this lifestyle and return to the Tamihana family is symbolised by washing her hands in the sea which 'was like a discarding, or a renewal, like the washing of hands that takes leave of the dead and

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<sup>84</sup> Grace (1987) p. 175.

<sup>85</sup> Grace (1987) p. 25.

<sup>86</sup> Grace (1987) p. 175.

<sup>87</sup> Grace (1987) p. 79.

turns one towards the living.<sup>88</sup> The growth of each of the other woman characters is also textually contingent upon the death of a close male relative. Granny Tamihana survived the influenza epidemic and whereas her brother was killed by a kehua, she has the strength to contain the spirit world within herself without harm, so that, although attached to this world she is 'like a magic fire woman' within whose eyes 'the way along the pathways was too far and too magic, too secret and too locked away to follow . . .'<sup>89</sup> It is through Tokowaru's death also that Tangimoana comes to be reconciled with her family.

Such constructions of Maori women as the 'lifeblood' of the community are obviously problematic in that they can serve to contain women within the old Western stereotypes of the 'native' woman, as close to nature and unfettered sexuality. Mark Williams is commenting on the development of such a process in Pakeha writing when he compares the strategies employed by the 1930s writers and those of the 1980s. He writes:

In the 1930s young bourgeois novelists in England eagerly repudiated their own class in their fiction in favour of the poor, the down-and-outs, itinerants, the industrial working class. In the 1980s in New Zealand new versions of this effort appear. They have in common the desire to adopt oral traditions, Maori and Pakeha, because these indicate greater health than middle class Pakeha society, and to reformulate and deconstruct inherited notions of national identity by turning to aspects of social experience - particularly that of women and Maori - ignored or denigrated by the masculine and realist nationalism inherited from the 1930s.<sup>90</sup>

In the 1930s the educated and idealistic group of young writers who clustered around *Phoenix* created a masculine writing ethos and a literary masculine identity for the country's emergent nationalism. In the 1980s it was the educated young Maori who, aware of the real nature of their deprivation, began to express their identity in more aggressive terms. The violence of *the bone people* and the polemical rhetoric of *The*

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<sup>88</sup> Grace (1987) p. 26.

<sup>89</sup> Grace (1987) p. 55.

<sup>90</sup> Mark Williams (1991) p. 84.

*Matriarch* are part of this process of developing an uncompromising and often bitter style as part of a developing militancy. Maori feminists were very much part of this radical thrust, in part because, unlike Maori men, they had never had token membership in the Pakeha male world of rugby and soldiering. They risked disapproval within their own community, however, by adopting strategies said to belong to the Pakeha. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku has described the situation in the following words:

We are all effectively trained at an early age to nurture, protect, cover for, and look after those frailer than or dependent on us. Too often, we cover for our men, for their weaknesses; too often, we fear that to do anything else, to expose them, to bring shame on the whanau, would be to act like a pakeha, to be *un-Maori* - and for a Maori woman coming into a sense of political consciousness, being *un-Maori* is unthinkable. And thus, most of my activist sisters remain firmly within only the Maori cause, occasionally sniffing my way. The cruellest irony of all was that they judged me as being manipulated by pakeha women, and I judged them as being told how to be Maori by their men.<sup>91</sup>

One response of Maori feminists has been to seek justification for their actions in women ancestors and female mythological figures. While these constructions have undoubtedly afforded a level of empowerment to Maori women they have also been particularly acceptable to a liberal-educated Pakeha population sympathetic to Maori grievances and feminist issues. This same population educated in liberal values also provided a readership for the newly published Maori novels. It was particularly looking for something 'different', a replacement for the outdated realist 'man alone' tradition. Constructions of a non-materialistic and spiritually oriented Maori culture provided an ideal antidote, and the nostalgic sense of loss of a 'natural' paradise of the past conveniently carried on the Pakeha literary theme which had always been part of the country's mythology.

In effect, Maori feminism has sought to establish for Maori women a place in society which would give them equal economic advantages, prestige and eliminate

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<sup>91</sup> Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, *Mana Wahine Maori* (Auckland: New Women's Press, 1991) p. 11.

racism. Its literary counterpart, the construction of a feminine subjectivity, has tended to be subsumed within Pakeha strategies of containment which see Maori women as redeemers of their people because they supposedly possess an innately superior spiritual strength and vision. Such a construction offers a panacea to liberal Pakeha guilt by allowing a semblance of female agency which counteracts claims that the colonial endeavour has totally destroyed Maori ability to reconstruct themselves. However, it also keeps this agency safely contained. Maori women's spirituality is of its nature less threatening and disruptive than a Maori men's warrior ethos. With its stress on community, caring and acceptance it represents for Pakeha a perfect compromise while also supplying a solution to the 'man alone' literary malaise. *the bone people*, for example, with its concluding vision of community ended decades of novels which finished with a lone male character. Such constructions, however, have their obvious drawbacks, both literary and 'real'.

Kendrick Smithyman addresses some of these drawbacks in his 1965 study *A Way of Saying: A Study of New Zealand Poetry*. He argues that while formerly acceptable myths which represent a 'romantic strain in New Zealand writing' have broken down, the result has been a reactionary one - - the creation of an 'anti-romantic writing, an inverse romanticism which does not break away from romantic principles.'<sup>92</sup> Among those myths which are no longer seen as acceptable, he includes the 'myth of the primitive' with the 'man alone' as one of its manifestations. This myth is merely repeated in a feminine guise if the 'man alone' is replaced by always already constituted Maori women's bodies which 'reveal the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white (male) body'<sup>93</sup> but remain themselves caught within the paradigm of a naturally 'coherent group with identical interests and desires.'<sup>94</sup> For Maori women this becomes even more problematic as the category 'Maori woman'

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<sup>92</sup> Kendrick Smithyman, *A Way of Saying. A Study of New Zealand Poetry* (Auckland: Collins, 1965) p. 19.

<sup>93</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 92.

<sup>94</sup> Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes. Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse', *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, eds., Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin (London & New York: Routledge, 1995) p. 261.

conflates an essentialised 'natural' identity with an identity formed on the basis of a presumably homogeneous shared oppression. Consequently, as Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes:

This focus on the position of women whereby women are seen as a coherent group across contexts, regardless of class or ethnicity, structures the world in ultimately binary, dichotomous terms, where women are always seen in opposition to men, patriarchy is always necessarily male dominance . . . Thus, both men and women are always seen as preconstituted whole populations, and relations of dominance and exploitation are also posited in terms of whole peoples - wholes coming into exploitative relations. It is only when men and women are seen as different categories or groups possessing different *already constituted* categories of experience, cognition and interests as *groups* that such a simplistic dichotomy is possible.<sup>95</sup>

By the 1980s the growing binary opposition in ethnic debates in Aotearoa/New Zealand has paradoxically tended, on the one hand, to submerge the gendered nature of the society, but on the other hand, as Sneja Gunew and Anna Yeatman state:

New Zealand feminism has been profoundly influenced by this bicultural mapping of the national imaginary, and it is arguable that the dominance of a separatist orientation in New Zealand feminism reflects the symbolic influence of the Maori nationalist movement.<sup>96</sup>

The issue of contention between Maori and Pakeha over the role of cultural difference in the society has tended to obscure the gendered power structures behind such constructions. Consequently, from a literary perspective as late as 1980 Patrick Evans was still describing the exclusions in the New Zealand literary consciousness within the old masculinist agenda stating:

We can all understand how the establishment of the frozen meat trade formalized the European New Zealander's relationship with the land, condensing into symbol the processes of exploitation and despoliation that had been at the heart of colonization from the first. And thus a second mythology is

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<sup>95</sup> Mohanty (1995) p. 261.

<sup>96</sup> Sneja Gunew & Anna Yeatman, 'Introduction', *The Politics of Difference*, eds., S. Gunew & A. Yeatman (Boulder & San Francisco: Westview Press, 1993) p. xv.

established, counter to the initial, arcadia myth: the rustic shepherd-philosopher is revealed as a systematic and calculating butcher, the pristine pastoral lamb joins rows of carcasses awaiting export, and the yeoman dissolves into a class of artisans imprisoned and degraded by the task of daily slaughter. And dominating all, standing at the interface between country and town and symbolising the loss of the antipodean paradise is New Zealand's own satanic mill: the slaughterhouse.<sup>97</sup>

If *Potiki* is analysed as proclaiming an essential Maori womanhood which has existed for all time then it is necessary to investigate what purpose or function this might play and also what are its political and textual effects. If Maori femininity is, on the other hand, constructed as historically and politically contingent then the same set of questions may yield different results. These same questions can be applied equally to the essential Pakeha manhood which Evans has summed up as consisting of rustic shepherd-philosophers, calculating butchers, and degraded artisans, all of which represent different aspects of the literary man alone. Literary constructions of 'authentic' Maori women have their counterparts in such myths of authenticity in the masculine tradition. Winston Rhodes, for example, described the waifs of 'Sargeson's Stories' as 'possessing something that is truer and more fundamental than can be found in the polished phrases of the charming and the intelligent.'<sup>98</sup> Inspiration for the construction of such characters drew on arcadian myths ultimately derived from England, inherited gender notions, as well as ideas of the 'natural philosopher'. Likewise, an essential Maori femininity would obviously be derived from pre-contact gender relations among Maori. Little, in fact, has been well established concerning gender relations among pre-contact Maori. Gender, however, is considered to have been a central dynamic in Maori society and sexual differentiation permeated all aspects of Maori life, even natural objects such as trees, stones and wind being conceived as being either male or female. Knowledge of this differentiation has been largely deduced from mythology which emphasises the perception of women as having

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<sup>97</sup> Patrick Evans, 'Paradise or Slaughterhouse', *Islands* Vol. 28 (1980) p. 76.

<sup>98</sup> Winston Rhodes, 'The Puritan and the Waif', *Landfall Country*, ed., Charles Brasch (Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1962) p. 419.

a destructive potential as well as a creative one. This ambivalence was expressed in the social structure by the dual polarities of tapu and noa. Allan and Louise Hanson interpret tapu as meaning either objects or persons are under the influence of atuas, the unseen animators of the world. Women represented a powerful agent for the ritual separation of atua influence from persons and things of this world. This was because the vagina was understood as the passage whereby infants entered the world from the realm of the gods and by expansion, it was a passage of influence of any sort from the godly world into this one. The vagina as birth canal gave women the ability to instil tapu. On the other hand, the ability to dispel tapu was linked to notions of the vagina as an organ that kills. The female could act as a whakanoa agent, making ordinary or noa, because she attracted godly influence which was drawn into her genitalia and returned to the realm of the atua. On a more mundane level childbirth was accepted as one of the most important of women's functions and children were greatly desired, males to become warriors and females as hostesses and entertainers of guests and to contract political alliances through marriage.

Such social constructions were inevitably altered by the advent of European settlers and a Western version of the relations between the sexes. Initially as James Belich writes 'Maori society at contact was male-dominated, "sexist" in today's usage, though not completely so. One could say it was somewhat more sexist than Europe believed itself to be, and somewhat less sexist than Europe actually was.'<sup>99</sup> However, male ascendancy was often contested as Belich continues:

Women's resistance stems fundamentally from the contradiction between myths of male superiority and the reality of rough parity, though not sameness. It is limited by very close links with the opposition - 'sleeping with the enemy' - and by the existence of forces other than gender of which both men and women can be victims and beneficiaries. It therefore takes subtle forms. One, tending towards continuity, is the maintenance of a semi-independent women's domain, or subculture. In Maori society this was associated with such things as midwifery and weaving . . . Such domains were not wholly independent, nor

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<sup>99</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples* (Auckland: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1996) p. 101.

wholly compatible with male ascendancy, but, like the importance of women in greeting rituals, they did give some autonomy and leverage.<sup>100</sup>

With the establishment of the State Maori women came to be governed by the same laws of colonial society as Pakeha women, but Maori strove to maintain their own customs and James and Saville Smith conclude that 'most Maori women's gender experience was determined by a social structure and world view quite different to that of the Pakeha.'<sup>101</sup> However, by the beginning of the twentieth century they state:

The Cult of Domesticity provided a rationale for intervention into the lives of the working class and, later the Maori. Indeed, the Cult of Domesticity, which the State had so assiduously promoted for the Pakeha, became an important means by which Maori could be assimilated into Pakeha society.<sup>102</sup>

After the Second World War the imposition of the Pakeha version of a gendered culture was associated with the Maori Women's Welfare League. Although it provided Maori women with a political platform and actively promoted Maori culture it also disseminated Pakeha attitudes towards homecraft and mothercraft in order to have Maori women accepted as competent mothers by Pakeha. Many League members saw Maori women as the moral force which would solve Maori problems and they adopted the philosophy that 'the root causes of Maori problems were centred around the mother, the child, and the home.'<sup>103</sup>

If Grace is positing an essential and traditional version of Maori femininity in *Potiki*, based upon a mythology in which women are associated with the extremes of life-giving and death-dealing forces, the issue is whether this can provide Maori women with advantages with which to offset a life-style described by Kathy Irwin:

Maori women's health, education, family structure and support, employment and unemployment statistics are significantly different from Maori men. Our women earn less, are left alone to raise children, take subjects at school which

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<sup>100</sup> Belich (1996) p. 102.

<sup>101</sup> James & Saville Smith (1989) p. 25.

<sup>102</sup> James & Saville Smith (1989) p. 42.

<sup>103</sup> James & Saville Smith (1989) p. 44.

prepare them for the lowest paid, least secure sectors of the labour market, and have health problems which lead the world in negative indices in some areas such as smoking and related health problems.<sup>104</sup>

In speaking of her own work Grace positions her construction of women characters in opposition to stereotypical images of Maori women in Pakeha literature, which she says are sexual without being relational:

Earliest works depict Maori girls as passionate hip-swingers with flashing eyes . . . In Mulgan's *Man Alone* the main character has a sexual relationship with someone else's wife (illicit), she's the boss's wife (doubly illicit), she's a Maori (triple banger!) . . . In Maurice Gee's *The Big Season* we are told that one of the major character's first woman was a Maori - the woman is never mentioned again, but we've been able to note what an unconventional character the man is . . .<sup>105</sup>

Where the 'man alone' tradition has, as a generalisation, represented women as objects for men's gratification, Grace's ostensible aim is to subvert this tradition through constructing women characters who undertake a traditional role as educators, removing them from the Pakeha assigned role of providing sexual gratification. All three women characters are educators in different ways. Granny Tamihana through her traditional knowledge, Roimata as a teller of stories and Tangimoana in her role as activist all function in different ways to regenerate aspects of Maori culture. They claim it is rare for them to find anything of their own lives in either books or television so their main book becomes 'the wharenuī which is itself a story, a design structure and a taonga. And we are part of that book along with family past and family yet to come.'<sup>106</sup> There is an explicit link between the stories told by women and the stories told by the house, which is also female - - the wombed house - - as they both pass on knowledge ultimately derived from the gods.

As weavers of baskets, tukutuku and stories the women provide stories that 'linked the people to the earth and the heavens from ancient to future times, and which

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<sup>104</sup> Kathy Irwin, 'Towards Theories of Maori Feminism', *Feminist Voices*, eds., Rosemary Du Plessis et al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) p. 2.

<sup>105</sup> Patricia Grace quoted in Arvidson (1991) p. 119.

<sup>106</sup> Grace (1987) p. 104.

told the people of their relationship to light and growth and to each other.<sup>107</sup> As women positioned on the portal between life and death, between humans and gods they, like Tokowaru, can hear the stories told by the house. Both weaving and story telling are based around the whareniui where:

the new-limbed trees have been given eyes with which to see . . . . But this tree is an outward quiet only, because within this otherness there is a sounding, a ringing, a beating, a flowing greater than the tree has ever known before. And the quiet of the house is also the quiet of stalks and vines that no longer jangle at any touch of mind, or bird, or person passing, but which have been laced and bound into new patterns and have been given new stories to tell. Stories that lace and bind the earthly matters to matters not of earth.<sup>108</sup>

The sense in which women are privileged to share stories with the whareniui once again both presupposes past symbolisms and creatively reinterprets them. Therefore as mimicry of the 'traditional Maori woman' it represents a 'compromise between the demand for identity, stasis - and the counter-pressure of the diachrony of history, change, difference.'<sup>109</sup> Granny Tamihana's personality mimics the Pakeha stereotype of the 'good' Maori, dignified, courteous, hard-working and proud of their culture. Roimata mimics the Pakeha notion of the good Maori mother as advocated by the Maori Woman's Welfare League. Each one is a partial representation which 'rearticulates the whole notion of *identity* and alienates it from essence.'<sup>110</sup>

It can be argued that the 'man alone' representation of the whole idealised masculine body also rearticulates the notion of identity. While popular images of masculinity such as those portrayed in the DB Beer advertisements are frequently publicly encountered in Aotearoa/New Zealand they cannot necessarily be taken as Kai Jensen writes:

as being the whole story of male experience. Men are enjoined to be strong, inexpressive and so on, but what purpose do such injunctions serve in their

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<sup>107</sup> Grace (1987) p. 87.

<sup>108</sup> Grace (1987) p. 87.

<sup>109</sup> Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 86.

<sup>110</sup> Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 89.

context, how many men actually follow them, and do men present themselves differently in different situations? What about ironic or self-parodic manly stances?

He goes on to note that:

John Mulgan . . . suggests that there's an element of deception, of playacting, to masculinity, when his protagonist Johnson hears other passengers on a train talking excitedly about the unemployed riots in Auckland: 'they talked as if they were going into a war area. Listening, he considered the necessity which all men have of dramatising themselves.' Such passages suggest that our past male writers were at least aware that masculinity was more than a straightforward correlation of image and private self.<sup>111</sup>

Maori femininity in *Potiki* can be read in a similar light as women 'dramatising themselves' within the contaminated space from which the subaltern may speak. So, within the confrontational plot the individuality of Tangimoana portrays a personality most influenced by a Pakeha linear narrative and history and her personality therefore operates as an 'innovative site of collaboration and contestation.' She contests a spiritual disposition which destines Maori to a life on the margins, without acceding to those Pakeha advocates of capitalism who 'can't think, because they have become just like machines.'<sup>112</sup> In doing so, she breaks down the artificially maintained division between ecology and economy, spirituality and entrepreneurial activity which remained intact in *the bone people*. Consequently, she also 'articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority.'<sup>113</sup> As a site of mimicry of the man alone she operates in response to the romantic man alone which Baxter described as both criminal and creative and unable to cope with conformity to society's norms. Tangimoana also resolves her community's difficulties with the developers by criminal action brought about by her lack of desire to conform with Pakeha demands. Granny Tamihaha as a lone sufferer mimics such characters as Awawata Bill while being neither solitary nor rootless. Roimata, the watcher of the skies, mimics the natural

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<sup>111</sup> Jensen (1996) p. 12.

<sup>112</sup> Grace (1987) p. 151.

<sup>113</sup> Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' (1994) p. 88.

philosopher. All three, in respect to Pakeha society portray an independence, egalitarianism and loyalty to their 'mates'. But the mimicry of the 'man alone' is also subtly rendered on a more general level in the mythic discourse of the novel through the subversion of rigidly bounded sexual roles. The male carver of the Prologue, for example is explicitly described as giving birth, while the linking of women to weaving, the story telling of the house and the passage between the sacred and profane worlds associates them with the masculine gender and activities of Maui and his rope.

