

## 'To Be True One Must Find One's *Kaupapa*': Moments of Agency in Maori Fiction

When it emerged as a critical category in the mid-eighties, 'post-colonialism' quickly established itself as a theoretical paradigm for the reading of texts from areas that received the English language during colonization. Such texts could be shown to articulate themselves against the dominant discourses of Western traditions. Their engagement with discursive power could be uniformly analyzed as textual strategies of 'abrogation' and 'appropriation', producing a counter-discourse that was susceptible to a description in terms of syncretism and hybridity. A decade on, the problematic designated by the term postcolonialism has shifted. The homogenizing slant of 'post-colonialism' can now be historicized in the context of curricular politics in academic centers whose interests are only marginally relevant to the concerns of writers in former British colonies. To begin to address and respond to these concerns, postcolonial criticism needs to combine a recognition of the gravitational pull of the culture of global capitalism, of which in various ways postmodernism has come to represent both model and critique, with an awareness of the specific colonial histories that have brought cultures around the world into the orbit of this dominant culture. These histories are not readily subsumed under one single paradigm. As Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge point out in a recent discussion of postcolonialism,

[s]maller *récits* must replace the *grand récit* of postcolonialism in all these instances so that we can know the historical background better. In these smaller *récits* it may well be that the term 'postcolonial' is never used. (288-89)<sup>1</sup>

One of the principal challenges of postcolonial criticism therefore nowadays is to construct and explore the connections between the local and the global as it emerges at the conjuncture of theory and reading. This essay attempts to make such a connection by situating Maori fiction in a context of local culture and political endeavor in New Zealand and reading this situatedness in terms of a postcolonial concept of agency. The notion of *kaupapa* thus points to an area of concerns in which the term 'postcolonial' is indeed not used much, while my use of the concept of agency primarily draws on the insights of an essay by Homi Bhabha that is itself interested in the connections between postcolonialism and postmodernism. I pursue this connection between the local and the global across readings of some important texts by Maori writers, and

---

<sup>1</sup> I follow the example of Mishra and Hodge in using the unhyphenated spelling of the word 'postcolonialism' to indicate that my intervention is lodged in this shifted problematic designated by the term. Many thanks to Sibylle Brändli, Gabriela Hilti, Kevin McCafferty, Manuela Rossini and Anne Zimmermann for their critical queries and helpful comments at various stages in the composition of this essay.

these readings will therefore present the principal focus of my essay. What, for want of a better term, I would call discursive connectedness, as opposed to any hasty subordination, assimilation or integration, will thus emerge as a value from my own discourse, for it is only in such connectedness that a moment of agency can ultimately be achieved.

*Kaupapa* is a Maori word which in recent years has become indispensable to bicultural politics in New Zealand. Central to Maori protocol, it has made its way even into the discourse of government ministers. The most current usage of the term is explained by the Maori anthropologist, Cleve Barlow, as a set of cultural rules and policies associated with public administration, specifying, for instance, the conditions under which different tribal groups can meet, but also setting guidelines and procedures for implementing policies (43). If you look up the word in Williams' *Dictionary of the Maori Language*, you'll find a variety of translations such as 'stage', 'platform', 'groundwork', 'raft', 'fleet of canoes', 'spiritual medium', 'the sticks used in certain rites of divination', the 'original' of a song, a 'trail or track', a 'plan, scheme, proposal' (107). The semantic field common to these terms lends the notion of *kaupapa* a sense of support and conveyance, and it refers to land and water as well as to a temporal and spiritual dimension. In a very broad sense the word *kaupapa* thus denotes an enabling relational and performative situation or condition.

James Ritchie, in his book, *Becoming Bicultural*, indicates three distinct but related dimensions in this broad definition of *kaupapa*. According to Ritchie,

Maori use the word *kaupapa* in various ways. It is the term for purpose, agenda, intention, reason. At a deeper level it is the basis, (...) the assured philosophy. And beyond that it is the medium through which wairua is made manifest, emerges in action in the palpable world. To be true one must find one's *kaupapa*. (240)

The word *kaupapa* here connects three distinct dimensions: on the level of individual action it relates individual efforts and intentions to a broader social and cultural context or process. At a collective level, *kaupapa* identifies and relates issues in a distinctive ideological position. And finally, there is in Ritchie's explanation the sense that *kaupapa* has more than an instrumental function and is of paramount value itself, precisely because of its connecting power. In this sense it is the recognition of the value of a *kaupapa* which constitutes a cultural subjectivity in an enabling articulation with the social world. The observation and recognition of a *kaupapa* thus becomes a condition for individual and collective physical and mental well-being.

Two more insights can be drawn from Ritchie's explanation of the word to indicate the special relevance of the notion of *kaupapa* in contemporary Maori cultural and political practices. Firstly, a *kaupapa* is something that is to be sought: 'To be true one must find one's *kaupapa*'. The search for a *kaupapa* is more than a search for a political cause, however, it is a cause in its own right. It is the effort to regain a foundation and a network for cultural development that singles out the three principal issues in Maori politics today: land, tribal economies, and the language. At tribal and national levels these three issues very much form the *kaupapa*. But they gain their relevance from the recognition that without a reconstruction of the territorial, economic, and

discursive connections, tribal lines that were severed in the process of colonization, there can be no *kaupapa* in the sense of an actual empowerment. Secondly, *kaupapa* has gained great discursive importance for Maori, who, as Ritchie says, use the word in a variety of ways. The word *kaupapa* these days appears in a multiplicity of discourses and thus pervades the entire spectrum of discursive production in contemporary New Zealand, from the formal speech-making situations in tribal meetings governed by traditional protocol, through parliamentary debate and consultation on land and water rights, extra-parliamentary lobbying for tribal economic autonomy, to the struggle for control over what might be called ideological apparatuses, the education system and the print and electronic media. While this variety of usage may in some sense pose a threat to the specificity of the concept, it again also evokes the connecting power of the notion of *kaupapa* in that it allows Maori to establish a discursive network as a basis for social transformation. The widespread use of the notion of *kaupapa* testifies to the considerable success with which Maori have managed to gain a certain control over discursive processes in New Zealand, potentially turning them into paths toward political, cultural and economic development.

The particular relevance of the notion of *kaupapa* today thus emerges from a colonial situation and the need for its bicultural transformation. Its primarily discursive orientation manifests both a necessity and a recognition of the particular importance of discursive production in contemporary political and economic processes world-wide. Given the colonial dislocation of the traditional bases of cultural and economic life as well as the increasing importance of discursive production in contemporary New Zealand economy, discursive action has become the stepping stone for collective efforts to recuperate autonomy. The challenge that the concept of *kaupapa* seems to present to Maori discursive practices is to go beyond mere token representation and to develop discursive production into a sustaining political and economic platform from which to revitalize the distinctive territorial and tribal ties of Maori society. The purpose of discursive production is ultimately not just more accurate representations of Maori life, but to develop existing and new discourses as material links that bring the marginalized and dispersed tribal subjects into an economically and culturally enabling articulation with contemporary society; enabling in the very concrete sense of opening opportunities for work and investment, as well as reconnecting people's selfhood in distinctive cultural modes of production and exchange. It is in this orientation that the notion of *kaupapa* can fulfill its empowering function.

