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Resisting the Canon: Maori and the New Zealand Short Story Canon 1953-1984

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RESISTING THE CANON: MAORI AND THE NEW ZEALAND SHORT STORY 1953-1984

For the degree of Master of Arts

Is approved by the final examining committee:

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Robert Marzec

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Date

RESISTING THE CANON:
MĀORI AND THE NEW ZEALAND SHORT STORY 1953-1984

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

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by

Rachel M. LaCasse-Ford

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

of

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For my husband and my son.

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My son was three months old when I began this project, and he is nearly two years old at its completion. Cornelius, thank you for keeping me grounded in the things that matter most. If my sister, Hannah, hadn't given up nearly two years of her life to act as nanny, this project would likely never have seen completion. Hannah, I will never be able to express my appreciation for the time you have given to my family. And finally, I would like to thank my husband for his support during this long process. Chris, you and I have learned a great deal about ourselves and each other over the last two years, and I love you more today than I ever have before. Thank you for taking this journey with me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY	v
ABSTRACT	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: THE SHORT STORY	7
Short Story Theory.....	7
Beginnings.....	7
The Modernist Short Story	8
The Social Realists	11
Postmodern and Postcolonial Approaches	14
Early New Zealand Writing.....	19
Tales from Maoriland.....	19
Rewriting Maoriland: Social Realists of the 1930s.....	25
World War II Periodicals.....	34
CHAPTER TWO: THE NEW ZEALAND SHORT STORY CANON.....	42
Short Story Anthologies.....	42
Introduction	42
<i>New Zealand Short Stories</i> (1932): O. N. Gillespie	42
<i>Tales By New Zealanders</i> (1938): C. R. Allen	52
<i>New Zealand Short Stories Series One</i> (1953): D. M. Davin.....	55
<i>New Zealand Short Stories Series Two</i> (1965): C. K. Stead	66
<i>New Zealand Short Stories Series Three</i> (1975): Vincent O’Sullivan.....	68
<i>New Zealand Short Stories Series Four</i> (1984): Lydia Wevers.....	71
CHAPTER THREE: MĀORI SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH	75
Introduction.....	75
Historical and Literary Context	77
Māori in the Colonial Period	77
Māori After the Second World War	84
<i>Te Ao Hou</i> (1952-1976): “A Marae on Paper”	91
<i>Contemporary Maori Writing</i> (1970): Margaret Orbell	100
Rewriting Māori.....	105
Conclusion	109
CONCLUSION.....	112
BIBLIOGRAPHY	114

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In order to show respect for te reo Māori (the Māori language), I have chosen not to draw attention to Māori words and phrases with italics. This has become the standard practice for scholars studying Aotearoa New Zealand, for rather than treating Māori words as something foreign in the text, it gives both languages equal status. For issues of respect and also clarity, I have chosen to use macrons to indicate long vowels (as in the case of Pākehā). The terms “Māori” and “Pākehā” are always capitalized, whether used as nouns or adjectives. Māori words are not given a final “s” to indicate pluralization (i.e., one Pākehā, three Māori) or possession. Whenever Māori words or phrases are in quoted material, I retain the orthographic qualities of the original source.

Finally, when referring to the country’s recent bicultural history, I refer to the country as “Aotearoa New Zealand,” retaining both the Māori and English names. However, when referring to earlier periods, and when using the country’s name as an adjective, I use “New Zealand” only.

ABSTRACT

LaCasse-Ford, Rachel. M.A., Purdue University, May 2014. *Resisting the Canon: Māori and the New Zealand Short Story 1953-1984*. Major Professor: Shaun F.D. Hughes.

This thesis offers informed readings of a wide selection of short stories by both Pākehā (ethnically European New Zealand) and Māori (indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand) writers in an effort to place these stories, and anthologies in which they are canonized, within a cultural and historical context. It provides a concise literary genealogy of the Māori within the New Zealand short story, and it explores the ways Māori short story writers pushed back against racist portrayals of Māori and efforts to silence or contain the Māori voice.

INTRODUCTION

My interest in Aotearoa New Zealand began in 2011 during a three-month backpacking trip across the North and South Islands. I wanted to find a book of local short stories to read during my trip, and so I poked around in shops and leafed through books until at last, as I was leaving a Wellington thrift shop, a book caught my eye: *Classic New Zealand Short Stories* (1994).¹ I read the collection, a reprint of a collection first published in 1953, during the remainder of my trip, and as I learned more about the history of the country, particularly in regard to its colonial past, the more I wondered, What is it that makes these “classic New Zealand short stories?” And why are no stories by Māori (the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand) included in this collection? This book would eventually become the first installment of a four-volume anthology, published between 1953 and 1984, forming what now makes up the core canon of New Zealand short stories.² There have been some critical examinations of the short story canon in Aotearoa New Zealand,³ but no one has yet offered a sustained look at the

¹ Dan Davin, ed., *Classic New Zealand Short Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; repr.). This collection was originally published in the Oxford World’s Classics series under the title *New Zealand Short Stories* (1953).

² The other three series in this anthology are: C. K. Stead, ed. *New Zealand Short Stories Second Series* (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1976) first published 1965; Vincent O’Sullivan, ed. *New Zealand Short Stories Third Series* (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1976) first published 1975; Lydia Wevers, ed. *New Zealand Short Stories Fourth Series* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1984).

³ See Joel Gwynne, *The Secular Visionaries: Aestheticism and New Zealand Short Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, Costerus New Series 186 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010); Cherry Hankin, ed. *Critical Essays on the New Zealand Short Story* (Auckland: Heinemann, 1982); W. H. New, *Dreams of Speech and Violence: The Art of the Short Story in Canada and New Zealand* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1987); there is a brief section devoted to New Zealand short stories in Jacqueline Bardolph, ed. *Telling Stories: Postcolonial Short Fiction in English*, Cross/Cultures 47 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001).

treatment of Māori within that canon.¹ This thesis attempts to fill this gap in the scholarship surrounding the literary history of the nation's short story canon and the position of the Māori within it.

Looking at cultural productions such as the short story offers a unique approach to exploring the effects of imperialism, colonialism, and decolonization on twentieth-century Aotearoa New Zealand. Short stories have always played a major role in New Zealand literature and what Edward Said terms "culture."² Narrative is a crucial aspect of culture, Said argues, because "stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world" and "they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history."³ "The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging" is one of the most important ways in which colonizers and colonized discursively "contend with one another."⁴ This struggle to assert and block narratives characterizes much of the history of the New Zealand short story. Therefore, one of the goals of this study is to explore the ways imperialism affected the development of the canon.

There has been large critical debate on what a short story is and how it ought to be both written and read. The short story has a long history within the West. Critics have underlined affinities between the short story and other genres, such as the sketch, the

¹ Michelle Keown has written a book chapter which "offers an overview of Māori short fiction in English published in Aotearoa/New Zealand from the early 1970s to the present," with a particular focus on Patricia Grace. Michelle Keown, "'Sheddings of Light': Patricia Grace and Māori Short Fiction," *The Postcolonial Short Story: Contemporary Essays*, eds. Maggie Awadalla and Paul March-Russell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) 33-48 at 33. See also Witi Ihimaera, ed., *Where's Waari?: A History of the Māori Through the Short Story* (Auckland: Reed Books, 2000), an anthology in which Ihimaera collects previously anthologized short stories containing Māori characters.

² Said defines "culture" as "all those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure." Edward Said, "Introduction" to *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994) xi-xxviii at xii.

³ Said, "Introduction," xii.

⁴ Said, "Introduction," xiii.

fable, the folktale, the parable, the anecdote, and the medieval romance, and have placed the short story's origins within early oral traditions.⁵ This connection is significant for many scholars, particularly those looking at postmodern stories that foreground the genre's malleable nature. For many, the short story is "shadowed by its oral past, partially because of its fusion of the folktale with the sketch, the latter tending towards realism whereas the former tends towards fantasy," leaving not a concrete genre, but rather narratives that vary in length and focus, that may choose to integrate or reject various criteria traditionally associated with the genre, often creating something new with each invention.⁶

This quality of the short story is particularly interesting to scholars who work in the field of postcolonial studies. Mary Louise Pratt shows that traditionally marginalized or silenced voices have been able to find solid ground to stand and speak to dominant culture.⁷ This theory has led to many readings of culturally othered voices within the Western canon. The focus of much of this scholarship is on how these othered voices are able to speak within dominant discourse, while still maintaining some level of autonomy and agency, often accomplished by utilizing cultural traditions of storytelling into their short stories. In her chapter on Patricia Grace, Keown argues that "among New Zealand's Māori writers who draw upon oral traditions, Patricia Grace comes closest to bridging the gap between oral and written narratives."⁸ Keown utilizes Deleuze and Guattari's model of "minor literature" to demonstrate the effect this bridging has on the New Zealand short

⁵ See Walter Allen, "The Modern Story: Origins, Background, Affinities," *The Short Story in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) 3-23.

⁶ Maggie Awadalla and Paul March-Russell, "Introduction," to *The Postcolonial Short Story: Contemporary Essays*, eds. Maggie Awadalla and Paul March-Russell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) 1-14 at 2.

⁷ Mary Louise Pratt, "The Short Story: The Long and the Short of It," *Poetics* 10 (1981): 175-194 at 187.

⁸ Keown, "'Sheddings of Light'," 40.

story canon. Grace uses features of Māori language and culture to “infiltrate” the “major” language and begin a process of “deterritorialization.”⁹ This process “undermines any sense of univocal authority and shifts the parameters of meaning towards the ‘minor’ writer’s own cultural milieu.”¹⁰ Grace’s work deterritorializes the New Zealand short story, moving it out of the Western tradition and into a space that allows for interpretations based in non-Western customs and discourses.

Keown rightly acknowledges that the terms “major” and “minor” are “problematic in their association with processes of domination and subjection in colonial discourse,” but she feels the argument is nevertheless useful.¹¹ Postcolonial scholars are especially attuned to the limitations of viewing indigenous writing only from a Western theoretical vantage point. As a researcher who does not identify as Māori, I feel it is important to articulate my own subject position in order to avoid committing any “recolonizing” practices in my discussion of a culture and history that I do not claim as my own. In her monograph, *The Circle and the Spiral* (2004), Eva Rask Knudsen emphasizes the importance for postcolonial researchers to perform “indigenised” reading—that is, reading with an attempt to understand the indigenous perspective.¹² Performing an “indigenised” reading safeguards scholars from approaching a text only from a Western perspective, only judging a work of literature by Western literary standards. Paola Della Valle points out that theoretical terms such as “postcolonialism” and “postmodernism” have “originated in the Western academy,” and that as scholars we

⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan, *Theory and History of Literature* 30 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) 26.

¹⁰ Keown, “‘Sheddings of Light’,” 40.

¹¹ Keown, “‘Sheddings of Light’,” 40.

¹² Eva Rask Knudsen, *The Circle and the Spiral: A Study of Australian Aboriginal and New Zealand Māori Literature*, *Cross/Cultures* 68 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004) 3.

must be aware of the dangers of placing non-Western texts into Western conceptual frameworks.¹³

My own approach is a qualified version of the methodologies outlined above. In order to talk about Māori in the New Zealand short stories canon, I must be able to locate Māori within a Western literary tradition. (This is the focus of chapters one and two.) This is not to say that Māori writers cannot borrow from both traditions to create a culturally significant text (or in fact, that they must borrow from one at all). My readings depart from the basic assumption that while Māori writers identify within a particular cultural and literary tradition, the critic does not have the right to judge their work against artificial expectations of what a text by such an author ought to look like. Māori writing is not wholly steeped in traditionalism, nor is it entirely divorced from it. What makes Māori writing in English so interesting is the way it sometimes wrestles with its own divided allegiances. Just as Māori identity is a thing to be defined and redefined by those who claim it as their own, Māori writing cannot be pinned down as being *this* or *that*. My intention is to familiarize the reader with the development of the New Zealand short story canon so that I can locate Māori within this Western tradition, while simultaneously critiquing the impulse to do so. Anthologists of the twentieth century (whose introductions will be a major focus in chapter two) have long attempted to define the “Māori short story,” and as this thesis will argue, it is this desire to *define* that recolonizes the Māori voice, that blocks the narrative from emerging on its own terms, as defined by its own creators. Chapter three will look at short stories by Māori writers in order to observe this process of recolonization from an indigenous perspective. The Māori writers I discuss are less interested in defining “Māori” as they are in opening up a dialogue,

¹³ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice: The Rise of Māori Literature* (Auckland: Oratia Media, 2010) 106.

inviting readers (especially Māori readers) to consider the ways “Māori” has been articulated by both Pākehā and Māori, and the ways it might be reconsidered in a contemporary context.

This thesis does not focus on a single author or text, but rather it attempts to offer informed readings of a wide selection of short stories by both Pākehā and Māori writers in an effort to place these stories, and the anthologies in which they are canonized, within a cultural and historical context. It will provide a concise literary genealogy of the Māori within the New Zealand short story, and it will explore the ways Māori writers have pushed back against racist portrayals of Māori and efforts to silence or contain the Māori voice. Scholars may find this work helpful when researching the development of the postcolonial short story or the history of Aotearoa New Zealand through a postcolonial lens. My hope is that scholars will find it useful to have this history pieced together in one place and presented with a critical eye focused both on the literature and on the ontological underpinnings of that literature. Anne K. Burke Erickson’s dissertation, which focuses on Irish contributions to the short story form, has also informed the way I approach this subject.¹⁴ By looking at Irish short stories and their historical and cultural contexts, Burke Erickson’s dissertation “creates a fruitful new arena for narrative discourse, which not only benefits Irish short story writers, but also the whole genre.”¹⁵ In this vein, part of my goal in writing this thesis is to demonstrate how the history of the New Zealand short stories has influenced the way we talk about short stories today.

¹⁴ Anne K. Burke Erickson, “The Irish Short Story: A Tale of Minorities, Imperialism, and Canonical Consequences,” Diss. Purdue University, 2000.

¹⁵ Burke Erickson, “The Irish Short Story,” 4.

CHAPTER ONE
THE SHORT STORY
Short Story Theory

Beginnings

Most scholars point to Edgar Allan Poe as the first person to give the short story serious critical consideration. His 1842 review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* places the short story (which he calls the "prose tale") almost at the very top of the literary hierarchy, just below poetry, saying that it "affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent."¹ In addition to arguing for the genre's importance in the literary canon, Poe outlines some basic tenets of the genre, most notably the "unity of effect or impression."² Unlike the novel, he argues, the prose tale is able to sustain a single effect until the very end, allowing for the proper build-up of tension and emotion. Whereas the novel's length can lead to "weariness or interruption," a tale that may be read in a single sitting is able to keep the reader's attention and maintain "control" of the reader's "soul," thus leaving "an intense and enduring impression."³

¹ Edgar Allan Poe, "Review of *Twice-Told Tales*," *Short Story Theories*, ed. Charles E. May (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976) 45-51 at 46.

² Poe, "Review," 46.

³ Poe, "Review," 47.

Poe's theories remained influential throughout the following century, as the short story rose in what Ferguson calls the "hierarchy of genres."¹ Magazines printed serial stories which were consumed voraciously by the reading public. Because of their length and simple plot structure, short stories quickly became the favorite medium for children's stories. Once key modernist writers began to take the genre seriously, however, there was a desire in critical circles to move the genre out of mass culture and into high culture. A line was drawn between "high brow" (stories that exuded a particular kind of aesthetic) and "low-brow" (stories which relied more heavily on plot development than artistry). Brander Matthews designated the two categories as "true Short-stories" and "stories which are merely short," giving the former title to works that best adhere to Poe's "unity of impression" principle.²

The Modernist Short Story

James Joyce modernized the "unity of impression" principle in the early twentieth century by introducing what came to be known as the "epiphany." This technique is typically read as a sudden realization that unites many themes and motifs that were introduced earlier in a given text. Dominic Head describes the epiphany as "the archetypal model of the single-effect doctrine in short story theory since Poe."³

Moreover, it became, and remains, "a central principle in short story composition, as well

¹ Suzanne Ferguson, "The Rise of the Short Story in the Hierarchy of Genres," *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*, eds. Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989) 176-92 at 176.

² Brander Matthews, "The Philosophy of the Short Story," *Short Story Theories*, ed. Charles E. May (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976) 52-59 at 52. For further discussion on the distinction between these two types of stories, see Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) at 16. Also see Ferguson, "The Rise of the Short Story," 177-78; and Clare Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985) 6-7.

³ Head, *The Modernist Short Story*, 48.

as a key term in short story criticism.”⁴ According to Ferguson, the “prestige” that came to define the modern short story is largely due to writers’ ability to write in this “code of generic and stylistic conventions [namely, the unity of impression technique] that only the initiate of modern art could decipher.”⁵

Typical interpretations of this technique were challenged, however, when Dominic Head argued that modernist writers implemented “*disunifying* [rather than unifying] effects”; techniques like “ellipsis and ambiguity”⁶ were used not as a way to unite a story with a “*single* effect” but instead as a way to create a “nexus of a *variety* of forces.”⁷ Through this reading, Head emphasized the significance of context, arguing that the kind of “disruption” that disunifying techniques creates “establishes a connection between text and context.”⁸ He believes that modernist writers felt drawn to the short story form because of its “stress on literary artifice.” For modernists, experimentation and formal innovation “is the linchpin of modernism and of the social perspectives it offers.”⁹ Therefore, Head establishes a significant connection between the short story genre and the historical moment of modernism.

This methodology has direct relevance when analyzing the rise of the short story within the literary canon of Aotearoa New Zealand. During the modernist period, New Zealand short story writers were aware of the same forces of consumer periodical culture as their counterparts in England and the United States. Stories were published serially in periodicals, both locally and abroad. The local venues provided an outlet for writers to

⁴ Head, *The Modernist Short Story*, 49.

⁵ Ferguson, “The Rise of the Short Story,” 190.

⁶ Head, *The Modernist Short Story*, 2, emphasis original.

⁷ Head, *The Modernist Short Story*, 49, emphasis original.

⁸ Head, *The Modernist Short Story*, 2.

⁹ Head, *The Modernist Short Story*, 2.

portray places and character types that local readers could identify, while the stories aimed at a European audience attempted to portray a piece of distant, colonial life. Both types of stories tended to capture places, people, and events in a superficial and uncomplicated way through popular genres like the romance, the yarn, the adventure story, the racing story, and the comic sketch.¹⁰

Katherine Mansfield was the first prominent New Zealand writer to give the short story the kind of gravitas that we have come to associate with the modernist movement. However, her position within the New Zealand canon has been described as “inconclusive.”¹¹ Often she is simply subsumed into the British canon alongside high modernist writers like Virginia Woolf, whose work greatly influenced Mansfield and who, in turn, was influenced by Mansfield’s narrative experimentation. However, it has been emphasized that it is precisely Mansfield’s background that allowed her to explore identity through narrative in such a deep and complex way. Even after moving to England, marrying an Englishman, and becoming a British subject, Mansfield never quite felt at home in England.¹² Her own fragmented identity mirrored the way modernists envisioned life and human nature; her drifting allowed her to remain attached to New Zealand in a meaningful way (many of her best stories are set in her homeland) while still allowing her work to speak to and influence a larger European community. Head argues that Mansfield’s stories replicate in form the messages they convey. For instance, in his reading of “Bliss,” Head writes that “the ambiguity” with which the story approaches the

¹⁰ Lydia Wevers, “The Short Story,” *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, ed. Terry Sturm (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991) 202-68 at 203.

¹¹ Wevers, “The Short Story,” 215.

¹² For further discussion, see Ian A. Gordon, “Introduction.” *Undiscovered Country: The New Zealand Stories of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Ian A. Gordon (London: Longman, 1974) ix-xxi at xi.

issue of Bertha's latent homosexuality, "replicates the uncertainty of the experience."¹³ In a similar way, Mansfield's fragmented narratives, such as her well-known story, "Prelude," mirror her own fragmentary and elusive cultural identity.

The Social Realists

Due to Katherine Mansfield's strong connection to the European tradition, there remained a desire to define a *true* New Zealand short story. Writer-critic Dan Davin (1913-1990) asserted that New Zealand had no real contribution to the short story form, that Katherine Mansfield belonged to a different tradition, and that New Zealanders simply took what the Europeans had taught them and applied it to a New Zealand landscape populated with New Zealand characters.¹⁴ This view is certainly persuasive, for the work of New Zealand short story writers mirrors some of the trends that were visible in works coming out of Britain and the United States during this period. The global hardships of the 1930s caused writers in each of the aforementioned countries to reject the modernists' preoccupation with literary artifice and to focus instead on the material plight of the lower and middle classes. This shift toward social realism provides the foundation for what would become the New Zealand short story canon.

Clare Hanson reviews this period in her comprehensive monograph, *Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980* (1985). She focuses on the work of Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain, who in part make up what Hanson calls the second generation of "tale-tellers."¹⁵ These writers, she says, were interested in getting back to what Poe saw as the

¹³ Head, "The Short Story," 30.

