MAORI LITERATURE: PROTEST AND AFFIRMATION

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The works of Maori writers have emerged in the last two decades as powerful literary and political commentaries.[1] During this time New Zealand has witnessed a Maori renaissance, whose characteristics have included pronounced and pointed Maori political activity, an increased awareness of the Maori artistic heritage, and, finally but certainly not insignificantly, innovation and experimentation within that heritage. While there has unquestionably been a reengagement with Maori art generally, sparked by the successful Te Maori exhibition in the United States and its triumphal return to New Zealand, Maori literature stands out as a means through which Maori culture can be reexamined, reevaluated, and for the most part reaffirmed. As importantly, New Zealand's colonial heritage and Pakeha complicity have been subject to scrutiny.[2] This indigenous perspective is in keeping both with the spirit of the Maori renaissance within New Zealand and with the increasing awareness and articulation of the implications of colonialism for indigenous people. Through literature, then, a distinctively Maori voice has penetrated New Zealand discourse.

Only in the last two decades has Maori writing received a national--and, in some cases, an international--audience. This period corresponds with the evolution of Maori political aspirations and the subsequent redefinition of Maori-Pakeha relations. Two Maori writers in particular, Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera, have emerged as especially significant, each producing an individual corpus spanning the course of the Maori renaissance. In this article, I will be concerned primarily with their works, although the more recent novels of Keri Hulme

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(the bone people) and Alan Duff *(Once Were Warriors),* who are also Maori, will come into the discussion. In particular, I shall be discussing the following works by Patricia Grace: *Wairariki* (1975); *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps* (1978); *The Dream Sleepers* (1980); *Potiki* (1986); *Electric City* (1987); and by Witi Ihimaera: *Pounamu Pounamu* (1972); *Tangi* (1973); *Whanau* (1974); *The New Net Goes Fishing* (1977); *The Matriarch* (1986); *Dear Miss Mansfield* (1989).

Both Grace and Ihimaera have moved over the last twenty years from presenting celebratory vignettes of rural life to a confrontation with the compelling issues that mark Maori life in contemporary New Zealand, As a result, the lives of characters in later works are considerably less sanitized than in the earlier works; and both authors, tracing the landscape of Maori-Pakeha interchanges over the last century, have made violence a significant motif in their later works. In *Pounamu Pounamu* (1972), for example, Ihimaera describes an idyllic community, where. conflict is far less important that the cultural coherence that has held together Waituhi (the East Coast community that appears in all his work). By 1986, in *The Matriarch,* he dissects the physical violence that has been the legacy of colonialism in a reexamination of Waituhi's history. Similarly, in Grace's *Potiki* (1986) Pakeha treachery causes the death of a central character and the destruction of the meetinghouse. In their later works, both examine as well the domestic violence and physical brutality that have come to mar familial relations. However, unlike Duff, the sympathies of both Grace and Ihimaera are clearly with their Maori protagonists: their writings reflect the new shape of New Zealand politics and have become guideposts to defining the course of the Maori renaissance.

To study the development of these two authors, then, is to understand a great deal about Maori perceptions of the New Zealand political order. But however successful such work may be judged, problems inevitably follow this kind of cultural innovation. Pakeha writers are considered as individuals, but Grace and Ihimaera, much to their individual consternation, are seen as Maori who write rather than as writers who are Maori.[3] Their position as writers allows them to stand aside from the action, while as Maori they can, with some confidence, present the insiders' point of view. Such a dual perspective situates them for the kind of radical critique called for by Keesing:

> European scholars of the Pacific have been complicit in legitimating and producing male-oriented and elitist representations of societies that were themselves male- and (in many cases)

> elite-dominated. A critical skepticism with regard to pasts and power, and a critical deconstruction of conceptualizations of "a culture" that hide and neutralize subaltern voices and perspectives, should, I think, dialectically confront idealizations of the past.
>
> This is not the time to leave the past to the "experts," whether of the present generation or their predecessors. Scholarly representations of the Pacific have in many ways incorporated premises of colonial discourse and Orientalism, in assigning a "fixity" to Otherness, in typifying, in essentializing, in exoticizing. (1989:37)

The fiction of Grace and Ihimaera is important because it has appeared not only in the midst of a radical Maori critique of the New Zealand social order, but also at a time when many academic disciplines are wrestling with issues of cultural imperialism.

Grace and Ihimaera as Literary Pioneers: An Overview

Until Grace and Ihimaera published their short stories and novels, the Maori appeared in New Zealand fiction only as characters in Pakeha writing. Pakeha views of the Maori were expressed, formed, and developed through a literary medium alien to the Maori, without Maori reciprocity. Moreover, until the mid-twentieth century, the Maori were portrayed in Pakeha fiction in stock stereotypical modes. Such literary depictions fostered images of the Maori that could not be refuted by the limited social experience most Pakeha had of New Zealand's indigenous population, given the relative homogeneity of most small towns and the isolation of the Maori. Until the postwar Maori migration to New Zealand's urban areas, most Pakeha knew little of their Maori contemporaries. Maori life, on the other hand, has been, since significant colonial activity began in the mid-nineteenth century, invaded by the Pakeha. The asymmetry in literary expression is all the more significant for that reason.

When Maoris appeared at all in Pakeha literature, they were represented as outsiders, as beings external to the action. These stereotypes were cruel representations of an indigenous people, objectifying them, denying them autonomy in Pakeha eyes. Moreover, such literary stereotypes reinforced boundaries that separated New Zealand's two ethnic groups. Young Maori men were shown either as noble aristocrats or as gaudy posturers. Middle-aged men were represented as lazy, and fre-

quently as fat; on occasion, a dignified but inscrutable male elder would make an appearance. Women fared no better than men: young women were either aloof Polynesian princesses (replete with grass skirts and naked breasts) or promiscuous domestics who threatened the sanctity of Pakeha familial relations. The counterpart of the male elder was the wizened but stately matriarch (Pearson 1968:226).

There were few Maori responses to Pakeha representations until the 1970s, when Grace's and Ihimaera's early fiction was published. Their work follows a trajectory that reveals the increasing militancy of the Maori position: an investigation of their work is therefore an exercise in both social history and anthropological understanding.

In their early work, which took the form of short stories, Grace and Ihimaera both emphasized the emotional landscape of rural life,[4] placing the greatest importance on its enduring integrity. For example, through the course of Ihimaera's work, the settlement of Waituhi is revitalized, A run-down backwater in *Pounamu Pounamu* populated by the elderly, Waituhi is, in *The Matriarch,* a community that remains faithful to its history at the same time that it exerts an attraction for a new generation. Through the course of Ihimaera's work, Rongopai, the meetinghouse in Waituhi, is reborn and restored to its former glory. From being an object of scorn and shame, Rongopai emerges as a great source of pride for the village's inhabitants. Both Rongopai and Waituhi, in their vitality and endurance, stand as metaphors for the Maori condition.