The novel as a whole, however, is not solely concerned with mimicry on an individual level, but is also like *the bone people* seeking to create a 'home' for the people through the metaphorical linking of the family with the State. *Potiki* therefore, also represents the subverting through mimicry of the 'family arcadia' as the model for Pakeha settlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The following section, therefore, is a brief survey of the Pakeha construction of the State sponsored family arcadia, and is followed by an examination of the ways *Potiki* produces an alternative metaphor for the State which gives primacy to women.

### **The Family Man and the Rural/Urban Arcadia**

Over and against the mythology of the man alone and its corresponding egalitarian mateship among men there has persisted in Aotearoa/New Zealand a tradition of order and social conformity grounded in the nuclear family. This construction of a 'home' was paralleled by the construction of a civil society which would transform the country into a 'home' for the people. The intersection of this process has been scathingly referred to by Pearson as:

a universe well-plumbed and shockproof . . . one that 'runs by clockwork'. You get up at a regular hour, go to work, you marry and have a family, a house and garden, and you live on an even keel till you draw a pension and they bury you decently.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Pearson (1952) p. 203.

James and Saville-Smith interpret this conformist element as having 'its foundation in the early colonial household and the mutual dependency of women and men within it.'<sup>115</sup> Such a view is supported by Miles Fairburn who argues persuasively against a view of nineteenth-century New Zealand which consists of a multitude of insulated local communities engaging in frequent interaction and resulting in a social bonding system that maintained a high level of conformity and order. In countering this thesis he assesses the likely coverage, intensity and effects of three possible types of social bonding in localities which he terms the kinship, the vertical and the horizontal. His conclusion is that:

In rural localities perhaps the greatest obstacle to interaction was the geographical isolation of the household. Rather than secluding localities, geographical isolation had a more extreme consequence: it insulated households within local areas. Many contemporaries observed that in the countryside remoteness had a Robinson Crusoe effect: it prohibited frequent visiting; it cut people off from civilised amenities; it compelled them to socialise with people with whom they had nothing in common; and induced household self-sufficiency and individual loneliness and boredom. There was also a strong probability that they would be socially isolated by the effects of geographical mobility. If remoteness made frequent face-to-face contact seem strange, mobility made the faces seem those of strangers. Although the colony was far more conducive to horizontal ties, it gave inadequate opportunities to engage in social communication so that where each individual was a 'man alone' was in the sense that his associations tended to be few and fleeting.<sup>116</sup>

And yet, despite this social isolation a strong sense of social conformity developed, of which Pearson offers the following description:

Somewhere at the back of the outlook of the New Zealander is a dream, a dream of security in equality. Everybody acts the same, receives the same amount of the world's goods, everyone moves in the same direction. Everyone has simple tastes, explainable desires which can be satisfied with proportionately simple effort . . . The special quality of the New Zealander's

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<sup>115</sup> James & Saville Smith (1989) p. 25.

<sup>116</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'Local Community or Atomised Society?', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 16, October (1982) p. 156.

version (of the dream) is that the evil is to disagree or to be different. The chaos of existence is to be legislated into shape; the varieties of human quality and personality are to be levelled into conformity with the legislation.<sup>117</sup>

While Pearson's invective is specifically targeting the Labour Government of post-war years which he described as a 'busy-body state' which institutionalised the nose-y-parker traditions of a small Protestant community, he is also tracing the history of active State support for the family from the 1880s. The Liberal Government which held power from 1891-1912 saw its role as one of pragmatic intervention when public pressure demanded changes. This era saw the creation of the modern New Zealand State, much of which remained intact until the fourth Labour Government came to power in 1983. This Liberal policy was specifically seen as having its origins in the pragmatism of the pioneers. Consequently liberalism was not anti-capitalist but sought to spread private ownership of land more equally. In describing the period of Liberal Government Hamer writes:

To begin with, public life was dominated by men from a generation which had experienced New Zealand before, as well as during, the depression of the 1880s. The indignation that they felt about the social hardships and economic problems of the 1880s flowed from their experiences as migrants whose reference point was the dreams and aspirations that they had brought with them. Their shock at what had gone wrong with their 'Promised land' was traumatic and provided much of the emotional force behind the Liberal reforms.<sup>118</sup>

James and Saville-Smith interpret this early situation as one in which:

Two major contradictions emerged which spelt acute problems for the State by the mid-1880s. The first was the contradiction between the provision of welfare, and the State's already overstretched budget. The second was between the requirements of the state to control men and children, and the maintenance of male authority. Resolution of such contradictions involved the State in reinforcing the family in new ways. It emphasized the social control of women as wives and mothers and, in doing so, set the context for the systematic

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<sup>117</sup> Pearson (1952) p. 218.

<sup>118</sup> David Hamer (1990) p. 131.

expression of a gendered culture which has dominated New Zealand ever since.<sup>119</sup>

What this government did not challenge, nor did successive governments, was a vision of New Zealand as a rural arcadia. The crucial distinction between the Man Alone and the Family Man was made by equating the frontier with nature's untamed wilderness and the beast in man. Domesticity, on the other hand, is associated with beneficent nature that is cultivated by man and identified as the garden paradise. In 'Rural Myth and the New Urban Frontier' Fairburn writes: 'nature which is tamed into the cultivated and domesticated garden, is God's Own Country. Life in unnurtured nature was placed outside the ambience of the good life.'<sup>120</sup> Arcadia, therefore, was to be found in a family situated between untamed nature and the artificial life of the city.

Despite the high degree of social and economic change taking place in New Zealand between the 1870s and the 1890s, social and political organisation was directed towards the same ends as the old - - the attainment of familial arcadia and the espousal of a moral tradition derived from the soil-based family. Fairburn sees this familial arcadia as having immigrated in the minds of the settlers as 'three initially discreet arcadian visions' of which 'the first is the Victorian suburban arcadia of the middleclass sentimental family.'<sup>121</sup> This had developed in response to industrialisation and the concomitant desire to create the home as a sanctuary in nature, a haven for women and children from the degrading forces of capitalism and from contamination from the proximity of city slums. According to R.C.J. Stone, these impulses behind the Victorian suburban movement were adopted very early by the wealthy business and professional groups in New Zealand.<sup>122</sup>

The second vision stemmed from a middle-class but humanitarian impulse to provide opportunities for the struggling small settler and the lower class immigrant to

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<sup>119</sup> James & Saville Smith (1989) p. 29.

<sup>120</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'Rural Myth and the New Urban Frontier', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 9 (1975) p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> Fairburn (1975) p. 6.

<sup>122</sup> R. C. J. Stone, *Makers of Fortune* (Auckland, 1973) quoted in Fairburn, (1975) p. 6.

go on the land. By 1906 this tradition was so well established that even members of the conservative order such as Massey insisted that every worker should become his own landlord. The third arcadian vision also features the small family farm and reflects the Government's policies on assisted immigration, especially during the 1870s and in the periods 1904-15 and 1922-7 when assisted immigrants were to a significant degree labourers and domestic servants drawn from rural areas. Having originated from economically distressed areas they regarded land as a key source of social opportunity. According to Fairburn:

Transplanted separately into New Zealand, these visions of Arcadia . . . merged together into an almost perfect harmony, to create the common rural myth: all rejected the city; and they equally idealised the soil-based family as the fundamental foundation of the social order . . . All assumed an economy based on bountiful nature . . . In short there was an implicit social contract binding them that New Zealanders lived or should live . . . in familial arcadia.<sup>123</sup>

Yet by 1911 the urban population had exceeded the rural and the New Zealander was confronted with the dilemma of having an urban social structure but a rural ethos. The draw of urban life was that it promised financial security and employment but despite this social reality the soil-based mythology did not diminish. Instead, the social values remained stubbornly rural and rather than questioning the goal of the rural myth, urban workers tended to support strike action to break what was seen as the city capitalist's obstruction of their rural ambitions.

Caught within the myth of the small family farms arcadia, the Liberal party pursued a policy which ultimately evolved into a perception of the proletariat being redeemed through a urban wage worker pursuing a lifestyle as a suburban part-time peasant. First, the village settlement schemes and later the government state housing schemes affirmed the New Zealand moral vision. Rejecting city culture they strove to create a family centred garden of Eden for the city worker. However, in practice this

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<sup>123</sup> Fairburn (1975) p. 3-21.

led 'to the genteel middleclass concept of suburban arcadia: of shrubs, lawns and do-it-yourself.' As Fairburn writes:

The state housing schemes from 1905 to the early 1930s by contrast failed to elevate the less fortunate into any sort of arcadia. Too few homes were built to ease the city's congestion. During the 1920s Harry Holland seems to have disseminated the idea that the inner city under-privileged would be regenerated in the environment of the garden city or garden suburb . . . Extending the middleclass suburban life style to the worker fitted the New Zealand intellectual tradition since the worker had already been mentally projected into suburbia. The garden suburb modified this perspective as it conjured up the worker as less rustic than middleclass, more genteel than yokel - differences of degree not kind . . . it was logical, though ironic, that Holland proclaimed the necessity for the state to re-settle inner city workers in gracious suburban environs - the traditional New Zealand middleclass arcadia where tamed nature created a sentimental sanctuary for the family . . . This formation of the new urban frontier left the basic social assumptions of New Zealanders largely intact and unchanged. The threatening forces associated with the city crystallised a highly durable and conservative structure of beliefs. Its spirit, a common myth of familial arcadia, was preserved within the protective shell of the modern state while its physical embodiment was the small family farm and the suburban home.<sup>124</sup>

*Potiki* is positioned in a series of ambivalently presented sites with regard to the Pakeha rural/urban arcadia. The Tamihanas represent the epitome of the soil-based family immersed in domesticity and cultivation of the land. Their life is carefully situated between the artificial life of the city and untamed nature. Rather than being the 'normal' nuclear family, however, they consist of several generations who live communally. Moreover, they are in frequent contact with other insulated Maori communities, but this does not result in an overall culture of conformity and order. Instead it promotes an increasing resistance to the ideology of the dominant order.

In terms of the three visions of arcadia, therefore, rather than being a middleclass, sentimental family escaping from the degrading horrors of industrialisation they are attempting to create a haven from the 'degrading' after-effects of colonisation. Where the second vision was prompted by the humanitarian impulse to

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<sup>124</sup> Fairburn (1975) p. 3-21.

provide opportunities for the struggling small settler, the Tamihanas express the urge to provide a sanctuary for Maori returning from a city life of increasing unemployment. The maintenance of a rural ethos is juxtaposed to the draw towards urban life which is represented not as a desire but a necessity engendered by Pakeha expropriation of Maori land. The third arcadian vision of Pakeha, that of assisted immigration for those with a rural background who regarded land as a key source of opportunity becomes instead an indigenous community obdurately remaining on their land which Pakeha seek to acquire, just as they acquired the land from Maori for the original immigrants.

The reality for these Pakeha immigrants by the early twentieth century was that they were largely contained within an ideology focused on the family, the notion of the Family Man and the Cult of Domesticity for women. All were both vigorously promoted through heavy investment by the State. Increasingly, as James and Saville Smith write:

Women's lives are structured as dependent and privatised. This is opposed to a masculinity which situates men as actors in the public sphere where they are providers for, and protectors of, women . . . The cult of Domesticity asserted men's superiority in spheres of life concerned with ambition, competition, and paid work. It consequently restricted women's participation in those spheres. By the early twentieth century, a male-dominated medical profession used 'scientific' evidence to show that the division of labour between the sexes was biologically determined. In the process, the feminist theme which accompanied the elevation of the roles of wife and mother, that of women's rights to economic independence and access to paid labour, was lost.<sup>125</sup>

This gender division with its origin in the pioneer homestead was paralleled by a similar division in the larger 'home' of the nation. Although New Zealand was celebrated as the first country to give women the vote in 1893, for the most part issues that were of concern to women had to be filtered through a system in which every position of power was held by a man. What emerged bore a close resemblance to

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<sup>125</sup> James & Saville Smith (1989) p. 31-34.

what men thought was good for women rather than what women themselves may have thought. The emphasis in policy directed towards women was, in fact, concerned with strengthening the family unit and the domestic role of women. The founding of the Plunket Society by Dr. Truby King further inscribed the belief that women's destiny was one of motherhood and even the advocates of women's interests tended to concentrate on ensuring that women were given more assistance by the State in fulfilling this role.

From the perspective of mainstream political theory the public realm is assumed to be understandable as an arena separate and independent of sexual and domestic life. But for the classic social contract theorists, arguments about the political meaning of sexual difference were an integral part of the emergence of the idea of a modern civil society that is divided into two contrasting spheres of social life. As Carole Pateman argues:

In mainstream political theory, the public sphere is assumed to be capable of being understood on its own, as if it existed *sui generis*, independently of private sexual relations and domestic life - the structure of relations between the sexes is ignored and sexual relations stand as the paradigm of all that is private or non-political. Yet, as attention to the classic texts would show, the meanings of 'private' and 'public' are mutually interdependent; the 'public' cannot be comprehended in isolation. Properly to understand the conception of a public world and the capacities and characteristics that are required to participate within it demands at the same time, an understanding of what is excluded from the public and why the exclusion takes place. The public rests on a particular conception of the 'private' and vice versa. When the 'public' is analysed in isolation, theorists are able to assume that nothing or no one of significance is excluded.<sup>126</sup>

Women are, in fact, included in civil society, but as inhabitants of a private sphere, a subsection of civil society which is separated from the public world of freedom and equality. Women, womanhood and women's bodies represent the private; they represent all that is excluded from the public sphere. In the patriarchal

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<sup>126</sup> Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women. Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989) p. 3.

construction of the difference between masculinity and femininity, women lack the capacities necessary for political life. The 'disorder of women' means that they pose a threat to the political order and so must be incorporated into the civil order 'differently' from men. And, of course, women have also never been totally excluded from participation in the public world of institutions, but once again, this incorporation is different from that of men and has been structured around the sexual difference of women from men. They are included as 'women' whose sexual embodiment excludes them from the 'universal', sovereign self. In the transition from the traditional to the modern world there is a change from the traditional paternal form of patriarchy to a new specifically modern or fraternal form: patriarchal civil society. The conflict between the two was over the political rights of fathers and the natural liberty of sons. The patriarchalists claimed that kings ruled as fathers, the contract theorists argued that sons were born free and equal. While the contract theorists rejected paternal right, they absorbed and simultaneously transformed conjugal, masculine patriarchal right. The fundamental distinction between the traditional patriarchy of the father and modern patriarchy is precisely that the latter is created in separation from, and opposition to, the familial sphere. The civil body politic is consequently fashioned after the image of the male 'individual' who is constituted through the separation of civil society from women. The kind of independence claimed by this sovereign self has not only required the dependence of women but also:

those cast as primitive or immature versions of this self. This self could enter into a relationship of reciprocal recognition with its fraternal fellows, but it could not offer such recognition to those it cast as its dependent or primitive others.... Women (and 'primitives') are those on whom this self depends but whose own potential selfhood must be denied if the self is both to maintain its need for these others, and to ensure that they cannot challenge its illusion of autarchic independence. The self manages to achieve this exclusion by projecting its dependency onto this category of others, and constituting them as its dependents. All other subjects who do not meet the needs of this self in ways that do not participate in the relationship of reciprocal recognition

between sovereign selves participate in this feminised status of the sovereign self's dependent.<sup>127</sup>

The construction of a colonial civil society necessarily, therefore, omitted the full and equal participation of women and Maori.

Home, as a nation then, was both a desired 'state' to be established and maintained and, inevitably because of the exclusions on which it was structured, a place of subversion. Bhabha describes these exclusions as being part of 'unhomeliness' which he views as:

the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations . . . (where) the recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorientating.<sup>128</sup>

The establishment of the civil State in Aotearoa/New Zealand was closely tied to the 'man alone' ideology and the frontier mythology surrounding it. The Labour government under Michael Savage, for example, worked to promote the 1930s nationalism by institutionalising the 'man alone'. In the political consolidation of cultural activity, this enterprise has its parallel in the 1980s with David Lange's Labour government and its drive to authorise biculturalism. These two attempts created a crisis for the civil State as the boundary which it seeks to draw between the private and the public spheres reveals through the 'unhomely' the figures of Maori and women, its ambivalent structure. These two groupings, 'hidden from sight' constitute what is *forgotten* in the theoretical distinctions of the private and public spheres of civil society. Both feminism and Maori activism have brought into public view what was forgotten - the 'unhomely' element of civil society and by specifying the patriarchal, gendered and racist nature of civil society have disturbed:

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<sup>127</sup> Anna Yeatman, 'Justice and the Sovereign Self', *Justice and Identity*, eds., Margaret Wilson & Anna Yeatman (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1995) p. 199.

<sup>128</sup> Bhabha, 'Introduction' (1994) p. 9.

the symmetry of private and public which is now shadowed, or uncannily doubled, by the difference of genders (and ethnicity) which does not neatly map onto the private and the public, but becomes disturbingly supplementary to them. This results in redrawing the domestic boundaries as the space of the normalizing, pastoralizing, and individuating techniques of modern power and police: the personal-*is*-the-political; the world-*in*-the-home.<sup>129</sup>

Not only was the actual new 'home away from home' constructed according to utopian principles, so also were the imaginary 'homes' produced in the literature of the colony. In this respect, Rosemary Mahongoly George speaks of the 'home' imagined in fiction as:

a desire that is fulfilled or denied in varying measure to the subjects (both the fictional characters and the readers) constructed by the narrative. As such 'home' moves along several axes, and yet it is usually represented as fixed, rooted, stable - the very antithesis of travel.<sup>130</sup>

Like utopia, home (both fictional and real) is built on ideological patterns of inclusions and exclusions, and therefore cannot be regarded as a neutral place. Imagining utopia and imagining a home is as political an act as imagining a nation, and the attempt to establish any of these may be interpreted as a display of hegemonic power. In the case of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, what was excluded in the establishing of the new colonial nation - - and in its imaginative portrayals of itself - - was the same repressed problem that lies at the heart of the European political theory of both civil society and democracy - - the problem of patriarchal power, or the government of women by men. It is consequently from the perspective of a 'home' for Maori women that I would like to return to an examination of *Potiki*.

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<sup>129</sup> Bhabha, 'Introduction' (1994) p. 11.

<sup>130</sup> Rosemary Mahongoly George, *The Politics of Home* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 9.

## A Maori Home

Early New Zealand writing made explicit the familiar connection between control of other lands and control of female sexuality and the use of gender in the discourse of territorial acquisition. William Golder, for example wrote in the Preface to his *The New Zealand Survey* (1867):

With no small interest too can we regard the approach of Enterprise and Industry, each as with bridegroom integrity, comes to divest Nature of those solitary weeds in which she has been long arrayed in order to deck her with the garb of art, thereby adding fresh beauties to her native comeliness.<sup>131</sup>

In extolling the family man, Jess, in William Satchell's novel *The Land of the Lost* (1902) prophesies:

There is a better day coming. Every year the settler is extending his landmarks and rooting himself like the trees he displaces . . . I see the apple orchards and the vineyards of the future,' he says, 'The men we know - the reckless, the hopeless, the unhappy - are gone to their appointed places. I hear the voices of the children at play among the thick leaved trees.'<sup>132</sup>

Alongside such arcadian and patriarchal constructions *Potiki* can seem strangely familiar. The Tamihana family appear to live in a rural idyll. Like the carver of the Prologue, Grace is obviously concerned with making a home for the people but, at least at first glance this home could comply with Pearson's assessment in which 'everyone has simple tastes, explainable desires which can be satisfied with proportionally simple effort . . .'