¹⁴ D.M. Davin, "Introduction," to *New Zealand Short Stories First Series*, ed. D.M. Davin (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1976; repr.) i-vi. This is another reprint of the collection first published in 1953.

¹⁵ Hanson, *Short Stories*, 82.

democratizing potential of the short story.¹⁶ Specifically, they wanted to reestablish the connection between the reader and the story. They saw the modernists as too keen to separate the reader (and the writer) from the text, and as too focused on the art object. To O'Connor and O'Faolain, the short story form should have a material connection to those who consume it. Rather than trying to create an "intensely cultivated subjectivity," writers should "[follow] closely the contours of human experience," and show readers the general as well as the particular ways in which people experience life.¹⁷ Instead of alienating or losing one's audience, a "recognizable pattern [of] experience" is reestablished, and readers become a more central part of the short story's form.¹⁸ As Poe had argued in 1842, if the message is lost on the reader, the story falls short of its potential.¹⁹

This principle came to be embraced by New Zealand writers and critics at around the same time. Frank Sargeson (1903-1982), who began by publishing sketches in a weekly periodical based in Christchurch, eventually came to be seen as the father of New Zealand literature. His short stories captured the vernacular of the people and places of New Zealand. Heavily influenced by the work of American short story writer Sherwood Anderson, Sargeson's stories depicted realistic people doing realistic things, speaking in familiar accents, having familiar conversations.²⁰ Like O'Connor and O'Faolain,

¹⁶ In his review of Hawthorne's *Tales*, Poe praises the short story, over the rhymed poem, for its democratizing appeal to a larger body of readers. See Poe, "Review," 48.

¹⁷ Hanson, *Short Stories*, 82-83.

¹⁸ Hanson, *Short Stories*, 83.

¹⁹ Poe criticized Hawthorne's "Minister's Black Veil" for burying its "messages of Truth," and thus making it less understandable for the majority of its readers. See Poe, "Review," 50.

²⁰ William S. Broughton, "Sargeson, Frank," *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998) 474-76 at 474. This may not be unrelated to Sargeson's repressed homosexuality. See Michael King, *Frank Sargeson: A Life* (Auckland: Viking, 1995) 93-96 et seq. On the other hand this was the pervasive ideology of the times. See Kai Jensen,

Sargeson emphasized the importance of the reader to the story and explored the complex realities that New Zealanders faced, trapped within a Puritanical past, in “a spiritually depressed society.”²¹

As William S. Broughton points out, however, Sargeson’s prose focused “relentlessly on his male characters and their experiences.”²² Thus, the voice of “universal New Zealand experience” was almost exclusively white and male. Of course, this is also the case outside of New Zealand writing. In his landmark essay, *The Lonely Voice* (1963), O’Connor discusses what he calls “submerged populations...outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society.”²³ For O’Connor, short stories have the unique ability to make the familiar strange—to convey a familiar experience in an unfamiliar way or from an unfamiliar perspective. Thus, the short story is the perfect form through which traditionally silenced voices might speak. These populations, though submerged, remain predominantly male and white. Like Sargeson, O’Connor was interested in the ways the (male) individual was able to push back against the currents of society and represent something wholly other, yet “wholly other” did not look “wholly different.”

Although O’Connor’s vision of the lonely voice did not extend far beyond the subaltern Irish male, this principle can be applied to other “submerged populations,” such as women and people of color. In New Zealand, the writing of Jean Devanny (1894-

Whole Men: The Masculine Tradition in New Zealand Literature (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1996) and Jock Phillips, *A Man’s Country: The Image of the Pakeha Male – A History*, rev. ed. (Auckland: Penguin, 1996).

²¹ Broughton, “Sargeson, Frank,” 476.

²² Broughton, “Sargeson, Frank,” 476.

²³ Frank O’Connor, “The Lonely Voice,” *Short Story Theories*, ed. Charles E. May (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976) 83-93 at 86.

1962) was similar to Sargeson's in its raw depiction of "real" New Zealand life. However, she did not write for the "educated middle-class," as Sargeson did, but rather she wrote for and of "the plain-speaking, truth-telling, hard-drinking, and hard-up rural New Zealander."²⁴ Though her work seems to support the ideas of writers like Sargeson, her writing met with "hostile reception" due to her gender and her commitment to feminism and Marxism.²⁵ It was not until much later that her work was identified as "a crucial change in direction for short fiction."²⁶ Both Sargeson and Devanny pushed New Zealand writers out of the genres of romance and pastoral colonial landscapes, opening up a space where political concerns could be raised and debated in a public forum.

The social realists played a vital role in the development of the New Zealand short story. The traditions started by writers such as Frank Sargeson and Dan Davin (who will be discussed in chapter two) would shape the New Zealand short story for a generation. Whether writers attempt to mimic their techniques or whether they attempt to challenge them and create something different, the work from this period has remained a sounding board against which all other short stories from Aotearoa New Zealand are read. It is this tradition, narrow both in terms of race and gender, which postmodern and postcolonial writers would attempt to challenge and open up in order to create a more inclusive and malleable definition of the New Zealand short story.

Postmodern and Postcolonial Approaches

In order for all submerged populations to be given voice within the canon (not just white, middle-class males), a shift needed to occur. According to Iftekharrudin et al,

²⁴ Wevers, "The Short Story," 223.

²⁵ Wevers, "The Short Story," 223.

²⁶ Wevers, "The Short Story," 223.

postmodernism provided that shift. With the dismantling of grand narratives, there opened up a space for alternative epistemologies to surface. This can be seen in the way the short story itself changed as writers attempted to challenge the formal traditions of the genre. In the introduction to the edited collection of essays on postmodern readings of the short story, Iftekharrudin et al argue that postmodern writers attempted to flatten the hierarchies that had been established through the formation of the canon, and to subvert the dominance of any one narrative style over another. As a result, the “spatial” narrative style challenged the prominence of the more traditional “linear” style.²⁷ For decades, linear stories dominated the short story form, most likely because of their connection to popular periodicals, which called for “finely crafted plots and simple ironic reversals that concluded each story.”²⁸ The modernists began playing with spatial narrative structure, (for example, in works like Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.) but it wasn’t until the middle of the century when writers began to reveal the short story’s potential for play. Postmodernism, as it came to be known, showcased a “loss of belief in the authenticity of the ‘real’ world.”²⁹ Stories by writers like Jorge Luis Borges and John Barth continually questioned their own existence and authenticity, often emphasizing their own artificiality and folding back in upon themselves. The lines (between text and author or text and reader) are held up and critiqued, subverted and destroyed.

In addition to making the form more playful, postmodernism also allowed more voices to speak. Because of the postmodernism movement, which can be characterized as

²⁷ Farhat Iftekharrudin, et al., “Introduction” to *Postmodern Approaches to the Short Story*, eds. Farhat Iftekharrudin, et al., (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003) vii-xi at ix.

²⁸ Iftekharrudin, et al, “Introduction,” ix.

²⁹ Iftekharrudin, et al., “Introduction,” x.

“a set of ideas and practices that reject hierarchy, stability and categorisation,”³⁰ hierarchies are flattened, traditional epistemologies are decentered, and marginalized voices are allowed to speak. This reorientation has challenged the structural integrity of the short story genre. Awadalla and March-Russell explain that some postmodern writers (such as John Barth, Emma Dohaghue, and Neil Gaiman) have turned back to the short story’s “oral roots,”³¹ using “language, content and imagery of the folkloric tradition as part of their individual practice.”³² These writers employ “formal experiments” that “disrupt the composed authority of the printed page.”³³ By connecting to “early modern storytellers” like Geoffrey Chaucer through “use of accent, idiom, register and pastiche,” and by mimicking “the pauses, hesitations and digressions of living speech,” writers “draw attention to the writerliness of the text”³⁴ in an attempt to “make authentic the act of knowing.”³⁵

In the last several decades, scholars have turned their attention to the “postcolonial short story.” In 2013, Maggie Awadalla and Paul March-Russell edited one of the first major collections of essays devoted to this particular approach to reading the short story.³⁶ In this volume, scholars examine short stories from a number of post-colonial nations, including African countries, Canada, India, the Arab world, and the Caribbean, as well as diasporic writing. In their introduction, Awadalla and March-Russell attempt to explain why the short story has been such an important genre for post-

³⁰ Jerome de Groot, *The Historical Novel* (London: Routledge, 2010) 110. See also Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989).

³¹ Awadalla and March-Russell, “Introduction,” 3.

³² Awadalla and March-Russell, “Introduction,” 2.

³³ Awadalla and March-Russell, “Introduction,” 2.

³⁴ Awadalla and March-Russell, “Introduction,” 2.

³⁵ Iftekharrudin, et al., “Introduction,” x.

³⁶ Others include Bardolph, ed., *Telling Stories*, and W.H. New, *Dreams of Speech and Violence*.

colonial writers. They suggest that it may stem from “the short story’s association with the oral roots of folk culture.”³⁷ Additionally, they recognize the inherent difficulty in categorizing the short story’s “resistance to being either high or low culture” and suggest that its tendency to “[defy] categorization” lends itself to writers whose identities likewise defy Western tradition.³⁸

To this collection, Michelle Keown contributes a chapter about Māori writer Patricia Grace and “Māori Short Fiction” more generally.³⁹ Keown has published abundantly on Māori writing, and this is one of the first significant critical looks at the relationship between the short story and indigenous peoples of the Pacific.⁴⁰ In this piece, Keown theorizes the connection between the short story in English and the Māori writers who practice it. She points back to Frank O’Connor’s “submerged populations” who exist in isolation, but she rightly points out that it has “little relevance to the large body of Māori writing that...celebrates communal Māori values and social practices.”⁴¹ Della Valle explores the influence of traditional storytelling practices and *māoritanga* (the experience of being Māori) on Māori writing in English. She calls Māori writing in English “a hybrid literature,” which “moulds the genres of the Western canon and the language of the colonisers into new forms, reflecting the influence of the Maori oral tradition, the pace and rhythm of the Maori language, and a different sensibility.”⁴² Moreover, she argues that “Maori writing uses the English language and is articulated

³⁷ Awadalla and March-Russell, “Introduction,” 4.

³⁸ Awadalla and March-Russell, “Introduction,” 5, 4.

³⁹ Keown, “‘Sheddings of light’.”

⁴⁰ See Keown’s *Postcolonial Pacific Writing: Representations of the Body* (London: Routledge, 2005) and *Pacific Islands Writing: The Postcolonial Literatures of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Oceania* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁴¹ Keown, “‘Sheddings of light’,” 37.

⁴² Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 93.

through Western literary genres, yet it is grounded on premises that do not belong to the scope and forms of the European canon,” because Māori tradition is saturated in narratives, mythologies, cultural texts, symbolism, and metaphor unique to the Māori culture and different from the Western canon of art and literature.⁴³

This demonstrates the inherent complexity of Māori writing in English. Many writers discussed in this study identify as Māori but grew up in a hybrid world, with sometimes very little exposure to traditional Māori language and customs before adulthood. What does it mean, then, to write as a Māori in the English language, within a distinctly Western genre like the short story? What is Māori writing? What is a Māori writer? These questions are not asked in order to pin down a definitive and conclusive answer. Rather, they are asked as a rhetorical measure in order to demonstrate the kinds of questions that preoccupied the editors and reviewers of Māori writing in English from roughly the 1950s to the 1980s. These editors and reviewers, Pākehā men and women, often desired to pinpoint precisely what made a work a “Māori short story.” Not surprisingly, the answer produced most often related to traditionalism and the writer’s ability to incorporate Māori traditionalism into his or her writing.

This is problematic, of course, because as Homi Bhabha articulates:

The ‘right’ to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the *persistence* of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be *reinscribed* through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are ‘in the minority’.⁴⁴

A Māori writer is not one who holds fast to tradition, but rather who is empowered by that tradition to articulate a new and complex identity, changing and adapting tradition

⁴³ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 101.

⁴⁴ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994) at 2, my emphasis.

within their ever contingent and contradictory existence. As this study will show, Pākehā editors who were bringing Māori writing into the public sphere attempted to contain that writing by sweeping it into the New Zealand canon, and by allowing only a very limited definition of “Māori writing.” This study explores the development of the Māori short story in English by locating it alongside, within, and against the congruent development of the New Zealand short story canon during the twentieth century. It demonstrates the numerous ways Māori writers have braided together western and Māori languages and customs to express and problematize the complexities and ambiguities of contemporary Māori identity, and it offers a concise genealogy of the history that led to the creation of this hybrid literature.

Early New Zealand Writing

Tales from Maoriland

In the 1790s, England began to rely on New Zealand for raw natural resources. As demand for whale and seal oil rose to “[grease] the machinery of Britain’s Industrial Revolution and [light] the homes of its workers.”⁴⁵ In an effort to control the accession and distribution of these resources, the British government invited its citizens to relocate to New Zealand. Beginning in the 1830s, there was a boom in demand for land, and settlers began pouring into the colonies. White-settler writing from this period mostly consisted of non-fiction accounts of mariners and settlers that were aimed primarily at a British audience. These works included personal accounts, travel narratives, journals, and diaries. The earliest short fiction was published by “small groups and literary societies

⁴⁵ Patrick Evans, *The Long Forgetting: Post-colonial Literary Culture in New Zealand* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2007) 48.

whose effort [was] directed mainly at documenting and recording the local environment.”⁴⁶ As Lydia Wevers shows, the line between truth and fiction begins to blur during this period, as writers used fiction to show reality. “A Tale I Heard in the Bush,” a story that takes place in Australia, “is framed, like many colonial stories, as an oral narrative, authentic word of mouth.”⁴⁷ In this instance, oral storytelling is seen as an indication of veracity.

These tales of adventure and romance in far off places became increasingly popular. They supported the imperial project on the domestic front, for the image of colonization presented to British readers was not one of exploitation and devastation of peoples and natural resources, but rather it was presented as a game, an adventure taking place in an exotic and terrifying world of the bush, in antipodal islands inhabited by savages who must be outsmarted and outmaneuvered by the cleverer British settler protagonist. Readers read these stories from the comfort of their own middle class homes by lamplight likely fueled by the oil obtained from whales and seals off the very coasts they were reading about. Thus, readers participated in the destructive cycle of colonization by demanding more raw resources, and thus causing more damage to be done to local ecologies, indigenous wildlife, and indigenous people.

Across the British Empire, colonial literature of this period tended to share many qualities. In particular, Australian bush tales shared many qualities with the bush tales of New Zealand. As more and more Britons moved to New Zealand, and the tide of generations started to turn, there grew a desire to distinguish New Zealand stories as

⁴⁶ Wevers, “The Short Story,” 204.

⁴⁷ Wevers, “The Short Story,” 204.

different from those coming out of Australia. However, this difference was not conveyed through style or motif, but rather through the presence of the Māori other. As Phillipa Mein Smith points out, the “biggest losers [in the colonial boom] were Maori.”⁴⁸ As British settlers purchased land, Māori were relocated to *tenths*—“sections of land scattered among the European holdings,” the idea being to allow the Māori to absorb swiftly into “the march of civilisation going on around them.”⁴⁹ In reality, Māori did not move to the cities but retreated into rural areas of New Zealand. Life on the margins of society was unstable and potentially dangerous. Māori were “underpaid for their land, deprived of their best land, and denied cheap loans to develop the remainder,” often being left with barely enough to survive.⁵⁰

At this point, Māori were no longer a legitimate threat to the white settlers, and so they became a useful tool for the formation of a Pākehā identity. They became an emblem of New Zealand, an icon that could be used to define New Zealand and its white inhabitants as having a distinct experience and identity. This can be seen in the way New Zealand came to be known as “Maoriland.” To Australian newspaper editors, and others outside of the South Pacific, Maoriland became “a literary synonym for New Zealand.”⁵¹ Books were published with titles such as *Musings in Maoriland* (1890), and journals like *The Maoriland* (1901) and *The Maoriland Worker* (1910-1924) were circulated.⁵² In fact, Stafford and Williams argue that the use of this title “came to register the first

⁴⁸ Phillipa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 108.

⁴⁹ Evans, *The Long Forgetting*, 51.

⁵⁰ Mein Smith, *A Concise History*, 108.

⁵¹ Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, *Māoriland: New Zealand Literature, 1872-1914* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006) 10.

⁵² Thomas Bracken, *Musings in Maoriland* (Dunedin: A.T. Keirle, 1890).

literary evidence of a national consciousness.”⁵³ Unlike the earlier colonial writings of mariners and settlers, these Maoriland writings captured an effort of collective identity formation. Through this discourse, Pākehā New Zealanders started to see themselves not as disparate colonies set up by various agencies or companies, but as one unified consciousness, defined by the fact that every member of every colony lived in the land of the Māori. In this way, they appropriated Māori difference in an attempt to create a unique identity, one that would set them apart from other British colonies around the globe.

Literature became instrumental in creating this discourse of the emerging New Zealand identity. Katherine Mansfield utilized Māori characters in a number of stories for the “exotic currency” they held for her English readers.⁵⁴ She wrote Māori characters into her stories and included bits of te reo Māori (the Māori language) in order to create a distinct identity for herself as a transplant writer in England, “exaggerat[ing] her apartness as an artist in an unsympathetic environment [and making] it the basis of a literary persona.”⁵⁵ Aimee Gasston looks at Mansfield’s “fascination with cannibalism,” something that has been associated with the Māori people since first contact.⁵⁶ Gasston argues that Mansfield views cannibalism as symbolic of the artistic process. She uses the metaphor first to critique bourgeois intellectuals “pick[ing] over the bones of each other’s

⁵³ Stafford and Williams, *Māoriland*, 11.

⁵⁴ Stafford and Williams, *Maoriland*, 153.

⁵⁵ Stafford and Williams, *Maoriland*, 145.

⁵⁶ Aimee Gasston, “Katherine Mansfield, Cannibal,” *Katherine Mansfield and the (Post)colonial*, Katherine Mansfield Studies 5 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) 15-28 at 15. Gasston talks about the legend of Māori cannibalism on 20.

creations,” and also to demonstrate her own artistic practice, which involves consuming a subject before being able to recreate it on paper.⁵⁷

It is clear that while Mansfield’s writing at times seems sympathetic to the plight of the Māori or her Māori characters, her sympathy does not extend beyond her appropriating that plight to symbolize her own modern condition. Māori characters not only put her writing into an exotic space, but they allow modernist readers to associate the fading Māori with the fading of cultural and personal innocence. They are a “hostile emanation in the native bush,” a “savage spirit of the land [which] roams unchecked at sundown.”⁵⁸ These figures, while used to imply a “sense of guilt at white settler intrusion,” do not treat Māori characters as living human beings but rather reinscribe them as ghosts, haunting reminders of the instability of colonial identity.⁵⁹

Writers portrayed Māori in a strategic way, positioning them as a cultural other while simultaneously sweeping them into Western ontology. The first literature to feature Māori were translations of Māori myths, collected and transcribed by Sir George Grey (1812-1898). Grey held a number of political offices in New Zealand in the nineteenth century, including Governor (1845-1853) and Premier (1877-1879). Grey took an interest in Māori affairs, and soon after landing in the country, “acquired a fluent command of Māori and established great mana with the Māori leaders.”⁶⁰ In his prologue to the first edition of *Polynesian Mythology* (1885), Grey says he found it necessary to learn the

⁵⁷ Gasston, “Katherine Mansfield, Cannibal,” 25.

⁵⁸ Janet Wilson, “Mansfield as (Post)colonial-Modernist: Rewriting the Contract with Death,” *Katherine Mansfield and the (Post)colonial*, Katherine Mansfield Studies 5 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) 29-44 at 29.

⁵⁹ Wilson, “Mansfield as (Post)colonial-Modernist,” 29.

⁶⁰ Nelson Wattie, “Grey, Sir George,” *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998) 219-220 at 219.

language and myths of the Māori so that he could understand their very figurative and allusive way of speaking.⁶¹ Because of his relationship with particular Māori iwi (tribes), Grey was able to learn stories from Māori informants. He, or more often someone else, would record various versions of a particular myth or legend, and then Grey would attempt to synthesize the stories into one cohesive narrative.

This was done, as Grey explains, because “the whole future of the islands and of the native race depended” on his ability to communicate with and understand the Māori chiefs.⁶² Grey may have meant this in a literal sense—he needed to be able to understand Māori chiefs when negotiating Māori-Pākehā relations—but on a symbolic level, Grey’s collection of Māori myths also “saves” the Māori from total cultural extinction by recoding the myths into a unified linear narrative in English that could be put down into print and disseminated to a large number of readers. The practice of claiming to “save” the Māori culture from extinction became a powerful trope for Pākehā writers. *Tales of the Maori Bush* (1934) is a collection of stories gathered by James Cowan (1870-1943) during his “lifelong close friendship with the Maori people, who,” he asserts, “are as much my own people as my Pakeha fellow-countrymen are.”⁶³ In his preface, Cowan explains:

The old Maori life, the life that is passing like a breath of bush smoke. . .has passed, for the Maori has changed, and the wise old men who personified the traditions and the distinctive culture of the race have given place to a generation

⁶¹ Sir George Grey, “Preface to the First Edition,” in *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the New Zealand Race: As Furnished by Their Priests and Chiefs*, 2nd ed. (Auckland: H. Brett, 1885; repr., New Zealand Collection Reprints 1, Hamilton: University of Waikato Library, 1995) v-xi at vii-viii.

