MAKING MYTH, MAKING NATION: MĀORI SYMBOLS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF BICULTURAL IDENTITY IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata, ko te pae tata whakamāua kia tīna.
Seek the distant horizons, and those that you attain, treasure them.

The completion of this master’s thesis symbolizes a distant horizon that I have finally reached. I feel as though I have been paddling toward it my whole life, albeit I have taken a few lengthy detours. Now, the prevailing currents have brought me to rest on this new shore. But, while destinations may be satisfying to reach, they are most keenly marked by the journey that precedes them. It is the journey—not the destination—that shapes us, that defines who we are. Therefore, although this thesis is an accomplishment I will most certainly treasure, it would not have been possible without the many people who have nurtured me, cheered me on, and encouraged me during the incredibly satisfying times when I felt I was making positive progress toward my goal, and at other times when it seemed as though I was stuck in the intellectual doldrums. As many will attest, the research-writing journey is a solitary one. The scholar is often alone in a room with his or her thoughts and a blank page waiting to be filled. But, as I reflect on my own academic voyage, I see that I was in fact not alone. Rather, an entire crew was paddling behind me, their strokes synchronized with mine, helping propel this vessel—this thesis—toward that far off horizon.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis critically analyzes how Māori cultural symbols are utilized in the contemporary period as a means of constructing bicultural identity in Aotearoa New Zealand through modes of representation found in everyday, civic life. To provide a focus for this project, I consider the deployment of one symbol in particular: the koru. I also investigate the mobilization of Māori symbols, specifically the marae, in a single exhibition space—Te Marae—located in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. As this thesis shows, recent (and, indeed, past) developments in Aotearoa New Zealand call into question the legitimacy of biculturalism as a policy that is capable of rendering Māori as equal partners with Pākehā. To this end, I consider not only the efficacy of Māori cultural symbols to carry the message of biculturalism to the nation, but as well the possible role they play in concealing the socioeconomic and political disparities that continue to exist between Māori and Pākehā. What emerges from this project are all the complexities, ruptures, and contestations that mark a nation in the process of becoming and the plight of two peoples who struggle to locate a common ground on which they might both stand kāhohi ki te kānohi—face to face.
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The year 2001 marked a significant turning point in my life. I got married, left my career of eleven years in the television broadcasting industry, and moved from my New Zealand homeland to my husband’s in Hawai’i. All of these exciting and dramatic changes took place within the short space of six months. Three months after my arrival in Hawai’i, at the age of thirty-one, I began another journey, this time into the world of academia. Now, eight years later I find myself embarking on yet another sojourn, a master’s thesis, which has returned me to the place from whence my journey began—home.

I consider myself to in many ways embody the research project I have undertaken; that is, I am the product of a bicultural union—my father is Māori and my mother is Pākehā. Further, as much as anyone else in Aotearoa, I too have been conditioned to think of home as a bicultural haven, as “Godzone,” as “one big happy family.” Like so many other New Zealanders, I have happily consumed notions of a bicultural New Zealand by purchasing tiki-bearing tea towels and wearing koru covered jandals (slippers in Hawai’i). Indeed, I have been drawn into the grand myth of biculturalism as much as any other “Kiwi” through the prominent display of Māori symbols in everyday New Zealand life. However, the distance between home and Hawai’i has enabled me to see things through a much clearer lens—one that has brought the signs and symbols with which this thesis is concerned and the accompanying ideology of biculturalism into sharper

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1 Henceforth I use New Zealand, Aotearoa, Aotearoa New Zealand interchangeably
focus. In one sense, then, my view from afar has enabled me to see things more critically and with greater clarity. Taking a position as an outsider—one who is distanced both geographically and conceptually—has allowed me to recognize the underlying mechanisms that lead New Zealanders to think of themselves as members of a bicultural nation, despite the glaring flaws present in the bicultural model.

Conversely, my insider status means that I can draw on my own experience as a member of the group that is being researched; while on the one hand I am examining the process, I am also inextricably tied to it. I am tied to the process in ways other than being a “Kiwi”—while I acknowledge my Pākehā ancestry, I identify myself as Māori. In her groundbreaking work titled *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), Linda Tuhiwai Smith considered the many ways research has been used as a tool to colonize and oppress indigenous people in general, and Māori in particular. Significantly, Smith highlights the importance of indigenous researchers taking control of the research process. As she so powerfully states: “When indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is complete” (193). It is my hope that as a Māori researcher, I can make a critical contribution to ensuring that “activity of research” is rendered more complete, more whole.

In “Doing Ethnography in One’s Own Ethnic Community,” Val Colic-Peisker uses the term cultural “halfie” to describe her status when working with migrant Croatians in Australia. “Halfie,” she contends, refers to an individual who is “part of the researched group and simultaneously distanced from it” (Colic-Peisker 2004, 94). It is this position, she asserts, that enabled her to turn “fieldwork” into “homework” (a term Pacific Islander scholar Katerina Teaiwa uses in her own multi-sited ethnographic work). Thus, in my research I take the position of a cultural “halfie,” the simple reason being that I believe it adequately describes not only my insider/outsider status, but as well denotes my own feelings of being suspended halfway between

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2 The term “halfie” as used here is not to be confused with the term “half caste,” which has been used in New Zealand as a term of derogation to describe individuals of Māori/Pākehā ancestry.
two cultures and homes—Māori-Pākehā and Aotearoa-Hawai‘i. Thus, it is as a Māori-Kiwi existing within what is for all intents and purposes a negotiable, half-in-half-out space that I locate myself within the narrative of this thesis.
INTRODUCTION

A symbol, once in being, spreads among the people. In use and in experience, its meaning grows (Charles Peirce in Hauser and others 1992, 10)

... how is it that no attempt has been made to adopt the ‘root patterns’ of Maori decorative art to the needs and requirements of every-day colonial life, so that instead of destroying and rooting out a unique and highly-developed form of ornament, the special product of our beautiful country, it might be taken up and become a national characteristic (Hamilton 1929, 71)

* * * *

Ngā Tohu o Te Motu—Symbols of the Nation

In 2007 I returned home to New Zealand after a three-year absence. As the Air New Zealand flight descended through the thick, slate-grey clouds of a New Zealand winter, I was able to begin making out the landmarks of Auckland city—landmarks that had become so familiar to me during the twelve years I had lived there: the gentle slopes of Maungawhau2 with its plunging, long-dormant volcanic crater, and the ancient Māori1 agricultural terraces of Maungakiekie,4 which, from the air, seemed to ripple out and disappear into the verdant-green of the surrounding area. Despite the fact that my own ancestral lands lay several hundreds of kilometers to the south, these landmarks signified for me the soil in which my roots were securely anchored: the fertile earth of the wider homeland—New Zealand. But, if familiar landmarks as seen from the air served as a salient reminder that I was home, once on the ground I was confronted by other signs of New Zealand.

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2 An inactive volcano located in the Mount Eden suburb of Auckland. Maungawhau literally means “mountain of the whau tree.” It is more commonly referred to as Mount Eden.

3 The indigenous people of New Zealand. I should point out here that the term Māori has only been in use as recently as the 1840s. Previous to European contact, Māori collective identity was based on hapū (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribal) affiliations. While this is still the case, the term Māori conceals these specific connections, bringing disparate and separate collectivities under a single ethnic identity. For the purpose of this thesis, I use “Māori” to refer to the indigenous people of New Zealand with the understanding that it does not reflect the diversity between the various hapū and iwi or the complex ways by which Māori identify themselves.

4 An inactive volcano located in the One Tree Hill suburb of Auckland. Maungakiekie literally means “mountain of the kiekie vine.” It is also referred to as One Tree Hill.
Zealand—signs that although specific to Māori culture, nevertheless appeared to be hailing a much wider constituency.

On entering the international arrivals section of Auckland airport, I encountered a sign that read, “Haere mai—Welcome.” A few steps further and I found myself passing underneath an elaborately carved waharoa (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Waharoa. Auckland International Airport. Photo by Marata Tamaira

Although in Māori culture the traditional function of the waharoa is to provide tangata whenua\(^5\) and manuhiri\(^6\) with an entranceway to the marae,\(^7\) in the context of the airport terminal its cultural meaning had been transformed to instead serve as a gateway to the nation. The trek toward customs was marked by a veritable display of larger than life photographs installed on the airport.

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\(^5\) People belonging to the land; indigenous people. Synonymous with “Māori”

\(^6\) Visitors

\(^7\) Used to refer to the space directly in front of the meeting house, but as well it denotes the complex of buildings that make up a marae (including the meeting house, dining hall etc)
walls, all of them depicting scenes of New Zealand’s unique natural and cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{8} Such images included a tui,\textsuperscript{9} a rimu tree, an unfurling fern frond, a weta,\textsuperscript{10} and many other examples of the country’s flora and fauna. Significantly, many of the photographs featured elements specific to Māori heritage and identity, such as a kete (woven bag), a tekoteko (gable finial), a pounamu (jade pendant), a carved hoe (paddle), and a matau (fishhook). The natural and cultural ambience was amplified by the recorded sounds of forest birds, which were interspersed with the haunting strain of the kōauau, a traditional Māori nose flute. As I moved through this auditory and visual briccolage of nature and culture, I recall being struck by the veraciousness with which Māori symbols were being used to cement an idea of New Zealand in the minds of visitors and returning natives alike. Indeed, in considering Harold Hamilton’s call for the adoption of Māori symbols so that they might “become a national characteristic” (cited in the second of the two epigrams that precede this chapter), after walking through the Auckland terminal, one might well have concluded that his plaintive request had been answered.

I would like to point out, however, that Hamilton’s assertion that there had been no substantive attempt to incorporate Māori cultural symbols into “every-day colonial life” was not entirely accurate. At the time of his writing in 1929, the utilization of Māori culture and symbols to forge and sustain a sense of identity for New Zealand settlers was in full swing, appearing on stamps,\textsuperscript{11} crockery, and state architecture. In writing about early uses of Māori culture by European migrants, historian Jock Phillips noted that, “Māori offered [settler] New Zealanders an instant tradition, a ready-made ‘home in thought’” (2003, 170). The formation of this “home in thought” through the use of Māori symbols was particularly evident during the New Zealand

\textsuperscript{8} Go to http://auckland-airport.co.nz/Expansion/journey.php to view the full array of images
\textsuperscript{9} A bird native to New Zealand, the tui is also referred to as the bellbird (Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae)
\textsuperscript{10} An insect belonging to the order Orthoptera, the weta is related to crickets, grasshoppers, and locusts
\textsuperscript{11} Stamps bearing Māori motifs were in circulation from as early as 1896 (see the notes section in Pound 1994, p192 for a more detailed discussion)
International Exhibition,\textsuperscript{12} which was held in the South Island township of Christchurch between 1906 and 1907.

First proposed during the opening of Parliament in 1903 by New Zealand Premier Richard John Seddon, the New Zealand International Exhibition was to be “an outward andvisible sign to the world of the colony’s progress” (Cowan 1910, 25). A critical feature of the exhibition was the showcasing of indigenous culture and symbols through various sites of display. One such site included Āraiteuru, a replica Māori village (pā) that was constructed on the exhibition grounds. Here, Māori from various parts of New Zealand participated in the exhibition, performing cultural activities such as welcoming visiting dignitaries onto the marae (named Ōhinemutu) with pōwhiri\textsuperscript{13} and haka\textsuperscript{14} displays. James Cowan, an early ethnographer of Māori culture and the author of the official record for the New Zealand exhibition described the activities in the inner sanctum of the pā,

\begin{quote}
Within there were glimpses of reed-thatched houses and red-painted carvings and wooden effigies, some grasping weapons of the Maori, all with their shell-made eyes glaring fiercely outwards over the walls—a ‘gorgon-eyed and grinning demonry.’ Smoke curled up in the inner pa from the women’s cooking-ovens—the stone-heated hangi. The sound of song and dance was in the air, the chatter of a little Maori community, the lilt of the poi-girls at their re-hearsals [sic], the men at their hakas; a scene instinct with challenge to the imagination of the stranger (Cowan 1910, 312; author’s italics).
\end{quote}

Other conspicuous features of Māori life and culture that were displayed in the pā included a waharoa (Fig. 2)—an impressive gateway to Āraiteuru. Carved by Lake Rotoiti craftsman Neke Kapua and his sons specifically for the exhibition, the waharoa stood like a giant sentinel at the pā’s entrance, ushering visitors into the village complex (Cowan 1910).\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] Also referred to as the Christchurch International Exhibition
\item[13] Ceremonial welcome onto the marae
\item[14] Ceremonial posture dance
\item[15] Neke Kapua’s waharoa is currently displayed on level 2 of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa
\end{footnotes}
Outside the pā, Māori water vessels—including Tāheretikitiki, a war canoe (waka tauā) from the Waikato region—entertained visitors by gliding back and forth across the exhibition’s artificial lake, Lake Victoria. However, nowhere was such an appropriation of Māori culture and symbols most effectively and self-consciously deployed at the exhibition than during the opening ceremony, where a sign inscribed with the Māori words of welcome—“Haere Mai”—was suspended at the main entranceway. As Cowan observed,

‘Haere Mai!’ in letters of fire that blazed out afar by night and shone in a glitter of gold by day welcomed one to the big Fair. The Maori’s cry of greeting has long ago been adopted into the white New Zealander’s tongue, and it came as a pleasant and poetic invitation—one that savoured of the soil—to see the words blazoned on high over the main entrance-way of the Exhibition. (1910, 72)

Symbols of Māori culture were extended to other sites of representation during the exhibition.

Over 3 million postage stamps commemorating the event were issued throughout New Zealand as
well as abroad (Cowan 1910, 92), a great number of them depicting scenes of Māori cultural life and bearing the logoized form of the koru (curvilinear design) and various tāniko\textsuperscript{16} motifs.

Although the New Zealand International Exhibition was by no means the first occasion during which Māori symbols were used to represent New Zealand in the public sphere of the exhibition space,\textsuperscript{17} it nevertheless revealed a growing recognition on the part of settlers of the significant role Māori and their cultural symbols could play in the shaping and moulding of a unique New Zealand identity. Indeed, the need to formulate a more defined and official sense of New Zealand-ness became particularly important when, in 1907—the same year that marked the closing of the exhibition—the country made its first tentative steps towards nationhood in its shift from British colony to dominion.\textsuperscript{18} In the intervening one hundred or so years, Māori have remained an intrinsic part of the nation-making project, supplying a portmanteau of indigenous symbols through which to imagine the wider New Zealand.

This thesis critically analyzes how Māori cultural symbols are used in the contemporary period as a means of constructing national identity in New Zealand through modes of representation found in everyday, civic life. Elements of Māori culture—including, but not limited to the heitiki,\textsuperscript{19} the koru, and the haka—have gained tremendous currency as visual elements in the formation and representation of the nation. Drawing from Bill Renwick’s analysis of Māori museum objects, Māori cultural symbols have come to serve as “emblems of [national] identity” (cited in McCarthy 2007, 136), appearing in a myriad of contexts, including the sports field (where the haka is performed by the All Blacks), as motifs on commodities such

\textsuperscript{16} geometric designs formed through a process of weaving
\textsuperscript{17} For a useful discussion of earlier exhibitions in which Māori culture and symbols featured prominently, see chapter one in McCarthy 2007, pp.13–60
\textsuperscript{18} By adopting dominion status, New Zealand gained greater autonomy over its affairs, albeit that it was still answerable to the British Crown. As Giselle Byrnes argues, the shift from colony to dominion was “largely semantic and did not usher in any real transformation” (Byrnes 2007, unpaginated)
\textsuperscript{19} Adornment (usually made of greenstone or bone) worn around the neck
as clothing apparel, teacups and saucers, tea towels (Fig. 3), wine bottle labels (Fig. 4), tote bags (Fig. 5), stamps, and coinage, and as corporate designs, of which the Air New Zealand koru motif is the most prominent. Put simply, the national terrain is indelibly inscribed with the indigenous symbols of Māori culture. For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus on one symbol in particular—the koru.

In discussing the utilization of Māori symbols in nationalist discourse, I focus on a particular manifestation of New Zealand nationalism: biculturalism. Rooted in the political dynamics of the 1970s, biculturalism was viewed as a template for improving race relations between Māori and Pākehā and conferring on Māori their rights to self-determination. However, the passing of the Foreshore and Seabed Act in 2004, which effectively stripped Māori of their customary title to foreshore and seabed resources, and a 2006 report by the special

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20 Photos by author
21 New Zealanders of European descent. Although in earlier years “Pākehā” was considered by many settler descendents to be a denigrating term (many believed it meant “White Pig” or “Whitebait”—the latter being a juvenile freshwater fish). However, today many settler descendents are proud to refer to themselves as Pākehā. As well-known historian Judith Binney stated in a 2005 interview with the New Zealand Herald, “I think it is the most simple and practical term. It is a name given to us by Maori. It has no pejorative associations like people think it does—it’s a descriptive term. I think it’s nice to have a name the people who live here gave you, because that’s what I am” (New Zealand Herald Online, 2009). (I should point out here that while the term Pākehā is no longer viewed by settlers as derisive, we should not dismiss the fact that being Pākehā—that is, a descendent of colonial settlers—remains a problematic issue vis-à-vis Māori claims for equality and justice)
rapporteur to the United Nations, who cited evidence of continued inequality between Māori and Pākehā, calls into question the legitimacy of biculturalism as a political model that is capable of forging an equal partnership between the two peoples. Indeed, biculturalism in New Zealand might be considered more myth than reality. Commenting on the use of Māori cultural symbols to design a bicultural New Zealand identity, art curator Anna Miles observed that,

"Today, to turn the pages of the New Zealand Government Directory is to encounter an entire visual language based on the combination of Māori and modern design elements... A profusion of corporate korus, derived from kowhaiwhai (rafter panels found in traditional Māori meeting houses) or tukutuku (woven panels), have drawn on the symbolism of weaving and of growth to become the iconography of the extraordinary marriage of biculturalism and New Right ideology in contemporary New Zealand. (1999, 78)"

Significant is Miles’ observation that while the inclusion of indigenous symbols on corporate and governmental logos implies a fidelity to the stated aim of biculturalism—that is, to render Māori equal and autonomous partners with their Pākehā counterparts—in reality the policies that are being pursued are based on their “social and economic exclusion” (Miles 1999, 78). To this end, I consider not only the efficacy of Māori cultural symbols to carry the message of biculturalism to the nation, but as well the possible role they play in concealing the socioeconomic and political disparities that continue to exist between Māori and Pākehā. Here, I draw attention to the paradoxical nature of Māori symbols, which in one sense function to affirm indigenous culture by making it more visible to the nation, while in another sense render invisible the sustained marginalization of the people. To help make sense of this complex phenomenon, I consider Antonio Gramsci’s critical reading of hegemony as a process whereby the dominant group (in the case of New Zealand, Pākehā) holds sway over subaltern subjectivities (i.e., Māori) by soliciting their consent (this in contrast to using naked force) through a series of what I refer to as “strategic sacrifices” (Gramsci in Hoare and Smith 2007). Using concessions (read strategic sacrifices) as the carrot, the hegemonic collective is able to lead the subordinate group to and then envelope it within an ideological framework that appears natural, commonsensical; this, despite the niggling contradictions. This is how power gains and maintains its foothold: it creates the
illusion of equality. As I argue, biculturalism while on the surface seeming to work positively for Māori, in fact preserves the status quo of Pākehā hegemony and undercuts Māori of the real power they seek.

Nowhere is the effort to define and shape national identity more prominent than at the locus of the museum. As Claudia Bell has stated so succinctly, “Through the museum the nation is implicitly and explicitly articulated” (Bell cited in Gore 2002, 17). Thus, while the first part of this thesis constitutes an inventory of sorts, whereby I explore the various ways Māori symbols are harnessed, reconstituted, and deployed in popular culture to articulate New Zealand’s bicultural status, the second part focuses on their mobilization in the civic institution of the museum—specifically the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Envisioned as a forum for the nation, Te Papa Tongarewa constitutes New Zealand’s first fully-fledged bicultural museum, which involves the inclusion of Māori at all levels of its operations as well as the incorporation of Māori cultural symbols within its walls. In this thesis I focus on one of the museum’s permanent exhibitions—Te Marae—to reveal how Māori objects, read here as cultural symbols, are used to construct bicultural identity.

As I will argue, Te Papa’s bicultural focus necessarily distinguishes it as a space of disjuncture and contradiction. On the one hand, by upholding the rhetoric of biculturalism, Te Papa may be seen to be supporting Pākehā hegemony in New Zealand in so far as it cloaks the socioeconomic and political disadvantages that confront Māori in the contemporary period. On the other hand, by enacting bicultural policies within its own institutional framework—such as the hiring of Māori to fill curatorial and managerial roles and the incorporation of indigenous values and perspectives in the development of exhibitions—the museum necessarily affirms and strengthens the position of Māori. Indeed, as this thesis shows, Māori museum professionals are actively making their own claims on the public space of the museum in order to ensure the proper representation of their cultural objects and symbols. Although he was referring to the space of
the art gallery, Māori scholar and artist Robert Jahnke’s words seem appropriate in this instance: “It is in the capture of site that Maori cultural representation finds its most provocative presence” (1999, 199). Using the exhibition space of Te Marae as a case study, then, I consider the varying degrees by which Māori professionals are able to capture the site of the museum to bring a level of empowerment to Māori. Inversely, I also investigate how the museum carries out its own form of capture by pressing the Māori objects in its holdings into service as icons of a bicultural nation, or, to borrow from museum and cultural studies theorist Tony Bennett, as “instrument[s] of nationing” (Bennett 1995, 150).

Although this thesis highlights the inherent flaws of biculturalism in New Zealand (such as the continued inequality between Pākehā and Māori), I by no means seek to cast Māori as victims of Pākehā paternalism. Indeed, while on the one hand Māori cultural materials are pressed into service for use in the construction of a larger national narrative i.e., the bicultural narrative, on the other hand Māori agents actively maneuver themselves with and against unequal systems of state power to enact their own counter-hegemonic plight. In Gramscian terms, such maneuverings constitute a “war of position,” a pragmatic form of engagement whereby agents (in this case, indigenous agents) use existing power structures to forward their own agendas (Gramsci in Hoare and Smith 2007, 238–239). It is a process that is not without risk, however: in attempting to affirm their culture by actively allowing for their symbols to be deployed within the national context, Māori at times inadvertently find themselves co-opted by the interests of the dominant group. Still, what I want to underscore here is the fact that Māori, far from being passive bystanders in the deployment and interpretation of their cultural materials, actively negotiate their way around existing systems of power in Aotearoa New Zealand. Historically speaking, Māori have demonstrated a tremendous degree of agency insofar as the use of their culture and symbols for national purposes is concerned. While on the one hand such agency implies a certain tacit consent on the part of Māori to the cooption of their cultural materials into national life, on the other it reveals that for many Māori the deployment of their symbols in the
national context equated to an elevation of their mana (power/prestige). Here, I would like to
return briefly to the 1906–1907 New Zealand Exhibition discussed at the beginning of this
chapter.

A cursory glance through Te Pipiwharauroa—a Māori language periodical published in
Gisborne, New Zealand during the 1900s—reveals an enthusiastic Māori response to the
inclusion of their culture and symbols as part of the exhibition. For instance, in a letter dated
February 1906, T Harapata exhorted his fellow Māori to loan out their heirlooms so that they
could be displayed in the upcoming exhibition:

Kāti, e hoa mā, kei ētahi ō koutou ngā taonga a ō tātou tupuna e pupuri ana, me
																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																											
to the

So, my friends, if some of you are in possession of the treasures of our tupuna,
send them there [to the exhibition] to be gazed upon by the peoples of the world.

. . . Bring your Māori treasures to this exhibition. (cited in Thomson 1998, 144–145)

A year later, Tīmi Wāta Rimini expressed his delight at the government’s decision to include the
Te Arawa waka (canoe) on a commemorative postage stamp:

. . . kua hōmai e te Kāwanatanga he honore nui ki a Te Arawa: kua waiho ko Te

Arawa waka hei pane-kuini ināianei. Utaina katoatia ā koutou reta ki runga i a
Te Arawa, māna e hari ki ngā pito e whā o te ao.

The government has bestowed a great honour upon Te Arawa: it has been
arranged that Te Arawa waka should now be a postage stamp. Place all your
letters on board Te Arawa, and it will carry them to the four ends of the earth!”

While it should by no means be assumed that all Māori viewed the nationalization of their
symbols in such favorable terms, the letters nevertheless reveal the fervent desire of many to see
their culture and symbols made more visible on the national terrain (and, as implied in Tīmi

22 Named after the Shining Cuckoo, a migratory bird found in New Zealand as well as other parts of the Pacific
Rimini's letter, in the international arena). For the two Māori correspondents cited above, the deployment of their symbols brought honor and prestige. It is the goal of this thesis, then, to flesh out the complicated ways by which Māori in the contemporary period negotiate the deployment of their symbols and the pivotal role they play in constructing and deconstructing notions of the nation.

Despite the fact that Māori symbols are a ubiquitous feature in New Zealand, critical analysis regarding their significance in the construction of bicultural identity is still a growing field of enquiry. This thesis attempts to add to the scholarship that has already been done as well as provide a firm foundation for subsequent investigations to be made into the deployment of indigenous symbols for nation-making purposes in other parts of the Pacific. From a methodological standpoint, this thesis draws on an eclectic array of resources, including primary documents, journal and news articles, and a qualitative study comprised of interviews with museum professionals and museum visitors. From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that this thesis draws from a very small sample group of museum visitors (six in all). While such views should not be taken as being representative of the wider New Zealand population, they nevertheless offer a meaningful impression of individual responses to the museum. In terms of its theoretical orientation, the work of Roland Barthes provides a strong basis from which to analyze how Māori signs and symbols—viewed here as elements within a larger national discourse—are ensnared and pressed into service to secure the myth of biculturalism.

Significantly, I describe biculturalism as a myth, since rather than rendering Māori as equal partners with Pākehā, ultimate power and authority in New Zealand remains "firmly under Crown control" (Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 240). It is this fictional aspect of biculturalism that I seek to uncover. Barthes states that, "Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (Barthes 1972, 143; emphasis added). In a critical way then, myth, insofar as
Barthes is concerned, cleanses a thing of its most dubious traits, turning it into an unquestionable and undeniable fact. To articulate Barthes' ideas with my own research, the appearance of Māori iconography in such venues as, say, the museum and as commodities of popular culture, may be viewed as an attempt to legitimize the ideology of biculturalism and make innocent those aspects of it that are most troubling.

It seems pertinent to provide here a brief "road map" for the thesis. "Making Myth, Making Nation" comprises four chapters. In chapter 1, "Peopling," I trace Aotearoa New Zealand's history of human settlement, beginning first with the arrival of Polynesian migrants and, later, the arrival and subsequent settlement of Europeans. Here I draw attention to the cultural entanglements between both sets of migrants—entanglements that are at once characterized by mistranslations and meaningful points of connection. In chapter 2, "Colonizing," I reveal the changing relations between Māori and Europeans as power dynamics shift and Europeans emerge as the dominant group. At the heart of this chapter lies the Treaty of Waitangi, a document that while binding Māori and Pākehā together simultaneously worked to wrench them apart. Here, I also consider the conditions under which New Zealand's current political model—biculturalism—was established and the degree to which it affords (or does not afford) Māori a greater level of equality with Pākehā.

In chapter 3, "Symbolizing," I explore the world of Māori symbols as they are transferred from their indigenous milieu into the national domain. In this section I focus primarily on the deployment of the koru: its use in the design of a new national flag and as the principle symbol of Air New Zealand. In chapter 4, "Museumizing," I investigate the use of Māori symbols—in particular the marae—in the permanent exhibition space of Te Marae, located at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. As I reveal, while on the one hand Te Papa Tongarewa might be seen to be eliminating the contradictory nature of biculturalism in New Zealand, on the other it offers Māori a critical space in which to exercise their mana and make tangible inroads toward
indigenous empowerment. Importantly, in this section I draw on the perspectives of museum professionals and visitors.

