ANDREAS REISCHEK AND THE MAORI: VILLAINY OR THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY SCIENTIFIC ETHOS?

Erich Kolig

University of Otago
Dunedin, New Zealand

About one hundred years ago, from 1877 to 1889, Andreas Reischek, an Austrian explorer, ethnographer, naturalist, and collector was active in New Zealand. The esteem he enjoyed in his own time contrasts sharply with his reputation today. On 16 June 1888 the *Auckland Weekly News* (p. 8) lauded Reischek as "brave, enduring, self-sacrificing and indomitable" and exulted: "taking him all in all, as an example of enthusiasm and unselfishness in scientific pursuit, I know of none to compare with him in New Zealand." The tone since then has drastically changed, as can be seen by the forcefully voiced disapproval in a recent biography by Michael King (1981) and the responsive chord it struck in the New Zealand press.[1] The contrast between these two views gives rise to the question how such drastic changes of mind occur.

Today Reischek is faulted on two counts. First, critics charge, in order to enhance his collection of indigenous New Zealand fauna, he mercilessly hunted species already known to be on the verge of extinction. Today, as a broad spectrum of people have become conscious of the value of nature preservation, this appears particularly loathsome.[2] Second, current public sentiments in New Zealand are particularly offended by Reischek's ethnographic work. In this article I wish to highlight the nature of his relationship with the Maori as well as the ideological

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background of his ethnographic pursuit: a background that indicts and absolves him at the same time. Through it Reischek is inextricably linked with the history of the anthropological profession. Thus any guilt and flaws belong not only to Reischek, but also to anthropology.

Born in 1845 in Linz in northern Austria, Reischek was a taxidermist by profession and a fanatical nature lover by inclination. It was his profession that brought him to New Zealand. Julius von Haast, then director of the Canterbury Museum, was looking for an able taxidermist to prepare animal skins for display. Reischek was recommended to him by Ferdinand von Hochstetter (see Haast Letterbooks), who had visited New Zealand with the Austrian *Novara* expedition in 1858-1859 and, at the request of the New Zealand government, stayed on to conduct a geological survey (see, e.g., Hochstetter 1885). Hochstetter, later to become director of the Imperial Natural History Museum in Vienna, retained a life-long interest in New Zealand as well as a friendship with Haast. This proved profitable for both the Viennese and the Canterbury museum as natural history material and ethnographic objects were exchanged between them for several years.

Reischek was initially under contract for a period of two years during which he was to prepare animal exhibits for display in the then newly established museum in Christchurch. However, the two years became twelve as Reischek continued to extend his stay, finally leaving in 1889. During these twelve years Reischek became a daring explorer and mountaineer in New Zealand's bush and backcountry, as well as an accomplished naturalist. He wrote several ornithological papers[3] and a treatise on training dogs entitled *Caesar: The Story of a Wonderful Dog* (1889). His main work, published posthumously, is *Sterbende Welt: Zwoelf Jahre Forscherleben auf Neuseeland* (1924), translated and abbreviated as *Yesterdays in Maoriland* (1930). This volume, which contains Reischek's observations on Maori society, recounts his relationships with the Maori, replete with numerous admissions of what today must be regarded as culpability in his dealings with them. His relationship with the Maori was marked as much by mutual affection as by the ruthlessness with which Reischek pursued his ethnographic interests, in particular gathering skeletal materials and bringing together an outstanding collection of Maori artifacts,

Reischek was one of the very few Europeans to have King Tawhiao's permission to travel in the King country in the 1880s, a time of chronic friction and acute distrust between Maori and Pakeha.[4] Kerry-Nicholls, who also traveled in the King country at about the same time—and without anyone's permission but his own—wrote that it was "tabooed

to the European as a Mohemmedan mosque" and "all who had hitherto attempted to make even short journeys into it had been ruthlessly plundered by the natives, and sent back across the frontier stripped even of their clothes" (Kerry-Nicholls 1974:14). Reischek, however, was traveling in safety under King Tawhiao's personal protection, as is shown by a letter dated February 1882 and signed by Honana Maioha, one of the King country's leading dignitaries.[5] Nonetheless, there were dangers, as Reischek was well aware. Part of the King country was under the influence of prophet and "rebel" leader Te Kooti Rikirangi and others who would not readily acknowledge the Maori king's jurisdiction and who might violently object to the presence of a Pakeha. The fact that Reischek was able to move about relatively freely speaks as much for his daring as for Maori generosity.

Reischek was not always guided by scrupulous honesty vis-a-vis the Maori, who had extended to him their friendship and hospitality on many an occasion. The friendship of the Maori seemed to him a means to an end that fully justified the employment of unethical methods if need be. This weighs heavily against him in the face of the letters of affection and trust that he received from several Maori, including King Tawhiao and chiefs of high rank and prestige. One example speaks for itself:

> A farewell and remembrance to his dear friend A. Reischek.
> Welcome, go to your kingdom, to your people, to your land. That you may live a long life, that your years may be many, that many days may fall to your lot. May the great God in the heaven look after you in peace. I am glad that you came to the regions of the King to travel. I am glad for you that you should return in peace under the name of King Tawhiao. Go in peace to your people. Greetings, friend. From Honana Maioha.
> Letter to his dear friend (dated Kopua-Arekahanara, New Zealand, 8 February 1882, Reischek, Letters [Linz]).[6]

King Tawhiao wrote in equally affectionate terms: "Yes, it is good that you will come and visit me, then return home. Enough of words. This is a song of affection from me to you . . ." (letter to Reischek, dated Whatiwhatihoe, 20 Oct. 1882, Reischek, Letters [Linz]).[7]

Reischek collected ethnographic objects with a zeal that bordered on obsession. In order to document Maori culture as completely as possible, Reischek included in his collection roughly baked cakes and homemade noodles offered to him in a village near Ruapehu (Reischek 1924:308). Perhaps he went hungry on this occasion just to save his meal for his col-

lection. The noodles seem to have meanwhile disintegrated (nor are they mentioned in Moschner's catalogue, 1958); but the small cakes, now hardly recognizable as food, are still faithfully preserved in the vast storage basement of the Ethnological Museum in Vienna, where Reischek's collection is housed today. Cakes, fern roots, strands of tobacco, dried caterpillars (used for tattooing according to Reischek's notes), and other such trivia reveal Reischek's intention to portray Maori culture as completely as possible and not just to bring together an array of expensive curios to dazzle his European contemporaries and achieve high prices on the art market. This is important to note in order to see both Reischek and his work in their true light.