The widespread appeal to an insistence on the concept of *kaupapa* suggests that it is important to an understanding of the discursive situation and orientation of Maori fiction as well. Witi Ihimaera is the Maori writer who has perhaps most explicitly acknowledged the fundamental importance that the notion of *kaupapa* has for his work (Williams 1991: 283). Other writers, such as Patricia Grace and Keri Hulme have equally pointed out that their work is best seen as part of a collective endeavor and not adequately evaluated in terms of individual achievement alone. There exists an ongoing and acknowledged dialogue of mutual influence and response between Maori writers which aims at opening and broadening the discursive field for the emerging careers of a

growing number of writers.<sup>1</sup> Established writers such as Grace, Hulme, Ihimaera, and Apirana Taylor have been actively involved in promoting the writing of less well-known authors. This sense of a collective endeavor is perhaps most apparent in the new six-volume anthology of Maori writing, *Te Ao Marama*, edited by Witi Ihimaera, Haare Williams, Irihapeti Ramsden and Don Long, which assembles a great variety of writings, ranging from excerpts from internationally well-known texts, such as Keri Hulme's long awaited second novel, *Bait*, to the literary productions of a Wellington martial arts group, collected by Apirana Taylor. Each volume of this anthology opens with a statement entitled 'Kaupapa', situating the writing in a vigorous and ever-expanding discursive environment.

More interesting, perhaps, are the ways in which the commitment to a connecting notion of *kaupapa* is apparent in the narrative productions by Maori writers. Here too we find the three orientations that Ritchie has indicated in the word *kaupapa*: individual connectedness, ideological platform, and spiritual well-being achieved in culturally distinctive modes of production. A concern for the predicament of individuals who are disconnected from discursive processes and thus invisible and powerless, for instance, is characteristic of Patricia Grace's writing, most evidently in her collections of short stories. Often adopting a structure of recollection, her stories record the struggle of silenced and marginalized individuals for articulation at the intersection of conflicting discourses. Thus the stories, 'A Way of Talking' (*Waiariki*, 1-16) and 'Letters from Whetu' (*The Dream Sleepers*, 28-42), dialogically enact the process by which their young female protagonist-narrators extricate themselves from debilitating predetermined images of Maoriness and reach a sense of communal identity in irony and word-play. In 'Parade' (*Waiariki*, 81-89), Matewai, an Auckland university student who returns to her village to take part in a seasonal Maori parade, at first feels insulted by the self-congratulatory arrogance with which the local Pakeha community views their staging of Maori culture. In the course of the story, however, she is able to transcend her own 'reformed' perspective by recognizing the greater relevance of a sense of Maoriness gained through collective self-enactment, encapsulated in the image of pods that have cast their seed. While the Pakeha neighbors may only see empty shells, for the Maori the sense of self-value emerges from a performative collectivity.

<sup>1</sup> In a discussion of *The Matriarch* at the University of Auckland in 1990, Ihimaera emphasized his view of 'Maori literature as being a cooperative venture, not a competitive one': 'Maori writers are not running a race against each other. I look forward to the time when Maori writing is looked at for the communal activity that it is, supportive of one another, for the benefit of all [...].' That this collective outlook and supportive attitude is shared by other Maori writers, is evidenced in recent interviews by Patricia Grace and Keri Hulme. Both Grace and Hulme have acknowledged the indebtedness of their creative activities to community and ancestors (Tausky 95, Alley 144-45), and have pointed out the mutual encouragement and support that connects Maori writers in a collective endeavor (McRae 296, Peek 4). Together with other writers, Grace, Hulme, and Ihimaera formed 'the Te Haa Maori writing committee, a group aimed at supporting and financing younger Maori writers' (Sharrad 100).

Not all of Grace's stories present successful struggles for articulation and perhaps her stance has become more confrontational over the years. Stories like 'Journey' (*The Dream Sleepers*, 50-66) and 'The Hills' (*Electric City*, 65-69) show an old man and an adolescent respectively in confrontations with the authorities, and while the Maori protagonists are able to negotiate the discursive barriers, their interlocutors' inability to do so results in acts of violence, the long-term consequences of which are textually represented in symbolical overdetermination. A similar situation is the subject of 'The Geranium' (*Electric City*, 15-23), a story of domestic violence, in which Marney is habitually abused by her husband. Prohibitively confining Marney's sense of selfhood to the domestic, Bob regularly subjects his wife to inquisitive interrogation. Again the psychologically damaging effects of violence appear in symbolical overdetermination, as Bob, twisting Marney's arm, orders her to throw away a geranium she has received from another woman. At the moment of its implication in a ritual of victimization, the plant, from merely representing Marney's love of flowers, expands into a projection of Marney's own sense of a chucked-out self. In these and other stories, Grace's attentiveness to the situation of silent and invisible individuals coming into ideological being shows itself in a careful exploration of the tensions between the need for verbal self-articulation and the violence of symbolical appropriation.<sup>1</sup>

The concern with a *kaupapa* as a platform for collective action, the second dimension in Ritchie's definition of the concept, shows itself in Maori fiction primarily in dialogic rehearsals of urgent ideological debates. While in short stories this ideological engagement has produced a tradition of ethnic humor and satire, it is in the novels that the more sustained interaction with and probing of current ideologies takes place. Hauraki Greenland has analyzed the discourses and strategies of contemporary Maori political activism since the seventies and has identified the issue of land alienation as the chief focus in the attempts at raising and transforming collective consciousness. Land, as Greenland has shown, is not only prominent in controversies about divergent Maori and Pakeha uses of natural resources and in the pursuit of tribal economies based on kinship associations between people and their ancestral territories. It also serves as a powerful rallying symbol and focus for protest

<sup>1</sup> Grace's novels can be seen to pursue the same interest in the articulation of disconnected lives. Her latest novel, *Cousins*, programmatically opens with the evocation of a situation of utter isolation and directionlessness:

Mata Pairama sitting on the road, breathing in and out, having thoughts but not thinking. Having thoughts that sometimes coiled, hunched against themselves waiting for a forgetful moment when they would become the thinking, become the questioning – the where, the why, the what – become once again the beginning of the answer search, the beginning once again of waiting.

But there would be no more waiting, no more seeking answers to questions thready already from fingering, because she knew now that there were no answers, unless the answers were 'Nowhere' 'No reason' 'Nothing' 'No one'. (14)

From this situation, *Cousins* casts a vast network of discursive connectedness which at the novel's close even integrates and sustains Mata.

about the general grievances of a disadvantaged indigenous minority: unemployment, delinquency, alcoholism and violence. The transformation of consciousness in terms of Maori sovereignty and unity, in turn, draws on notions of black consciousness and of cultural and psychological decolonization, in appeals to concepts of Maori spirituality and in the elaboration of explicitly separatist and exclusionist discursive strategies.