⁶² Grey, “Preface,” vii.

⁶³ James Cowan, “Preface” to *Tales of the Maori Bush* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1934) 7-8 at 8.

with new interests, a generation which inevitably must rely chiefly on books written by the Pakeha for its knowledge of the story and lore of the race.⁶⁴

It is clear to Cowan that the oral traditions of the Māori have all but disappeared.

Traditional Māori culture is “non-literate,” meaning that knowledge is organized and disseminated not through books but through “cultural texts, [such as] carvings in their wharehūi (ancestral or meeting houses) or oral storytelling.”⁶⁵ The colonizing Pākehā saw this as an inefficient way of organizing knowledge, and an indication that the stories would be lost as the Māori supposedly vanished from the face of the earth. Grey and Cowan both believed that it was the responsibility of the Pākehā, not the Māori, to keep Māori myths and traditions alive, and it was not until much later in the twentieth century that Māori writers would begin exploring the place of Māori oral culture within written English. In this early period, literary history confirms political and social history: as Pākehā displaced Māori from their tribal lands, so too did they displace them from their right to the preservation and dissemination of knowledge.

Rewriting Maoriland: Social Realists of the 1930s

In the 1930s, the term “Maoriland” began to take up a new meaning when “a group of modernising cultural nationalists [were] determine[d] to eradicate the colonial taint from New Zealand writing.”⁶⁶ “Maoriland” was now used to indicate colonial literature—that is, literature that no longer depicted real life in New Zealand. The term was “made to represent a set of wholly negative qualities: an atmosphere of feyness, of

⁶⁴ Cowan, “Preface,” 7.

⁶⁵ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 10.

⁶⁶ Stafford and Williams, *Māoriland*, 12.

fairyland romance, characterised by the relentless mythologising of Māori.⁶⁷ Cowan's *Tales from the Bush* is a prime example of the Maoriland tradition. Writers like Roderick Finlayson (1818-1892) and Frank Sargeson would depict Māori in their stories, but in a more sensitive light. According to Della Valle, Finlayson and Sargeson

share a sensitive view of Maori, grounded in their recognition in Maori culture of a code of values and attitudes underestimated or vanished in the Western world: the systemic understanding of nature, that is, the respect for the mutual interdependence of all forms of life; the importance of affective bonds within the family group and between human beings in general; the primacy of imagination over rationality in the understanding of reality; and a more relaxed attitude towards the body and sexuality.⁶⁸

The two writers have not always been given equal recognition and respect, however.

While Sargeson has long been seen as the father of modern New Zealand literature, Finlayson has at times been forgotten from the canon entirely. Della Valle argues that this may be due in large part to the fact that while Sargeson relegated Māori characters to margins of his stories, Finlayson treated them more directly and fully, something readers were not yet ready to accept.⁶⁹

Sargeson published a number of stories in *New Zealand New Writing*, a periodical which ran during World War II. The first story to appear in this series is “Episode” (1940), a story about a man trying not to think too hard about the emptiness in his life, the hostility that arises within heteronormative relationships, and his repressed homoerotic urges which are never quite articulated. This is a typical plot for Sargeson's fiction, which has been “recently reinterpreted in the light of his difficult condition as a closeted

⁶⁷ Stafford and Williams, *Māoriland*, 12. See also, Evans, *The Long Forgetting*, 66 and 102.

⁶⁸ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 28.

⁶⁹ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 28.

homosexual in a homophobic, puritanical society.”⁷⁰ Constantly preoccupied by the alienation that plagued twentieth-century New Zealand culture, Sargeson’s fiction portrays “the picture of a disrupted society made up of lonely atoms, single threads that cannot be harmoniously woven into a texture.”⁷¹ Della Valle argues that Sargeson’s work is worth examining from a Māori perspective because of the way it attempts to capture a “life that is alternative to the Western one,” one that “readers could hypothesise [as] an indirect reference to the Maori view and the influence of Maori culture on him.”⁷² She offers a reading of his story “White Man’s Burden” (1936) in which Sargeson “[shows] Maori and Pakeha alike as victims of the [puritanical social] system.”⁷³ Unlike Sargeson’s Pākehā, the Māori “have not completely lost their centre,” which it can be assumed “is found in the bond with their origin, values and culture that, however flimsy, exists nevertheless.”⁷⁴ For Sargeson, then, although Māori have been influenced by Western culture, they have been able to retain their grounding in a cultural framework that emphasizes a sustainable and responsible relationship with the ecological networks to which they belong. Whereas the Pākehā middle-class of Sargeson’s upbringing is *disconnected*—from the production of the food they consume, and from the emotional and physical dynamic which Sargeson saw as essential to meaningful human interactions—the Māori offer Sargeson and his readers a way of life that is *connected*—both to the land and to each other.

⁷⁰ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 27.

⁷¹ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 30.

⁷² Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 32.

⁷³ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 34.

⁷⁴ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 34.

As a social realist, Sargeson's stories offer realistic portrayals of poverty endemic in rural Māori communities, as well as realistic representations of survival. For example, Della Valle celebrates "An Affair of the Heart" (1936) for its realistic portrayal of a Māori family and the "terrible condition of the family's poverty," while demonstrating how by harvesting pipi (mollusks) and other fruits of the land, they are "still part of a wider natural texture [that] ensures them the food."⁷⁵ The Māori family displays kindness and affection while the Pākehā family never shows their feelings. Sargeson is clearly interested in showing the contrast between Māori culture and Pākehā culture in an attempt to shift the center of culture from the consumerism that leads to alienation and exploitation, to one that resembles what he sees as the Māori center, one that defines identity not through individualism and consumerism, but rather through one's connection to community and one's lineage.

He portrays Māori as a living people, struggling to survive in a Pākehā world, but the problem is that Sargeson's focus remains firmly on the plight of the Pākehā. He is not really interested in how society ought to change in order to better the lives of Māori; rather, he is interested in how the Māori way of life might benefit Pākehā. Māori remain symbols, emblematic of a way of life, an attitude. They remain a sort of other, an identity and way of life that Pākehā should strive to emulate.

Finlayson's depiction of Māori is similar to Sargeson's, but because of the personal relationships he formed with Māori during his adolescent years, Finlayson attempted to bring Māori to the center of the story, rather than relegating them to the

⁷⁵ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 35.

margins.⁷⁶ Like Sargeson, his stories often portray Māori who have been affected or corrupted by Western influence. “Sweet Beulah Land” (1940) was published in the second series of *New Zealand New Writing* (1943) although it was the lead story in the collection, *Sweet Beulah Land* (1942).⁷⁷ In this story, Finlayson depicts a community torn between the old ways of their traditional, rural existence and the new ways that will lead them out of the country into the cities. This new way is represented by the Governor, who is on his way from the city to purchase Māori land. In anticipation of his arrival, members of the community come from far away to prepare a hui, a traditional Māori gathering or assembly in which food, or kai, is prepared and in which great respect is shown to the guest or guests of honor. While preparing for the hui, the old generation comes up against the new generation. An elder complains, “with hate and disgust,” that the Government “want[s] to rob us again, eh?...And they want us to farm for the Government, eh?”⁷⁸ In response, “Young Turi said, to hell with the land. Give him the money and town life. A man can always get a job there. He didn’t mean to rust away in this stick-in-the-hole poverty-stricken kainga; and so on, and so on.”⁷⁹ Another man “listened to all the arguments,...and he agreed with this one and agreed with that one. ‘Ae, the money’s all right,’ he admitted. ‘Ae, but what about the land? If we have no land...? Ae, we need more money’.”⁸⁰ Rather than refer to past wrongs or violence, Finlayson’s story taps into the immediate problems facing Māori during his lifetime. Although his dialogue retains

⁷⁶ See Bill Pearson, “Introduction” to Roderick Finlayson, *Brown Man’s Burden and Later Stories*, *New Zealand Fiction 7* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1973) vii-xxiv. There is a detailed “Bibliography of Roderick Finlayson’s Imaginative Writing,” 143-46.

⁷⁷ Roderick Finlayson, *Sweet Beulah Land* (Auckland: The Griffith Press, 1942) 9-15.

⁷⁸ Roderick Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” *New Zealand New Writing 2* (1943): 59-65 at 59-60.

⁷⁹ Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 60.

⁸⁰ Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 60.

stereotyped accents, the conversations that his characters participate in force readers to consider the interactions between present-day Māori and Pākehā, revealing the kind of struggles faced by rural Māori communities.

This story does more than just give voice to what was a silent population for many Pākehā readers. It also attempts to show the damaging effects of this interaction on Māori traditionalism. The hui, or more specifically, the hākari (the feast) associated with the hui, is a significant cultural event in Māori tradition.⁸¹ Food plays a central role in religious practice, and feeding guests well is a display of hospitality as well as a show of mana, or communal strength. Hākari were used to show mutual respect, and were often associated with the signing of a peace agreement. In “Sweet Beulah Land,” Finlayson utilizes the cultural significance of the hui in order to show what is at stake with the introduction of Western culture and money. He juxtaposes the communal spirit of the hui against outward shows of self-interest raised as a response to the Governor’s wish to purchase the land:

Everybody went about saying Haeremai, and Happy New Year to you all; good on the Governor and the Government. Look at all they’re going to do for us...The Maoris shut the eye to the hard slogging of individual dairy-farming on the poor unbroken land. “Oho!” each one thought, “leave that to the other fellow and good luck to him. If I can get the cash for *my* bit of land...Kapai! The money first, then taihoa, the other matters can wait.”⁸²

The story constantly contradicts itself. Finlayson’s Māori are the central characters of the story, and yet it is clearly not a Māori story. The narrator remains an outsider. He describes the preparation for the hui, some of the events of the hui, and the aftermath, but

⁸¹ See further: Anne Salmond, *Hui: A Study of Maori Ceremonial Gatherings*, 2nd ed. (Birkenhead, Auckland: Reed, 1996). First published in this edition, 1976. On the hākari or feast in a modern hui, see 107-08.

⁸² Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 61.

the reader is never allowed to understand the situation from the Māori point of view. Instead, the Māori are portrayed as unable to fit exactly into Western culture. The narrator does not bother the reader with the details of the meeting; for instance, the meaning and significance of the haka are not explained. Instead, the outcome of the Māori-Pākehā interaction is comical for the Pākehā observer, who can plainly see that the Māori do not, or cannot, fit into the Pākehā way of life. When the Governor arrives, for instance, the Māori put on a traditional haka, or dance and chant of welcome, but the Māori make a “mistake,” turning their backs on the camera man recording the event, and “so spoil[ing] his record of it.”⁸³ At the same time, the story also suggests that the Māori might not *wish* to fit into the Pākehā way of life. In this type of reading, the Māori are keenly aware of the situation with the camera and are consciously rebuking the attempt to use Māori to tell Pākehā stories. Finlayson’s Māori resist their own participation in the story, and thus Finlayson is able to create a more complex Māori character, one who exhibits a considerable amount of agency.

Because the story centers on the Māori community, beginning and ending with the Māori characters, only bringing in Pākehā characters for a short period in the middle, the focus is meant to be on the effect of this intercultural interaction on the Māori. After the Pākehā have left, the feasting continues while two characters lament the events of the day: “‘Eh, well, it’s settled,’ a man said to Penny. ‘I heard the news from Turi,’ Penny replied, stolidly munching dry bread and cold meat. ‘A bad day for us,’ he said.”⁸⁴ This conversation is set against a scene of excitement, a crowd getting “noisy and dancing,”

⁸³ Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 62.

⁸⁴ Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 64.

girls and boys “running to and fro, and such a clatter and a gabble.”⁸⁵ The narrator remarks, as if in disbelief:

Hundreds of couples shuffled round and round and round—celebrating the sale of the communal lands.

Everyone knew now that the trick had been turned. Everyone knew now that the old men had been talked into selling all their land in the name of pakeha progress—and on the Government’s terms. And everybody was celebrating, money in pocket, money to burn. Of course they would still have the village site, and the burial ground.”⁸⁶

There is a sense of loss in the voice of the narrator. The Māori have earned some money, but for Finlayson, at the cost of traditionalism, at the cost of community. In the Māori epistemology, land is what provides a people, and thus an individual person, with a cultural identity.⁸⁷ The loss of communal land signifies a concrete loss of traditional identity. The members of this community may now have the means to adopt Pākehā cultural practices in exchange for those lost with the land, but as the story evidences, Māori do not fit perfectly within Pākehā culture. This is not a shortcoming in Finlayson’s view; rather, it shows the resiliency of the pieces of Māori culture which Finlayson wishes could be awoken within Pākehā culture. This story is a tragedy, then, for Finlayson, who would prefer to see Pākehā cast off the evils of capitalism and individualism in exchange for the Māori cultural beliefs in community and communal identity. This desire is exhibited through the story’s title, “Sweet Beulah Land,” which is written on a religious tract handed out to the Māori by a Pākehā missionary. During the ceremony, an elder postures in order to “let the Government folk know what he thought

⁸⁵ Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 64.

⁸⁶ Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 64.

⁸⁷ See Douglas Sinclair, “Land: Maori View and European Response,” *Te Ao Hurihuri/The World Moves On* (Wellington: Hicks Smith & Son, 1975) 141-72.

of their schemes,” and hands the tract to the Governor as “payment” for the land, in effect, rejecting Pākehā culture, represented by the Christian doctrine inscribed on the tract.⁸⁸

Although moments such as this can be read as moments of resistance, they are continually undercut by the story’s tendency to reposition the focalization into a frame the readers are more likely to identify with. As he is handed the tract, the governor misses the meaning behind the gesture, and assumes that it was simply done for his amusement.⁸⁹ The Pākehā present at the hui are concerned with getting dysentery from eating Māori food, and rather than expose these concerns as being charged by racism, the story shows the drinking water being defiled by wild dogs. Although the story seems to want to expose the damage caused by Pākehā culture, Māori are depicted as indolent, languorous, bad with money, and prone to drink. The attempt may be to show the effects of Pākehā culture on the Māori, but the Māori are characterized using familiar and nonthreatening stereotypes. Thus, although as Della Valle argues, Finlayson’s work demonstrates a concerted effort to represent Māori in more specific terms and in a more sympathetic light, his narratives display an inability to move beyond the racism inherent in the culture from which and for which they were produced. However, both Sargeson and Finlayson lay the groundwork for a more careful depiction of Māori culture and identity, and this will be picked up by writers in the decades to come.

⁸⁸ Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 62-63.

⁸⁹ Finlayson, “Sweet Beulah Land,” 63.

World War II Periodicals

Periodicals have always played a significant role in the development and circulation of New Zealand literature. There were a number of periodicals published before the Second World War, including the important fortnightly journal of radical and left-wing political opinion, *Tomorrow* (1932-1940).⁹⁰ Writers like Sargeson and Finlayson published their stories in *Tomorrow*, and the magazine also gave room for poetry, articles, and reviews of New Zealand writing. Because of its range, *Tomorrow* was “one of the most important periodicals of literary interest published prior to the founding of *Landfall* in 1947.”⁹¹ However, in 1940, *Tomorrow* shut down. Because of the war, there were shortages of materials, consumer demand, and workers. Additionally, the Censorship and Publicity Regulations were put in place by the New Zealand government, and a number of publications were shut down “not so much for publishing material that might be deemed seditious as for its potential to do so.”⁹² It was due to this “government pressure,” that *Tomorrow* ceased publication.⁹³

With such closures, New Zealand writers were left without a venue in which to publish their work. Ian Gordon (1908-2004) felt it essential to provide an outlet for New Zealand’s writers to continue publishing, and so in 1942, he became the founding (and sole) editor of *New Zealand New Writing (NZNW)*, a four-volume magazine published irregularly between 1942 and 1945. *New Zealand New Writing* was published by the Progressive Publishing Society (PPS), an organization that intended to use the magazine

⁹⁰ Stephen Hamilton, “*Tomorrow*,” *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 543.

⁹¹ Hamilton, “*Tomorrow*,” 543.

⁹² Stephen Hamilton, “‘A Snook Cocked at Totalitarianism’: Ian Gordon & ‘New Zealand New Writing’,” *Journal of New Zealand Literature JZNL* 17 (1999): 47-70 at 47.

⁹³ Hamilton, “*Tomorrow*,” 543.

as a platform for conveying didactic left-wing ideology.⁹⁴ Gordon, however, was not interested in pushing a leftist agenda, something that caused a considerable amount of animosity between him and the PPS throughout their time together. Rather, Gordon emphasized the necessity of “providing a much needed outlet for new and established writers” during the culturally repressed time of war.⁹⁵ Gordon was often accused of being too elitist and literary. PPS and other critics of the time felt that the magazine should reach working class readers, and that the literature should be about the issues and livelihoods pertaining to that type of readership.

Despite these disagreements, Ian Gordon remained the magazine’s sole editor. As professor of English at Victoria University of Wellington, Gordon brought a position of authority to the magazine, and as a result, the volumes sold at an incredible rate. Gordon relied heavily on the influence of “John Lehmann’s champion of literary modernism,” *Penguin New Writing*, something else that landed Gordon in hot water.⁹⁶ Hamilton discusses this dispute in some depth, but what is important to take away from this is the connection that Gordon wished to make to *Penguin New Writing*, for seen in this light, it is clear that Gordon was attempting to do a similar kind of thing: to create a “champion of literary modernism” in New Zealand.

In many ways, *NZNW* produced much of the same kinds of short fiction that had been published earlier: “adventure stories set in colonial days, ...ghost stories, and ...tales of Maori life witness through Pākehā eyes.”⁹⁷ But there was a new *gravitas* to these stories, which captured the difficulties of living through a depression and a war. A.

⁹⁴ Hamilton, “‘A Snook Cocked at Totalitarianism’,” 48.

⁹⁵ Hamilton, “‘A Snook Cocked at Totalitarianism’,” 50.

⁹⁶ Hamilton, “‘A Snook Cocked at Totalitarianism’,” 50.

⁹⁷ Hamilton, “‘A Snook Cocked at Totalitarianism’,” 52.

Jackson's "Unto Us" paints a visceral portrait of depression life,⁹⁸ while "My Ship Was Bombed," authored by a "Merchant Seaman," offers a vivid account of a battle on the Mediterranean.⁹⁹ Marie Bullock's "Visiting Camp" depicts life on the home front, and Helen Shaw's "The Two Fathers" conveys the cultural crisis that takes place as men are removed from their public and domestic roles in New Zealand and are replaced, potentially in both capacities, by foreign soldiers.¹⁰⁰ There are also stories that capture the fluid line that separates life and death, such as A.P. Gaskell's "The Cave," stories that show boys becoming men as they encounter things like death and human cruelty.¹⁰¹ In the majority of these stories, however, Māori characters remain much the same as before. Hamilton points out that there are many stories that depict Māori characters in the typical fashion: writers would usually give Māori characters a "formal even biblical diction, deemed an appropriate idiom into which to translate the Māori language. Otherwise they spoke a broken English which reinforced their characterisation as inarticulate and dim-witted according with their role as subjects of stereotypical humour."¹⁰² There are a number of exceptions to this generalization, however. Hamilton points to A.P. Gaskell's "The Picture in the Paper," as doing something slightly different.¹⁰³ Unlike most yarns, he claims that Gaskell

subtly reverses a key convention of the genre by allowing his Maori protagonist tell his own story... While Gaskell retains the convention of having his narrator Sammy speak in broken English, he does this in a way which makes for a far

⁹⁸ Ian Gordon ed., *New Zealand New Writing* 1 (1942): 39-48.

⁹⁹ Merchant Seaman, "My Ship Was Bombed," *New Zealand New Writing* 4 (1945): 5-10.

¹⁰⁰ Marie Bullock, "Visiting Camp," *New Zealand New Writing* 1 (1942): 57-60; Helen Shaw, "The Two Fathers," *New Zealand New Writing* 2 (1943): 49-58.

¹⁰¹ Ian Gordon ed., *New Zealand New Writing* 2 (1943) 38-47.

¹⁰² Hamilton, "'A Snook Cocked at Totalitarianism,'" 53.

¹⁰³ A.P. Gaskell, "The Picture in the Paper," *New Zealand New Writing* 1 (1942): 11-15. This story was reprinted in: A. P. Gaskell, *All Part of the Game: The Stories of A. P. Gaskell*, ed. R. A. Copeland, *New Zealand Fiction* 12 (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1978) 5-8.

more sensitive characterisation, partly founded on having Sammy tell his story from his own perspective, allowing some sympathy to be developed for him in his ingenuous attempts to gain Pakeha approval.¹⁰⁴

Sammy is indeed painted as dim-witted. After saving a classmate from a flooded river and getting his picture in the local paper, Sammy spends the rest of the story trying to be a hero again. Because his actions are motivated by the desire to impress the local Pākehā who were impressed with his first heroic deed, the story does not divert fault from the Pākehā. It is the interaction of these two cultures, after all, that causes Sammy to commit assault and theft. However, despite our sympathy for Sammy, it is clear that it is the inability of the Māori to understand Pākehā culture that leads to his downfall and makes him such a comically pitiful character. Thus the story reinforces the place of Māori in the national literature as a source of comedy and as a people outside of civilized culture trying even against their nature to get in.