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<sup>131</sup> William Golder, *The New Zealand Survey* (London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1867) p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> William Satchell, *The Land of the Lost* (Auckland: Auckland University Press. Wellington: Oxford University Press 2nd Ed. 1971) p. 207. First Published London: Methuen, 1902.

But the emphasis is not so much on the family structure as on the meeting house as representative of the nation. This house, like the spiral house of *the bone people* and Rongapai, as represented in *The Matriarch*, signify Maori as indigenous and different. For *Potiki* it is the traditional carved meeting house which symbolises a utopian home and the textual dominance of the women characters who purport to have equal status - - 'we all have the say, all of us together, all look after things'<sup>133</sup> - - explicitly rejects the tripartite structure of the nation in *the bone people* and the fraternal solution of utu. Significantly, the fraternal solution to the problems of establishing a bicultural society which concluded the film *Utu* (1983) also excluded women. By the end of the film, one of the two women characters was dead and the other silenced and excluded from the decision making.

*Potiki*, by contrast, concludes with the voice of a carved ancestor, and possibly in its final lines in Maori, in the voice of the house itself. This female house and its carvings, in Nicholas Thomas's words:

do more than evoke or recall the absent dead. Carvings can instead be seen to create ancestors as real and immediate presences. They convey energy and movement and a kind of continuing vitality that a mere image of a dead person could not possess. The generative capacity of the ancestor is frequently attested to by additional figures between the legs or across the chest, representing a wife and children; Maori art does not seem to create 'images' of people that are less substantial than the people themselves; instead it produces embodiments that surround the activities of the meeting-house and the marae as a whole.<sup>134</sup>

The 'excess' which Thomas comments on as a feature of the carved wharenuī which developed during the early nineteenth century and which he interprets as both a challenge to foreigners and a source of affirmation for those who identified with its genealogy is developed by Grace into the 'excess' of a communicating house. The conclusion of the novel in Maori, therefore, is part of the story told by the wharenuī and specifically excludes those who do not 'belong'. The Maori 'home' consequently,

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<sup>133</sup> Grace (1987) p. 118.

<sup>134</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Oceanic Art* (London: Thames and Hudson World of Art, 1995) p. 62-3.

can be interpreted as constructing itself upon an ethnic and genealogical inclusion and a corresponding exclusion of the Pakeha pioneer homestead and the urban arcadia. Grace obviously uses the positive dynamic of ancestral carvings to incorporate her fictional community/nation into a sense of belonging via the recognition of the ancestral source of the self in the carvings of the home. These same carvings, however, exclude outsiders from the positive dynamic of self-definition and are likely to leave them feeling threatened, intimidated and estranged, challenging their right to belong.

Traditionally the wharenui was divided between male and female elements. The tukutuku were made by women and the carvings by men, and a pair of male and female ancestors were frequently conspicuous in the facade. Generative sexual union was typically depicted on the ridgepole over the porch and gave material form to the broader idea of sexual complementarity. Grace appears to follow this traditional practice by having James become a carver and Tangimoana weave the tukutuku panels of the new house. As a metaphor for civil society, therefore, the wharenui is not fashioned after the image of the male individual alone.

However, the marae outside the meeting house is a masculine area, and following concepts of complementarity, is in most tribes a place where only men speak. This has become a site of considerable dissension among Maori. Kathy Irwin succinctly outlines the situation:

The speaking rights of women on the marae is one of the most misunderstood and abused contemporary issues of our culture and time. Many of those engaged in the debate, and identified as 'on the Pakeha side', have been accused of trying to analyse Maori culture in Pakeha terms, in order to give the colonisation of our culture and people a twentieth century face, in the name of feminism and equality of rights. Those 'on the Maori side' claim that Pakeha ideas have been used to make observations and judgements about the Maori world with little or no attempt to reconcile the different epistemological bases of the two cultures.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Kathy Irwin (1992) p. 8.

In order to maintain a narrative in which following the rules of the ancestors is a mode of political struggle as well as a way of life, Grace focuses her attention on the tangi of Hemi's mother as the only form of marae ritual in the novel. The tangi provides a context for asserting a positive, unified conception of Maoriness and symbolises a 'defensive solidarity' vis-a-vis the Pakeha. Karen Sinclair claims that 'the divisions that exist in contemporary Maori society, aggravated by the shifting currents in Maori-Pakeha relations, are to some extent superseded in the tangihangi.'<sup>136</sup> Also the tangi customarily takes place on the marae which is the major arena where Pakeha culture is at a disadvantage as the rituals and language are unknown. But more importantly Sinclair observes:

Unlike other traditional rituals on the marae, the tangi draws attention to women. Their call welcomes the dead and greets arriving mourners, and it is they who maintain a watch over the deceased. Their presence links them irrevocably to the pollution of death. But equally clearly, their importance in funeral rituals also connects them to the persistence of Maori tradition in the contemporary social order. The centrality of women in mourning, no doubt a liability in the past, has been turned to advantage as women become focal points in this most important of Maori rituals.<sup>137</sup>

From a broader perspective she claims:

The contingencies of the colonial situation have enhanced the authority and influence that Maori women were traditionally permitted to claim . . . By their continual involvement in (European) institutions and by their enduring commitment to their children and grandchildren, women have come to understand a social world dominated by Europeans. . . . They are therefore willing both to uphold tradition and ease its passing. Thus the colonial situation, which has so often diminished the stature of Maori men, has enhanced the prestige of Maori women.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Karen Sinclair, 'Tangi: Funeral Rituals and the Construction of Maori Identity', *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific*, eds., J. Linnekin & L. Poyer (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990) p. 225.

<sup>137</sup> Sinclair (1990) p. 229.

<sup>138</sup> Karen Sinclair, quoted in Michele D. Dominy, 'Maori Sovereignty. A Feminist Invention of Identity', Linnekin & Poyer (1990) p. 242.

Grace could be said to capitalise on both these aspects of contemporary Maori society to portray a social situation which mimics the Western civil society while also maintaining an attachment to the sacred world. By positioning her female house on the threshold between the sacred and the secular worlds she gives primacy to the traditional roles of women as giving both life and death. Civil society thereby is constructed upon the 'disorder of women' and the personal becomes the political. Like the carver of the prologue Grace also breaks the rules producing a metaphor of civil society which is clearly the product of cultural and social pressures and not simply an extrapolation from shared ancestry or traditional beliefs. She challenges the dominance of the New Zealand political order by introducing a sacred authority into the secular State in order to establish a home for women in which they are neither alone nor sleeping fretfully.

## **Chapter Five: Rumble and Haka** **The Land Wars & *Once Were Warriors***

Towards the end of the 1980s *Potiki* had been appropriated by Pakeha as the 'authentic' Maori novel in remarkably similar fashion to their earlier appropriation of *Man Alone* as the 'authentic' Pakeha novel. Both novels had expressly criticised Aotearoa/New Zealand and yet become representative of a national and ethnic cultural exceptionalism. Each had also been taken to portray either an essential masculinity or femininity. The Pakeha sense of what constituted the nation had obviously undergone a radical refashioning by the 1980s, but the further changes which occurred under the Labour government between 1984 and 1990 might be referred to as 'revolutionary'. The conclusion of this decade saw the re-election of the National government, and not uncoincidentally the publication of Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors*, the final novel to be considered here. Duff's rightwing politics were both nourished by the increasingly conservative approach of the government to Maori and a Pakeha back-lash against Maori demands, and fed into these agendas. Duff's fictional representation of Maori 'failure' in real terms to be included equally in educational success, employment and to be law abiding must be read against a background of the introduction of capitalism into Aotearoa/New Zealand and its concomitant drive to contain Maori within Pakeha conceptions of law and order.

In being constructed around the phrase 'once were' with its backward gaze, *Once Were Warriors* implicitly appears to valorise a warriorhood which may be that of pre-contact society or that of the Land Wars of the 1860s. It is ambiguously positioned both in this sense and in the fact that it may refer to a desired and desirable past and therefore be concerned with constructing a subjectivity grounded in tradition. Alternatively, if it is implying that the past is an undesirable and negative site compared to modernity, its focus will be on the present. In its refusal to idealise either the past or the present, *Once Were Warriors* insists that there never was a 'Maoriland Utopia'

constructed upon the holistic and integrative traditions that characterise the 'mainstream' presentation of Maoritanga. It therefore inverts modern primitive objectifications of Maori culture which have been upheld by both Maori and Pakeha. It is in the negotiation between the valourised and denigrated constructions of the past and through a present characterised by a Maori subjectivity which is seen as having failed to achieve modernity that this novel will be examined.

The first sections of this chapter will concentrate on the introduction of capitalism and law and order in the nineteenth century, and an examination of the causes and consequences of the Land Wars. These will be followed by a brief summary of the economics of Aotearoa/New Zealand and its effect on Maori.

### **Trade, Land, and Law and Order**

On the ninth of November 1769 Joseph Banks reported in his journal that a Maori trading with the second lieutenant on Cook's ship *Endeavour*, 'almost immediately cheated by taking the Cloth which was given to (him) without returning that which was bargained for.' The lieutenant, having lost patience, shot him dead, and elicited the comment from Banks that the man's life was 'forfeited to the laws of England.'<sup>1</sup> The remaining Maori discussed the possibility of vengeance but decided that the dead man had been in the wrong and his death was *utu* for his offence. This early scene encapsulated the uneasy conjunction between commerce, property, and law and order which was to preoccupy both Europeans and Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand for much of the following century, and which finally incorporated Aotearoa into 'the great connective narrative of capitalism . . . (which) drives the empires of social reproduction.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Banks. 'Endeavour journal,' *The Writing of New Zealand*, ed., Alex Calder (Auckland: Reed Books Ltd., 1993) p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Introduction,' *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge: 1991) p. 6.

Maori were quick to realise the possibilities of trade and after initial misunderstandings and displays of defiance were willing to barter fish and artifacts for cloth, iron nails and other European goods. But as Keith Sorrenson notes, 'there remained the problem of how to discipline and guide the Maori into peaceable and reliable trading partners, and of persuading them that they would gain more by open-handed exchange than by attempting to "pluck the Pakeha" or steal their goods.'<sup>3</sup> Europeans, of course, had to grapple with aspects of Maori society such as the laws of tapu and the mana of chiefs, the transgression of which was the probable cause of most of the early instances of aggression. But the Maori desire for European goods was such that they were prepared to accommodate a high degree of inappropriate behavior by Europeans. The European desire for a lucrative trade in whale oil, flax and timber was such that they also were prepared to both risk their lives and accommodate themselves to Maori dictates. Such trading, it was argued, was beneficial to Maori as commerce was inherently a 'civilising' influence.

The earliest missionaries endorsed this outlook. Samuel Marsden, for example, believed that trade would lead to the adoption of Christianity and he distributed agricultural implements to this end. Although Maori made rapid progress in agriculture and in bartering their produce with visiting ships, they also discovered that trade provided the implements of war. Hongi Heke, the Ngapuhi chief who was the first to obtain a supply of muskets demonstrated in his career of conquest in the 1820s that trade provided the means to war. Other chiefs quickly followed suit in their desire to pay off old scores and increase their wealth and prestige. In consequence, parts of the North Island were convulsed by increased tribal warfare. These conflicts, commonly referred to as the Musket Wars, continued until 1833. While they may have subsided due to Maori exhaustion and missionary mediation, the most likely cause was the restoration of the intertribal balance of power. Yet for Pakeha there was always the hope that commercial activity would eventually provide a substitute for war, a hope

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<sup>3</sup> Keith Sorrenson, 'How to Civilise Savages,' *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. ix, no.2 (1975) p. 98.

that was sustained as despite the setbacks of Heke's war in the north the Maori continued to supply the colonists with agricultural produce, labour and other services. However, in general by the 1840s for Maori such pursuits were of lesser consequence than their own internal concerns. As Ann Parsonson writes:

Each hapu was pitted against its neighbour, always poised on the brink of hostility. An insult, trespass, or killing would open an immediate breach, which might take months or years to heal. Aggressive, shrewd, suspicious, preoccupied with the acquisition and display of wealth, evermindful for an opportunity to damage those of their relatives and opponents, the Maoris were too concerned with the enemy at home to pay much attention to new external threats.<sup>4</sup>

But Maori soon learned that the Pakeha's capitalism could be turned to their advantage, not only for the purposes of outright war, but also for providing new ways of pursuing traditional rivalries. Consequently, it was appropriated with vigour. One of the negative results of this appropriation was that Maori were open to negotiation with the New Zealand Company agents. The New Zealand Association, formed in 1837, which became the New Zealand Company the following year was set up by Edward Gibbon Wakefield as a means of promoting settlement of Europeans. At the heart of the company's plan were the proposals to deal with Maori land. In property terms, then, it established a lasting emphasis on land and its conjunction with the capitalist motivations of investors and settlers. The influence of humanitarians and evangelical opinion in England forced Wakefield to take Maori needs into account. Douglas Sinclair describes the system that was set up:

He broke new ground when he announced his novel and important concession to the interests of the Maoris. A policy of tenths, he said, would form a valuable asset for the Maoris, and would help to reclaim them from barbarism. The policy would reserve a balloted one-tenth of all land purchased by colonists for the indigenous inhabitants to be governed by chiefs with official backing.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ann Parsonson, 'The Pursuit of Mana' *Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed., W. H. Oliver (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1981) p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas Sinclair, 'Land: Maori View and European Response,' *Te Ao Huruhuri* (Auckland:

The aim of the association, however, was to generate capital for wealthy Englishmen, motivated by both philanthropic and economic principles. The reasoning was that if New Zealand became a British possession then in all probability it would attract investment of British capital. When the association became a company, the philanthropic aspect of the endeavour was lost, to be replaced by a strictly commercial concern which could justify paying low prices to Maori since the 'real payment' was to be the 'conferring on them of the great boon of civilization.'<sup>6</sup>

Although the then Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, was replaced at this time by Lord Normanby who withdrew the promise of a charter for the company, Wakefield continued with his enterprise. Agents were sent to New Zealand to set up a system of government independent of the Crown and thereby force the hand of the government to satisfy their venture. In persuading Maori to part with their land Wakefield offered muskets and gunpowder as incentives. As Douglas Sinclair explains:

By some quirk of fate, Wakefield found the Ngati Awa at a time when they considered themselves in desperate need for guns. The old alliance of Ngati Awa with Ngati Toa and Ngati Raukawa under the volatile leadership of Te Rauparaha and Te Rangihaeata had long worn thin. And the constant and petty annoyances between them were being read as possible heralds of the onset of war.<sup>7</sup>

The emphasis for Maori in these negotiations, therefore, remained one of adapting capitalism to satisfy inter-tribal antagonisms or increase mana. The Wakefield Company's dealings, however, were marked by dishonest and incomplete purchases and proved for most Maori to be a disillusioning experience. The New Zealand Company was soon forced to abandon its colonising role and the future of land sales came to rest in the hands of the government. With annexation and the beginnings of systematic colonisation the civilising mission gained a new lease of life. Under the

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Longman Paul. rev.ed. 1981) p. 94.

<sup>6</sup> Edward J. Wakefield, *Adventure in New Zealand* (London: John Murray 1845) I. p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Sinclair (1981) p. 97.

Treaty of Waitangi the government was accorded the right of pre-emption to purchase such land as the Maori were willing to sell. The Crown, and in effect for the first fifteen years or so, the governors also played a vital role in the continuation of colonisation. If plenty of Maori land was purchased and made available to the settlers they were relatively content, if not they pressed for the abolition of pre-emption and the right to purchase land directly from the Maori. As Bruce Jesson writes: 'It would be exaggerating to describe the colonization of New Zealand as an exercise in state capitalism; however, the state's economic role was pivotal, its purpose being to facilitate the formation of a pastoral and commercial bourgeoisie.'<sup>8</sup> The Crown purchase regime continued some of the features of the Wakefieldian system. Sorrenson, for example, points out: 'Grey and the chief land purchase commissioner, Donald McLean, never tired of telling the Maori, it was not the low price that was paid that would be their real benefit, but the settlement in their midst of civilized colonists.'<sup>9</sup> For a time this seemed to be the case for, as the opportunities for trade increased Maori financial prospects also rose dramatically. Ranganui Walker describes the situation in the following words:

Tribes around Hauraki Gulf headed for the Auckland markets in canoes and sailing vessels laden with produce . . . Tribes around the Tamaki isthmus sold thousands of kits of oysters annually through the ports of Auckland and Onehunga right up to 1858. Tribes from as far afield as Te Whaiti and Ruatahuna brought produce to Auckland in order to acquire manufactured goods. Tribes in the south benefited financially from proximity to Pakeha in the New Zealand Company settlements. As early as 1842 a bank manager in Wellington estimated Maori wealth to be upwards of £150,000. Much of this was invested later in the decade in ploughs, carts and mills.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout this period Maori sold land for a variety of causes, but the reasons frequently involved an escalating competitiveness among tribes. Parsonson comments that the Mokau people for example:

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<sup>8</sup> Bruce Jesson, 'The Disintegration of a Labour Tradition: New Zealand Politics in the 1980s', *New Left Review*, No. 192, March/April (1992) p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Keith Sorrenson (1975) p. 105.

<sup>10</sup> Ranganui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou* (Auckland: Penguin, 1990) p. 100.

were humiliated at having to sell their produce at New Plymouth, to the Pakehas of Ati Awa, because they were without any of their own. And the Hawkes Bay chief, Te Hapuku, whose nearest Pakeha neighbours were whalers whom he despised, embarked in 1851 on a programme of sales designed to attract a rather better class of settler.<sup>11</sup>

Payment for land was also important as it could be paraded before opponents as tangible recognition of a claim. Likewise, when disputes arose they were often not in order to prevent sales but to defend claims to land which had been offered for sale by other claimants.

However, as Maori land decreased colonists continued to pour into the country and by 1858 the European population exceeded that of the Maori, whose numbers were declining. Consequently great pressure was brought to bear on tribes, particularly those in the Waitara and Waikato to sell their fertile and highly productive land. Their progressive advance in agriculture - - in 'civilisation' - - brought forth the admiration and the envy of the settlers. Yet, in resisting the seizure of their lands in the following wars these same tribes were described as rebels and suffered the confiscation of their land. Even confiscation could be justified by an appeal to the civilising mission however. It was necessary, said Premier Domett in 1863, to confiscate the land of the rebel Maori to force them into civilisation, since peaceful methods had failed.<sup>12</sup>

Such rationalisations of the civilising mission were not just means for the acquisition of land, but were also implicated in notions of law and order. Ever since the Treaty had transferred sovereignty to the Queen, at least from the Pakeha viewpoint, the governors, and after them the settler politicians, had set their faces firmly against any independent exercise of sovereign powers by the Maori chiefs, let alone a Maori king. Despite the urging of the Colonial Office and a special provision in the 1852 Constitution Act to set aside districts beyond the European settlements where Maori law and custom would prevail, no such districts were ever established. It

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<sup>11</sup> Ann Parsonson (1981) p. 149.