Most novels could be shown to engage with these wider ideological aspirations in one way or another, but Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch* and Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors* are the two books that most pronouncedly address the concerns of contemporary activism, and consequently have attracted most criticism from activists. Although they occupy opposite ideological positions, both novels lodge their fictional arguments in the context of the loss of *mana* in a detribalized society and the self-destructive circuits that result from it. In some respects Ihimaera articulates the orthodox position of Maori radicals by rewriting the history of the land wars of the last century in a provocative way and by recapitulating the legislative injustices that led to the confiscation of most tribal lands. Duff in contrast takes the stance of a Maori dissenter advocating an outdated but neo-conservatively fashionable ideology of assimilation, urging the Maori to stop moaning about the past and to get on by being successful in the Pakeha economy. In style both novelists closely draw on political rhetoric. But while Ihimaera weaves references to and quotations from non-fictional Maori political discourses past and present into the fabric of his fiction, Duff rather seems to bring radical contemporary American accents into the New Zealand context. Finally, both books are confrontational novels of indictment and address or accuse their audience directly. Thus Ihimaera's narrator repeatedly lashes out against his Pakeha reader, and Duff's novel insults its Maori readership with such epithets as 'your collective stupidity, your monumental idiocy, Brown People' (81).

The concern with violence and mental or spiritual well-being points to the third area where the commitment to a notion of *kaupapa* manifests itself in Maori writing. This is the area that Ritchie describes as the manifestation of a spiritual dimension of Maoriness in distinctive modes of action in the material world. Beyond efforts at ideological mobilization or contestation, the most challenging Maori novels also reflect and transcend the limitations of a constitution of indigenous subjectivities within conventional modes of narrative representation and closure. This is the case with Patricia Grace's *Potiki*, Keri Hulme's *the bone people*, and Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*. Each of these novels, in different ways, uncompromisingly confronts the effects of the loss of a *kaupapa* or of the attack on it by a foreign culture. At the same time, these novels also explore the collusiveness of certain forms of narrativization, acts of signification and discursive closure, with acts of violence, and attempt, on the basis of the historical textuality of colonial subjectivity, to inscribe such representations into alternative, culturally distinct forms of discursive production that are oriented in an open and enabling articulation with social embodiment. It is here, where the commitment to an empowering *kaupapa* leads to the most challenging textual innovations in Maori fiction, that I am reminded of the concept of agency as it has emerged in recent postcolonial critical theory. And before I attempt to spell out a little further my last remarks

about the three most famous Maori novels, I would like to suggest how the connection between the language of *kaupapa* and the language of agency can be made productive for my reading.

My reading of the concept of agency here follows Homi Bhabha's argument in 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency,' where agency designates the 'return of the subject' (185), dislocated by post-structuralist analyses of discourse, in postcolonial discursive production. The concept of agency recognizes that the conditions for social transformation have to be sought on the site of a colonial discourse which has enlisted the indigenous subject and its material extensions in the foundation of a social and economic welfare that does not extend its benefits to the indigenous population. In other words, the concept of agency implies a tactical awareness that the articulation of a postcolonial indigenous subjectivity departs from a distinctly confining discursive situation and involves a renegotiation of the meanings of colonial representations, acts of signification that are collusive with a colonial social and economic order. Before it can become a mode of production, a colonial economy is a form of theft, and this process is accompanied by discursive acts of appropriation which record the conditions of indigenous life but carry them away and articulate them with social and economic processes that are ultimately hostile to the indigenous people's welfare. The construction of indigenous life as a homogeneous culture of the past is only the most obvious sign of this appropriation.

This situation also obtains in New Zealand and can be recognized in the production of texts that have become classics of Maori anthropology, such as George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology*, Elsdon Best's accounts of Maori lore, or Raymond Firth's *Economics of the New Zealand Maori*. Governor Grey's collection and publication of Maori myths and ancestral traditions is perhaps the best example of such a collusion as it was part and parcel of a project of more efficient colonization (Gibbons 38). But Best's and Firth's work should equally be associated with the establishment of a colonial economy, as Steven Webster points out:

Best's accounts were, in fact, derived from evidence presented to influence the decision of an official land titles commission for which Best was secretary. The rich data of Firth's *Primitive Economics of the N.Z. Maori* (1929) are based not only upon earlier materials recounted in the context of colonization; the synthesis of data in Firth's work is inseparable from his textual form, which systematically naturalised as universal and inevitable an historically specific process of social change. (47)

The textualization of Maori culture was a crucial component of the colonizing process because it served to reduce the risk of direct violent confrontation while facilitating the implementation of a social and economic order which for the indigenous population came to represent a form of systemic violence. Whereas for the Maori such texts became a dead-end, textually acknowledged in images of sunsets and of a vanishing culture, for their European colonizers they became enabling extensions, not only by sustaining the academic or political careers of their authors, but more importantly in that they decisively shaped the policies and processes that established a colonial order.

The textualization of indigenous culture and systemic violence to a large extent describe the colonial history of the Maori. As colonial subjects they find themselves in a world which is textually mapped in an articulation with a disabling social and economic structure. History thus appears to the colonized Maori as a mirror of misrecognition, a curtain drawn on memory. As there is no way behind that mirror, the striving for agency necessarily takes the form of a colonial mimicry. This means that the pursuit of agency involves a temporary endorsement, a repetition of the colonial signification, the indigenous subject momentarily assuming the position of the colonial subject, only to transform the mode of its articulation. This mimicry is the kind of intervention that Rey Chow, quoting Michel de Certeau, has defined as a tactic:

'A calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus' (de Certeau, p. 37). Betting on time instead of space, a tactic 'concerns an operational logic whose models may go as far back as the age-old ruses of fishes and insects that disguise or transform themselves in order to survive [...]'. (de Certeau, p. xi, quoted by Chow 16)

This sense of betting on time is also important in Bhabha's concept of postcolonial agency. The indigenous appropriation of the image of the native combines enactment and analysis and turns the site of colonial signification into a performative space, introducing a temporality into the otherwise closed frame of the colonial representation. For Bhabha the moment of agency is the effect of a time lag in the closure of signification. The renegotiation of meaning postpones the moment of closure which emerges 'retroactively' (183) in a position that is exterior to the discursive articulation.

The signified is distanced; the resulting time lag opens up the space between the lexical and the grammatical, between enunciation and enounced, in-between the anchoring of signifiers. Then, suddenly, this in-between spatial dimension, this distancing, converts itself into the temporality of the 'throw' that iteratively (re)turns the subject as a moment of conclusion and control: a historically or contextually specific subject. (186)

The performative space opened by postcolonial discursive production is the site of a doubling, an 'intersubjective realm' (Bhabha 191) accessible to an analysis in terms of intertextuality. The postcolonial reiteration of the colonial signification does not merely reproduce the conventional signs of authority but aims to effect their relocation in an articulation that exceeds the structures of dependence. The excess is an effect of the doubling in iterative articulation: the subject's individuation and absorption in the chain of signification, at its outcome, yields another discursive position, where agency emerges. This position cannot be located within the closure of signification; Bhabha, quoting Barthes, locates it 'outside the sentence' (*passim*), a position which is not signifier nor signified, but to which the discourse presents an enabling extension. Agency thus appears as what the signification is *after* in the sense of a double exteriority, postponement and precedence, extending the performative

space of discursive production.<sup>1</sup> Much recent Maori work on their colonial representation has in effect succeeded in clearing the ground for such a discursive position.<sup>2</sup>

This brings me back to the commitment to a *kaupapa* in Maori fiction, and I now want to connect the pursuit of agency with the cultural specificity of this commitment by focusing once again on the three most famous Maori novels, *Potiki, the bone people*, and *The Matriarch*. Each of these novels can be seen to explore the collusiveness of certain forms of narrativization with acts of violence. At the same time, however, these novels also use a number of dominant Western discourses as the basis for a production in pursuit of a moment of agency outside narrative closure. The confrontation of violence plays a crucial role in each of these novels. But while it is possible to construct sacrificial readings in which this violence is instrumental to narrative closure, these texts strongly resist such interpretations.