The rest of the short stories from the first volume portray Māori characters in a more typical way. C.R. Gilbert's "Fear" is a tale passed down through the generations of the noble savage Rewi Tamati, so fierce that he killed a beautiful native princess to save his own life, who was ultimately killed by the smarter Pākehā and lamented by the contemporary narrator as a noble savage, destined to pass into history and remain safely in the stories of the past.¹⁰⁵ P.W. Robertson's story, "Eruption at Tarawera," published in the third series, uses the typical depiction of Māori in order to bring a sense of hope and idealism to an otherwise realistic and sobering collection of narratives. Like other stories, it captures an incident of death and pain, but Robertson infuses the tale with a sense of victory and overcoming. The narrator of the story meets an old man in a park who regales

¹⁰⁴ Hamilton, "'A Snook Cocked at Totalitarianism,'" 53.

¹⁰⁵ C.R. Gilbert, "Fear," *New Zealand New Writing* 1 (1942): 16-19.

him with his experiences at the 1886 eruption of Mount Tarawera near Rotorua. At the time of the eruption, the then-young man was newly arrived from England, working for a railway company to modernize the nascent colony. The eruption occurred during his first weeks in New Zealand. Ash filled the sky for days, and the man, along with a schoolteacher, went into the bush to look for survivors. They came across a Māori man, sitting on the ground crying and moaning. They rescued a woman trapped in a house, and when they passed back the way they had come, the Māori man had disappeared. The man's experiences take the reader back to a time of chaos. The eruption speaks to the wildness of nature, and the uncontrolled savagery of olden times. The crying Māori echoes the cries of the dying Māori race, incapable of controlling the world, doomed to wander in the woods as "a little group of bewildered inhabitants."¹⁰⁶ But the story begins and ends in stability—in modern New Zealand, in a meticulously maintained park on a clear blue day—and so it gives the reader a sense of pride and optimism about the future. It shows readers where New Zealand came from—a time when Māori and Nature ruled and ravaged the land—and it shows how Pākehā were able to tame and bring them under their control. Like the realities of war facing readers, the difficult time captured by this story is overcome by the hardiness and ingenuity of Pākehā New Zealanders. Like Cowan, Robertson emphasizes this power and control through the control of storytelling. The narrator reports that the events of the eruption have not "[found] a place in the poetry of Māori mythology," and so it is up to Pākehā storytellers and writers to keep the story

¹⁰⁶ P.W. Robertson, "Eruption at Tarawera," *New Zealand New Writing* 3 (1944): 33-38 at 33.

alive, to keep it from dying out of cultural memory.¹⁰⁷ It is the Pākehā version that becomes the definitive version, the depiction of Māori as the definitive image.

Many stories published in *New Zealand New Writing* would be collected in later single-author works or multi-author anthologies. This was a central moment in the development of the New Zealand short story canon, for it fostered the kind of writing that would be celebrated later as *the* literary voice of New Zealand. There were a number of periodicals that did not close during the war. The *New Zealand Listener* (1939-) was established as a weekly magazine in 1939 by what was then the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS). The original purpose of the magazine was to publish material related in some way to broadcasting. However, the magazine's founding editor, Oliver Duff (1883-1967),¹⁰⁸ "interpreted broadcasting in its widest sense...as having to do with all human affairs but especially the arts."¹⁰⁹ He believed "that offering readers good writing of all kinds would give the magazine character and distinction (and support to struggling writers)," and so the *Listener* quickly became a central platform on which New Zealand short story writers presented their work.¹¹⁰ As Mason points out, the magazine was meant "not only to help the NZBS play its part as New Zealand's largest patron of the arts but also to form a pool of talent on which it could draw; the magazine in turn would provide an outlet and source of income for writers, and a forum for discussion of New Zealand's emerging cultural identity."¹¹¹ The magazine quickly

¹⁰⁷ Robertson, "Eruption at Tarawera," 33.

¹⁰⁸ The grandfather of the controversial Māori novelist, Alan Duff (1950-).

¹⁰⁹ Andrew Mason, "The New Zealand Listener," *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 398-400 at 398.

¹¹⁰ Mason, "The New Zealand Listener," 398. Gaskell's "The Picture in the Paper" was actually first published in *The Listener*, 13 February, 1942. See Gaskell, *All Part of the Game*, 192.

¹¹¹ Mason, "The New Zealand Listener," 399.

became a central part of the New Zealand literary scene, publishing reviews of New Zealand books, profiles of New Zealand writers, as well as imaginative writing.

In 1947, *Landfall* (1947-) was founded and eventually became the most important journal for the development and circulation of New Zealand literature and saw fifty years of unbroken publication. *Landfall* was the brainchild of Caxton Press editor Denis Glover and the poet Charles Brasch, who had spent time together in England during the war. Together, Glover and Brasch planned to create a “professionally produced literary journal in New Zealand,” one that would pick up where *Tomorrow* had left off.¹¹² However, through the course of its lifetime, *Landfall* became increasingly conservative, and so in the 1950s, “journals such as *Numbers* (1954-1959) and *Mate* (1957-1981) emerged in the 1950s to provide an alternative voice.”¹¹³ This is clear when conducting a survey of the stories published in *Landfall*, particularly during this period. In 1962, Brasch compiled an anthology of stories, poems, artwork, and what he terms “Explorations” that were published in *Landfall* between 1947 and 1961.¹¹⁴ Predictably, the collection contains stories by Sargeson and Finlayson, and the rest are stories by other male Pākehā writers, which reveals the narrow scope with which Brasch approached the New Zealand short story.

I will discuss *Numbers* as well as *Te Ao Hou* (1952-1976), a periodical published by the Department of Māori Affairs for a Māori readership, more thoroughly in chapter three, for it was in these periodicals that the first Māori short stories in English saw

¹¹² Peter Simpson, “Landfall,” *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 293-95 at 293.

¹¹³ Simpson, “Landfall,” 294.

¹¹⁴ Charles Brasch, ed., *Landfall Country: Work from Landfall, 1947-61* (Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1962).

publication. This represents a turning point in the representation of Māori in the New Zealand short story. Beginning in the 1950s, Māori would take up the short story genre and begin writing about Māori life and identity from a new perspective, one that attempts to talk about Māori issues—such as living in Aotearoa New Zealand in the twentieth century, modern-day māoritanga, representation, identity, and sovereignty, to name just a few—in a way that can speak within the larger Māori cultural group and also bridge the (post-)colonial divide in an effort to expose and redress longstanding social, political, economic, and artistic oppression.

CHAPTER TWO
THE NEW ZEALAND SHORT STORY CANON

Short Story Anthologies

Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the significance of the short story genre within the literary history of Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as the various representations of Māori by Pākehā writers. This chapter aims to explore the formation of a national canon of New Zealand short stories, which began in earnest in 1953 and continues into the twenty-first century. The scope of the chapter is limited to short story anthologies published between 1932 and 1984, and focuses on the primary goals of each anthology, as articulated by its (Pākehā) editor. The chapter looks at the move to incorporate Māori writing in English into the canon, and discusses some of the ways that anthologies promoted, and also pushed back against, this rise of the Māori voice within what had been an exclusively Pākehā literary tradition.

New Zealand Short Stories (1932): O. N. Gillespie

The first published collection of New Zealand short stories was *New Zealand Short Stories* (1932), edited by O.N. Gillespie (1883-1957). The collection was originally published in 1930, but the date on the edition I am holding, the FIRST CHEAP EDITION, was published in 1932. This book is a fascinating text not only for the stories

it contains, but also for its physical design. On the worn cloth cover is a smiling hei-tiki, a tribute to the maoriland tradition to which this collection belongs.¹ The title on the spine shines in gold letters; another tiki, this time with his tongue protruding, also gilded, sits below the lettering. In the preface (dated 1929), Gillespie, writes: “This little volume is the first collection ever made of short stores by New Zealanders.”² He points out to his reader that these stories, in “contrast with those from Australia...lack any national outlook or distinctive atmosphere.”³ In fact, more than half of the stories collected were first published in Australian magazines like the *Bulletin* (1880-2008), *Art in Australia* (1916-1942), *Aussie* (1918-1919), or the *Lone Hand* (1907-1928); and British or American periodicals, such as (respectively) the *Observer* (1791-) and *Harper’s Magazine* (1850-). While Gillespie may see this as a potential source of criticism, he brings his reader’s attention to the fact that New Zealand inhabitants and Australian inhabitants are simply not that different because both immigrated from Europe: “New Zealand is inhabited by approximately a million and half people,” he writes, “less than half per cent of whom were born outside the Empire.”⁴ The majority of New Zealanders, in other words, are displaced Britons, not exuding a particular national outlook because their national outlook is, essentially, a British one. To Gillespie, it is clear—and admirable—that New Zealanders are displaced Britons. He celebrates this fact, stating that men and women of “the purest British stock in the world” came to New Zealand seeking “to refashion in these islands the homeland they had left. Here and there a more

¹ Hei-tiki are traditional greenstone (pounamu) pendants carved in the shape of a human fetus. See Margaret Orbell, “Tiki,” *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Māori Myth and Legend* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1995) 213.

² O.N. Gillespie, “Preface” to *New Zealand Short Stories* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1932) v-viii at v.

³ Gillespie, “Preface,” v.

⁴ Gillespie, “Preface,” v.

daring dreamer hoped to make the copy better than the original.”⁵ Still today, he exclaims, New Zealanders have not lost contact with England: “No day of the year sees less than ten thousand New Zealanders at ‘Home’,” many boys sent up to Oxford or Cambridge to study; and the “latest London fashion fad is in our streets within seven weeks, just the time the steamer takes to bring it here.”⁶ He insists that this connection with Britain is “so deep-seated” and “its compulsion is so general, that superficial differences observed in us by hurried travellers should never be thought permanent; any distinctive national characteristics,” he says, “will be long in making their appearance.”⁷ In this way, Gillespie does not attempt to define a unique vision of New Zealand identity as much as he tries to persuade his readers that New Zealand is a new and “better” Britain, and that because of the strength and ingenuity of “Our stock,” New Zealand has reached “a standard of material comfort...possibly unequalled anywhere.”⁸

Gillespie’s introduction seems to be preoccupied by this issue of “stock” and bloodline. The strong Anglo-Saxon bloodline is what made New Zealand so prosperous, and yet the homogeneity is also what makes their literature virtually indistinguishable from other colonial literature. It in this moment that the Māori become useful for Gillespie. He claims that it is “the delightful Maori race” who make New Zealand really special, not for what they offer the country in any material sense, but for what they offer it symbolically.⁹ The Māori stood as the cultural other against whom British settlers and soldiers had to fight for their right to establish an existence on the islands. In typical

⁵ Gillespie, “Preface,” v.

⁶ Gillespie, “Preface,” vi.

⁷ Gillespie, “Preface,” vi.

⁸ Gillespie, “Preface,” vi.

⁹ Gillespie, “Preface,” v.

colonial fashion, it was the fight against Māori that allowed the settlers and their disparate colonies to unify against a common enemy. Gillespie would also argue that because by 1930 the Māori had been “overcome” by Pākehā New Zealanders, the sheer strength and ingenuity required of such a feat becomes plain. In this way, Māori were helpful in two ways: first, by showing the white New Zealanders what they are by showing them what they are not (*savage*), and second, by what showing white New Zealanders what they have overcome (*fearsome enemies*). In this way, Gillespie highlights the significant role that Māori played in the unification and development of the nascent country.

At the same time, however, Gillespie’s introduction laments the lack of “romantic material usually found in a new land.”¹⁰ He characterizes the settlement of New Zealand as a “victory...prosaic and swiftly won,” but he also complains that there was “no epic struggle with mighty forces” that determined this victory.¹¹ So even though the Māori stood in the way of British settlers, they gave up the land too easily to the Anglo stock. All too easily—“With magical rapidity”—“bush lands became pastures, plains shone with wheat, towns and cities were built,” and therefore it is the character of the Māori that is to blame for whatever romance the stories lack.¹² Clearly Gillespie is participating in both practices, using the Māori to unify the nation while simultaneously distancing the Māori from that nation. The Māori is now the noble savage, but it is also the weak fey creature that lives in the forest, apart from civilization, simply passing into myth and legend.

¹⁰ Gillespie, “Preface,” vi.

¹¹ Gillespie, “Preface,” vii, vi.

¹² Gillespie, “Preface,” v.

The stories anthologized in this collection collude in Gillespie's sentiments. "The Last of the Moas" by Arthur H. Adams, is a typical "new chum" tale in which a young man from England is sent to the New Zealand bush in order to "learn colonial experience."¹³ The tale places the reader at "the extreme borders of civilisation," gazing into the "unexplored country" of the rugged South Island.¹⁴ The narrator, one of the hands at a local sheep station and an experienced bushman, decides to play a joke on the new chum, convincing him that moa, gigantic flightless birds that had long been extinct, still roam the forests beyond the mountains. Skeptical at first, the new chum is gradually convinced of the tale's veracity, and soon he musters a pack of men to go off and hunt the giant birds. The trip takes the men over a mountain range known as the Tapu (the Māori word for restricted in a religious sense).¹⁵ According to one of the men, Māori are "afraid of 'em. Say the ranges are the dwelling-place of a big *taniwha*."¹⁶ He emphasizes: "You couldn't get a Maori to climb the Tapu range. Why the very name, *tapu*, tells you what they think about it. It's forbidden, 'sacred'!"¹⁷ Here the Māori are used as a foil, the kind of people who rely on irrational superstition to make decisions. By breaking tapu and crossing into the mountains, the men show that they are above the Māori, that they are rational and fearless, and that it is these qualities that will allow Pākehā to penetrate

¹³ Arthur H. Adams, "The Last of the Moas," *New Zealand Short Stories* (London: J.M. Dent, 1932) 12-29 at 12.

¹⁴ Adams, "The Last of the Moas," 13.

¹⁵ Margaret Orbell, "Tapu and Noa," *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Māori Myth and Legend*, 186-88. This is a misunderstanding on the part of the Pākehā in the story. The mountains are not named "Tapu," but rather they are tapu, an adjective used to refer to something or someone under religious restriction.

¹⁶ Adams, "The Last of the Moas," 16. A taniwha is a monstrous lizard-like creature particularly associated with water, so it's not quite clear what it is doing up in the mountain range. See Margaret Orbell, "Taniwha," *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Māori Myth and Legend*, 184-86.

¹⁷ Adams, "The Last of the Moas," 16.

even the dense “virgin bush” in an act of domination and control.¹⁸

At first, the other station hands agree to perpetuate the joke, but slowly each becomes convinced that there’s truth to the legend. Noises in the forests, along with tales of ghostly Māori figures in the distance, frighten the men, and soon they believe that there is a bird out there. The story ends with an encounter with a live moa: “For a moment it stood there, staring at us with great horny eyes, its great beak gaping and closing, its vast body, clothed in brown silky feathers, swaying and heaving.”¹⁹ The “body, clothed in brown silky feathers,” brings to mind images of Māori wearing kākahu, or cloaks, made of “silky [birds’] feathers.” Kākahu are important cultural texts for Māori; they are used as vehicles for passing on knowledge from one generation to the next. However, because of romanticized artwork and photographs, the image of a Māori wearing a kākahu also took on meaning for the colonial Pākehā. From this perspective, the kākahu is not a complex text but merely a decorative piece of clothing, perhaps an indicator of position or status within the community, but ultimately, it is a symbol of the ostensibly primitive nature of the Māori people. Thus, from the point of view of the culturally ignorant colonial writer and his undiscerning Pākehā readership, the encounter with the moa can be read as an encounter with a Māori in the bush. Māori play a critical role in the creation of tension in this story. Indeed, it is only believable that the giant bird could exist out there because of the well-known “legends of vanished Maoris” that lurk in the back of the bushmen’s mind.²⁰

¹⁸ Adams, “The Last of the Moas,” 18

¹⁹ Adams, “The Last of the Moas,” 28.

²⁰ Adams, “The Last of the Moas,” 16.

As the men stand before the great bird, they are in awe. Quickly then, Clarence, the new chum, grabs a rifle and takes aim. The other men wrestle the gun away from him and chastise him for wanting to kill the animal. The narrator says: “It’s a real moa! You’re not going to shoot a live moa—the last of the moas?” Another adds: “You shoot that bird, Clarence, and I’ll shoot you!”²¹ The bird then turns and runs away through the bush. The narrator and the other bushman lament the bird’s predicament: “‘Poor old bird!’ he muttered. ‘He thought he had found a mate. He’ll never believe in nothin’ no more’.”²² In this colonial moment, as Pākehā push the Māori further and further off of their tribal lands, the fate of the Māori becomes the fate of the moa: the shadow of a figure, a ghost wandering alone in the woods, doomed to become extinct and leave no trace but what legends can convey. What this story suggests, however, is that it is the duty of the Pākehā not to let the Māori vanish completely—not to shoot the last of the moa—but to instead keep them alive through stories and legends, to use their language and their myths to define New Zealand as something unique within the British Empire.

A.A. Grace’s “Putangitangi and the Maero” depicts a different kind of monster, one that is also meant to resemble, or indeed represent, the savage Māori. Horo the Māori is a skillful hunter and an affectionate husband. When he is hunting in the woods one day, he encounters a Maero: “a monster with head, body, and legs like a Maori’s, with arms eight or ten feet long, bristling with sharp and deadly talons half as long again.”²³ In this story, a maiden, Horo’s betrothed, is captured by the Maero and hidden deep in his cave. The Maero loves the maiden and shows his love by offering her raw birds and by

²¹ Adams, “The Last of the Moas,” 28.

²² Adams, “The Last of the Moas,” 29.

²³ A.A. Grace, “Putangitangi and the Maero,” *New Zealand Short Stories*, ed. O.N. Gillespie (London: J.M. Dent, 1932) 76-85 at 77.

affectionately tasting her. However, these actions only fill the maiden with “fear and nausea.”²⁴ Eventually, the Maero is outwitted, and Horo defeats him with fire.

According to Margaret Orbell, the māero were one of several races living in Aotearoa before the ancestors of the Māori came and pushed them off the land.²⁵ In Grace’s version of the myth, the maero, like the moa, is a convenient symbol. He is a hyperbolic version of a Māori—a visible signifier of the most primitive and savage aspect of their nature. Horo, the story’s hero, participates in the courtship, hunting, and other domestic occupations that would be familiar to Grace’s readers. He is the one who gets the girl in the end, and whose line prospers for multiple generations (his great-grandchildren are mentioned at the end of the story.)²⁶ The Maero, on the other hand, does not have such a future; his uncouth attempts at courting lead to his demise. Horo dismembers and decapitates him; his line is finished. This ending would have been comforting for Grace’s readers, for in the end it is the *civilized* aspect of the Māori nature that survives—that is, the one who appropriately enacts the Western social codes of courtship, marriage, and procreation—and the *savage* nature—the inability to abide by these codes—that is expunged. In this context, literature reaffirms the notion that Māori are not only disappearing, fading into the trees and mountains like the moa, but that those who remain are rejecting their old ways, becoming a productive part of Pākehā society.

²⁴ Grace, “Putangitangi and the Maero,” 79.

²⁵ Margaret Orbell, “Maero,” *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Māori Myth and Legend*, 94-95. According to Orbell, the maero are specific to the North Island, and since Grace grew up in the Lake Taupo area, in the central North Island, it is not surprising that he employs them in his story. The other ancient inhabitants are the māeroero and the patupaiarehe. See A. W. Reed, *Reed Book of Māori Mythology*, rev. Ross Calman (Birkenhead: Reed, 2004) 223-25 on the similarity between the maero, māeroero and patupaiarehe. Reed/Calman would restrict the maero to the South Island but they give the Māori name for the Eyre Mountains at the back of Lake Wakatipu as Ngā Pukemāeroero, the hills of the māeroero. They would restrict the patupaiarehe to the north east of the North Island.

²⁶ Grace, “Putangitangi and the Maero,” 85.

This myth works toward the colonial project on a number of levels. Presented as a “Māori myth,” the story homogenizes the Māori people. There is no attempt to locate it within a particular narrative tradition within a specific tribe. Through this homogenization, the myth also flattens a complex and oftentimes conflicting set of institutions, alliances, and sociopolitical orders. The story is taken from a Māori oral tradition (or traditions) and presented to a Pākehā readership in order to teach the Pākehā something about the Māori tradition, but the story’s underlying function is to reinforce the image of Māori as a culturally backward people who can be taught to live like the Pākehā. This message reassures readers that contact with the Pākehā is good for the Māori, and that colonization is in the best interest of everyone involved.