Over the last several years New Zealanders have begun referring to New Zealand as Aotearoa/New Zealand. Here, the Māori vernacular name Aotearoa, meaning “Land of the Long White Cloud” has been fused with Nova Zeelandia (New Zealand in Anglofied form), the Dutch vernacular name meaning “New Sealand” to imply the bicultural relationship between Māori and Pākehā. It is within this hyphenated space—this space between a metaphorical land and sea as expressed in the names given by Māori and Pākehā to their shared homeland—that the two peoples intersect. It is not only a space marked by contestation and tension, but as well, it is a negotiable space where identity is formed and where a nation is imagined. Somewhere in between that dynamic wedge exist the cultural symbols and motifs of Māori culture, which, after undergoing their own transformation, emerge as referents imbued with new meaning, as ngā tohu o te motu—symbols of the nation.
Figure 6. Culture Areas of the Pacific. *Courtesy of Manoa Mapworks*
Maori Tribal Locations
circa 1870
New Zealand’s North Island

Figure 7a. Maori Tribal Locations (North Island). Courtesy of Manoa Mapworks
Figure 7b. Maori Tribal Locations (South Island). Courtesy of Manoa Mapworks
CHAPTER 1: PEOPLING

Genesis
Always, in these islands, meeting and parting/Shake us, making tremulous the salt-rimmed air
(Charles Brasch, “In these Islands” in Curnow 1945, 47)

This chapter considers the peopling of Aotearoa. It explores the arrival and subsequent
settlement of early Polynesian migrants on New Zealand’s shores, and as well considers the
eventual entanglements that transpired between Māori and Europeans as they encountered one
another, sometimes in ways that were mutually beneficial, at other times in ways that were
violent. Such intercultural encounters—characterized as they were by misunderstandings and
mistranslations as each side sought to communicate with the other—became the basis on which a
nation would eventually be built, and which in the contemporary period continue to play out in
Māori-Pākehā relations. Before discussing the peopling of the country, however, it is important
to first consider the genesis of the land itself. After all, how can there be a peopling of place
without the ground on which to settle and multiply?

In Māori mythology, before there was land or people, beast or plant, there was the Void,
the endless expansion of empty space—Te Kore (Walker 1990). Although Te Kore represented a
state of nothingness, it nevertheless held within its inky black domain the dynamic potential for
life. It is within this primeval space that Te Pō nui, the Great Night, emerged. Te Pō nui was the
result of the union between Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), who, being
so much in love, had locked themselves together in a tight embrace. Pressed together as they were
for so many aeons, no light could enter between them, nor could their many children move about freely.\(^{23}\)

In an effort to liberate themselves from the stifling crush of their parents’ bodies, the children of Rangi and Papa devised a plan of action: they would separate them by force. Tānemahuta—the god of the forest—initiated the scheme by setting up giant tree trunks to push the pair apart.\(^{24}\) To expedite the mission, Tānemahuta chanted,

\[
\begin{align*}
E \text{ iki, e iki e!} \\
Te \text{ turou o Whiti} \\
Hiki nuku e! \\
Hiki rangi e! \\
Hiki nuku e! \\
Hiki rangi e! \\
Ha-ha! \\
Ka hikitia tons uri! \\
Ka hapai tona uri! \\
I-a-ia! \\
I-aia!\(^{25}\)
\end{align*}
\]

As the huge columns of wood were brought upright, a terrible moan of grief issued forth as sky and earth were separated from one another. Rangi ascended into the heavens, and as he did so the first light appeared—Te Awatea—“suffusing all things, dazzling, bringing wonderful life to all the Earth, filling the vasts of space” (Pomare and Cowan 1987, 7). The sun (Tama-nui-te-Rā), the moon (Mārama), and the constellation of stars (ngā whiti) took their place in the heavens with Rangi, while a mantle of verdant green spread out over Papa’s prone body. This, according to Māori lore, is how the world of light—Te Ao Mārama—came into being.

In the world of light, the land began to take shape. While Western science contends that the formation of New Zealand began when it sheared away from the super-continent of

\(^{23}\) Ranginui and Papatūānuku had several children, the central ones being Tānemahuta, Tangaroa, Tawhirimatea, Tumatauenga, Haumiatiketike, and Rongomatane (see Walker 1990; Pomare and Cowan 1987; Roberts and others 2004).

\(^{24}\) Some narratives assert that Tānemahuta pushed the pair apart with his shoulders (for instance, see Walker 1990).

\(^{25}\) From Legends of the Maori Pomare and Cowan 1987, 4
Gondwanaland during the Cretaceous period around 80 million years ago (Belich 1996, 40), in the Māori worldview its existence is not the result of powerful tectonic forces, but rather the daring feat of one man—Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga (Maui, the topknot of Taranga) (see Pomare and Cowan 1987, 15). Widely celebrated as a culture hero throughout Polynesia, according to Māori lore, after acquiring his kuia26 Murirangawhenua’s jawbone, Maui set out on a fishing expedition with his brothers. Jealous of their younger sibling, the brothers refused to share their bait with him. Ever the innovator, Maui punched himself in the nose causing it to bleed. Using Murirangawhenua’s jawbone as a fishhook, he smeared his own blood over it as bait and threw it over the side of the boat. It was not long before a giant fish bit down on the hook. Maui pulled at the line with all his might as the creature writhed and twisted its way to the surface. As Maui’s magnificent catch died, it transformed into the North Island of New Zealand (Te-Ika-a-Maui—The Great Fish of Maui), while Maui’s canoe became the South Island (Te-Waka-a-Maui—The Canoe of Maui), and the canoe’s anchor became Stewart Island (Te-Punga-a-Maui—The Anchor of Maui) (Belich 1996, 40; Hohepa 1999, 187).

The aeons passed and the land became cloaked with life. Vegetation sprouted up through the fertile soil, and all manner of beast and insect, bird, and lizard populated the forests, deserts, and towering mountains. The land was filled with a multitude of sounds: the lyrical chatter of birds in the forest, the surging waves as they crashed on windswept beaches, and the constant draw and exhalation of Tawhirimatea’s27 breath as he roamed the rugged landscape. But a new sound would soon come: the sound of human voices chanting their way across the ocean; the sound of many vessels being hauled onto dry land; and the sound of newborn infants crying as the new colonists began to settle and multiply. Thus, it was that New Zealand’s first human settlers arrived.

26 Female ancestor
27 Tawhirimatea is the god of wind and rains (See Roberts and others 2004, 4)
Settlement

Ka u ki Matanuku
Ka u ki Matarangi
Ka u ki tenei whenua
Hei whenua.
Mau e kai te Manawa o tauhou

I arrive where unknown earth is under my feet,
I arrive where a new sky is above me;
I arrive at this land, a resting-place for me,
O Spirit of Earth! The stranger humbly offers his
heart as food for thee?

The first settlers to reach New Zealand did so in large double-hulled canoes (Kirch 2000). They were Polynesians, whose early ancestors, it is widely contended, hailed from Southeast Asia, possibly as far way as Taiwan (Kirch 2000, 91). Carried by favorable winds across a tempestuous ocean and using navigational skills derived from their voyaging predecessors, these Polynesian juggernauts settled first the high-islands and atolls of what is today known as the “Polynesian Triangle” (see Fig. 6), and then broadened their reach to its southern-most tip, the large landmass of New Zealand. Although there has been considerable debate regarding when precisely the first colonists made first landfall in New Zealand, recent archaeological research points to a date some time between AD 1280–AD 1300 (see Anderson 1991).

One of the earliest travelers to locate New Zealand, according to some Māori oral traditions, was Kupe, the legendary explorer from Hawaiki (Walker 1990, 34–37). Legend has it

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28 A chant recited by Ngatoroirangi, a powerful tohunga (priest/expert) of Te Arawa, one of many seagoing vessels that carried Polynesian colonists to New Zealand in the period before European contact. According to John Te Heuheu Grace, “Ngatoroirangi recited his invocations to establish the people’s gods in their new home” (see Grace 2002, 48)

29 These early voyagers are popularly referred to as the Lapita peoples. They are most widely known for the dentate-stamped, incised pottery they made, which appears in the archaeological record from the Bismarck Archipelago in Melanesia to Sāmoa and Tonga (see Kirch 2000)

30 Settlement dates for New Zealand, as with other parts of the Pacific, from the 1950s to 1970s tended to be earlier rather than later. In the case of New Zealand, AD 200 became the standard date of settlement (Belich 1996, 28). However, current-day archaeological research points to a much later date. The later date cited in this paper was recently supported by new archaeological data derived from Polynesian rat (Rattus exulans) bones. For more, go to: http://www.sciencealert.com.au/news/20080406-17433.html
that when Kupe’s wife Hineiteaparangi first caught sight of the coast, she saw a large cloud hovering over the land. She immediately exclaimed: “He ao! he ao!” (A cloud! A cloud!). Thus, it is from this utterance that the name Aotearoa derives: Land of the Long White Cloud (Evans 1998). Kupe did not stay long in the new land, however. After naming several landmarks on both the North and South Islands (for example, Whangaroa, Kapiti, and Mana), he and his traveling companions returned to Hawaiki.

But others followed in Kupe’s wake. Leaving behind their ancestral homelands—homelands now believed to have been located in the more tropical latitudes of Eastern Polynesia, such as the Society Islands, and possibly the Southern Cooks, the Tuamotu Archipelago, and Mangareva (Lowe and others 2002)—voyaging Polynesians carried with them a suite of flora and fauna, including kumara, taro, yam, gourd, paper mulberry (aute), the Polynesian rat (kiore; Rattus exulans), and the dog to aid them in settling their new home (Kirch 2000, 275–276). For reasons that remain unclear, despite the fact that the pig and chicken were popular livestock in other parts of Polynesia (and, indeed, the wider Pacific), neither animal made it to New Zealand’s shores (Kirch 2000; Belich 1996).31 One might hypothesize that they died en route, were eaten by the voyagers during the long sea journey, or were left on the home beach. Whatever the reasons, the absence of both pig and fowl was more than adequately counterbalanced by the bountiful array of local flora and fauna that was on offer to the colonists in the new land.

31 Indeed, when Tupaia, the Tahitian navigator, encountered the local Māori population at Doubtless Bay, located in the upper North Island, he was incensed that they were bereft of the ubiquitous pig: “And have you no hoggs among you? said Tupaia.—No.—And did your ancestors bring none back with them?—No.—You must be a parcel of Liars then, said he, and your story a great lye for your ancestors would never have been such fools as to come back without them” (See The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks 1768–1771, journal entry 9 December 1769, online at http://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/banks/series_03/03_471.cfm)
Early Polynesians made landfall in a country rich in wildlife. The waterways were populated by teems of freshwater fish, and the wetlands supported a host of waterfowl, such as the pūkeko (moorhen) and the takahe (Gill 2002). The beaches were covered with fur seals, sea lions, and elephant seals, and the forests were alive with a veritable array of birds—including the kererū (native pigeon), kākāriki (parakeet), kākā (parrot), and the flightless kiwi (Gill 2002). Two species of bat, barely a thumb length in size, were the only land mammals to have made it across the large expanse of ocean to New Zealand. Where the native bats were small, the moa was positively gigantic. Depending on the species, these flightless birds varied in size from 1.3 meters (the little bush moa) to 3.67 meters (the largest of the species, *Dinornis giganteus*) (Belich 1996, 34; Walker 1990, 29). Indeed, the birds, particularly the larger species, more than compensated for the absence of the chicken, and provided Polynesian settlers with an important source of protein. On the subject of the moa, elder statesman Apirana Ngata wrote rather humorously to his long-time friend Te Rangihiroa (Peter Buck) that, “It must have tickled the old fellows [the early Polynesian settlers] to apply the spare term of moa to such a hypertrophied fowl” (Sorrenson 1987, 184).

The land provided for the colonists and as each year passed they dug their roots ever deeper into the soil of their new homeland. As their numbers grew they developed tribes (iwi) and sub-tribes (hapu), each of which staked a claim on their own domain (Figs. 7a and 7b) (Walker 1990). As Māori historian Pat Hohepa has stated: “[Ancestral] Bones became icons; the metaphor became the group name” (Hohepa 1999, 189). The settlers warred against one

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32 The two species of bat are the short-tailed bat (*Mystacina tuberculata*) and the long-tailed bat (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*) (See http://www.teara.govt.nz/TheBush/NativeBirdsAndBats/Bats/1/en)
33 Due to human predation during the early settlement era, the moa was extinct hundreds of years before European arrival (See http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/06/0615_050615_moa.html)
34 In the Māori vernacular, “moa” means chicken
35 Ranginui Walker estimates that there were 42 distinct tribal groups during the pre-European contact period (See Walker in Rice 1992, 498)
another and joined their genealogies through intermarriage, and for over 400 years remained secluded from the rest of the world. But, as men from distant lands began venturing out in search of new places to explore and exploit, that seclusion came increasingly under threat.

**Early Encounters**

*As the sun illuminated the surface of the ocean with the first early morning fingers of light, it caught the reflection of something in the distance. The mysterious object glinted in the sunlight and was seen from the shore by a young boy, who immediately set off along the beach to alert his kin. Turning their gaze toward the mouth of an expansive bay, a multitude of eyes watched as a strange vessel tacked this way and then that, moving ever closer to the land, moving ever closer to them. On the other side of the beach, a mile out to sea, a salt-worn captain rubbed the metallic casting of his ship’s telescope absent-mindedly before returning it to the first mate. Taking a mental note of the smoke that ascended from the newfound land—"No doubt the fires of natives," he thought—he issued the order to maintain the ship’s course. Far above sea and land, a lone frigate bird sounded a cry of warning. It was a warning of something to come, a portent that two worlds were about to collide.*

* * * * *

The earliest recorded contact between Māori and Europeans occurred well before the phenomenal expansion of Western powers into the wider Pacific during the latter part of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. On the morning of 18 December 1642, under the command of Abel Janszoon Tasman, two Dutch expeditionary vessels—the *Heemskerck* and *Zeehaen*—slipped into what is today known as Golden Bay, an expansive body of sheltered water situated at the northern tip of New Zealand’s South Island. Their arrival must have come as a somewhat welcome respite for the Dutchmen after such a lengthy voyage across a not-so-pacific Pacific. The expedition was undertaken for two reasons: to locate the enigmatic “Great South Land,” or Terra Australis Incognita—which the Greek geographer Ptolemy had postulated some 1,500 years previous must exist in order to counterbalance the northern landmasses (Salmond

36 This brief foray into fictional prose is adapted from Abel Tasman’s journal dated 14–16 December, 1642. See [http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600571h.html](http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600571h.html)

37 Herein, I will employ the term Māori to refer to the Polynesian inhabitants of New Zealand, unless specific reference to a tribe/sub-tribe is warranted
and more specifically, to obtain gold and silver to fund the nascent Dutch nation (Belich 1996, 119). Thus, it is under the auspice of scientific enquiry and the hope of procuring riches for king and country that the men from Holland encountered the tangata whenua of the area, the people of Ngāti Tumata Kōkiri.

As with many early encounters between Islander and Outlander in other parts of the Pacific, meaningful interaction between the local Māori inhabitants and the Dutch was hindered by an impenetrable language barrier and a complete lack of knowledge of the other. The inability of either group to communicate effectively across the cultural divide was underscored by their first encounter. Recalling the approach of two native canoes to within earshot of the Dutch ships, Tasman wrote, “the men ... began to call out to us in the rough, hollow voice, but we could not understand a word of what they said. We however called out to them in answer, upon which they repeated their cries several times.” When language failed them, the two sides turned to music. The Māori retinue blew out a message on an instrument that sounded “like that of a Moorish trumpet” (most likely a conch shell), while the second mate of the Zeehaen, who had been trained in trumpeting, was ordered to issue a response. The two groups continued to “sound out” one another until dusk, when the natives finally turned their canoes around and headed back to shore.

One might imagine the cacophony of that first meeting—the voices and trumpeting that echoed across the bay, all of it unintelligible to those on each receiving side, the intended message being tossed around in the eddying currents that stirred between Native canoe and European ship. Not knowing the other’s intentions quite naturally gave rise to feelings of

38 I borrow this term from Robert Borofsky to describe foreigners (see Remembrance of Pacific Pasts: An Invitation to Remake History [2000])
39 See Abel Tasman’s journal dated 16 December 1642 online at http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600571h.html
40 ibid
mistrust and uneasiness, or so it was on the Dutch side. After the encounter with the two canoes, Tasman ordered his men to “keep in readiness all necessaries of war” and placed them on double-watch. After the next morning, thirteen inhabitants approached the newcomers’ ships, the Dutchmen encouraged them to come aboard by waving various items of cargo, including linen and knives. The inhabitants inspected them from a distance and returned to shore only to be replaced by seven more canoes, one of which was “high and pointed in the front.” The skipper of the Zeehaen sent out a cock-boat of six crewmen to contact with the vessels. As the Dutchmen paddled out, the high-prow canoe made a sudden dash for them and rammed the small boat violently. Using indigenous weapons of warfare, “a long, blunt spike” (possibly a tewhatewha) and “short thick clubs” (possibly patu or mere), the occupants of the vessels dispatched three of the Dutch crewmen, and fatally wounded one. The Dutch responded with musket and cannon fire, but “none of them took effect.” Crews on both the Heemskerck and Zeehaen quickly weighed anchor, issuing cannon fire to ward off a swarm of indigenous vessels that sped to intercept the ship’s retreat out of the bay. Finally, badly shaken by the incident but safe in open water, the Dutchmen turned their course northeast by north. As the bay receded in the distance, they bestowed on it the name Moordenaersbay (“Murderers Bay”) to mark their ordeal and to memorialize their fallen crewmen (Belich 1996).

What had begun as a seemingly earnest attempt by both sides to communicate with one another—first through language and, when that proved futile, through the blaring sound of

[41 ibid
42 ibid
43 See Abel Tasman’s journal dated 19 December 1642 online at http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600571h.html
44 James Belich posits that this particular canoe was a waka taua, or war canoe, such vessels of which are characterized by a high prow (see Belich 1996, 119)
45 See Abel Tasman’s journal date 19 December 1642 online at http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600571h.html
46 ibid
47 “Murderers Bay” was renamed “Golden Bay” by Captain James Cook when he visited it in 1769]
trumpets—in the space of a day deteriorated into a violent exchange of deadly blows and gun fire. Reading Tasman’s journal entry on the eve of the conflict, one cannot help but note the irony of his statement regarding the perceived intentions of the Ngāti Tumata: “these people apparently sought our friendship.” Such an irony would be emblematic of the complexity and contradictions that came to shape future relations between Māori and Pākehā. In the wake of the confrontation, Tasman quickly revised his thinking: “Seeing that the detestable deed of these natives against four men of the Zeehaen’s crew, perpetuated this morning, must teach us to consider the inhabitants of this country as enemies.”

We do not know precisely why the Ngāti Tumata Kōkiri attacked the Dutch. Though they would most likely have committed their account of the historical moment to oral memory, the intervening centuries have silenced it. Nevertheless, Tasman’s journaling of the incident, however skewed it might have been and despite the absence of an indigenous perspective, conveys in a salient way the level of intercultural misunderstandings and mistranslations that occurred between tangata whenua and manuhiri as their worlds collided. Although the encounter between the Dutch and the people of Ngāti Tumata was brief, with the arrival of a new set of Europeans 127 years later, contact between Māori and the outside world would be re-established, and this time it would be on a sustained basis.

**Sustained Contact**

The rituals of meeting . . . the act of embrace, the greeting made in tears, the exchange of presents . . . In short, this represents an intermingling. Lives are mingled together, and this is how, among persons and things so intermingled, each emerges from their own sphere and mixes together.

Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*

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48 See Abel Tasman’s journal dated 19 December 1642 online at http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/06/0600571h.html
49 ibid
The arrival of the *HMS Endeavour*, captained by James Cook, in New Zealand in 1769, and the subsequent mapping and exploration of the land by a league of cartographers, geographers, and naturalists brought the country into sharp relief. In a metaphorical way, the “Long White Cloud” that had helped conceal the great landmass began to dissipate, revealing for European eyes a place of abundant resources. Unlike the Ngāti Tumata Kōkiri who had rejected Tasman’s attempt at trade 127 years previous, when Cook and his crew of weather-beaten sailors arrived, they encountered indigenous communities who were more than eager to engage in the exchange of goods. Horeta Te Taniwha,50 who was a young boy when Cook’s ship dropped anchor in what is today known as Mercury Bay, recalled the intercultural encounter: “as we could not understand them we laughed, and they laughed also . . . we gave our mats for their mats, to which some of our warriors said “ka pai” [good], which words were repeated by the goblins [the Europeans], at which we laughed and were joined in the laugh by the goblins” (cited in Belich 1996, 123). But, while some encounters between Cook and Māori inhabitants proceeded peacefully on some occasions, as each group attempted to negotiate the cultural frontier, mishaps and missteps were inevitable. Theft (or, rather, the perception of theft) became a particularly contentious issue for both the Europeans and the tangata whenua.

When Cook arrived in the Bay of Islands51 on 25 November 1769, he and his crew were greeted by two hundred Ngāpuhi52 paddling seven canoes, all of them eager to trade with the newcomers (Hohepa 1999, 192). However, after several hours of friendly exchange, peaceful relations between the two groups momentarily descended into violence when a member of the Ngāpuhi group attempted to abscond with a pair of English breeches. Joseph Banks, the English

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50 Te Horeta was a chief of the Ngāti Whanaunga (See footnotes in The Early Journals of Henry Williams online at New Zealand Electronic Text Centre at http://www.nzetc.org/scholarly/tei-RogEarl-t1-body-d7.html#reference-to-fn57-343)

51 The Bay of Islands is located in the upper North Island of New Zealand (see Fig. 7a)

52 The large tribal group whose geographical domain lies in the upper North Island of New Zealand (See Fig. 7a)
naturalist on board the *Endeavour* reported the incident: “Our usual punishment was inflicted, smallshot, which made the offender immediately relinquish his prize.”\(^{53}\) Five days later, after having sailed up the coast to trade with other local Māori, the *Endeavour* returned to the Bay of Islands, only this time it was met by three hundred to four hundred Ngāpuhi paddling thirty-seven canoes (Hohepa 1999, 192). Although their initial experience with English weapons had made them cautious, it did not deter several local Ngāpuhi from attempting to make off with the *Endeavour*'s buoy. Again, Banks relayed events as they unfolded: “while we were at dinner one of them went to the Buoy which they attempted to tow away: a musquet [sic] was fired over them without effect. . . . A ball was then fired at them which was thought to strike one of them.”\(^{54}\) Incredibly, despite the show of English aggression, the would-be “thieves” returned to the ship to continue trading.

While the Ngāpuhi traded with the ship’s crew, Cook, Banks, and several other shipmen left the *Endeavour* to conduct an excursion around Motuarohia Island. However, as noted by Banks, “no sooner had we set a foot on the shore about quarter of a mile from the ship but every Canoe put off in a moment and pulld [sic] towards us.”\(^{55}\) Soon, the Englishmen found themselves surrounded by several hundred Ngāpuhi. Threatened by the close proximity of the warriors, Cook drew a line in the sand to indicate where they were not permitted to venture beyond. The Ngāpuhi ignored his gesture and began closing in. While several of the warriors challenged the Englishmen with a haka, several others attempted to drag the two rowboats belonging to the *Endeavour* ashore. Fearing an attack was imminent Cook gave the command to shoot. Several volleys of musket fire were issued, causing the men who were dragging the boats to flee.


\(^{54}\) ibid

\(^{55}\) ibid
Another man ran toward the English wielding his patu (club), but was stopped in his tracks by Solander, a Swedish naturalist, who “gave him a peppering with small shott [sic].” Despite the sophistication of their firepower, Cook and his small retinue was no match for the large number of Ngāpuhi warriors, who surrounded them on all sides (Hohepa 1999, 194). Indeed, the English would have most certainly been overwhelmed had it not been for the Endeavour's crew intervening by bringing the ship’s canon broadside and firing it at the warriors, who had by this time taken position on a hill (Hohepa 1999). Unable to compete with the ship’s advanced weaponry, the Ngāpuhi war party finally retreated.

In writing of the incident, Māori historian Pat Hohepa has provided a compelling explanation for Ngāpuhi’s aggression toward the Englishmen during their attempted sojourn around Motuarohia. Put simply, they thought Cook and his men were trying to capture their island (Hohepa 1999, 194). As with Cook, who had given strict orders to his men to shoot at any Native that attempted to remove property from his ship, the Ngāpuhi sought to protect what was theirs from the English. It was one thing for the Strangers to be anchored off the beach, but once they ventured on to Ngāpuhi land—without invitation, no less—they shifted from potential trading partner to potential thief. The force with which both Ngāpuhi and the British sought to protect their possessions, be it breeches, a buoy, boats, or land, underscores in a more general way the misconceptions that dogged Māori and European relations in the early years of contact. Eventually, however, each side had to come to term with a basic fact: in order to get what they wanted, they had to learn to work together. It is on the basis of mutual wants, then, that the two sides began working toward a more conciliatory relationship (Orange 1996, 5).

57 ibid. (See in particular Banks’ journal entry dated 29 November 1769)
From the 1790s onward, as the Industrial Revolution gathered momentum in Europe and, as the demand for raw materials to drive it increased—materials such as whale oil, timber, and flax—European (and eventually American) interests in New Zealand expanded exponentially (Belich 1996; Hohepa 1999). The wealth of New Zealand’s natural resources loomed ever large in the sights of commercial traders, who brought with them items of great interest to Māori, such as cloth, beads, glass, blankets, iron nails, axes, and muskets (Belich 1996; Walker 1990). In return, Māori communities, especially those who were ideally located in coastal areas, sold them fresh water, pork, vegetables (many of which had been grown from European seeds), charcoal, dressed flax, and kauri spars (Hohepa, 1999; Belich 1996; Ralston, 1978; Walker 1990).

As explorers, whalers, missionaries, and sealers converged on New Zealand’s shores bringing with them “the things . . . [and] thoughts [including diseases]. . .of Europe to Maori” (Belich 1996, 139), local chiefs took steps to secure mutual trade alliances with the newcomers by inviting ship-jumpers and ex-convicts to settle among them (Belich 1996; Walker 1990). Māori chiefs offered them “land and wives to bind them into the tribe on whose behalf they acted as intermediaries in trade with visiting ships” (Walker 1990, 79).

These middlemen came to be known as “Māori Pakeha,” liminal characters “who personified the flotsam and jetsam of the colonial Pacific” (Thomas 1995, 93). Indeed, they were Pākehā who had “gone native” (Orange 1987, 6). Māori Pākehā became enveloped in Māori

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58 Māori communities eagerly acquired muskets to use against traditional enemies during intertribal warfare. The introduction of the weapons led to intertribal warfare, which came to be known collectively as The Musket Wars, in the 1820s (see Belich 1996, 156–164; Walker 1990, 82–84; King 1996, 47). Noting the devastating loss of life caused by the introduction of the musket to Māori, Henry William lamented: “How melancholy is the reflexion . . . that once these hills and valleys were peopled [by Māori]. . . but of late years, they have been hunted as the deer, until few remain, and they are driven into the interior!” (Wright 1967, 96–97)

59 Early trade posts were located in coastal areas where European vessels could easily drop anchor and transport trade items to and from the shore. These ports of call were transformed into booming towns of mercantile activity. For more, see Ralston 1978 and Kiste 1994

60 M P K Sorrenson has referred to them as “pioneers of inter-racial marriage” (Sorrenson 1992, 142).
culture, sometimes irreversibly so. For example, James Caddell (also known as James Mowry), who had come in contact with the people of Ngai Tahu\(^{61}\) at the age of sixteen, became so entrenched in the Māori way of life that he forgot “most of his English” (Belich 1996, 132). In the intervening years, Caddell became a significant figure in Ngāi Tahu, being “transformed from the English sailor boy to the terrifying New Zealand chief” (Robley 1896, 104). Māori Pākehā were cultural chameleons, who drew on the cultural symbols of Māori to secure their place in indigenous society. For example, Barnet Burns (also known as George White, or Hori Waiti in the Māori vernacular), like so many of his European compatriots, had his face and body inscribed with moko Māori (Māori tattoo), becoming, as Belich has stated, “the tattooed white Ngāti Kahungunu”\(^{62}\) (Fig. 8) (Belich 1996, 132; MacKay 1949, 69).