John Beston, for instance, has advanced a sacrificial reading of Grace's *Potiki*, perceiving Toko's death in a fire as salvific for his community, and even suggesting that with this novel Grace has joined the ranks of those who consider violence as a viable solution to the problems of race-relations in New Zealand. The violence in *Potiki*, however, does not represent a solution to the conflicts the novel deals with. It appears as the result of the clash between two economies, but it is also seen to be inherent in the capitalist transformation of the world into profit. For the Maori, on the other hand, material production becomes an antidote to violence. Violence indeed does not play a major part in the functioning of the plot; the novel is far more concerned with the correspondences between the nexus of material production and the fashioning of collective selfhood. Violence here appears as a crisis, a temporary disturbance in the narrative scheme of *Potiki*, which is primarily articulated in

<sup>1</sup> The position of exteriority that I am trying to evoke here as an extrication from within discursive containment seems not unlike that described by Rey Chow in her essay, 'Where Have All the Natives Gone?' (27-54). There Chow writes that 'the agency of the native cannot simply be imagined in terms of a resistance against the image – that is, *after* the image has been formed – nor in terms of a subjectivity that existed *before*, beneath, inside, or outside the image. It needs to be rethought as that which bears witness to its own demolition – in a form which is at once image and gaze, but a gaze that exceeds the moment of colonization' (51). What Chow here theorizes in the psychoanalytical terms of image and gaze, I am trying to express in terms of material production and articulation. The appeal of a self-conscious use of certain prepositions when describing this exteriority as a moment of extrication from within, is considerable, but it would be wrong to dismiss this as 'mere word-play', since what is at issue here is indeed the established order of Western discourses. See also Bhabha on the use of the 'language metaphor' in current cultural criticism (176-79).

<sup>2</sup> Examples of such ground-breaking revisions can be seen in Keri Hulme's revitalization of the dialogic structure underlying Elsdon Best's accounts of the Maui legends and her creative unsettling of textual codifications of Maori culture in her short stories (see Heim and Zimmermann). Equally important in this context is the kind of work that Ihimaera has called for (Sharrad 98): delving into the process of textualization that produced Grey's classic text, and bringing to surface the voices of his informants, as, for instance, Jenifer Curnow does in a recent translation and publication of a manuscript by Te Rangikaheke.

the complementary dialogicity of various narrative voices. It is prefigured (in chapter 13) in the verbal confrontation between the Tamihana *whanau* and Dolman, the spokesman of a real estate company who wants to buy their land in order to turn it into a seaside holiday resort. Dolman's torrent of words, his scorching contempt for the apparently derelict state of the Maori community and his failure to recognize the independent existence of the land, anticipate his company's terrorizing attacks on the community by first flooding their burial ground and then burning their meeting-house, thereby causing Toko's death. The community's tactic, when negotiations fail, of satirically undermining Dolman's words, on the other hand, prefigures their recourse to sabotage towards the end of the story, using the company's machines to destroy the new road and to flatten 'the new structures' (166), before driving the bulldozers into the sea. This retaliation, however, is controversial among the Maori and leads to a temporary dissonance in the otherwise strictly complementary dialogicity of the novel's discourse.

Violence is thus not denied but confronted. But the confrontation does not entail a sublimation of violence. Toko's death does not save his community. Rather it produces a paralyzing pain and anger, and the novel details the collective effort by which the directionlessness of pain is overcome and the anger is redirected in a determination to rebuild the meeting-house, working the experience of death and pain into the fabric of the new building. This containment of violence in the process of reconstruction does not imply that the community reconstitutes itself by way of a sacrifice. The reconstruction takes the form of a material reconstruction of the links with the land and the ancestral world. Toko's inclusion among the ancestral figures serves as a reminder and a link. His death exemplifies and accentuates the community's pain, but it does not become the spring of its life. At the end of the novel, Toko is shown to have an afterlife, but not in terms of a sacrificially interpreted resurrection, since his death is not the result of an expulsion supposed to give life to his community and the world of his afterlife is continuous with the world of the living.

Keri Hulme's *the bone people* is similar to *Potiki* in that the principal victim of violence is a child, Simon, who seems to be endowed with special knowledge and insight. Here, too, critics have gone far in their sacrificially interpretations of Simon in Christian terms (Dale, Williams 1990). Such readings tend to be at odds with Simon's realistic role as an abused child and perhaps fail to take sufficiently into account the fact that sacrificially interpretations of him are offered by the witnesses and perpetrators of violence in the novel. Kerewin and Joe, who are closest to Simon, tend to see him as 'some weird saint' (16), while the witnessing community at Whangaroa, where the novel is set, chiefly treats him as a scapegoat. The implication of these perspectives in the ongoing perpetration of violence, however, makes their interpretations suspicious. Concentrating on Simon as a victim of abuse, it becomes necessary to interpret his specialness differently, precisely as a result of his victimization, which gives him a disturbing insight into the social mechanisms of violence and a greater need and awareness of material links and extensions as a way to compensate for the world loss that his regular victimization entails.

Hulme's novel presents a sustained exploration of the psychologies of the victim, perpetrator and witness of violence, their precarious relationships as well as their connection with or disconnection from productive nexuses. While Simon, as a consequence of his predicament, has an intuitive grasp of the indebtedness of material making to pain and human sentience, both Kerewin and Joe, in different ways, lack sustaining links with the world of production. Hulme's insistence on (verbal) materiality and on sentient detail in her analysis of violence, slows down the narrative and prevents the instrumentalization of violence in the plot, resisting, as Rod Edmond has pointed out, an unequivocal reading of the novel in terms of myth or romance. Indeed, Margery Fee has drawn attention to the fact that once we adopt such a reading, the novel consistently frustrates our expectations. Hulme, she says, 'hooks us with our favourite fantasies, and then shows us how sterile, destructive and unnecessary they really are' (21). Against this argument it might be said that ultimately *the bone people* does satisfy its readers' desire for romance since it ends on an optimistic note with the evocation of a recovered sense of community. But it is important to recognize that this recovery is not a function of violence, nor really of narrative logic or closure. It can occur simply because the protagonists are given a second chance, as a wound that is left to heal may sustain the hope that it will not be inflicted again.<sup>1</sup> The sense of community in the novel's epilogue, 'Moonwater Picking', as Edmond shows, is evoked in dialogic openness, suggesting the possibility of new, perhaps unconventional connections that remain, however, to be achieved. It seems as if Hulme's book, to use Judith Dale's phrase, wants 'to have it both ways': establishing the assumption of responsibility as an ethical imperative (for characters and readers alike), it both resists a sacrificially narrativization of violence and rejects a defeatist hopelessness.