Gillespie’s readers would have been both Pākehā (white New Zealanders) and the British. Pākehā were not simply interested in defining their particular colonial experience to one another; they were also interested in defining themselves to those whom they saw as their fellow countrymen on the other side of the world: the British. At the end of his preface, Gillespie describes the Māori people as, “our Maoris,” an allusion few readers would have missed. In 1884, Lady Mary Martin’s *Our Maoris* was published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. “[S]ome little time ago,” Martin writes in her preface, “three Maori Chiefs [came] from New Zealand...to present a petition to their Mother the Queen.”²⁷ After this meeting took place, Martin felt compelled to introduce the Māori people to the public, and so she relates “a faint but strictly faithful attempt to describe them as they were,—a people just emerging from barbarism, with many faults,

²⁷ Lady Catherine Martin, “Preface” to *Our Maoris* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1884) iii-iv at iii.

but also with great capabilities.”²⁸ This record, which is based on “diaries kept by the writer during a residence of thirty-four years in New Zealand,” was an attempt to claim knowledge of the Māori in order to have the right to articulate their place in the colonial scene.²⁹ Evans stresses that “the self-consciousness that seems to be such an important part of literary nationalism” in New Zealand’s emerging white settler culture during this time came from “the distinctive sense in the imperialist consciousness of being looked at from the outside, of always being under some sort of inspection.”³⁰ Martin, it seems, wished to control how an English readership saw New Zealand, and Gillespie’s preface clearly mirrors this sentiment.

Ultimately, this “petrified” Māori aesthetic, which became a “unified style” in the 1920s, would become useful for Pākehā writers like Gillespie.³¹ Through “absorption,” Gillespie predicts, the Māori race will give way to the stronger Anglo “stock,” but not without first conferring a “slight golden tinge”—like the gilded tiki on the volume’s cover—a “love of high poetic imagery” that will “[mellow]” our “worship of the practical.”³² He emphasizes: “We need such a change,” and so, before they are irrevocably lost to time, the best of the Māori virtues—i.e., the most European-like—will be saved and memorialized in the Pākehā attitudes, which now, because of the momentary contact with a savage and “more natural” race, have become more evenly distributed between “practical” and “poetic.”³³

²⁸ Martin, “Preface,” iii-iv.

²⁹ Martin, “Preface,” iii.

³⁰ Evans, *The Long Forgetting*, 101.

³¹ Evans, *The Long Forgetting*, 75.

³² Gillespie, “Preface,” vii.

³³ Gillespie, “Preface,” vii.

Tales By New Zealanders (1938): C. R. Allen

The second collection of New Zealand short stories, *Tales by New Zealanders* (1938), was edited by C.R. Allen (1885-1962) and published by the British Authors' Press in 1938. The targeted readers for this collection were British (as opposed to New Zealand or Australian readers who were more likely to read Gillespie's collection). This move was an important one for New Zealand literature. Sir Hugh Walpole (1884-1941), himself a New Zealand-born Englishman, was asked to write the foreword to the collection. Walpole explains that the stories collected are of interest because of "the simple fact that they are stories about New Zealanders by New Zealanders."³⁴ He goes on to instruct the reader on how to properly consume the stories:

I would recommend—although it is probably advice that no one will take—that the volume should be read through from beginning to end as a whole exactly as though a number of intelligent, observant men and women were guests in your house and began one after another to give you their idea of New Zealand, to tell stories of things that had happened there, to paint little pictures, to suggest that, although they were having a very good time in your house, there was a nostalgia.³⁵

Walpole's description of the book is palpably condescending. The stories, he claims, are not of real literary merit—not like Katherine Mansfield's stories—and most of them are "simply magazine stories."³⁶ However, he believes that these stories give us a "more actual sense of New Zealand than [Mansfield] ever gave," and so because of this, they are worth reading.³⁷ Walpole offers this book as a kind of travel guide, a way for London readers to travel through New Zealand without actually having to see its landscapes and

³⁴ Sir Hugh Walpole, "Foreword" to *Tales By New Zealanders*, ed. C.R. Allen (London: British Authors' Press, 1938) v-vii at v.

³⁵ Walpole, "Foreword," v.

³⁶ Walpole, "Foreword," v.

³⁷ Walpole, "Foreword," vi.

towns and without actually having to speak to any of its inhabitants. For Walpole, New Zealand is a distant place, a kind of dreamscape that can be accurately described in the length of twenty-six short stories, all written by Pākehā writers, and all in some way feeding his desire to feel nostalgic for what he sees as the strange and distant land of his birth.

Most of the writers published in this volume would never again be anthologized under the same “national literature” heading. There is a story by editor C.R. Allen, a significant figure in New Zealand letters, and there is one by John A. Lee (1891-1982), whose work would be anthologized again by Davin in 1953. This collection was significant for people like Davin who sought literary legitimization from England. Having a collection of stories by New Zealand writers in circulation in England let those writers know that their work did not have to be restricted to local circulation, but that it could find an audience in other parts of the world (especially back “Home”). Of course, the types of stories that would interest a London audience remained relatively limited, and the issues that writers addressed regarding New Zealand life would be read through a lens of the disinterested (and likely uninterested) foreigner. But these concerns were not of immediate interest to those who wished to get New Zealand stories recognized and accepted into the greater Western tradition. This collection doubtless fuelled the confidence with which Davin compiled *New Zealand Short Stories* fifteen years later.

One notable presence in this collection is Robin Hyde (1906-1939). Hyde was a journalist and a creative writer who had by this time published a body of work in local periodicals. Much of her work is steeped in criticism of society and specifically of the plight of women and Māori. It often espoused leftist politics and liberal ideologies. “The

Little Bridge” (1928) is one of six stories within the anthology that focus on Māori. As Jones relates, most of these stories “follow the nineteenth-century pattern in exploiting Maori culture for thrills and the supernatural,” portraying Māori in traditional stereotypes. Hyde’s story, he says, “used traditional stereotypes, albeit with some subtlety.”³⁸ Hyde depicts a Māori chief, Te Kawhaia, who is “a hundred years old, some say,” and “the last of the seriously anti-English chiefs.”³⁹ Te Kawhaia tells the story of when Pākehā came into contact with his people, “the people of the sacred mountain.”⁴⁰ The narrator, a Pākehā listening to Te Kawhaia’s story, argues that “whatever your battle songs and battle-axes may have been, there was genuine friendship between Maori and the Britisher from the start.”⁴¹ Te Kawhaia rebukes this notion of friendship, for he is keenly aware of the uneven distribution of power between Pākehā and Māori. He states that even in times of peace, it was only “a kind of peace, so precarious that in no town could one walk without seeing the uniform of soldiers.”⁴² Even in times of friendship, Te Kawhaia understands that the relationship between Māori and Pākehā is built on war and violence. Power defines these relationships, and when Māori try to exert power against the Pākehā by learning “the wisdom of the pakeha that they might use it as a sword against him,” they are “captured themselves by this wisdom, this bright, childish sword.”⁴³ The Māori chiefs “looked with new eyes and saw a Maori race who would grow rich in playing with the white man’s toys, and who would have a share in a wider

³⁸ Lawrence Jones, *Picking Up the Traces: The Making of a New Zealand Literary Culture, 1932-1945* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2003) 183.

³⁹ Robin Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” *Tales By New Zealanders* (London: British Author’s Press, 1938) 160-70 at 160.

⁴⁰ Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 162.

⁴¹ Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 161.

⁴² Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 164.

⁴³ Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 164.

empire than this green narrow land; who would be safe in peace and terrible in war.”⁴⁴

The power that lies in the dominating culture is something Te Kawhaia fears Māori will want to possess. It causes the Māori people to turn against one another, “for none trusted his neighbour and each believed that if he turned to the white man his lands would be protected, and perhaps added to by those of the defiant.”⁴⁵ Eventually, the tribe members destroy their own village and move away from their sacred mountain. They leave behind “a haunted land—haunted by the spirit of a brown man who speaks none but the ancient tongue, and makes old music on the flutes that are no longer fashioned by the carver. It is haunted by the youth of such men as myself, pakeha, and by the memories of the old men who watched the first of you die.”⁴⁶ Ghosts of disposed Māori haunting the land is a familiar trope in colonial literature. Hyde portrays the Māori as a dying race, pushed off their land and left to fade as a result of leaving “the light on their own mountain.”⁴⁷ She emphasizes the hopelessness of the situation: the narrator explains that Te Kawhaia “is against the English as a man may be against earthquakes and original sin, without hope of remedy.”⁴⁸ Hyde’s story exposes the relationship of power in which Māori and Pākehā are locked, but does not offer a way out of it. Instead it perpetuates the belief that Pākehā domination of Māori is unfortunate but inescapable.

New Zealand Short Stories Series One (1953): D. M. Davin

Two decades after the publication of Gillespie’s anthology, and fifteen years after Walpole introduced his collection of New Zealand stories to the British reading public,

⁴⁴ Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 164-65.

⁴⁵ Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 165.

⁴⁶ Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 168.

⁴⁷ Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 168.

⁴⁸ Hyde, “The Little Bridge,” 160.

Dan Davin edited and published *New Zealand Short Stories* (1953). As the mirrored titles reflect, Gillespie's and Davin's intentions are similar: each desires to bring together a definitive collection of short stories that would represent what each sees as New Zealand's best, or at least, most representative writing. However, the historical moments in which these editors worked differed in a few significant ways. First, while Gillespie's collection celebrates the work of "transplanted Britons trying to come to terms with a strange environment," Davin's collection comes out of two difficult phases of New Zealand history: the depression of the 1930s and the Second World War, which sent many young men, including himself, to the war efforts in Europe, the Pacific, and the Middle East.⁴⁹ After these events of collective suffering, a national identity began to flourish—New Zealanders no longer saw themselves as "displaced Britons," and instead began to forge a new kind of identity. Wartime periodicals like *New Zealand New Writing* provided the space for writers to explore this new terrain, and in 1953, Davin offered them the legitimization through a place in the Oxford Classics series published by the prestigious Oxford University Press.

Also unlike Gillespie, Davin was in England at a time when critics were becoming increasingly preoccupied with solidifying a canon of great national literature. In the years surrounding 1950, there was a movement within literary circles to focus on canon formation, as evidenced by books like F. R. Leavis's (1895-1978) *The Great Tradition* (1948), in which he named Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad as the canon of "great English novelists."⁵⁰ As an editor at Oxford University

⁴⁹ James Bertram, *Dan Davin, New Zealand Writers and Their Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 4.

⁵⁰ F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (New York: George W. Stewart, 1948) 1.

Press, Davin found himself at the center of this movement, and so he seized the opportunity to carve a space for New Zealand writers within the blossoming Western canon. In doing so, he explores much of the turmoil faced by New Zealanders, giving the most attention to the move away from their colonial past. He hopes to stake out an identity for New Zealand that is at once in line with Western literary progress and true to what makes New Zealand unique. Davin lays out his criteria for selection in his introduction to the volume. He explains that the stories are “if not anchored, at least tethered to a time and place that is recognizably New Zealand,” and that they also exhibit great “literary quality.”⁵¹ The anthology includes a number of stories written around the turn of the century, including stories by Alfred A. Grace (1867-1942), Lady Barker (1831-1911), Henry Lapham (1852-1887), William Baucke (1848-1931), and of course, Katherine Mansfield. These stories of colonial New Zealand depict a past that Davin is eager to move away from, but which he acknowledges provides the foundation for a national canon.

The anthology tellingly opens with Grace’s “The Ngarara,” first published in *Tales of a Dying Race* (1901), which Davin describes as his one “rueful concession to [New Zealand’s] semi-mythic past.”⁵² Davin is reluctant to include this story because in generic terms, it is not a proper short story; like “Putangitangi and the Maero,” it falls under the category of a rewritten Māori myth. “The Ngarara” is a typical example of the way Pākehā writers mythologized Māori culture and identity. The story is just exotic enough to place it in the distant past and within a foreign culture, but the character

⁵¹ Davin, “Introduction,” i.

⁵² Davin, “Introduction,” i. A.A. Grace, *Tales of a Dying Race* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1901) 177-86.

dynamics are familiar enough to allow modern Pākehā readers to identify comprehend. In this story, a young, beautiful woman is kidnapped by a monster, the Ngārara.⁵³ The woman's mother seeks out the help of three strong, handsome young men. (All of the characters in this story are Māori.) Each man must compete for the opportunity to save the young woman and take her as his wife. There is a competition of masculine virility, and the winner then overtakes the monster and claims the demure damsel as his prize.

Grace takes the Māori myth and reworks it for the benefit of his Pākehā audience. Māori are placed unthreateningly within a European framework, one that is filled with noble savages and knights-errant, and Pākehā readers are able to mesh their own English literary heredity with this Māori tradition, solidifying a dominant identity that brings both Māori and English pasts together into what has become the modern New Zealander. In this paradigm, Māori are no longer other; they are the figurative ancestors of the modern Pākehā. They are no longer a cultural threat because they have been recast as dark-skinned Europeans. Davin places this story at the beginning of his collection because it represents the “semi-mythic past” upon which New Zealand literature is founded. It is the type of storytelling that New Zealanders have had to pull out of antiquity and rewrite for the modern era. Because the story is based on a myth, it must ultimately be rejected in favor of what Davin and his fellow social realists argued was a more important “realistic” representation of reality. Moreover, is it appropriate for this story to begin what would become a multi-volume anthology because it displays the very argument that early-

⁵³ Margaret Orbell, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Māori Myth and Legend*, does not have a separate entry for ngārara, but discusses them under “Reptiles,” 154-56 where they are described as the offspring of Punga, one of the sons of the sea god Tangaroa, and the father of all hideous creatures (Orbell, “Punga,” 144). They are similar and sometimes identical with Taniwha. First published in A. A. Grace, *Tales of a Dying Race*, 187-96.

twentieth-century writers were making: everything Māori must be appropriated, made familiar, and Christianized if possible, in order to show how far this nation has come since its first arrival on these primitive shores.

The other story by Grace, “Te Wiria’s Potatoes” (also previously published in *Tales of a Dying Race*, 84-88), evinces another typical depiction of Māori. In this story, the main character is a Pākehā man, Villiers (the Māori call him Te Wiria), who is “on good terms with the dispossessed lords of the soil”—the Ngati-Ata.⁵⁴ Villiers has a large crop of potatoes ready for harvest, but since all the young Pākehā men had left for the west coast in search of gold, there was no one to help him dig up his crop. Finally, “two score Maoris” show up with instructions from their chief, Tohitapu, to help Villiers dig up his potatoes.⁵⁵ Villiers tearfully accepts the offer from those who “had his welfare so near in their hearts.”⁵⁶ After fifty sacks of potatoes are placed in his shed, the Ngati-Ata disappear. The next morning, however, Villiers finds his storehouses empty. Angrily he goes to Tohitapu and accuses the men of stealing his potatoes. The proof is evident—he sees an empty sack marked with a “V,” a newly dug hole full of potatoes, and the chief who is munching on potato soup during their conference. The chief calls his people to listen, and he goes on to chastise them for the way they’ve treated “my *pakeha*.”⁵⁷ He rebukes them and calls them “a wicked, lazy lot of people... a set of cowards and thieves... [and] an ungrateful tribe.”⁵⁸ He tells them to “Get out of my sight, every one of

⁵⁴ A.A. Grace, “Te Wiria’s Potatoes,” *New Zealand Short Stories First Series*, ed. D.M. Davin (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1976) 27-30 at 27.

⁵⁵ Grace, “Te Wiria’s Potatoes,” 28.

⁵⁶ Grace, “Te Wiria’s Potatoes,” 28.

⁵⁷ Grace, “Te Wiria’s Potatoes,” 29, original emphasis.

⁵⁸ Grace, “Te Wiria’s Potatoes,” 30.

you!” and then returns to his meal of “pork and baked potatoes—Te Wiria’s potatoes.”⁵⁹

The story ends with Villiers “wondering whether Tohitapu was a great actor or a great liar,” something he continues wondering “to this day.”⁶⁰

This story exemplifies the paradoxical way Grace depicted his Māori characters. The son of a missionary, Grace spent much of his life in rural Māori communities, and he clearly developed a regard and concern for the Māori throughout his life. However, Grace nevertheless continually represented Māori as either comical or pathetic, refusing to illustrate them as deep or complex characters. The chief in “Te Wiria’s Potatoes” is either a “great actor,” able to speak the words the Pākehā wants him to speak without meaning a single word of it, or he is a blithering idiot, unaware that he himself is participating in the actions for which he condemns his tribe. The first interpretation might evoke a sense of subversion. Grace depicts a Māori character who allows the Pākehā to think he is in charge of a situation in order to pacify him and keep him around to grow more delicious potatoes. However, even this analysis portrays the Māori-Pākehā relationship as one that is superficial and based on situational propinquity, ignoring the emotional complexities that make up real interpersonal (and especially colonial intercultural) relationships. Moreover, as Wevers points out, the story “stabilizes and normalizes the existing economic, social, and cultural hierarchy”—the Māori are “allowed to steal on a small scale from those who have stolen on a large scale” (i.e., their land), but it is the Pākehā in the end who “establishes his moral and cultural ascendancy,” meaning the relationship exists because he allows it to exist.⁶¹ Thus the story reinforces the need and duty to both

⁵⁹ Grace, “Te Wiria’s Potatoes,” 30.

⁶⁰ Grace, “Te Wiria’s Potatoes,” 30.

⁶¹ Wevers, “The Short Story,” 209.

accept Māori into New Zealand culture, but only insofar as they are useful to building and maintaining the Pākehā way of life.

The later stories that involve Māori characters also contribute to what Davin sees as a “pervading seriousness” and “rarity of humour” that characterizes this collection.⁶² In addition to the economic depression and war, which Davin sees as “the growing point” of New Zealand’s literary canon, there is a “gravity [that] seems to underlie the stories,” particularly “where Maoris enter,” and he offers the explanation that “the post-depression authors have lost the innocence that shows in *Grace*, and the hint of remorse... becomes more open.”⁶³ Davin heralds Roderick Finlayson’s “good-humoured” story, “The Totara Tree,” which “does not leave his sympathy for the Maoris in doubt.”⁶⁴ “In ‘The Whare,’” he writes, “[Douglas] Stewart gets much of his tension from the contrast between the Maori, however abased still able to enjoy, and the Pakeha, acquisitive but impotent for anything more than pleasure.”⁶⁵ A writer himself, Davin sees the Māori as a tool: they are something that can cause tension, precipitate action, or give pause for reflection within a narrative. More broadly, Māori are useful, as they have always been, for their resilience to absorption, their ability to “[remain] alive,” which can be used strategically, by gifted writers, to speak to New Zealand’s own resilience and its unique identity within the larger British Empire.⁶⁶

⁶² Davin, “Introduction,” v.

⁶³ Davin, “Introduction,” v. Lawrence Jones, *Picking Up the Traces*, discusses the relationship between New Zealand writers and the depression in two of his chapters: “‘No New Zealand Writer Regrets the Depression’: Provincial Writers and the Great Depression,” 297-313; and “‘A Body in the Cellar’: The Literary Depiction of the Depression by Provincial Writers,” 314-32.

⁶⁴ Davin, “Introduction,” v.

⁶⁵ Davin, “Introduction,” v.

⁶⁶ Davin, “Introduction,” vi.

Not surprisingly, the collection does not contain any stories written by Māori. What is surprising, however, is that fact that Davin does not ignore this omission but rather he acknowledges it and attempts to offer an explanation for it. He concedes that not including any stories written by Māori is an unfortunate omission, but that it is due to the fact that “[that] gifted people has not yet given us imaginative writers in English.”⁶⁷ This statement is significant for two reasons. First, this observation reveals the fact that there were, in fact, no published short stories in English by Māori writers, not necessarily because of the lack of “imaginative writers,” as Davin asserts, but rather because there had never been a venue through which Māori could publish their writing. The first short story by a Māori writer in English would not appear in a published format until 1954, two years after Davin composed his introductory material.⁶⁸ Despite this, Davin is content to place the blame on the Māori, rather than any problem within New Zealand’s literary climate.

Davin’s argument also hinges on the fact that no Māori has written anything imaginative in *English*. That is not to say that they had not written anything imaginative in *te reo Māori*. Why couldn’t a story written in *te reo Māori* simply be translated into English for publication in this collection? Davin is clearly not interested in what Māori may or may not have to say in their own language; he is only willing to listen if the writing is in English.⁶⁹ This is a significant moment of culture and imperialism meeting:

⁶⁷ Davin, “Introduction,” v.

⁶⁸ J.C. Sturm’s “The Old Coat,” *Numbers* 1 (1954): 22-24. This story will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

⁶⁹ When *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, eds. Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen (Auckland: Penguin, 1985) appeared it caused something of a stir as it opened with 22 poems in Māori (with English translations by Margaret Orbell) under the heading: “The Maori Tradition” and contains poems in Māori by

by refusing to look outside the realm of written English, Davin is exhibiting what Said calls the “power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging.”⁷⁰ Davin blocks Māori from forming narratives, and enforces silence where there should be voice. Moreover, he contributes to the longstanding efforts to “facilitate the Europeanisation of Māori.”⁷¹ These efforts were still very much in practice on a national level at the time Davin was putting his collection together. Government-run Māori schools, many of which were opened more than fifty years before, were still in operation. These schools often had policies of English language only that were severely enforced. They were not officially shut down until 1959, seven years after Davin composed his introduction, and so this moment implicates Davin in this attempt to assimilate Māori into Pākehā culture. Māori may write, they might get published, and they might even find their work in a collection of New Zealand short stories, but as far as Davin is concerned, this will only happen if they reject te reo Māori and write in English.