<sup>12</sup> Memorandum, 5 October 1863. Appendices to the *Journals of the House of Representatives*. (1863) A. 84. p. 11.

was the consistent object of successive New Zealand governments to bring Maori and their property within the scope of English civil and criminal law, including locally enacted laws. This could be seen as upholding not merely the first clause of the Treaty but also the third, which promised Maori the rights and privileges of British subjects.

The policy of assimilation was clearly pursued because it could be equated with settler interests, notably in relation to the acquisition of Maori land. It was hardly coincidental that legislation to individualise Maori land titles and allow 'free trade', and to confiscate the land of 'rebel' Maori was passed soon after the settlers took responsibility for Native Affairs in the early 1860s. The 'free trade' policy was continued vigorously for the remainder of the nineteenth century and played a vital part in the opening up of the central North Island for European settlement, including those two last refuges of Maori independence, the King Country and the Urewera. Moreover the policy could be pursued with a relatively free conscience, since the Maori population was still declining and there was little likelihood that they would need the land.

Though the Native Land Acts were clearly the most important weapon in promoting the assimilation policy, other aspects of the application of law were of importance. In particular there was the continuing settler demand that all Maori who plundered, assaulted or murdered settlers must be brought to justice - - to British justice - - and prevented from absconding to Maori districts. Coupled with the settler drive to impose the British legal and judicial system was a determination not to recognise any independent Maori authorities whether these were the village runanga or national political movements like the Kotahitanga. Maori had been granted representation in the New Zealand parliament in the Native Representation Act of 1867 and this was considered to be their proper forum. This measure was largely acceptable to politicians because of the need to cement alliances with kupapa and it was to kupapa chiefs that the seats went. This could hardly constitute a neutral situation for those Maori who were aware of the situation. As Alan Ward notes:

Initially the Native Department treated Maori representation rather as a matter of public relations and goodwill than a serious attempt at democratic representation. Rolleston proposed arrangements to prevent a general poll, which he feared would excite tribal antagonisms and allow the votes of commoners to swamp the influence of the chiefs. He intended rather that a meeting of chiefs in each electorate should agree on a single candidate . . . Many Maori treated the Act with indifference. Most of those in the disturbed districts were in fact unaware of it, while the Northland and Bay of Plenty Maori were angry and disappointed that there were to be only four representatives because each tribe could not choose its own representative and none had confidence in a representative from another tribe within the same vast electorate.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, as Keith Sinclair points out :

Not all Maori thought the seats in Parliament would be useful. A Te Awara chief, Pokiha Taranui, wrote to other chiefs asking, 'what is the point in our chiefs being sent into the Pakeha parliament if they can't understand the language of the Pakeha?' He had a point: in the 1870s it was said that only a South Island member of the House of Representatives (M.H.R.), Taiaoa, could follow the debates.<sup>14</sup>

Probably the Maori politicians only became effective in the 1890s when they had been educated in English. The inability of Maori politicians to achieve Maori goals was a major factor in creating the demand for a Maori Parliament in the 1870s and later. In fact, politics outside parliament were far more important to Maori. They held innumerable meetings all over the country to discuss major issues. Very large inter-tribal runanga were held in the 1850s, leading to the election of the first Maori king, Potatau. During the wars the runanga seem to have ceased especially in unsettled districts, but were revived again in the 1870s. The most distinctive political movement of this time was the formation of Maori komiti which organised inter-tribal meetings and agitated about important issues. The idea of Maori unity (kotahitanga) which had been discussed in the 1850s was revived in Henare Matua's komiti, one of the most active at the time. Such activities in the period prior to 1861 were an important cause of the Anglo-Maori Wars.

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<sup>13</sup> Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice* (Auckland: Auckland University Press 1987) p. 209.

<sup>14</sup> Keith Sinclair, *Kinds of Peace* (Auckland: Auckland University Press 1991) p. 87.

## War, Land and Law

Although the contention has been made that the overwhelmingly important motive for Pakeha aggression leading to the Land Wars was the hunger for land, this is not the entire story. The land-hunger motive was certainly overwhelmingly important in the case of the Taranaki war of 1860-1. This began as an attempt to deny the right of Wiremu Kingi to prohibit the alienation by minor owners of the land of the tribe. A Maori named Teira tried to sell to the government some of the land on which his paramount chief, Wiremu Kingi, and most of his tribe were living. The great chief refused to let the lesser sell it. A survey of the land was commenced, but was obstructed by Maori. Martial law was declared, troops occupied the Waitara district and the first shots of the war were fired. But even in the case of the Waitara purchase Keith Sinclair has demonstrated that Governor Browne, misled by some of his advisers, ordered the troops against Kingi, not because, while knowing that Kingi had a just claim, he wanted to terrorise him, but because he genuinely believed that Kingi had *no* claim.<sup>15</sup> Browne believed that he was promoting law and order, ending a long anarchy in Taranaki, not merely seizing land for settlement. By 1861 there was an uneasy truce and although Browne wanted to invade the Waikato he was given another posting and Sir George Grey returned as governor in the hope of making peace. Although Grey investigated the title to Waitara and decided to return it to Atiawa, he left it too late and Rewi Maniapoto sent word from King Tawhiao to attack. The Maori consequently ambushed some troops and the war began again. The involvement of the King movement in the Taranaki war highlighted issues other than the settler hunger for Maori lands.

One particular issue concerned the establishment of Native Districts, separate from the European provinces. This was anathema to the settlers and was also not to

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<sup>15</sup>Keith Sinclair, *The Origins of the Maori Wars* (Auckland: Auckland University Press. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.) p. 141-8 & 200-1. First Published Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1961.

Grey's taste. He believed that the Queen's government must be demonstrably exercised over all those who since the Treaty of Waitangi had been regarded as British subjects. Moreover, the King movement threatened to prevent him from attaining the goal on which his reputation rested, that of racial amalgamation. His approach to the King movement was therefore essentially negative. As Alan Ward writes:

Grey's egotism had wedded him to the idea of being the fond and wise father of the Maoris, a role he imagined he had played with success in his first governorship. He still regarded the chiefs as essentially childlike people responsive to a mixture of chiding and candy. He seemed quite unable to grasp the fact that he was (dealing with) men who, backed by some 10,000 armed supporters were experiencing the rich and heady satisfactions of creating an independent Maori nationality in defiance of the invaders.<sup>16</sup>

Contrary to opinions that he was a protector of Maori interests, who might have averted war but for the intransigence of Maori extremists and land-hungry settlers, Grey himself advanced policies that led inexorably to war. By 1865, aware that he was not going to secure the submission of the bulk of 'rebel' Maori, Grey lost interest in his earlier dream of conducting a harmonious amalgamation of races under his paternal wing, and became more concerned to bargain with settler premiers in order to retain as much influence as he could in the now self-governing colony. The resulting bargains included Grey's agreement to extensive confiscation in the Waikato and Taranaki and to a military subjugation of the latter province by the Stafford government in early 1866. These in turn weakened the confidence of the Colonial Office in Grey and contributed largely to his dismissal in 1867.

Regardless of Grey's misreading of Maori desire for independence, as Sinclair has pointed out, the basic antagonism between Maori and settlers was such that war was likely to occur at some time, even if Grey had averted, not invited, a collision in 1863.<sup>17</sup> There were obvious material satisfactions to be gained by the Europeans in

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<sup>16</sup> Alan Ward, 'The Origins of the Anglo-Maori Wars,' *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 1, pt. 2 (1967) p. 154.

<sup>17</sup> Sinclair (1957) p. 271-2.

making war on the King movement. While settlers commonly stated that the conquest of the King movement was intended to establish the rule of law, this too, to a great extent, implied the pursuit of material gain. The subjugation of the King movement meant, not only that land in Waikato would be confiscated but also that there would be more certainty of extensive purchases under the Native Lands Act of 1862. The supremacy of European power meant also that trade and commerce could exploit the Maori market with the assurance that the payment of debts could be enforced through the courts, or an equivalent taken in land.

Pakeha insecurity was also increased by the fact that the Maori were not in the period immediately prior to the wars living in peace and tranquility. There were constant minor conflicts arising out of a continuation of the tribal wars of the 1820s and 1830s and, indirectly, out of the very presence of European settlement. There were moreover, frequent slayings arising out of *makutu* or *puremu* disputes. The activities of *taua muru* - - armed parties seeking retributive plunder - - were a subject of constant criticism by magistrates in every district as late as the 1880s. Although these were essentially institutional means of adjusting differences in Maori society they gave Europeans an impression of constant turbulence and savagery. The inability of British law to suppress such practices had been felt by officials as a source of deep humiliation. Henry Sewell, for example stated: 'What are we to say to a Government with 50,000 subjects over whom it exercises, and can exercise not the slightest practical control? . . . we profess to govern them and are able to do so just so long and so far as they choose to let us.'<sup>18</sup> Moreover, although Maori hospitality and generosity were usually to the fore, the North Island settlers felt in a state of insecurity in the face of Maori power. Settler fears, if substantially unjustified, were nevertheless very real. And as Ward writes:

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<sup>18</sup> Cited in J. L. Robson, *New Zealand, The Development of its Laws and Constitution* (London: Stevens 1954) p. 18.

The Maoris did not always care to keep their power masked. One of the commonest words used in settler writings to describe Maori behavior during the period of 1840-63 was 'bounce'. This term was used to describe the allegedly capricious and arbitrary behavior of Maoris who impounded cattle, refused to pay debts, stopped roads and surveys, levied tolls, left passengers stranded on ferries and defied magistrates summonses. These activities were often well-deserved responses to acts of injustice, insults or breaches of Maori custom by settlers; they reached their peak after European aggressions such as the Wairua intrusion of 1843 and the Waitara war of 1860-1, which indicates that they were in fact largely defensive in origin, or assertions of the Maoris' claim that they were not yet to be trampled on in their own land. But at times innocent and fair-minded settlers were hurt and none felt secure. As a result, much of the settler community developed a deep loathing for the Maoris that grew positively explosive after 1861.<sup>19</sup>

In 1861-3 the King movement was more active than ever in proselytising and showed a stiffened response to Grey's rival institutions. These reactions, too, were largely defensive. The Kingite leaders sought to safeguard the integrity of their movement, and of Maori society, by trying to extend their authority as widely as possible beyond their own base territory. But to the settlers they appeared aggressive and threatened the maintenance of order by European institutions.

The reasons for the unwillingness of the government to give a defined status to the King movement included, besides a desire for Waikato land, Grey's personal ambitions, and settler fears for their security, a belief in the inherent superiority of Western conceptions of law and order. The settlers in New Zealand usually omitted mention of colour and, whether or not they wanted land, they certainly spoke of the 'superiority' of British society and desired to have its particular brand of law and order firmly established.

The crisis period of 1861-3 was, therefore, the climax of over twenty years of tension and mistrust arising from many causes. While the desire for more land was uppermost in the minds of numbers of Pakeha the theme that emerges more strongly in the writing of the settlers is the demand for security of person as well as property, and for the supremacy of Western institutions. The invasion of the Waikato expressed the

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<sup>19</sup> Ward (1967) p. 148-170.

determination of Pakeha to resolve the ultimate question of which culture was going to prevail and admit the other on sufferance.

Gayatri Spivak has claimed that imperialism requires rereading 'not because Empire, like Capital is abstract, but because Empire messes with identity.'<sup>20</sup> However, the narratives of Pakeha authority in this period of New Zealand's colonial history do not merely 'mess' with identity but are forms of displacement which serve to construct a fiction in which Maori institutions of law and order and desire for autonomy are portrayed as intransigence in order to maintain the myth of colonial authority. The enthusiasm among Europeans all over New Zealand to volunteer for the raid on Te Whiti's settlement at Parihaka in 1881, for example, cannot be explained merely in terms of the desire for Te Whiti's land, which could benefit comparatively few. Nor did the police raid on the settlement of Rua in the Urewera country in 1916 have anything to do with the prophet's land, for the government had already decided to leave it as a forest-covered reserve to minimise flooding on the Bay of Plenty plains beneath. The raid was a classic illustration of Pakeha intolerance of independent Maori authority. Rua was feared and mistrusted for the concentration of followers he had built up. The police gunfire at Maungapohatu in 1916 was in effect the last shooting in the Anglo-Maori wars, which broke the last Maori stronghold. The ideal of the rule of European law in New Zealand was, therefore, from the Maori standpoint, a very aggressive one which sought to contain their property, trade possibilities and customary laws within an alien structure.

In 1863 the greed of land sharks and the fear of frontier families, notions of European superiority, the desire of the Governor and the magistrates to end the humiliation of not being able to rule the outdistricts and of the humanitarians to carry the policy of amalgamation to a conclusion - - all these found common expression in the impulse to end Maori resistance by force of arms. The basic motives were, of course, settler fear and settler self-interest, but the belief that the Maori would benefit

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20 Gayatri C. Spivak, 'Reading the Satanic Verses,' *Public Culture* 2, no.1 (Fall 1989) p. 86.

from submission to British rule inclined humanitarians to oppose Maori separatism and to acquiesce to the use of arms to end it. Ultimately the imposition of European law was considered a necessity as Maori autonomy and their capacity to constrain land sales were inextricably linked.

### **The Wars and their Aftermath**

In the early years of colonisation economic interaction was vital to both Maori and Pakeha and in general it was Maori markets which underpinned the economy of European settlements. These settlements in turn provided Maori with markets for their goods and trading centres for the distribution of European goods. Maori power, in fact, was commercial rather than political. The threat to this economic interaction was basically a conflict of political aspirations which was perhaps the most fundamental cause of the wars.

In the ensuing wars Maori suffered from a basic disadvantage in that they had no warrior class as such, and as their fighting force was also a vital part of the labour force, they were unable to sustain a war of any length. Traditionally Maori warfare had consisted of sporadic raids rather than long campaigns. The Maori also suffered from being greatly outnumbered in virtually every campaign. James Belich writes:

At the beginning of the New Zealand wars, the Maoris seemed impossibly outmatched by the British in military technology, organisation for war and simple numbers. In the end, it required 18,000 British troops, together with careful preparation and logistical organisation, to defeat them - and even then they were able to delay and limit the enemy victory. After Imperial troops were withdrawn Titokawaru came within an ace of success against vastly superior colonial forces, a result which might have reversed the decision of the Waikato war. Prior to this, the Maoris blocked the British in two wars, and regularly defeated forces several times their own numbers - forces which were not trapped or surprised, but which actually chose to give battle.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (Auckland: Auckland University Press 1986) p. 291.

The method of warfare that the Maori developed to deal effectively with the situation was innovative in that it differed from both their traditional system and the British military system. First, they confronted the problem of heavy bombardment. Because they faced overwhelming enemy firepower due to European numerical superiority, they developed the 'modern pa' which were effectively trench systems. Frequently they positioned their main firing trenches well in front of virtually deserted stockades so the British shells passed overhead, but more importantly, they developed bunkers as protection from bombardment. These bunkers were connected by trenches or passages to firing positions so after successfully sitting out an artillery attack, they could recommence firing. Second, they had the problem of repulsing assaults. According to Belich:

The decisive factor concerned the construction of the pa and the preparation of the surrounding battlefield. Carefully sited firing positions and salients for enfilading fire were regular features of pa. So too were light defences like the pekerangi which impeded an attacker and allowed time to shoot him. Hidden rifle trenches and deceptively weak-looking fortifications might prove decisive. False targets might distract assault parties as well as artillery . . . In terms of protecting the garrison, modern pa were trench and bunker systems, in terms of repelling assaults, they were carefully prepared killing grounds.<sup>22</sup>

Maori resistance, however, had its weaknesses. Tribal differences often led Maori groups to act against their own long-term interests. Not all tribes were involved in the war. About half the Maori people were neutral kupapa, a name which at first meant that they fought for the Queen, but also came to mean they were neutral or friendly towards Pakeha. As Keith Sinclair comments:

Some tribes and hapu made considered calculations about where their best interests lay. Some fought for reasons of Maori politics. For instance the Arawa wanted revenge against their enemies to the north and south. Some Maori groups changed sides during the fighting.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> James Belich (1986) p. 296-7

<sup>23</sup> Keith Sinclair (1991) p. 7.

The rise of the Hauhau also split the Maori side further. A civil war broke out among the Ngati Porou between Hauhau converts and kupapa who hated the Hauhau and feared being attacked as much as did the settlers.

With the loss of the wars the political cohesion of some of the tribes was reduced. The power and influence of the King Movement was also reduced. There was undisguised animosity between the Waikato and Maniapoto regions as the King and his people were in the humiliating position of being obliged to live on Ngati Maniapoto land after their Waikato land had been confiscated. This in turn compromised Maori ability to control assimilation and the alienation of land through the application of British law. The period after the wars was also marked, as was much of the nineteenth century by a decline in Maori population, largely through lack of immunity to introduced diseases. Only in the 1890s when they had acquired the necessary antibodies did the population begin to rise.

The 1870s and 1880s were decades of rapid development for Pakeha, especially in those areas which could also contribute to their containment of Maori aspirations such as roads and railways. Once again, Maori reactions varied. While many opposed these signs of 'civilisation' because they opened up the land to settlers and allowed troops to be brought in swiftly if trouble erupted, others were pleased to accept work and wages on public works. However, Maori autonomy did not die out but persisted through two different strategies - - centres of resistance (the precursor of Maori separatism), and the formation of alliances with the government (the precursor of biculturalism). There were centres of resistance in the Urewera district and South Taranaki but the largest centre was the King Country which despite its internal difficulties functioned as an independent state until the mid-1880s. Its influence extended long after this date and provided a platform for the twentieth-century leader Te Puea Herangi which in Sorrenson's words formed 'a bulwark for Maori ideals and values.'<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Sorrenson, 'The Maori King Movement,' in eds., R. M. Chapman & K. Sinclair, *Studies in a Small Democracy* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1963) p. 55.

Ideologically, the Anglo-Maori Wars fed into the construction of the modern myth of New Zealand race relations. Combined with the older humanitarian strand in British policy the Maori were granted respect for their courage and chivalry. This tended to fuse with benign notions such as Edward Tregear's Aryan Maori, offsetting the fatal impact theory and the inevitability of Maori dying out. Maori were thereby constructed as worthy and capable of inclusion in 'civilised' society. The downside of such a construction was that it served to promote assimilation. The British throughout the wars expected victory and this expectation coloured the interpretation of these wars. Belich explains that:

British stereotypes of their own and of Maori military abilities determined what was acceptable and what was not . . . British commentators were quite capable of recognising some Maori qualities: courage, chivalry, dexterity at guerilla methods, and intuitive or traditional fort-building skill. But there were others that they were reluctant to acknowledge. For some commentators, these included good marksmanship, discipline, and the capacity for sustained and well-organised physical labour . . . But a still more important aspect of the stereotype was the reluctance to credit the Maori with the higher military talents : the capacity to co-ordinate, to think strategically, and to innovate tactically.<sup>25</sup>

The emphasis on Maori courage and chivalry as a form of romantic heroism served to obscure the real nature of the wars and British defeats. They perpetuated a notion that the wars formed the basis for a supposed mutual respect while at the same time perpetuating the ethnocentric beliefs that Maori lacked the intellectual qualities known as 'the higher mental functions.' To quote Belich again:

An underlying, unstated belief that the Maori had not invented guns and a written language because they could not was compatible with a great deal of respect for other Maori virtues. The Maoris could be beautiful, strong, heroic and chivalrous; they could display intelligence of various kinds; but they could not invent or theorize. At the very least, they could not invent or theorize to the same level as Europeans.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> James Belich (1986) p. 312-316.