Witi Ihimaera's treatment of violence in *The Matriarch* is perhaps most problematic among the three novels I am discussing. Peter Beatson has called it New Zealand's

first real 'problem novel' since it contains no clear internal indications of how it should be interpreted. [...] The book contains moral paradoxes rare in both Maori and Pakeha literature. (33)

In Ihimaera's novel, too, it is primarily the confrontation of violence that leads to a narrative crisis and a failure or resistance to achieve closure. Ihimaera's narrator, Tamatea, deals with violence in two separate areas quite differently, in both cases, however, apparently legitimating the use of violence. These are the area of domestic infighting and the national/colonial arena of war. In the sphere of extended family politics, violence is part of the struggle over the *whanau's mana* and leadership, where it appears as a sort of birthright of the rightful heir, a kind of inborn 'killer instinct' (90). In the context of Tamatea's revision of

<sup>1</sup> This image of the wound and its healing draws on Rod Edmond's insightful essay on *the bone people*. Considering the centrality of violence in Hulme's novel, he writes: 'No sooner does wounding occur than healing begins, just as from the first moment of bleeding our blood begins to clot. This I take to be the novel's deep structure.' (279)

the wars of and against Te Kooti Rikirangi in the 1860s, on the other hand, violence becomes the object of a polemical shifting of political blame. Here a sacrificial interpretation of violence provides the basis for the articulation of a wronged and persecuted people's self-consciousness, while in the context of the struggle over the family's *mana* violence is assumed as a legitimate instrument of power, even a mark of rightful authority. This paradoxical treatment of violence makes the novel's moral stance extremely problematic and prevents the achievement of an enabling sense of narrative closure. The two spheres of violence are linked in the novel's design by two scenes set on tribal *marae*, but the connection only accentuates the sense of a disrupted narrative subjectivity. In the first of the two scenes, Tamatea's grandmother, the matriarch, transgresses the rules of *marae* protocol by assuming the privilege of speaking on a foreign *marae* and is nearly killed as supernatural powers force her hands around her throat in an act of self-strangulation (113). In the second scene, Tamatea opposes his rival, Toroa, over the family's *mana* and demonstrates his rightful claim by using his will power to spontaneously bring about Toroa's near suffocation (402). The image of self-strangulation recurs throughout *The Matriarch* and links the different spheres of violence. As it is associated with the manner of Tamatea's birth, its shadow also falls on the narrator. While it may provide a certain sense of closure in that it connects the disparate narrative strands, however, as the image of a suicidal self, the image of self-strangulation undermines the possibility of founding an enabling subjectivity on violence.

*The Matriarch* most obviously suggests that the moment of agency the novel aspires to cannot be identified with the image of a subjectivity within the closure of narrative representation, but needs to be sought in the performative space that the discourse produces. But Ihimaera's novel is not the only text that indicates the need of a critical shift in the evaluation of subjectivity from representation to performance. Grace's *Potiki* and Hulme's *the bone people* equally inscribe their subjectivity in a different articulation with discursive production than is assumed in the conventional semiotic paradigm of representation. Linking the critique of sacrificial violence with a crisis of narrative closure, all three of these novels construct their narratives as performative spaces in which the condition of agency emerges as a possibility of connecting to collective and distinctively Maori processes of cultural production in the materiality of a multiplicity of discourses. In other words, this cultural specificity appears in the intertextual dialogicity of these texts, and in the remaining part of this paper I want to evoke this position of intersubjectivity as a moment of agency, a tactical move rather than a strategic formation, as it emerges from these three novels.

*The Matriarch* is again the most complicated case. Its performative subjectivity articulates itself in the intricate dialogicity of a multiplicity of voices. The performative structure of the novel is underlined by the fact that its five major sections are designated as 'acts'. Apart from the rather obvious links that the novel constructs and maintains with Ihimaera's previous books, *The Matriarch*'s discourse produces a complex network of more or less overt dialogic relations. The novel develops five major narrative strands: the story of the struggle over the *mana* of the Mahana *whanau* to which Tamatea and his grandmother, Artemis, belong; the story of the wars of and against the

prophetic leader, Te Kooti Rikirangi; the account of the meeting between tribal leaders and the Prime Minister on a Wellington *marae* in 1949; the story of the Takitimu, the ancestral canoe of the East Coast tribes, according to tribal tradition; and the parliamentary debates of the late 19th century in which Tamatea's ancestor, Wi Pere Halbert, a historical figure, took part. Each of these strands articulates an overt dialogue of complementary and conflicting accounts which links Tamatea's and his grandmother's discourses with those of historical participants and witnesses and fictional commentators alike. At the same time, each of these strands is also the product of an extended system of quotation, a somewhat more covert, though not concealed, dialogue with a variety of historical sources and discourses.

The worldview of *The Matriarch*, expressed in this highlighted polyphony, is fraught with tensions. The novel's most fundamental tension, however, appears in the view of history that this dialogic structure articulates. Throughout his assemblage of discourses, Tamatea combines an assertion of historical events as controlled by some supernatural agency or fate with a claim that all history is ultimately no more than a fiction, or bricolage. The tension between the view of history as the manifestation of a transcendental intentionality, downplaying human action and choice, and the concept of history as a textuality, predicated on the contingency of human bias, problematizes Tamatea's entire historical project. This aporia is, however, again metaphorically contained in the image of self-strangulation which can now be read as a radical critique of individual subjectivity and the notion of history associated with it, mirroring the colonized condition of the Maori.

The challenge for Ihimaera's readers is to perceive the tensions between human production and construction and fateful or supernatural direction as constituting Tamatea's subjectivity and to include this particular sense of Tamatea's identity in the interpretation of his role and function in the narrative. Tamatea's identity or, rather, his individuality is indeed very ambiguous, but this ambiguity, I would like to argue, is susceptible to an interpretation which sees Tamatea's role as that of a tribal historian. As a character he is conspicuously passive, reluctant to take up action, but his individual prestige is not diminished by his inactivity. He appears as a docile grandson, a listener, interviewer, researcher of family history, and in this his role as a character merges with his role as narrator where he appears as story-teller, arranger of historical and documentary material, and as a mouthpiece for Artemis. The ambiguity relating to his identity thus consists in a tension between the sense of the constructedness of the narrative, everywhere betraying Tamatea's activity in arranging and orchestrating the polyvocality of his material, and the sense that he is himself constructed by his material, which constitutes him as the mouthpiece for the articulation of some prophetic power. As the embodiment of tribal *mana*, Tamatea's individuality is overdetermined but also coextensive with the gradual accumulation of his historical material, while as a character in

<sup>1</sup> The principal texts are Mackay and Mitchell, as well as parliamentary Hansards. Ihimaera has also been shown to have copied from other historians' work, and subsequently been accused of plagiarism (see Hugh Barlow and Andrew Johnston).

action his individuality is spurious and as a center of consciousness it merges with that of his grandmother.