The writers that Davin does include, and the ones whom he celebrates with the greatest enthusiasm, are the social realist writers, epitomized by Frank Sargeson. Davin himself was influential in the development of this tradition and specifically in the development of regionalist narratives, which came to be a widely recognizable genre in New Zealand short fiction (two of Davin’s stories appear in this volume). The social realists’ view of the “New Zealand experience,” however, was a concertedly narrow one. In an effort to push against the oppressiveness of living in a Puritanical society, the social

17 named poets. This was the first major anthology of New Zealand Verse to include poetry in te reo Māori.

⁷⁰ Said, “Introduction,” xiii.

⁷¹ Judith Simon and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *A Civilising Mission?: Perceptions and Representations of the Native Schools System* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001) 12.

realists tended to simply reorder the social and cultural hierarchy, especially in terms of class, in fact doing very little to really break it down. For example, Māori writers are not the only voices absent from this conversation; there is also a noticeable shortage of female Pākehā writers. Although Davin includes stories by Alice Webb, Janet Frame, and Helen Shaw, a number of important writers of the period like Robin Hyde and Jean Devanny are conspicuously absent. Jean Devanny's stories were published in London in the 1920s, but her work is excluded from both Gillespie's and Davin's collections. As Wevers notes, Devanny's stories "might seem to provide a 'distinctive (local) atmosphere'" that Gillespie claimed he could not find in his search for a New Zealand literary voice.⁷² One might argue that this "atmosphere" would also have served Davin's search to find stories "tethered to a time and place that is recognizably New Zealand," for several of Devanny's stories are focalized around coal-mining settlements of the West Coast. One explanation for this rejection of female writers might have to do with form. Devanny based her stories on the "romance model, [most of them being] about love," and this was the form that Sargeson and Davin were trying to move the nation away from.⁷³ Another more likely explanation has to do with Devanny's politics: she was "a communist and a feminist" who "re-wrote romance as a vehicle for her political convictions."⁷⁴ Moreover Devanny portrayed female characters as complex beings, "insist[ing] on the sexuality of the woman as a motive force in her behavior."⁷⁵ It seems that Davanny's and Hyde's personal lives and politics were too radical for Davin's vision of the definitive New Zealander. The fact that Davin does include a story by John A. Lee,

⁷² Wevers, "The Short Story," 223.

⁷³ Wevers, "The Short Story," 223.

⁷⁴ Wevers, "The Short Story," 223.

⁷⁵ Wevers, "The Short Story," 223.

whose politics were closer to Devanny's and Hyde's, is telling about the sort of writers Davin regarded as exemplary New Zealanders. Not only was Lee male, and thus fit into the masculinist tradition, but like Davin, Lee was also a decorated (D.S.O.) veteran; he was wounded and lost an arm in March 1918 at Mailly-Maillet on the Western Front. For Davin, then, the literary voice of New Zealand must fit his predefined criteria of being masculine and nationalist. Sargeson fit these criteria. He believed the new voice of New Zealand ought to be characterized by the driving force of the male voice. At the time of publication, stories by Frank Anthony, one of which Davin includes, were praised for their "direct and masculine' qualities," for his treatment of male characters in "a dominantly masculine environment, anti-domestic, afraid of women...preoccupied with ambitious but uncompleted projects, practical jokes, and horseplay."⁷⁶ This assertive, masculine tone is how Davin thought New Zealand literature ought to sound like, and therefore, it took precedence as Davin put his anthology together.

Davin concedes that his collection has "obvious gaps and flaws" and he asserts that "no claim is made for complete representation of periods or settings."⁷⁷ But I would add to this a rather obvious point to a postcolonial critic, that there is also no claim for the complete representation of perspectives. Davin sidesteps this issue, claiming that because the Māori have written nothing of literary merit in English, they have removed themselves from the equation. It is obvious that had he incorporated this voice, had he attempted to forge a complex, multi-racial identity, he may have found a more satisfying answer to what makes a New Zealand story.

⁷⁶ Wevers, "The Short Story," 224.

⁷⁷ Davin, "Introduction," i.

New Zealand Short Stories Series Two (1965): C. K. Stead

Davin's 1953 collection proved so popular that in 1965, Oxford University Press published a second volume of *New Zealand Short Stories*. The editor of this collection, C. K. Stead (1932-), has a mission that is, unsurprisingly, very similar to Davin's. He points this out in his introduction by saying, "it is worth noting that two-thirds of [the stories in Davin's collection] belonged to the fifteen years from 1937 to 1951, when the form in New Zealand assumed stature and importance in the hands of ten or a dozen writers. The emphasis of the present volume is on new developments."⁷⁸ Stead is clearly looking for stories that carry on the tradition begun by social realists like Davin and Sargeson.⁷⁹ Hidden in this volume, however, is something remarkable: J. C. Sturm's "For All the Saints" (1955), which was published a decade earlier in the Māori Affairs Department periodical *Te Ao Hou* (1952-1976). Sturm's first short story, which was the very first story to be published by a Māori writer in English, was "The Old Coat" (1954), published in the first volume of the magazine *Numbers* (1954-1959). Even though "For All the Saints" was the first Māori story to be anthologized in the *New Zealand Short Stories* series, this fact is easy to miss when reading Stead's introduction. What would seem like a revolutionary moment, one that would lead to celebration, or at the very least, recognition, is not even mentioned. Reading this absence against what Stead *does* discuss in his introduction is illuminating. He celebrates the short story in New Zealand as having "for a long time a special place....not as a novelist's by-product, or as the promise of a

⁷⁸ C. K. Stead, "Introduction" to *New Zealand Short Stories Second Series* (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1976) i-vi at i.

⁷⁹ Note that Stead's specialty lies in modernism, especially Pound. See C.K. Stead, *The New Poetic*: [From *Yeats to Eliot*] (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1964); and C.K. Stead, *Pound, Yeats, Eliot and the Modernist Movement* (New Brunswick: NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986).

novel, but as a form in its own right by which a talent may fully declare itself.”⁸⁰

Significantly, Stead sees truth in the stories he anthologizes. Discussing scenes by two of his favorite authors, Frank Sargeson and Marilyn Duckworth (1935-), he wonders: “Why are [some of these] scenes memorable? Why is one compelled—by that power which belongs uniquely to fiction—to store them *as if they were real*?”⁸¹ He goes on to say: “There is, I suppose it may be said, a ‘perception’—about our society, about ourselves—bodied forth in these scenes.”⁸² The stories, then, represent reality in New Zealand life. The stories reveal an essential experience that is unique to New Zealanders. Despite the problems with this sentiment, the fact that Stead includes a Māori woman’s perspective suggests that this essential experience is broadening. However, the fact that Stead does not acknowledge this suggests that he perhaps included her story reluctantly, or that, at the very least, he was simply not aware of the significance doing so.

Moreover, the process of articulating the New Zealand experience, as Stead points out, is not one-sided. He takes New Zealand’s readers as well as its storytellers into consideration when making these assumptions. He says: “My concern has been...to keep as close as possible to the experience of the common reader who will come to these stories as fiction.”⁸³ The Māori are marginalized once more, for they are not Stead’s target audience—they are not the “common reader.” Thus, he reinforces the way Māori remain on the outskirts of cultural production as writers and also as readers. Māori writers like Sturm, then, do not merit discussion in the introduction alongside New Zealand’s “best,” and Māori readers do not merit consideration as a viable critical

⁸⁰ Stead, “Introduction,” i.

⁸¹ Stead, “Introduction,” iii.

⁸² Stead, “Introduction,” iii.

⁸³ Stead, “Introduction,” iv.

audience. Thus, even as Sturm's story pokes a hole in the hermetic ideal of the New Zealand voice, Stead's refusal to recognize her accomplishments reveals his own discomfort in talking about contemporary race relations and his ambivalence toward the right of the Māori to speak.⁸⁴

New Zealand Short Stories Series Three (1975): Vincent O'Sullivan

Vincent O'Sullivan (1937-) edited the third collection in the Oxford series in 1975. This collection inducts two more Māori writers into the canon: Witi Ihimaera (1944-) and Patricia Grace (1937-). O'Sullivan, like his predecessors, continues to be concerned with identifying a distinctly New Zealand voice. But while Davin and Stead wanted to present New Zealand to the western world, O'Sullivan turns to the stories that New Zealanders tell themselves. He says: "The majority of those who take up this book will be New Zealanders," and for him, the aim of this anthology is to "measure the nation's pulse"—to see what New Zealanders are saying, how they are experiencing life, and how they are sharing that experience with one another.⁸⁵ This turn, from outward to inward, from England back to New Zealand, is a significant one for the development of the short story canon. As long as editors were concerned with how New Zealand writing would be received in England and other parts of the world, their view remained fixedly narrow. O'Sullivan is the first anthologist who includes Māori writers *and* openly acknowledges their presence, suggesting that in his view, for New Zealanders to talk

⁸⁴ This would not be the last time Stead's treatment of Māori writers would be challenged. In chapter three, I will discuss a controversy surrounding Stead and his perceived racism regarding the writing of another Māori author.

⁸⁵ Vincent O'Sullivan, "Introduction" to *New Zealand Short Stories Third Series* (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1975) i-vii at ii.

about what it really means to live there, the Māori must be more than symbols, more than metaphors—they must take part in the conversation.

However, that is not to say that O’Sullivan’s introduction is unproblematic. When explaining his reading and selection process, he argues that when good writers talk about New Zealand, they do so “in a language which must draw always from shared common life, if they are to create those patterns of fiction which finally clarify to ourselves the kind of tribe we are.”⁸⁶ Again, it seems that O’Sullivan is making an attempt to be inclusive rather than exclusive. He appropriates terminology from the Māori—or rather, he uses an English word that denotes a part of Māori experience—to talk about the common threads of life that paint an accurate picture of what it means to belong to the New Zealand “tribe.” Of course, this is not the most appropriate way to describe New Zealand and its inhabitants; it does not attempt to account for heterogeneity of identities and experiences, but like the previous editors, O’Sullivan is looking for things that New Zealanders have in common in order to articulate what it means to be a New Zealander. What is different, however, is O’Sullivan’s willingness to listen to Māori perspectives and attempt to imagine a readership that is also Māori.

While this is surely a move forward in the rise of the Māori voice in New Zealand literature, it is important to recognize some potential limitations. Because O’Sullivan only includes three stories (out of the twenty-seven total), written by two writers (a total of twenty-one writers are included), there is a danger in allowing such a limited number of minority voices to speak on behalf of a much larger population. The privileged Pākehā reader, accustomed to reading Pākehā writing, would be able to identify similarities and

⁸⁶ O’Sullivan, “Introduction,” ii.

differences between aspects of Pākehā stories and their own experiences, allowing them to interpret each story as just one perspective of their own complex and changing environment. But when the same readers encounter a Māori narrative, they would likely have less (or no) experience to draw from, and so are more likely to understand a work by a Māori writer as standing in for *all* Māori experience.

O’Sullivan intensifies this problem by articulating what readers should get from Māori stories. The ability to capture the voice of the Māori through dialect is what O’Sullivan seems to value most. He points to Pākehā writer Roderick Finlayson, and his “meticulous grasp of the English spoken by Maoris” as “clear[ing] the tracks for later writers,” such as Patricia Grace.⁸⁷ For O’Sullivan, these writers capture the Māori voice, which translates into the Māori experience, all for the edification of a Pākehā audience. This is problematic for a number of reasons. To begin, assigning a particular dialect or speech pattern to a large heterogeneous group of people reduces them into a flat, narrow category. To say that a writer captures “the voice of the Māori” is to suggest that there is only one Māori voice, that this voice is easily identifiable, and that it may be pinned down, examined, and taxonomized. For O’Sullivan, the goal of the Māori short story is to reveal a truth about the Māori people that reinforces familiar stereotypes; it is not to ask questions or to challenge predetermined notions of indigenous identity. In this way, even though this anthology includes Māori stories, O’Sullivan subverts the agency claimed by the writers by containing and limiting their potential to challenge Pākehā conceptions of what it means to be Māori.

⁸⁷ O’Sullivan, “Introduction,” v.

New Zealand Short Stories Series Four (1984): Lydia Wevers

The fourth and (so far) final collection in this series was published in 1984. Nearly a decade separates this volume from the O’Sullivan’s, and indeed, much has happened during this time. The development of postmodernism has carved a space for the emergence of the Māori renaissance (beginning in the 1970s), and people have begun rethinking the way they view relationships with one another and with the literature they produce. We can see this change reverberating in the introduction to this collection, which offers a much more nuanced and culturally sensitive discussion about the implications of putting together a collection of New Zealand short stories. In her introduction, editor Lydia Wevers (1950-) acknowledges that “the body literary is not necessarily the same animal as the body politic,” and unlike the three previous editors, she asserts that “what we choose not to see is as revealing as what we do see—or are shown”⁸⁸ She does not offer a “critical essay on the New Zealand short story, or even on the contents of this anthology”; instead, she offers “an attempt at digestion.”⁸⁹ While the previous editors sought to display New Zealand’s “best” writers of the short story, Wevers rather questions this very notion of quality. She sees the empty spaces, the writers not included, as having just as much right to write about and discuss life in Aotearoa New Zealand as any one else.

Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace are anthologized again in this collection, but remarkably, they remain the only two Māori writers included. Wevers discusses their writing in some detail. She celebrates their capacity to “write with intelligence and

⁸⁸ Lydia Wevers, “Introduction” to *New Zealand Short Stories Fourth Series* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1984) x-xx at vii.

⁸⁹ Wevers, “Introduction,” vii.

compassion about the social problems experienced by Māoris, racism, the shift away from rural values and tribal support, historical and present injustice, poverty.”⁹⁰ Wevers appreciates the complexity with which Ihimaera and Grace approach these issues, and so she encourages her readers to resist overly generalized and reductive readings of their stories. However, Wevers herself perpetuates the reducing approach to Māori writing by praising Ihimaera and Grace for accurately capturing a Māori voice and identity. It seems that, for Wevers, the Māori identity is simple enough that it can be fully articulated by the writing of just two individual voices. Like the writers discussed previously who depict Māori characters, along with the editors who celebrate them, there is considerable attention given to the way Māori speak English. These stories represent Māori not only “in the more obvious way of subject matter, but in the flow and rhythm of...syntax,...repetitions and inversions,...elided grammar.”⁹¹ This persistent preoccupation with what could be described as Māori English is problematic, and unpacking it reveals a great deal about the way the development of the short story canon participated in the social apparatus that worked throughout the twentieth century to keep Māori oppressed.

Shaun F. D. Hughes has shown that there is not, and was not (during the period under discussion), such a thing as Māori English. The closest thing, he says, would have existed as a pidgin or creole during the early period of colonization.⁹² What developed subsequently, however, and what came to be understood as Māori English, was in fact a dialect more closely tied to class. This of course reveals the connection between racial

⁹⁰ Wevers, “Introduction,” ix.

⁹¹ Wevers, “Introduction,” x.

⁹² Hughes, “‘Māori English’,” 566.

and economic disenfranchisement. Since the Māori population remained economically disenfranchised throughout the twentieth century, they remained disproportionately represented in the lower classes. Therefore, it is easy to see why the dialect would have been projected onto the Māori as a marker of ethnicity. Thus, whenever writers and editors portrayed this dialect as being an inherent attribute of being Māori, they no longer needed to question *why* Māori spoke this way. This portrayal makes it seem inevitable for the Māori to be disenfranchised economically, for the way they speak English reveals their inability to adapt to modern society. In reality, it is their position in society which produces this dialect. This is a cycle that is endemic to the social structure, not to the Māori people, and so it only through the dismantling of this structure that the cycle will be broken. Thus, even despite Wevers' praise of Ihimaera and Grace for portraying poverty in their communities, her remarks fall short of encouraging readers to consider the real foundation for that poverty.

For Wevers, Patricia Grace “[m]ore than any other Māori writer...has made English a Māori language.”⁹³ However, Wevers quickly moves out of the realm of language: “To read her stories,” Wevers says, is to “think Māori.”⁹⁴ To “write” or “speak” Māori can be discussed, as above, from a linguistic standpoint, but what does it mean to “think” Māori? For Wevers, Ihimaera's and Grace's stories are successful Māori short stories because they work to bridge the divide between the Māori and Pākehā worlds. They work to make the Māori experience not so foreign to the Pākehā reader. And while this may have seemed like a success to Wevers, especially in light of the

⁹³ Wevers, “Introduction,” x.

⁹⁴ Wevers, “Introduction,” x.

increased consumption of Māori art and writing during the Māori renaissance, it continued the practice of limiting the kinds of works Māori were allowed to produce. For in order to get published, to sell books, and be anthologized, a writer must capture the Māori experience in a way that Pākehā readers and editors find acceptable.

While the prefatory material in the first three collections attempts to collect the best representations of New Zealand short fiction, Wevers' introduction highlights the fact that creating anthologies, forming a canon of classic New Zealand writers, is not a passive exercise of cataloging or displaying, but is itself an act of creation. The moment stories are put into a collection like *New Zealand Short Stories*, under the prestigious Oxford University Press, they become representative, showing not what the New Zealand experience is, but what a select few think it ought to be. Furthermore, anyone who does not identify with this particular representation is marginalized and silenced.

CHAPTER THREE
MĀORI SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH

Introduction

The preceding chapters have offered a genealogy of the short story in Aotearoa New Zealand. I have outlined not only the evolution of the New Zealand short story as a genre, but also the evolution of the New Zealand short story canon. I have discussed in some detail the ways that Māori have been either included in or excluded from this canon, and I have discussed the process through which Māori became more than silent, metaphorical figures in Pākehā writing. This chapter will look at the period between 1950 and 1970 when Māori were beginning to be published and anthologized. Scholarship on early Māori writing tends to focus on the writing of Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace, the two most internationally well-known Māori writers (Ihimaera was the first Māori and Grace the first Māori woman to publish single-author collections of short stories).¹ While these writers are indeed central to the discussion of the rise of the Māori voice in the literature of Aotearoa New Zealand, it is worth looking at how some less frequently discussed writers contributed to building the foundation upon which writers like Ihimaera and Grace were able to build their careers. More specifically, it is worth examining the ways that Māori writers were able to participate in dominant culture while still

¹ Witi Ihimaera, *Pounamu, Pounamu* (Auckland: Heinemann, 1972) and Patricia Grace, *Waiariki* (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1975). For a discussion of Ihimaera, see Umelo Ojinmah, *Witi Ihimaera: A Changing Vision* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1993). On Grace, see Judith Dell Panny, *Turning the Eye: Patricia Grace and the Short Story* (Lincoln, N.Z.: Lincoln University Press, 1997).

maintaining a level of autonomy and creative sovereignty. This chapter will look at published Māori writing to examine the ways this voice was asserted, not just so that it might speak within Pākehā discourse, but more importantly, that might challenge the very nature of that discourse.

J.C. Sturm's "For All the Saints" has been called "a harbinger of an emerging Maori literary canon," and Allen sees in the *Te Ao Hou* stories "efforts to assert cultural and political distinctiveness."¹ It is important to note that this desire to "assert cultural and political distinctiveness" emerged at the same time that Davin and his followers were attempting to assert a literary particularity for the New Zealand short story. Clearly, as one approved discourse was emerging, another counter-discourse was also beginning to bloom. But while Davin's history has been well documented and discussed, the history of the earlier Māori writers in English has remained submerged. It is, therefore, the goal of this chapter to bring a part of that history to light.

In order to set up this discussion, I will survey Māori writing, beginning in the colonial period. Although Māori did not begin publishing short stories until the middle of the twentieth century, they did publish in a number of other genres (non-fiction reports, waiata [sung poetry], and other forms of oral culture transposed into print). Writing from this period demonstrates some of the changes that were taking place within Māori society, and it illuminates the ways that Māori writers were using written media to address, confront, and make use of these changes. The kinds of issues brought forth by writing of these other genres will allow us to discuss the history from which Māori short stories would emerge, providing a critical lens through which to approach them.

¹ Michael, "J.C. Sturm: Before the Silence," 65; Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Māori Literary and Activist Texts*, New Americanists (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) 6.

Historical and Literary Context

Māori in the Colonial Period

To speak of Māori writing in English is to speak of a complicated phenomenon. Before Europeans arrived on the shores of Aotearoa and began transcribing te reo Māori into letters and words, the Māori culture was entirely non-literate. That is not to say there were not texts; cultural texts are incredibly significant—truly central—to the expression of māoritanga and the preservation of knowledge and stories. And so, to say that Māori only began “writing” after colonization is an incorrect and ethnocentric supposition. This study is interested in these non-literate traditions that predate the creation of the Māori written grammar, and how they both effected and were affected by the creation of a written literature in English. What does it look like when an oral culture begins writing? Particularly when writing in an alien tongue? This question feeds directly into my interest in Māori short stories in English, for it was only after this long and complicated process that Māori began writing short stories in English. To try and understand such stories with a level of integrity, one that requires a literary critic to move outside of a Western-centered epistemology, it is necessary to ground oneself in history.