61 Tribal group whose lands constitute the entire South Island of New Zealand
62 Kahungunu is a tribe whose lands are located on the east coast of New Zealand, primarily the Hawke’s Bay and Wairarapa regions
Māori also crossed the cultural limen, incorporating the things of the West, such as Western garb and weapons (Fig. 9) into their lives and operating as mediators between Europeans and the Māori communities from whence they came. An early facilitator of Māori-Pākehā relations was Ruatara of Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands. In 1810 Ruatara traveled to Australia where he stayed with Reverend Samuel Marsden on his mission station at Parramatta, Sydney, for eight months (Belich 1996, 142). During his time there, Ruatara learned how to cultivate and process European agricultural products. When he returned to New Zealand this early indigenous entrepreneur set about growing all manner of European crops, including wheat, cabbages, onions, carrots, and turnips. Ruatara also “possessed rum, tea, sugar, flour, cheese and chests of European clothing” (Belich 1996, 142).

Because he was one of the early “tohunga Pākehā” (coined by Belich to refer to Māori middlemen) to learn to speak English, Ruatara consequently took on the important role of mediator between Māori and Pākehā. Indeed, it is due to his influence and protection that Samuel
Marsden was able to establish the first permanent European settlement in New Zealand and, thereby, introduce Christianity to Māori (Belich 1996, 143). By 1815, Ruatara was “the best-armed chief in the country, as well as the wealthiest in terms of European plants, tools and settlers” (Belich 1996, 143). Had he not succumbed to illness in 1815, Ruatara would have been able to complete his plans to mill wheat for export to Sydney.\(^6^3\) In the wake of his death, Ruatara was replaced by Ngāpuhi’s most well-known chief, Hongi Hika, who used European goods to increase his mana (prestige) and wreak havoc on his enemies. As David Chappell has stated,

\[\ldots\] he drank cow’s milk to symbolize the \textit{mana} he had obtained from the \textit{pakeha} (whites) and lined up his muskets in rows, giving each the name of a Ngapuhi defeat it would avenge. In his battles, Hongi wore a red coat, armor, a helmet, and spied on his enemies with a telescope. He bowed and saluted Te Hinaki, in military fashion, before killing the chief in combat and drinking his blood. (Chappell 1997, 144–145)

The alliances between Māori and Pākehā not only enabled both groups to secure their desired wants and meet their planned agendas, but as well the resulting marriages from such intercultural entanglements brought them into a more intimate sphere of engagement as such unions gave rise to a new generation of mixed offspring. Here, the relationship between Māori and Pākehā became ever more cemented through the intermingling of genes and the creation of a hybrid whakapapa (genealogy).

While Māori and Pākehā were equal in terms of the distribution of power during the early years of engagement, as the former succumbed to foreign diseases for which they had no immunity—such as smallpox, measles, influenza, and tuberculosis—the balance of power soon began to tilt in favor of Pākehā (Walker 1990, 80). Walker has pointed out that, “To the Maori people, it seemed they died while Europeans lived” (1990, 80).\(^6^4\) Not only did Europeans live,  

\(^6^3\) See \textit{The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand} online at http://www.teara.govt.nz/1966/R/Ruatara/Ruatara/en

\(^6^4\) Pat Hohepa has stated that by 1892 New Zealand’s indigenous population had dropped by 75% (from 250,000 in 1769 to 42,000 in 1892) (Hohepa 1999). Such high mortality rates were not unique in the
but as well their numbers grew. In 1830 there were a grand total of 300 Europeans living in New Zealand, but within the short span of ten years that number had risen to 2000 (King 1996, 48). Times were changing. As M P K Sorrenson asserted, “there was a difference between the few Pākehā who had earlier come to trade, and the many who now came to settle, to claim, occupy, and cultivate the land” (Sorrenson 1992, 142). And, as the many settled, so too did the long arm of the British Empire begin to reach out across the sea to New Zealand, first offering its hand as protection to Māori against “agents of vice” and land sharks (Belich 1996, 127–139), and then, as the British machinery of justice and administration became established, forming a fist that would deliver the hard hitting blow of colonization.

Pacific. For example, see David Stannard’s analysis of population decline in Hawai’i in Before the Horror: The Population of Hawaii on the Eve of Western Contact (1989)
CHAPTER 2: COLONIZING

Of Myth and Empire

"Empire in New Zealand, and perhaps elsewhere, was caused mainly by its myths" (Belich 1996, 187)

Of all the “messy entanglements” that have occurred between Māori and Pākehā, none has presented a more significant and enduring point of contention between the two peoples than the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Described under various monikers as a “fortress,” “Maori Magna Carta,” “Great Charter of Maori Rights” and, in more recent decades, as a “fraud” and a “sham” (Byrnes 2006a, unpaginated), over the last 167 years the treaty has come to inhabit an ambiguous and highly contested space, both as a “symbol of our life together as a nation” and, as Ranginui Walker has referred to it, a “morally dubious document” (Walker 1989, 263).

The Treaty of Waitangi (see Appendix 1) was signed on 6 February 1840 by over 500 chiefs from various parts of New Zealand and representatives of the British Crown. Importantly, the treaty was to function as “a legal instrument” that would give the British the authority to protect Māori rights, facilitate the establishment of a settler-led government, secure for the Crown “exclusive rights of purchase to Māori land,” and smooth tensions between Māori

65 I borrow this phrase from the publication Messy Entanglements, a selection of Pacific-related papers given at the 10th Pacific History Association Conference held in Tarawa, Kiribati in 1994. See Talu and Quanchi 1994
66 The treaty takes its name from the location at which it was signed—Waitangi—which is located in the Bay of Islands (upper North Island of New Zealand)
67 When missionary Henry Williams read the treaty to Māori signatories in 1840, he proclaimed, “The treaty is really like a fortress to you” (cited in Orange 1996, 18; emphasis added)
68 Taken from the subtitle of a ten-page publication that was released during the 150th anniversary of the treaty’s signing in 1990. See The Treaty of Waitangi: The Symbol of Our Life Together as a Nation (NZ 1990 Commission 1990)
69 While the official signing of the treaty at Waitangi entailed the participation of 43 chiefs, signatures continued to be obtained many months later. By the time the treaty had finished being circulated around the country, over 500 Māori had given their consent (see, for example, Belich 1996; Orange 1987, 1996; Ward 1995)
and Pākehā (Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 8–9). However, where the second and third objectives were achieved, the first and last fell short. As Peter Adams has pointed out, in terms of the first objective in particular, protection to Māori was given “only insofar as their rights were compatible with British dominance” (Adams 1977, 15). The notion of Māori equality with Pākehā was also at issue. That Māori fully expected to be equal partners with their Pākehā counterparts was made clear by many of the chiefs who had gathered to debate the pros and cons of the treaty the day before its signing. One of them, Tareha, a chief of the Ngāti Rehia tribe, stated: “We chiefs are the rulers and we won’t be ruled over. If we were all to have a rank equal to you that might be acceptable. But if we are going to be subordinate to you, then I say get back to your ship and sail away” (Orange 1996, 18).

My own ancestor, paramount chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa Te Heuheu Tukino II, declared in more succinct terms what he believed would happen to Māori if they ceded their lands to Britain: “Do not consent [to the Treaty], or we will become slaves for this woman, Queen Victoria” (Caselberg 1975, 50). His warning was a harbinger of what was to come. In the end, the pact that was to bring about peace and equality between Māori and Pākehā instead lay the foundations for increased tensions between the two peoples and became for Māori a struggle without end—ka whawhai tonu mātou (Walker 1990).

Before embarking on a more in-depth discussion of the treaty, it is first necessary to consider some of the pressures that predicated its drafting and eventual signing. As Belich has indicated, the Treaty of Waitangi did not take shape in isolation but rather it emerged out of a string of myths that over time convinced the initially hesitant Colonial Office in London to intervene in New Zealand’s affairs (Belich 1996, 182). To repeat the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter: “Empire in New Zealand, and perhaps elsewhere, is caused mainly by its myths” (Belich 1996, 187). James Belich cites three myth-making agents, each of which had a vested interest in the British annexation of New Zealand. They included the missionaries, particularly those associated with the Protestant-led Church Missionary Society (CMS), who were in the
business of civilizing the Native inhabitants and saving their souls; advocates and agents of
“systematic colonization,” who were in the business of exporting English “labour and capital to
new colonies” (Belich 1996, 183); and the merchants and capitalists, who were in the business of
making money (Belich 1996). These pressure groups wheedled their way into the collective mind
of the Colonial Office spreading stories of “frontier chaos” that made it seem increasingly
difficult for Britain not to intervene in New Zealand (Belich 1996).

One myth in particular played on Anglo-French rivalries. In 1831 a rumor emerged that a
French warship, La Favourite, was on its way to the Bay of Islands to claim New Zealand for the
republic and exact revenge for the killing of Frenchman Marion du Fresne in 1772 (Orange 1987,
11; Adams 1977, 76). The rumor had been generated by CMS missionary William Yate, and
Rewa, a chief of the Bay of Islands on their return from Sydney, Australia (see Orange 1987, 11).
Spurred by fears of an imminent French takeover, thirteen Hokianga chiefs gathered together to
sign a petition that had been drafted by Yate requesting the protection of the British king. Part of
the letter read: “We have heard that the tribe of Marian (Marion) is at hand coming to take away
our land, therefore we pray thee to become our friend and the guardian of these islands, lest the
Teasing of other tribes should come near to us, and lest strangers should come and take away our
land” (Elder 1932, 504). As it was later to be discovered, the French had (at that time, at least) no
such plans to annex New Zealand. After a short five-day stay in the Bay of Islands, La Favourite
weighed anchor and set a course for Chile (Adams 1977, 76). The storm of fear had subsided, but
the petition for British protection was sent nevertheless.

It is noteworthy to point out that the letter signed by the chiefs not only requested that the
British king protect them from the French, but as well its own citizens who were frequenting New
Zealand on whaling ships and the like. Consider the letter’s final paragraph: “And if any of thy
people should be troublesome or vicious towards us—for some persons are living here who have
run away from ships—we pray thee to be angry with them that they may be obedient, lest the
anger of the people of this land fall upon them” (Elder 1932, 504). Thus, the second thread in the
mythmaking project to solicit British intervention was spun—the myth of fatal impact (Belich 1996), which depicted Māori as being in dire need of British protection from the deleterious affects of contact.70

The fatal impact line was used to good effect by CMS missionary Samuel Marsden, who was appointed Anglican Chaplain of New South Wales and opened the first mission station under the auspice of the CMS at Rangihoua, Bay of Islands in 1814 (Belich 1996, 135). He wrote to Ralph Darling, the governor of Sydney, of the need for Britain to exercise legal authority in New Zealand so as to guard Māori against “the infamous acts of the Europeans” (Elder 1932, 498). The perpetrators, as Marsden saw it, were “agents of vice,” such as the “masters and crews who put into the harbors of New Zealand,” and who, he contended, were committing all manner of crime against indigenous communities (Elder 1932, 497).71 Marsden was not the only missionary to paint a grim picture of the Māori situation for the Colonial Office. Henry Williams, who would later become a key figure in the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, wrote, “there is no law in New Zealand . . . Without some immediate interposition on the part of the [British] Government for our protection, our position will become very desperate, as we may be expected to be surrounded ere long by a swarm of rogues and vagabonds, who indeed carry all before them, both as respects the respectable Europeans and also the Natives” (cited in Evans 2004, 6).

It is important to note here that Māori were in fact not the hapless victims of English skullduggery that the missionaries portrayed them to be. Indeed, Belich has posed the rather salient question of how only a handful of “traders, whalers, and grog sellers acquired the whip hand over thousands of musket-armed and battle-hardened warriors” (Belich 1996, 186). The

70 By deploying the phrase “myth of fatal impact,” I do not mean to suggest that Māori were free of the negative effects of European contact, such as death by foreign disease, loss of land, loss of culture etc. What I mean to point out is that certain pressure groups tended to stretch aspects of the truth to use as evidence for the need for British intervention
71 None the least of which was the trafficking of preserved Māori heads for sale in Europe and the Americas (Elder 1932).
myth of Māori oppression under Europeans is a little less convincing, too, when we consider Gordon Browne’s letter addressed to Darling, dated 1831, in which he stated that Europeans had “no hold upon the affections of the New Zealanders [i.e., Māori]” and were only safe “because at present it is to their interests that we should be so” (cited in Adams 1977, 48). Here, according to Browne, it was Māori who had the upper hand in intercultural relations, not Pākehā. That Browne’s report conflicted with Marsden’s and Williams’ is not so much the point I want to make here as the fact that it is the word of the missionaries, not Browne’s that eventually gained purchase with the Colonial Office. As Belich has stated, the Colonial Office was “predisposed to believe that what myth taught would happen was happening” (Belich 1996, 187), and thus it is on this basis that it chose to follow Marsden’s and the other missionaries’ recommendations to intercede in New Zealand.

Despite the power of myth over the Colonial Office, it was in fact a non-myth that helped tip the scale toward British intervention. In 1830, two Ngāi Tahu chiefs traveled to Sydney, Australia, to request that Governor Ralph Darling discipline the crew of an English ship, the Elizabeth, for aiding Ngāi Toa chief Te Rauparaha by transporting him and a retinue of warriors to Akaroa to exact utu (revenge) on the Ngāi Tahu (Orange 1996, 10). Although the crew were never brought to justice for their involvement in the affair (they jumped bail), in the years following the incident Governor Darling, along with Samuel Marsden, agitated for the Colonial Office to appoint a British Resident to New Zealand to affect law and order, and protect Māori from “the kind of ‘outrage’, in which Europeans took sides in tribal fighting” (Orange 1996, 10). Indeed, as Darling was to write, the Elizabeth affair was a blight on “the character of the [British] nation” and the appointment of a representative would “assure the Maoris of the desire of His Majesty’s Government to afford them protection and to tranquillize the minds of settlers” who were concerned there would be a Māori backlash (cited in Adams 1977, 62). Their request was finally answered and, in 1833, amidst a seven gun salute and a haka by local Māori, James Busby arrived in the Bay of Islands to begin his appointment as British Resident (Ward 1995, 25), his
orders being to “afford better protection” to both Māori and English citizens (Elder 1932, 505). But, as Ranginui Walker has asserted, Busby’s arrival in New Zealand was a portent of more troubling things to come, symbolizing as he did “an official British presence in the country and the initial step towards formal annexation” (Walker 1990, 88).

While none of the pressures, mythical or otherwise, were on their own substantial enough to move the Colonial Office to intervene in New Zealand, when considered as a whole they presented a glut of woes that simply could not be ignored. British intervention, the Colonial Office finally decided, was a “fatal necessity” if New Zealand was to gain a modicum of stability (the assumption here being that New Zealand was unstable when in fact it was not). Although it is true that Britain’s initial hope was to exercise a benign influence over the country through agents such as Busby, the missionaries, and respectable Europeans rather than colonize it outright, by 1840 “it found itself going the whole hog and claiming complete authority” (Belich 1996, 181).

The central logic behind Britain’s sudden change of heart rested on the actions of Edward Gibbons Wakefield who, acting under the aegis of the land-purchasing enterprise the New Zealand Company, began dispatching shiploads of emigrants to New Zealand in 1839 in order to settle the land there—tracts of which had been purchased ahead of time as cheap as possible from Māori (Adams 1977, 144; Walker 1990, 89). Settlers with skill were sought to grow a new colony—a little Britain in the Antipodes. In an attempt to encourage migration, the New Zealand Company even offered free passage to those emigrants who applied. For example, on 21 August 1839, the London-based New Zealand Gazette (which, incidentally, was backed by the New Zealand Company) advertised in its inaugural issue: “The Directors of the New Zealand Land

72 I borrow this phrase from Peter Adams’ book Fatal Necessity: British Intervention in New Zealand 1830–1847 (1977)
73 Before 1838 the New Zealand Company was known as the New Zealand Association
Company hereby give notice that they are ready to receive applications for a Free Passage to their First and Principle Settlement” (*New Zealand Gazette* 21 Aug 1839, 1).

Another advertisement in the same issue targeted Scottish citizens for immigration. Under the heading “First Scotch Colony for New Zealand,” potential migrants were advised thus,

The ship *Bengal Merchant*, of 503 tons, having been chartered in September next, parties intending to join the Colony are requested to do so on or before the 20th August current, in order that the necessary preliminary arrangements may be made for the Voyage. (*New Zealand Gazette* 21 Aug 1839, 1)

The entire first issue of the gazette was a veritable cornucopia of advertisements enticing British citizens to set sail for the new frontier—the new colony.74 And, they did. When it left port at Glasgow, the *Bengal Merchant* carried 122 colonists ranging from lowly servant maids to tailors and shoemakers (Ward 1928). Other ships made the journey across the Pacific—such as the *Cuba, Aurora, Oriental*, and *Duke of Roxburgh*—all of them carrying to New Zealand the human seeds of change. Despite the fact that it had not been endorsed officially by Britain, the process of systematic colonization was now well underway. Its hand forced and fearing that Māori would resist an influx of so many settlers (Orange 1996, 13), the Colonial Office finally conceded to establish a British colony in New Zealand.

However, Britain could not simply claim the country by naked coercion, as had been the fate of other places and peoples in the Pacific, and, indeed, around the globe. The Crown’s official recognition of Māori as a sovereign people in 1835 through the Declaration of Independence, which was brokered by Busby and signed by the United Tribes of New Zealand, meant that Britain had to take a more diplomatic route to securing the country (Orange 1987, 32). Sovereignty had to be relinquished freely by the indigenous inhabitants, and what better way to secure their consent than through the legally binding terms of a treaty.

74 I should point out here it was not until the end of 1840 that New Zealand became an official colony of Britain. Early calls for Europeans to “join the Colony” (as cited in the above newspaper advertisement dated 1839), reveals the belief that the colonization of New Zealand was inevitable


**Treaty: Lost in Translation**

In August 1839, William Hobson was dispatched to New Zealand as consul with orders to acquire British sovereignty over "the whole or any parts" of New Zealand that Māori agreed to cede (Orange 1987, 29). Less than six months later, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed into existence. On the day of the treaty's official signing, several hundred Māori from various parts of New Zealand—including Europeans and American settlers—assembled at Waitangi to witness the proceedings (Colenso 1971).

![Figure 10. Reenactment of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, February 6th, 1840. Marcus King, 1939 [Wellington, Free Lance]. Reference Number: C-033-007. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.](image)

After CMS missionary Henry Williams read the terms and conditions of the treaty in Māori, each chief was summoned to the table to place his signature on the document (Fig. 10). Since many of the Māori signatories could not read or write they resorted to using graphic symbols, such as crosses, zigzags, and other motifs to indicate their consent. Others drew on more explicitly cultural symbols. Several chiefs, including Kawiti and Makoware (the first and fifty-second names on the Treaty of Waitangi respectively), used the curvilinear design of the...
korus—a symbol associated most prominently with Māori carving and tattooing—as their signature.\footnote{To view the Māori signatures on the various versions of the treaty, go to New Zealand History Online at http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/interactive/treaty-of-waitangi-copy. Māori use of indigenous symbols on legal documents was a frequent occurrence during the nineteenth century. Indeed, nowhere was the phenomenon more salient than in the case of Tuhawaiki, a South Island chief, who drew his entire moko kānōhi (facial tattoo) on a land grant on 28 March 1840. See Robley for more on the Māori use of moko on legal documentation (1896, 10–17).}

After each chief inscribed his mark on the treaty, Hobson shook their hand and uttered a few words in Māori that he had hastily learned from Williams for the occasion, “He iwi tahi tātou—We are one people” (Colenso 1971, 35). Once all signatures had been acquired, the chiefs gave three cheers to signal an end to the proceedings. But, the jubilation was not to last long. Even before the final signatures were being acquired during the treaty’s circulation to other iwi and hapū around the country, rumblings of discontent began to be heard as it slowly dawned on Māori that their lands, sovereignty, and freedom were far from protected under the treaty (Orange 1996, 35).

The three articles embedded in the treaty were, on the surface at least, fairly straightforward. The first gave the Crown “all the rights and powers of Sovereignty which the said Confederation or Individual Chiefs respectively exercise or possess” (cited in Orange 1996, 31). The second article ensured Māori that they would retain “full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession,” but added that the Crown had the “exclusive right of Preemption over such lands” (cited in Orange 1996, 31). The final article granted Māori “all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects” (cited in Orange 1996, 31). \textit{Seemingly} straightforward, but there were hidden flaws.
As I have argued, the twin dragons of misunderstanding and mistranslation have featured as a leitmotif in Māori-Pākehā relations. We have a long history of “talking past each other” in the rather messy and unpredictable process of intercultural exchange (see Metge and Kinloch 1984). Where there has been common ground, it has been shaky and tenuous, and where there has been written agreement—as with the Treaty of Waitangi—the intentions of both sides have been lost in translation, quite literally. Two days before the Treaty of Waitangi was to be officially signed, Henry Williams (the CMS missionary mentioned above) and his 21-year old son were commissioned by Hobson to translate the English version of the treaty into Māori. Their unfamiliarity with the nuances of the language and their tendency to draw on missionary concepts and transliterations led to what Walker has argued was the “inappropriate translations of key words” (Walker 1984, 268). Of particular significance here are the words sovereignty (rangatiratanga) and governorship (kawanatanga). Consider the English version of the first article of the Treaty of Waitangi, whereby the Māori signatories ceded to the Crown:

... absolutely and without reservation all the rights and powers of Sovereignty which the said Confederation or Individual chiefs respectively exercise or possess, or may be supposed to exercise or possess over their respective Territories as the sole Sovereigns thereof (cited in Orange 1996, 31; emphasis added).

Consider now the Māori version of the first article:

... ake tonu atu te Kawanatanga katoa o o ratou wenua (cited in Orange 1996, 30; emphasis added).

One of the major differences between the two versions is that while the English text explicates the transfer of Māori sovereignty to the Crown, in the Māori text it was governance, or kawanatanga that was being relinquished, thus “leaving the chiefs’ rangatiratanga” (McHugh 1991, 3). As Walker has articulated, the term kawanatanga would have been “understood as a

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76 Linguist Bruce Biggs distinguished between the English and Māori versions of the treaty by referring to them as the Treaty of Waitangi and Te Tiriti o Waitangi respectively (see Biggs 1998).
benign term” and would certainly not have been confused with rangatiratanga, or sovereignty (Walker 1989, 264). For Māori the treaty entailed “a sharing of power and authority” with the Crown rather than “a transfer of power” that would render them mere subjects (Williams 1998, 79–80; emphasis added).

Distinguished Māori academic Hugh Kawharu employed a cultural relativistic perspective when considering what it was that Māori expected or, indeed, imagined when they signed the treaty:

The Māori people’s view . . . could only have been framed in terms of their own culture; in other words, what the chiefs imagined they were ceding was that part of their mana [prestige] and rangatiratanga [sovereignty] that hitherto enabled them to make war, exact retribution, consume or enslave their vanquished enemies, and generally exercise power over life and death. It is totally against the run of evidence to imagine that they would have wittingly divested themselves of all their spiritually sanctioned powers—most of which powers, indeed, they wanted protected. They would have believed that they were retaining their rangatiratanga intact . . . (cited in McHugh 1991, 4)

As Kawharu illuminates in the above statement, rangatiratanga constituted an inalienable and spiritually sanctioned state of being. For Māori, their sovereignty could no more be ceded to the British Crown than their genealogical connections to their ancestors could be severed. Even some Pākehā in the immediate decades following the treaty recognized that there had to have been some sort of misunderstanding on the part of Māori for them to have signed a document that divested them of their sovereignty. Commenting in 1858 in the editorial section of the Daily Southern Cross, W F Porter wrote: “I maintain that the natives did not understand the Treaty of Waitangi in the sense in which Captain Hobson explained it to me, and according to which explanation it has since been carried out. Had they done so, it never would have been signed” (6 July 1858, 3).

To return to 1840, that Māori assumed they retained rangatiratanga over their lands was underscored by Kaitaia chief Nopera Panakareao’s proclamation after he signed the treaty in Kaitaia: *Ko te atakau o te whenua i riro i a te Kuini, ko te tinana o te whenua waiho ki a tātou*—“the shadow of the land has passed to the Queen, the substance has remained with us”
(cited in Walker 1984, 269). From this perspective, the substance, the *mana* of the land, remained with Māori. But, as indigenous communities were to discover, the “historic muddle” in the translation from English to Māori during the drafting of the treaty was to have lasting implications in terms of their sovereign authority over their lands and, in a more encompassing way, their lives. Indeed, a year after signing the treaty, Panakareao reversed his historic statement when he shared with Reverend Richard Taylor his fears that the substance of the land had in fact gone to Europeans, leaving Māori with only the shadow (Wards 1968, 49). *Things fall apart; the center cannot hold.*

Within a decade of the treaty’s signing most of the land in the South Island had been purchased—mostly through unfair dealings (Parsonson 1992, 181)—thus “making good the Crown’s claim to sovereignty” (Walker 1989, 270). Although the process of dispossession took longer in the North Island, it was not long before martial law and legislative measures such as the Native Land Act 1862—which transformed communally owned land into individual title—effectively secured settler land claims (Walker 1990, 135). The alienation of Māori land was met by a wave of nascent indigenous resistance. In one of the most memorable acts of Māori protest against British impositions, Ngā Puhi chief Hone Heke cut down the flagstaff at the township of Russell not once, but three times. As Claudia Orange has pointed out, Heke’s destruction of British property was highly symbolic: “he saw the signal staff as a tohu [a symbol] that New Zealand was passing into British hands” (Orange 1996, 41). Other Māori used the written word to register their concerns in more diplomatic ways. In November 1847, Waikato chief Te Wherowhero wrote to inform Queen Victoria of his fears regarding the potential loss of Māori lands: “Oh Madam, listen! The report has come hither, that your Elders think of taking the

77 Taken from William Butler Yeats’ poem, “The Second Coming”
78 The people of Murihiku, for instance, were left with only 4,875 acres out of an original 7 million as a result of unfair land purchases (Parsonson 1992)
Maoris land without cause. Behold, the heart is sad, but we will not believe this report, because we heard from the first Governor that with ourselves lay the consideration of our lands . . . we write to you to love our people" (cited in Orange 1996, 43).

In later years, Māori rallied to assert their sovereignty through such initiatives as the Kotahitanga or unity movement, which attempted to bring a halt to the further sale of Māori land to the government, and the Māori King Movement (or Kingitanga), which established Waikato chief Te Wherowhero as the Māori king in 1858 (Walker 1984, 270). On this last point, Māori sought to create a ruling partnership with Pākehā, with the king holding sway over lands under Māori title, while the governor retained jurisdiction over lands acquired by the Crown (Walker 1990, 113). As was relayed in the New Zealander on 3 July 1858: “The King on his piece; the Queen on her piece, God over both; and Love binding them together” (cited in Sorrenson 1992, 153). But there was to be no such arrangement. In 1861 Governor George Grey deployed troops to attack the Waikato, the seat of power for the Māori King Movement (Belich 1996, 229: see also Ward 1995, 147–164). The Land Wars that had begun the previous year in the Taranaki region spread throughout the North Island, plunging half the country into a bloody series of battles that not only took place between Māori communities and British and colonial troops, but as well between Māori themselves—those who staunchly resisted colonial forces and those who fought on behalf of the government.80

The end of the Land Wars in around 1870 resulted in more losses for Māori as the government began confiscating lands—over one and a half million acres of tribal lands in the Taranaki, Waikato, Tauranga, and Opotiki regions—from those iwi and hapū who had opposed it during the wars (Sorrenson 1992, 158). By 1890, settlers and the Crown had gained control over

79 For a more in-depth discussion of the Land Wars (also known as the New Zealand Wars) see Belich (1986,1998) and Walker (1990)
80 Māori who supported government forces were know as “kūpapa,” which translates as traitor (Belich 1996, 230)
22 million of New Zealand's 26 million hectares (Romaine 2004, 45). Māori were left with a meager 4 million hectares, most of which was considered terra nugax (land of no importance) by Pākehā, since it was located in the most rugged and isolated reaches of the country (Romaine 2004).