<sup>26</sup> James Belich, (1986) p. 326.

However, even these circumscribed favourable images of Maori did not necessarily survive the war. Maori were considered to be redeemable by their willingness to adopt European capitalism, religion and law. Resistance was interpreted as refusal to accept these 'civilising' influences. Contemporary publications denounced the civilising mission as inappropriate treatment for an unregenerate people:

The Maori is now known to us as what he is, and not as missionaries and philanthropists were willing to believe him. (In reality the Maori is) a man ignorant and savage, loving darkness and anarchy, hating light and order; a man of fierce, and ungoverned passions, bloodthirsty, cruel, ungrateful and treacherous.<sup>27</sup>

This period directly following the wars saw the definitive development of what might be termed 'hard' and 'soft' primitivism in Pakeha stereotyping of Maori. 'Hard' primitivism endorses portrayals of Maori as savage, depraved, coming from an inferior social order and lacking in the mental capacities necessary for Western 'civilised' life. 'Soft' primitivism, on the other hand, constructs Maori as pre-modern in a positive but romanticised sense of having existed in a Maori spiritual utopia characterised by the now familiar notions of loving community and attachment to the land. This utopia is seen as having been despoiled by colonisation.

The reality for Maori in the 1860s, however, was that they were living in a very different society. Most of the population was Pakeha, the country was governed by Pakeha institutions and at least in theory by Pakeha law. This was the decade which saw the last years of the warriors, blood feuds and tribal fighting. Yet for Maori the claims of social precedence, the issue of challenges and the settling of insults remained essentially the same as they had been a century before. The tensions between small rural communities, constantly appraising and sparring with their neighbours, remained. People still spent their money on traditional obligations and the universal measure of

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Belich, (1986) p. 328.

wealth remained the feast. Political activity also remained tribal but dissatisfaction with the government was endemic. A new political sophistication developed as a basis for requests for redress of wrongs which chiefs suggested stemmed from the arrival of Pakeha and annexation. Although Maori political independence did not survive, their cultural autonomy and identity did. Old ways of behaving remained so that while the Land Court was extremely effective in reducing Maori independence and including them within the State's embrace, their detribalising aim was less successful. The old reasons for selling land persisted with the rivalry for mana having the Land Court as its arena. New status symbols such as tombstones and buggies cost money and selling land was the easiest source. Maori were also tempted into engagement with the state for mana, as well as the desire to participate in the framing of laws which affected them and the hope that they could subvert the dominance of the State. Tribal affiliation remained in the work patterns of many Maori who engaged in contract harvesting, labouring or shearing within tribally organised groups with the proceeds to some extent supporting tribal ends such as hui or tangi. As Belich writes:

The Pa, as kianga came increasingly to be called in the twentieth century, seemed a marginal fringe community only in the eyes of its Pakeha neighbours. Competition, co-operation and the key institutions of hui, tangihangi and the display of group mana and identity through symbols such as meeting houses went on as before.<sup>28</sup>

This 'hidden' world has been interpreted by Pakeha scholars as having undergone various 'renaissances'. Raymond Firth, for example, sees a revival of Maori society sometime in the late nineteenth century. He writes:

The antipathy to the European, the reaction against his customs and his goods, the mood of despondency and lost initiative passed, and from about 1880 a fairly steady movement towards economic prosperity set in, based on a revival of interest and hope.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples* (Auckland: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1996) p. 269-70.

<sup>29</sup> Raymond Firth, *The Economics of the New Zealand Maori* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1959) p. 457-8.

G. V. Butterworth, however, views the period from 1920 onwards as the 'turn of the tide'. This was the period in which government policies were influenced by Apirana Ngata and when Ratana Members of Parliament were backed by a Labour Government dedicated to full employment. The result was a rise in the general standard of living and health that reinforced a rise in Maori morale. Community optimism and prosperity showed itself in the 1940s and 1950s through the traditional expression of building numbers of carved meeting houses and in marae renovations. It also showed itself in the willingness to take advantage of new opportunities. In the immediate post-war period extensive land development schemes to rehabilitate ex-servicemen benefited Maori by stimulating employment opportunities in rural areas, slowing down the rate of migration to towns. However, as Butterworth notes:

The nature of the schemes ensured . . . that the main benefit of these new opportunities accrued to returned servicemen and to the more mature Maori. There were not sufficient rural opportunities for young workers in the 15 to 24 years age group.<sup>30</sup>

By the 1950s the general prosperity was beginning to dwindle and the lack of economic opportunities in the countryside forced Maori to move in larger and larger numbers. The stress which had been laid in the District Maori High Schools on 'education of a practical nature' left Maori ill-equipped for urban employment opportunities other than labouring and reflected the narrow view of the Maori future held by Pakeha. Such a view implicitly endorsed those negative stereotypes of Maori in which they were seen to display sufficient intelligence to be assimilated into Western society but to be incapable of sophisticated theorising or innovation. This outlook persisted despite the fact that much of the bitterness and ill-will toward Maori following the Land Wars had diminished by the early years of the twentieth century and continued to do so. Sir John Gorst, for example, revisiting New Zealand in 1906 remarked on the change from the 1860s:

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<sup>30</sup> G. V. Butterworth, 'A Rural Maori Renaissance?', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. LXXXI, Pt. 2 (1972) p. 187.

There was no change more visible in New Zealand which appeared more remarkable than the entire alteration in the sentiment with which the white and brown races regarded one another. In former times the feeling of Pakeha towards Maori was much like that of white to negro in the United States . . . All this is now changed. The public opinion of the country regards the Maoris (sic.) as entitled to equal rights and equal justice, they are looked upon as a unique distinction of the New Zealand State, and the community is not a little proud of their success in assimilating into their civilisation this ancient and picturesque race.<sup>31</sup>

This 'success' could be summarised as the Pakeha accomplishment of inscribing Maori within a future largely directed by a government policy whereby the 'warrior' was to become a farmer. This incorporation of Maori aspirations within a farming mandate was also endorsed by Maori leaders such as Ngata as the image of the Maori as farmer offset the earlier 'hard' stereotypes of warlike savages. It also contained the germ of a move away from the early colonial sense of commerce as inherently civilising to the later twentieth-century conception of the 'soft' modern primitive whose pre-modern innocence was to be protected by adherence to a rural lifestyle free from the 'savagery' of the marketplace. The positive side of such containment was clearly visible in Keri Hulme's *the bone people*, published at a time when biculturalism was endorsed by the government and by large sections of both Maori and Pakeha populations. The title itself has unequivocal connotations of Maori forming a sacred structure or 'skeleton' for the nation. By 1990, with the National Party back in power, both government policy and the mood among Pakeha shifted into the beginnings of a backlash in respect of Maori expectations and claims. Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors* reflects this change in popular outlook, the title describing Maori negatively as now not-warriors. In economic terms this equates their current disadvantage and disproportionate numbers of unemployed with a passivity which is implicitly compared to a nineteenth-century state of activity and enthusiasm for entrepreneurial venture. 'Warriors' also connotes a fighting stance against foreign incursions or impositions, but

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<sup>31</sup> J. E. Gorst, *New Zealand Revisited: Recollections of the Days of my Youth* (London: Pitman, 1908) p.67.

the novel's title gives no indication whether it refers to inter-tribal antagonisms or warfare directed against the settlers. It does, however, implicitly refer back to the 'hard' stereotyping of Maori immediately after the Land Wars.

Maori exclusion from mainstream success is not simply the result of the Land Wars or their inter-tribal competitiveness for mana, but is also derived from Pakeha stereotyping of Maori as non-materialistic, (an overcategorisation which Maori themselves have embraced as part of 'orthodox' Maoritanga) and the vulnerable economic structure of Aotearoa/New Zealand from the post Land War period to the 1980s. Consequently, a brief outline of the economic changes which have taken place in the country over the past century will be given in the following section. This in turn feeds into the earlier analysis of the various Maori renaissances and their containment by Pakeha. In contrast to this approach *Once Were Warriors* is seen to repudiate colonial history as a marker of Maori disadvantage and concentrates on intra-ethnic causes. Unlike *the bone people* which is set in a landscape degraded by Europeans, *Once Were Warriors* is, therefore, set in a landscape degraded by Maori themselves.

### **Economics in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

The establishment of a comprehensive economic strategy in Aotearoa/New Zealand was linked to and found its rationale in the social reforms of the first Labour Government. This was largely because the establishment of a welfare State required a greater degree of economic stability. Export earnings, for example, tended to fluctuate wildly in a colonial economy dependent on a narrow range of pastoral industries. What is more, government policies could easily be undermined by a flight of capital. A solution was found in the introduction of import and exchange controls. A wide range of manufacturing industries developed behind this barrier of protection. The State (through the Reserve bank) regulated and controlled banking and finance and a network of restrictions and regulations overlaid the economy as a whole. It was a prosperous and secure existence for New Zealand business, but one that rested on an

inconsistency. While the Pakeha political ethos of the country was individualistic and egalitarian, the freedom of action on the part of business was limited.

Having established the welfare state and the protected economy the Labour Party lost power (with a couple of brief interludes) for forty years. However, the conservative National government accepted most of what Labour had established, without attempting to extend it. As Colin James has commented:

New Zealand was a colonial society, dependent militarily, culturally, economically and in mentality on Britain and the United States. Its economy was agrarian-based, which gave it some features of a developing economy - though New Zealanders afforded themselves material spoils appropriate to a mature, industrialised economy. This dependency, the assurance of support from some bigger, outside force, meshed well with the quest for security and reinforced it.<sup>32</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s, New Zealand's history of prosperity and security abruptly ended. The signs had been there from the 1950s and 1960s with Britain negotiating for entry to the E.E.C. and threatening to unsettle New Zealand's markets for butter and meat. The economy had been sliding into crisis since the mid-1970s. Growth was small, budget and current-account deficits were large, and the overseas debt was formidable. Meanwhile, National Party prime minister Rob Muldoon had antagonised most sections of the electorate with his authoritarian style.

New Zealand in the 1980s was particularly vulnerable, in the main because it lacked the normal developed economy of other Western nations. The country in fact, represents something of a paradox in that it has enjoyed a Western-style way of life and standard of living, but with an economic structure possessing definite colonial features. In the late 1970s however, a mood developed for economic reform. 'Restructuring' was embraced and new export industries were regarded as the solution to the country's problems. The 1970s and 1980s also represented a period of political

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<sup>32</sup> Colin James, *New Territory: The Transformation of New Zealand 1984-92* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books 1992) p. 7.

change, with the flourishing mood of liberal individualism that took both a left-wing and a right-wing form. On the Left was the politics of individual conscience derived from the student radicalism of the 1960s which left a legacy of concern for social, moral and foreign-policy issues, and whose adherents formed the basis for the feminist, anti-racist and peace movements. But, James writes:

For New Zealand it was not just the security of the welfare state that was undermined by the post 1970 convulsion. The security born of its dependence on colonial linkages was also lost as New Zealand was forced out of colonial dependence, forced to confront the serious and debilitating structural shortcomings of an agrarian, dependent economy. The internal social homogeneity decayed. Many things changed at once during the 1970s. That portended a turbulent 1980s.<sup>33</sup>

This turbulence became evident when, on becoming the government in late 1983, Labour discarded its tradition of the party of the Welfare State and, without warning, became a party of the New Right. In the next six years, Labour almost entirely deregulated the economy. It privatised most of the State's commercial activities. It reorganised both central and local government along commercial lines. The government ceased to play any role in economic management, with the exception of eliminating inflation, which became its sole economic goal. To this end it operated a high-interest-rate monetary policy. The country developed an unusual mix of policies, in that while *laissez faire* economic policies are usually combined with authoritarian and socially conservative attitudes, as for example, under Margaret Thatcher, in New Zealand authoritarian attitudes were highly unfashionable until the later 1980s. A strong libertarian mood developed among the activists of the Right while at the same time the free-market Right gained political hegemony in New Zealand. Minister Roger Douglas's economic reforms were pushed through at a speed which disoriented any political opposition and free-market individualism, which had seemed an eccentric point of view a decade earlier, had become the new orthodoxy.

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<sup>33</sup> James (1992) p. 8.

The National Party's return to power in 1990 continued a social policy which is marked by a traditional authoritarianism and social conservatism. They propounded a strong belief in the family, social cohesion and moral certainty. On economic matters, in contrast, power lay with a belligerent New Right minority who favoured an untrammelled individualism and who identified themselves as 'liberal'. Unlike the Labour Right, who justified their *laissez faire* policies with arguments based on efficiency, the right wing of the National Party were animated by the usual prejudices - the unemployed shirk work, unmarried mothers breed in order to live off the state and so forth. Bob Jesson's argument that the Labour government of the 1980s was crippled by the contradiction between New Right economics and a liberal social policy<sup>34</sup> is echoed in a similar and related contradiction which bears upon Maori in that their culture is widely legitimised and celebrated but in an idealised form that maps uneasily onto the urbanised way of life for most Maori characterised by widescale unemployment and family breakdown. On the one hand, Maori have suffered disproportionately during the recession yet their culture has been increasingly exalted as representing 'Liberal' desires of what should constitute a post-colonial nation.

Attempts in the 1980s by the Labour government to represent Maori interests and alleviate disadvantage resulted in the development of two new strategies of State sector management. First, a policy of devolution was introduced under which many of the services once provided by the Department of Maori Affairs were to become, over a five year period, the responsibility of iwi. Second, various measures were initiated to make the public sector as a whole more responsive to Maori needs and aspirations. The policy of devolution was grounded in an acceptance of the tribal-based nature of the Maori community and a recognition that the Treaty of Waitangi was signed by chiefs on behalf of their iwi or hapu rather than on behalf of a Maori nation. Maori were to be given control over many of the resources previously channelled through the Department of Maori Affairs. A new ministry of Maori Affairs (Manatu Maori) was to

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<sup>34</sup> Bob Jesson, 'The Disintegration of a Labour Tradition: New Zealand Politics in the 1980s', *New Left Review*, 192 (1992) p. 46.

be established to ensure that Maori values and perspectives were considered in all policy matters and an Iwi Transition Agency would be established to facilitate the transfer of government programmes to iwi organisations. Manatu Maori commenced operations on 1 July 1989 and ITA came into being a few months later. Although widely accepted within the Maori community, some aspects of Labour's devolution policy sparked criticism. It was felt that the new policy rather than being devolution signalling a transfer of power, the changes were a form of delegation in which responsibility but not power were transferred.

The second prong of Labour's approach was to make government departments more responsive to Maori needs and cultural traditions. Government agencies employed a variety of strategies to facilitate Maori input in policy development and service delivery, including employing Maori consultants, and appointing advisory boards. Other innovations include many agencies making use of individual kaumatua to provide them with day-to-day advice on matters such as consultation processes and cultural protocol.

However, this discourse of development for Maori which was seen as iwi based sat uneasily with the valourisation of Maori culture and its inclusion in government departmental policy. The anthropologist Toon van Meijl, for example, argues that 'traditional culture is particularly reconstituted in order to justify growing demands for autonomous Maori development programmes . . . the strategy for achieving an independent future . . . is justified as well as outlined in terms of Maori traditions.'<sup>35</sup> It is the paradox of this construction between 'traditional' and 'modern' discourses as a means of improving the Maori social position which finds its literary representation in *Once Were Warriors*, a novel which finds participation in commerce an inherently 'civilising' activity, but which must also construct Maori as one 'lost tribe' to maintain its narrative logic. For, just as trading was to provide a substitute for inter-tribal warfare in the nineteenth century, but was appropriated by Maori as a means of

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<sup>35</sup> Meijl van Toon, 'Redefining Ideology in Time' *Anthropos*, Vol. 90, No.1 (1995) p. 1.

pursuing mana, so devolution to iwi authorities has tended to pit tribes against each other in the competition for scarce resources.

### **The Lost Tribe**

Positioned at opposite ends of the decade, both *the bone people* and *Once Were Warriors* explore the two cultures of Aotearoa/New Zealand as repositories of human hurt, but see behind their bleak and unsparing presentation of family violence and self-hatred, redemptive possibilities which are directly linked to a revival of 'core' Maori values. Like Hulme before him, Alan Duff has capitalised on what Graham Wiremu has labelled 'supposedly Maori themes' involving an 'interplay between violence, drunkenness and folk magic' but in doing so, unlike Hulme, he appears to endorse a 'hard' primitivism or the old myth of the 'benighted even depraved Polynesian . . . to be disparaged by those of superior civilisation.'<sup>36</sup> The question which needs to be addressed, therefore, is how Duff as a 'Maori writer' negotiates the gap between an account of Maori identity which emphasises an archaic authenticity of warriorhood, and the present-day circumstances of urban Maori.

It is significant in this respect that in the early 1980s the limited economic role, power and wealth of most Maori rather than producing anger, gave rise to a sense of superiority over Pakeha who were seen as obsessed with material goods and goals. Pakeha, of course, presented this as a chief characteristic of Maori, which despite its damaging effect, was admirable if not a model they themselves wished to emulate. Maori by and large accepted this construction of themselves and seemed to be motivated to acquire their share of the national wealth in order to lead a life, viewed in Maori terms, as based on caring and sharing. 'Caring and sharing' has its counterpart in pre-contact society in communal activities such as gardening and in tribal ownership of land. It was a lifestyle which initially successfully adapted to the introduction of

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<sup>36</sup> Graham Wiremu, 'Here we are! Take Notice!' *New Zealand Listener*, 22 May (1982) p. 84.

Western capitalism. However, its present-day equivalent according to Raj Vasil has given rise to a belief among Maori that 'their commitment to tribal or community welfare rather than to their own individual or family interests make it more difficult for them to compete successfully in . . . a capitalistic economic structure.'<sup>37</sup> Such a belief is derived from an essentialised version of tribal life as consisting of attributes unchanged since pre-contact times and denies the adaptations which enabled Maori to successfully compete in the early colonial marketplace. It is also in part the result of an identification with the Pakeha concept of what constitutes viable economic activity. But as Ruth Brown states, 'spirituality and entrepreneurial activity are not necessarily mutually exclusive' and moreover, she insists:

Elision of the Maori from effective capitalist operation is a part of the Westerner's version of Maoritanga, which foregrounds spiritual inviolability while ignoring or underplaying Maori involvement in entrepreneurial enterprises, so paving the way for continuing colonialist domination and continuing Maori resentment.<sup>38</sup>

This eventuality would appear to have come to fruition in that during the decade-long rule by the National Party from 1975 to 1983 the signs of an emerging anger, and frustration within the Maori community were largely ignored or unnoticed by Pakeha, but by the time the Labour Government came to power in the Maori were a significantly politicised people. While expectations were at first high among Maori that the government would look favourably on the changes which they wished to see implemented, this was gradually replaced by disillusionment. The Maori cause had come to constitute an obstacle to the economic agenda of the government, especially in relation to the State Owned Enterprises. The result has been much less willingness among Maori to wait for gestures of goodwill from Pakeha and despite their general position of disadvantage, a more militant pride and mana has begun to assert itself. In literary terms this is attested to by the change in narrative strategy from *the bone*

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<sup>37</sup> Raj Vasil, *What do the Maori Want? New Maori Political Perspectives* (Auckland: Random Century, 1990) p. 26.