While writers in colonial situations must confront issues of fragmentation and rupture,[5] Grace and Ihimaera nevertheless present us with positive portrayals of the Maori world, showing communities that have maintained their coherence and integrity. People are tied to the land and to their ancestors through a heritage that is represented as simultaneously political and spiritual. Individual difficulties are subsumed in deep emotional connectedness within communities and by the resulting *aroha* (love, sympathy, empathy) that binds people despite their poverty. Grace, for example, celebrates in *Waiariki* the cohesion and warmth of a Maori community that must struggle to exist in hostile surroundings. In *Mutuwhenua* the differences between Maori and Pakeha emerge as a major focus, the Maori being more spiritual, exhibiting more highly refined sensibilities. These early works are a clear celebration of traditional Maori values. But they represent more than an affirmation of Maori community; implicitly they provide commentaries on the emptiness of the conventions of 'the conqueror. Despite their marginality and poverty, the Maori are the clear victors in the contem-

porary social order: the very aspects of Maori life that are so laudable--community, commensality, and *aroha*--stand in contrast to the individualism and self-serving greed of the Pakeha.

Pakeha critics see in these rural novels a sentimental evocation of lost times and places. Just as conceivable, however, may be the authors' decisions to depict the enduring vitality, more remarkable in the face of ruin and disrepair, of Maori communities.[6] These early works could not help but reassure their Maori readership of the validity of Maori experience. In a world where Maori social legitimacy was called into question, this was not a small contribution.

By the 1980s the Maori had adopted a far more active political stance, signifying more intense Maori engagement with the political establishment. Tribunals had been erected throughout the country to hear Maori land claims; land marches and demonstrations gave voice to new Maori assertiveness. The 1980s were heady times: it even seemed possible that the balance that had so far favored the Pakeha might tilt toward the Maori. As these events were unfolding, Grace and Ihimaera changed both the venue and the tone of their fiction. Dramatic events moved to urban arenas, while the authors' voices became more clearly partisan and their social statements more definitive.

Grace's and Ihimaera's move to probe the Maori urban experience was not simply a change in scene; for each of them the move from rural to urban environment, from home to hostile territory, meant the discussion of domestic rupture, permanent fault lines that splinter kin groups, violent confrontations between Maori and between Maori and Pakeha. In *Potiki*, for instance, Grace describes Pakeha appropriation of Maori land, while in *The Matriarch* Ihimaera explores schisms in the community that compound the complex social relations--marred by the violent battles between Maori and Pakeha--in the nineteenth century. In these types of portrayals, the writers reflect both social and literary trends in New Zealand: Maori have become far more assertive, more positive in their statements of their identity, more willing to be intensely critical of Pakeha presumptions of cultural supremacy. In Grace's *Electric City* and Ihimaera's *The New Net Goes Fishing*, the allure of the city is chimeric: life is fragile, marriages are brittle, casualties of broken relations flounder without the support available in rural areas. Young Maori are aliens in a landscape that is harsh, impersonal, and unfriendly; the railway station, the pubs, the marginal arenas of a congested urban center are where these young wanderers are most likely to appear. Pakeha prejudice is all the more insidious, for now it is not only ill-considered, but cavalier and casual.

The effectiveness of the Maori voice is enhanced by the addition of Hulme and Duff as chroniclers of the Maori condition. Neither Hulme nor Duff present especially palatable versions of Maori life: drunkenness, child abuse, and incest loom as issues that must be confronted.[7] As one critic has written, "Current Maori writing focuses on the disagreeableness of being poor, drinking and violence, of being in prison, discriminated against and patronised, while drawing its richness and strength from the reexploration of historical, tribal, and mythological identity" (Wevers 1985:355).

Both Grace and Ihimaera deal directly with the problems of land alienation in their major novels of the 1980s. The importance of the past and its continuing intrusion into the present is difficult for Pakeha to grasp, but axiomatic for the Maori. Embodied by carvings and meeting-houses, both of which connote in the Maori world the proximity of ancestors, the past is an important presence in these novels.

Grace and Ihimaera deal with historical realities of Pakeha treachery against the Maori: Grace focuses upon land alienation and recent attempts at reclamation; Ihimaera invokes the local tribal history of Maori prophecy that dominated the nineteenth century and traces its legacy into the late twentieth century. The tradition of prophecy-provides an idiom that encompasses and lends meaning to the terrible realities of subjugation. Indeed, domination, expropriation, and defeat are themes that must concern Maori novelists today.

Patricia Grace

In her first collection of short stories, *Waiariki,* Grace demonstrates her mastery of vignettes, by capturing for her audience the pulse and vitality of Maori community life. In "Valley" the phases of human life are linked to the seasons (Beston 1984). Beston maintains that Grace's goal at this juncture is to appeal to both Maori and Pakeha audiences: for the former, to evoke recognition and pride in their distinctiveness; for the latter, to demonstrate a commonality of experience that links New Zealand's two major ethnic groups (1984:42).[8] Yet it seems very clear that whatever common humanity may bind the groups, the moral edge belongs to the Maori. Maori warmth and *aroha* denote an emotional openness, a connectedness that is nowhere in evidence among the more isolated, inhibited Pakeha.

Grace's presentation and sensibility are frequently solemn and grave; there is mockery rather than the self-deprecating humor that lightens

Ihimaera's work. Nevertheless, Grace's perception is sharp, her target more consistently the Pakeha social order. Her work concentrates on the shadows the Pakeha have cast on the Maori landscape.

Most of the *Waiariki* stories are concerned with the distinctiveness of Maori sensibilities. Far more than Ihimaera, Grace concentrates on Maori spirituality. There are tales of dreams that come true, of deaths foretold by the *morepork* (traditionally an omen of death), tales of second sight. Indeed, evidence of Maori spirituality and connectedness pervade this collection of short stories. While her characters are engaged in a consuming round of daily activities, there is a strong sense that this is a fragile order, one that in many ways has already yielded to the new. As this transformation occurs, the characters are subjected to innumerable embarrassments and humiliations. In a world that has ceased to make sense, people have no bearings. There is no rapprochement between the Maori and the Pakeha. Instead there are cutting observations, as in "A Way of Talking." "It's fashionable for a Pakeha to have a Maori for a friend," claims Rose, who has been studying at university, She goes on to mimic a Pakeha characterization of the Maori: "I have friends who are Maoris. They're lovely people. The eldest girl was married recently and I did the frocks. The other girl is at varsity. They're all so *friendly* and so *natural* and their house is absolutely *spotless*" (Grace 1975:5; emphasis in original).

There are regrets. The passing of certain aspects of the old order is no longer in dispute. In realizing that resources are depleted, a character in the title story "Waiariki" draws critical cultural implications:

> No. My regret came partly in the knowledge that we could not have the old days back again. We cannot have the simple things. I cannot have them for my children and we cannot have full kits any more. And there was regret in me too for the passing of innocence, for that which made me unable to say to my children, "Put your kits [baskets] on the sand little ones. Mimi [urinate] on your kits and then wash them in the sea. Then we will find plenty. There will be plenty of good *kai moana* [seafood] in the sea and your kits will be always full." (pp. 41-42)

(As Grace's work progresses, her authority will grow; anger will supplant regret at cultural loss.)