What appears to be bestowed on Tamatea is the guardianship of oral history. His ambiguous individuality recalls the role of the tribal historian as it is evoked in Judith Binney's study of oral traditions of the East Coast area, which is where Ihimaera's novel is set.<sup>1</sup> Oral histories, according to Binney, highlight the narrative subject as a 'kinship I', an individuality circumscribed by the tribal self, which 'reaches not only into the past but into the future as well: 'Thus it is that I am born in you'' (Binney 25). The sentence that Binney quotes to illustrate the tribal identity of the guardian of tradition echoes in Artemis' claim of immortality (*The Matriarch* 121, 196), her assertion to Tamatea that '[y]ou and I will never die' (447), as well as her repeated statement of having fashioned Tamatea in her own image (13, 127, 448). The oral histories that Judith Binney studies, and which can be seen to form the context of *The Matriarch*, are concerned with the spiritual leadership of Te Kooti. As Binney points out, they are both retrospective, asserting the God-given nature of Te Kooti's power that has been bestowed on his followers, and predictive, testifying to the prophecy of the restoration of the people's autonomy in the future. Within this temporality, the telling of history unfolds as the guardianship of a prophetic *mana* that is distinctly separate from the authority of the colonizers. By inscribing itself into this ongoing articulation of a performative sense of peoplehood, *The Matriarch* extends this tradition into the English language and allows oral history to envelop the written histories that seem to found its narrative.

Unlike Ihimaera's novel, Grace's *Potiki* and Hulme's *the bone people* do not represent a single albeit ambiguous individual subjectivity. Nor do they inscribe themselves into a very specific oral tradition as explicitly as *The Matriarch*. Something of that mouthpiece narratorship which we find in *The Matriarch* can also be found in Patricia Grace's *Potiki*, but here it does not crystallize itself in a privileged subjectivity as much as it appears as an effect of the complementary dialogicity of the narrative strands relating to the Tamihana *whanau*. The novel does have its privileged narrative personae in the characters of Roimata and Toko, but while Roimata's voice is clearly individualized, Toko's voice is not so much circumscribed by individuality as it integrates the communal voice of the *whanau*. As Roimata once observes of Toko: 'All

<sup>1</sup> Binney clearly indicates the family as the center around which these oral histories revolve. 'In the oral narrative forms what have survived are not so much directly political stories (although these do exist, particularly among men) but family myth-narratives. These are the histories which establish the particular relationship between Te Kooti and the family's own ancestors. Maori history is structured around kin. *Whanau* (the extended family) and *hapu* (the functioning tribal unit) are the basic concerns of Maori history. It is the *whanau* which gives identity to the individual, and the *tipuna*, the ancestors, are the source, in turn, of its *mana*. History is told in these terms. It is defined by family and by *whakapapa*. It is concerned with the holding and the transference of *mana* by successive generations' (18). The description fits the situation that Ihimaera's novel evokes, and indeed my own attempt at reading its paradoxical subjectivity in terms of oral history is indebted to Binney's remark, at the end of her essay, that '*The Matriarch* evokes this powerful conjunction of myth with history' (28).

stories belong to him' (38). Apart from these two main narrative strands, a number of chapters belong to other members of the family and three chapters are told by an unlocalized voice which reflects a collective perspective. These voices are linked by their complementary perspective and by refrain-like recurrences of certain phrases and images, above all Hemi's sentence, 'Everything we need is here,' which is repeated by several speakers throughout the novel (37, 38, 41, 69, 92, 103, 132, 145, 159). In this dialogic structure, *Potiki* also taps a number of discursive archives, including Maori myth, the barely fictionalized account of real life events as well as the discourse of hostile Pakeha, and transforms them into a collective process of story-telling.<sup>1</sup> Throughout, however, the novel maintains a parallel between this collective process by which the community fashions itself and the *whanau*'s cooperation in sustaining an independent and culturally distinct economy.

If the novel indicates the place of an encompassing subjectivity it is the position of the carver which is properly outside the novel, appearing only in its prologue, and to which the novel provides a verbal extension. The carver is not, however, manifestly present as a voice, but is himself only one embodiment of a life principle which manifests itself in an ongoing process of material production. The carver owes and gives his life to his carving which in turn gives life to Toko who at the end of the novel returns to his wooden life. This mutual exchange of the gift of life between the human maker and the material artefact pervades the novel's structure in and around the central image of the carved meeting-house, which itself becomes the prototype of the book as a community's extended body. As Roimata once points out:

our main book was the wharenuī which is itself a story, a history, a gallery, a study, a design structure and a taonga. And we are part of that book along with family past and family yet to come. (104)

The carved meeting-house as a material artefact focuses the community's links with its material environment, which in the course of ancestral occupation has been transformed into the family's extended body. The sense of the meeting-house as a material extension of the *whanau*'s body is most emphatically expressed when it is burnt down. This is how Toko sees it:

The great head of the great ancestor that had looked out towards the people whenever they advanced across the marae had gone. The arms that had been extended in welcome, and the sacred and intricate backbone that had run through the apex, as well as the patterned ribs adjoining the backbone, had caved, and dropped into the flames, and gone....

We could only stand silent in the night's silence and in the night's darkness. It was as if we were the new tekoteko figured about the edges of the gutted house, unhooded, standing in place of those that had gone to ash. (136)

Just as the house sustains the collective selfhood, when it is destroyed the people stand in for the house and rebuild it, thereby redrawing and reaffirming

<sup>1</sup> Patricia Grace has repeatedly commented on her treatment of recent conflicts over land in *Potiki*. See, for instance, Tausky 97-99.



their ancestral links with the land on which they live. By choosing the meeting-house as its central symbol, *Potiki* inscribes itself into a paradigm of material production that is oriented in an extension of individual and collective embodiment. In Grace's novel, the boundaries between human selfhood and material artefacts are permeable. They are not identical but connected by the projection and reciprocation of life in material production. And it is this productive nexus which encompasses the individual lives of both carver and carving, as well as of the members of the fictional community, thereby providing them all with a purpose, a collective standpoint, and becoming the source of their spiritual well-being, in short, their *kaupapa*.

In *the bone people*, finally, a similar notion of reciprocal production is focused in the concept of the *mauri*, the material embodiment of a creative life principle and a talismanic reminder of people's responsibility to their material environment. Some critics have contested Hulme's Maori identity and questioned the authenticity of her novel's Maori qualities which they see as spurious and grafted onto the narrative in chapter ten, 'The Kaumatua and the Broken Man.' I do not want to enter into an argument about Hulme's Maoriness, which I take for granted since, as far as I know, no Maori has disputed her claim to Kai Tahu affiliation. I do, however, want to take issue with the view that reduces the novel's Maori dimension to chapter ten and suggests that Hulme deliberately conceals her intertextual debt in an apparently transparent realism.

A sense of Maoriness is not just grafted onto the novel in chapter ten, or even simply in part four. Indeed, it pervasively informs the novel from its beginning. For the characters, Kerewin and Joe, Maoriness is an important component of their biographical background. Here it is of a behavioral order, shaping habits and the way things are done, but above all manifesting itself in a feeling of inadequacy, a sense of loss. For all its pervasiveness throughout the first three parts of the novel, this Maoriness does not sustain the characters' lives in crisis. For both Kerewin and Joe, their Maoriness is not a life force but a misunderstood, stereotypical and transmogrified heritage. This is evident in Kerewin's alienation and in Joe's violent outbursts. The novel identifies Kerewin's and Joe's condition as a disconnectedness from the life principle that is inherent in the Maori world, and consequently their recovery in part four takes the form of a discovery and awakening of the *mauri* within them. In this course of her protagonists' development, one can recognize Hulme's commitment, but her drawing attention to the beneficial potential of a Maori world view does not imply that she idealizes the Maori past. The novel does not hold out a promise of effortless salvation in a naive return to the past; rather, recovery involves a responsible answering to tradition, and this is reflected in the development of the novel's discourse. Thus while the stereotypical Maoriness that restricts the characters' well-being is largely contained in a discourse of realistic representation, the enabling sense of a Maoriness, indebted to the recognition of the value and power of the *mauri*, emerges from the connection to (oral and written) traditions which the novel highlights both in its fictional story and in its handling of intertextuality.