The fruit of Reischek's labor is an ethnographic collection of 1,199 items, of which about 460 objects are from New Zealand and the rest from various Pacific Islands, Australia, India, and North America.[8] The whole collection was purchased in 1890, through a private initiative, for the Imperial Museum in Vienna, for a sum of 24,000 florin (records, Ethnological Museum, Vienna), which was approximately twice the prime minister's yearly salary.[9]

The methods by which the collection was assembled vary greatly. Some of the objects were presents given to Reischek on a personal basis: valuable nephrite clubs, woven blankets, and carvings. Other objects were purchased from willing vendors, sometimes at high prices as Reischek notes. Occasionally he reluctantly had to forego a tempting purchase as the asking price was beyond his means. From a moral point of view it is worth noting that in Reischek's time the Maori could not, if indeed this had been possible earlier, be tricked or cajoled into selling something they did not wish to part with, nor could they be persuaded to reduce their prices. No longer would a Maori chief mortgage his finely tattooed head in exchange for no more than a metal axe, as reported by the Reverend Marsden (Drummond 1908:100f.).

However, not all of the collection was acquired with scrupulous honesty, by any stretch of moral standards. Reischek conducted many unauthorized and probably highly unprofessional excavations of shell middens (e.g., Reischek 1924:57), he raided deserted *pa* sites (ibid.: 86, 87, 94, 95), and, most damaging, ransacked burial places. It is this aspect of his activity that evokes the strongest resentment today. Even though at that time the government did not place restrictions on the unauthorized excavation of sites of historic and prehistoric significance —as is now the case under the Historic Places Act—Reischek was acting in gross violation of Maori customary law.

Of a particularly odious nature were Reischek's forays into burial

places, where he gathered such relics as skulls and ornaments (ibid.: e.g., 80, 89, 96, 97, 118, 235, 236, 237, 239, 240). He seems to have been especially active in this respect during his stay in Northland, between 1879 and 1880. Clearly the most controversial part of the collection are two mummified corpses taken from a burial cave near Kawhia: one of an adult man and one of a child (see Moschner 1958:126). The theft of these two bodies has probably been the major cause of ill-feeling toward Reischek, in particular among the Maori community, which demanded time and again their repatriation. Even though the Maori queen as well as the New Zealand government were involved at various times in negotiations with the Vienna museum, the problem remained a festering sore for decades until in March 1985 the adult mummy was at last restored to New Zealand.

Reischek was quite aware of the enormity of the sacrilege. Yet he persisted—with the help of two Maori accomplices apparently swayed by pecuniary rewards, even though they must have been conscious that they were breaking one of the strongest tapu, customarily placed on burial sites (Reischek 1924:174f.). Reischek did not seem surprised, nor deterred, when the Maori began to eye him with suspicion and to issue veiled threats (ibid.:85). At one point two Maori demanded to see the contents of the ample bags he always carried, and he mentions that this was not the first time. He knew of the consequences had he been caught red-handed: “the Maori threaten every violation of the grave-tapu with death” he reports (ibid.:81). However, these were risks he was prepared to take, leading his critics to suspect that it was the prospect of vast honors or huge rewards that spurred him on.

Naturally, secretiveness was a major aspect of Reischek’s methods, A characteristic incident is related in his biography (ibid.:82ff.), Reischek set out suitably equipped for the occasion with saw and lantern, and, cleverly avoiding a Maori observation party sent to keep an eye on the suspicious stranger, he entered the deserted Pa Marikuru by night. There, among other things, he sawed off from a post the portrait figure of chief Tirorau, taking great care to do the job over flowing water so as to obliterate all tell-tale signs.

Reischek did not always have to acquire carvings in this adventurous way. In one case, for instance, he took carvings from a deserted house with the consent of the traditional owners. In the village Hauturu, chief Te Whitiora, Reischek’s powerful friend and mentor, lifted the tapu to enable Reischek to help himself to the finest carvings (ibid.:192). However, shortly afterward he committed a terrible faux pas when, in order to lighten his load, he chopped away some of the wood from the carv-

ings he had just taken and tried to burn it in a campfire. A Maori watching him became agitated about the sacrilege of burning the effigy of an ancestor. Only the timely intervention of Whitiora saved Reischek from the consequences of his carelessness. This incident is revealing, for it shows that Reischek either had little knowledge of the lore and belief of the Maori or had scant regard for their sensitivities. It is puzzling how this can be reconciled with his many protestations of sympathy and friendship for the Maori.

It is not surprising that Reischek's dealings with the Maori have done more than just raise a few eyebrows. The most recent expression of passionate disapproval is Michael King's biography "The Collector." Reischek has been tried by King and found wanting: his greed, moral corruption, and treachery condemn his memory to eternal loathing. King puts his indictment succinctly (1981:61): Reischek "was prepared to lie, to cheat, and to steal under the cover of night." It is interesting that Reischek should still be so vilified today, a century later. It cannot be disputed that he acted in defiance of Maori customary law and that he grievously hurt Maori sensitivities by violating the tapu surrounding burials. Disturbing human remains is among the worst of crimes in traditional Maori society; its severity can be gauged by the fact that desecrating burials and taking the bones to work them into flutes and fish hooks were strategems used by the Maori as an extreme form of calculated insult. However, this is only one facet of the story.