In a very interesting twist her last story in the volume, "Parade," deals with a parade going through town during a carnival, where the

Maori contingent is on a float, dressed in what has come to be defined as "traditional costume." On the float, men perform the *haka*, while the group sings, dances, and twirls their *poi*. The protagonist, a young Maori woman, is overcome as she watches her family perform. She searches faces in the crowd, attempting to gauge the reaction to the spectacle that is her family: "I could see enjoyment on the upturned faces and yet it occurred to me again and again that many people enjoyed zoos. That's how I felt. Animals in cages to be stared at. . . . Talking, swinging by the tail, walking in circles, laughing, crying, having babies" (p. 85). Yet by talking to the elders she comes to realize that these performances have become necessary. They may be embarrassing, humiliating, but "It is your job, this. To show others who we are" (p. 88).

It would be easy to see such performances as cultural vestiges that have lost their meaning, now merely insignia of a calcified past. But Grace forces a different perspective on the reader: she steps back and assesses the role of such presentations in contemporary New Zealand. While she is quite aware that Maori actors and Pakeha observers may well construct the scene in considerably less favorable lights, her point is well taken. In the absence of any dialogue between Maori and Pakeha, the Maori must take any opportunity to present themselves. In this light, Pakeha ignorance or concurrence with the Maori definition is irrelevant. Grace is asserting that the Maori, not the Pakeha, are the critical audience.[9]

As Grace develops as a writer, her anger points more directly at the Pakeha. She insists that the Maori be judged on their own terms. The cost is too heavy when they must constantly be accountable to Pakeha standards, In her later work, she will reverse this process, revealing the flaws in Pakeha sensibilities by holding them up against a Maori mirror. In 1978 she made her goals quite clear:

> So I think it is important for me and other Maori writers to write about us in all our variousness, our feelings and aspirations and values; attitudes to life and earth, affinity for land and land issues, about kinship and social orders and status; about the concept of aroha embracing awhina and manaaki; attitudes towards learning and work, towards food--its growing and collecting and preparation. And most especially about the spiritual aspects of all these things. Also about Maoris relating to Pakehas and vice versa, and all that this implies. (Grace and Ihimaera 1978:81)

Grace: Maori/Pakeha Relations

In *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps,* her first novel, Grace explores the problems encountered when a young Maori woman marries a Pakeha schoolteacher. While this theme should provide an opportunity to explore the barriers between Maori and Pakeha, the novel falters as it moves into this arena of contested meanings.

The female protagonist is known, as the story opens, as Linda. However, she is also the namesake of her grandmother, Ripeka. That she possesses two names is an indication of her dual nature. Indeed, she is a participant in two worlds, each with its own demands. Her choice of a Pakeha--Graeme--forces her and the reader to examine what exactly it is that constitutes her Maoriness, what boundaries exist between herself and her husband.

Ripeka/Linda has grown up with many Pakeha friends and seemingly navigates well in Pakeha waters. Yet even as a child and as an adolescent, she found herself removed from her Pakeha counterparts by mutual misconstructions of meaning. Thus when a young Linda and her Pakeha friends come across a buried greenstone weapon, a *taonga* (a treasure), she and her family understand that it must be returned to the earth. By contrast, her Pakeha friends seek profit from unearthing such a relic. It becomes clear that meaning and significance differ radically between the two cultures.

Linda's grandmother, representing the values that sustain Maori culture, objects to her granddaughter's marriage. Linda ignores her disapproval, attributing it to the inherent conservativism of Maori elders. Of course the opposition proves prescient. As the courtship and marriage of Linda and Graeme progresses, cultural differences threaten to engulf the couple. Through the course of the novel, Linda is transformed into Ripeka, as her Maori aspect begins its ascendancy.

After their marriage, they move to Wellington, where Graeme takes up a teaching post. Initially they are happy, and Linda becomes pregnant. However, Linda's circumstances deteriorate quickly; she begins to have disturbing dreams, which eventually become nightmares. The city itself is transformed from a place of wonder and delight into a grave and the house becomes "a burying place" (Anderson 1986). Linda is haunted in her nightmarish visions by an old woman with a tattooed face (thereby making it impossible for the reader to mistake her for anything other than a Maori). Tormented by fiendish visions at night, she walks the streets of Wellington by day to escape the house. Her wanderings attest to the disintegration and disillusion of urban life. Through it

all, she does not confide in her husband. It is her parents' visit that brings out the truth of her illness. Linda is suffering from a Maori malady. The house is built over a graveyard, a serious violation of Maori notions of personal and social boundaries. It is of course only a Maori who sickens at such an infraction. Graeme is concerned about his wife, but he remains unscathed. Neither knew about the graveyard. It is inescapable that Grace is trying to suggest that Ripeka is affected while Graeme is not because she is innately, if unconsciously, susceptible to forces that cannot touch Graeme. Clearly, the implication here is that there are indeed inherent differences between Maori and Pakeha. Maori are more spiritual, more in touch with the unseen and unseeable. The introduction of inherent differences into the New Zealand discourse is especially dangerous, Furthermore, notions of a racial unconscious do not serve well an anthropological sensibility.

From a literary standpoint there is no dramatic tension here, because Graeme is both a stereotype and a paragon, He is dedicated and earnest in his job, concerned and solicitous of his wife in every regard.[10] Grace is aware of the insidious effects of Pakeha stereotypes of Maori. However, this kind of idealization also distorts.[11]

In *Mutuwhenua* we see more than a mere assertion of Maori spiritual superiority. Quite often, subordinate groups use opposition as a means of self-definition. Implicitly, Grace and Ihimaera's concern with *aroha,* with family, with land are designed to stand in contrast to Pakeha attitudes. At the very least, the richness of Maori life contrasts with that of the Pakeha. However, Grace is not saying that here. While Ripeka's illness certainly separates her from Graeme, it emerges for no reason other than that she is Maori. Grace is taking a position of inherent differences that revolve about Maori spirituality. Volition and knowledge would appear to be insignificant.

Yet Grace is making an important point here. Ripeka/Linda has grown up with a dual nature, in two worlds with competing demands that cannot be reconciled. Although the distance between Ripeka/Linda and the Pakeha world may widen as the novel progresses, she grows closer both to her Maori side and to resolving contradictions that, Grace seems to imply, could be life-threatening to a young woman isolated and unprepared in a Pakeha landscape.

Grace provides a mythological frame for the story. *Mutuwhenua* is the phase when the moon is asleep. Invisible in the heavens, it is nonetheless "buried in the darkness." Grace also recounts the story of Rona, who suffers because she ignores what is buried. By contrast, Ripeka/Linda confronts the hidden side of her identity and triumphs. This

theme of burial refers back to the greenstone buried earlier in the novel, which becomes a metaphor for Maoriness.

In this very political novel, Grace denies the possibility that Maori and Pakeha are, or have ever been, one people. Although Graeme and Ripeka are tied to one another through affection, intimacy, and the greater knowledge that Graeme derives from Ripeka, they are separated by an uncrossable cultural chasm. Moreover, it is Ripeka who possesses the more highly refined sensibilities. For all his good qualities, Graeme is not in the same league. Yet this assertion of differences, while of dubious literary quality, is perhaps politically salutary. We must admire Grace for refusing to subordinate her convictions to compel illusory goodwill, which in the past has ill-served the Maori.