As the twentieth century approached, Pākehā outnumbered Māori by fourteen to one (Sorrenson 1992, 141), and the process of “benign assimilation” of Māori into Pākehā society was well underway through the establishment of a Western-style politico-legal and educational system. Here, Māori were to be elevated to the level of European civilization, while their culture and language were to be phased out “as humanely as possible” (Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 113).

Beginning with the Hunn Report in 1961, assimilationist strategies of managing Māori-Pākehā relations gave way to an integrationist approach, which promoted the combination rather than fusing Māori and Pākehā “to form one nation wherein Māori culture remain[ed] distinct” (section of the Hunn Report cited in Dunstall 1992, 478). However, while on the surface the policy seemed to address Māori needs in terms of encouraging the retention of indigenous culture and conferring on Māori equal opportunities and rights, as Fleras and Spoonley have asserted, such accommodations were “tolerated as long as they fell within the rules of the governing framework” (Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 115). Thus, for many Māori, integration was considered synonymous with assimilation (Walker 1992, 503).

The treaty had failed to protect Māori, and far from rendering them equal with Pākehā it reduced them instead to “the brown underclass of New Zealand society” (Walker 1992, 498). Te Heuheu’s warning at the signing of the treaty had come to pass. Māori had become slaves—figuratively at least—in their own land.

**Centennial Myths and Māori Symbols**

As historian Giselle Byrne has pointed out, for Māori the treaty had dual significance: while on the one hand it was viewed as an “emblem of broken promises,” on the other it functioned as a
touchstone around which they could gather to agitate for their “autonomy and self-determination” (Byrnes 2006b, 6). Here, the treaty not only symbolized loss, but as well the hope of future restitution and justice. Over the next one hundred years, Māori issued a wero, a challenge calling for the Crown (and later the settler government) to uphold its obligations to them under the provisions of the treaty, and for all confiscated lands to be returned (Orange 1996). But, while many Māori refused to forget the treaty and the promises that remained to be honored, for Pākehā it had become a dim memory, an artifact of history that “had almost gone out of the public mind” (cited in Orange 1996, 234). Indeed, in a symbolic way, the degradation of the nation’s collective memory of the treaty was matched by its physical state. In 1911, when prominent scholar Thomas Hocken came across the treaty papers in the Wellington government buildings, he found that they had not only been badly damaged by water, but as well two copies had been gnawed at by rats (Orange 1996, 236).

The treaty remained in anonymity until 1940—the year New Zealand celebrated its 100th anniversary. From its dubious location in the musty basement of the government buildings, the treaty was brought out, dusted off, and reinstated in the national imagination. After 100 years, the treaty was given a fresh start. Touted as the “foundation of nationhood” by newspapers around the country (Orange 1996, 72), it was recast as a symbol of national unity and scoured clean of its problematic associations with British colonization and the incessant calls by Māori for their sovereign rights to be acknowledged. In an important way, the reconstituting of the treaty’s historical plot in relation to the centennial commemorations may be viewed from a Halbwachsian perspective. According to Eric Halbwachs, the past is not fixed, but rather it is malleable (Coser

81 It should be noted that the treaty is not a single document, but rather it consists of nine separate sheets, seven of which are paper and the remainder being parchment. The nine sheets take the names of those areas where they were signed (excluding the printed sheet): The Waitangi sheet; Manukau-Kāwhia sheet; the Waikato-Manukau sheet; the printed sheet; the Tauranga sheet; the Bay of Plenty sheet; the Herald sheet (the Herald being a British ship); the Cook Strait sheet; the East Coast sheet (see the Archives New Zealand Web site: http://www.archives.govt.nz/exhibitions/permanentexhibitions/treaty.php)
1992). Further, it is subject to being shaped by the concerns of the present. In 1940, the concerns of the present centered on fostering a sense of national cohesion—a preoccupation that had begun in the 1890s and gained considerable traction in 1907 when New Zealand moved from being a colony to a dominion—between the two treaty partners, as the “youngest country in the world” strove to define itself among its global peers.

Importantly, the re-shaping of the past entailed the reconfiguring of the nation’s collective memory. As new memories of the treaty were being constructed, old ones were being systematically eradicated in a process that French historian Pierre Nora has described as the “dialectic of remembering and forgetting” (Nora cited in Marashi 2008, 112). Part of that remembering/forgetting dialectic depended on the conscription of Māori cultural symbols into national spheres of articulation, particularly in the context of national spectacles such as the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, which was held in the capital city of Wellington between 1939 and 1940. Such symbols of Māori culture included a carved meeting house, which stood as the centerpiece of the Māori court, and the koru—now a ubiquitous symbol in New Zealand—which featured as a prominent motif on many of the buildings that had been constructed especially for the exhibition (McCarthy 2007, 88–89).

Another site of representation where Māori symbols were deployed was on literature related to the exhibition. For example, visitors attending the exhibition received a certificate of attendance (Fig. 11), which featured European and, more particularly, Māori motifs.
Key symbols from Māori culture included the kōwhaiwhai (scroll painting) and carved images (which made up the certificate’s border); a wharenui and waka; native fauna, including the tui, kererū, and kiwi; and native flora, including the pōhutukawa, mānuka (tea tree), and kōwhai. To articulate my own reading of the symbols, native elements of culture and nature as they appeared on the certificate may be seen to be functioning as signifiers of a romantic, primordial past, by extension fixing Māori as the living remnants of a bygone era. The romantic past was to be highlighted, while the traumatic past—marred as it was by intercultural conflict, treaty violations, and the dispossession of Māori of their lands—was to be omitted, swept under the national rug, so to speak. As Michael Billig has stated, nations seek to “forget the violence which brought them into existence” (1995, 38). Importantly, the desire to forget those aspects of the past that disrupted the nationalist vision of New Zealand as a land of racial harmony was

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82 Colloquially referred to as the New Zealand Christmas tree, the pōhutukawa grows in coastal areas and produces a bright red flower that consists of multiple stamens.

83 A native shrub that produces yellow flowers.
articulated through various modes of communication, in particular open-air speeches and local newspaper reports.

For example, in his address to the nation on 6 February 1940, Prime Minister Peter Fraser reminded New Zealanders that in relation to Māori grievances over the treaty, “It is not much good brooding over ancient wrongs” (New Zealand History Online 2008). Another attempt to wipe the national memory bank came on the same day, this time by way of an editorial in the New Zealand Herald, which read: “There has been much debate about the value of the Treaty of Waitangi as a legal instrument . . . about alleged violations, both early and later. Let that now be forgotten, since it is better to consider what has resulted from the most remarkable compact ever made between a civilized and primitive people” (New History Online 2008; emphasis added).

However, as much as the agents of official power wanted the messy, problematic features of the national past to be forgotten, they did not bank on the durability of Māori memory and the will of the people to not forget. Indeed, to that end, we might be reminded of the immortal words uttered by Mirek, a character in Milan Kundera’s The Book of Laughter and Forgetting: “The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting” (1996, 4).

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the use of Māori symbols for colonial and later national purposes was, by 1940, nothing new. They had been used to forge and sustain a sense of identity for New Zealand settlers since the late 1800s (even earlier if we consider the tattooing of Māori-Pākehā bodies with indigenous symbols as discussed briefly in chapter 1). However, in the context of the treaty commemorations—commemorations being, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot has argued, sites of historical production “that contribute to the continuous myth-making process” (Trouillot 1995, 116)—the inclusion of Māori cultural elements alongside European ones (i.e., a tall ship [presumably the HMS Endeavour], airplane, cityscape, and figure
of Zealandia cloaked in the New Zealand flag) was critical to creating the illusion of a national utopia, wherein Māori motifs provided ties to a deep past that Pākehā lacked, and Pākehā provided images of the national future that the nation was to strive toward (with Māori presumably having a little more ground to cover).

If the presence of Māori symbols on centennial commemorative materials such as the certificate of attendance created an image (literally and figuratively) of harmonious race relations, the physical involvement of Māori as cultural performers at the Centennial Exhibition made those good relations appear even more explicit. Māori culture groups performed for the public in haka demonstrations (Fig. 12), while others displayed and sold their traditional arts and crafts (McCarthy 2007, 89–90). Tuhaka Kapua, a Māori carver from Rotorua, had his own stall at the exhibition where he sold his work (Fig. 13). The stall front was a self-conscious representation of Māori culture in itself, featuring as it did kōwhaiwhai designs, a kōruru (mask that is usually placed on the gable of a meeting house), and a row of a punga fern logs to imply a palisade fence. Amidst these cultural “props” hung a sign that hailed passersby to come and “see him [Kapua] at work.”

Zealandia is the New Zealand equivalent of Britannia, the personification of Britain in female form. As Suzanne Romaine has pointed out, Zealandia symbolizes emerging nationhood in New Zealand (Romaine 2004, 50)

A native fern
While it cannot be emphasized enough the degree to which Māori were voluntary participants in the construction of the national myth of harmonious relations between Māori and Pākehā during the centennial celebrations, there were many others who used the occasion as an opportunity to air their grievances regarding the pilfering of their lands and other injustices leveled by the colonial government. Here, counter-memories of historical trauma revealed the fissure between
myth and reality. For example, Waikato and Taranaki iwi boycotted the centennial celebrations arguing that their compensation claims for confiscated lands had not yet been settled by the government (Orange 1987, 1996). One Tainui leader put the centennial celebrations in perspective with a pointed remark: “This is an occasion for rejoicing on the part of the pakehas and those tribes who have not suffered any injustices during the past 100 years” (New Zealand History Online, 2008). Ngāti Porou leader Apirana Ngata appealed to the Labour government to honor Māori petitions to settle grievances, so that they could finally “close their eyes to the past” (cited in Orange 1996, 73) and, in similar vein, Ngāi Tahu reminded the government that it had waited one hundred years for its land grievances to be settled, and that the centennial year was an appropriate time to make restitution (Orange 1987, 237). Appropriate in their eyes, but not in the eyes of the government—their request was denied. But, Māori would not allow their claims to go ignored, nor would they close their eyes to the past. To draw on the American novelist William Faulkner: “The past is never dead. It’s not even past” (1951, 92). The taiaha of indigenous activism was being sharpened for action.

The Sharp Tip of Māori Activism
The late 1960s and 1970s witnessed an upsurge in Native protest movements in New Zealand as a new generation of Māori leaders emerged. These young, university-educated urbanites were equipped to adopt new strategies of resistance and protest. In 1968, a group of Wellington-based Māori published Te Hokioi, a newsletter that its founders described as “a taiaha of truth for the Māori nation” (Walker 1984, 276). The newsletter focused on raising public awareness to the exploitation of Māori resources such as pounamu (greenstone), and issues regarding the control of Māori assets (Walker 1984). The myth of unity deployed during the 1940 centennial celebrations

86 Named after a mythical bird
also unraveled as Māori began hijacking the yearly Waitangi Day\textsuperscript{87} celebrations and using them as a platform to express their grievances over the treaty. In 1971 Ngā Tamatoa\textsuperscript{88}—a group of young Māori who were “politically conscious, radical, and unwaveringly committed to the pursuit of tino rangatiratanga [sovereignty]” (Harris 2004, 42)—mounted the first of many protests at Waitangi. Calling for the treaty to be ratified, members of the group wore black armbands and declared Waitangi Day as “a day of mourning” (Walker 1990, 211). The “foundation of nationhood” that the treaty symbolized began to shake and wobble, and the long-running myth of New Zealand as having “the best relations in the world” began to crumble and dissolve.

Other political events of significance included the 1975 Hīkoi (Land March), which involved the participation of over 40,000 people (both Māori and Pākehā) (Harris 2004),\textsuperscript{89} the

\textsuperscript{87} In 1960 the Labour government passed the Waitangi Day Act, declaring the 6 February as a “national day of thanksgiving in commemoration of the signing” of the treaty (cited in Orange 1996, 74). In 1973 it was made a public holiday

\textsuperscript{88} Meaning “Young Warriors,” Ngā Tamatoa emerged out of the Young Maori Leaders Conference in 1970, which was organized by Ranginui Walker. See Walker 1984, 1987, 1990; Harris 2004

\textsuperscript{89} At the head of the movement was 80-year old Whina Cooper, a kuia of the northern tribes. Forming the organization Te Roopu o te Matakiti (The Group of Visionaries), Cooper and members of Te Matakiti
Maori land protests at Raglan golf course in February 1978\textsuperscript{90} and the 105-day occupation of Takaparawha (Bastion Point) (Fig. 14) by members of the Ngāti Whātua tribe three months later.\textsuperscript{91}

These and other acts of resistance, as well as a growing recognition of indigenous and civil rights around the globe, culminated in a shift in government policies, chief of which was the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1976.\textsuperscript{92} Here, the long ignored treaty, the document that had been water-damaged, rat chewed, and at one time referred to as a legal nullity, suddenly began to be put to work—this time for Māori.

**The Bicultural Turn**

In an era of anti-colonialism and anti-racism in New Zealand, biculturalism\textsuperscript{93} emerged as a paradigmatic shift in domestic politics. Biculturalism, as Robert Sullivan has stated, "represented organized an impressive island-wide land march (hikoi) from Te Hāpua in the Far North to the seat of government in Wellington, a journey of 700 miles (Walker 1990, 214; Harris 2004). The marchers carried a Memorial of Rights that demanded that all government statutes that had the power to alienate, designate, or confiscate Māori land be repealed and that Māori be given control over their remaining lands in perpetuity (Harris 2004; Walker 1990).

\textsuperscript{90} On 12 February 1978, 17 people belonging to the Tainui Awhiro hapū were arrested for trespassing on the Raglan golf course during a protest rally. The land belonged to the hapū, but had been taken during the Second World War and never returned. February 2008 marked the 30\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the arrests. For an insightful discussion see Waikato Times Online 2008.

\textsuperscript{91} For a more in depth discussion of the Bastion Point occupation, see Merata Mita’s documentary *Bastion Point: Day 105* (1980). For a more in depth discussion of Māori resistance initiatives, see Walker 1990; Harris, 2004.

\textsuperscript{92} The tribunal was established under the auspice of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 and constituted the first legal mechanism through which Māori grievances could be heard in relation to perceived Treaty breaches by the Crown (Orange 1996; Walker 1990). Although a powerful mechanism for Māori social justice, the tribunal was initially limited by the fact that its members could not make awards to claimants (this was the sole purview of Parliament), nor could it investigate claims before 1975, which constituted the majority of grievances. A decade later, the Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act 1985 was passed to extend the tribunal’s scope of investigation to include claims dating back to 1840. For more on the Waitangi Tribunal and its adherence to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, see the Te Puni Kōkiri 2001.

\textsuperscript{93} In its nascent form, biculturalism was championed by the National government under the Māori affairs initiative “Tū Tangata” (meaning to “stand tall”) (Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 115). Put into effect in 1977, the aim of Tū Tangata was to empower Māori through such means as Māori language initiatives, like kōhanga reo (Māori language nests), and by establishing Māori employment-training schemes. As well, the Tu Tangata initiative set in motion the process of devolution, whereby control over the various social welfare programs for Māori was transferred from the bureaucratic, monolithic entity of the Department of

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the culmination of diplomacy between peoples, hearts and minds sort of stuff, appealing to New Zealanders’ national higher selves” (Sullivan 2006, 10). It was a concerted effort to break with racist assimilation policies and the embarrassing smear of the colonial past, and remake New Zealand in the image of Aotearoa (or, as is the case, Aotearoa/New Zealand). As Mark Williams has pointed out, New Zealand was “refashioned around the indigenous presence, a spiritualized land possessed of a special destiny” (Williams 1997,29). Biculturalism was thus a lofty, utopian ideal.

In terms of its nascent origins, sociologist Erik Schwimmer is credited with introducing the concept in his essay “The Aspirations of the Contemporary Māori” (1968). Here, Schwimmer defined biculturalism as accepting “as legitimate the values of a second culture,” having familiarity (to some extent) with that culture and its values, and the ability to “turn to them, if necessary, for subsidiary relationships” (Schwimmer 1968, 13). In a fundamental way, Schwimmer rejected a monocultural outlook and expanded biculturalism to include the “ability to see two sides of the question,” wherein there is a “confrontation and reconciliation of two conflicting value systems, both of which are accepted as valid” (Schwimmer 1968, 13; emphasis added). Here, biculturalism was to promote a spirit of partnership (indeed, Schwimmer drew on the metaphor of marriage to underscore this point in his definition of biculturalism) between Māori and Pākehā and a mutual sharing and understanding of each other’s culture. Indeed, under a bicultural model “each culture makes creative use of the other” (Schwimmer 1968, 13).

But, an important consideration in all of this joined “hearts and minds sort of stuff” was the fact that Māori were already bicultural, being that they were well-versed in the culture and values of the Pākehā; it was Pākehā who remained illiterate in the ways of Māori. Further,
partnership between Māori and Pākehā was only going to be possible if the latter was willing to share power. In a brief paper titled “The Meaning of Biculturalism” (1986), Ranginui Walker outlined what biculturalism would have to look like in order to gain legitimacy with Māori: “biculturalism means more than Pakehas learning a few phrases of Maori language and how to behave on the marae. It means they will have to share what they have monopolised for so long, power, privilege and occupational security” (1986, 5). Here, Walker called for a biculturalism that instituted substantive adjustments in the hegemonic structure—adjustments that placed Māori on the same footing as Pākehā. How, then, has biculturalism fared since Walker’s writing?

It can be argued that since its establishment as New Zealand’s official policy in the late 1980s, biculturalism has been in many ways a success in terms of the incorporation of Māori culture and values into mainstream New Zealand society. For example, Māori customary law has been integrated into many aspects of the Western legal system, and in 1993, for the first time in New Zealand land tenure history, Māori values and collective Māori ownership over land was recognized through the passing of the Te Ture Whenua Māori Act (Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 238). In 1986 the Waitangi Tribunal made Māori an official language of New Zealand and established Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) in the following year to promote it throughout the country (Waitangi Tribunal 2008). Three years later, the Education Act established kura kaupapa Māori as an official form of state schooling (see the Report on Kura Kaupapa Māori 1997). At the tertiary level, three prominent indigenous universities—Te Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiarangi, and Te Whare Wānanga o Raukawa—emerged in the 1990s and have since gained significant purchase in the New Zealand public education system, boasting at one time over 40,000 students, many

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94 Māori language immersion school. Literally: Māori foundations school. The first kura kaupapa was Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hoani Waititi in Henderson, Auckland in 1985
95 That number has since dropped to 25,000
of them non-Māori (Gerittsen 2008). Significantly, the whare wānanga—while providing an array of programs such as, in the case of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiarangi, media studies, environmental studies, as well as Māori studies—are all rooted in tikanga Māori 
practice.

The preservation and promotion of Māori language through radio and television media benefited from the passing of the Broadcasting Act in 1991, which acknowledged the principles of the treaty and imposed “a continuing obligation on the Crown to take such active steps as are reasonable to assist in the preservation of the Māori language by the use of both radio and television broadcasting” (Te Māngai Pāho 2008). To date, there are 21 iwi radio stations and Māori language is broadcast via television through a slew of Māori-oriented shows including Mana News, Television New Zealand’s (TVNZ) Channel One News show, and the very popular Māori Television. Indeed, concerning TVNZ’S commitment to promoting Māori language, in July 2008 it celebrated Māori Language Week by captioning two of its highest rating television shows—Shortland Street and Country Calendar—with Māori subtitles (TVNZ Blog, n.d.).

To turn to another civic space, in 1998 the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa opened its doors to the New Zealand public for the first time. Taking biculturalism as its founding concept, one of the stated goals of the museum is “to ensure the development of a strong operational partnership between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti that is active throughout the organisation and at the governance level” (Museum of New Zealand 2008). Te Papa hires Māori at all levels of its operations, one of the top positions being occupied by Michelle Hippolite in her capacity as Kaihautū (leader) of the museum.

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96 Māori custom, way of doing things
97 Māori Language Week was instituted in 1975 to promote the language. In 2008 it ran from 21–27 July. See New Zealand History online at: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/maori-language-week
For all intents and purposes, one would not be faulted for thinking that biculturalism has, on the whole, led to some significant victories for Māori in terms of the drafting of more equitable state policies and the acknowledgement, even valuing of indigenous culture. Certainly, Māori are far better off than they were three decades, even two decades ago. However, closer inspection reveals a “twist” in the bicultural turn that raises serious questions regarding the future for Māori-Pākehā relations and the nation as a whole.

The passing of the Foreshore and Seabed Act in 2004, which effectively stripped Māori of their customary title to foreshore and seabed resources, and a damning report issued two years later by the special rapporteur to the United Nations, who cited “evidence of deprivation and discrimination” regarding the situation of Māori in New Zealand (Mutu 2007, 235, 237), calls into question the legitimacy of biculturalism as a policy that is capable of rendering Māori as equal partners with Pākehā. As Māori academic Ani Mikaere asserted in a 2004 lecture titled “Are We All New Zealanders Now? A Māori Response to the Pākehā Quest for Indigeneity,” “The foreshore debacle has provided a timely reminder of the ease with which the Crown slips into its time-honoured pattern of threats and coercion, consigning Pākehā yet again to the role of oppressor” (Mikaere 2004, 12). More recently, the targeting of Māori living in the Tūhoe settlement of Ruatoki during anti-terror raids carried out by the New Zealand police in 2007 has generated heavy contestation over what some observers have pegged as racial discrimination. As Māori lawyer Moana Jackson stated in one interview, “I do not buy that this was a racially-neutral act” (New Zealand Herald Online 2007). The raids certainly put a significant dent in

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98 The Foreshore and Seabed Act contravenes article two of the Treaty of Waitangi, which states that Māori shall have “full exclusive and undisturbed possession of the Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties” (see Orange 1989, 31)
99 Tūhoe is a tribe whose lands are located between those of Te Arawa in the central North Island and those of the East Coast tribes (see Fig. 7a)
Vince Marotta’s assumption that biculturalism “is more tolerant, more understanding, wiser, freer and more at peace with itself” (Marotta 2000, 182). I do not think it is a far stretch to assume that the people of Ruatoki would laugh at such a suggestion given their recent experience.

Indeed, “the bucolic image of contentment between Maori and Pakeha” that biculturalism projects is beginning to dissolve under the glaring heat of reality (Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 43). Even the Treaty of Waitangi looks to be in danger. As Māori scholar Margaret Mutu has pointed out, “Legislation is currently before Parliament to remove all references to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi from all legislation” (Mutu 2008, 233). Such moves highlight a growing opposition to biculturalism, based on the feeling that Māori are being given too many privileges. This much was made clear in 2005 by then National leader Don Brash in his “Nationhood” speech. In it, Brash described the Treaty grievance process (and, by extension bicultural policies) as one “where the minority has a birthright to the upper hand” (cited in Scoop 2005). He went on to argue:

We intend to remove divisive race-based features from legislation. The “principles of the Treaty”—never clearly defined yet ever expanding—are the thin end of a wedge leading to a racially divided state and we want no part of that. There can be no basis for special privileges for any race, no basis for government funding based on race, no basis for introducing Maori wards in local authority elections, and no obligation for local governments to consult Maori in preference to other New Zealanders. (cited in Scoop 2005)

Where Brash’s tirade calls for the removal of race-based (essentially bicultural) legislation, some commentators argue that biculturalism was never much effective to begin with. Some analysts, such as Dominic O’Sullivan, argue that far from carving out a “path to justice,” biculturalism “assists the state to retain colonial authority” (O’Sullivan 2007, 18, emphasis added). In a similar way, Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley have pointed out that while on the surface Māori appear to be engaged as equal partners with Pākehā in chartering a course for New Zealand, “the power and authority remain firmly under Crown control” (Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 240; emphasis added)—hence, the passing of such pieces of legislation as the Foreshore and Seabed Act, despite widespread Māori opposition. Indeed, a closer examination of the bicultural model shows that
while it may offer an important means through which to conserve and promote Māori culture, it has not altered the hegemonic structures of Pākehā power. Getting past the surface characteristics, biculturalism begins to look very similar to its predecessors: assimilation and integration.

The trick that biculturalism plays on the imagination lies in the fact that it is accommodative. Antonio Gramsci’s definition of hegemony is critical to consider here. For Gramsci, the intrinsic characteristic of hegemony does not so much rest on the forceful domination by one group over another (e.g., the deployment of British and colonial troops during the Land Wars), but rather it rests on what I refer to here as a series of “strategic sacrifices.” Gramsci states that hegemony “presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise should be formed” (Gramsci in Hoare and Smith 2007, 161; emphasis added). The logic here is that in order to maintain power the dominant group must make certain concessions. Here, we might think about biculturalism through a Gramscian lens in the sense that it accommodates Māori, but only to the degree that such accommodations fit with the needs of the dominant group. Thus, while Māori have made considerable positive progress over the last several decades, such gains have ultimately been within very narrow and prescribed parameters.

To this end, I contend that biculturalism is a myth. Not in the sense that it is a lie—that is a much too simple (and erroneous) a definition—but rather in the sense that it naturalizes and makes innocent that which “is profoundly motivated” (Hall 1997, 153). As stated, biculturalism—while on the surface appearing to give a certain degree of power and autonomy to Māori—is ultimately motivated by hegemonic interests. Important in all of this is how such a myth becomes cemented in the national imaginary. In the following chapters, I consider the deployment of Māori symbols as critical elements in the construction of biculturalism, being transformed as they have from symbols of Māori culture to emblems of nationhood. Appearing in a number of everyday venues, from the koru on the tail of Air New Zealand’s planes to the
explosive performance of the haka on the rugby field, Māori symbols, in a powerful way, have become the moko\(^{100}\) on the face of New Zealand.

\(^{100}\) Moko refer to the permanent tattoos on the body or face in Māori culture and constitute a critical expression of identity. (Note: the process of creating tattoos is referred to as tā moko). For more on Māori tattoo meanings and methods, see for instance *Mau Moko: The World of Māori Tattoo* by Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (2007)
CHAPTER 3: SYMBOLIZING

Representing the Nation

“Nations, and national cultures are artifacts—continually imagined, invented, contested, and transformed by the agencies of individual persons, the state, and global flows of commodities” (Foster 1991, 252).

To represent something is to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses . . . To represent also means to symbolize, stand for, to be a specimen of, or to substitute for (in Hall 1997, 16)

In Naming the Other: Images of the Maori in New Zealand Film and Television, Martin Blythe observed:

There have always been many New Zealands, never just one. Imperial New Zealand, Maori New Zealand, Official New Zealand, your New Zealand, my New Zealand. Official New Zealand exists within the framework of nationalism: one small ship-of-a-nation state drifting toward Antarctica with 3.4 million people on board, sailing in search of the obligatory national identity, well stocked with sheep, kiwifruit, sporting venues, beautiful landscapes, and a sometime great notion of a nuclear free zone” (1994, 5; emphasis added).

Such “stocks” as referenced by Blythe have come to stand for or represent New Zealand in a fundamental way. They are used to flag our identity as a nation, appearing alongside other examples of Kiwiana including hokey pokey ice cream, the paua shell, the New Zealand bush

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101 Kiwiana, as Claudia Bell has described, “refers to particular artifacts and images that have been adopted as symbols of [the New Zealand] nation. They are intended to evoke an instant, positive sense of New Zealand” (Bell 1996, 175). More specifically, Kiwiana symbols are associated with Pākehā culture.
shirt, pavlova, fish and chips, rugby, the buzzy bee, wheetbix, marmite and vegemite, and ANZAC biscuits.