<sup>38</sup> Ruth Brown, 'Maori Spirituality as a Pakeha Construct', *Meanjin*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (1989) p. 257.

*people* and *The Matriarch* which both address a Pakeha readership, to that of *Potiki* and *Once Were Warriors* which are both, albeit from very different positions, concerned with addressing a Maori audience and intra-ethnic issues.

Politically, writes Vasil, in respect of Maori:

Their view of themselves now is based entirely on their position as the tangata whenua with contractual rights and status derived from the Treaty of Waitangi. They are no longer willing to reconcile themselves to the status of a subordinate minority and insist on being treated as partners of the Pakeha in a new, bicultural Aotearoa.<sup>39</sup>

The emphasis on the Treaty and the government's devolution programme has given increasing prominence to iwi with a concomitant reinforcement of the loyalty of Maori to their iwi. Maoritanga as a concept has come under increasing suspicion. John Rangihau, for example claims:

Maoritanga is a term coined by the Pakeha to bring the tribes together because if you cannot divide and rule then, for a tribal people, all you can do is unite them and rule. Because they then lose everything by losing their own tribal histories and traditions that gave them their identity.<sup>40</sup>

Tribal identity in a pre-contact context was, obviously, constituted in opposition to others, each tribe perceiving itself as different. This process of reactive objectification underwent a series of transformations or developments after the colonial encounter which enabled the construction of certain practices or customs to become emblematic of Maoridom as a whole. This totalising process which explicated a whole way of life can also be seen as particularising in that the 'Maori Way' was epitomised by certain constructions which were largely adopted by all Maori. The revival of a 'pre-Maoritanga' discourse of tradition, however, seeks to maintain that iwi and their distinctive identities have remained constant throughout colonisation and exist today in

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<sup>39</sup> Vasil (1990) p. 31.

<sup>40</sup> John Rangihau, 'Being Maori', *Te Ao Hurihuri*, ed., Michael King (Auckland: Hicks Smith, 1983) p. 175.

much the same way as they did for their forebears. The emphasis on iwi will, Vasil claims:

make it exceedingly difficult to promote the range and depth of socio-economic change necessary to create the basis for a vibrant, confident and prosperous Maori community. Some iwi are quite small and are likely to find it extremely difficult to create a viable economic and political base for their 'autonomous' existence. They are also likely to remain fragmented into competing tribes, making it that much more difficult for them to unite politically and secure their rightful place in the polity as a partner of the Pakeha. Competition among them for the benefits and entitlements of the Pakeha-dominated state will inevitably give the Pakeha rulers an opportunity to play off one tribe against another and damage their unity and solidarity. Furthermore, a reinforcement of tribal identity and loyalty is likely to make it more difficult for their larger identity as Maori to become viable and meaningful.<sup>41</sup>

Although such a scenario undoubtedly has a certain truth to it, it ignores the continuing Maori re-invention of tradition to conform with Maori aspirations for the future. This relationship between a future-oriented discourse of tradition and a past-oriented discourse of tradition justifies the desire for an independent future on the basis of a different past. The projected structure of this desired future, however, is largely based on European models. Moreover, although traditions are represented as timeless and unchanging the ideological aim of such a construction is to bring about political and economic change. Both the discourses of past and future, tradition and development are, therefore, politicised and come together in their focus on the disadvantage and marginalisation of Maori in the present. *Once Were Warriors* is constructed around this same paradox. It focuses unrelentingly on Maori as the failed dregs of society, but these same Maori can be propelled into a successful future through the adoption of characteristics drawn from a particular interpretation of past traditions. In order for this objective to be achieved, however, the characters must see themselves, in Grace Heke's words, as the 'lost tribe', and not as a number of lost

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<sup>41</sup> Vasil (1990) p. 56.

tribes. Such a construction has not gone uncontested in Maori society. As Nicholas Thomas writes:

It is almost always assumed that the people concerned have a positive attitude towards the reifications of indigenous tradition or custom that they present. That is, because emphasis has been placed on the role of such constructions in the affirmation or assertion of local identity, negative and ambivalent attitudes toward the customary or the traditional have remained largely invisible.<sup>42</sup>

While the resurgence of tribal affiliation has required an elaboration of identity, the political contestation within the tribal population has resulted not only in the selecting and valourising of particular aspects of a past heritage but also at times in the radical rejection of what is considered traditional. At the same time the ideological need to justify the devolution of resources and responsibilities to tribal organisations must ignore the actual changes which have occurred in Maori tribal organisation. Tribes are consequently frequently represented as unchanged and unchanging remnants of the past, and as such they function in a 'real' sense in the same way as 'once were' functions on the 'imagined' level. Just as the concept of what constitutes a warrior has undergone alteration through time and, in Duff's novel is a disputed category, so the significance of the tribe has altered throughout colonial history and has acquired new meanings. In the discourse of the 'newly authentic' tradition 'tribe' is associated with all the emotional and moral values of caring for kin which are balanced against the stereotypes of cold and unloving Pakeha. 'The signifier "tribe,"' as van Meijl comments, 'has been disconnected from its historical signifieds, and is now being endowed with significations which have acquired meaning primarily, but not exclusively, in interethnic discourse.'<sup>43</sup> He goes on to state:

The implicit analogy between past and present events, however, demands that traditional phenomena are conceptualised in a timeless manner in order to resist and/or defy the changes which have taken place in the interim. Thus

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<sup>42</sup> Nicholas Thomas, 'The Inversion of Tradition', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1990) p. 214.

<sup>43</sup> van Meijl (1995) p. 10.

change is not denied, since it is presupposed in the implicit comparison of past and present phenomena, but is rendered a mere variation of a recurrent pattern.<sup>44</sup>

Duff conflates tribal differences and presents the entire urban Maori population as a 'lost tribe'. This contesting of the discourse of tribal identity is he claims because 'Maoridom needs to be rid of the tribe-obsessed leadership which inevitably returns to its inward looking self: tribe. Tribe, it is always tribe, or iwi, before Maori. It will never change so long as we continue old tribal practices . . .'<sup>45</sup> This necessitates the relegation of Maori as tangata whenua and the importance afforded the Treaty in current Maori political discourse to the margins. The 'blame' for Maori economic failure in colonial times falls on Maori themselves because they were unable to surmount old tribal rivalries based on mana. By extension Maori economic disadvantage in the 1980s is also the result of a continuing emphasis on tribal affiliation with its attendant mana and competitiveness.

However, in the novel the 'lost tribe' of Pine Block can, by adopting the appropriate Pan-Maori model become 'proper' Maori in the future. Such an achievement also requires the acceptance of the discourse of development with its 'Pakeha' work ethic and Western conceptions of law and order. The 'Maori tribe' is seen as lost, not because they were unable to maintain a political autonomy against the pressure of settlers to contain them within Western conceptions of law and order, but because they were apparently unable to put aside tribal rivalries to form a united counter-hegemonic force. In *Once Were Warriors* the Pine Block 'tribe' are regenerated by rallying around Beth and joining in such activities as renovating the local community hall. The anti-social activities of glue sniffing, alcohol abuse, violence and law-breaking can apparently be superceded by such activities as building a changing room in much the same way as missionaries and traders sought to 'civilise' Maori through incorporation in Pakeha commerce. Such bland conceptions of identity

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<sup>44</sup> van Meijl (1995) p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Alan Duff, *Maori The Crisis and the Challenge* (Auckland: Harper & Collins, 1993) p. 118-9.

make no allowance for the creative re-working of introduced practices and can only construe mana as a negative social attribute. Consequently, in the novel, the alteration in the hierarchical and gendered construction of the fictional tribe - - its modernisation in conformity with European egalitarian models - - serves to legitimate it for the future. It also paradoxically echoes, in real terms, the secularisation of actual tribes as management committees. The qualities, for example, of people who are to take up leading positions in these management committees are all based on skills and experience gained in Pakeha sections of society. This in turn has increasingly displaced the traditional position and authority of the tribal kaumatua. The question raised by these changes is how the mediation of tradition and development is being resolved in Maori practices.

It would appear that these paradoxes are largely resolved through a conception of time, in which the mundane world is connected to the sacred or mytho-poetic world of timelessness. Van Meijl writes in this regard that:

Historical events and structures are constantly regenerated to charge and recharge the present with connotative significations which, for political and ideological reasons, are considered important for the direction to be followed in the future, while the aspired state of the future is foreshadowed by the generation of connotative significations which are considered panhistoric extensions of the timeless signs.<sup>46</sup>

Such a construction allows, in the logic of *Once Were Warriors*, for the co-existence of 'traditional' features such as Te Tupaea's 'oral history class' and the meeting house as a 'book for a bookless society' to have relevance and value in a world of housing estates which the authorial voice at times berates for its failure to achieve modernity. Beth's mundane state house becomes a home for the people and, as it functions as an urban marae, is made sacred through its linking with the timeless realm. As a marae it both symbolises a present-day group identity and new-found vitality and acts as a bridge to a particular construction of the past. A traditional meeting house expresses

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<sup>46</sup> van Meijl (1995) p. 14.

the state of community relations because it is the most powerful symbol a group may possess. It represents reverence for the past and veneration for the ancestors as well as being an architectural history book of the tribe concerned. When the tribe is gathered on the marae, the meeting house signifies the presence of the ancestors. The focus on a traditional meeting house is therefore downplayed in *Once Were Warriors*, and it is safely relegated to a rural environment. While Beth's initial vision and determination were discovered in this meeting house, the resultant activity all takes place at her urban state house which is suitably detached from tribal connotations. The past is not one which includes ancestors, nor does the novel envisage Maori as actually *interacting* with powers which have placed them in a sacred cosmos. Rather the past of secular activities is recalled. However, in its contestation of a tribal identity for Maori the novel is impelled to find a different means of signifying possibilities for the future while maintaining a link with the timeless realm. This is achieved by the figuring of a cloud formation at the conclusion of the novel. The relentless social scrutiny gives way to a climax of meta-ethical 'prophecy' in which, 'the last refrains of sweetsad hymn (are) more mighty than the departing rumble and roar of Browns. And a sky stayed blue. And that cloud formation had changed shape - Oh, but only if you're looking for that sorta thing'.<sup>47</sup> This refers back to an earlier reference to a cloud 'shaped like nothing much though it could've been a boat, a water vessel of some sort, at a push, if you were looking for that sorta thing'.<sup>48</sup> The oblique reference to a canoe pushing out into the future brings together a mythic discourse of journeying from Hawaiki to a new life and serves to signify the journey from deprivation to rehabilitation in Aotearoa/New Zealand. These considerations are also part and parcel of the construction of warriorhood in the novel which will be analysed in the following section.

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<sup>47</sup> Alan Duff, *Once Were Warriors* (London: Vintage Press, 1995) p. 198. First Published Auckland: Tandem Press, 1990.

<sup>48</sup> Duff (1995) p. 196.

## Warriors & Non-Warriors

In its attempt re-establish the legitimacy of, an admittedly modified, conception of warriorhood *Once Were Warriors* must ignore or downplay the economic marginalisation and stereotyping of Maori through colonial policies and it therefore fails to historicise identity, associating it instead with the stable essence of mana. Mana, as already demonstrated, remained a powerful force in Maori society, influencing their responses to an imported religion, economic opportunities, land sales and so on, and was consequently not merely a divisive force but definitive in the Maori creative adaptations to circumstances. Any construction of present-day subjectivity formulated through an appeal to an authentic warriorhood and its necessarily attendant mana is, of its nature, constituted in opposition to other competing constructions. Consequently, as Nicholas Thomas argues:

What is important is not so much the categorical fact that difference provides a foil for identity as the actual histories of accommodation or confrontation that shape particular understandings of others and thus determine what specific practices, manners, or local ethics are rendered explicit and made to carry the burden of local identity.<sup>49</sup>

It would, therefore, seem inevitable that Maori experience of colonisation would play a significant role in the shaping of a contemporary warrior identity. For a Maori novelist in the 1980s the issue translates into one of whether a contemporary Maori identity can be represented without being presented as an impoverished version of an earlier and nobler tradition. Duff himself has faced similar problems as a 'Maori' writer who has eschewed the 'authorised' version of what constitutes Maoridom in the 1980s. 'Once were', therefore, functions on a number of levels. It could be claiming that Duff's tough view of Maoridom can be crystallised by insisting that he is lamenting the passing of a proud warrior race which has degenerated into what he refers to as 'a race

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<sup>49</sup> Nicholas Thomas (1990) p. 213-32.

of peasants with peasant expectations.<sup>50</sup> Such a nostalgic desire for an identity located in the past and its implicit criticism of Pakeha containment of Maori as pastoralists also functions as a criticism of those literary expectations voiced by Pearson in which Maori writers would provide a new lyric voice full of passion and celebration of living. It consequently also threatens the pieties of Pakeha liberals who have embraced the 'pastoral model' of the Maori renaissance. Duff himself comments with respect to *Once Were Warriors* that:

New Zealanders were unsure of what unfolded before their reading eyes . . . when it drew a picture, not of Nanny Kuia down on the beach gathering Kaimoana for her mokopuna (and saving the life of a rich white person caught in the surf while she was at it), but of hard drinking men, and not a few women, who were appalling parents, who were wife beaters, child rapists, beer-sodden lowlifers.<sup>51</sup>

As Peter Beatson writes, rather than reinforcing 'soft' stereotyping:

The novel, in fact, risks confirming many of the worst fears and also stereotypes that abound among many Pakeha with respect to the Maori. Within the first two chapters an appalling catalogue of collective Maori deficiencies is unleashed. Maori are dirty, feckless, lazy, ill-educated, drunken and greedy. They criminally neglect their children, are incapable of forethought and moral strenuousness and they substitute abrupt oscillations of superficial sentimentality and mindless aggression for emotional and intellectual maturity.<sup>52</sup>

In opposition to Pearson's 'authentic' Maori literary voice, Bruce Stewart therefore describes Duff as authentic precisely because of his difference from constructions of Maori as romantic primitives mystically relating to the earth and a spiritual realm. He is 'gutsy, emotive, naked not manicuredly clever, sophisticated lit (sic), full of strained understatement. What you see is how it is.'<sup>53</sup> There are several aspects which need analysing in such a claim. The first is the assertion that Duff's writing is not 'clever' or

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<sup>50</sup> Duff, Interview with Elizabeth Alley, *Radio New Zealand* 28 March, 1991.

<sup>51</sup> Duff (1993) p. ix.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Beatson, Review of *Once Were Warriors*, *Landfall*, 179, Sept (1991) p. 366.

<sup>53</sup> Bruce Stewart, Review of *Once Were Warriors*, *New Zealand Books Pt.1*. 1 (1991) p. 9.

'sophisticated'. While Sneja Gunew and Fazal Rizvi have rightly stated that 'aesthetic traditions and excellences are invented categories often used to practice a politics of exclusion',<sup>54</sup> the construction of a Maori writer as 'not clever' but 'gutsy' comes perilously close to reiterating those nineteenth-century Pakeha stereotypes of Maori as brave warriors but lacking in mental capacity or - - more recently - - as people able for physical but not intellectual labour.

The second problem is that Stewart appears to be advocating an uncomplicated notion of fiction as an authoritative and accurate account of the socio-historical context it reflects - - 'what you see is what you get.' Duff himself endorses this outlook saying his authority as a writer is directly related to his own life experience. 'I wrote it because it had much, too much to do with my childhood. What I'd witnessed. What I'd experienced. And a hell of a lot to do with the adult I grew up to be as a consequence of those sights and experiences.'<sup>55</sup>

This claim to be an authentically Maori writer portraying 'real' Maoridom is echoed by Witi Ihimaera's comment on the novel: 'This is the haka, the rage of a people who, yes, once were warriors.'<sup>56</sup> Duff here becomes the spokesperson for Maori familiar with cultural forms such as haka which he is able to communicate in literary form. The empowering quality of the war haka lends 'authenticity' to Duff as a writer advocating political action on the part of Maori. It is, however, the nature of that political action, and where it is directed, which is crucial. Ironically, just as Duff's novel presents a vision of Maoridom past and present as fractured by tribal/gang rivalries, constantly at war with itself, so too the political climate, as the 1980s drew to a close, was increasingly characterised by conflict among differing Maori tribes and factions. Inevitably this has involved disputes as to who has the right to speak as 'Maori.' Duff's right in this regard has been particularly challenged by 'establishment'

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<sup>54</sup> Sneja Gunew & Fazal Rizvi, 'Introduction', *Culture, Difference and the Arts*, eds., Gunew & Rizvi (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994) p. xiii.

<sup>55</sup> Duff (1993) p. xii.

<sup>56</sup> Witi Ihimaera on the back cover of the 1st edition of *Once Were Warriors* (Auckland: Tandem Press, 1990)

Maori figures such as Ranganui Walker who writes, 'For (Duff) there are no plusses in being Maori. The centre of gravity of his life is in the Pakeha world - that is where he is and wants to be, and he would like other Maori to join him.'<sup>57</sup> As a 'Pakeha-identified' Maori, Duff's politics are seen as being out of line with the mainstream versions of social advancement for Maori. He blatantly locates himself as being opposed to any return to the belief-structures and many of the practices of traditional Maoridom, strongly criticising the role of Maori elders and the lack of accountability for mismanagement of money in waka projects.<sup>58</sup> At the same time he fights what he calls 'the usual cliches about Maori failure meaning Pakeha oppression' and the notion that Maori are 'faultless, blameless, misunderstood, mistreated, European-abused innocents descended from a 'once-noble-warrior breed that was destroyed by the whiteman.'<sup>59</sup>

Duff speaks as a privileged informant, a 'native son' whose self-imposed mission is to deliver unpalatable home-truths to his people. He implicates the reader through direct address in the book's message - - e.g. 'you stupid drunk Maori', 'your collective stupidity, your monumental idiocy, Brown People'<sup>60</sup> and he also offers passages which contain starkly dismissive vocalisations - - describing Maori, for example, as a race of darkies who do nothing but guzzle beer.

The contradiction in Duff's position is exposed in his non-fiction writings where he is prepared to acknowledge that children are affected by their environment and experiences but on a broader level reluctant to admit that the experience of colonisation has had a significantly deleterious effect on Maori. He uses 'once were' as a form of castigation against what he sees as Maori inadequacies caused by Maori themselves, whereas with other writers and political activists the warrior ethos has been employed as a metaphor not for inter-tribal tensions but for confrontation, literal and metaphorical, between Maori and Pakeha. It is not only the warrior figure, but his

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<sup>57</sup> Ranganui Walker, 'Te Karanga: Eat Your Heart Out, Alan Duff', *Metro*, 145 (1993) p. 136-7.