Reischek's behavior does not seem to have broken any contemporary New Zealand laws, written or unwritten. In fact, in a general sense, the nineteenth-century certainly was not characterized by a very empathetic, sensitive approach of the Pakeha to the Maori; this despite the astonishing fact that it was possible to generate and perpetuate the popular "myth" that the nineteenth-century Maori-Pakeha relationships, some unfortunate and regrettable outbreaks of hostilities notwithstanding, were marked by mutual respect and a great deal of cordiality and goodwill. The reality appears to have been quite different (see, e.g., Miller 1966; Ward 1973). Seen within a nineteenth-century context, Reischek's actions were not vastly beyond the limits of behavior acceptable among Pakeha. His deeds seem in accord with the general plundering of Maori valuables and possessions, land, cultural treasures, dignity, and freedom of decision occurring at the time. Surely the acquisition of artifacts and burial contents by what today may seem dubious methods must have been much more prevalent than is generally believed today. It was certainly not confined to one or two depraved individuals or unscrupulous collectors. The amount of bone material

and burial paraphernalia that today can be found in museums and private collections throughout the world is otherwise unexplainable (see, e.g., Fox 1983). The famous Buller collection provides a telling example. Several items are coyly listed as having been "picked up" or "dug up" and it is unlikely that the consent of the Maori owners was ever obtained. The presence of bone material obliquely points to the same methods as Reischek's, although perhaps less brazen. Certain entries in the Buller catalogue are revealing, such as a Maori coffin that "was taken from a Nga-puhi burial place, a cave . . ." A "carved support for a Maori coffin" was "taken away at night by a half-caste from ancient burial place . . ." (Buller, Maori Collection).

It seems clear that the condemnation of a few ethnographers and collectors such as Reischek springs, more than anything, from the application of the moral standards of the 1980s. It is when viewed through the prism of modern ethics, which is King's point of view, that Reischek's behavior appears grossly improper. But this fails to take into account the historical reality of the "anthropological ethos" in the nineteenth century.[10] Despite the acute moral awareness of most anthropologists today, the beginnings of the discipline were steeped in unbridled enthusiasm, often entailing a blatant disregard for ethical issues. In the rest of this article I shall attempt to set out the motives driving Reischek, to explain the ambiguity of his attitudes, and not least to sketch the scientific ide*ology* of his time and society, all of which I think are highly symptomatic of the spirit that informed early anthropology as a whole.

The image of Reischek as a fortune hunter is hardly applicable. He did not solely seek out expensive curios that might bring him a rich reward in Austria. This is evidenced by the breadth of the material collected, which clearly shows his intention to portray Maori culture as completely as possible. Reischek seems to have been instructed by Hochstetter, the director of the Imperial Natural History Museum in Vienna, to bring back as much museum material as possible (including bone material), the idea apparently being that Hochstetter would eventually acquire the artifacts (see Heger 1902:409). However, by the time Reischek returned to Vienna, Hochstetter had died, leaving Reischek to find another home for his collection; this created the impression that he was searching for the highest bidder. It is important to recognize that Reischek was not a treasure hunter, unscrupulous in the sole pursuit of personal wealth and fame. His motivations were of a different nature: he thought he had a scientific mandate to achieve his goals.

However, the fact remains that Reischek enjoyed the hospitality and friendship of many Maori, which he returned by violating their custom-

ary laws. This is even more curious when we read in his diaries, published in *Sterbende Welt,* numerous professions of sympathy and regard for the Maori. In a short eulogy written for the Austrian Academy of Science, Wettstein emphasizes Reischek's love for the Maori: "He describes them as a people of superior culture, whose undeserved, gradual demise he deeply regrets. Reischek loved those people despite their cannibalism . . ." (1957:17). There is ample evidence for these sentiments in *Sterbende* Welt. Reischek's description of the early history of New Zealand and of Maori-Pakeha relationships shows very clearly where his sympathies lay (Reischek 1924:121-151). His long account of New Zealand history and race-relations is both balanced and favorable to the Maori, clearly speaking for Reischek's understanding as well as for his profound sympathy for the vanquished. It is equally clear that these are Reischek's original thoughts and that he was not simply mirroring images and cliches extant in New Zealand at the time. Several paragraphs are deeply critical of the European approach and express his repugnance at what he saw as their double-dealing, infidelity, and deceit toward the Maori. As an example, Reischek relates the story of Hone Heke, the Christianized chief, who when honoring the Sunday with a service as the missionaries had taught, is surprised and taken by soldiers, who seem to know no such religious canon (ibid.:133).

Reischek (ibid.:135ff.) also refers to the poignant problem of dubious land deals by which many Maori were defrauded of their land (much later recognized as one of the greatest causes of the friction between Maori and Pakeha; see, e.g., Sinclair 1961:44ff). With unconcealed satisfaction he relates the well-known "Wairau affray" of 1843 involving Te Rauparaha, in which the Maori drove away the surveyors and then routed the military sent out to enforce the parcelling up of the land (see Burns 1980:239ff.). He concludes: "thus, as an exception, this sad story ended with a victory of the just cause."

Time and time again Reischek speaks of the just cause of the Maori (e.g., 1924:145). Very few who wrote about the Maori in the nineteenth century empathized with their viewpoint and their grievances as fully and unreservedly as Reischek. For instance, Reischek gives a surprisingly balanced account of the King movement (ibid.:135ff.). When most European historians could not see beyond the blood, the massacres, and the ferociousness of the adversary, Reischek's description of Pai Marire, of its cause and its aspirations, is of a striking objectivity and moderation (ibid.:147-150).[11] While European records of that time habitually speak of rebellion, treachery, and savagery perpetrated by HauHau, Reischek recognizes it as a basically nationalistic movement

and an essentially peaceful religion that happened to develop a violent guerrilla wing under the leadership of some of Te Ua Haumene's extremist disciples, such as Kereopa.[12] Decades later authors writing about the Maori-Pakeha wars, Te Kooti, HauHau, and the like chronically offered a one-sided, biased picture with little understanding for the Maori side. The Maori adversaries were usually referred to as "fanatics," even "perverts," their activities being "uprisings" and "rebellions" (see, e.g., Taylor 1959:440). Reeves (1956:211) called Pai Marire, or HauHau as he preferred, a "barbaric, debased" cult and superstition. "It was a wilder, more debased, and more barbaric parody of Christianity than the Mormonism of Joe Smith" are his unflattering words. Even more moderate writers completely failed to appreciate the social, economic, and political reasons that drove the Maori to fight Europeans. Even the peaceful Parihaka movement, which never raised a weapon against the Pakeha, was described in such loaded terms as "bands of native fanatics, excited to the point of rebellion against the whites" (Kerry-Nicholls [1884] 1974:14).[13]

His sympathy for the Maori led Reischek to criticize Christianity, describing it very graphically as a Trojan horse from which, as soon as the indigenous people have sunk to their knees before the image of Christ, emerge the Europeans, murderous and greedy for booty (1924:146). These are strong words. In the light of Reischek's deeds they must seem empty rhetoric and yet they cannot have been completely devoid of sincerity.