In *The Dream Sleepers* and *The Electric City,* two subsequent collections of short stories, Grace explores how Pakeha domination has narrowed Maori opportunities and Maori stature. By contrast, there is always support and acceptance within the Maori community. In one of her saddest stories, "Letters from Whetu," a young Maori student sits in school writing letters to his friends, while his condescending and ill-informed Pakeha teachers fail to engage his mind, His letters reflect the paths of his cohort: episodes with drugs, stealing rampages, weapons battles. Whetu's frustrations, however justified, will produce neither mobility in the Pakeha world nor success among more conservative Maori. Interestingly, Pakeha critics do not see Grace's clear anger here. On the contrary, they tend to criticize her for pandering too much to Pakeha sensibilities (see, for example, Beston 1984). Her strength lies in the contrasting of the nature of interpersonal relationships: there is sustenance and acceptance within a Maori community, whether these are rural or urban, that is threatened by the encroachment of the Pakeha.

This theme is addressed very directly in *Potiki,* her most political novel. There can be no doubt that Pakeha ignorance of the Maori world and Pakeha reliance on profit and materialism menace the Maori in profound and troubling ways. Yet in this novel she retains a fidelity to Maori form that is new for her. In different chapters each individual relates his/her perspective on unfolding events. Maori are careful not to appropriate other's stories and insist, in meetinghouses, on *marae* (ceremonial arena), that participants be allowed to speak for themselves; no one else can tell their story. In *Potiki,* everyone has an opportunity to speak. Moreover, the construction of the novel resembles a spiral, a central metaphor, which emphasizes the continued ties between past and present. Her insistence on Maori form, her use of idiomatic Maori expressions (translated only in a glossary), force the reader to adopt a

bicultural stance (something that Ihimaera also demands in *The Matriarch*).

In *Potiki* Patricia Grace brings together many of her previous themes in an especially powerful novel. The novel's power derives from its clear political intent. Here she discusses the alienation of Maori land by dramatizing an event that bears a strong resemblance to the treacherous actions of the Pakeha government. Grace again links her modern characters to the heroes of Maori mythology. Potiki, or last-born, refers to Maui, the Maori culture hero, who, despite his lowly status (a last-born in a society that favored primogeniture), was a creative force behind the generation of the Maori social universe. In this story Toko, born of a slightly simple mother who has an unmemorable (indeed unremembered) liaison with an itinerant beachcomber, is the *potiki.* Toko embodies characteristics derived from both Christianity and from Maori mythology, that is, he clearly resembles both Christ and Maui. In imbuing her central character with attributes derived from two traditions, Grace is able to summon forth associations for the reader that will only strengthen the potency of the representation of Toko. Mary, his mother, may well have had a liaison with Joseph, the beachcomber (Tiffen 1978a). On the other hand, there is more than a mild suggestion that Toko's paternity is spiritual rather than human. Like Maui, who was an abortion, Toko was born months before term and taken into the water to drown. Like Maui, Toko was rescued by his kinsmen, who were unaware of his true identity or of his true abilities. Toko, who is in a wheelchair, is gifted with second sight. With her emphasis on Maori spirituality, Grace has given Toko the one weapon that the Maori can use against the wiles of the Pakeha.

Maori spirituality is perhaps nowhere more evident than in their attachment to the land, which has mystical, not material, value. It is the land that encloses and nurtures the family, a unit that supersedes all other allegiances. The meetinghouse is, as both Grace and Ihimaera remind the reader, shaped like a human body. To enter is to be embraced by the totality of ancestors that have preceded the current community. As conflict with the Pakeha mounts over the land, the story moves toward inevitable tragedy. With love and confidence, the family in *Potiki* attempt to reason with the Pakeha developers who want their land to turn it into an amusement park. When the family refuse to give way, the situation escalates into violence. When his wheelchair accidentally triggers a bomb set in the doorway of the meetinghouse, Toko is killed. Pakeha duplicity and treachery are everywhere in evidence, yet the moral victory belongs to the Maori, for Toko becomes part of the

meetinghouse, part of the past to which the Maori will always remain loyal and connected. It is no accident that the bombing takes place on the meetinghouse's threshold, which is a liminal area where past and present are conjoined. Here the difference between Maui and Toko is critical. Maui died in the body of his ancestress, Hine Nui Te Po, and now all his people die. Toko died in the body of his ancestor so his people could survive.

The past has become a character in this novel. Embodied in the meetinghouse, the past frames the action that takes place in the present. Linking past and present are the ancestors and the enduring menace of the Pakeha. In this novel there is no forgiveness for Pakeha treachery; blots on the past are neither dissipated nor forgotten. In the future they may be avenged.

Over the two decades of her writing, Grace's fiction has become more sophisticated and more directly political. Seldom does she seem concerned with assertions of common humanity. Indeed, her recent work is a proclamation of irreconcilable difference. At the same time, her work has become far more pointed in its presentation of a Maori perspective.

Witi Ihimaera: Early Work

Witi Ihimaera's literary career has spanned the course. of the Maori renaissance. From his early short stories, published in 1973, through to his most recent works, *The Matriarch* (1986) and *Dear Miss Mansfield* (1989), Ihimaera has moved from presenting celebratory images of rural Maori life to adopting a sophisticated political stance in which his scrutiny has turned to the legacy of Pakeha colonialism. This increasingly political use of fiction would in itself be of interest. However, far more compelling has been the Pakeha response to Ihimaera's literary activism.[12]

Ihimaera's career has been remarkable. He studied music at university and worked for the New Zealand Civil Service for several years before joining the Foreign Service. At the time that *The Matriarch* was written, he was New Zealand's consul in New York. It would be easy to argue that Ihimaera exemplifies a bicultural ideal. Yet the situation is considerably more complex; Ihimaera has taught himself to be bicultural and in so doing has hardly escaped the conflicts of his position. The virtues of his biculturalism rest on the critical stance that he readily assumes: he is simultaneously an insider and an outsider in both worlds. Yet there is an irony that Garrett notes: "He differs from a Pakeha writer in that [he] has to regain an understanding of the values and cul-

tural roots of a society that has been largely destroyed by the very processes that have led that writer towards deciding to write English fiction" (1986:112).[13]

Pounamu Pounamu is Ihimaera's first book of short stories, published in 1972. Here he recreates the world he lived in/heard about as a child and peoples it with individuals who, in the course of his writing, will he come increasingly vivid. *Pounamu,* the Maori name for greenstone, is a multifaceted, elusive treasure. For Ihimaera this is an apt image for the rich, intricate life of the rural Maori. His image for the city is the Emerald City, glittering, but not what it appears to be. He is of course referring to the Emerald City in *The Wizard of Oz,* which, as it turns out, was a favorite childhood book of Ihimaera's.

This is the first book of what will become known as the rural Waituhi trilogy. The other books are novels, *Tangi* and *Whanau.* The scene in all three is Waituhi, a small village around Gisborne, and the major players are the fictional Mahana family, who will figure in all the stories and novels through to the most recent, *The Matriarch.*[14] Although there are recurring characters throughout Grace's works, there is not the consistency of persons and places that is to be found in Ihimaera's works. Waituhi is an actual place. However, in literary terms, by keeping place constant over two decades of writing, Ihimaera is able to explore change in an especially effective manner. *Mahana,* a Maori word meaning "warm," was chosen specifically by Ihimaera to summon up feelings about the family. Although Ihimaera is writing about rural life, he is addressing the urban young: "My first priority is to the young Maori, the ones who have suffered most with the erosion of the Maori map, the ones who are Maori by colour but who have no emotional identity as Maori" (1975: 118). Accordingly, his focus is on the richness of the emotional life that unfolds for his characters. His emphasis in *Pounamu Pounamu* is on the contrast between a small settlement that yearly grows more depleted, whose buildings are falling into disarray, whose youth is leaving, and the continued complexity of the ties that bind the people to the place. In these novels his criticism of the Pakeha is implicit; his major concern, as he tells us, is to reassure the young urban Maori of the validity of rural experience.[15] Thus the cohesion and interdependence that typifies these communities is clearly seen as something specific to an exclusively Maori context.