Māori are not one homogenous group, as they are often portrayed in literature, but rather are broken up into hapū (sub-tribe) or iwi (tribe) living on either the North or the South Island. According to Michael King, before and during colonization, Māori identity “was expressed through descent lines and proverbs”—references to identity are “invariably tribal and regional, never ‘Māori’.”² However, because a single, unified people was easier for the British government to deal with, they were often treated as a

² Michael King, “Between Two Worlds,” *Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Geoffrey W. Rice, 2nd ed. (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992) 285-307 at 285.

single homogenous group. As a result, in cases such as the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, now considered New Zealand's founding document, a small number of particular tribal leaders were expected to speak on behalf of all Māori. As in the case of the Treaty, this representation often took the form of the newly introduced written word. Before the arrival of Europeans, stories and histories were passed down orally and through other arts, such as carving and weaving. The first published writing in Māori, therefore, did not come from Māori writers. The first writing in Māori was connected to the Church or the State. Missionary societies put out religious tracts, moralizing narratives, and newspapers, as well as "books of the Bible, orders of service, catechisms, prayer-books, hymnals, and almanacs."³ The government sponsored publications that were meant to "inform Māori readers about the civilizations of Britain and Europe and about government policy."⁴ It was in response to this discourse that Māori eventually began to produce their own written literature.

As McRae points out, Māori culture did not reject orality in favor of literacy outright. One of the complications that arose with the introduction of print to Māori culture was that "traditional knowledge could be disseminated far beyond the reaches of a tribal audience."⁵ McRae explains that this was a potential problem because "it was a feature of Māori oral traditions to be closely controlled by the tribal group," and "with writing they could be communicated well outside its boundaries."⁶ However, writers were able to control who read their texts to some extent, "by selection of an audience [or]

³ Jane McRae, "Māori Literature: A Survey," *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature*, ed. Terry Sturm (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991) 1-24 at 6.

⁴ McRae, "Māori Literature," 6.

⁵ Jane McRae, "From Māori Oral Traditions to Print," *Book and Print in New Zealand: A Guide to Print Culture in Aotearoa*, eds. Penny Griffith et al. (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997) 17-43 at 20.

⁶ McRae, "From Māori Oral Traditions," 20.

by limited print runs.”⁷ Thus, as Māori began printing written texts, such as written records of traditions, they were often “kept close to the tribal home and...made available only to selected readers.”⁸

Most published records of Māori oral culture come from a collaboration of Māori and Pākehā writers and informants. The most famous example is Sir George Grey, who put a prolific amount of Māori tradition into English. In creating his *Polynesian Mythologies* (discussed briefly in chapter one), Grey collaborated with a number of Māori. McRae points out that Grey “also sought out others to write for him.”⁹ Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke (ca.1815-1896) was one of the most significant contributors to Grey’s cause. He worked with Grey between 1849-1853, and wrote “some 800 pages on many topics—language usage, the origin of man and the universe, religious rituals and ceremonies, customary practices, and historical events in the life of his tribe [Te Arawa],” along with 234 pages of commentary on the meanings of words and customs referred to by Grey.¹⁰ John White (1826-1891) also gathered and published material from Māori informants. He “asked a Ngapuhi chief, Aperahama Taonui, to write down the history of his tribe.”¹¹ This literary fusion of Māori and Pākehā is indicative of the contemporary colonial climate. Recent scholars have attempted to identify and distinguish Māori contribution from Pākehā contribution. Agathe Thornton has compared the three manuscripts by Te Rangikāheke, two of which were written for readers who “would have expert knowledge about ancient traditional stories,” and the other was written for Grey

⁷ McRae, “From Māori Oral Traditions,” 20.

⁸ McRae, “Māori Literature,” 7.

⁹ McRae, “Māori Literature,” 8.

¹⁰ McRae, “Māori Literature,” 9.

¹¹ McRae, “Māori Literature,” 15.

(an outsider).¹² The texts vary in a number of significant ways; for example, whereas connections between the narrative and proverbial or cosmogonic sayings would be apparent to insider readers, they needed to be explained for Grey and his readers.¹³

Before the mid-twentieth century, Māori writing took the form of non-fiction reports, waiata (sung poetry), and other forms of oral culture transposed into print but remaining in te reo Māori. It would not be until the middle of the twentieth century that Māori writers began publishing short stories in English. Writing from this period, then, does not relate directly to the topic of short stories, but it does demonstrate some of the changes that were taking place within Māori society, and it illuminates the ways that Māori writers were using written media to address, confront, and make use of these changes. The kinds of issues brought forth by writing of another genre allows us to see the history that Māori short stories would be emerging from, providing a critical platform from which to approach them.

By reading these early text, it becomes clear that the Māori culture was being pulled through a transition. As Stafford and Williams indicate, however, it was not just the culture that was being manipulated, but Māori themselves. In the early 1900s, Pākehā arranged for traditional Māori performances to be put on display for prominent

¹² Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 14. See Agathe Thornton, *Maori Oral Art as Seen by a Classicist*, Te Whenua Studies 2 (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 1987) 59-86; 2nd ed., intro. Jane McRae (Wellington: Huia, 1999) 49-75; Agathe Thornton, ed. and trans., *The Story of Māui by Te Rangitāheke*. Canterbury Maori Studies 5 (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, Department of Maori, 1992) 1; and the discussion of “The Manuscripts,” in Agathe Thornton, *The Birth of the Universe: Te Whānautanga o te Ao Tukupū. Māori Oral Cosmology from the Wairarapa* (Birkenhead, Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2004) 25-85.

¹³ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 14. Clearly, Māori writers were well aware that different kinds of readers had different needs and expectations. This knowledge provided writers with the tool to exert power on different levels. Knowing that Pākehā readers unfamiliar with Māori knowledge and practices required more explanation meant that Māori could choose either to impart that knowledge or to refuse. Culturally illiterate readers are at the mercy of the author—either the information is going to be provided or it is going to be withheld. This will be taken back up later in this chapter, but it worth pointing out that this potential for resistance begins to take seed in the earliest Māori writing in English.

audiences. In 1901, a performance was organized for visiting British royalty, the future King George V and Queen Mary, during which Māori performers were forbidden from “disturb[ing] the pristine image of the colonised presented to the colonisers.”¹⁴ Such performances, Stafford and Williams argue, “[exhibit] a more complex sense of the situation of Maori in late colonial New Zealand when Maori were situated uneasily between a traditional past, to which no ready means of return was possible, and a modernity in which they were excluded from full participation.”¹⁵ Traditional aspects of Māori culture were being mythologized, and at the same time contemporary Māori were not allowed to create art and writing that would represent a new form of traditionalism. This position is demonstrated in the kind of writing being published during the period. Māori were consistently featured as characters—or more accurately, as props and metaphors—and yet they were not given the opportunity to join mainstream literary culture and write publicly for themselves.

There were a number of important Māori rights movements at the start of the twentieth century which used printed material to speak to a variety of audiences. Participants in the Ratana and Kingitanga movements believed that Māori should be returned to their rightful position in Aotearoa New Zealand, though they pushed for this using different, at times conflicting, strategies.¹⁶ Sir Apirana Ngata (1874-1950) was a member of the Kingitanga movement who was able to use writing to voice Māori concerns within the public discourse of Pākehā society. Ngata was educated at Te Aute College and in 1893 became the first Māori to earn a degree from a New Zealand university. He quickly became an important political figure, serving on the Eastern Māori

¹⁴ Stafford and Williams, *Maoriland*, 257.

¹⁵ Stafford and Williams, *Maoriland*, 257.

¹⁶ Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, 147-149.

parliament, the Native Affairs Committee, and the Native Land Commission. During his time of service, he contributed to the writing of significant political documents, such as the Native Land Act of 1909.¹⁷ In 1929, Ngata was given authority to “bring land under departmental control, survey, drain, reclaim and irrigate it, grass, fertilise and fence it, construct buildings, buy equipment and livestock, and hand it over to Maori farmers. Through land development schemes he strove with tribal leaders to create self-sufficient Maori communities.”¹⁸

Ngata’s political vision was not universally accepted by Māori leaders and his writing reveals the tension of the moment, both within and between Māori communities, as well as between Māori and mainstream Pākehā culture. In addition his political writings, Ngata authored a number of poems that were disseminated within Pākehā society. One poem in particular, as described by Stafford and Williams, “displays the contradictions in the ‘transitional’ situation of the Māori: [...] written in English, replete with classical references, invoking the dying race topos, it is nevertheless a stirring description of Maori cultural practice that is celebratory as well as nostalgic.”¹⁹

Margaret Orbell has published translations and discussions of a number of articles from early Māori language newspapers in *History Now*. In one such article, Orbell discusses a letter published in *Te Puke Ki Hikurangi* (1897-1913), a Māori language newspaper published for the Kotahitanga movement.²⁰ Orbell explains that as Māori were

¹⁷ This information is taken from Stafford and Williams, *Maoriland*, 259. See also Nelson Wattie, “Ngata, Sir Apirana Turupa,” *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, ed. Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998) 407-08.

¹⁸ Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, 149.

¹⁹ Stafford and Williams, *Maoriland*, 259.

²⁰ Margaret Orbell, “A Tragedy, and a Letter,” *History Now; Te Pai Tawhito o Te Wā*, 2 (1996): 29-32 at 29. According to Orbell, members of the Kotahitanga Movement accepted the validity of the Treaty of Waitangi and “vigorously [campaign] for a separate Māori parliament that would control Māori affairs especially land issues.”

introduced to the teachings of Christianity, Bible stories and parables were incorporated into Māori epistemology. She translates a letter, composed in 1900, by Hamiora Mangakahia of Ngati Whanaunga, an influential Māori figure involved in the Kotahitanga Movement, written in response to news from the Bay of Plenty of a river-crossing disaster that took the lives of sixteen children. This letter makes evident the transition many Māori were experiencing, moving from exclusively Māori histories, narratives, and epistemologies to a mixture of Māori and Christian. “Employing the powerful rhetoric of a speaker at a tangi [or funeral],” Orbell explains, Hamiora Mangakahia “address[es] first the children’s parents and other relatives, [and their] iwi... Then, in accordance with custom, he addresses the children themselves who now are setting out on their last journey.”²¹ Then, following the custom of speakers on marae, he alludes to an event from history, and finally, he brings in newly acquired stories from the Bible.

As Orbell points out, rather than causing friction or animosity, the two ways of thinking merged to create a more layered epistemology: “the two traditions confirmed each other.”²² Just as interaction with Māori affected the ways Pākehā understood and constructed their reality, the same can be said about Māori in response to interactions with Pākehā. Some writers, especially those involved in the Kotahitanga Movement, incorporated Western epistemologies into their traditional ways of thinking and speaking; others pushed back against the encroachment of Pākehā epistemology onto Māori beliefs and customs. This article creates a new kind of cultural identity, one based in both Māori and Christian tradition. This hybridization would become a hallmark of a great deal of

²¹ Orbell, “A Tragedy,” 30.

²² Orbell, “A Tragedy,” 30.

Māori writing in the twentieth century. Some writing would bring the two together, as this article did; others would value one tradition over the other, but the very fact that writers felt led to address this meeting of cultures demonstrates the effect colonization had on the development of the Māori literary voice. Māori writers would challenge identity categories laid out by Pākehā writers for the last hundred years by portraying the Māori identity as something varied and complex, and by refusing to fit into the simple categories set for them by Pākehā editors.

Māori After the Second World War

The concept of “Māori identity”—as one people, as opposed to individual groups—came about in large part due to the 1930s Depression, the Second World War, and the urbanization that accompanied these events. King relates: “At the beginning of the twentieth century well over 90 per cent of Māori lived in rural communities,” but over the next several decades, Māori left their rural communities to find work in the cities (traditional subsistent farming was deteriorating due to loss of land and resources).²³ The Second World War in particular triggered this move, as “manpower regulations and the Maori War Effort Organization opened up a variety of manufacturing and labouring jobs to Māori men and women.”²⁴ As more and more Māori moved into the cities, interaction with Pākehā became more frequent. Māori were suddenly much more visible—they were no longer an abstract existence somewhere in the bush; they were now neighbors, coworkers, employees, church members.

²³ King, “Between Two Worlds,” 290.

²⁴ King, “Between Two Worlds,” 289.

Writing inevitably sprang from these new interactions, on the part of Pākehā as well as Māori. Whereas Pākehā wrote of Māori in moralizing or sentimentalizing ways, Māori writers were often concerned with issues of alienation and isolation. The writing by J.C. Sturm certainly fits this description. Sturm's story "The Old Coat" (1954) was published in the first issue of *Numbers* in 1954, making it the first story by a Māori writer to see publication. In this story, Sturm deals with a particular kind of alienation, one related to the role of the domestic housewife. In this story, two friends are chatting after having put their children to bed, when they are visited by a superhuman force. As the entity shakes the house and pounds on the door, they are able to keep it held in the next room. When the noise dies down, they open the door to find nothing but an old coat lying on the floor. The narrator is shaken and pulls a knife from the kitchen. She moves down the hallway to check on the sleeping children, and each time she turns around the coat is lying behind her: "Once more that rage took possession of me, and the hunted turned hunter, I stormed up and down the passage, and in and out of rooms like a mad thing. I stood beside doors shouting to it to come out, and slashed and stabbed with my knife at shadows in the corners."²⁵

This story has seen very little critical attention, but in her MA thesis on Sturm, Margaret Erica Michael offers an interesting reading. "The Old Coat," she claims, uses gothic imagery to comment on the "oppression of domesticity and the life that [women are] forced to live."²⁶ In this story, a familiar object, an old coat, is turned into something dangerous, "a frightening symbol of a fear which must be destroyed."²⁷ Michael points out that Sturm is often concerned with the alienation that stems from social forces

²⁵ J.C. Sturm, "The Old Coat," *Numbers* (1954): 22-24 at 23.

²⁶ Michael, "J.C. Sturm: Before the Silence," 45.

²⁷ Michael, "J.C. Sturm: Before the Silence," 44.

imposed on people. The narrator of “The Old Coat” experiences isolation that results from an imposed domestic role. In Michael’s words:

The narrator is alone and isolated, and the self-confidence she thought she could rely on is insufficient. The fight against domestic oppression is a lonely one. The total absence of any male in the story, by actual presence or reference, demonstrates that this is a woman’s issue, that there is a gulf between women and men which means that women must deal with their oppression alone.²⁸

Of course, Michael’s focus on isolation does not fully take into account the fact that the two female characters are having this experience *together*. She argues that because there is no male in the story, the female characters feel isolated in their domestic roles, but this reading neglects to explore these characters’ relationship as a coming together, a collectivizing in the face of an oppressive force. This force may be rooted in gender roles and domesticity, but Sturm also demonstrates that oppression can be experienced collectively. The women fight off the force together in an attempt to preserve their own lives and the lives of their children. It is only together that the door is held shut and the oppressive force kept at bay. This would suggest that Sturm is interested in experiences of oppression as well as in the ways the oppressed fight back. From this perspective, the focus is not on isolation, but rather in collectivity. “The Old Coat” displays the outcomes of oppression—the feelings of fear, rage, and isolation—but it also provides a way to harness these feelings so that one might fight against the oppressive force. When read this way, it is remarkable that “The Old Coat” was the first published Māori short story. What at first appears to be a comment on the gender spheres turns out to be a call to action, an appeal for women, for Māori, and for other submerged groups to rise together against the forces of oppression.

²⁸ Michael, “J.C. Sturm: Before the Silence,” 46.

In the December 1955 issue of the Department of Māori Affairs periodical *Te Ao Hou*, “For All the Saints” won the first successful literary competition held by the magazine’s editor, and became the first of many stories by Māori writers to be published in this venue.²⁹ “For All the Saints” portrays a friendship between two women, but this time the racial identities of the women are made plain: one is Māori and the other Pākehā. This story deals more overtly with isolation, which is more layered in light of the character’s gender, race, and socioeconomic status. In this story, Alice, a Māori woman from a poverty-stricken rural family, has moved to the city to find work. The narrator, whom Alice calls “Jacko,” is a Pākehā woman who comes from a slightly more privileged working class family. The two women work as nurses together and strike up a friendship when Jacko sets out to teach Alice to read. Alice finds it difficult to act according to social codes and expectations of Pākehā society, and her actions and words often make Jacko feel uncomfortable. It is interesting that we are told the story from Jacko’s perspective. As a Māori writer attempting to depict the alienation felt by urban-dwelling Māori, Sturm could have chosen to narrate the story from Alice’s perspective, but by telling the story from the narrator’s subject position, the story enacts Alice’s outsider status. She is within the narrative, but she has no say in how it is told. We as readers are forced to grapple with our own complicity in this one-sided power dynamic. We read about Alice, but only a Pākehā interpretation of her. We must continually ask ourselves if the narrator is reliable, if she is conveying all of the information we need to

²⁹ The first story competition was announced in the Royal Tour 1953 issue. It called for Māori “groups and individuals” to submit stories for the chance to win cash prizes and publication in a coming issue. One prize was to be offered for a story in English, and one for a story in Māori. However, in the April 1955 issue, the editor explained that the judges “recommend that no prize be given for last year’s entries,” due to the lack of qualified submissions. In the same issue, the second competition was announced, with the same criteria as before. It was this second competition that J.C. Sturm won. All issues of *Te Ao Hou* are available at: <http://teaohou.natlib.govt.nz/journals/teaohou/index.html>.

build an accurate understanding of Alice. Because Alice is not allowed to tell the story for herself, we are not really able to understand her experience. In the end, Alice goes back home to visit her family and never returns. Jacko is left wondering what ever happened to Alice, why she never came back. It seems that even though Alice is not allowed to tell her own story, Sturm at least gives her the power to remove herself from it.

Despite the significant position held by Sturm's stories as the first published Māori short stories in English, Sturm's writing would be all but forgotten in the years and decades to come. Once Margaret Orbell became editor of *Te Ao Hou* in 1961, Sturm met opposition and eventually stopped submitting her work to the magazine.³⁰ It is clear that editors had a specific notion of what kinds of stories Pākehā and Māori women ought to be writing—that is, what kinds of stories Pākehā readers would be willing to purchase—and when Sturm's stories failed to live up to that expectation, they were “forgotten,” much like Pākehā female writer Jean Devanny was “forgotten” and excluded from New Zealand short story canon. The most “acceptable” early Māori short stories take the form of “village fiction.”³¹ Many of these stories lament the passing away of Māori traditionalism in exchange for modern (Pākehā) city life. They contain the Māori experience within a rural location, portraying Māori in stereotypical settings that matched Pākehā readers' expectations. There has been a fair amount of criticism launched at Māori writing from this period. Sturm herself once stated that such stories are “about

³⁰ Michael, “J.C. Sturm: Before the Silence,” 67. Orbell also excluded Sturm from her anthology *Contemporary Māori Writing* (1970), which will be discussed later in the chapter.

³¹ See Jean-Pierre Durix, *Mimesis, Genres and Post-Colonial Discourse: Deconstructing Magic Realism* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) 87.

Maoris, but Maoris as Pākehā saw us.”³² Over the course of his career, Witi Ihimaera has become increasingly vocal about this practice of neutralizing and Pākehā-ifying the Māori voice. In 1972, Ihimaera published *Pounamu, Pounamu* (1972), the first collection of single-authored short stories by a Māori writer. This, along with his first novels, *Tangi* (1973) and *Whanau* (1974), propelled him into the public spotlight, and he quickly became the definitive literary and political voice of the Māori during the Māori renaissance.³³ Despite the importance of his early work, though, Ihimaera has never been completely satisfied with them. Feeling constrained by the limits of the “village novel,” Ihimaera has launched some salient criticisms of the way Māori have been represented by both Māori and Pākehā writers. In his own early writing, Māori are often depicted in a typical rural setting where traditionalism is pitted against the demands of modernization. The stories often lament the fate of the traditions being lost by youthful Māori leaving for the cities. In an effort to rectify his mistakes and to portray Māori in a more nuanced and politically minded way, Ihimaera has gone back and rewritten (and republished) his five earliest books, including his short story collection *Pounamu, Pounamu*.³⁴ In an Australian radio interview, Ihimaera explains his decision to rewrite these five books:

³² Sturm, in *Broken Journeys: The Life and Art of J.C. Sturm*, Documentary (Paekakariki: Kapiti Productions, 2007); quoted in Michael, “J.C. Sturm: Before the Silence,” 67. Witi Ihimaera makes a similar argument, to which I will return later in this chapter.