In his diaries Reischek is quite candid, concealing nothing, not even his misdeeds. Quite obviously, he saw no reason to hold back. One may surmise that as far as his views on the Maori are concerned, he spoke his mind, disinterested in currying favor with anyone. When cross-examined by the Maori, Reischek was under considerable pressure to pay at least lip service to their cause (see, e.g., ibid.:186-187), but there is no conceivable reason why he should be kind to them in his private notes unless he really meant it. It is fair to infer, therefore, that he was genuinely sympathetic to the Maori of his time and their grievances against the Pakeha.

But if true, how can Reischek's professed sympathy for the Maori be reconciled with the fact, which he implicitly admitted, that he did not honor their trust, that he failed to respect their customs and religious beliefs by pilfering their tabooed villages and violating their burial sites? I think the answer is to be found not so much in an inherent character flaw of Reischek's, but in the nineteenth-century mentality in general. More specifically, the inherent contradictions displayed in Reis-

chek's attitudes are not atypical of the scientific mind of that time. Let us have a closer look.

The respect and admiration Reischek felt for the Maori doubtless sprang from the Rousseauan cliché of the noble savage, a bill the Maori filled especially well. Several times in *Sterbende Welt* Reischek exults about the mental and moral superiority of the Maori (e.g., ibid.:145). Characteristic is a passage where Reischek, gushing about the Maori living in a state of honesty and togetherness with God and nature, compares himself with Tacitus, the Roman author who had held superficially similar views (ibid.:122). The noble savages then were the Germanic tribes, believed to live in a primitive but admirably natural and moral state in comparison to the "debauched" Romans. These romantic views expressed by Reischek were by no means unique. While Australian Aborigines, for instance, had the misfortune to be seen by some to be closer to baboons than to Europeans (see Fiske 1893:71-72), those peoples who qualified for the epithet "noble savage," and most notably the Maori, held the romantic admiration of most European writers. Not all, however, cultivated the objectivity that Reischek possessed. Not infrequently, the Maori was seen worthy of the title noble savage only so long as he was not engaged in "rebellion," in which case he became simply a savage. This fickleness of opinion is summed up in the elegant, if grossly prejudiced, French adage of the day: "grattez le Maori et trouvez le sauvage." Not unusually, such disappointment with the "noble race" was put down to the corruptive influence of culture contact, which made the Maori depraved and degenerate, sullenly insisting on spurious rights they had not earned and gradually sinking into increasing immorality (see, e.g., Hawthorne 1869:5). As Pearson (1984:14ff.) points out, the Rousseauan image of the noble savage was not accepted unquestioned and unchallenged, nor unmodified for that matter, by the eighteenth-century explorers and the editors of their tales. But even so, the predominant attributes ascribed to, in particular, the Pacific peoples, were benign ones; those traits seen as deplorable were belittled or altogether ignored. Rousseau's happy stage of simplicity, preserved in the islands, basically remained undisputed. However, by the mid-nineteenth century this generally favorable picture was being replaced by one less so: human sacrifice, cannibalism, infanticide, sexual license, cruelty, sorcery, and superstition, as well as other features considered undesirable, began to move into the focus of European awareness (Pearson 1984:27f.). Then, as Europe gradually extended its imperial control over the Pacific, racial and cultural arrogance increased; a considerably diminished romanticism uneasily coexisted with the emergent unflattering harshness of social Darwinism.

In Austria, however, the image of the noble savage managed to survive relatively intact well into the second half of the nineteenth century. This was no coincidence. Unlike other leading nations of Europe at that time, Austria had no strong ambitions to extend its political domain through overseas possessions. Romantic notions about exotic peoples could persist to a much greater extent than was possible in colonialist nations, faced as they were with the often unpleasant realities of administering peoples unwilling to accept foreign rule. Certainly the Viennese intelligentsia seems to have subscribed to romantic clichés, supported, in this case, by the experience with two worthy representatives of the noble savage. (This was perhaps only meager evidence to base a profound conviction on, but was tenable insofar as it was not contradicted by experience to the contrary.) I shall briefly describe the encounter between Austria and the Maori.

In the years 1857 to 1859 the navy frigate *Novara* was dispatched by the Austrian nation to conduct a scientific around-the-globe expedition (see Scherzer 1861 and 1973). Its task was to gather scientific materials and data on a wide range of subjects. In the time-honored tradition of earlier navigators, the crew also sought to entice individuals of exotic race to return with them so as to be able to bring home live exhibits.[14] When the *Novara* called at Auckland harbor in December 1858—the visit lasted only until January the following year—attempts were made to persuade some Maori to come along as crew members. They encountered much reluctance, apparently, as Scherzer reports, because the Maori were afraid they might be used as living provisions. Even when it was pointed out to them that a few African negroes had already been aboard the ship for fifteen months without having been harmed, this did not allay their fears. They suspected the negroes had survived only because a real emergency had not yet occurred (Scherzer 1861: vol. 3, 159).

Finally, two Maori did sign on: Wiremu Toetoe, a Waikato chief and post-office official, and a relative, Te Hemera(u) Rerehau.[15] The choice could not have been more fortunate. Both were exceptional men who adjusted with ease to life aboard the ship and who through their charm and wit soon became the favorites of the whole crew. The handsome and well-tattooed Toetoe especially enjoyed much affection and respect. In Vienna the two were lionized in fashionable circles, shown the sights, and introduced to the Emperor, who was so taken by their dignity and good manners that he gave orders to meet all expenses for their repatriation and made them a cash present. Useful training was also in store for the Maori visitors: they learned the printing trade and their teachers were favorably impressed by their ease of learning, skill, and

eagerness. On departure they were presented with a complete printing press, which would later have some impact on Maori-Pakeha relationships in New Zealand (Scherzer 1861: vol. 3, 159f.).