Pounamu Pounamu begins and ends with a death, a major ritual occasion for the Maori. While stylistically this repetition links disparate stories, it also focuses on the uniquely Maori characteristics of Waituhi. Happy, lighter stories appear at the beginning of the book, while darker

stories dominate as the book progresses. Corballis argues that this movement from light to darkness suggests disillusion, deprivation, and death (1979:66).

Interestingly, parallel with Ihimaera's development as a writer, and consistent with the Maori renaissance, Waituhi blossoms over time. It is only in the early work that we have the feeling of dereliction and disrepair. In this collection of stories Waituhi has been left to a few old-timers, who play cards and use their homes as museums. When an old woman dies (appropriately playing cards with her friend), her husband, the local elder, remains in their house. Their home is seen as the *manawa*, the heart of the family, an important image for Ihimaera. In this village, kinship ties define everything, creating a multiplicity of allegiances and obligations. Young boys look after their grandmothers, widows are taken care of by other family members, individuals protect one another through complicated webs of mutual responsibility, which are never defined as stifling. There are few young people. In one story, appropriately titled "In Search of the Emerald City," a family prepares to leave Waituhi for Wellington, intent on better jobs and better education. Such an attitude, pragmatic on the surface, breaks faith with the ties that connect people.

In *Tangi*, the second of the trilogy, Ihimaera focuses on the emotional currents that sustain Maori communities through times of crisis. Tama Mahana, a young boy of twenty-one who has been working in Wellington, learns over the telephone of his father's death in Waituhi. He leaves Wellington by plane to return to his family for the *tangi*, the three days of mourning followed by burial, which is a prime ceremony and celebration of Maori identity (see Sinclair 1990). The structure of the ritual is such that the present and the past define and are defined by one another. Ihimaera parallels the interplay between past and present in his narrative structure, moving back and forth between the plane trip, in the darkness of night, that takes Tama to the *tangi*, and the train trip, in the daytime sun, that returns Tama to Wellington. This is more than a successful narrative technique, for it allows Ihimaera to remain faithful to critical Maori traditions, where the past influences the present, and where an orator faces the days in front by addressing his ancestors.[16] By the end of the *tangi* Tama has resolved his emotional crisis and will return to take up his father's work in Waituhi. Out of death, and beyond Tama's consciousness or control, has come a new beginning. Indeed, throughout the *tangi*, Tama chants to himself the familiar: "Death comes, but I am not yet dead, I breathe, I live."

One of the major themes in the book is the sheer force of community

sentiment in times of upheaval. There is not only an outpouring of physical and spiritual support from likely and unlikely quarters, but the community itself, through its rising tide of emotions, its chanting, singing, speechmaking, carries Tama over and through his personal desolation. Ihimaera does not criticize the Pakeha here. His concern is only with the manner in which the Maori community functions. Nevertheless it is obvious that this kind of emotional outpouring is far from cornmon in a Pakeha community. There can be no doubt that its absence is a lack; its presence defines and validates Maori social life. The *tangi* and the values associated with it arm its participants with a moral counterchallenge; for this is an arena that is subject to Maori, not Pakeha, definitions. At a *tangi,* a host of Maori virtues emerge that implicitly and explicitly are set against Pakeha ways. Pakeha come up lacking, for Pakeha materialism loses ground to assertions and demonstrations of Maori spirituality. Maori generosity and hospitality emerge as superior values when compared with rigid Pakeha politeness, which, in Maori eyes, masks a lack of sensitivity. Finally, the *tangi* vindicates Maori definitions of themselves as morally superior. While the Pakeha are seen as motivated by self-interest, the *tangi* provides a conclusive demonstration that the Maori are concerned with family, their near and remote kin, and with anyone who has a lien, however indirect, on their affections. The *tangi* provides a refuge from Pakeha encroachment and an opportunity to redefine the Maori position in New Zealand society.

As Tama's mind moves between the past and the present, the reader learns about the texture of Tama's childhood. He recalls the harshness of the early years of his parents' marriage, of their movements and migrations, with a growing family in tow, in search of jobs and stability, until finally they are able to accumulate enough money to buy a home in the village. There are other separations, but none prepares him for death.[17] At this juncture he must take the assistance offered by his relations. Tama is a neophyte, unable to function comfortably in completely Maori contexts, incapable of speaking at his father's funeral (which must be done in the Maori language and according to strict formulas), of maintaining the farm on his own. He accepts the proffered help gratefully and graciously. The premium is not on independence but on mutuality and interdependence. Using the image that is so important to Ihimaera, Tama recalls his father's constant injunction, "*To manawa, a ratou manawa*" (Your heart is also their heart), a mantra that will reecho through The Matriarch. Emotion, love, support, and empathy mark the *tangi,* providing a testimony 'to all that is positive in Maori life. "It is with little doubt the most intense revelation of the Maori

moral and emotional world yet bared to the public gaze. It is certainly a novel of a kind no Pakeha could have written" (Arvidson 1975:14).[18]

In 1974 Ihimaera published his second novel, *Whanau*, the third book in the rural trilogy. Although people are leaving Waituhi, there is a strong sense of resurrection and renewal. Most particularly this can be seen in regard to the meetinghouse, Rongopai, which is a real house with a real history. Painted with enthusiasm by young iconoclasts at the end of the last century, Rongopai was a truly innovative structure. Its failure to conform to Maori traditions shocked tribal elders, as did the representations of the intruding culture that appeared on the walls. The house fell into disuse, a source of shame to the local people. However, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust ensured its revival and sustenance. Throughout Ihimaera's work, attitudes toward the meetinghouse change and crystallize. The people's shame turns to pride, their embarrassment becomes self-respect; in *The Matriarch* the house is as much a character as any of the individuals in the book.

In *Whanau* a young boy, while working to restore the meetinghouse, realizes that the old order may be yielding to one prophesied, but not yet understood. For Andrew,

> The paintings are a blend of the Maori and the Pakeha worlds. They illustrate a new world of two races joining, Perhaps the young men intended to show how the Maori world was changing. Whatever the intention, for Andrew Whatu[,] Rongopai symbolises the twilight years of the Maori. As it had been foretold, so it had come to pass: the shadow behind the tattooed face, the pale stranger, had gradually emerged and begun to alter an old way of life. (P. 124)

Tensions between urban and rural lifestyles are given full expression in this volume. Waituhi offers much, as Ihimaera tells us:

> These people will never leave because they and the village are inseparable. They have been too steeped in family life. All their relations are here. This is their home, their family. They give life to the village; the village gives life to them. Away from it they will wither. The land is in their blood and they are the blood of the land. They will remain here because blood links blood, and blood links years and blood links families now and over all the years past. It is good to remain *family*. There is such aroha in belonging to each other. It is growing up together, liv-

> ing all your years together and being buried next to one another. You are never a stranger. You are never alone. That's why it is good to stay here. (Pp. 17-18)

Although at this stage in his career, the lure of the rural homeland seems almost overwhelming, Ihimaera gives us characters who are in fact buffeted about by complex and competing currents. These are not noble, simple souls living in an organic paradise. On the contrary, there are lives here characterized by cruelty, deception, treachery, and self-serving delusions. But it is easier to survive with the tolerance and support typical of a rural community. However, circumstances too often get the better of these characters. Certainly they are angry at the Pakeha, but somehow blaming everything on the intruders is too facile.