Blythe, however, stopped short of including another, more prevalent set of national referents: Māori symbols. It is impossible to ignore the burgeoning corpus of Māori cultural symbols that have come to represent, in a crucial way, the New Zealand nation. They appear in both “high” and “low” art, on everyday materials, such as advertising logos, clothing apparel, jewelry, logos on personal and corporate business cards, and on more official materials such as governmental letterheads, policy documents, national currency, and stamps. Māori symbols are made evident through national celebrations such as the Matariki festival—the Māori New Year—that is held each winter when the Matariki (Pleiades) constellation sets in New Zealand’s sky. Indeed, Māori symbolism traverses the sky each day in the form of the koru, the official logo of Air New Zealand, which appears on the tail of the airline’s planes, while on the ground the dynamic performance of the haka—read here as a performative symbol—inspires tens of thousands of All Black rugby fans into near frenzy before “kick off.” As well, the heitiki—a stylized adornment that in Māori culture symbolizes the wearer’s whakapapa (genealogy)—is transformed in the space of New Zealand popular culture into a kitsch icon, appearing on shoulder bags, t-towels (Fig. 15), cushions, t-shirts (Fig. 16), and shot glasses (Fig. 17). As Avril Bell has argued, Māori symbols “provide identifiably specific national signifiers . . . that Pākehā

102 A meringue-type dessert borrowed from Australia
103 A wooden pull-along toy in the likeness of a bee, the Buzzy Bee was first released in the 1940s.
104 A cereal biscuit
105 Condiments made of yeast and malt extracts
106 Anzac biscuits are named after the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, which was established during WWI. The biscuits, made primarily of oats, flour, and golden syrup, were baked by Australian and New Zealand women during both world wars and sent to soldiers fighting overseas
107 Importantly, it is only over the last decade that Matariki has gained momentum as a prominent national event. As stated by the New Zealand Māori Tourism Council, by 2011 it is hoped that it will be “New Zealand’s premier national celebration that celebrates our unique culture and heritage and fosters a strong sense of national identity” (New Zealand Māori Tourism Council 2008; emphasis added)
108 The All Blacks are New Zealand’s national rugby team
symbols such as jandals, kiwifruit, and pavlova just cannot match" (Bell 2004, 131; author’s emphasis). Māori academic Jonathan Mane-Wheoki has also noted the significance of Māori symbols in the crafting of the nation’s identity:

There are elements of Māori culture that are providing a sociocultural cohesian that Pākehā New Zealand would otherwise lack. They’re things like hei matau, pounamu, hei tiki, moko, and it’s interesting that on Waitangi Day, ten to twelve thousand New Zealanders gathered in Parliament Square in London and performed a haka. Now I’m not saying every one of those people knew how to perform ‘Ka mate, Ka mate,’ but they all had a go. When our national youth choir do a concert, they start off with a karanga [ceremonial call of welcome], a waiata [song], a haka, so there are lots of elements of Māori culture that have become normalized.109

Figure 15. Tiki tea towel titled “A Classic Kiwi Symbol.” Photo by Marata Tamaira

Figure 16. Tiki t-shirts. Photo courtesy of Katherine Higgins

109 Interview reproduced with permission, Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, Wellington, New Zealand, 1 July 2008
How is it, then, that the symbols of Māoridom have come to be so critical to the nation’s visual identity? How did they make the transcendent leap from their indigenous cultural milieu to the national domain, coming to constitute both symbolic and economic assets in the nation’s “identity portfolio”? How is that they have come to carry more visual mana (prestige) than, say, the symbols associated with the dominant Pākehā culture? In this chapter, I explore these questions within the much larger context of Māori symbols and their deployment as emblems of bicultural identity in New Zealand. I focus on one symbol in particular: the koru, which features prominently in popular New Zealand culture. As I show, the deployment of the koru is rooted in a complex framework of nationalist discourse that both empowers and co-opts Māori within a shifting field of hegemonic relations. On the one hand the koru might be viewed as an element of Māori culture that has been uprooted from its original context and recast as a symbol of the nation, while on the other its deployment on the national terrain might be viewed as a celebration of indigenous art and culture, making Māori more visible both to themselves as well as the dominant culture. Indeed, “Appreciation and appropriation” as Nicholas Thomas has contended, are “intimately connected” (1999, 158).
I also consider how the koru constitutes one of many cultural elements that are deployed in a process referred to by Michael Billig as banal nationalism (Billig 1995). Banal nationalism here refers to the unconscious habits of everyday experience; the “routine and familiar forms of nationalism” that tend to go unnoticed and un-remarked (Billig 1995, 8). New Zealand may be a “small ship-of-a-nation state” drifting perilously toward the great southern continent, but as I contend, it is the sheer weight of these quotidian, taken-for-granted symbols—Maori symbols—that keep us anchored, rooted if you prefer a more arboreal motif, to our national, bicultural identity. Before continuing further, however, a brief discussion of “nation” is required.

Turning to the concept of the nation, I want to begin in an unexpected place—with a passage in Irish novelist James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. The scene is set in an Irish pub. As the ale flows and the clientele wax philosophical, a dialogue unfolds:

—But do you know what a nation means? says John Wyse.
—Yes, says Bloom.
—What is it? says John Wyse.
—A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.
—By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that’s so I’m a nation for I’m living in the same place for the past five years. So of course everyone had a laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:
—Or also living in different places. (Joyce 1946, 325)

I chose this short conversation between the two fictional characters John Wyse and Leopold Bloom as a starting point, because it illustrates very simply the ambivalence surrounding the question: What constitutes a nation? Bloom offers that it is the same people living in the same place, while Wyse expands on his friend’s assertion to include those same people living in different places. Indeed, the uncertainty and open-endedness of their statements echoes Benedict Anderson’s observation that “Nation, nationality, nationalism—all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse” (1991, 3).

Of course, the slippery nature of “nation-ness” has not deterred those who would try to understand the complexity of its meaning. In 1882 in a lecture delivered at the Sorbonne titled
"What is a Nation?" ("Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?") French theorist Ernest Renan described the nation as "a soul, a spiritual principle" the citizens of which constitute a "spiritual family" rather than a "group determined by the shape of the earth" (Renan 1990, 19). Since then others have sought to scale and feel for the elusive contours of the nation, among them such notables as Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, and the already-mentioned Benedict Anderson. Importantly, while offering their own idiosyncratic definitions of "nation," as well as "nationalism" and "national identity," all three have nevertheless agreed on one specific and important point: the nation and its related forms are inherently constructed. In Nations and Nationalism, Gellner contended that, "The cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions. Any old shred would have served as well" (1983, 1). Similarly, in The Invention of Tradition, Hobsbawm and Ranger referred to the nation as a "recent historical innovation" whose associated phenomena, "nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories" all rest "on exercises in social engineering which are often deliberate and always innovative" (1983, 13). Finally, Anderson focused on the imaginary nature of the nation, highlighting the role museums, censuses, maps, and print media play in creating an "imagined political community," imagined "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (1990 [1983], 6).

It is important to point out here, however, that the concept of nation is not without its problems and dilemmas. Indeed, at the heart of the issue lies the prevailing assumption that the nation constitutes a tightly bounded, homogenous entity. For example, the flag-waving masses seen on television sets all across the United States as well as abroad during the 2009 inaugural speech by newly sworn in US President Barack Obama did not constitute a mere rag-tag assortment of people expressing their support of the next president, rather they signified the wider American collective, a nation of people celebrating themselves with all the patriotic fervor that has come to be equated with American national sentiment. Similarly, in 1995 when tens of
thousands of New Zealanders lined Queen Street in Auckland city—waving not flags but red socks\(^{10}\) to welcome home Sir Peter Blake and his crew after their America’s Cup win—they were not simply a crowd of Kiwis welcoming home the winners, they represented the nation welcoming home its fellow citizens. Such “images of communion” as they are frequently deployed through such modes of representation as television and print media make it easy to forget that nations are inherently made up of a heterogenous, not homogenous membership.

In fact, as Giselle Byrnes has articulated, “the nation’ as a composite and singular body is a fiction” and, what is more, in the case of New Zealand, it is “a settler creation” (2007, unpaginated). Her views echo those of Peter Gibbons, who several years earlier, in his 1992 dissertation, remarked that New Zealand constituted “a huge cultural artifact produced (or invented) by the settler society” (cited in O’Connor 2004, 166). One might wonder if other such inventions as constructed by New Zealand settler society might include biculturalism. Byrnes has this to say on the matter:

Biculturalism itself is a flawed notion. . . . because it posits Maori in a (junior) position with the Crown and assumes that the cultural and political constituencies of Maori and Pakeha are homogenous. Biculturalism is a seductive concept because is promises liberation by respecting difference—but in reality it can be a sort of ideological straightjacket. (Byrnes 2007, unpaginated)

The main point I want to make here is that nations—in particular the New Zealand nation—are by no means innocent or natural; they are not a mere fact. Rather, they are driven by powerful interests and “carry the force to become ‘real,’ and to compel the imagination of community in a particular direction” (Foster 1991, 254). In New Zealand, the national community is compelled to imagine itself in the context of a bicultural framework. This thesis attempts to wriggle out of that “ideological straightjacket” by critically examining those processes that make bicultural

\(^{10}\) Red socks were Peter Blake’s good luck charm during the 1995 America’s Cup and were worn by New Zealander’s during the yachting competition as a sign of support.
nationalism in New Zealand appear real and concrete, despite its inherent flaws and contradictions.

If nations are artifacts (as offered by Robert J Foster in the epigraph preceding this chapter), or as Homi Bhabha has stated, narrated, in the sense that they are literally and figuratively written into existence (Bhabha 1990, 292), what then constitutes the materials of their construction/narration? What are the binding agents that enable a hodge-podge, heterogeneous population like New Zealand to view itself as a single, collective entity? Stefan Berger has argued that history plays a pivotal role in the construction of nation and national identity: “Nation-builders everywhere agreed: their nation had to have a history—the longer and prouder the better” (2007, 1). Other nation-making, identity-making apparatuses include, as Anderson has pointed out, museums, censuses, maps, and print media (the former of which will be considered in the next chapter). And, important to this thesis is Foster’s cogent offering that the nation also materializes through “a variety of collective practices and representations” (Foster 1991, 239)—representations that include symbols of nationhood such as flags, anthems, festivals, and, as I posit, referents borrowed (or, as has sometimes been the case, appropriated) from indigenous culture. In the next section, I consider how it is that elements of Māori culture have come to hold a place of such high significance in the construction of the nation. As I argue, indigenous culture, as taken up by settlers and their heirs, serves to legitimize their place in New Zealand.

Māori Symbols and the Quest for a Settled Settler Identity

Nationalism “cultivates the symbols, the fetishes of an autochthonous national character, which must be preserved against dissipation” (Etienne Balibar cited in Alonso 1994, 388).

“Settler societies are composed initially of very unsettled people” (Gibbons 2002, 7).

As the number of locally born settlers increased in New Zealand during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the umbilical cord connecting Pākehā to mother Britain began to slowly dry and wither. Where early colonists had sought to impose their British identity on the new
land—introducing a veritable and virile portmanteau of Old World flora and fauna including gorse, white clover, oak trees, wheat and barley, cattle, salmon, rabbits, and, of course, sheep (Gibbons 2002; Crosby 1986), and replacing indigenous place names with their own European ones—by the early twentieth century, their offspring, who had “no direct experience of the old world, or very little, as an internalized, remembered frame of reference” (Gibbons 2002, 8), gradually began looking to indigenous culture to settle what was for all intents and purposes an unsettled and uncertain identity.

In Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures (1989) Terry Goldie employed the term “indigenization” to describe the process by which settlers and their descendents sought to create a space of belonging in lands to which they were not native. Indigenization, Goldie has suggested, “came when a person moved to a new place and recognized an Other as having greater roots in that place” (1989, 14). In the case of New Zealand, Māori became the “Other” upon which white settlers relied to provide them with a sense of rooted-ness. “By seeing themselves in relation to the Maori rather than in relation to Britain, the Pakeha were advancing their claims to authentic belonging in New Zealand” (Williams 1997, 23). Gibbons has argued that the self-fashioning of a naturalized settler identity took place through a series of “textualizing strategies” (Gibbons 2002), whereby Māori culture was made known to settlers through the written word. Māori myths were the first element of indigenous culture to be used as scaffolding for an indigenized settler identity as well as for fostering an autochthonous national character. As Jock Phillips has stated, “Maori myths . . . began to be seen as providing New Zealanders with a mythology to replace classical or Norse myths” (2003, 170). Other textualizing strategies included the incorporation of Māori words into a budding New Zealand literature.

In early colonial writings, there existed a deep ambivalence to the new land. As nationalist writer Allen Curnow observed, “The nineteenth-century colonists achieved their migration bodily, but not in spirit” (Curnow 1960, 20). Such tension and fragmentation, as it
existed for early colonists—stuck as they were between the home of Natives where they had set down roots, and their native home in England, for which they longed—made it difficult to kindle a sense of nation-ness in their written experiences of their adopted land. However, poet Alan Mulgan, argued that for the New Zealander who had never seen Britain, the inclusion of English referents in homegrown literature lacked the force of the lived experience. Wonderingly, he asked the question, “May we not . . . find music in our own names?” (cited in Gibbons 2002, 12). Importantly, by “our own names,” Mulgan specifically alluded to those derived from Māori culture. Consider a section of his poem, titled “Aldebaran”:

Meadowsweet, primrose, Hebrides; / Kowhai, Sirius, Moana, Miro; / Aldebaran, Wainui, Miro; / Konini, konini, rosemary, riro (cited in Gibbons 2002, 12). Here, the poet mixed Māori vernacular plant names—kowhai, moana, miro, wainui, konini, and riro—with those of English varieties in what amounts to a textual potpourri. Such borrowings from Māori culture, as Mark Williams has pointed out, enabled Pākehā to “tap into and extend their consciousness of belonging” in New Zealand (1997, 25). The words and symbols of Māori culture provided the raw materials out of which that consciousness—a national, rooted consciousness—could take shape. Indigenous identity was also imbibed through performative strategies. Gibbons makes reference to Our Nation’s Story, a history textbook published during the 1930s and 1940s for New Zealand school children. In one volume, children were encouraged to play at being Māori: “Imagine you are a sentinel . . . Tell the story of an attack on the pa; or if you are a girl, tell the story of how your mother cooked food in the hangi” (cited in Gibbons 2002, 13). Here, the fantasy or consciousness of belonging is fixed through the deployment of stereotypical symbols associated with Māori culture, such as the pa (village) and the hangi (underground oven). As Gibbons has argued, such fanciful imaginations necessarily eschewed the contemporary reality of Māori—who at that time had become enveloped within the folds of Western society through a process of systematic assimilation—and instead focused on those elements of Māori culture that were perceived to be rooted in deep, ahistorical time, thus providing non-Māori with a more authentic experience of belonging, a
“non-industrial authenticity” (Thomas 1994, 185). The problem here, of course is that by relegating Māori to the past, it necessarily concealed the economic, social, and cultural problems they faced in the present.

Playing Native was not a new or recent phenomenon by the 1930s and 1940s when Our Nation’s Story was being circulated around schools. Indeed, it was plainly evident at the 1906 Christchurch International Exhibition (discussed in the introduction), where Pākehā donned Māori dress and other accoutrements—such as feather cloaks and taiaha—to become “Pākehā Māori for a Day” (Williams 1997). The desire to perform and experience indigenous culture and to secure a sense of place on foreign soil was by no means isolated to New Zealand, either. In Playing Indian, Philip Joseph Deloria examined the role “the Indian” played in shaping American imaginings of self and place in a land that had been acquired through genocidal violence. He reveals that for some Americans, playing Indian became a hobby through which an authentic “Otherness” could be secured. “Indianness, with its multilayered history of evocative symbolism, offered a rich palette of additional meanings—nature, patriotic rebellion, freedom, and Americanness itself” (Deloria 1998, 142). Such has been the case in New Zealand, where symbols of Māori culture have been evoked to settle settlers’ unease and offer them a turangawaewae (place of standing) of which they would otherwise be bereft—indeed, a sense of New Zealandness.

What then can we say of the heirs of those settlers in the bicultural era? Have they succeeded in overcoming the “sad sense of displacement” (Williams 1997, 25) that their forbears struggled with? As I argue, biculturalism is part of a continuum whereby Māori culture has been used to furnish an insecure Pākehā identity in New Zealand, in the colonial and now the contemporary period. Biculturalism allows Pākehā to continue to draw from Māori culture, while simultaneously retaining control over the broader systems of power. While on the surface the thrust of biculturalism is to create parity between Māori and Pākehā, when looked at closely, its real utility is in serving the dominant group. That is not to say that biculturalism has not offered
Maori some access to power. But, such concessions must be seen for what they are—as strategic sacrifices that the dominant group can afford to make in order to sustain its hegemonic interests.

As Ben Dibley has so saliently pointed out,

Biculturalism then can be read, in part, as an attempt to suture a postcolonial identity for settler heirs, filling the void conditioned by ‘the crisis of postcolonialism’ with meaning, being and identity. In this way biculturalism comes to supply a new legitimizing narration of New Zealand nationhood, concerned to secure a postcolonial national culture and identity by redefining New Zealand as a bicultural national formation. (Dibley 1996, 7)

So, how does the suturing of a postcolonial, bicultural identity take place? The answer is to be found on the surface of everyday life in New Zealand, where the symbols of Maori culture are everywhere apparent.

In 2008, Taranaki high school student Phoebe Harrop won the Humanities Award in a writing competition for Year 12 and 13 students. Titled “The New NZer [New Zealander]: Life in the 21st Century,” Harrop began:

She has blonde hair, pale skin and blue eyes. And she’s wearing a moko [Maori facial tattoo] on her chin. “I can imagine a whole group of people turning in their graves at the thought of this,” she says. It’s the blatant display of biculturalism that has people stopping and staring as she strolls through Pukekura Park in New Plymouth. Rachel Helms, singer extraordinaire and student representative of Victoria University, is of mixed descent: “Scottish and Irish and maybe English. Definitely not Maori! (New Zealand Herald Online 2008a; emphasis added)

As the above excerpt shows, Maori culture—as it did in the past and now continues to do so in the present—functions as a strategic resource in the twenty first century in terms of providing the markers of a post-colonial identity for Pakeha in the bicultural period, in this case the drawing of a moko on the chin of a young Pakeha woman. It is notable to point out, however, that such

Dibley’s deployment of the term “postcolonial” should not be taken as an acceptance that colonialism in New Zealand has ended, but rather it reflects a common assumption on the part of many settler nations—including New Zealand—that the colonial days are over. If colonialism entailed the suppression of indigenous culture, postcolonialism entails the embracing of indigenous culture as a means by which settler nations may distance themselves from their colonial roots. However, in many instances, as is the case in New Zealand, the same colonial power structures remain in place, thus underscoring the superficiality of the term “postcolonial”
markings can be easily washed off. It is one thing for Pākehā to play at being Māori, but it is another for them to live the everyday reality of their Māori counterparts. But, biculturalism is not just characterized by Pākehā use of Māori symbols as a display of their bicultural status. Rather, Māori are willing participants in the deployment of their symbols for national use. For example, Māori artist Rangi Kipa—whose corian hei tiki's have gained tremendous popularity in Aotearoa New Zealand, and are worn by Māori and non-Māori alike—openly encourages the deployment of Māori symbols.

During a lecture series held at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum in 2008, Kipa asserted: “Now that we’re in a position of power, the sharing of things isn’t such an issue. . . . The sooner we start developing a design language we can share the better . . . It’s all part of people making a way in our lives together” (Kipa 2008). One Māori-run company that has taken up Kipa’s exhortation to share Māori symbols with the nation is Kia Kaha, the New Zealand-based clothing company owned and operated by Daniel Love and his wife Charmaine. Meaning “To Stand Tall/Proud,” Kia Kaha employs a range of Māori motifs that appear on both casual and evening wear and over the last thirteen years has grown to become a thriving multi-million dollar competitor in the fashion business. For Matene Love, the managing director of Kia Kaha, Māori having the competitive edge in business is crucial:

We need to make the call as a cultural identity: do we want to compete or not? We can’t be too precious and do it piecemeal or we shouldn’t do it at all. We found it hard when we established our business to be recognised as a premium clothing brand here in New Zealand because of our cultural identity. We stuck it out and overcame all of the negative stereotypes associated with Maori business and now we have all sorts of New Zealanders wearing Maori-influenced clothing (2007, 48)

Indeed, walking down any street in New Zealand, it is not difficult to identify the characteristic swirl of Māori motifs and the Kia Kaha brand name emblazoned on apparel worn by old, young, Māori, and non-Māori alike.

In the next section, I focus on the koru, a symbol that has its roots in Māori culture, but which now constitutes a prominent feature of national visual identity. It is the argument of this
thesis that Māori symbols, such as the koru, not only function as building blocks in the construction of the nation, but as well they simultaneously work to naturalize the ideology of biculturalism. Māori symbols, I contend, mask the inherent contradictions in the bicultural model, making real what is illusory, making common sense that which is motivated by powerful agendas. In this way, then, they may be viewed as part of the myth-making process, the function of which is to cover over contradiction. Here, Māori appear equal with Pākehā, while in reality they remain in a subordinate position as junior partners (see Fleras and Spoonley 2002).

Let me repeat here Barthes’ statement as relayed in the introduction to this thesis: “Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact” (Barthes 1972, 143; emphasis added). Myth, as Barthes has stated, also constitutes a type of speech, a system of representation that relies on a stockpile of materials to make its utterances heard: “We must here recall that the materials of mythical speech (the language itself, photography, painting, posters, rituals, objects, etc.), however different at the start, are reduced to a pure signifying function as soon as they are caught by myth. Myth sees in them only the same raw material” (Barthes 1972, 114).

As I argue, Māori symbols have in various ways and to certain degrees been ensnared by myth, coopted and utilized as the raw material of bicultural speech. Here, they may be seen to affirm the ideology of biculturalism by making it appear natural and by purifying it of its inherent flaws. However, to focus solely on such negative readings of these symbols would be a mistake. As Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright have pointed out, the meaning ascribed to images, symbols, or any other kind of signifying vehicle is by no means fixed—“dominant or shared meanings . . . can also be interpreted and used in ways that do not conform to these meanings” (Sturken and Cartwright 2001, 45). The field of meaning making, therefore, constitutes a site of struggle as well as negotiation, collaboration as well as contestation. It is a site where multiple stakeholders converge to make their own claims on the materials of representation—in the case of
this thesis, Māori symbols in general and the koru in particular—to shape them to their own needs and agendas. While some of those agendas necessarily entail the cooption of Māori culture, in other instances they foster positive growth and cultural empowerment. Both Māori and Pākehā are part of this dynamic process of meaning making through the harnessing and deployment of indigenous symbols, in ways that sometimes support the status quo, and at other times in ways that challenge and subvert it.

UNFURLING THE KORU IN NATIONAL CULTURE

Observe the young and tender frond / of this punga: shaped and curved / like the scroll of a fiddle: fit instrument / to play archaic tunes. / I see the shape of a coiled spring (A R D Fairburn, “Conversation in the Bush” in Curnow 1945, 117)

“Of all Maori forms, the koru is the one most often asserted as signature of place, and so as a national sign” (Pound 1994, 67).

No other symbol evokes a greater sense of place on the New Zealand national terrain than the koru.

Derived from the “young and tender frond” of the tree fern (or ponga) (Fig. 18), the koru motif constitutes a primary design feature in Māori art (Phillipps 1960; Neich 1993; Buck 1950; Barrow 1984).


112 In Dictionary of the Maori Language, Herbert W Williams translates the pitau as a “young succulent shoot of a plant, especially circinate frond of a fern” (Williams 1957, 284)
Māori scholar Peter Buck (Te Rangihiroa) noted that it is difficult to imagine how the Māori artist “could have avoided being influenced in thought by the spiral curve of fern fronds” (Buck 1950, 328). The influence of these “arborescent metaphors” on early Māori artisans was wide and sweeping, appearing in such practices as tā moko (tattooing) (Fig. 19), whakairo (carving), kōwhaiwhai (scroll patterns, of which the koru is the basic design element)\textsuperscript{113} (Fig. 20), and ipu whakairo (gourd carving) throughout the various tribes.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{maori_chief_tattoo.jpg}
\caption{Head of Māori chief showing full facial tattoo. Drawing by William Francis Robert Gordon 1921. Reference number A-092-023. Courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{113} Kōwhaiwhai constitute the central design feature on the rafters and ridgepoles of meeting houses as well as tombs, monuments, and paddles (see Neich 1993, 38)
Classified under three categories—single spiral, interlocking double spiral, and interlocking double looped spiral (Barrow 1984, 46)—the koru constitutes a significant part of the cosmological and spiritual universe of Māori, symbolizing “latent and potential energy, the life principle, light and enlightenment” (cited in Sullivan 2005, 16).

Whether tattooed on skin, carved or painted on wood, the koru, in an indigenous context, functions as an important element in the expression of individual identity (here I refer to the Māori carver/tā moko practioner or moko wearer), collective identity (tribe and sub-tribe), and ancestral connections (Shand 2002; Mead 1984). As Arapata Hakiwai has articulated, “Maori art is a manifestation of a larger whole. Tribal traditions, the stories of ancestors, genealogical relationships, symbols and metaphors, the taha wairua or spiritual elements that unifies our world are among the essential elements of Maori art” (Hakiwai 1996, 54; author’s emphasis). Further, while the koru is not considered tapu (sacred) in and of itself, the practices with which it is associated, specifically tā moko, whakairo, and kōwhaiwhai make it a highly charged and mana-laden symbol. For example, commenting on the kōwhaiwhai designs that feature in meeting houses, Roger Neich has noted the spiraling motifs’ connotational association with “inherited power and authority” (Neich 1993, 38). Similarly, concerning tā moko and whakairo, both practices were “the most bound by the laws of tapu” (Neich 1993, 20). However, the koru, while associated with the realm of the sacred and thereby
imbued with its own source of mana, is nevertheless a highly flexible symbol (Sullivan 2005, 14). As with any work of art, new meanings and expressions are possible.

The koru—that “simple curving stalk with a bulb at one end” (Phillipps 1960, 7)—has undergone significant transformation in the bicultural context both at a denotational and connotational level (see Skinner n.d). Indeed, as I show, when transplanted from the loamy “soil” of indigenous culture to the national terrain, the koru unfurls in dynamic ways.

One does not have to venture far to find evidence of the koru’s recent transformation. It features as a logo for numerous corporations and government agencies (Fig. 21), and it appears on commodities such as T-shirts, tea towels, key rings, and shoulder bags. What I want to discuss more specifically here, however, is the potential for the koru to appear on one of the most prominent expressions of nation-ness: the flag. A country’s flag, “the national symbol number one” as Susanne Reichl has referred to it (Reichl 2004, 206), constitutes a powerful distillation of any nation. The koru’s distinction as a symbol of national import came into sharp focus in 2003 when the NZFlag.com Trust launched a nation-wide campaign to change the New Zealand flag.

Two of the principle reasons for the proposed change rested on the perception by many that the existing flag—characterized as it is by the British Union Jack in the upper left-hand
corner—is too reminiscent of the nation’s colonial history, and second, that it bears too close a resemblance with New Zealand’s neighbor and long-time rival, Australia. As poet and short fiction writer Jeffrey Paparoa Holmon penned in a short poem that appears on the trust’s Web site: Our present flag’s a dismal rag with the Pomme Jack in the corner/our stars look like Australia’s:/colonial nostalgia!/Let’s make a flag for who we are/for Māori and for Pākehā (http://www.nzflag.com/opinion.cfm).