<sup>58</sup> Duff (1993) p. 49-50.

<sup>59</sup> Tilly Reedy, 'Viewpoint', *New Zealand Listener*, 10 June (1991) p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> Duff (1995) p. 81.

ultimate precursor, the mythic figure of Tumatamenga, the god of war, who is incorporated into current constructions of Maori subjectivity to give energy to present-day struggles. Apirana Taylor writes ironically of a modern rootless Maori:

My name is Tu the freezing worker  
Ngati DB is my tribe  
The pub is my marae  
My fist is my taiaha.<sup>61</sup>

And in his short story 'The Carver', he writes of a carver who creates the figure of a pre-contact Warrior, Te Toa, and then attacks his creation with a tomahawk to signify the wounds inflicted by expropriation, alienation, and domination by Pakeha: 'He grunted as he swung the tomahawk so the blade bit exactly where he wanted it to.' To symbolise loss of land, or standing place, and loss of language, the carver chops off the legs and tongue from the carving. But:

It's not just the man who is the warrior, he decided. The woman is a warrior and she dies, and he chopped at the balls and shaped a tara. Both ure and tara had no life in them and the eyes were lifeless...With ease he pushed Te Toa over. He picked up a beer bottle and placed it in the mouth of Te Toa. Now his strength was gone . . .<sup>62</sup>

The television series *Open House* written by Rawiri Paratene and Pat Hohepa (1987) contained one of the most widely distributed representations of the modern Maori warrior as freedom fighter. The character Pare, a 'stirrer' in the terms of Nairn and McCreanor's analysis sees the current relationship between Maori and Pakeha as an unequivocal battle between Black and White. Pare scornfully addresses a Maori member of the Department of Maori Affairs, saying, 'You are a prime example of this generation's house nigger. We are either warriors or collaborators. Which are you?'<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Apirana Taylor, 'Sad Joke on the Marae', *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, eds., Ian Wedde & Harvey McQueen (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1985) p. 522.

<sup>62</sup> Apirana Taylor, 'The Carver' *Te Rau Aroha - A Hundred Leaves of Love* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1986) p. 8-9.

<sup>63</sup> Rawiri Paratene & Pat Hohepa 'Toitu Te Whenua -The Land Remains', *Open House*, Television ONE, 21.1.87.

Such a binary opposition harks back to the Land Wars and distinguishes between warriors who fought the Pakeha and those kaupapa who either actively fought on the side of the colonisers or remained neutral. It both reveals the tensions and grievances which have remained within Maori society unnoticed and unacknowledged by Pakeha and also serves to politicise wars of the past in the present. Consequently Duff as 'collaborator' rather than 'true' warrior, is seen to be doubly betraying Maoridom by also framing his novel as a haka, a war dance directed against Maori as their own worst enemies. Joan Metge defines haka as 'rhythmically shouted chants of defiance accompanied by aggressive, stylized movements of the hands and feet.'<sup>64</sup> A literary version of a haka, in Duff's terms, becomes a defiance of traditional tribal constructions of Maori society, and if in keeping with other Maori art forms the haka is an index of group vitality he would appear to be reinforcing a sense of Maori as wilfully emasculating themselves. Where previous novels have utilised traditional Maori art forms to empower Maori and confront 'enemies' *Once Were Warriors* confronts Maori with their own apparent impotence and assumes that recognition of this state is a sufficient and necessary condition for regeneration.

Moreover, the allusions to warriorhood and warfare in *Once Were Warriors* are almost all concerned with intertribal rivalries and aggression and little concerned with Maori battling against Pakeha. So for example, rival gangs battle each other in imitation of intertribal conflict. 'There were kids who'd joined with their archrivals, the Black Hawks, across town, and so got to do battle, often fatal, with their Pine Blocks brothers and cousins and childhood friends. Maori against Maori.'<sup>65</sup> And Jake thinks of warriorhood in terms of activities in the pub with other Maori:

Us Maoris man, we used to be warriors, And that mighta been a long time ago, but you walk into any public bar in the land where where's Maoris and tell Jake Heke that warriors are a thing of the past.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Joan Metge, *The Maoris of New Zealand* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976) p. 335.

<sup>65</sup> Duff (1995) p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> Duff (1995) p. 54.

'Authentic' warriorhood is postulated as that which existed in the period prior to the Land Wars as it insists on recreating the forms of warfare used in intertribal conflict rather than those adopted during the Land Wars. This is made particularly evident in the ritual-type behaviour of characters in the novel which parallel the ritualised encounters between Maori groups in pre-contact and early colonial days.

In writing of first contacts between European and Maori Ann Salmond recounts how, 'time and again the local Maoris charged out in their canoes, brandishing weapons and chanting the war dance. These displays were indeed intended to intimidate, but they were part of the traditional rituals of encounter and not necessarily hostile.'<sup>67</sup> Likewise, she describes encounters between Maori groups on land:

In peace and war strangers were greeted with the same ritual forms, because an unknown group might always be planning treachery, and a display of strength could dissuade them. Early observers of these encounters remarked that it was almost impossible to distinguish peaceful overtures from warlike ones, and just to be sure, groups who are meeting for the first time went armed and in full strength. The encounter began with a firing-off of muskets on both sides, then the local warriors, stripped naked, started up a wardance.<sup>68</sup>

These forms of behaviour are re-enacted in *Once Were Warriors* in the encounters within and between gangs and between Jake and his 'mates' in the pub. Jake's reception in the pub is a mixture of bravado and comraderie in which it is impossible to distinguish between peaceful overtures and invitations to fight:

Hey Jake, Put it here, brother, And here. And here. And there, and over here, Jake everywhere. Man . . . Crowd closing, even against him, Jake. Someone shoved by Jake, the someone twisting and asking the fuck you shoving, mate? before he'd seen who it was. Oh Jake. It's you, brother. Here, put it here..<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Anne Salmond, *Hui* (Wellington & London: A. H. & A. W. Reed Books, 1975) p. 19.

<sup>68</sup> Salmond (1975) p. 132-3.

<sup>69</sup> Duff, (1995) p. 61.

And when members of the Brown Fists enter the pub, Jake immediately accepts this as a challenge:

A line-up ofem, they came in wearing their fuckin black shades you'd think the fuckin sun was shining in here at this near on eleven at night. Fuckem. Comin in here swaggering like that thinking they own the joint, I own it. I'm king a this castle. That hurt coming on.<sup>70</sup>

This is an accurate rendition of actions in pre-contact society as described by Hanson and Hanson:

Maori vengeance was designed not just to punish the author of an affront. At least as important was the rehabilitation of the offended persons or group . . . a prime index of the Maori's success or vitality was his strength and control over what happened in his life. Any deleterious external influence that had penetrated his range of control signified *mate* or weakness on his part. This brought on the psychological state of melancholy in which the offended one brooded, despaired, over the threat to his strength and honor. In addition to direct retribution, the Maori's violent act of revenge was his response to his own distressed state of being. It was his reassertion of control over the things that affected his life. Revenge restored his soul - his self-esteem and social standing.<sup>71</sup>

Jake's personality and behaviour and dissociation from Maori tradition are presented as being the result of his ancestor's slave status and having little to do with the after-effects of colonisation. Jake recounts to his wife and children how:

My branch of the Heke line was descended from a slave . . . See kids, to be a warrior or get captured in battle was the pits. Just the pits, eh. Better to die. So us Hekes - *innocent* - having to cop the shit from being descended from this weakling arsehole of an ancestor.<sup>72</sup>

And in response to this information Beth thinks to herself, 'Yet to read the newspapers, on the TV every damn day, you'd think we've descended from a pack a

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<sup>70</sup> Duff, (1995) p. 73.

<sup>71</sup> Allan & Louise Hanson, *Counterpoint in Maori Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983) p. 140.

<sup>72</sup> Duff (1995) p. 102.

angels, and it's the Pakeha who's the devil'.<sup>73</sup> Beth therefore underscores the narrative drive to place responsibility for the current disadvantage of Maori on structures within Maori society itself and to downplay those associated with colonialism, capitalism and class.

Other writers have tended to transpose such actions and emotions into the encounter between Maori and Pakeha, utilising the same pattern of empowerment and disempowerment, belonging and exclusion which is such a prominent feature of Maori art forms. The haka as a source of affirmation is no exception to this rule and although actual pitched battle was probably rare in pre-contact society (other ways of maintaining intertribal balance such as *murū* being preferred), when hand to hand combat was inevitable the opposing sides, according to Hanson and Hanson 'drew up facing each other and, as much to screw up their own courage as to intimidate the foe, they performed the wardance'.<sup>74</sup> At points in the novel, intertribal warfare seems to be valorised unconditionally as a form of authentic behaviour. Duff writes of Jake and his son at the lakeside:

Down at the lake, getting out, taking a walk; . . . looking at the unruffled waters of the lake, and Abe wondering aloud if their Maori ancestors'd had any big rumbles out on those waters, in canoes, them fuckin big carved jobs, Jake saying, Yeah, Sure they did. Your ancestors, boy, they were fighters. . . imagine your ancestors of old when they were racing their great war canoes across them waters, armed to the teeth, mad as anything with the fury of war, and doing battle with the enemy.<sup>75</sup>

This literary celebration of martial arts in the same year as the sesquicentennial commemorations can raise profoundly ambivalent responses such as that of Irihapeti Ramsden:

Far worse for Maori was the building of the *waka taua*, the warships which accompanied the ultimate colonial symbol into Waitangi. Our people played right into the stereotype of Maori as a male-based culture, primitive warriors

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<sup>73</sup> Duff (1995) p. 103.

<sup>74</sup> Hanson & Hanso, (1983) p. 135.

<sup>75</sup> Duff (1995) p. 98.

constantly at war. How was the waka taua decision arrived at? Why were the symbols of war chosen to demonstrate the state of our race relations to the world? What actually happened was the powerful reinforcement of the natives versus civilisation argument . . . How I wish that we had refused to build the now redundant and debt-ridden warships. We should have insisted on re-creating the magnificent vessels which brought our people to these shores in wave after wave of organised migrations. Those first vessels were full of the women who established the early Polynesian cultures of this place as well as bearing the children of the next generations. The messages for our young men, women, and children would have been about energy, vision, courage, intellectual ability, navigational and technical skills . . . The myth that we arrived here by accident on primitive canoes would have been ruptured for ever.<sup>76</sup>

Although Duff continually emphasises aggressive contact between Maori, this behaviour and its relationship to 'traditional' ritual encounter in the novel is not solely constructed as 'authentic' but also interrogated as to its value. The concluding vision in the novel of a canoe is, therefore, in accordance with Ramsden's suggestion and offsets the supposed valourisation of inter-tribal battles in war canoes. As it is also portrayed as a united, organised enterprise it functions, in Duff's terms, to portray Maori as entering into modernity. On this level, 'once were' constructs a Maori subjectivity as a 'left over', what remains after a large segment of traditional social practices have been subtracted. The example of this residue is the Heke family who stand in for 'Maori in general' - - 'the going-nowhere nobodies', and the Pine Block estate which exemplifies every Maori home. If once again we look at family and home as pervasive metaphors for the nation then the dysfunctional Heke family are actually characterised as a non-family, particularly when both Jake and Beth fail to turn up for Boogie's appearance in Court when he is made a ward of court and sent to a Boy's Home, (where ironically, he learns traditional Maori culture). By extension Maori are seen to lack the necessary civility to qualify for a nationhood which cares for its citizens. Likewise, Pine Block estate, marked by violence, alcohol and drug abuse, broken pavements and the shells of wrecked cars, represents a state which has failed in its project of achieving

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<sup>76</sup> Irihapeti Ramsden, 'Doing it for the Mokopuna', *Kaupapa New Zealand. Vision Aotearoa*, ed. Witi Ihimaera (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1994) p. 255.

modernity. The reader is presented metaphorically, not only with the discarded remnants of what were once warriors but with the remnants of what might once have been an autonomous Maori nation. This failed remnant, however, is judged for its lack of success by Western capitalist standards.

Both the Heke family and Pine Block are epitomised by unemployment. It is Jake's lack of desire to find employment after being made redundant which characterises him as the author of the family problems, and unemployment in general which explicates the wider unhappiness of Pine Block. This 'chosen' deprivation not only removes any responsibility for the situation from the present government and well-off Pakeha such as Trambert, but also from a past of land dispossession. Consequently, although warriorhood is emblematic in the novel of the Maori past, it eschews reference to Maori warriors who fought against dispossession in the Land Wars, and becomes instead a site in a specific period of the past around which the present problems of what constitutes being Maori revolve. Jake, for example, batters Beth for 'insulting' his friends by implying they are not 'proper' Maori, their toughness a mere travesty of warriorhood:

Maoris eh? Can any of us in this room speak the language? No reply. What do we know of our culture? her voice emotional, the way it gets when she's had too much to drink, or is like anyway when she gets a bee in her bonnet. Men's voices, a chorus ofem, telling her to shuddup and siddown and that she had a damn cheek talking to them like that. But Beth went right on at them. She told them the Maori of old had a culture, and he had pride, and he had warriorhood, not this bullying, man-hitting-woman shet, you call that manhood? It's not manhood and it sure as hell ain't Maori warriorhood.<sup>77</sup>

From early on, then, it is also a gendered notion of warriorhood which plays a significant role in relation to present-day subjectivity. Jake is the perpetrator of violence, and being work-shy the perpetrator of their impoverished life style. While he is therefore equipped with a degree of agency, Beth as the recipient of his actions and choices is victim, although a complicit one. The children are also victims in a

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<sup>77</sup> Duff (1995) p. 28.

specifically gendered construction. Nig, as the eldest son carries on an 'inheritance' from his father but in a more extreme way, and Grace as eldest daughter, becomes a more extreme victim than her mother. On this level, the novel operates around a gendered paradigm of warriorhood in which men's behaviour is self-defeating and aggressive while women's is passive, accepting but nevertheless resilient. This theme is underpinned by descending and ascending spirals of tragedy and hope. As Peter Beatson writes:

The novel is organised around the antitheses of community disintegration and reintegration, of death and rebirth. As members of the fated central family are sucked down by the undertow, the pseudo-whanau of the gang is set against the cultural strength of the authentic traditional community, the brutish violence of the rumble or pub brawl is set against the stoic and magnanimous qualities of the ancient warrior, phoney gregariousness is set against the emotional warmth of genuine aroha.<sup>78</sup>

Beth, however, possesses a vision and questions current expressions of the 'Maori way' acknowledging that 'its a big problem being a Maori in this world'.<sup>79</sup> The morning after her 'insult' to Jake's friends and subsequent beating Beth thinks aloud to what she imagines is 'a huge theatre of people . . . watching and listening to her' as she sits alone drinking beer. At first her audience is generalised and might possibly include Maori:

We used to be a race of warriors, O audience out there. . . And we used to war all the time, us Maoris. Against each other. True. It's true, honest to God, audience. Hated each other. Tribe against tribe. Savages. We were savages. But warriors eh. It's important to remember that. Warriors.<sup>80</sup>

Beth appears to be unequivocally endorsing warriorhood as an affair solely between Maori. However, she then rounds quietly on an exclusively Pakeha audience,

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<sup>78</sup> Beatson (1991) p.366-7.

<sup>79</sup> Duff (1995) p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> Duff (1995) p. 47.

challenging them directly in a way that recalls passages of Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*:

Because, you see, it was what we lost when you, the white audience out there, defeated us, conquered us, took our *mana*, left us with nothing. But the warrior thing got handed down, see. Well, sort of handed done; in a mixed-up sense it did. It was more toughness that got handed down from generation to generation. Toughness, eh. Us Maoris might be every bad thing in this world but you can't take away from us our toughness. But this toughness, Pakeha audience of mine, it started to mean less and less as the world got older . . . even before computers, it made toughness redundant. Now thassa a good word for a Maori, eh, redundant?<sup>81</sup>

As the moral of the tale this analysis acknowledges Pakeha prejudice and actions and is the closest the text comes to accusing Pakeha readers. It also resembles those passages in *The Matriarch* where the distance between the author's voice and that of the character becomes imperceptible. Beth's move from inter-tribal to inter-ethnic conflict is crucial as it clarifies her textual role in making manifest the distinction between non-warriorhood and warriorhood in the present. Here Beth ruminates on the complex quality of old warriorhood which she later refers to as a 'rightful warrior inheritance' not one of 'attacking, violent pride, but heart-pride.'<sup>82</sup> This is opposed to a 'redundant' toughness which appears to allow no possibilities of redemption. Such a 'tough' non-warriorhood is sustained in Jake's own reported fantasies in which he mentally removes himself from a Maori tradition and imagines himself an Indian chief. At first he imagines others in the pub see him as a 'Maori warrior chief' but immediately changes his mind:

no, not a Maori, I can't speak the language and people'll know I can't, and it'll spoil it - and Indian chief, a real Injun, not one of them black theivin bastards own half the fuckin shops round town, a *real* Indian from comics and TV and America . . . like Sitting Bull . . .<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Duff (1995) p. 47-8.

<sup>82</sup> Duff (1995) p. 167.

<sup>83</sup> Duff (1995) p. 65-6.

Here he reiterates Beth's criticisms and adopts a fraudulent imported warriorhood seen as a contrived masquerade rather than authentic.

It is the introduction of the gang and Nig's initiation into it which adds further complexity to the conception of what constitutes a warrior or non-warrior. The Brown Fists to whom Nig finally gains entry is led by Jimmy Bad Horse, his name relating him to the same fake warriorhood as that of Jake. The gang, however, are a more extreme form of non-warriorhood in the sense that their murderous aggression and destructiveness surpass that of Jake and his mates. This is epitomised by the gang's role in debt collecting in which they kick in the head of a Maori woman unable to maintain payments on a television. They are, moreover, employed in this enterprise by 'some white prick with a business in town',<sup>84</sup> further undermining their alienation from any form of Maoritanga.

Yet the gang in certain ways do appear to reconstruct warrior values with their strong sense of belonging together as 'bruthas' and sisters, and their visible expression of fortitude by undergoing the pain of acquiring facial moko or 'tats.' However, as a substitute family and as a further variation on warriorhood the gang is rejected by the moral scheme of the novel in much the same way as Jake Heke and the 'Pine Block mentality' is rejected. Jake's inability to function within a family/nation structure and his consequent refusal to attend Grace's tangi is echoed by the 'inauthentic' familial 'belonging' of the gang and Jimmy Bad Horse's refusal to allow Nig to attend the tangi, maintaining '*this* is your fuckin family. From now on, *this* is where you're at.'<sup>85</sup>

The 'belongingness' of the gang is made publicly visible by their tats but these are also seen to disqualify them from membership in 'real' warriorhood. Dave Simmons writes of moko that it is:

specifically designed to enhance the structure of the facial bones and the face in such a way that the person to whom it is applied feels that he has increased status, dignity and presence in any social situation . . . It is no accident that a

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<sup>84</sup> Duff (1995) p. 158.