The marginality of Waituhi as a place where the old order is fractured but manages to survive is useful for Ihimaera's purposes. Such damage and rupture that does exist cannot be attributed to any inherent defects of the village, for there inhabitants maintain their cultural integrity; instead, cultural incapacity results from the rootlessness of the new generation, to which Ihimaera turns his attention in *The New Net Goes Fishing,* published in 1977. Here Ihimaera moves his focus to the urban lives of his Maori characters. In this collection there is little to celebrate, less to romanticize. In his dissection of the problems that afflict the Maori, Ihimaera is perhaps closer to Hulme than to Grace. Once again, as in his earlier work, the city is like Oz, ashine with possibilities, tarnished with shattered dreams. "Big Brother Little Sister" explores the damage of broken relationships, the fragility of a diminished kinship universe. Two young children face the streets of Wellington after their mother's boyfriend is violent yet again, able to depend only on one another in the cruel disorder of the urban landscape.

By contrast, the glimpses we are given of the village suggest support, affection, and a sense of values that has been displaced in the city. The cost of success is high. In "Catching Up," a young boy makes it through university by his own persistence and his mother's dogged determination. But, we learn at the very end, the price he has paid is to be removed from his Maoritanga. When he meets an old lady at the graduation ceremonies eager to congratulate him, he is unable to return her greeting. While the old lady demurs, assuring our embarrassed hero that it is, after all, all right, the reader knows that it is not.

The city changes the nature of personal relations. In "Cousins" a young boy learns of the death of a fellow university student, only to discover that they were related. As the funeral draws near and the narra-

tor talks about his cousin, he is filled with regret--regret at not having known his cousin, regret at the capitulations each has made in order to get on in a Pakeha world.

Urban environments with their alien rules and cold impersonality diminish the Maori. By contrast, a Maori setting is sustaining and uplifting. In the final story, "Return from Oz," a family that had been in the city for a generation packs up to return to the country, hoping to close the gap that has made strangers of kinsmen. It is significant that Ihimaera uses "Oz"--not the "Emerald City--here: There is no lustre to an urban milieu; its glimmering appeal is now known to be sleight of hand. Despite his obvious contrast between urban and rural communities, it is important to see that Ihimaera did not, as critics so often maintain, glorify or sentimentalize a calcified past. There are rural enclaves all over New Zealand that continue to be robust and enduring. The elders are bilingual, they face the decay that years of government policies and neglect have engendered, and they lose, at least for a time, their young to the cities, to the universities, and to the general allure of the Pakeha world. But these enclaves are not romantic or nostalgic entities. There is violence (both emotional and physical), deprivation, and despair. Indeed, even in the warm glow of Ihimaera's early stories, this aspect can be gleaned. Yet there is enormous vitality in many of these areas, vitality that has ironically been enhanced by government policies that have failed the young and forced them out of the cities and back into their rural homelands. Supported by work schemes (which are themselves the consequences of alarming unemployment among Maori youth), young people are learning Maori language, Maori carving conventions, and the complex etiquette that governs Maori ceremonial. In short, these communities are closing ranks and flourishing.[19] However, in Ihimaera's fiction, when the Pakeha come and invade these environments, the Maori are especially threatened.

Ihimaera, Radical Politics, and the Pakeha Establishment

The ominous presence of the Pakeha, both in the past and in the present, pervades *The Matriarch*, published in 1986. In this novel Ihimaera is concerned with relations between the past and the present, Pakeha and Maori, ancestors and descendants. The importance of bloodlines is made clear. Once again this is the story of Waituhi, but a much fuller rendition now tells of its connections with Te Kooti, the major nineteenth-century prophet of the East Coast. It is a tale of intense personal rivalry, reflected in and carried on through genera-

tions, of fierce and uncompromising tribal loyalties, and of terrible truths, which will continue to separate Maori from Pakeha.

The protagonist in this book is once again Tama Mahana, now a world traveler and civil servant residing in Wellington. Yet his ties to his background remain strong--in no small part because he was raised by his grandmother, the matriarch of the title, Artemis Mahana. Tama moves well in both worlds, but is not completely at home in either. Resolution will prove elusive. At the novel's end there is neither complete repudiation nor complete acceptance.

Artemis Mahana marries a weak man, fifteen years her junior, to preserve tribal alliances. Although men generally enjoy the prerogative of rank, privilege, and power, in this case her superiority is demonstrable. Ihaka is a conniving, jealous, mean-spirited individual. It is not surprising that Artemis focuses her energy on her grandson at the expense of her husband. But such attention isolates Tama, often placing him at odds with his family.

The book has the organization and the feel of an opera; it is arranged in acts and is performed on an epic scale. The language in italics throughout the text is Italian, not Maori. In this we can see Ihimaera's insistence on the readers' accommodation of Maori conventions; large portions of the text are in untranslated Maori. As the tale of Artemis--the source of her powers, their transfer to and reenactment through Tama--is unwound, the action moves through five acts, between the past and the present, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Tama adopts a dual perspective; he is both participant and observer, the latter achieved through "interviews" that he holds with journalists and well-meaning but ignorant Pakeha. From the insider's perspective, we are witness to the people and events that generated Artemis. The eyes of the outsider only validate her powers. As Artemis's grandson, Tama is taken into the very heart of Maori sensibility. Two strong women, Artemis and Tiana, his mother, fight over Tama. In them we glimpse two modalities of feminine power, power that comes to fruition in a context of male domination and privilege. Tiana is a daughter-in-law, a junior to a high-ranking senior woman. Each woman must employ different strategies as they vie for Tama. This concentration on women's power and prerogatives demonstrates an important aspect of Maori bilateral kinship. In doing so Ihimaera demonstrates the continuing integrity and coherence of Maori culture. Moreover, in showing the weakness of men (namely Ihaka), he affirms the continuing strength of this culture.

This triumph of Maori culture, its persistence in the face of defeat, is literally and metaphorically represented by the meetinghouse. By *The*

Matriarch, Rongopai has been completely redone and revitalized. Celebrating and representing the past of a group, the achievements of its ancestors, meetinghouses are sources of stability and immutability in a tumultuous world. The revitalization of Rongopai provides an apt image both for the East Coast and for Maori culture.

Ihimaera reminds the reader that the travesties of history are not readily forgotten. But this history is Maori history, and a Maori is now telling the story. Here, the history that is recounted is East Coast history (although Ihimaera does admit to some elaboration). Ihimaera is not only suited in a literary sense to telling that history, but he is entitled to it, because this is his ancestral legacy. We have now entered an arena of contested meanings. But this is not an invention of the novelist, nor a creation of the defeated. As Binney has demonstrated (1979, 1984, 1986), the perspective adopted here has been held by those on the East Coast for several decades, although their views have been reconstituted and restructured over time.