To find a flag that distinguished the country in ways more reflective of “who we are, for Māori and for Pākehā,” the trust’s organizers issued a nation-wide call for design proposals. The competition netted numerous submissions that included well-worn motifs such as the silver fern, the Southern Cross, the kiwi, and more significantly, the koru. A quick glance at the proposed designs from the 2003 flag campaign reveals the extent to which the koru has curled its way into the national consciousness. For example, of the eight artists whose designs were being seriously considered for the proposed new national flag, five took their inspiration from the koru motif. One designer, Donna Cross, noted that her koru design encapsulated, “Land, sea, sky, growth, biculturalism and a real sense of belonging to the Pacific” (NZFlag.com Trust, 2004a). Another designer, Jeff James, a fifth generation New Zealander, said of his proposed green and white flag, titled “Koru” (Fig. 22):

I tried to look beyond the short-term expectations for a new flag, envisaging what Aotearoa/New Zealand will stand for in a hundred or more year’s [sic] time. I was looking for the essence of our culture, something simple and striking, one icon that would represent us all. In the end it came down to the koru. Nothing else was needed. . . In addition to the koru’s inherent symbolism of growth, new life and hope, the form suggests our fern, sea and cloud. The intertwining spirals represent the past and future joining, and diverse cultures living together in balance. (NZFlag.com Trust 2004b; emphasis added)

114 It is important to point out here that the proposal for a koru motifed flag is not new. In 1983, acclaimed Austrian artist Fredrick Hundertwasser—who became a New Zealand citizen in the 1970s—initiated a campaign under the nationalist parole, “A Flag of Our Own,” to create a flag “for New Zealand which represents an unmistakable identity” (from Hundertwasser’s flag proposal in Leonard 1987, 10). His proposed design, the “Koru Flag” (flag), while it was not officially approved of, nevertheless enjoyed widespread support from the general Kiwi population (Restany 2002, 72).
Here, James’s koru takes on the qualities of a polysemic motif, shifting between fern, sea, cloud, growth, new life, hope, and the temporal domains of past and future. We might imagine the koru—the “one icon that would represent us all”—as a unifying spiral, gathering the national collective together into its coiling form, a visual exemplar of unity and partnership.

But, as with any symbol, the meaning ascribed to the koru is unstable and it takes on new connotations under the banner of Māori sovereignty in the form of the Tino Rangatiratanga (Māori Independence) flag (Fig. 23).

Featuring as the central design feature on the Tino Rangatiratanga flag, the koru is imbued with a political force of its own. While retaining its connotational associations of growth, and life, as expressed in James’ proposal, the Tino Rangatiratanga koru diverges from
expressions of national unity, becoming instead a counter-hegemonic symbol, a salient reminder of the continued struggle of Māori against injustice and inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand. As Māori activist Tia Taurere has stated, “The Tino Rangatiratanga flag symbolises the long tradition of struggle and resistance by Maori against colonisation and the Crown sponsored theft of Maori land and resources. It is a symbol used by Maori who continue to resist the pressures of colonisation and cultural and economic genocide” (Indigenous Portal 2008).

![Figure 24. Participants in Foreshore and Seabed Hikoi, Parliament grounds, Wellington. 5 May 2004. Reference number PADL-000075-07. Courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand](image)

Designed by members of the protest group Te Kawariki Haraina Marsden—Jan Smith, and Linda Munn in 1990 (Skinner n.d)—the tri-color¹¹⁵ Tino Rangatiratanga flag has become a critical symbol of Māori protest at Treaty of Waitangi Day events as well as protest marches,

¹¹⁵ The flag is made up of red, black, and white, widely considered the “traditional” colors of Māori culture
such as the one carried out in response to the foreshore and seabed debate in 2004 (Fig. 24). Indeed, at its first unfurling at the 1990 Waitangi Day celebrations, the flag was intended to disrupt “the cosy image of a bicultural nation that was being promoted by the government” (Skinner n.d). Given that the flag symbolizes Māori resistance to Pākehā hegemony, it should come as no surprise that when placed on national landmarks, it is viewed with a measure of ambivalence and, more to the point, opposition.

In 2007, members of the sovereignty group Te Ata Tino Toa made plans to fly the flag from a significant landmark in Auckland—the Auckland Harbour Bridge—in observance of Waitangi Day. However, their request for a permit to do so was staunchly denied by Transit New Zealand,116 which policy at the time was to only fly flags belonging to countries recognized by the United Nations.117 The following year, Te Ata Tino Toa took things into their own hands, creating the largest ever Tino Rangatiratanga Flag (measuring 7 meters by 14 meters) and flying it by plane over the bridge (Indigenous Portal 2008). Te Ata Tino Toa spokesperson Teanau Tuiono commented, “If they can’t recognize our mana within their established status quo structures, our response is to get creative and show how our mana can transcend their pettiness” (Scoop 2008). The flag debate looks set to continue in 2009. In support of Te Ata Tino Toa’s endeavors to fly the flag on Auckland Harbour Bridge on Waitangi Day 2009, Minister of Māori Affairs Dr Pita Sharples recently argued, “I want the flag up there . . . I think it’s a symbol of the new direction this Government is taking by inviting the Māori Party to be part of it . . . putting the Tino Rangatiratanga flag up alongside the New Zealand flag shows a willingness by New Zealand to recognize the bicultural nature of our foundation which is recognized on Waitangi

116 Transit New Zealand is the governmental agency in charge of New Zealand roads
117 That policy changed in 2007. Currently, only the New Zealand flag is permitted to fly on the bridge. In the year previous to the Tino Rangatiratanga flag debacle, at least five foreign flags were flown on the bridge including Holland, the Republic of Panama, Turkey, Austria, and Hungary. See Transit archives at: http://www.transit.govt.nz/news/news-archive19.jsp
Day” (New Zealand Herald Online 2009a; emphasis added). Sharples’ colleague, Māori Party MP Hone Harawira echoed his sentiments stating: “the flying of the two flags gives Māori a sense that we are becoming closer to the partnership that the Treaty always talked about” (TVNZ Online 2009).

Importantly, Sharples and Harawira allude to what might be considered a more substantive expression of biculturalism, whereby Māori and Pākehā constitute separate but equal components of an overarching unity, the flags of both nations flying side-by-side as a symbol of their bicultural partnership. However, as is the current state of affairs in New Zealand, Māori are forced to maneuver within the very narrow parameters set by the dominant group. That Māori are denied the right by a governing entity to fly a symbol of their sovereign identity—a koru-motified flag—for one day on a 50-year old bridge, reveals in a simple but stark way the enduring hegemonic borders that define Māori-Pākehā relations and clearly underscores the shaky foundations on which biculturalism stands. Indeed, if Māori symbols are to be deployed as part of the nation’s visual culture, equality between the two bicultural partners must be a lived reality. If not, the image of New Zealand as a bicultural country becomes nothing more than a disingenuous, empty expression of nation-ness, “with Māori providing merely the indigenising and localising elements” (Dibley 1996, 68). Jeff James’ koru-inspired design may be considered a worthy candidate as the country’s potential new flag, but it will only gain legitimacy as a symbol that truly represents us all after the Tino Rangatiratanga koru is permitted to be hoisted and flown free of restrictions.

118 I would like to thank Dr Terence Wesley-Smith for this important insight
119 I should point out here that while many Māori view the Tino Rangatiratanga flag as a symbol of Māori sovereignty and identity, it is by no means a perspective shared by all. Further, the flag is not only flown by Māori, but as well some Pākehā
120 It should be noted that after two years of campaigning to change the New Zealand flag, the NZFlag.com Trust organizers failed to acquire the requisite 270,000 signatures to warrant a referendum (only 100,000 signed the petition).
The Sky's the Limit

Nowhere does the koru appear more prominently on the national terrain than as the corporate logo of Air New Zealand. Established in 1939 as Tasman Empire Airways Limited (TEAL), Air New Zealand began deploying the koru in larger than life form on the tails of its fleet in 1973 (Air New Zealand 2006) (Fig. 25).

Since then, the koru has operated as the company’s defining symbol, featuring on promotional and merchandising material, as well as stationary (e.g., business cards, manual covers etc). The koru has also been incorporated into the company’s nomenclature. Frequent fliers are eligible to become members of the Air New Zealand Koru Club, which offers among other perks access to the plush interior of the Koru Lounge, where members may relax while waiting for their flight. Indeed, the degree to which the koru has become a key component of Air New Zealand’s visual identity came into sharp focus in November 2008 when Air New Zealand Airbus A320 crashed in the frigid waters off the coast of southern France killing all on board. Watching the tragic aftermath as it unfolded over the Internet, there was one image that kept being repeated—the removal of the plane’s battered tail from the water, its koru scratched but still intact. The effect of that poignant image was evident in Opposition Leader Phil Goff’s parliamentary address,

As New Zealanders, all of us would have been affected by seeing the picture of the tail fin of the Airbus, with the koru emblem on it, floating in the ocean. It brought back the memory of a crash, 29 years earlier, of an Air New Zealand
plane on Mount Erebus, in Antarctica, where we saw the very sad picture of the koru on the tail fin embedded in the snow. Some years later I had the opportunity to fly over the site, and see the koru, still on the mountain. (http://theyworkforyou.co.nz/motions/2008/dec/09/air_nz)

Goff’s sentiments regarding the significance of the Air New Zealand koru were shared by Prime Minister John Key: “To New Zealanders, Air New Zealand and its koru symbol are more than just an airline. They are part of who we are; they are symbols of this country that fly far beyond our shores” (http://theyworkforyou.co.nz/motions/2008/dec/09/air_nz). The koru has a powerful emotional pull on New Zealanders, being, as Key noted, emblematic of who we are. Here, a tail fin emblazoned with a koru becomes just as significant as a national flag. It functions as a metonym for the nation—in this case, a nation in mourning. It should be pointed out however that such meaningful recognition of the koru at a national level is by no means a natural fact. Rather, it is the result of a series of representational strategies that have been used to construct such meaning. As Stuart Hall has stated, “Things don’t mean: we construct meaning” (1997, 25; author’s emphasis). In relation to the koru, sometimes the construction of meaning for national or corporate purposes can take problematic shape when it contravenes indigenous cultural codes of use.

Take for instance one particular deployment of the koru in the 1970s, whereby Air New Zealand commissioned Leopard Brewery in Hastings to create a beer specifically for the airline. The beer they came up with was Koru Lager, “A real taste of New Zealand” as one advertisement in the airline’s in-flight magazine Jetway promised (Jetway 1977). Indeed, reading the advertisement further reveals the koru’s role in authenticating the airline’s new beverage:

For a lager that’s only been around for a year, Koru has a history that goes back centuries. It’s all in the name. Koru. Few can boast a namesake so steeped in history, colour and culture. Koru first came to New Zealand in the minds and possessions of the ancient Maori canoe voyagers. A vital symbol of a vital people . . . It [the koru] lived long, long before the modern world was born. And the Koru lives on today. Whether expressed traditionally as it was hundreds of years ago, or in adaption as a symbol on the tail of a giant jet airliner in the 21st century, it still portrays the beauty of simplicity. . . . Haere-mai. Welcome. Already you have a friend. (Jetway 1977, 2)
Here, the koru becomes a product to consume, not only as an alcoholic beverage, but as well as an idea—a nostalgic sentiment. To compensate for its own shallow roots (having only been around for a year), Koru Lager taps into the deeper cultural roots of the koru to fabricate its own authenticity. This process necessarily involves relegating Māori to the ancient past, a time “before the modern world was born” to provide the needed ontological foundation. While on the surface, the advert appears to value indigenous culture with all its history, color, and vitality, the very context of the koru’s use betrays what is for all intents and purposes an inappropriate appropriation of a Māori cultural symbol; the meaning of the koru becomes distorted, debased to the common sign of “beer.”

Writing in his regular column in the *New Zealand Listener* in 1983, Ranginui Walker drew special attention to the inappropriate use of Māori symbols, particularly in the context of their deployment in the souvenir industry. Though his focus was on the inappropriate appropriation of the tiki in particular, Walker’s following statement is helpful for understanding Māori cultural sensibilities and the fine line that exists between appreciation and the blatant misuse of cultural symbols for commercial ends. Walker wrote,

> The tiki, which is a sacred object, also came in for its share of misuse as replicas in soap, as decoration on a diaper (needless to say right where the anal passage excretes its contents) and even as a doorknocker, where the genital area of the tiki was struck by the knocker. Could the latter be interpreted as the symbolic emasculation of Maoritanga? (Walker 1987, 225)

Given the koru’s association with highly tapu practices (as discussed earlier), we might well interpret its reduction in the 1970s to the sign of beer as a derogatory treatment of Māori cultural property, a symbolic inebriating of Maoritanga to match Walker’s assertion that the misuse of the tiki constitutes the culture’s symbolic emasculation. Māori academic Ngahuia Te Awekotuku referred to such culturally offensive deployments as a “promiscuous and irresponsible plundering of Maori motifs” (cited in Eastmond and Pitts 1986, 52). Indeed, concerning the perceived misuse of the koru by Pākehā artist Gordon Walters, Te Awekotuku likened his appropriation of the symbol to a
form of colonization: "he [Walters] has thoroughly exploited and colonized and annexed and taken over" (Te Awekotuku in Eastmond and Pitts 1986, 52).121

Māori continue to resist and challenge the misappropriation of their symbols. The most significant step toward the protection of Māori symbols, as well as other cultural property, came in 1991 when six iwi—Ngāti Kuri, Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Porou, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Kahungunu, and Ngāti Koata—laid a claim against the Crown. The Treaty of Waitangi claim—known popularly as WAI 262122—concerns issues relating to indigenous flora and fauna, as well as cultural property and intellectual property rights. Importantly, the claim relates to the second article of the Treaty of Waitangi, which grants Māori “the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties.” Here, “other properties” (me ō rātou taonga katoa)—as pointed out by Maui Solomon, the Moriori-Māori lawyer representing the six iwi—refers to “whakairo [carving], rongoa Maori [Māori medicinal knowledge], waahi tapu [sacred sites], pa sites [village] and Māori cultural images, designs and symbols” (Solomon 2000, unpaginated; emphasis added). Commenting on the use of Māori symbols specifically, Solomon stated, “It’s about Māori having control and ownership over designs—and who uses those designs—by asserting rangatiratanga over their icons” (Solomon cited in Art News 1999, u.p). Indeed, as part of the push to assert rangatiratanga over their symbols, in the 1990s Māori stakeholders forced Air New Zealand to withdraw its koru-motifed carpet on the grounds that it was culturally offensive to have people tread on the symbol (Solomon 2004, 163).

121 Due to the fact that much has been written about Gordon Walters’ use of the koru in his artwork, I have chosen not to focus on him in this thesis. However, for an insightful discussion of Walters’ work and the debate surrounding it, see Pound 1994
122 “WAI” is an abbreviated form of Waitangi and “262” identifies it as the two hundred and sixty-second tribunal claim. The longer the Indigenous Flora and Fauna and Maori Intellectual and Cultural Property Claim
To give Air New Zealand credit, since its days of serving Koru Lager and handing out plastic tikis to passengers as souvenirs, the company has gradually been moving toward a more sensitive and responsible approach to the deployment of Māori cultural symbols. For example, during a re-branding project in the mid-1990s, the company released a basic guide for how its most important visual identity element, the koru, was to be used. According to the guide, the symbol was not to appear in association with food, alcohol, or other beverages; on sports items, such as footballs, netballs, golf balls, where the koru “would be physically assaulted”; on rubbish containers; and on any type of material that can be walked or sat on (Air New Zealand 1997, unpaginated). Importantly, during the re-branding exercise, Air New Zealand also opted not to register the koru on the carrier’s plane tails as a company trademark in order to avoid clashing with Māori over assertions of ownership (Shand 2002, 51). The due care with which Air New Zealand negotiated its use of and claim on the koru during the re-branding project may on one level be viewed as nothing more than an exercise in political correctness, a public relations strategy to keep Māori, the owners of the koru, placated. We should not be fooled into thinking that this is not partially, if not substantially the case. However, what I want to highlight here is the way Māori have intervened in, seized even, the corporate space of Air New Zealand and changed the terms under which their cultural heritage is deployed. In similar vain to Te Ata Tino Toa flying the Tino Rangatiratanga flag by plane over the Auckland Harbour Bridge when their permit to do so was denied, Māori claims on how the koru is used in the context of Air New Zealand may be viewed as a dynamic display of mana Māori (Māori prestige/power) and tino rangatiratanga. Such articulations of power constitute a positive step toward partnership and mutual understanding between the corporate entity of Air New Zealand and Māori. We might even say it sets a precedent for a genuine bicultural relationship.
In 2006 Air New Zealand underwent another brand identity refresh, part of which included the extension of the koru motif into new sites of representation. For example, new greenstone-colored walls featuring “a fern-like extension of the koru” were installed in check in counters in airports throughout the country, and the old uniforms were replaced with the stylish Zambesi design, featuring Māori artist Derek Lardelli’s koru-inspired motif (Scoop 2006). Importantly, as much as Air New Zealand underwent an external change, it also made significant internal changes, particularly with regard to its increased collaboration with Māori to promote their culture.

One of the most significant changes was the creation of the executive position of Cultural and Customer Ambassador (CCA) in Air New Zealand, which was taken up by Andrew Baker in 2006. Commenting on his position, Baker wrote to me:

The CCA role had never existed before within the organisation. The role was developed by me and the executive management of Air NZ to address a perceived shortfall in cultural knowledge from Air NZ employees. I’m proud to be associated with an organisation that has made a real commitment to raising the awareness of the Māori language and cultural practices within its organisation. My aim is to help Air New Zealand employees understand elements of Māori values and language and how this can be of benefit to themselves, the business and our customers. (pers comm via e-mail, 16 March 2009, reproduced with permission)

Importantly, the project involved an agreement between Air New Zealand and the Māori Language Commission, under which te reo Māori (Māori language) was to be promoted and made available to international and domestic passengers through, “entertainment, greetings or access to phrase books” (New Zealand Herald Online 2008b). As the Māori Language Commission chairman Erima Henare put it, “its important that the national icon, Air New Zealand, adopts the other national language of the country” (New Zealand Herald Online 2008b). As part of the project, Baker initiated the production of the first Air New Zealand cultural kit—Te Kete Ararau i Te Rangi. The kit—described by Baker as a taonga (gift) to be shared by Air New Zealand employees with their friends, family,
and customers—includes a DVD and booklet (Fig. 26) and aims to help Air New Zealanders gain a greater understanding and appreciation of Māori culture.

Several key Māori figures feature on the DVD, including television personality Stacy Daniels and acclaimed actor Temuera Morrison. Both the DVD and booklet teach readers/viewers how to pronounce Māori words and place names, as well as introduces them to Māori myths and legends. Featuring on the cover of both the DVD and booklet, as well as in the lyrics of the Air New Zealand song on the DVD, the catch phrase “Ko mātou ēnei” [This is who we are] may be interpreted in two ways: This is who we are as Air New Zealanders and this is who we are as New Zealanders. On both counts, who we are necessarily rests on who Māori are.

Figure 26. Te Kete Ararau i Te Rangi cultural kit. Photo by Marata Tamaira.

In the introduction to the kit, Baker writes:

More and more we as Air New Zealanders are identifying with our cultural heritage. The symbols we carry on our uniforms, our aircraft and in our airports help to identify our airline to the world. As the market that we operate in becomes increasingly competitive, it is more important than ever that we clearly define ourselves. Our culture and heritage makes us unique. Our language, stories and images are distinctive to our nation. It is important that as Air New Zealanders and as leaders we have some knowledge of our stories and what these symbols mean. (Air New Zealand 2008; emphasis added)
A critical reading of the introduction reveals the convergence of corporate identity with Māori identity. Here, Māori identity and culture operates as a strategic resource for Air New Zealand, providing the company with the point of difference needed to give it an important competitive edge in “a world spoilt for choice” (in Panoho 2007, 46). Put simply, Māori culture is added value for a corporation that is confronted with the challenge of defining itself both in New Zealand and abroad. While it would be naïve to ignore the fact that Air New Zealand’s commitment to promoting Māori culture is first and foremost driven by commercial and marketing interests and the ever-present “bottom line,” there is nevertheless something more complex going on here. In a more encompassing way, the kit constitutes a critical tool by which non-Māori Air New Zealanders, their families, and the airline’s customers may come to a more substantive and meaningful understanding of Māori culture. In one sense, then, Air New Zealand may be seen to be operating at a genuine bicultural level by attempting to increase the cultural literacy of non-Māori and making Māori culture more visible to the nation. More importantly, Māori agents, such as Andrew Baker have a critical say over how their culture is to be represented both at home and abroad, thereby ensuring best cultural practices and the protection of Māori cultural property.

On Reflection

As we have seen in the two brief examples, the koru stands as a critical signifier for the nation, featuring as the proposed design for a new national flag, and as the primary symbol for the nation’s airline. Importantly, in both cases the koru appears in ways that are largely taken for granted by the national collective. Removed from its cultural milieu, the koru has been imbued with new meaning—sometimes in ways that are highly problematic, at other times in ways that affirm and increase the visibility of Māori culture. Commenting in the 1980s, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku argued that the koru had become a plastic symbol, subject to exploitation and colonization (cited in Eastmond and Pitts 1986). While her statement certainly carries the weight
of truth, in its plasticity, the koru can also be a symbol of Māori empowerment in the contemporary period. As we have seen, even as the koru unfurls outward, it concomitantly spirals back to its center. This is where Māori take it up once again, reinscribing it with their own meanings and challenging the meanings that are given to it by non-Māori. Further, Māori stakeholders are taking up key positions in such corporate spaces as Air New Zealand to ensure that Māori cultural elements—including but not limited to the koru—are deployed and promoted in ways that foster deeper understanding and appreciation of the culture at a national level. Here, Māori and Pākehā may be seen to be working together, moving toward what might be considered a genuine understanding of one another. Consider Piri Sciascia’s words:

New Zealand culture today has for many of its people an increasingly bicultural focus... A true New Zealand identity is slowly emerging and Māori art is central to that identity. Within New Zealand this influence grows, particularly when people become receiving vessels, open to the korero [conversation] before them. *The production of Māori art assists in binding people to the land.* Places have meaning. Order is provided. Stability is given to our Aotearoa existence. (Sciascia 1997, 162)

The koru—that “beautiful, contortionist, meandering form” (Youle in Kedgley 2002, unpaginated)—has lent itself to both Māori and Pākehā, inspiring open dialogue between the two bicultural partners, as well as debate. It is a symbol around which Māori-Pākehā relations are contested and negotiated, separated out and bound back together. The koru, one among many Māori symbols that are used to define and articulate New Zealand’s bicultural status, “assists in binding people to the land,” creating the common ground on which Māori and Pākehā may kōrero (talk) with one another. It is a relationship in progress, and even as New Zealand, that small ship-of-a-nation state threatens to break free from its moorings, it is the symbols of Māori culture that will continue to anchor us, to the home shore, as well as to each other.

In the next chapter, I consider the mobilization of Māori symbols in the civic institution of the museum—specifically the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Envisioned as a forum for the nation, Te Papa Tongarewa constitutes New Zealand’s first fully-fledged bicultural museum. I focus on one of the museum’s permanent exhibitions—*Te Marae*—to reveal how

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Māori objects, read here as cultural symbols, are used to construct bicultural identity in Aotearoa New Zealand.
CHAPTER 4: MUSEUMIZING

Displayer Myth and Mana Māori at Te Papa Tongarewa

“For museums, and the museumizing imagination, are both profoundly political” (Anderson 1991, 178)

Between June and July of 2008, I conducted research at New Zealand’s national museum, Te Papa Tongarewa. Every day for three weeks I made the short journey from the hostel I was staying at to the museum, and every day the scene was similar. As soon as the doors were opened at 10 A.M., visitors from all walks of life streamed in. Groups of school children ran around excitedly as they waited to embark on their museum visit, while their teachers tried desperately to corral their young charges; mothers pushed their rosy-cheeked toddlers around in strollers; and always, adults and children alike could be found standing in the center of the museum’s lobby spinning the large water-ball—a 1.4 billion year old crystalline basalt sphere that rotates in a basin of water—its jet-black surface reflecting the entranced faces of those partaking in the activity. At the time of my research trip to New Zealand, the country was in the throes of an extremely cold winter. However, even the freezing rain and gusting winds did not deter the crowds that flocked to the nation’s museum.

On entering Te Papa, one cannot help but be awestruck by the sheer enormity of the space inside—a space made even larger by the huge sheets of glazed glass that constitute the front doors and windows of the museum’s atrium. To the right of Te Papa’s entrance, cloakroom attendants wait to greet visitors with a friendly “Kia ora!—Hello!” before receiving their coats and bags. Bilingual signs in Māori and English direct visitors to the many gallery spaces in the museum as well as to various other facilities such as the cafeteria and restrooms. Ascending

123 Mana Māori refers to the power and authority of Zealand Māori
124 Te Papa Tongarewa’s literally means “repository for precious things.” See: http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/AboutTePapa/FAQs/#meaning)
immediately in front of the grand entranceway is the spectacular flight of stairs that lead visitors to Level 2, "the beginning of the Te Papa experience" (MoNZTP 1998, 4). The building comprises five levels, populated by a veritable array of galleries that focus on such themes as natural and human history, art, immigration, and Māori culture. Te Papa’s overt bicultural stance is physically manifested in the building’s architecture, which was designed by the architectural firm Jasmax. While the Māori galleries face north, overlooking the harbor and Taiti valley, the Pākehā galleries are oriented toward the urban sprawl of Wellington city to the south. The spatial arrangement of Te Papa is symbolically significant: the north is associated with natural elements (water and earth), while the south is aligned with capitalist development (Williams 2005, 84). Thus, it is within this context of shared yet divergent space that tangata whenua and tangata tiriti are encouraged to recognize one another’s place on the national terrain. The two main Māori galleries—Te Marae and Mana Whenua—are located on Level 4. Here, symbols of Māori heritage—taonga, myths, and art—not only offer insight into the lives of the indigenous people of the land, but more importantly they serve as threads in a much broader and encompassing narrative of national sense of place and belonging.

In this chapter, I focus on the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa as a space where the narrative of the nation—that is, the bicultural nation—is constructed. Here, I focus on a single exhibition space—Te Marae—as a case study to investigate how symbols of Māori culture are used to underpin the museum’s position as a bicultural institution as well as reflect the nation’s bicultural condition. In Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has noted that museums constitute critical sites for the narrativization of the nation. Such narratives—master narratives as Hooper-Greenhill refers to them—are "created by presenting a large-scale picture, by eliminating complicating and contradictory detail, by disguising difference, by hiding those elements that don’t quite fit, and emphasizing those that do" (Hooper-Greenhill 2000, 24). In previous chapters, I have argued that biculturalism—with its failure to deliver equality and social justice to Māori—may be seen as nothing more than a
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fictional (read, also, mythical) narrative, a story New Zealanders tell themselves to drive away the nagging truth that race relations in New Zealand continue to be haunted by the specter of colonialism.

However, despite the perjuring levels of inequality between Māori and Pākehā, there are areas where indigenous agents are empowered to challenge and subvert the status quo. As I reveal, while on the one hand there are instances where Te Papa might be seen to be “eliminating [the] contradictory detail” in biculturalism by neglecting to disclose the model’s inherent flaws, particularly in relation to the exhibition under analysis, on the other hand the museum’s adherence to a bicultural rationale in terms of its governing and operational strategies has in many ways enabled Māori to turn an historically colonial space into one in which their mana and sovereignty are enacted. Here, I focus on the institutional operations of the museum and the important role Māori museum professionals play in the representation and display of Māori culture. In addition, I consider the responses of six museum visitors, all of who toured Te Marae and who shared with me their experience of the space—a space that constitutes the nexus between indigenous culture and bicultural nationalism. What emerges is the unfolding story of a nation and a national museum striving to come to terms with the contentions and complexities that frame Māori-Pākehā relations in the twenty-first century.

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Fig. 27), popularly referred to as “Our Place,” opened its doors to the public on 14 February 1998 after thirteen years of intensive planning and a financial investment of over NZ$300 million (Williams 2005, 81). On the day of its opening, over thirty thousand people convened on Wellington’s waterfront—where Te Papa is located—to take part in the festivities, which began with a dawn ceremony and a Māori blessing. It is important to note here that Māori culture was a prominent feature of the celebrations.