It speaks for the cosmopolitan character of Vienna at that time that there was a scholar of the Maori idiom, a Herr Zimmerl, who could converse with Toetoe and Hemerau in their own language. However, this was hardly necessary, as both soon acquired a good command of German and Italian (the predominant language in the imperial Austrian fleet), in addition to English. The Viennese were much charmed by their brightness and adaptability, and not least by their flowery poetic style of expression. Scherzer specifically mentions a letter Toetoe sent from Vienna to a former crew member of the *Novara* who had stayed behind in Trieste (then the major harbor of the Austrian navy): "You are on the sea shore at Trieste. We ascend to the peak of mount Leopold to see the clouds from afar, which rise from Styria. We cannot see Trieste, for our eyes are misty with tears which flow from them . . ." (Scherzer 1861: vol. 3, 160).

The extremely favorable impression made by the two Maori in Vienna contributed much to fortify the benign, if somewhat condescending, image of the Maori as a truly noble people. Scherzer (1861: vol. 3, 99f.) made them this compliment:

> While bushmen, hottentotts, Kaffirs and Australian negroes like the Indian tribes of British Canada and the United States of North-America offer the desolate picture of stuntedness and ruin, there are every indications present that the task will succeed to ennoble one of the wildest but also one of the most gifted aboriginal peoples of the earth (namely the Maori) through education and training and to induct them into the orbit of civilisation for good.

When after nine months they left Vienna, Toetoe and Hemerau not only had made a lasting impression on the Austrians but had themselves been greatly affected by their experience. Shortly before departing they printed an open letter to the Austrian people, bidding them farewell and extolling the friendship between the Maori and the Austrians. Their only complaint was the harsh winter weather in Vienna (see Hochstetter 1863:529f.). Later Hemerau would pass to Reischek a letter expressing his devotion to Austria:

> I greet you, o Emperor of Austria, greetings, greetings to you in the distant land. God has looked after you through the many

> years, and me too, may you live on for ever and ever amen, and me too. I have written to you over the many years, perhaps they have not arrived. You should write some letters so I can understand. The letter of Hokiteta [Hochstetter] has arrived with the picture. I have seen Reischek, he stayed with me and I gave him some of the things of the Maori. That is all. Reischek should come back as a companion for me here. I want some time to go over there. I have three children, who are yours, Emperor . . .” (Dated Mokau, 26 March 1882, Reischek, Letters [Linz])[16]

Traveling via Germany and London, where Toetoe and Hemerau met English royalty, they shipped from Southampton back to New Zealand. Seemingly as a result of their enjoyable stay in Vienna, both adopted an anti-British attitude, perhaps because the British, in their minds, compared rather poorly to the lovable Viennese. Subsequently, they used their newly acquired skills and their printing press to promulgate anti-British proclamations and to incite secession from British rule. Most importantly, the press was used to print Te Hokioi (“The war bird”), a political bulletin constituting the official organ of the King movement at the time. (Reischek later would meet Hemerau, who earnestly entreated him to stay; see Reischek 1924:208.)

Unfortunately, mutual enchantment and respect was not to be the sole ingredient in subsequent ethnographic encounters. In the later part of the nineteenth century, evolutionism had a great impact on science (see Howe 1977:142; Sorrenson 1979:17, 42). Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and, in Germany, Ernst Haeckel had succeeded in formulating scientifically and concisely ideas that had previously been only vague notions. The relentless grip of the laws of evolution and natural selection entailed, it was believed, the inevitable disappearance of some natural species as well as some parts of humanity, either as a consequence of the impinging European civilization or of processes of nature itself. Evolutionism lent justification and reason to the downfall of some parts of nature and humanity, thus absolving from guilt or responsibility those relentlessly pursuing the expansion of European civilization. The predicament of the by now not-so-noble savages, the Maori among them, could now be satisfactorily explained. Not unlike the dodo, he was viewed as being precariously perched on the edge of the abyss of extinction. As Howe (1977:142) aptly writes, “the image of the Noble Savage and the Ignoble Savage merged into that of the Dying Savage.”[17] Much as one may have regretted the demise of the fine and tragic figure

of the Maori, his fate was accepted without question. As one author lyrically explained in 1884,

> It is a notable fact, which strikes the observer at once, that many of the old chiefs and elders of the various tribes, with their well-defined, tattooed features and splendid physique, have the stamp of the "noble savage" in all his manliness depicted in every line of their body; while many of them preserve that calm, dignified air characteristic of primitive races in all parts of the world before they begin to be improved off the face of the earth by raw rum and European progress. (Kerry-Nicholls 1974:12)

Equally revealing is this passage by W. P. Reeves: "The average colonist regards a Mongolian with repulsion, a Negro with contempt, and looks on an Australian black as very near to a wild beast; but he likes the Maoris, and is sorry that they are dying out" (Reeves 1956:57). Those who spoke out against this convenient popular notion were simply crying in the wilderness. One of the few voices raised against the seeming inevitability of "dark races" disappearing was J. E. Gorst's, who argued that it is not necessarily true that "wherever the brown and the white skins come into contact, the former must disappear" (Gorst 1959:7). Even some Maori had apparently come to accept what appeared to be their tragic fate. A Maori chief is said to have commented on the decline of his people in the following words: "the Maori is passing away like the Kiwi, the tui, and many other things . . ." (Kerry-Nicholls 1974:292).

Reischek is thus quite consistent with the perception of his time when he lumps together natural species and the Maori, often in the same breath. Several passages in *Sterbende Welt* either condemn or lament European civilization's disintegrating effect on both nature and indigenous cultures (1924:122). He writes: ". . . for wherever the European goes, nature dies" (ibid.:82). And he blames the Europeans for the disappearance of the Maori dog as much as for the imminent demise of the Maori themselves (ibid.:101).[18]

To what extent Reischek's views were formed under the immediate influence of Hochstetter, who expressed similar ideas in his classic tome *Neu-Seeland* (1863), is a matter of conjecture. Presumably, Reischek was familiar with Hochstetter's writings, as the latter was his mentor who had secured for him the New Zealand post. In preparing himself for his new position, Reischek would have looked to the foremost authoritative work on New Zealand for information, which was beyond

doubt *Neu-Seeland.* Hochstetter certainly was the unchallenged authority on matters concerning New Zealand, on natural history and geology as well as cultural and ethnographic matters. He could easily hold and defend this status not only because of his actual experience and scientific work in New Zealand, but also because he was the director of the prestigious Imperial Museum in Vienna.