In *The Matriarch* Te Kooti is a major character, as is his imagery, resurrected by Ihimaera and shown to be as effective in this century as in the last. But here the valence has shifted: Te Kooti is not a villain, but a victim. The Pakeha is the Pharaoh, who has taken God's chosen people into bondage and exile. To live in the land of the Pharaoh, to abide by his rules, is to compromise yourself beyond redemption.

And yet this is very much a novel of redemption. As the novel closes, Tama's grandfather dies. Tama's relationship with Ihaka encompasses the major issues of the book: blood, ancestry, succession. At his death the issues have been resolved, and Tama has come to terms with his past. Land rights are a major focus of the novel, and Maori concern over land seemed also to be (before the 1990 election) headed for resolution. The nineteenth-century leaders, Te Kooti and his enemy Wi Pere, an ancestor of Artemis Mahana, had been in their way intent on reclaiming Maori land. For Artemis this becomes a crusade, one that is readily carried on by Tama. Artemis must not only confront the Pakeha, she must also take on factions within the Maori community. This is a very important point. Up until now Ihimaera eschewed any discussion of dissension within Maori ranks. In *The Matriarch* this is the source of Artemis's major battles, one in which she uses all the weapons at her disposal. Ihimaera does not ignore such disputes, and his novel gains stature in their treatment. But through it all, the book provides a forum for Maori grievances.[20]

In *The Matriarch* Ihimaera has invoked the imagery used by prophetic leaders of the nineteenth century. By summoning up an impor-

tant Maori prophet, one who formed a separate church (which still functions today), Ihimaera moves deliberately into the realm of Maori spirituality. For Ihimaera and his kinspeople on the East Coast, the history that appears in standard New Zealand texts fails to ring true to their experience. In Ihimaera's work there is movement toward increasing control of knowledge (Garrett 1986:115), which in both traditions, Pakeha and Maori, means power. For Te Kooti and for other prophets, to command the Old Testament *and* to look to tribal ancestors for guidance was to negotiate two sources of potency and to gain divine assistance against formidable odds. This was not an arbitrary pastiche but rather a return to a past idiom that encompassed and lent meaning to the terrible realities of subjugation.

Ihimaera realizes, as perhaps Pakeha critics do not, that commingling the Old Testament and notions of traditional Maori spirituality enlarges the power that either could command on its own. The cultural coherence depicted in *The Matriarch* is not illusory, nor is it mythical. It reflects one of the many aspects of contemporary life that is inaccessible to the Pakeha. That Ihimaera has returned to metaphors and imagery of the nineteenth century only attests to the Maori point that the past defines and gives meaning to the present. In this sense he has remained faithful to Maori principles while simultaneously relying on the novelist's craft to do so. By merging the past and the present, Pakeha and Maori modalities, Ihimaera can effectively make the point that multiplicity does not imply incoherence.

In his study of Ihimaera's work, Mark Williams raises the issue of the novelist's use of sources. To be more specific, he claims that Ihimaera did not adequately cite sources to which he owed much of the background information (Williams 1990:129-131), an act that cannot be dismissed lightly. Nevertheless, this cannot be my principal concern here. Instead, I am concerned with the stance that Williams has assumed.

Williams maintains that "Ihimaera misrepresents history in order to make his partisan case more convincing" (1990: 131). This suggests that there is one history that either can be presented objectively or that can, alternatively, be misrepresented. This kind of either/or logic cannot be sustained (Clifford 1988), neither in contemporary anthropology where much has been written about the epistemological arrogance of the West nor in New Zealand where, at the very least, the lesson of the Waitangi Tribunal and its attendant furor should have alerted people to the provisionality of history. If Ihimaera's representations vilify the Pakeha, emphasizing grievance and condemnation, as Williams asserts (1990:

130), there are at least two responses to this. The Pakeha have represented the same events as those depicted in *The Matriarch,* and depicted Pakeha heroics in the face of Maori ineptitude, cunning, or treachery. If Ihimaera distorts, it is within a tradition marked already by distortion and construction. There are too many interests, some known, some unknowable, to trust notions of "objectivity" and "fact" in the recording of events in which peoples' pasts are at stake. If we feel obliged to view Ihimaera's depiction with skepticism, a depiction that at least has literary license on its side, then we ought to look just as skeptically at the accounts presented by historians and chroniclers.

In fact, the questions raised by *The Matriarch* are especially important. They are more complex than Williams allows. There are not merely two views of history--Maori and Pakeha--that are here being represented: a multiplicity of views/sides have been adopted within the Maori community as well. Wi Pere and Te Kooti were not on the same side in East Coast politics. Moreover, if for some, including the reader, Artemis Mahana is on the side of the gods, for others her behavior and motivations are distinctly diabolical. Ihimaera is pointing out that from different perspectives history looks very different, a point he of course continues in *Dear Miss Mansfield.* His contention that a Maori response to events must be given is evident in his latest works.[21] That that Maori response will look different and may well have some political ramifications should be neither surprising nor offensive. What is offensive is that Pakeha representations are considered to be neutral.

Conclusion

Clearly, Ihimaera and Grace are using fiction to confront Pakeha control over a history that the Maori, whether happily or not, have had to share. They are well served by literature, which has at its command the capacity to conjure up alternative realities. These are useful fictions in difficult times. But fiction must be interpreted liberally. The Maori have always envisioned alternative realities, especially in light of Pakeha domination of "legitimacy." That these realities consist of many strands does not make them incoherent. In fact, their multiplicity makes them a very effective means through which identities can be negotiated. For, in revealing possibilities, Ihimaera and Grace hint at the insinuation of a counterdiscourse, a subversive counterpoint to Pakeha representations of New Zealand indigenes (Goldie 1990).

The stories that can be told of conquest, confiscation, and dispossession cannot be linear. They must involve branchings, doublings-back,

and missed opportunities.[22] This is as true for the Pakeha as it is for the Maori, with one critical difference. The Maori have often been trapped by the stories that can and have been told about them. Maori authors (despite their diversity of vision) have taken it upon themselves to tell new stories. At the same time, such authors have given voice to terrible experience and in so doing have defined it and given it meaning. To be sure these are frightening, but they are also ennobling and sustaining, granting Maori control of present representations and finally granting them control of their history.

NOTES

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1. Maori are the indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand.

2. “Pakeha” is the Maori term for people of European descent.

3. Both Grace and Ihimaera have complained in interviews that their non-Maori work is dismissed or ignored by critics. See Grace and Ihimaera 1978.

4. This is in fact no easy task. They must convey the rich and varied texture of life in small rural communities in the language of the oppressor. Ihimaera gets around this by being an expert at dialogue, which often is in what is called Maori English. Grace is, I think, less successful. She uses Maori syntax in stories written in English, to display her characters’ continued commitment to Maori thought processes. It is not until Ihimaera’s *The Matriarch* that Maori appropriation of the oppressor’s language and culture becomes a full-fledged issue.

5. Nanda writes of this situation for indigenous writers: “The writer here is initially engaged with a reality of a different order and complexion. Historically, socially, spiritually and aesthetically it is a fragmented world. The wounds of history often provide the life-blood that flows into a work of art” (1978:11).