125 As I pointed out in the introduction to this thesis, the small size of the sample group entails that the viewpoints of respondents should not be considered representative of the wider New Zealand public.
throughout the day. As well as the blessing, the opening ceremony included the paddling of a Māori war canoe (waka taua) into Lambton Harbor. A pōwhiri\(^{126}\) was also held to welcome visitors onto the museum’s marae, Rongomaraeroa. Te Papa’s bicultural emphasis was not lost on the crowd waiting to enter the museum.

![Figure 27. Exterior Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand. Photo by Marata Tamaira.](image)

As one bystander noted: “It’s part of the bicultural heritage of the country. It’s great to see . . . Maori and pakha on the waterfront” (Evening Post 1998). Here, the waterfront, that liminal space between water and land that served as a point of contact between Māori and Pākehā during early encounters, was to operate once again as a site of cultural exchange and dialogue between the two peoples during the museum’s inaugural opening. As the doors to the museum swung open at midday, the first people to cross its threshold were two children, a Māori boy and a

\(^{126}\) Traditional Māori welcome onto a marae
Pākehā girl, living symbols of the nation’s alleged bicultural status—an ambitious vision of Aotearoa New Zealand entering a new era of race relations.

It is important to point out that it was the highly acclaimed Te Maori\textsuperscript{127} exhibition that provided the impetus for how Te Papa was to take shape in terms of its adherence to a bicultural framework. Organized by Sidney Moko Mead, David Simmons, and Douglas Newton, Te Maori was the first exhibition of taonga Māori to be displayed for an international audience (Butts 2002, 228). Opening first at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1984, Te Maori toured the United States\textsuperscript{128} for three years, drawing a total of 620,000 visitors (AGMANZ 1986, 3). The success of the exhibition overseas did much to raise awareness and instill an appreciation of Māori cultural materials on the domestic front. When Te Maori returned to New Zealand in 1987, the exhibition was greeted with enthusiasm, not only by Māori themselves, but as well by Pākehā. New Zealand Prime Minister, David Lange, himself of Pākehā descent, underscored the significance of the exhibition in binding Māori and Pākehā together, "[Te Maori is] A cultural event powerful enough to bring together . . . the people of New Zealand, Maori and Pakeha" (AGMANZ 1986, 3). Dame Te Atairangikaahu of Tainui tribe also highlighted the importance of Te Maori in fostering a sense of national identity and pride for all New Zealanders, not just Māori:

I feel . . . that the exhibition will help New Zealanders of ancestry other than Maori to be more aware of our Nation’s ancient history and culture (which, as so many think, did not commence in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and particularly 1840), and what we have, this day, is a continuity of culture that projects the image of New Zealand and of being, proudly, a New Zealander." (AGMANZ 1986, 2)

In New Zealand, Te Maori was exhibited in four metropolitan museums—the National Museum and Art Gallery in Wellington; the Otago Museum in Dunedin; the Robert McDougal

\textsuperscript{127} Because the macron in the first vowel of “Maori” was absent on the original exhibition signage for Te Maori, I have chose to omit it here

\textsuperscript{128} As well as New York, Te Maori was exhibited in San Francisco, Saint Louis, and Chicago
Art Gallery in Christchurch; and the Auckland City Art Gallery in Auckland—drawing in 920,000 visitors. But, more than elevating the international and domestic profile of taonga Māori, Te Maori opened up an important consultative process between Pākehā-run museums and iwi Māori (Butts 2002). As David Butts has stated, it was only after the Te Maori exhibition “that most museums began to recognize, in both policy and practice, the right of Māori to determine the way in which their taonga tuku iho (treasures handed down through generations) are managed and interpreted” (2002, 227; author’s emphasis). A significant aspect of the planning and execution of Te Maori was the control Māori had in terms of the decision-making process and the high level of indigenous involvement. Museum curators were required to seek permission from the various iwi representatives to include their treasures in the exhibition and, in the case of the US tour, Māori elders insisted on accompanying the treasures to New York to keep them “'warm' while . . . overseas and away from their social universe” (Mead 1997, 160). In New Zealand, Māori directed all of the opening ceremonies as well as the daily management of the exhibition (Butts 2002, 228).

Despite generating enormous enthusiasm for Māori culture at the national level and bolstering a nascent spirit of bicultural partnership between Māori and Pākehā, Te Maori was not without its problems and contradictions. Even as the nation was celebrating the exhibition’s showing on home soil, the people of Ngāti Atiawa in the Taranaki region were agitating to put a stop to the pollution of their natural resources by the exhibition’s main sponsor, Mobil Oil Corporation. During the years preceding Te Maori, Mobil, with the permission of Ngāti Atiawa, had built several natural gas plants on the tribe’s lands. When leaking pipes spilled tons of effluent into Ngāti Atiawa’s river—Kapunui River—killing most of its marine life, the tribe demanded that the company make immediate provisions to clean up the toxic waste. Mobil refused to comply with Ngāti Atiawa’s request. Marjorie Rau-Kupa, a kaumatua (elder) who supported Ngāti Atiawa’s struggle against Mobil, had this to say about the company’s contradictory treatment of Māori,
In the foreword to *Te Maori* Mobil claims to honor the Maori people and have an interest in the people of New Zealand. If this were true they would have responded to our requests to them to clean up their effluent . . . They are sponsoring *Te Maori* purely to improve their public image. They are using our artifacts as an advertising gimmick and the Maori people who traveled with it as performing monkeys. Our taonga have been degraded to artifacts by the way Mobil has dealt with them and us. *(AGMANZ 1986, 25)*

I chose to highlight the controversy between the people of Ngāti Atiawa and Mobil during the *Te Maori* exhibition in New Zealand because I believe it underscores tensions that often escape our notice. That is, while on one level the deployment of Māori culture and symbols through exhibitions like *Te Maori* serve dually to affirm Māori culture and bind Māori and Pākehā together, on another level they obscure the political struggles that Māori encounter, hidden as those struggles are under a veil of national jubilation. What emerges is a mismatch between the rhetoric of equality and cultural valuing, and the actual political forces that sustain the flow of power toward the dominant group. Despite its claims to honor Māori in the foreword to the *Te Maori* catalogue, Mobil’s outright dismissal to honor the request made by Ngāti Atiawa to clean up the effluent released by one of its plants underscores in a stark way the company’s less than genuine intentions and the ease with which Māori concerns can be ignored when it is not politically or economically expedient.

While the Mobil-Ngāti Atiawa controversy highlighted the inherent contradictions surrounding *Te Maori*, the exhibition nevertheless had wide-ranging implications for the reform and redefinition of museums in New Zealand. Even before *Te Maori* returned home after touring the US, government-sponsored plans were underway to create a new national museum—one that was based on fostering greater levels of equality between Māori and Pākehā. In November 1985, the National Museum of New Zealand Project Development Team released "Nga Taonga o Te Motu: Treasures of the Nation," a report that brought to bear three guiding principles: the “full and equal partnership between the two main cultures of New Zealand,” the fostering of national unity and a distinctive New Zealand culture, and the creation of a single new governing body for the proposed museum *(Project Development Team 1985, 2)*. The team highlighted taonga Māori
as “a powerful, irreplaceable and unique expression of the nation’s culture,” and underscored the bicultural nature of the venture by deploying—in a somewhat self-conscious way—Māori words such as taonga, marae, whanau, koha (gift), and mana (Project Development Team 1985, 2). A significant feature of the report was the recommendation that the proposed name for the museum, Pacific Cultural Centre, be replaced with National Museum of New Zealand/Te Marae Taonga o Aotearoa (Project Development Team 1985, 2), the new name underscoring the museum’s intent to recognize the bicultural relationship between Māori and Pākehā.

Four years later, under the newly formed Project Development Board, plans for the new museum were taking a more definite shape. Renamed the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, the museum’s official adoption of biculturalism was clearly articulated in one of several policy documents,

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa will be a national museum that powerfully expresses the total culture of New Zealand. It will express the bicultural nature of the country, recognising the mana and significance of each of the two mainstreams of tradition and cultural heritage and providing the means for each to contribute effectively to a statement of the nation’s identity (cited in Gore 2002, 224; emphasis added)

Three governing concepts were adopted by the museum to underscore the key theme of partnership between Māori and Pākehā: Papatūānuku (the land), Tāngata whenua (those who belong to the land by right of first discovery), and Tāngata tiriti (those who belong to the land by right of the Treaty of Waitangi) (Butts 2002, 230). In 1992 the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act established the fledgling museum as an official Crown entity, and in the following year construction of the main building commenced.

Te Papa was envisioned as a new kind of museum in that it attempted to break away from the old colonial habits of its predecessors—first the Colonial and then the Dominion museums—wherein white curators displayed Māori cultural materials according to their own Eurocentric ideals. Rather than being the objects of display, in Te Papa Māori were to be afforded a prominent position in the decision-making process. In 1995, three years before Te
Papa opened, Arapata Hakiwai, the current Director of Matauranga Māori at Te Papa, wrote a brief but illuminating paper titled, “The Search for Legitimacy: Museums in Aotearoa New Zealand—a Maori Viewpoint.” In it he argued the need for New Zealand museums to develop positive relations with Māori communities if they were to retain any kind of legitimacy. During fieldwork at Te Papa Tongarewa museum in 2008, I asked Hakiwai to comment on Te Papa’s commitment to working with Māori in collaborative and affirmative ways:

The success of Te Papa depends on the relationship with iwi... I was part of the old museum heading toward the new museum. Our people didn’t have a sense of belonging in the museum, and I was basically saying that we needed to turn that around. We needed to work from the ground up. The question was if we want to change the paradigm, what did we need to do to make our museum a place of belonging. Somewhere that’s comfortable for them [Māori] and a place where we can nurture and develop a culture. So, we needed to do things differently. Museums have been in a privileged position and I think it’s the people that legitimate museums and not museums who give legitimacy to the people. One of the comments I often encounter is that some museums in the universalist mode strongly believe or advocate that they have all the right in the world to interpret and present cultures. But I think that what’s really missing there is the lack of engagement or participation of those cultures in the process... It’s the people who give mana, credence, and certainly legitimacy to museums, such as ours. If we didn’t involve and recognize Māori in this museum, I think we would have just been like the old museum on Buckle Street.129

Since its opening, Te Papa has made positive progress in terms of incorporating iwi Māori into all levels of its operations, including the hiring of Māori docents and the placement of Māori museum professionals in key curatorial and managerial positions. Māori museum workers who currently hold high-level positions at Te Papa include, but are not limited to Arapata Hakiwai (Director of Matauranga Māori), Huhana Smith (Senior Curator Māori), Megan Tamati-Quennell (Curator of Māori and Indigenous Art), Awhina Tamarapa (curator of Taonga Māori), and Jonathan Mane-Wheoki (Director Art and Collection Services).130 Speaking about her own

129 Interview reproduced with permission, Arapata Hakiwai, Wellington, New Zealand, 20 July 2008; emphasis added
130 In February 2009 Jonathan Mane-Wheoki was appointed Head of Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland. His appointment commences in April 2009
position as curator for the Ngāi Tahu iwi exhibition Mō Tātou: Ngāi Tahu Whānui, Megan Tamati-Quennell had this to say,

The iwi select their own curator—so I was selected by my own to curate their show. And I worked with ten kaumatua to realize the exhibition. And they were like my advisory board that I worked to and I worked to them. So you’re the meat in the sandwich between those institutions, which is a hugely difficult thing to broker those relationships. And I made sure that that show was truly bicultural. That it was their voice and it was truly the way they wanted it. I made sure it was their exhibition and that it was something that people came into and said, “yes, that’s us, that’s me.” It was an empowering thing for Ngāi Tahu. They related to it and it made them feel as though it was a celebration of who they were. To me, it’s about how they choose to represent themselves. That’s probably the most powerful initiative internally for iwi, because it enables them to tell their stories the way they wish to tell them.131

Tamati-Quennell’s allusion to being the “meat in the sandwich” reveals the often-fraught space that Māori museum professionals inhabit between the institutions they work for and the iwi they are charged with serving. Indeed, during the planning stages of the Ngāi Tahu exhibition, Tamati-Quennell found herself having to broker the distance between the wishes of her iwi and those of the exhibition’s marketing team. During the initial planning stages, Ngāi Tahu and marketing representatives met to discuss the design for the Mō Tātou’s title billboard. As Tamati-Quennell relays, the marketing team had rejected the idea of using Aoraki, Ngāi Tahu’s ancestral mountain, on the grounds that it was “too much like a calendar scene.”132 Instead, they wanted Ngāi Tahu personalities on the billboard, which iwi representatives agreed to—for a time, at least. Tamati Quennell picks up the narrative:

The chairman . . . went along with it, but then it got pulled because the concern was that if there were people in the exhibition title, what if someone passed away? There was a tikanga associated with it. The marketing people were upset, because they [Ngāi Tahu elders] went along with it and then dropped it. They [the marketing representatives] got upset with me. But, I explained how the tribe was operating in a cultural way according to their tikanga. I said that the iwi exhibition needed to be informed by that tikanga. I told them that you have to

131 Interview reproduced with permission, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 July 2008
132 Interview reproduced with permission, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 July 2008
Tamati-Quennell, like her Māori museum colleagues, is accustomed to working within and against a complex set of power dynamics. As she shared with me, “I talk about myself being a guerrilla girl working from the inside out. You know, you can be on the outside throwing stones, or you can be on the inside catching them and building a wall with them. So, you’re in a position here where you can actually affect some change. And I think that’s the biggest draw card for me.”

A significant move early on in the establishment of Te Papa was the appointment of Cliff Whiting as Kaihautū, a position that is on par with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the museum (McCarthy 2007; Butts 2002). Butts has stated that the establishment of the Kaihautū position represented an important move toward “ensuring that the organization structure within the museum reflects the institution’s commitment to biculturalism” (Butts 2002, 231). Other ways Te Papa has attempted to fulfill its bicultural mandate has been through the establishment of Te Roopu Whakamana Māori (“the group that empowers Māori”), a group that oversees museum-iwi relations, bicultural development, and issues of repatriation (MoNZTP 2005). As well, the position of a poutakawaenga (literally, center platform) was created to provide a liason between iwi and the museum (Message 2006, 176). Of significance was the establishment of Mātauranga Māori (Māori worldview) principles as part of the museum’s practice. Here, Māori epistemology was established as the guiding force for the display and treatment of taonga Māori, encompassing within its scope such cultural principles as tikanga taonga (the knowledge base for protocols

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133 Interview reproduced with permission, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 July 2008
134 Interview reproduced with permission, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 July 2008; emphasis added
135 Te Papa’s first CEO was Dame Cheryl Sotheran; the position is currently held by Seddon Bennington
136 Kaihautū means leader, with specific reference to the helmsman of a canoe. The position of is currently held by Michelle Hippolite
when working with taonga) and mana taonga (the recognition that taonga are imbued with power
and retain connections with living descendents) (Te Papa National Services Te Paerangi 2006).

Mātauranga Māori is of critical consideration when it comes to the care of taonga. Awhina
Tamarapa noted that, “water bowls placed at exit ways from taonga in storage permit
people to sprinkle themselves with water, spiritually cleansing themselves of the tapu, or sacred
forces, of the taonga” (cited in Kreps 2003, 70, author’s emphasis). Here, taonga Māori are
viewed not as static objects, but as living entities imbued with spiritual potency. Critical to the
display and care of taonga is the acknowledgment that they are part of a complex network of
relations with living generations of Māori. As Hakiwai has stated, one of the chief aims during
the development of Te Papa’s permanent exhibition, Mana Whenua, was “to break down the
walls of the museum, reconnecting the umbilical cord between taonga and people, building two-
way highways so that life could be given back to taonga that had been sleeping for years” (cited
in Kreps 2003, 71, author’s emphasis). The idea of waking up taonga Māori is expanded by
Huhana Smith:

So much of our research work or relationship building work is around reenlivening the korero around the taonga. Picking up threads or fragments of information and then being able to expand on that using other kaupapa Māori [Māori policies], methodological development, and Māori methods of knowledge development to get more augmented around those taonga. So, in some ways it’s sort of like waking the taonga up, but doing it where you’ve got iwi and hapu involved.137

Here, taonga Māori are not being woken up by strangers, but by their whanaunga (kin/blood
relatives). Te Papa has also changed the way taonga Māori are identified. Rather than being
classified according to Western typological mores, taonga Māori are identified in relation to their
tribal affiliations (Kreps 2003, 71). Here, again, the relationship between ngā taonga Māori and
te iwi Māori is emphasized.

137 Interview reproduced with permission, Huhana Smith, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 July 2008
In hiring Māori curators and managers, and fostering positive relations with iwi Māori, Te Papa has ensured the museum a measure of success in terms of remaining faithful to its policy statement to “acknowledge the unique position of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand and the need to secure their participation in the governance, management, and operation of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa” (MoNZTP 1997, 5). However, as some commentators have noted, there are ruptures in this positive image. In a 2004 article titled, “Rewriting the Script: Te Papa Tongarewa the Museum of New Zealand,” Amiria Henare examined whether the biculturalism enacted at Te Papa was able to render substantive change for Māori in terms of assisting them in their quest for cultural and political self-determination. While she acknowledged that in the main Māori are afforded a strong voice in the museum, she questioned the degree to which such positive measures, “effect the distribution of political and economic power” to Māori outside of the museum’s doors (2004, 62). Paul Tapsell offered a similar argument when he stated that, “Employment of Māori at all levels is important, but not until museums’ Treaty partners, the tangata whenua, are provided official voice at tables of government will that feeling of inclusion become meaningful” (2005, 277). At the heart of the matter is the sense that what is being offered at Te Papa is not a true representation of biculturalism as it exists in the wider national sphere. Such a concern is validated by the fact that while symbolic biculturalism is everywhere present in Aotearoa New Zealand the “bicultural redistribution of resources” is slow to be taken up (Barclay 2005, 121; emphasis added). Paul Williams has pointed out, that in terms of Te Papa’s treatment of biculturalism, there is a vast “distance between political realities and idealized representation” (2005, 83). It is a point that has not been lost on some Māori. As one museum respondent remarked, “[The] actions don’t really meet up with the rhetoric. Yeah, I think it’s a bit of a myth in New Zealand—and it’s been a
long-standing myth, biculturalism."\textsuperscript{138} In the next section I consider one of Te Papa's permanent Māori exhibitions, \textit{Te Marae}. Here, I explore two overlapping points of discussion: the degree to which Māori heritage and symbols are used to express biculturalism and the distance between the political realities faced by Māori and the idealized version of biculturalism that is being represented in the museum.

\textbf{Te Marae: The Nation's Tūrangawaewae}

The marae complex constitutes the most critical symbol of Māoritanga, connoting as it does the identity of the hapū that owns it and their links with the land on which the marae is located (Mead, 2003, 96). Although traditionally restricted to rural areas, during the migration of Māori into the cities in the 1950s and 1960s, marae began to appear in metropolitan locales all over the country. Today, they serve as an important feature of many university campuses, churches, and high schools, with museums being no exception. \textit{Te Marae}—which comprises the actual marae area known as Rongomaraeroa and its associated architectural structures\textsuperscript{139}—was envisioned as a space in which all New Zealanders could stand with confidence and pride. In short, it was designed to serve as the nation's tūrangawaewae with special acknowledgment given to iwi Māori. The deployment of the marae as a site that connotes both the nation's and the museum's bicultural mandate is explicitly acknowledged on Te Papa's Web site,

Like other marae, this Marae is about identity—here, it is our nation's bicultural identity that is addressed. \textit{The Marae embodies the spirit of bicultural partnership that lies at the heart of the Museum}, and is based on the idea that Te Papa is a forum for the nation. All people have a right to stand on this Marae through a shared whakapapa (genealogy) and the mana (power) of the taonga

\textsuperscript{138} Interview reproduced with permission, Sarsha Douglas, Wellington, New Zealand, 28 June 2008
\textsuperscript{139} These include: Te Hono ki Hawaiki (the wharenui, or meeting house), Te Ara a Tāne (the pathway of men), Te Ara a Hine (the pathway of women, the marae ātea (the space in front of Te Hono ki Hawaiki), the pūwhare (the lookout), Ngā Kākahu o Papatūānuku, the waharoa (gateway), Papatūānuku (the floor of the marae), Te Ngutu Wairoa (the doorway to the outdoor area of the marae), and Ranginui (the stained glass door designed by Robert Jahnke)
A central feature of Rongomaraeroa is its whare nui (meeting house), Te Hono ki Hawaiki ("the link with Hawaiki") (Fig. 28). In Māori culture, the wharenui constitutes a significant building within the marae complex¹⁴¹ where the unique worldview of Māori is both encoded and articulated through the architectural features of the structure itself as well as through artistic renderings on its observable surface, such as whakairo (carving), tukutuku (lattice work), and kōwhaiwhai (painted curvilinear designs).

Fig. 28. Te Hono ki Hawaiki, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand. Photo by Marata Tamaira.

¹⁴¹Strictly speaking, the marae refers to the space in front of the meeting house. However, in the broader sense, the marae is used to refer to the marae proper (the space in front of the meeting house, referred to as the marae atea) as well as the complex of buildings surrounding it such as the dining hall, toilets etc.
Historian Anne Salmond has pointed to the potency of the meeting house, stating that it is “the most powerful symbol a group may possess” as it “represents reverence for the past and veneration for the ancestors. . . When the group gathers on the marae, the meeting-house is a statement that their ancestors are also present” (Salmond 1975, 39; author’s emphasis). The whare nui is a space of encounter where members of the tribe or sub-tribe gather for social occasions such as funerals, weddings, religious and political meetings, and celebrations (Neich 1996, 104). Indeed, they are “places of the heart” where tribal identity is both displayed and affirmed (Hakiwai 1996, 59). Importantly, however, where traditional whare nui reiterate and strengthen already existing genealogical ties between members of a hapū, the central function of Te Hono ki Hawaiki is constitutive in nature—here, its role is to engender a sense of shared genealogy among disparate and unrelated subjectivities.

Te Hono ki Hawaiki was designed by acclaimed Māori artist Cliff Whiting (who, as mentioned previously, was Te Papa’s first Kaihautū), and was constructed through the collaborative effort of tribal carving schools from all over New Zealand.142 Highly innovative in terms of its architectural rendering, one of the goals of Te Hono ki Hawaiki was to bridge the past, present, and future (Bennington 2004, 11). Built from custom board, the building is replete with modern carvings of Māori gods and ancestors (Fig. 29), which feature alongside a cultural bricolage of minarets, Asian-inspired archways, and a color scheme that eschews the traditional brown, black, and red palette of Māori culture. Here, a more contemporary color scheme of vibrant blues and yellows is applied. The rich assortment of colors are reflected with shimmering brilliance in Bob Jahnke’s stained glass doors, which depict the separation of Papatūānuku and Ranginui (Fig. 30).

142 The carving schools are located in various parts of New Zealand including, but not limited to Ngāti Kuri, Ngai Tāhoe, Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau a Apanui, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Raukawa, and Te Ati Awa.
Figure 29. Interior Te Hono ki Hawaiki carvings. Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand. *Photo by Marata Tamaira.*

Figure 30. Ranginui. Stained glass doors by Robert Jahnke, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand. *Photo by Marata Tamaira.*
Aspects of the exhibition that are strategically designed to foster a sense of belonging and collective identity among museum visitors include a large pounamu (greenstone) boulder—referred to as the Mauri stone—which is positioned on top of a shallow, canoe-shaped water feature (Fig. 31).

Figure 31. Pounamu water feature, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand. Photo by Marata Tamaira.

143 Pounamu, or greenstone was, and continues to be, highly prized by Māori. Pounamu is found only in the South Island of New Zealand.
Visitors are encouraged to rub the small grainle-sized stones located at the base of the boulder across its surface, the goal being to remove the brown, calcified exterior so that over time the vibrant green of the rock beneath will be revealed. At the center of Te Hono ki Hawaiki stands the whare nui’s “Whakapapa Desk” (Fig. 32). Here, visitors are asked to record their own whakapapa on a pamphlet titled “My Genealogy—Tōku Whakapapa.” The genealogy pamphlet requests personal information such as visitors’ whenua (country), iwi (tribe), maunga (mountain), awa (river), and waka (canoe), and invites them to make charcoal rubbings of stamps that best convey their personal identity. Māori mythological icons are drawn into the effort to create a shared genealogy, including such characters as the legendary Māui, Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), Ranginui (Sky Father), and Tama-Nui-Te-Rā (the sun).

Other stamps available for use in the whakapapa exercise are based on images located on the whare nui’s back wall, which features stylized representations of New Zealand’s diverse
population, including students, nurses, doctors, and even prison inmates. Importantly, the back wall constitutes the only place in the entire marae complex where Māori-Pākehā relations are given any measure of consideration.

Located behind the whakapapa desk are three vertical viewing boxes (Fig. 33), the bottom box referencing the conflict between Māori and early settlers, the second referencing the treaty, and the third alluding to peace between Māori and Pākehā. Of some interest is the second box, a document signed on 6 February 2000 by then Governor General of New Zealand, Sir Michael Hardie Boys, which reads:

Just as Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson before me signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi in this place on 6 February 1840 as the representative of the Crown, I . . . sign this declaration . . . and by doing so acknowledge the whakapapa of this house, Te Hono ki Hawaiki, and acknowledge the marae, Te Marae o Te Papa Tongarewa, as a place where all the peoples of New Zealand stand and belong.

Here, the treaty narrative, marred as it has been (and continues to be) by almost 170 years of discord between Māori and Pākehā, is reconstituted in the context of the museum’s marae, its
problematic past erased by the ideological leap from conflict to collective belonging. Notably, the ruptures between Māori and Pākehā that have resulted from the original document not being honored by the Crown, are only hinted at rather abstractly as evidenced by the crossed patu and saber that are encased in the bottom viewing box. The visual narrative ends with the image of the dove carrying an olive branch, the implication here being that the two peoples have already reached a state of reconciliation. It is within the context of this narrative that visitors are asked to place their signature in a section of the whakapapa pamphlet that reads, “I, [visitor’s name] sign on to the whakapapa of this house, Te Hono ki Hawaiki, and embrace this marae, Te Marae o Te Papa Tongarewa, as a place where I can stand and belong,” an exercise that brought to mind, for one respondent, the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi: “I felt like I was signing away my life to this place.”

While on one level the “Whakapapa Desk” may be viewed as fostering a positive sense of connection to the marae and, likewise, an appreciation of Māori culture overall, certain aspects of the space are nevertheless highly problematic, nonetheleast of which is the fact that it fails to engage critically with Māori-Pākehā race relation issues both past and present. As well, in the case of two respondents, far from inspiring in them a sense of belonging, the whakapapa exercise triggered feelings of uncertainty, even inadequacy:

Olivia Tuatoko (OT): It was hard! I was like, “Oh, do I have a sense of belonging?” Oh, I don’t know. What makes me feel . . . you know, which mountain or hill do I feel like I’m connected to? And I found myself jumping to different countries and not just in New Zealand.

Peter Burt (PB): I didn’t do that, I just thought of New Zealand all the time, but sometimes I think perhaps as a Pākehā you start to feel a little bit inadequate. Like I had to put here, my waka, I put a sailing ship . . . that’s why I chose that sailing ship wheel, ‘cos that’s how we got here, a sailing ship from Scotland. And that’s why I thought, you know, if you’re Maori you put the waka that came

144 Interview reproduced with permission, Katrina Tamaira, Wellington, New Zealand, 28 June 2008
from Hawaiki, or something, it's kind of better than a sailing ship, I think, from Scotland.

OT: Yours is coming from further away! (to PB)
OT: I put down the person who was flying a kite, only because I'm a bit of a dreamer. There were things that I know I should have put down, things that represented me, but for some reason I kept coming back to that picture [points to the genealogy sheet]. But, you know, finding my tribe, I thought, “What’s my tribe?” I started to question my belonging and who I identify with and what group. That’s having two different ethnic identities, I think that’s where I was able to grasp belonging to two different countries [New Zealand and Sāmoa].