Hochstetter's views reflect a whole spectrum ranging from gross ethnocentrism to romanticism, tempered with a somewhat condescending admiration for the Maori whom he knew quite well through his stay in New Zealand while making a geological survey for the government. To him the Maori was a "crude, but talented savage," though unfortunately smitten with the terrible stigma of being a cannibal (Hochstetter 1863:465). Apparently, Hochstetter, being a natural scientist, was heavily influenced by the doctrines of Darwinism, for he takes a dim view on the ability of the Maori to ennoble himself and to take his place in a civilized world—quite in contrast to Scherzer's optimism. In his mind, the Maori had been given a chance, by the philanthropic endeavors of the government and missionaries alike, to lift himself to the heights of civilization (ibid.:67f., 474ff.). But alas. "Highly endowed by nature with intellectual and physical powers, of quick temperament, full of fresh and frank self-assuredness and natural intellect, the Maori is fully aware of his progress to superior morality and culture; however, he is not capable of elevating himself to the full height of a Christian civilised life and it is this inbetweenness which destroys him" (ibid.:47f.). The Maori fails in trying to grasp the opportunity held out to him, to better himself. In the end fate is against him. Though it is difficult to understand what Hochstetter may have meant when he wrote that the Maori's inability to scale the same cultural heights as Europeans would prove to be the cause of his demise, it is clear that he is quite confident that the Maori is doomed to die, thrashing about as he may in his death throes. "The European world has spread its assuaging wings over the crude savages, but the civilised savage still fights; he fights now for the right and independence of his nationhood as the civilised people of Europe do" (ibid.:66f.). The violent spasms of war afflicting the country are the last flexing of muscles of a dying race (ibid.:493). And even though Hochstetter concedes justification for the Maori's resistance, he cannot help seeing the Maori kingdom only as a "childish game" of a failed and doomed people (ibid.:481). With considerable assuredness, he predicts that by the year 2000 there will be no Maori left (ibid.:467).

The starkly pessimistic views of the foremost Austrian authority pro-

vided the powerful ideological matrix on which Reischek's own views must have formed. In the case of disappearing species, science assumed the duty to preserve their images for posterity. The vanishing present, one thought, could be frozen for the benefit of future generations, in glass cabinets, between the pages of folio volumes, and in the form of dead and stuffed skins. Written texts, pictures, and bones would provide mankind with a lasting record of these unfortunate victims of evolution. Similarly, Maori culture, if not the Maori themselves, must die out, so it was believed, and should be preserved in museums at any cost —even, and this is the crux of the matter, if this had to be achieved in violation of Maori laws and beliefs. For these laws themselves are of no lasting relevance and subject to the relentless greater law of evolution. Because the Maori were by and large ignorant of their impending fate, it was left to science to assemble a neat record of their culture to be gazed at with wonder and admiration in the future. Accomplishing this task was considered by the scientist a responsibility larger than any obligation to honor the customs of the vanishing "savages." To ignore their protests and to override their quaint taboos was no more than an act of scientific duty.

Respect and admiration for the noble savage notwithstanding, little was done to help them survive. Love of nature and savages did not inspire any practical attempt to arrest the destructive processes. Nor did the regret over the disappearance of many fine species or races contain a moral question of guilt for the Europeans. For looming in the background, conveniently ubiquitous, was the belief in the inevitability of these annihilating forces as side effects of progressive evolution.

This harsh view of social Darwinism combined with the shattered fragments of the image of the noble savage form a background against which one may come to appreciate Reischek's seemingly contradictory views concerning the Maori, his regret as well as his apathy, his Rousseauan romanticism as well as his callous disregard. His attitudes, by their ambiguity, reveal something of the "anthropological" ethos of his time and society and show him as the fanatical would-be scientist that he was.

More than anything, Reischek's intensive search for skulls shows his scientism. The importance of the skull for scientific purposes was grossly overrated at that time. Broca's phrenological studies are probably the best-known example. Also, through comparative craniological studies it was thought a whole diachronic picture of mankind could be pieced together: its phylogenesis as well as ancient migrations could be reconstructed.[19] In comparison to this magnificent task, the severity of desecrating the burial places of "savages" paled to insignificance. Besides,

we must not forget that the scientific "skull cult" did not spare Europeans. Skeletal material was often collected for purely aesthetic or sentimental reasons, and the skull of many a famous musician or poet disappeared from the grave. Graveyards and bone houses were plundered for prize specimens. Sometimes rigor mortis had not yet set in before a corpse was dismembered, boiled, and the bones extracted. It is a chilling tale to read how the bodies of men of extraordinary height were snatched by scientists and their henchmen (see, e.g., Fiedler 1978: 111ff.). The *Novara* expedition too was eager to acquire bone material. In Sydney members of the expeditionary corps, led by an Aboriginal, tried to recover the fine skeleton of "chief" Tow Weiry or Ugly Tom, who had been interred recently. Much to their chagrin, they failed to find it (Scherzer 1861: vol. 3, 68f.). Even more ghoulish is the fate that befell the bodies of the last two Tasmanian aborigines, William Lanne and Truganini. When Lanne died in 1869, a surgeon surreptitiously extracted his skull, leaving facial and cranial skin intact, which he subsequently stuffed with a European skull. He also severed the corpse's hands and feet, which together with the skull he dispatched to London. Truganini, understandably horrified when she learned about the mutilation of her husband's body, had the authorities promise her a secret burial. This was done when she died some seven years later. However, two years after that, her skeleton was dug up from the grave and later exhibited in the Tasmanian Museum in Hobart, until in 1976, when owing to mounting Aboriginal protests it was ceremonially cremated and the ashes strewn over the sea. (See Ellis 1981.)

In addition to skeletal material, bodies, whether in desiccated, mummified, or otherwise preserved condition, also held enormous fascination for science. Museums and curio cabinets alike were crammed with preserved bodies and parts that seemed interesting or spectacular enough to keep for posterity (e.g., people of exotic race, pathological cases, and rarities). In Vienna, still in the early nineteenth century, a girl suffering from ichthyosis and two negroes, who had been treated with affection while alive (the negroes had held respected positions at court), once dead were skinned and their hides were moulded over wooden frames by artists to produce life-like figures (Portele 1958). Not even members of the aristocracy were exempt from this hunt after the spectacular, as exhibits in the Vienna Anatomical Museum testify.[20]

It is not alway possible to separate neatly the scientific endeavor of this time from curio collecting and the sensationalism of public displays. A case in point is the traveling display of the famous Captain Hadlock, an explorer of the Canadian arctic and subarctic wastelands. He had brought together an exhibition of ethnographic material of the region.