6. Both Grace and Ihimaera in early interviews state that their purpose is to define Maoriness and Maori communities. Grace commented: “We need to be contributors on the national scene, and surely have more right than anyone to be contributors. There is no need for the shaping of New Zealand society to be so one-sided, and not right that this should be so, when what Maori society has to contribute is both valuable and relevant” (Grace and Ihimaera 1978:83). Similarly, in a 1975 article Ihimaera maintained that his early work was clearly political. By portraying an “exclusively Maori value system,” he made an implicit critique of the Pakeha order (Ihimaera 1975:116).

7. Perhaps unfortunately, the readership for Hulme and Duff has been larger than that for Grace or for Ihimaera. But the critical and popular responses to their works are as much a part of the anthropology of the situation as are the novels themselves, Indeed, it is

critical to consider such writers in context and to analyze their works in terms of both the Maori renaissance and the ever-shifting political and social climate in New Zealand.

8. Beston argues that Grace always shows deference to Pakeha readers. (Beston's review was written before *Potiki* was published.) I think it is quite possible that Grace's subtlety, her avoidance at this point in her writing of frontal, explicit attacks, belies an intense anger at what has happened to the Maori at Pakeha hands. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Beston writes that her writing will appeal to "various impulses in Pakeha readers: the desire for novelty, interest in a people they commonly regard as inferior, a well intended (if somewhat superficial) egalitarianism, and an element of self congratulation that their culture has enriched the scope of Maori life" (1984:42). To keep her audience, Beston argues that her Maori characters never aspire too high, never threaten the Pakeha order. I disagree with this, but I think it is interesting that Pakeha critics often fail to recognize Maori anger.

9. According to Simms: "From within the Maori community, in its personal concerns and its sensitivity to the human feelings within the landscape--history, ancestors, work, meaning--arise the songs, the dancers, the old stories. To dance and sing with the other Maoris is to affirm her identity in that community." He goes on: "Here is the world of the Maori framed by that of the Pakeha, but now seen from within, so that the voices of the major and the prissy ladies seem grotesque and unreal, while the Maori tradition feels warm and real" (Simms 1978c:198).

10. Interestingly, Beston (1984) argues that Grace is very much concerned with *not* offending Pakeha readers. Thus, he argues, Linda is very much a stereotypical Pakeha housewife, with aspirations that do not transcend the domestic. Moreover, the problems of their relationship tend to be external to them, rather than caused by frictions that might be inevitable given their different perspectives. In this sense I do agree with Beston, because Grace lost an opportunity to explore more deeply the tensions that exist in marriages between the two groups.

11. She journeys away from Graeme during her illness only to return. It would seem that this suggests a more complicated, more sophisticated "accommodation to the dominant culture" (Simms 1986:109).

12. Such response has coincided with the hearings of the Waitangi Tribunal and the association, reinforced by the media, of the Maori generally with activism (Spoonley 1990:33). During this time, anthropologists, historians, and sociologists have examined many aspects of New Zealand society for racism. The media in particular has come under attack, and Spoonley has argued that the level of racism has increased in New Zealand in recent years: "Race relations in New Zealand have changed significantly since the 1950s and 1960s. The issues have become much more politically charged as notions of identity and the distribution of resources based on these identities are renegotiated. At a time when we have a much better analysis of racism in New Zealand society, and groups are working to confront racism, the level of public and political racism is increasing" (1990:36). Ranginui Walker has gone further (1990), arguing that the media has fomented social unrest and generated a Pakeha backlash.

13. Indeed Ihimaera has worked at recreating and redefining rural values for Maori and Pakeha audiences. It is not surprising then that in 1978 Tiffen wrote of Ihimaera: "The process of redefining self images by erecting cultural heroes and celebrating traditional values has already begun. Of all these writers, Witi Ihimaera most directly and unasham-

edly celebrates the social values of his group in a leisurely, almost incantatory lyrical prose" (Tiffen 1978b:8). For Ihimaera, his job was to "interpret ourselves and our position in New Zealand society and to try to prevent further loss of our culture" (see Baton 1977:123).

14. The Mahana family figures in all of Ihimaera's works, but there is no strict genealogical accuracy. Nevertheless, when the reader encounters Tama Mahana in *The Matriarch,* he is instantly recognizable as the Tama of earlier volumes, although he has different parents and a somewhat different background.

15. Not surprisingly, critics viewed these stories in often completely diametric ways. In 1973 Winston Rhodes wrote that fiction would be a vehicle through which the tension between Maoritanga ("Maoriness") and progress could be explored. "It is this rich emotional life, interwoven with the vanishing customs of a disintegrating community, a rapidly diminishing enclave in the midst of a world of restless endeavor and determined self interest, that gives strength and significance to the best of Maori writing" (1973:263). He points out that, unlike Pakeha writers, Ihimaera does not stoop to stereotypes, nor does he overromanticize. Yet Simms faults Ihimaera's *Whanau* on precisely those grounds, arguing that he drifts towards a "patronizing sentimentality" (1978c:339). He claims that inadequate attention is paid to Maori alienation.

16. Indeed, Corballis (1979) maintains that the structure of the novel replicates important structural considerations. By flying in the darkness, Tama links death, the sky, and his father; by returning during the day, the linkage is with mother, earth, life.

17. Garrett suggests that *Tangi* contains three stories (1986:114): the story of the *tangi* itself, the story of Tama's upbringing, and the story of Rangi and Papa, the mythological Sky Father and Earth Mother who must endure separation. Thus the movement of the novel is three-tiered, encompassing the personal, the social, and the cosmic.

18. Interestingly, although much of Ihimaera's work is autobiographical, *Tangi* clearly is not. When he mentioned wanting to write this book, his mother insisted that he must do so before his father's death, for otherwise such private feelings could never be committed to so public a forum (Beston 1977).

19. Anne Salmond, a noted and highly respected anthropologist, has cautioned against putting too positive a gloss on these activities (pers. com., 1990). Ultimately they result from and will perpetuate Maori unemployment and poverty with all the attendant social ills.

20. Thus Ihimaera writes:

> From the pakeha point of view the British Crown was surprisingly accommodating, given the colonial imperative by which all the major white conquerors were motivated. The Crown said that all property belonged to the Maori and could not be taken without our consent and without payment. . . . The trouble is that the Treaty has never had any status in domestic or international law. The pakeha signed it knowing it was worthless.
>
> Now, from te taha Maori, the view is different. . . . Maori tribal lands from the very beginning, even before the ink was dry on the document, have been illegally taken, granted, sold, leased, and wrongly withheld, misused and misplaced. . . . Are we to continue to ignore, in these modern times, the struggle

> they endured to prevent land from being swallowed up by the greedy pakeha speculators, and to prevent our customs and traditions from being trampled on by the pakeha? (1986:73)

21. Ironically, in discussing plagiarism, Williams writes: "It may be that a novelist finds some obscure work in a foreign language, translates it, and passes it off as his or her own work. This constitutes true plagiarism, but is undoubtedly rare" (1990:134). Claire Tomalin (1988:72) suggests in her carefully researched biography of Katherine Mansfield that Mansfield might have done precisely this.

22. A very similar point is made by Clifford (1988) in his discussion of the Mashpee.