Chapter ten evokes a similar situation of a guardianship under threat due to land alienation, and of a Maoriness kept alive in verbal tradition, as we find in

*The Matriarch*. Joe is introduced to the guardianship of the physical embodiment of a stone *mauri* by Tiaki Mira, an old man who has himself inherited his task from his grandmother, a precursor of Ihimaera's Artemis in that she was a willful woman who did not hesitate to transgress sacred laws in order to gain the knowledge she needed to assume a neglected guardianship. Tiaki instructs Joe in the lore connected with the particular *mauri*, and Joe himself, when taking up the guardianship after the old man's death, pursues his research and enters into a correspondence with tribal elders across the country. This sense of a Maoriness that cannot be dissociated from a tradition of guardianship is also apparent in the novel's use of written sources in its evocation of the *mauri*. Mark Williams (1990) has drawn attention to Hulme's indebtedness to Elsdon Best in her representation of the *mauri* and has dismissed it as an appeal to a transcendental power that is needed to set things right in New Zealand. The material embodiment of the *mauri* that Joe finds in chapter ten (384) indeed fits the description and picture that Best provides: it is a simple pierced stone (Best 1924, I: 305). But Williams' definition of the *mauri* as a god is misleading as Best's explanations clearly indicate:

[o]ne of the difficulties of understanding this concept lies in the fact that it bears three aspects. The *mauri* is an activity within us, an active physical life principle, but, under the name *mauri ora*, it is viewed as a *tapu* or sacred life principle. If this *mauri ora* becomes polluted in any way, then the consequences are most serious to the person. An examination of the third aspect will enable us to see the meaning of this idea somewhat better. That third aspect is the material *mauri*. This may be termed a talisman, a material object that represents the protecting power of the gods; in a sense it may be termed a shrine or medium of the gods. (Best 1924, I: 304)

This concept of the *mauri* is echoed by Tiaki Mira, who describes his task to Joe:

I guard the stone that was brought on one of the great canoes. I guard the canoe itself. I guard the little god that came with the canoe. The god broods over the mauriora, for that is what the stone is home to, but the *mauri* is distinct and great beyond the little god. (*the bone people*, 363)

The *mauri* is thus not to be identified with a god; as 'an active physical life principle' (Best), it rather constitutes the binding link connecting all living things. Its symbolical material representations are placed under guardianship. This is a view that can also be found in J.H. Mitchell's *Takitimu* (42-3), another classic of Maori anthropology to which Tiaki indeed alludes in more than one way. Mitchell's account of the voyage of the ancestral canoe of the Kai Tahu is not only pertinent here because *the bone people* situates its evocation of the material *mauri* in the context of tribal canoe traditions. Mitchell also records the case of a material *mauri* 'which controlled the whole of the East Coast' (43), thus presenting an interesting precedent for the *mauri* in Hulme's novel, which similarly transcends tribal boundaries. It is as if it was meant as a signpost to Mitchell's book that Tiaki Mira's name echoes that of the author of *Takitimu* as it appears on the title page of his book. There the author's name is

given as Tiaki Hikawera Mitira with the English form, J.H. Mitchell, added in brackets. The example of this reference is rather characteristic of Hulme's handling of intertextuality in *the bone people*.<sup>1</sup> Her text cannot be said to repress its intertextual grounds but rather highlights them in a way which does not thwart a reader's pleasure of discovery. What is more important is that a look at possible textual sources of Hulme's concept can actually help us to avoid misinterpreting the *mauri* in terms of a spirituality that revolves around the complacent worship of some salvific deity. Moreover, the recognition of the intertextual referents of the concept of the *mauri* does not invalidate the novel's Maoriness but rather reinforces the sense of a Maoriness as mediated by generations of verbal tradition, which is foregrounded in the story's emphasis on guardianship.

For the characters of Hulme's novel, the discovery of the *mauri* as the binding link connecting all living things does not entail a call to worship and patient waiting for salvation, but an imperative to assume responsibility for their environment as the source of their well-being. This responsibility is not primarily felt as a burden but comes as a relief, and this sense of relief, which pervades the last pages of *the bone people*, is in keeping with how James Ritchie evokes the effects of the principle of 'reciprocal unqualified caring' (75) which directs Maori attitudes to their resources.

When you act in terms of this anthropomorphic ethic there is a sense of intuitive rightness, of things coming together, of putahi, of emergent direction, of assurance, puta noa – release from the limitations of worry and concern. But there is also the requirement (...) to be constant in tuning into environmental messages. (87-8)

The discursive texture of *the bone people* shows its indebtedness to the connecting life force of the *mauri* in its attentiveness to pain and to details of human sentience. The sense of a connectedness of all living things is also powerfully evoked from the beginning by the novel's encompassing plot which relates the protagonists and shapes their lives in spite of their failures, and which lends them a dimension that exceeds their individuality. This is programmatically announced in the prologue:

They were nothing more than people, by themselves. [...] But altogether, they have become the heart and muscles and mind of something perilous and new, something strange and growing and great. (4)

Although Kerewin's voice and articulateness are foregrounded in the novel's discourse, Kerewin is not the central subjectivity of *the bone people*. The reader becomes aware of Joe's abuse of Simon long before Kerewin, and the novel's resistance to narrativizing violence amounts to an appeal to the reader's responsibility for the development of the narrative. The novel's enunciation

<sup>1</sup> Names in Hulme's novel often serve as pointers to discursive layers that mediate the apparently realistic reference of her text's verbal surface. In this case, this mediation is accentuated by the fact that the name Tiaki is redolent with connotations of guardianship (cf. Williams 1988: 414). Although its Maori form is given precedence on the title page, the name of the author of *Takitimu* is usually given in its English form in bibliographies.

thus enacts the process of a discursive production that is deeply invested in the facts of human embodiment. The sense of relief that emanates from assumed responsibility shows itself in the novel's capacity to evoke a Maoriness that exhilaratingly indulges in the verbal inventiveness which its intertextual foundation enables, without betraying its attentiveness to pain. This combination of responsibility and relief suggests that the extent to which *the bone people* inscribes itself into a nexus of material discursive production committed to the creative principle of the *mauri* is indeed greater than some of the novel's critics have assumed.