The highlight of the display was a pair of live Eskimos, a man and a woman (their child had died on the journey) and their husky, who performed all kinds of activities for the benefit of the spectators. Also part of the display were ethnographic objects from New Zealand, obviously considered the appropriate counterpart to the arctic collection. "Among the objects of the southern polar region" was the well-preserved head of a Maori chief from "Coradica" (Kororareka). This was the head of one "Rungatida (Rangatira) Amas" who had been "one of the strongest and handsomest men of the country" (Fitzinger 1825). His seems to have been an exceptionally sad story. He had come to England with one "Captain Dicksen" on a whaler in order to acquire firearms. When his money ran out he joined Captain Hadlock's show. However, soon after, he died in Leeds on 20 April 1824 at the age of twenty-two. Captain Hadlock had his head preserved and mounted on an artificial torso to let people see the famous cannibal. Significantly, when this exhibition reached Vienna in 1825, it was reviewed in a journal devoted to theater and entertainment for friends of the arts, literature, and social life (Fitzinger 1825). This is in keeping with the tastes at that time, which freely mixed education and amusement so that both were so inseparably intertwined as to be indistinguishable. The higher social circles, those who could afford it, seemed to relish a combination of facile education and more sophisticated forms of entertainment.

Reischek's fate and deeds, his approach to the Maori, give us a deep insight into the early days of anthropology in the Pacific. This is not to deny the role personal ambition and lust for fame may have played, but to label Reischek simply a "scholar-pirate" (to use an expression coined by Hudson 1981:70) looting a colony for his own profit is an oversimplification. More than anything else, it is the ideological background of his time and society that explains not just Reischek's behavior but in general the sinuous, often ambiguous and contradictory approach brought to bear on the peoples of the Pacific by ethnographers. Vacillating as they were between what they saw as their scientific duty, and their humanistic goodwill and romantic love for "exotic" peoples, some nonetheless felt compelled to give far greater weight to "duty," thus contributing to the moral liability under which modern anthropology still labors.

NOTES

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Otago research grant in 1984. My thanks go to Professor H. Manndorff, director of the Ethnological Museum in Vienna (Völkerkundemuseum Wien) where Reischek's collection is housed; to Drs. F. Baltzarek, C. Feest, I. Moschner, H. Peter, and K. Portele; and to Mr. G. Reischek, grandson of the explorer. I am indebted to Dr. R. B. Harlow for his translation of the Maori letters in the possession of Mr. G. Reischek. I must also thank three anonymous critics who led me to hone portions of the paper and who drew my attention to two relevant publications.

1. See, for instance, the review of King's book by E. A. Aubin, whose grandfather had known Reischek, in the *Otago Daily Times,* 11 Nov. 1981, p. 25; and the *New Zealand Listener,* 2 Jan. 1982, p. 50.

2. Not everyone though seems to be convinced that Reischek vandalized New Zealand's fauna. In a letter to the editor (*Christchurch Press,* 14 Dec. 1970), a George M. Moir, obviously a keen collector of Reischekiana, had this to say about Reischek: "At the beginning of 'Yesterdays,' Chap. xiv, is a paragraph from an address given by Reischek to the Auckland Institute in the 1880's. This shows him to have been a pioneer conservationist" (Reischek, Letters [Hocken]). One should also bear in mind that Reischek did not hunt and collect solely for his own collection. He did so also for the Canterbury and Auckland museums and obviously with the approval of both directors (see Haast, Cheeseman, and A. Reischek Letterbooks). That Reischek was not collecting clandestinely is very obvious from his letters and public addresses. On at least one occasion, in 1880, when making a collecting trip for Tuataras, Reischek was accompanied by Professors Parker and Thomas, two leading New Zealand naturalists, who thus became privy to Reischek's activities. Collecting rare specimens of interest to natural historians was apparently not uncommon, as shown by an advertisement in *The Maori Messenger (Ko te Karere Maori)* no. 42, vol. 2 of 1 Aug. 1850, which invited "any native" to bring such items as Kiwis, Kiwi eggs, and rare shells to a Mr. Johnson in Auckland for purchase. Private individuals and scientists in New Zealand apparently also received specimens from Reischek. (See, e.g., letter from Reischek to Prof. T. J. Parker, dated Auckland, 27 Oct. 1886, Reischek, Letters [Hocken]; also Reischek to Haast, Auckland, Nov. 1883, Haast Letterbooks.) That Reischek did not condone hunting for avarice becomes clear through a passage in his little booklet on his dog Caesar. There Reischek condemns quite categorically a man he had heard of, who had killed birds by the hundreds and marketed their carcasses and then moved on to another district to continue his enterprise. Reischek maintained he would condone shooting birds only for "scientific purposes or true sport, or even as subsistence for a hungry man" (1889:56). His reference to science as a justification for behavior considered quite outrageous today is characteristic and significant in the light of what shall be said later.

3. For a precis of Reischek's ornithological work and his papers, see Westerskov 1980.

4. This was not long after the Maori-Pakeha wars. In 1881 the official laying down of arms by King Tawhiao had signaled the end of openly hostile acts (see Gibson 1974:249), but discontent was still smoldering.

"King country" is a well known politico-geographic concept in New Zealand. It refers to an area, located roughly in west-central North Island, that was under the jurisdiction of the Maori kings in the nineteenth century. The actual boundaries claimed by the King movement have fluctuated.

5. Reischek, Letters (Linz). The letter is also reproduced in Reischek 1930:165. This letter also gives Reischek permission to shoot birds in the King country, which is significant in the light of later accusations against him. The letter shows that Reischek had enough

respect for the authority of the Maori kingdom to ask permission, and it does not sit well with the picture of Reischek ruthlessly decimating the indigenous fauna.