The ambivalence of the two respondents underscores in a critical way how museological intentions do not always align with the outcome. For OT, such questions of identity were not only difficult to place within the context of Māori culture (that is, having to declare tribal affiliations she did not have), but as well she felt torn between her dual identity of being of Samoan-palangi descent. For PB, who is of Pākehā descent, the exercise was even more problematic in that it highlighted his own sense of inadequacy when he considered his identity against the backdrop of Māori culture. From his perspective, a Māori waka sailing all the way from Hawaiki to New Zealand was far superior to the boat his own ancestors journeyed on from Scotland. Here, the museum’s expectation that visitors will readily feel a sense of belonging by virtue of Māori cultural elements is somewhat naïve and fails to take into account the complexities related to questions of identity. The whakapapa exercise, therefore, can become a site of tension where identities are forced into existence through the birth canal of Māori culture only to arrive incomplete.

For other visitors, such as the three young Māori women I interviewed, the whakapapa desk was perceived as an exercise in superficiality rather than offering any real understanding of Māori culture or the realities of biculturalism:

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145 Interviews reproduced with permission, Olivia Tuatoko and Peter Burt, Wellington, New Zealand, 27 June 2008
146 Palagi refers to an individual of European descent
Katrina Tamaira (KT): I think the intension is fine to get people to understand how important whakapapa is to Māori, but the way it’s constructed and put together is pretty regimented. At the bottom [of the pamphlet] where you’re supposed to sign your name, I felt like I was signing away my life to this place. And I didn’t even know where or what it was. I was just thinking about the [signing of the] Treaty. And also, the rubbings. I actually thought about putting the prisoner on, because sometimes I really do feel imprisoned by this bicultural rhetoric and the state.

Kim McBreen (KM): I think that desk to me showed just how much people don’t understand what whakapapa means. That if you write these things down, then you will belong to this land as much as anyone else belongs to this land. It just says that those people don’t get it.

Sarsha Douglas (SD): It’s just so black and white. Whakapapa isn’t black and white. It’s a journey. Just by filling in the gaps is not really going to cut it.147

Another respondent, when asked if after completing the whakapapa exercise she felt a sense of kinship to the marae, replied,

Candice Aiono (CA): No. Because it’s got a box for anyone to put their whakapapa in. It doesn’t feel special or unique or that it’s relating to your identity.

Marata Tamaira (MT): So do you think it’s not specific enough?

(CA): No. It’s really general. It’s too simple. I guess that’s good in a way, because anyone can access it. But, it doesn’t get specific enough. It [Te Marae] doesn’t feel like a marae, it’s just a stage really.148

CA’s allusion to Te Marae as a stage brings to mind Paul Williams’ statement that the marae constitutes more an exercise in performative civics, wherein New Zealanders are offered the opportunity to play at being bicultural—rubbing the pounamu, filling out the whakapapa pamphlet etc—rather than engaging with the real issues (Williams 2003, 249). Williams has also highlighted the superficial nature of Te Marae as a whole by drawing attention to the accommodations that have been made in order to make the marae experience accessible to all New Zealanders. For example, he noted that much of the protocol that would normally be present

147 Interviews reproduced with permission, Katrina Tamaira, Kim McBreen, and Sarsha Douglas, Wellington, New Zealand, 28 June 2008
148 Interview reproduced with permission, Candice Aiono, Wellington, New Zealand, 6 July 2008
on a marae is eliminated: visitors are not required to remove their footwear before entering the meeting house; food and alcohol is permitted on the premises during corporate functions; and, the formal welcome onto the marae—the pōwhiri—is absent (2005, 85–86). From a practical standpoint, given the large number of people who visit Te Marae every day, it would not be feasible to formally welcome every visiting group. However, the decision to eschew certain aspects of marae protocol reveals the compromises that Māori are called on to make in order to create a bicultural experience out of symbolic indigenous space. Indeed, tensions over the employment of Māori protocol on the marae became evident when a heated debate erupted between Cliff Whiting and Sir Ronald Trotter (then Chairman of the Project Development Board) during the making of the documentary *Getting to Our Place* (Preston and Cotrell 1999):

Trotter: [The marae is] to work out in a way that makes it both comfortable and warm for any iwi who come here, but comfortable and warm and part of the place for any Pākehā who are part of the Maoritanga that we talk about and the concepts that we’re trying to develop.

Whiting: There are two main fields that have to be explored, and the one that is most important is its customary role in the first place, because marae comes off and come from the tangata whenua who are Māori.

Trotter (interjecting): It’s not just for Māori . . . you must get that (slams fist on table). Now, if it is a Māori institution and nothing more, then this marae has failed . . . because we are bicultural. Bicultural talks about two—and if it’s going to be totally Māori and all driven by Māori protocols and with regard for the life—museum, that’s a Pākehā concept . . . *We want to be able to put a bicultural spin on the wall is what I’m saying.* This has to satisfy both cultures.

After his acrimonious encounter with Trotter, Whiting, in the privacy of his office, expressed his indignation:

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149 In Māori culture, removing one’s footwear before entering the marae indicates one’s respect for the house and the people affiliated with it.

150 The pōwhiri is actually not completely absent, since it is included when the marae is being used for special occasions.

151 *Getting to Our Place* is an insightful documentary that offers a “behind the scenes” look into the planning of Te Papa.
I just had to suppress a lot of inner feeling, mainly because it’s what I do know of a life long experience is that to gain some of the ground forward is to actually have to take that sort of crap and . . . I mean there were a lot of things . . . that I found were very arrogant and contained a lot of ignorance. And to come in to suggest that somebody, who doesn’t know Māori culture, who doesn’t know Māori full stop, to come in and to start to want to change a very important part of the culture . . . it’s one of the major threats, for instance, of Māori culture. . . . If the museum is about remembering, discovery, and all those other high ideals in terms of education . . . it should be able to cope with such an ordinary, straight forward cultural uniqueness and difference.

What the engagement between Trotter and Whiting reveals is the selectivity of the museum to include those aspects of Māori culture that suit it (that is, those aspects that give Te Papa the needed “bicultural spin” that Trotter referred to), and rejecting those aspects that do not (such as certain cultural protocols). Here, the inclusion of Māori cultural sensibilities is not a given, but rather it is contingent on whether or not they mesh with the corporate ideals of the museum and its primary goal of catering to all New Zealanders. The confrontation also reveals the tension between the two kinds of biculturalism that Te Papa seems to be reaching for: the kind of biculturalism that makes visitors feel “comfortable and warm” and the kind that confers on Māori equal status through the decision-making process. The problem for Māori, of course, comes when the first goal requires concessions that deplete their ability to function as equal partners.

*Te Marae* is instructive in that it offers insight into the ways Māori symbols—in this case the marae, meeting house, pounamu, Māori mythology, and even traditional identifying categories such as iwi, awa, maunga, and waka—are used by the museum to construct a bicultural, shared identity. While on the one hand *Te Marae* may be viewed in a positive light as promoting greater cultural understanding and providing a way through “which the museum can sustain relationships with and between the peoples of the nation” (Butts 2002, 231), on the other hand the exhibition occludes rather than confronts the messy and problematic reality of biculturalism (Williams 2005, 94) that occurs just outside its doors. As one respondent remarked,

Kim McBreen (KM): I wonder if these attempts [in Te Papa] to gloss things over . . . that we’re all one New Zealand and that we’ve completely accepted biculturalism aren’t making things so much worse, like fostering more
resentment among Māori. This is kind of a joke. On some level it’s really offensive.152

Such flaws as they exist in New Zealand’s bicultural model appeared quite literally on Te Papa’s front doorstep in 2004 when thousands of marchers converged at the museum before proceeding to Parliament to protest against the Foreshore and Seabed legislation. The legislation—which extinguished Māori customary rights to their foreshore and seabed resources—was based on the rationale that such habitats should be for “use and enjoyment by all New Zealanders” (New Zealand Ministry of Justice 2009; emphasis added). In effect, then, the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 secured the nationalization of Māori properties. Here, the museum’s attempt to give all New Zealanders a place to stand at the locus of one of the most significant symbols of Māoridom—the marae—echoes somewhat hollow when considered alongside governmental efforts to disenfranchise Māori of those resources that not only sustain them, but which are central to their sense of identity and belonging. It is no wonder, then, that at the time of its drafting (and, indeed, still), many Māori considered the Foreshore and Seabed Act as being tantamount to the land confiscations of the 1860s. Prominent Māori academic Margaret Mutu claimed: “It [the coast and foreshore] is part of my spiritual inheritance. You cannot march in and take it over. And, if the government sends in the army, it will not just be my nephews and family who defend it” (BBC News Online 2004). Such political upheaval serves to illuminate the cracks in the bicultural model, “enough to suggest that the bright bicultural dawn in which Te Papa took shape has since clouded over” (Oliver 2004, xiii).

In his 2003 dissertation titled, “New Zealand’s Identity Complex: A Critique of Cultural Practices at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa,” Paul Williams argued that in the effort to make all New Zealanders, especially Pākehā, feel welcome on Rongomaraeroa, Te Papa

152 Interview reproduced with permission, Kim McBreen, Wellington, New Zealand, 28 June 2008

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has necessarily reduced it to a depoliticized space: “Despite its bright colours and contemporary
design, the power of Maori tradition is paled when it is made comfortable and inviting” (2003,
21). It is an assertion with which not all would agree. When I discussed Williams’ statement
with Senior Curator Māori Huhana Smith, she had this to say:

It is the most popular marae in the country. And for people who come to have
the pōwhiri experience, this is not done as a dial-a-pōwhiri; it’s done with true
intention and consideration and respect. Some serious challenges have been laid
down. It is a place that gets emotionally charged. You’ve had an incredible
amount of languages being spoken on that marae, which gives you a sense that
it’s been successful in bringing diversity to the building and respect of that
diversity. It’s a space premised on Māori kaupapa, and that Māori kaupapa can
come to the fore and challenge something that might be impacting on that. So,
by saying pale, it’s not the case. Similarly what happens with the repatriation of
the tipuna, that place is prickling, it’s not pale.\textsuperscript{153}

Hakiwai echoed Smith’s sentiments:

I think it gives real sustenance to the bicultural mandate having such a strong
Māori institution [i.e., Rongomaraeroa]. And I think the meeting house, it’s
engendered a lot of debate, even amongst our own people. And I think it’s
because it’s so creative and innovative. We had a master artist, Cliff Whiting,
who conceived it. It is different. It’s in a building, for instance. It’s quite
transparent—you usually go through a door. I think over time people have
accepted it because it’s used—and I think that’s the test of it. That’s the place we
welcome our visitors. That’s the place we welcome back our ancestors who are
being repatriated back. We have had staff members who have passed away who
have lay on our marae. So, in many ways, the purpose and the function is very
akin to what happens around the country, but in a museum. I think the concept
was innovative. The test for our meeting house is if it’s copied. [Then] I think
it’s good—it’s worked.\textsuperscript{154}

Thus, Te Marae takes on all the characteristics of a marae proper on those occasions when it is
transformed from exhibition space to gathering space. As Smith and Hakiwai noted above, Māori
culture is powerfully enacted in Te Marae, serving as a site where ancestral remains are
welcomed back home, and where the dead are farewelled. During such occasions, Te Marae
becomes a “place [that] is prickling,” a place charged with emotion and spiritual potency.

\textsuperscript{153} Interview reproduced with permission, Huhana Smith, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 July 2008
\textsuperscript{154} Interview reproduced with permission, Arapata Hakiwai, Wellington, New Zealand, 20 July 2008
While on any given day *Te Marae* might be perceived as merely a site for the "universal unearthing of 'cultural roots'" (Williams 2005, 86), when the karanga¹⁵⁵ is issued and Māori and non-Māori bodies move onto the marae ātea,¹⁵⁶ *Te Marae* becomes a space for positive intercultural dialogue and exchange. Such was the case in 2008 during the museum’s celebration of the Matariki Festival when several iwi converged at *Te Marae* for the Kaumatua Kapa Haka performance (senior Māori cultural performance). Here, elders from various tribes around the country engaged in an exuberant display of Māori culture, celebrating through song and dance the lives of key Māori leaders, including Kingi Tahiwi, Sir Apirana Ngata, and Paraire Tomoana.

Figure 34. Kapa haka performance. Te Hono ki Hawaiki. Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand. *Photo by Marata Tamaira.*

¹⁵⁵ Ceremonial call of welcome
¹⁵⁶ The open area in front of the whare nui
On the day of the performance, the marae was filled to capacity (Fig. 34). While those audience members who arrived early were able to secure a seat, many others had to huddle close around the periphery. Māori and Pākehā (along with other non-Māori), packed tightly together, a microcosm of the nation meeting on shared ground. In a powerful way it reminded me that despite the many flaws in the bicultural model, there are nevertheless spaces where Māori and Pākehā can meet kānohi ki te kānohi—face to face—to negotiate aspects of our past, present, and future, and to engage with one another in ways that are meaningful. And, although it constitutes a site that is rife with contradiction, Te Marae nevertheless forms a social space where tangible biculturalism might be forged, maybe not on a grand scale, but certainly in the hearts and minds of ordinary citizens. As my friend Peter Mataira commented of the museum as a whole—and here I paraphrase his words—“when I walk into the museum, I see the future.” His statement is at least something to hold on to as Māori and Pākehā struggle to come to terms with the legacy of our colonial past, to come to terms with each other.
CONCLUSION

Back to the Beginning

In this thesis, I have highlighted the significance of Māori symbols in the shaping of bicultural identity in Aotearoa New Zealand. As I have shown, symbols of Māori culture are a significant feature of the national domain, appearing on commodities such as clothing, bags, and jewelry; on advertising logos, governmental pamphlets, billboards, and corporate logos; from the rugby field to the air. They are everywhere apparent on the surface of everyday life, so much so we have come to accept them, without reservation, as the natural emblems of our bicultural identity. They constitute the visual elements of banal nationalism—everyday reminders of who we are as a nation.

I have used two case studies to provide a framework for discussing the complex mobilization of indigenous symbols in New Zealand: the first case study explored the nationalization of the koru through its placement on a proposed new national flag and as the principle identifying symbol of Air New Zealand, and the second considered the deployment of Māori symbols in a single exhibition space at Te Papa Tongarewa, Te Marae. In both cases I argued that while on one level the mobilization of indigenous symbols has enhanced the status of Māori as first peoples of the country, on another level it has served to conceal still-existing structures of Pākehā dominance. Here, the incorporation of Māori symbols within New Zealand’s bicultural narrative necessarily mystifies the troubling realities associated with the political model—realities that exist just below the surface. In terms of the use of Māori symbols in Te Papa’s Te Marae, a narrative of national unity and belonging is highlighted at the expense of a more critical analysis of the present-day challenges faced by Māori. In the national sphere, Māori symbols may be seen to be transformed into “materials of mythical speech” (Barthes 1972, 114), serving as they do to present a bicultural reality that does not yet exist. Such a biculturalism—if it truly did exist—would entail that Māori have full and equal access to the
levers of power. However, this is clearly not the case. Thus, “A conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and has filled it with nature” (Barthes 1972, 142).

In 1987, just as biculturalism was gaining traction in New Zealand, Leonard Bell wrote, “At the same time that we dominate the Māori, we Pakeha wear their culture as a symbol of our national identity, our New Zealandness... We pretend to a bi-culturalism which conceals the reverse” (AGMANZ 1987, 9). Granted, Bell’s statement was made twenty-two years ago, but, as I contend, it still resonates today. In the contemporary period, the struggle of Māori for basic equality with their Pākehā counterparts is an ongoing issue. While Māori have come a long way since the days of assimilation and integration, disparities continue to exist between the two treaty partners in the areas of health, education, employment, criminal offences, and income levels (Fitzgerald 2004, 55). We are not equal:

Pakeha have, Maori have not; Pakeha give, Maori receive. Although the discourse of biculturalism seems to recognise first people status, it also skews the primacy of Maori claims. Bicultural discourse might suggest that Maori and Pakeha coexist as subjects with equivalent properties, but one group is more equal than the other. (Mohanram 1998, 26)

The Foreshore and Seabed Act was a clear indication of the “fraying of biculturalism” in Aotearoa New Zealand, but we can be sure the unraveling will not stop there. Recently, the government proposed relaxing restrictions on the use of Māori lands in order to accommodate the construction of affordable housing for a growing New Zealand population (NZ Herald Online 2009b). Where such a proposal will lead remains to be seen, but it hints at more troubling times ahead for Māori in terms of the safeguarding of their ancestral properties. One would not be faulted for wondering if biculturalism is in fact just another euphemism for assimilation (as integration was).

157 I borrow this phrase from Paul Williams’ article titled “A Breach on the Beach: Te Papa and the Fraying of Biculturalism” (2005)
‘Let’s work together,’ said the shark to the kahawai. ‘Great’, said the kahawai with a trusting smile. ‘Fool’, thought the shark as it opened its mouth and swallowed the kahawai . . . ‘That’s partnership [read biculturalism],’ said the politician. ‘That’s integration,’ said the bureaucrat. ‘That’s assimilation,’ said the Maori. (Reedy cited in Fleras and Spoonley 2002, 110)

If biculturalism is a myth as I am suggesting, what hope is there for Māori? Indeed, what hope is there for Māori-Pākehā relations? How can we move forward from here? It is important to point out that while the deployment of Māori symbols may be understood as a cooption or “swallowing up” of Māori cultural property for national purposes, they are simultaneously mobilized in ways that subvert the dominant Pākehā power structure. Here, we might imagine the kahawai turning to confront the shark. Importantly, this is where biculturalism may be seen to transform from the mythical into the real. Such has been the case at Te Papa museum, where Māori museum professionals, charged with caring for the cultural treasures and symbols of Māori culture, are actively staking their own claims on the space. As Smith asserted,

Māori are coming into the museum as participants in the process and as activators and catalysts to change. I’ve been here for 8 years and I’ve seen things change dramatically. There’s been some topsy-turvy times, and slightly sideways times, but ultimately the best way of indicating your authority is showing authority.158

Māori professionals, like Smith, are veterans when it comes to weathering the topsy-turvy times at Te Papa and showing their authority. We might again recall, too, Megan Tamati-Quennell’s self-described position as a “guerilla girl,” a term that is indicative of the war that is being waged on the cultural and political front in New Zealand. Rather than confronting the dominant system head on, Māori are engaging from the inside out—a strategy akin to Gramsci’s war of position,159 which entails a protracted struggle to overturn hegemony (Gramsci in Hoare and Smith 2007,
238–239). You can be on the outside throwing stones, or you can be on the inside catching them and building a wall with them.\textsuperscript{160}

It is important to point out, however, that working from the inside out constitutes a complex process of negotiation. While on the one hand Māori museum professionals are obligated to the Māori communities whose taonga are in their care and whose narratives they are charged with articulating, on the other hand they must answer to a museum institution that is primarily concerned with serving the needs of a national constituency. What this means is that indigenous museum professionals must often take a conciliatory stand. Such was the case when the decision was made to eschew many of the protocols associated with traditional marae in the civic space of Te Papa’s Te Marae. Māori may have authority in the museum, but it is contingent on the prevailing force of the dominant group. Even Smith conceded this point: “I’ve been here long enough. I can see what you can play with and what you can’t.”\textsuperscript{161} It should be noted that the tenuous position in which Māori museum professionals find themselves is not unique to New Zealand, but rather it is shared by indigenous museum professionals around the globe, including those working in Hawai’i (e.g., Bishop Museum) and the continental United States (e.g., National Museum of the American Indian) to name but a few. As the inclusion of indigenous voices in national museums increases over the next millennia, a critical aspect of the process will entail a new kind of museology training that prepares indigenous museum workers to mediate between the institution for which they work and the indigenous communities they are charged with serving. In many ways, such training entails the creation of a new kind of museum professional: one who is engaged more keenly in taking a stand on issues pertaining to the indigenous communities being represented in the museum and acting as an advocate for change. It would

\textsuperscript{160} Interview reproduced with permission, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 July 2008

\textsuperscript{161} Interview reproduced with permission, Huhana Smith, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 July 2008
seem that the kind of training I am suggesting—albeit in a very brief way—is vital if museums are to have any meaning or relevance for the indigenous peoples whose cultural treasures they house.

Aotearoa New Zealand, that “small ship-of-a-nation state,” continues to sail the choppy waters of identity and encounter questions of authority and power. It is stocked to capacity with all the things with which we as New Zealanders have come to identify ourselves: the All Blacks, the soft contours of an impossibly green landscape, sheep to populate that landscape, summer sausage “sizzles,” lamb roasts in the winter, symbols of Kiwiana, and, yes, symbols of indigenous culture—everywhere. Our ship is also stocked with items that threaten to overturn it: a flawed Treaty and a political model that is still more myth than reality. But, despite nearly 170 years of brutal headwinds and constant storms, our ship, though a little bit leaky, is still afloat. We will continue to sail forward and, with a stiff breeze in our sails, who knows what we will encounter on that distant horizon before us.

Epilogue: Chasing Symbols

It is 5 P.M. and I have just finished a long day at Te Papa museum sifting through the library’s treasure trove of resources. I am tired and hungry, and the biting chill of a southerly wind makes me hesitate momentarily before I step out of the warmth of the museum into the elements. Then I see her—a young Pākehā woman, by the looks of it in her mid-twenties, walking briskly (as most Wellingtonians do) across the road. What has caught my eye is not exactly the woman, but rather the leather bag slung across her shoulder. Hundreds of miniscule punch holes in the leather, when taken as a whole, form the image of a tiki. My hunger and weariness forgotten, I rush after the young woman. I want to ask her about the bag. Where did she get it? What, if anything, does the Māori symbol on it mean to her? I had been living, breathing Māori symbols since I began my project, so it is possible I was not thinking particularly clearly. But, I pursued her nevertheless. Rushing across the road to catch up to her I fumbled for my camera to try and take a snapshot of the bag. I managed to get a couple of shots in, but with so many people walking in
front of me, it was difficult to apprehend and snap at the same time. I decided to concentrate on pursuing my quarry. The young woman was already half a block ahead of me, and just when I thought I might have a chance to catch up to her, she turned a corner and ducked out of sight—she and her bag were gone. Later, I looked for the photograph I had taken. There it was, the tiki bag, certainly visible, but slightly off kilter and out of focus.

In recollecting the incident, I wonder if the Māori symbols I have been chasing for two and a half years now as part of a sustained enquiry into the use of Māori symbols in Aotearoa New Zealand are not still eluding me, dipping behind corners and disappearing from view. Just when I think I understand the dynamics of their deployment in New Zealand, I lose the intellectual thread, tangled as it is in the complex dynamics that frame the bicultural experience. Even curator Leonard Bell, who lambasted the use of Māori symbols in the bicultural project as an example of “pernicious neo-colonization” softened his tone by adding, well “No doubt sometimes it is, other times not” (cited in Thomas 1999, 152). Bell’s uncertainty underscores the fact that the mobilization of Māori symbols in the bicultural context is incredibly messy and the border between assimilation/cooption and agency/empowerment is ever shifting and difficult to pin down. Indeed, it is the complex nature of the subject that makes it a fertile field for research, a goal I hope to pursue in the next phase of my academic journey.

On researching the use of Māori symbols in the construction of bicultural identity in Aotearoa New Zealand, I have learned the value of inhabiting the space between—exploring the grey areas rather than the stark binaries, seeing things slightly out of focus (and maybe a little off kilter), rather than in sharp detail. The end result has been an exciting engagement with a subject that is complex, always in flux, and never, never, complete. It is a swirling coil that has no end or beginning—a koru, maybe, that is forever unfurling.
The Treaty of Waitangi

English Version

Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, regarding with Her Royal Favour the Native Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and anxious to protect their just Rights and Property and to secure to them the enjoyment of Peace and Good Order has deemed it necessary in consequence of the great number of Her Majesty's Subjects who have already settled in New Zealand and the rapid extension of Emigration both from Europe and Australia which is still in progress to constitute and appoint a functionary properly authorised to treat with the Aborigines of New Zealand for the recognition of Her Majesty's Sovereign authority over the whole or any part of those islands—Her Majesty therefore being desirous to establish a settled form of Civil Government with a view to avert the evil consequences which must result from the absence of the necessary Laws and Institutions alike to the native population and to Her subjects has been graciously pleased to empower and to authorise me William Hobson a Captain in Her Majesty's Royal Navy Consul and Lieutenant-Governor of such parts of New Zealand as may be or hereafter shall be ceded to her Majesty to invite the confederated and independent Chiefs of New Zealand to concur in the following Articles and Conditions.

Article the First

The Chiefs of the Confederation of the United Tribes of New Zealand and the separate and independent Chiefs who have not become members of the Confederation cede to Her Majesty the Queen of England absolutely and without reservation all the rights and powers of Sovereignty which the said Confederation or Individual Chiefs respectively exercise or possess, or may be supposed to exercise or to possess over their respective Territories as the sole sovereigns thereof.

Article the Second

Her Majesty the Queen of England confirms and guarantees to the Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and to the respective families and individuals thereof the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession; but the Chiefs of the United Tribes and the individual Chiefs yield to Her Majesty the exclusive right of Preemption over such lands as the proprietors thereof may be disposed to alienate at such prices as may be agreed upon between the respective Proprietors and persons appointed by Her Majesty to treat with them in that behalf.

Article the Third

In consideration thereof Her Majesty the Queen of England extends to the Natives of New Zealand Her royal protection and imparts to them all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects.

Māori Version

Ko Wikitoria te Kuini o Ingarani i tana mahara atawai ki nga Rangatira me nga Hapu o Nu Tirani
i tana hiahia hoki kia tohungia ki a ratou o ratou rangatiratanga me to ratou wenua, a kia mau tonu hoki te Rongo ki a ratou me te Atanoho hoki kua wakaaro ia he mea tika kia tukua mai tetahi Rangatira—hei kai wakarite ki nga Tangata maori o Nu Tirani—kia wakaætea e nga Rangatira Maori te Kawanatanga o te Kuini ki nga wahikatoa o te wenua nei me nga motu—na te mea hoki he tokomaha ke nga tangata o tona Iwi Kua noho ki tenei wenua, a e haere mai nei.

Na ko te Kuini e hiahia ana kia wakaritea te Kawanatanga kia kaua ai nga kino e puta mai ki te tangata Maori ki te Taha ke e haere mai nei.

Na kua pai te Kuini kia tukua a hau a Wiremu Hopihona he Kapitana i te Roiara Nawi hei Kawana mo nga wahi katoa o Nu Tirani e tukua aiane amua atu ki te Kuini, e mea atu ana ia ki nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga o nga hapu o Nu Tirani me era Rangatira atu enci ture ka korerotia nei.

Ko te tuatahi
Ko nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga me nga Rangatira katoa hoki ki hai i uru ki taua wakaminenga ka tuku rawa atu ki te Kuini o Ingaran i ake tonu atu—te Kawanatanga katoa o o ratou wenua.

Ko te tuarua
Ko te Kuini o Ingaran ka wakarite ka wakaæe ki nga Rangitira ki nga hapu—ki nga tangata katoa o Nu Tirani te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa. Otiia ko nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga me nga Rangatira katoa atu ka tuku ki te Kuini te hokonga o era wahi wenua e pai ai te tangata nona te Wenua—ki te ritenga o te utu e wakaritea ai e ratou ko te kai hoko e meatia nei e te Kuini hei kai hoko mona.

Ko te tuatoro
Hei wakaritenga mai hoki tenei mo te wakaætanga ki te Kawanatanga o te Kuini—Ka tiakina e te Kuini o Ingaran nga tangata maori katoa o Nu Tirani ka tukua ki a ratou nga tikanga katoa rite tahi ki ana mea ki nga tangata o Ingaran.

William Hobson, Consul and Lieutenant-Governor.
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