<sup>85</sup> Duff (1995) p. 140.

warrior people should use a facial tattoo that in repose is dignified but in anger gives the face the appearance of a snarling animal.<sup>86</sup>

The tattoos of the gang members fulfil all these conditions except that of dignity in repose and it is this dignity in particular which is used by Te Tupaea to valorise an authentic warriorhood. A further crucial difference, however, is that the gang members' mokos are etched rather than tattooed. Instead of having a sense of belonging which is 'deeply' carved into their being, gang members have only a 'shallow' imitation revealed through Nig's nightmare. Here he meets his ancestors, genuine warriors and sees that 'their tattooed faces were deeply etched whilst his manhood markings were but lightly marked.' They refuse to accept him saying, 'We are not of your cowardly blood, for we know you are knowing fear. We are warriors'.<sup>87</sup> They then proceed to punch him to death. Where characters in the novels covered earlier employed mimicry of the dominant order as a strategy of subversion and creative re-energisation of their fictional community both Jake and Nig mimic archaic versions of their own culture which, rather than providing for the entry of newness into their culture merely produce fake, inferior versions of a lost nobility. Unlike the confident mockery of Simon, Tokomaru or Te Kooti, Jake's aggressiveness and the gang member's flaunting of savagery appears rather as a gestural protest of despair. Moreover, both Jake and the gang's use of American Indian motifs means they do not mimic elements of Pakeha subjectivity but those which are associated with a culture foreign to both Maori and Pakeha. The problem of authority in representing difference is thereby placed outside inter-ethnic and colonial considerations. There is no negativity associated with a Pakeha lifestyle in the novel and the need to subvert Pakeha domination is obviated. The menace of mimicry is turned against Maori and what must be subverted is domination of Maori by their own inadequacies.

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<sup>86</sup> Dave Simmons, 'Moko', *Art and Artists of Oceania*, eds., Sidney M. Mead & Bernie Kernot (Palmeston North: Dunmore Press, 1983) p. 228.

<sup>87</sup> Duff (1995) p. 188.

The tangi for Grace is the point in the novel when the first movement towards the rebirth of the Pine Block community becomes apparent. At the Wainui Pa Beth is slowly drawn to the mana of her tribe's chief, Te Tupaea, who engenders 'a resurgence of fierce pride, a come-again of a people who once were warriors.'<sup>88</sup> As the character whose injury or death brings about creative change Grace is the textual equivalent of a Maui figure. However, as she commits suicide as a consequence of her own people's actions towards her the actions of the colonisers are again eschewed and blame falls on Maori only. Redemption is therefore selective among Maori rather than including all Maori in opposition to Pakeha. While there is no redemption within the logic of the novel for Nig and the gang members, there are undeveloped possibilities of healing and inclusion for Jake. But first he undergoes further moral approbrium and exclusion by being accused of incest. While the issue of his guilt is not definitively resolved, his implied negation of appropriate family relations signified by the possible incest does not exclude him entirely from the possibility of rehabilitation. This is revealed in the pub conversation with Nicky Hodge, who challenges him for not attending the tangi:

I don't like all that speeches and singing fuckin hymns stuff, thas why I wasn't there, Jake hearing himself explain without consciously deciding he would. Adding, all bawlin, howlin stuff. Tapping his chest: Ya think that's for Heke? He'd nearly said, the muss.

Mista, that's what they have a blimmin funeral for - so ya c'n cry. What, ya can't cry, ya can't show ya not tough at your own kid's tangi? Oh man . . . Jake close to steppin over and smakin Nicky one. Ah fuck you woman. Sitting down. Lighting up. Trying to dowse his anger straight from the bottle in one guzzle. Cept it didn't work. Nicky'd got to him; sumpthin about her tone, and the way her eyes seemed to know sumpthin that he oughta know but didn't.<sup>89</sup>

From this point on the novel shifts from denunciation to self-regeneration and proceeds by a series of juxtapositions. As Jake, for example, is banished Beth begins her engagement with Maori culture. As Nig is being accepted into the gang, Beth is accepted into her tribe and takes on a new role as street mother with the catch cry of

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<sup>88</sup> Duff (1995) p. 127.

<sup>89</sup> Duff (1995) p. 146.

'self help.' She arranges for chief Te Tupaea to conduct Saturday sessions in Maoritanga which usher in a new era. Te Tupaea acknowledges the Treaty of Waitangi as a contract that has been broken by the Pakeha but counsels the people to 'jack up their ideas' and stop blaming the Pakeha 'even if it was the Pakeha to blame.'

So what? he asked them in this booming voice that didn't need no microphone. Do I accuse the storm that destroys my crops? (well, come ta think of it that way . . .) No! No, I don't accuse the storm. I *clean up*. THEN I PLANT AGAIN!<sup>90</sup>

Te Tupaea both thrills his audience with his display of haka and upbraids them for the mess in which they find themselves. He also brings along successful Maori as role models. It is Te Tupaea's move away from a discourse which acclaims inter-tribal and inter-gang conflict to one which extols Maori actions in the Land Wars which signifies his version of warriorhood as the legitimate one. He tells his audience:

of great acts of chivalry during the warring with the first white men: of warriors - that's *Maori* warriors - slipping out into the battlefield at night to tend to the wounded enemy, giving the enemy food, drink, even touches of comfort. And the gathering going, Wow, far out, but why? And the chief's eyes with that fighting fire in them saying: So the enemy might have more strength to continue the battle in the morning.<sup>91</sup>

This legitimation is reinforced by the juxtaposition of the haka performed at Grace's tangi with Nig's rumble for entry into the Brown Fists. Whereas the haka is described as both empowering and a sophisticated art form:

KAMATE! KAMATE! each line, every encrazed utterance a spit-laced outpouring of WAR! WAR! WAR! And inwritten with this (atavistic) beat, this terrible animal rhythm of yet the highest order. Man, it was beautiful, crazy war-dance; like a mad fuckin ballet, man.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Duff (1995) p. 182.

<sup>91</sup> Duff (1995) p. 178.

<sup>92</sup> Duff (1995) p. 127.

the rumble is described as gratuitous violence leading to non-warriorhood and acceptance into a non-tribe:

The rumble turned out a breeze. (Freaked out to start off with till I connected with that left. Then I was right - wasted the cunt. Man, I moved like I was a boxing champ. God, I was good. Though I didn't like it Jimmy tellin me to carry on, kick the poor fucker's head in. But I did. And now look where I am. I'm standing smack in the middle of the Brown Fist's house, man, that's where it got me.<sup>93</sup>

Moreover, the haka performed at Pine Block by Te Tupaea and his associates initiates the movement toward 'self-help' by allowing the audience to become in touch with the 'authentic' warrior within themselves:

Suddenly he was bursting into a roaring cry signifying the start of a haka. And so a line-up of older males behind him stood. Like a row of fierce-faced guards. And they danced . . . And joined by four women, who launched themselves into it with even greater ferocity than the men. And the people sitting there with chills running up and down them, and not from the cold either. And this incredible beat of war setting off things in their heads: of understanding themselves, some locked away part of themselves suddenly opened up.<sup>94</sup>

The warriorhood constructed in this passage is one in which the spirit of the past is dissociated from its contemporary distortions figured by scenes in the pub and gang violence. The warrior past is enobled so long as it is translated appropriately in the present as spiritual redemption rather than toughness. There is, therefore, a contradiction at the heart of the novel in that authentic warriorhood must displace tribal rivalries and can only do so by being constructed on a model of warriorhood derived from the Land Wars, yet the narrative drive is away from inter-ethnic conflict and towards intra-ethnic conflict. This contradiction is resolved by a gender reversal. The vision of a resuscitated Maoridom is consolidated when Te Tupaea alters tribal tradition in arranging for Beth as a woman to act as his stand-in. Beth, as earlier

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<sup>93</sup> Duff (1995) p. 137.

<sup>94</sup> Duff (1995) p. 179.

alluded to, is legitimated in this role by her conception of warriorhood as inter-ethnic rather than inter-tribal. Te Tupaea's decision reverses the classic image of the warrior and reinterprets the meaning of 'doing battle' to include the Maori warrioress. Authentic warriorhood has come to be presented as the work of women. The reinvigoration of the community by Beth, Mavis and female relations is juxtaposed with an escalation of gang violence and Nig's death. While Jake is still unable to attend the funeral he watches from the bushes with a befriended street kid and this time weeps. The textual emphasis on Beth as warrioress continues the pattern of Maori novels in foregrounding the supposedly redemptive qualities of women. This enables the transformation of what has been portrayed as a violent patriarchal culture to be legitimated in its newly traditional form in the present. Beth is initially described as:

Half resenting the male elders, their privileged position, their secret language that only they and a few others knew; remembering that this very place, its cultural practices, had always been a mystery to a young girl growing up: a males only domain. And only certain males at that. From certain families. From chiefly lines. And to hell with the rest, you're here to serve us. That's how a girl'd felt. And growing up to the knowledge that as a woman she was never going to have the right to speak publicly as this man now was.<sup>95</sup>

In becoming a leader or spokesperson for her community, Beth transforms this social structure and in doing so underscores Duff's criticisms of Maoridom where, he believes, conceptions of rank and gender sit ill with Western notions of egalitarianism and where a rigid conservatism often stultifies creative adaptive change. The need for such change is expressed at Nig's funeral as 'Got ta move with the times or it leaves ya behind.'<sup>96</sup> The fictional method by which Duff seeks to transform Maoridom, and by implication, Maori subjectivity, would appear to be severely compromised on at least three counts. First, Beth's agency and role as warrioress is not achieved by her in company with other women but is extended to her by the largesse of Te Tupaea who ultimately therefore remains in control. The moves available to Maori women in the

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<sup>95</sup> Duff (1995) p. 120.

<sup>96</sup> Duff (1995) p. 197.

novel remain constrained both within Duff's conception of traditional Maori society and his adoption of Pakeha parameters to outline an appropriate role for women. Unlike *Potiki*, *Once Were Warriors* fails to provide an adequate entry of women into civil society and remains trapped in a version of the nineteenth-century 'Angel in the House.' In *Maori, The Crisis and the Challenge* Duff gives specific form to this role:

Maori women can do so much to reverse the tide of male-caused regress by virtue of the strength they're gathered over the years of living under an oppressive, domineering yoke. They, and only they, can bring about the changes in Maori society which their male counterparts won't ever bring because they have no desire to. Maori women can bring the changes when their menfolk cannot . . . It is the female capacity for motherhood, for nurturing, for possessing far stronger the parenting urge, where maternalism exists to a far more heightened degree than paternalism, where the hope lies. My hopes and arguments rest on the fact that women as a species are first and foremost concerned with the future, the wellbeing of the children whereas the man isn't necessarily so.<sup>97</sup>

Maori women have, it appears, escaped from what Duff considers to be a dominating and oppressive regime only to be contained within another supposedly superior one. It is however, the changes wrought by women which bring the Pakeha into contact with the Pine Block community. First Grace's suicide prompts Trambert to attend her tangi and later when changes in the community become evident he donates land to be used as a rugby pitch. It is here that the second inadequacy for a newly constructed Maori subjectivity becomes evident. Rather than a Dolman-like figure who tries to take Maori land and refuses to join the community for a meal, the paternal Trambert out of his largesse bestows gifts of land (which had originally belonged to Maori) to those who have proved themselves worthy of inclusion in the nation. As a metaphor of future race relations it would be an understatement to say that this is inadequate. But what is the most striking feature of *Once Were Warriors* is the lack of any character whose role is equivalent to that of Simon, Tokowaru, or Te Kooti. There is no figure, damaged, scarred but nevertheless cheeky, ebullient, creative

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<sup>97</sup> Duff (1993) p. 95-6.

and empowering. While these characters in the other novels examined may have been ultimately subsumed within the dominant discourse their mere existence as an index of continuing vitality has a political value which cannot be ignored. A Maui-type figure for Duff seems to signify the continuing presence of that resistant 'bounce' so deplored by the nineteenth-century settlers and associated in their minds and his with lawlessness. In place of such a character the horror, tragedy and destructiveness catalogued throughout the novel can seemingly be reversed by an injection of nineteenth-century positivism or do-it-yourself psychology combined with a nineteenth-century conception of women as a nurturing 'species'.

It is specifically in this regard that *Once Were Warriors* seeks to incorporate Maori into a right-wing economic structure. Maori, Duff implies, will only truly be part of the nation when they have acquired the same material possessions which Pakeha have afforded themselves in the past, despite the undeveloped, colonial nature of the economy. The novel fails to adequately address the economic crisis which disrupted the country in the 1980s. Instead, it is proposed that Maori 'restructure' their outlook and culture in much the same fashion as economic 'restructuring' was put forward as a solution to the country's problems. In fact, in real terms, it was the development of *laissez faire* economic policies (and at the end of the decade, authoritarian and socially conservative attitudes) which contributed substantially to Maori disadvantage and widespread unemployment. The novel's message that the appropriate mental attitude and adherence to a 'work ethic' will resolve problems of family breakdown and economic marginalisation fails to adequately address the economic history of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the ways in which this history of prosperity and security, protected by import and exchange controls, disintegrated in the 1970s and 1980s.

On the positive side, Duff's decision to write outside a re-appropriation of the dominant culture's primitivism and to resist the restrictive elements of idealisation, effectively asks Maori to understand themselves as they are rather than as they might be imagined to have been once. The force of the book's negativity makes visible for the

first time in Maori writing an anti-idealisation which may possibly spell the end of the construction of 'modern primitive' novels as a genre.

## **Conclusion**

In seeking to examine the construction of subjectivity in Maori novels of the 1980s, this thesis has read these novels as imbricated in varying ways in the ideological assumptions of the dominant Pakeha culture. However, as both Pakeha and Maori cultures are continually re-inventing themselves, 'Maori culture' in the 1980s as a representative category is interpreted as constructing itself through an on-going negotiation with aspects of 'traditional' culture as well as in opposition to and compliance with Pakeha stereotypes of Maori, whether they be valourising or denigrating. On a broader level, the introduction of Western institutions is seen to have acted as a strategy of containment, which disallowed the continuation of autonomous Maori institutions. The impact of these Western institutions is traced in successive chapters. In Chapter Two the Treaty of Waitangi and the introduction of European political philosophy inscribed Maori within a regime epitomised by the ascendancy of the English language and a Western mythology. Chapter Three considered the relation between current Maori subjectivity and the effects of the introduction of Christianity and a Western cultural exceptionalism which had its origins in a European utopian imaginary. Chapter Four examined the imposition of a masculine nationalism and masculine literary tradition with its exclusion of women from both civil society and literary self-representation. Finally, Chapter Five analysed the effects of the introduction of capitalism, law and order and the resulting Land Wars on Maori subjectivity. Pakeha dominance therefore, was gained by the constant incorporation and suppression of difference as well as by the vigorous reiteration of authoritative meanings. All these factors have operated to produce an overdetermined space within which objectification takes place. Objectification, therefore, is seen as irreducibly political.

However, each of these novels also demonstrates that in the process of constructing a 'Maori' subjectivity, tradition is not simply passively inherited, a burden that must be carried, but also a thing that can be acted upon or deployed to diverse ends. It may be an objectification of a heritage which is viewed as outmoded and undesirable, but as a resource it is as necessary to progressivist projects of nonconformity as it is to those of cultural affirmation and preservation. Nevertheless as the colonial endeavour in Aotearoa/New Zealand has had a constant and sustained impact, Maori have tended to couch their identity and resistance in terms made available by the dominant Pakeha. They may affirm and celebrate what colonialist discourse and practice subordinate and denigrate or they may identify with those 'soft' stereotypes which generate a neotraditional culture. All these constructions tend to be contested among Maori, who while they may assert the enduring value of their culture in countercolonial practice, will contest and reactively oppose aspects of the neotraditional culture from within.

The process of self-fashioning does not, of course, take place within a unified field of discourse. Although the resistant discourse of both 'real' and imagined' Maori is structured by the discourse of the dominant, traditionalism does not necessarily affirm exactly the same thing that Western primitivism has presumed to be the essence of Maoridom. Nor does it merely assert the value of what Pakeha discourses have denigrated in a straightforwardly reactive fashion. The process of mutual recognition has always been more partial and uneven, and Maori have reinterpreted institutions in a manner that depended on the efforts of both colonisers and colonised. In other words, although there would appear to be no space outside the dominant structure from which the subaltern may speak, Maori self-representation contains active components of social transformation.

Counter-hegemonic strategies employed in these Maori novels to fashion an alternative subjectivity which is subversive are largely achieved through the posing of hybridised performances which unsettle the perspectives that organise the Pakeha world. Imitation of postcolonial tropes of home as nation constitute a kind of

remaking, the creation of a novelistic form that is subtly but distinctively new. Through manipulating their own conceptual structures Maori writers have created spaces beyond the ambit of European definitions. The continuing employment of the rationale surrounding traditional Maori art forms which operate through the processes of group empowerment and confrontation to make vital those who belong, and conversely disempower and impoverish those who do not belong is a distinctive feature of these novels and represents in fictional form a subjectivity which is constituted in opposition to others. As such they exhibit not just how identities and traditions are invented but what they are invented against.

As a part of a wider political movement, Maori novels inevitably reflect the broader political concerns of their community and the country as a whole. Raj Vasil writes of Maori leaders for example:

Despite the paramount requirement of Maoriness and an overriding commitment to Maoridom, Maori leadership has tended to be predominantly communal-parochial, with little interest in wider issues. Leaders have had no special interest in ideologies and different political ideas and values. They are the leaders of the Maori people only and they have no special reason to spread their appeal beyond their community, among the Pakeha and others in New Zealand. It is quite significant that in New Zealand, unlike many other divided societies, leadership among both the Pakeha and the Maori has been community-based and not inter-ethnic. A Maori and a Pakeha seeking to represent and lead both communities is a rare phenomenon.<sup>1</sup>

Although this does not in a direct one-to-one sense reflect the role of Maori novels in the 1980s, there is a definite correlation in that they are above all concerned with the revitalisation of their own culture. If they appeal to a broader readership this would appear to be of lesser significance, and, in fact, as Maoridom as become more embattled by the end of the decade the novels have tended to turn inward more and more to address their own community. The gestural possibilities for a creative bicultural subjectivity figured in *the bone people* and *The Matriarch* are less of an

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<sup>1</sup> Raj Vasil, *What Do the Maori Want? New Maori Political Perspectives* (Auckland: Random Century, 1990) p. 74-5.

issue in *Potiki* and *Once Were Warriors* which speak directly to Maori though in very different ways. Overall, in my opinion, despite the counter-hegemonic strategies which these writers employ, the process of self-fashioning with which they are engaged ultimately involves a degree of false consciousness. In other words, they slide away from their avowed intentions and, despite themselves, promote various ambivalent constructions of subjectivity. However, as Ngahuia Te Awekotuku writes:

Political comment and protest through art have been an integral part of the Maori world. The powerful, riveting song-poems of the prophet-warrior Te Kooti; the vibrant wall panels of such great carved houses as Te Whai a Te Motu and Ngararanui, illustrate this tradition. Creativity was a potent weapon in political battle - and it has remained so.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, *Mana Wahine Maori* (Auckland: New Women's Press, 1991) p. 164.

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