6. He Poroporoaki whakamaumahara ki tona hoa aroha kia A Reischek
naumai haere ki tou Kingitanga ki tou iwi ki tou Whenua kia ora koe i te ora roa kia nuku atu ou tau i te Ao kia taka mai nga ra maha mou ma te Atua nui o te rangi koe e tiaki Paimarire
E hari ana ahau mo tou taenga mai ki nga takiwa o te Kingi haere ai e hari ana ahau mou kia hoki paimarire atu koe i raro i te mana o Kingi Tawhiao paimarire
haere ra i runga a te rangimarire ki tou iwi tena ra koe e hoa tena koe
Na Honana Maioha
Reta ki tona hoa aroha

7. Kia Raiheke
Tenara koe kua tae Mai tau Reta Mihi Mai Kiau Me tau Pene aroha i tuku Mainei kiau Ehoa tena ra koe Kua Mea nei kite Hoki atu Kitou Kainga Ae Ehoa e whaka Pai ana ane *[sic]* hoki a Hau Ki tau Kupu i Mea nei Koe Katae Mai ano Koe Kia Kite iau imua otou haerenga atu Kitou Kainga Ae epai ana Te Haere Mai kia Kite iau Kahoki Atu ai Koe Ki tou Kainga, heoi nga kupu he Waiata aroha te nei naku kia koe Tera koia te ao Haere Matariaki Mai teripa raro Kia ringia kote roimata Kia runa Ko taku Tinana whaka pa Rawaiho Kira rora Keite ngaru Kahorao Te Awa Kei tahu ete Rau Kamauru terangi Manako atu Kite Tau whaka orua Ana tearoha note Tane ite ahiahi Kati Koia ete Wairua te Kaiwhaka toro Mai tepo kia oho rawa ake kite ao koau anake Teehuri nei Kei wha Kapau noa te Manawa mate Wini raro eho Mai Koe Mate Tonga Hau e puhipuhi atu Tauarai tia Kitawhiti
Kotoku aroha tenei Kia Koe
Naku Na Kingi Tawhiao

8. There is a slight difference in the number of objects given in Reischek's bibliography and Moschner's catalogue (1958), the result, it seems, of whether objects of a similar nature are counted together or separately.

9. Tables of salaries supplied by the Institut fuer Wirtschaftswissenschaften, University of Vienna, give the following yearly figures: the prime minister (1895), 12,000 fl.; minister, 10,000 fl.; a university professor (1898), 3,200 fl. (plus increments after five years).

10. In a review of King's book, M. E. Hoare (1982:81) states, somewhat surprisingly, that "King attempts . . . a study of the Austrian scientific and social milieux"; and then goes on to say that King's "sources are meagre." Inadvertently, Hoare points to the crux of the matter: the absence of a thorough analysis of Reischek's time and society and the lack of an attempt to place Reischek and his activities within the proper social and ideological context. This is intrinsically the reason why King can paint the image of a picture-book villain. A different treatment, one that included an analysis of the scientific ethos at that time, in Europe in general and in Austria in particular, would have brought different results. King's investigation seems to have suffered from the language barrier, so that a good deal of the subject matter, the Austrian background of the story, seems to have remained very much terra incognita to him, not just in a linguistic but also in a cultural and historical sense.

11. On the King movement and HauHau/Pai Marire see, for example, Elsmore 1985 and Clark 1975.

12. *Sterbende Welt* of 1924 refers to Te Ua as Te Na, the result, it seems, of misreading Reischek's handwriting, which is for the greatest part in the old-fashioned Gothic script where U and N are almost identical.

13. For a description of the Parihaka movement, see Scott 1975.

14. Captain Cook seems to have started this practice by taking back to England a man from the Society Islands (see McCormick 1977). Sometimes such passengers were acquired through persuasion and inducement, sometimes through kidnapping—as in the case of the hapless Doubtless Bay chief Ranginui, whose hospitality to Captain Jean de Surville was repaid by his forcible abduction (see Dunmore 1969).

15. There are several diverse spellings. For instance, in Reischek's *Sterbende Welt* they are Wireama Toitoi and Hemera te Rerehau.

16. Ka mihi ahau ki a koe e te Emepa o a Tiria, Tenakoe, Tenakoe i te whenua tawhiti Na te Atua koe i Tiaki i roto i nga tau maha, me ahau hoki, Ki a ora tonu koe ake ake amene, meau hoki, i tuhituhi ano ahau ki a koe ingatau maha kaore Pea e tae atu kia koe Tena koe E hoa aroha, Me tuku mai e koe e te hi reta kia maramai ahau Ku a tae mai te reta ate Hokiteta kiau me te ahua hoki, Kua Kite ahau i a Raiheka Reischek i noho ki au i ho atu e au nga mea ate maori ki aia heoi ano
Me hoki mai a Raiheka he i hoa moku ki konei hia hia ahau i te tehi taima ki te haere atu Toko toru aku tamariki kei akoe e te Emepara kitetehi moni maku.

17. Howe (1977:140) argues that "the notion that Pacific islanders were headed for extinction long predated evolutionary theories of Darwin and others in the second half of the nineteenth century." Sorrenson (1979:73) similarly maintains that the "evolutionary doctrine was applied to New Zealand even before the publication of the Origin of Species in 1859." This is so, as Spencer's social Darwinism predates Darwin's; and in any case social Darwinism did not invent these notions, but forged them into a scientific system. This system could then begin its useful service of placating the European conscience, since actual events seemed no more than to bear out scientific predictions.

18. The title of Reischek's *Sterbende Welt* (Dying World) reflects this notion very clearly: it imparts the connotation of impending doom to what is described in the book. This pessimism proved to be very tenacious; some scientists continued to subscribe to it well into the 1930s, as for instance Malinowski. (See, e.g., Howe 1977:142.)

19. The origin of the Maori provoked a great deal of speculation. A Semitic or Jewish connection was hypothesized and even an Aryan origin ascribed to them (see Sorrenson 1979:14f.). Even today such theories in various guises crop up from time to time in anthropological and quasi-anthropological circles.

20. An illuminating example is given in the entertaining first chapter of Carl Sagan's "Broca's Brain" (1974), which describes his visit to the dungeon-like, cavernous magazines of the Musée de l'Homme, crammed with such prized specimens as the severed heads of New Caledonians and the formalin-preserved brain of Broca himself.

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