The appearance of these three novels around the middle of the eighties considerably extended the discursive range of Maori literature. In this, the major writers of the eighties can be seen to have stimulated a vigorous sense of new possibilities that has spurred on emerging writers throughout the last decade and has led to the flowering of Maori writing documented in the third volume of the new anthology, *Te Ao Marama*. In some ways, the commitment and success of writers like Grace, Hulme and Ihimaera has probably also improved the economic opportunities of aspiring Maori writers. This conclusion is at least suggested by the phenomenal success of Alan Duff's novel, *Once Were Warriors*, and its subsequent adaptation in Lee Tamahori's film. That a novel which presents a damning image of Maori society and articulates a rather assimilationist and individualist vision could become the basis for the collective production of a Maori film that was to be internationally successful, testifies to the extent to which Maori have recently succeeded in turning discursive production into a sustaining platform for cultural and economic development. In writing the screenplay for the adaptation of the novel, Riwia Brown in important respects has modified Duff's ideological vision. Still, both book and film over large parts draw the picture of a crippled and isolated Maori society and the redemptive sense of Maoriness that they achieve within the closure of their narratives may be questionable.<sup>1</sup> As articulations of performative spaces aiming to bring Maori discursive production into an enabling connection with contemporary cultural and economic processes, however, both Duff's book and Tamahori's film have achieved a moment of agency whose impact exceeds the expectations many might have entertained as little as ten years ago.

OTTO HEIM  
University of Zürich

<sup>1</sup> In Duff's novel, Maori culture, which is intrinsically – genetically – violent, only provides the forms for a ritualistic catharsis as a step toward emulation of the Pakeha. The film version, in contrast, endorses the project of a revitalization of tribal economies in a joint effort of the living generations, based on the *marae*. The ideological differences are most strikingly evoked in the endings of the two narratives: while Duff's book ends with a funeral scene and an explicitly sacrificial interpretation of violence that directs its readers' eyes heavenward, in Tamahori's film our perspective remains firmly on the ground, the camera focusing Jake standing alone on the parking lot of his favorite pub, while his family drives off out of the field of vision.

## References

- Alley, Elizabeth. 'Keri Hulme.' *In the Same Room: Conversations with New Zealand Writers*. Ed. Elizabeth Alley and Mark Williams. Auckland: Auckland UP, 1992. 141-56.
- Barlow, Cleve. *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Maori Culture*. Auckland: Oxford UP, 1993.
- Barlow, Hugh. 'Author Admits Copying from Historian's Work.' *Dominion* 27 Nov. 1989, 1.
- Beatson, Peter. *The Healing Tongue: Themes in Contemporary Maori Literature*. Palmerston North: Massey University, Sociology Dept, 1989.
- Best, Elsdon. *The Maori*. Wellington: Harry H. Tombs, 1924. 2 vols.
- Beston, John. 'Review of *Potiki* by Patricia Grace.' *Landfall* 40.4 (1986): 501-2.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency.' *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. 171-97.
- Binney, Judith. 'Maori Oral Narratives, Pakeha Written Texts: Two Forms of Telling History.' *New Zealand Journal of History* 21.1 (1987): 16-28.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley: U of CA P, 1984.
- Chow, Rey. *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.
- Dale, Judith. 'the bone people: (Not) Having It Both Ways.' *Landfall* 39.4 (1985): 413-28.
- Duff, Alan. *Once Were Warriors*. 1990. Auckland: Tandem, 1991.
- Edmond, Rod. 'No Country For Towers: Reconsidering the bone people.' *Landfall* 1.2 (1993): 277-90.
- Fee, Margery. 'Why C.K. Stead Didn't Like Keri Hulme's the bone people: Who Can Write as Other?' *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 1 (Spring 1989): 11-32.
- Firth, Raymond. *Economics of the New Zealand Maori*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1959.
- Gibbons, Peter. 'Non-Fiction.' *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*. Ed. Terry Sturm. Auckland: Oxford UP, 1991. 25-104.
- Grace, Patricia. *Waiariki and Other Stories*. 1975. Auckland: Penguin, 1988.
- . *The Dream Sleepers and Other Stories*. 1980. Auckland: Penguin, 1986.
- . *Potiki*. Auckland: Penguin, 1986.
- . *Electric City and Other Stories*. Auckland: Penguin, 1987.
- . *Cousins*. Auckland: Penguin, 1992.
- Greenland, Hauraki. 'Maori Ethnicity as Ideology.' *Nga Take: Ethnic Relations and Racism in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Ed. Paul Spoonley et al. Palmerston North: Dunmore P, 1991. 90-107.
- Grey, George. 1855. *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the New Zealanders as Furnished by Their Priests and Chiefs*. Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1929.
- Heim, Otto, and Anne Zimmermann. 'Hu(l)man Medi(t)ations: Inter-Cultural Explorations in Keri Hulme's *The Windeater/Te Kaihau*.' *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 8 (Dec. 1992): 106-35.
- Hulme, Keri. *the bone people*. 1984. Auckland: Spiral with Hodder and Stoughton, 1987.
- . *Te Kaihau / The Windeater*. Wellington: Victoria UP, 1986.
- Ihimaera, Witi. *The Matriarch*. 1986. Auckland: Pan Books, 1988.

- . 'The Matriarch: Discussion: University of Auckland, 18 July 1990.'
- , et al, ed. *Te Puawaitanga O Te Korero: The Flowering*. Auckland: Reed, 1993. Vol. 3 of *Te Ao Marama: Contemporary Maori Writing*.
- Johnston, Andrew. 'Matriarch Passages Copied - Historian.' *Dominion Sunday Times* 26 Nov. 1989, 1.
- Mackay, Joseph Angus. *Historic Poverty Bay and the East Coast, N. I., N. Z.* 2nd ed. Gisborne: J. G. Mackay, 1966.
- McRae, Jane. 'Patricia Grace.' *In the Same Room: Conversations with New Zealand Writers*. Ed. Elizabeth Alley and M. Williams. Auckland: Auckland UP, 1992. 285-96.
- Mishra, Vijay, and Bob Hodge. 'What Is Post(-)colonialism?' *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 276-90.
- Mitchell, J. H. *Takitimu*. Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1944.
- Peek, Andrew. 'An Interview with Keri Hulme.' *New Literatures Review* 20 (Winter 1990): 1-11.
- Ritchie, James. *Becoming Bicultural*. Wellington: Huia Publishers; Daphne Brasell Ass., 1992.
- Sharrad, Paul. 'Listening to One's Ancestors: An Interview with Witi Ihimaera.' *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 8 (Dec. 1992): 97-105.
- Tausky, Thomas E. "'Stories That Show Them Who They Are': An Interview with Patricia Grace." *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 6 (Fall 1991): 90-102.
- Te Rangikaheke, Wiremu Maihi. 'A Manuscript About Maori Knowledge, Its Retention and Transmission.' Trans., introd. & annot. Jenifer Curnow. *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 8 (Dec. 1992): 85-96.
- Webster, Steven. 'Structuralist Historicism and the History of Structuralism: Sahlins, the Hansons' *Counterpoint in Maori Culture*, and Postmodernist Ethnographic Form.' *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 96.1 (1987): 27-65.
- Williams, Herbert W. *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*. 7th ed. 1971. Wellington: Government Printer, 1988.
- Williams, Mark. 'Keri Hulme and Negative Capability.' *Leaving the Highway: Six Contemporary New Zealand Novelists*. Auckland: Auckland UP, 1990. 84-109.
- . 'Interview with Witi Ihimaera.' *Landfall* 45.3 (1991): 281-97.