³³ According to Melissa Kennedy, *Striding Both Worlds: Witi Ihimaera and New Zealand's Literary Traditions* Cross/Cultures 134 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011) at x, the Māori renaissance was “a reconsideration of race relations between the majority Pakeha and the indigenous Māori, sparked by increasing pressure from Māori for recognition and manifested in demands for political sovereignty and the revalorization of Māori culture.”

³⁴ Shaun F. D. Hughes explains that Ihimaera “stopped publishing for more than ten years after the appearance of *The New Net Goes Fishing* in 1977 because he felt that audience expectations trapped him in his rural narratives. His publishers were a branch of the same Heinemann Company responsible for the African Writers Series, although they had no equivalent series for the Pacific region. Ihimaera felt stifled by his self-censorship and the reluctance of his editors to approve anything political or controversial.” Shaun F. D. Hughes, “Postcolonial Plagiarisms: Yambo Ouologuem, Calixthe Beyala, and Witi Ihimaera,” *Forum For World Literature Studies* 3.3 (December 2011): 381-98 at 389.

at the time that I wrote [the books], the aesthetics were excellent, the quality was there in terms of them being literary works according to the standards of the time, and those standards were pretty high because they were set by Janet Frame and by Frank Sargeson and by other Pākehā writers or European writers in New Zealand. So what I had to do in those days was to step up to that mark. But there was another mark that I needed to step up to and that was a Māori mark, and in terms of Māori cultural standards and Māori literary standards, I just didn't think that the work cut it.³⁵

He goes on a little later in the interview:

in those days [around 1972] the New Zealand mythology was that New Zealand was one country of two people, and therefore our cultural imperative and our historical imperative and our social imperatives were all towards blending. Much to my sorrow I bought into that. So the work wasn't inflected with what I consider to be the reality of the situation, and I've always been unhappy with those first five books because of that, and that's why I began to rewrite them thirty years later.³⁶

Melissa Kennedy traces the shift in Ihimaera's focus in her study of his work from the 1970s to the 2000s. In much of his work, both old and new, Ihimaera depicts the Māori community "in the pastoral convention of a tamed and peaceful rural landscape," infused with "sentimentality and Romanticism."³⁷ But she shows that in his later works, Ihimaera is able to challenge the very sentimentality with which he tells his story. He is able to bring attention to the romanticization of traditionalism in order to challenge it. For instance, Kennedy looks at *The Matriarch* (1986)³⁸ and shows how the landscape is cast in sentimentalized terms, only to be subverted in the very next paragraph. It is this kind of

³⁵ Witi Ihimaera, interview by Peter Mares, "Revisiting fiction with Maori writer Witi Ihimaera," *The Book Show*, 5 May 2009. Quotations taken from the transcript of the radio interview available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bookshow/revisiting-fiction-with-maori-writer-witi-ihimaera/3130654#transcript>.

³⁶ Ihimaera, "Revisiting fiction with Maori writer Witi Ihimaera."

³⁷ Kennedy, *Striding Both Worlds*, 156.

³⁸ This was Ihimaera's first published work since *The New Net Goes Fishing* (1977), creating a gap of nearly ten years. When it first appeared, *The Matriarch* was controversial because it no longer fit into the pattern of "village fiction" and because it was accused of plagiarism. It has also appeared in a revised edition, *The Matriarch* (2009).

technique that Ihimaera sees as particularly useful in deconstructing the various images of “Māori” that have developed over the last two hundred years.

Te Ao Hou (1952-1976): “A Marae on Paper”

In *Blood Narrative* (2002), Chadwick Allen offers an in-depth look at *Te Ao Hou*. As Allen points out, the first issue “appeared in the midst of the dramatic social, economic, and demographic changes that followed World War II.”³⁹ The magazine was the first of its kind to devote such a far-reaching platform for the discussion of issues concerning the Māori people, and moreover, the first to invite Māori to partake in the conversation. The founding editor, Erik Schwimmer, hoped the magazine would become “like a ‘marae’ on paper, where all questions of interest to the Maori can be discussed,” both by interested Pākehā and by Māori themselves.⁴⁰ Schwimmer’s allusion to the marae is significant for this reason. Allen offers a detailed definition of a marae:

In the past, *marae* referred exclusively to the open yard directly in front of the wharenuī (meeting house), known as the marae atea, and was used for the performance of rituals on behalf of the community. Today, *marae* refers to all the buildings and open spaces in a Maori community facility. Typically, a contemporary marae contains a carved meeting house (whare whakairo) that represents and embodies the community’s principal ancestor, an open courtyard in front of the house (marae atea), and a dining hall (whare kai). Rural marae also typically include an adjacent cemetery (urupa). A marae may belong to a tribal group (iwi), clan (hapu), or extended family (whanau), who are responsible for its physical and spiritual upkeep.⁴¹

Importantly, “the marae and the activities performed there are seen [by Māori and other New Zealanders] as asserting within the larger European-descended community the continuing integrity, relevance, and beauty of Maori language, ritual, architecture, arts,

³⁹ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 45.

⁴⁰ Erik Schwimmer, “Editor’s Note,” *Te Ao Hou/The New World* (1952): 1-2 at 1.

⁴¹ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 47, original emphasis.

and community values.”⁴² Allen shows how Schwimmer’s layout for *Te Ao Hou* also attempted to “reproduce in the reading experience, as far as possible, some of the attributes of a ‘real’ visit to a physical marae.”⁴³ His editorial at the beginning “can be read as a formal welcome (powhiri) to visitors coming onto the ‘marae on paper’.”⁴⁴ After the fourth issue, Schwimmer moved the obituaries so that they would immediately follow the editorial, mimicking the practice of “formally [recognizing] the dead” before carrying on “with the business of the day.”⁴⁵ The table of contents, too, “provides an agenda for the magazine’s ‘hui’.”⁴⁶ Most importantly, though, Māori are invited to contribute to the magazine’s content. Although for the first issue, Schwimmer “had to write a good deal himself to start the ball rolling, . . . in future he [hoped] to be able to rely on contributions, especially from Maoris, articles, poems, drawings, photos, or anything else of interest.”⁴⁷ Therefore, as at a marae, Māori “pass on their knowledge [and preserve] traditional literary forms and indigenous knowledges by keeping them ‘alive’ through use.”⁴⁸

Of course, Schwimmer’s vision for *Te Ao Hou* clashed with the way the Department of Māori Affairs had planned to use the magazine as “an official ‘voice’ of the government” to the Māori people.⁴⁹ The government was concerned that its voice might be subverted or subordinated if the magazine published Māori writing. However, as Allen points out, the magazine’s format also had the potential of feeding directly into

⁴² Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 47.

⁴³ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 48-49.

⁴⁴ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 49.

⁴⁵ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 49.

⁴⁶ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 49.

⁴⁷ Schwimmer, “Editor’s Note,” 1.

⁴⁸ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 49.

⁴⁹ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 46.

the government's assimilationist goals. The idea of creating *Te Ao Hou* to resemble a marae allows it to “carry out one of the marae's primary functions, the staging of hui (gatherings) for the purpose of building consensus,”⁵⁰ and the consensus that readers are supposed to come to fits nicely into the government's assimilationist project: that “Maori interest can—and by implication, must—be set aside in order to earn a living”⁵¹ in the “predominantly Pākehā world.”⁵² Thus, *Te Ao Hou* “allows individual access to” traditional Māori practices by “making them conveniently available as a text...[that can be enjoyed] in the privacy of individually owned Maori homes.”⁵³

Still, *Te Ao Hou* was the “only national forum where contemporary writing by Maori authors could be displayed in either English or Māori: articles on history and traditional arts, personal essays and reminiscences, short works of fiction and poetry, and new works of traditional or modified genres.”⁵⁴ Despite the fact that “the earliest Maori writing in *Te Ao Hou* appears more or less complicit with the stated goals of dominant power,” Allen's chapter is interested in looking at “how the inclusion of diverse Maori voices in *Te Ao Hou* opened the possibility for subverting the government's assimilationist goals.”⁵⁵ For Allen, that potential lies in the fact that much of the magazine was written in both Māori and English. He argues that there are “subtle gaps” between the English and Māori versions of many texts, which are “metonymic of persistent linguistic and cultural differences in Aotearoa/New Zealand” at the time, and

⁵⁰ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 46.

⁵¹ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 49-50.

⁵² Schwimmer, “Editor's Note,” 1.

⁵³ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 50.

⁵⁴ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 43.

⁵⁵ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 44.

which open up opportunities to problematize the texts' messages.⁵⁶ These gaps are particularly important in writing produced by Māori, whether in essays, opinion pieces, or creative writing.

One story to which he gives particular attention is Hirini Moko/Sidney Moko Mead's (1927-) dual-language story "Show Us the Way/Whakaaturia Mai Te Huarahi" (1962), published under Orbell's editorship.⁵⁷ This story is narrated by a Māori man who invites a Pākehā coworker, Bill, into his home for tea. Predictably, Bill ends up rattling off a "litany of Pakeha complaints against the continuation of Maori traditions and political structures based on the Treaty of Waitangi," using a "patronizing tone [which] represents...typical Pakeha attitudes toward the ability of Maori to make important social, economic, and cultural decisions for themselves."⁵⁸ The narrator, Rapa, does not openly counter Bill's Eurocentric notions, but in his mind he responds to each by "detailing to himself and to the reader the social and spiritual necessities" of the various Māori customs and traditions that are under attack.⁵⁹ At first sight, "Show Us the Way" fits into the category of "village fiction." Mead paints Māori in a rural village, passively and helplessly facing pressures of assimilation. Rapa passively listens to Bill's criticism of Māori customs and his desire to eradicate them, but to himself (and the reader), Rapa questions Bill's assumptions and pokes holes in his summations of these Māori traditions. When pushed for an opinion on the subject, Rapa says, "I don't quite know whether you are right or wrong...Yes, perhaps you are right. Who knows!"⁶⁰ But Rapa inwardly

⁵⁶ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 50.

⁵⁷ Sidney Moko Mead/ Hirini Moko, "Show Us the Way/Whakaaturia Mai Te Huarahi," *Te Ao Hou* 38 (1962): 14-19.

⁵⁸ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 59.

⁵⁹ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 59.

⁶⁰ Mead, "Show Us the Way," *Te Ao Hou*, 18.

disagrees with Bill, and their conversation leads Rapa to ponder the fate of his people:

“What troubled me most was this. Supposing the policy laid down to guide us was wrong, all of us would be destroyed, our children and our grandchildren.”⁶¹ The story ends with a plea for help:

Who should lay down a policy? Should we ourselves, or should we rely on the enlightened members of the Pakeha people? And if it should be wrong, who would be responsible for our destruction? Is anyone able to say that we should do this and do that, bearing in mind the responsibility that should he be wrong, the whole of the Maori people will suffer? We are the ones who will feel the pain. And I am already in pain.

*Wandering aimlessly
And calling hopelessly
Ee, u ee!*

Then I began to pray.

*O God, if You are the keeper
Of all knowledge,
Please show us the way
That we should follow
So that we the Maori people
Shall not fall into dark oblivion.*⁶²

This passage evokes the dying Indian topos, a race of people fading into memory. Even though Māori are now writing and publishing, the literary depiction of Māori has not changed substantially. Mead’s story could be read right alongside A.P. Gaskell’s “Picture in the Paper” or Finlayson’s “Sweet Beulah Land.” On the surface, the Māori are portrayed in a typical way—in the country, in a run down house filled with dirty children—and the Pākehā are also portrayed in a way reminiscent of Sargeson’s or Finlayson’s oppressive puritanical Pākehā. As Bill and Rapa carry out a conversation regarding the future of Māori-Pākehā relations, the conversation becomes heavily one-

⁶¹ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 18.

⁶² Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 18.

sided, but only in terms of what is said aloud. Bill tells Rapa that all of the Māori traditions—the tangi (funeral), the hui (social gathering)—should be abandoned. These traditions, he claims, keep Māori and Pākehā apart culturally: “Their greatest sin,” Bill explains, “is that they separate us, making us go our separate ways. The Maoris go to their hui and the Pakehas go to theirs. We should really go together for we are one people—New Zealanders.”⁶³ However, even though Rapa does not outwardly contest Bill’s assertions about Māori customs, he turns inward to the reader, and addresses each of Bill’s criticisms, explaining the significance of each practice and the damage that would be done if such important aspects of Māori culture were destroyed.

By placing the narrative inside of Rapa’s thoughts, Mead provides a space for his resistance to come out. He may not verbalize his disagreements to Bill, but he carries out a forceful counter narrative in his own mind (which he offers to the reader). Bill asserts that the tangi, the traditional funeral rite of the Māori, ought to be abolished, for it “wastes time, wastes money and wastes food.”⁶⁴ In response, Rapa turns the critique onto the funerary practices of the Pākehā:

I have seen the utter loneliness of the Māori dead when following the Pākehā rites. I have seen our elders seeking a way by which the tears can flow and the speeches be heard, according to Maori custom. The way is not found. The thoughts became trouble, confused, and sorrow was withheld. One pitied the lonely relative lying there—he was not greeted nor was he kept warm, he was not wept over, nor farewelled.

Then they arrived at the cemetery. No longer could sorrow be contained. The tears rushed out like a waterfall. Loud wailed the mouths, to weep the traditional weeping of the ancestors of long ago. Then uncertainty reigned, for fear of transgressing and being wrong. Then there was silence. The tide of tears had ebbed.⁶⁵

At this point, Rapa offers a waiata, a poem:

⁶³ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 16.

⁶⁴ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 15.

⁶⁵ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 15.

Gently blows the wind from the North
 Bringing loving memories
 Which causes me here to weep
 Tis sorrow for the tribe.

Nga Moteatea, No. 71⁶⁶

Rapa laments the loss of traditionalism that has already taken place. He tells Bill, “Many are the Maori customs which have disappeared into oblivion.”⁶⁷ Despite his assertive internal dialogue, Rapa, again, portrays Māori in a familiar way: as a dying race, something to lament, something to mourn.

In this “village story,” Mead offers a typical depiction of rural Māori life, but he also offers a specific critique of contemporary Māori-Pākehā relations. In a brief break in the conversation, Rapa reflects on his friendship with Bill:

I don’t know why we should become friends for to my knowledge I am his only Maori friend. I know *he hasn’t seen much of Maori life and customs*. But he has heard the usual opinions held by some Pakehas, I refer to such statements as—the Maori is lazy, he is dirty, he is a drunkard, and so on.

Now he has come to our home. *He will see how this Maori family lives*. Perhaps at some future date he will invite my wife and me to his home, *so we will see how a Pakeha family behaves in its home*.⁶⁸

This passage reveals the real source of “friction” that exists between Māori and Pākehā. It is not that the two cultures are fundamentally at odds or are incompatible with one another; rather, it is because neither side has an accurate view of the other because of the

⁶⁶ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 16. In 1928 Sir Apirana Ngata (1874-1950) published the first of what was to be a series of volumes under the title *Nga Moteatea* (The Songs), but the publication stalled. It was taken up again in 1959 with the republication of this first volume by the Polynesian Society and the appearance of subsequent volumes under the editorship of Pei Te Huruhuri Jones (1898-1976): Sir Apirana Ngata and Pei Te Huruhuri Jones, eds., *Nga Moteatea: He maramara rere no nga waka maha; The Songs: Scattered Pieces from Many Canoe Areas*, 4 vols., Maori Texts 1-[4] (Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1959-1990). Volume 4 is in te reo Māori only. A fully revised new edition under the general editorship of Margaret Mutu has since appeared: Sir Apirana Ngata and Pei Te Huruhuri Jones, eds., *Ngā Mōteatea: The Songs*, 4 vols. (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004-2007). Number 71, the first stanza of which is used here, “He Tangi mō Te Wano” (“A Lament for Te Wano”) (1: 236-39 [1959]; 1: 314-17 [2004]), by Rangiamoa of Ngati Apakura, is a lament for her cousin, Te Wano, who died in the midst of leading his people south after they were expelled from their lands in the Waikato in 1864. The insertion of this verse here is particularly appropriate.

⁶⁷ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 15.

⁶⁸ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 17, my emphasis.

line that has been drawn, over and over again, in order to separate them. Bill enumerates all of the ways that Māori customs are wrong; yet he has no actual experience of those customs, he has no understanding of their purpose and their worth within the Māori cultural framework. Rapa, too, admits that he does not understand Pākehā because he has not seen the way they behave in their homes. He can only form an image of Bill based on stories that Bill tells him.⁶⁹ Bill has never invited Rapa into his home, and when Bill is invited into Rapa's home, he does more speaking than listening. Thus, because of their mutual ignorance, both are forced to judge the other based on stories told to them.

Of course, the true cause of this “friction” is the uneven power dynamic at work in their relationship. There are a set of stereotypes about the Māori that are well known to both Bill and Rapa: that “the Maori is lazy, he is dirty, he is a drunkard, and so on.” Rapa must fight back against these stereotypes, whereas Bill is not made to explain his way of life and social practices. The only way the two sides can reconcile is if this power dynamic is interrupted and reconfigured. If this does not happen, the Māori epistemology is reduced to a diminutive form: it becomes nothing more than a stereotype. Like in the story, the level of dialogue does not match up: one person is speaking out loud, the answer is spoken silently, and the two parties are unable to communicate because they are speaking on two different planes. Bill believes that casting off the Māori customs will benefit all because it will allow Māori and Pākehā to become one unified people. But as Rapa points out (to himself and the reader): “A Maori is a Maori and a Pakeha is a Pakeha. We have customs and peculiarities which don't find favour with the Pakeha

⁶⁹ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 17.

people, and he has some we don't like."⁷⁰ Bill's notion of unity—"that [Māori] should leave behind, throw out and abandon our Maori customs"—stems from a long history of colonial paternalistic discourse.⁷¹ The fact that readers are given both sides of the story—not just Bill's familiar assimilationist rhetoric, but also a counter-rhetoric—Mead invites his readers to actively engage with the text, questioning and challenging the presumptive nature of Bill's complaints. When Bill argues that Māori go into debt so that they can leave work to attend a hui (traditional gathering) on other islands, Rapa exposes Bill's stereotyped view of Māori: "Away again went my thoughts. I am able to meet all my debts. Is it possible that I am the only Maori who can? I doubt this. I am able to spare a few shillings to go to a hui. Those shillings die the death of chiefs; they are not wasted, at least, that is what I think."⁷² Rapa emphasizes the significance of the hui, not just for the Māori culture, but for him personally:

I heard the wise and sensible words spoken upon the maraes, words touching upon our troubles. I watched the entertainments—the haka, poi dances and other posture dances. Then, as I watched, the strange spirit of the haka touched me, penetrating to the very marrow of my bones. The life principle of the Maori, lying quiescent here, was stirred. It was being fed. Now spontaneously my tongue wants to dart out, my eyes want to dilate, my muscles jerk and I want to plunge into the haka.⁷³

The hui is so important to Rapa that describing it to the reader causes him to relive the intensely emotional experience. He draws on this experience and the knowledge offered at the hui to understand his relationship with Bill.

The "friction" between Māori and Pākehā is so deep-rooted that Rapa believes there is no possible solution: "It would be different if there was a remedy for this

⁷⁰ Mead, "Show Us the Way," *Te Ao Hou*, 17.

⁷¹ Mead, "Show Us the Way," *Te Ao Hou*, 17.

⁷² Mead, "Show Us the Way," *Te Ao Hou*, 16.

⁷³ Mead, "Show Us the Way," *Te Ao Hou*, 16.

situation. Since there isn't I must keep my thoughts to myself.”⁷⁴ He seems to know that power is so unevenly distributed it is almost impossible to change. He knows that doing anything to upset that dynamic would only cause problems for himself and his family, and so he chooses to appear compliant and receptive to Bill's horrifying suggestions. However, Mead offers a way to deal with this “friction”—by opening up a dialogue where both parties are allowed to speak. By allowing Rapa to speak to the reader, Mead challenges Pākehā readers to rethink their preconceived ideas about what it means to be Māori. By experience Māori “life and customs,” Rapa believes Pākehā will be more willing to listen to the Māori perspective. And even though their depictions of Māori “life and customs” in village stories such as this were not as nuanced, complex, or accurate as they would become, writers like Mead played a vital role in the opening the conversation between Pākehā and Māori. Māori were no longer only characters in Pākehā stories; they were now active members in the conversation.

Contemporary Maori Writing (1970): Margaret Orbell

Mead's argument is the most resistant and interesting in its original form in *Te Ao Hou*. Allen shows how the bilingual nature of this story—the fact that the Māori version and the English version are printed side-by-side on the magazine page—“offers a subtle challenge to the assumption of Pakeha superiority [via] the intertext created when bilingual readers read *across* his English and Māori versions rather than [reading] them sequentially.”⁷⁵ He explains that “for both English- and Maori-only readers, the absolute authority of either version by itself is undermined...only the bilingual reader has full

⁷⁴ Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Te Ao Hou*, 17.

⁷⁵ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 58, original emphasis.

access to all of the text's potential meanings: Maori, English, and the two combined."⁷⁶ He argues that when read sequentially—first in one language, then in the other—the two versions of Mead's story are "close approximations of each other," but when read "back and forth across the gap," it becomes clear that "at key moments, the interplay between Mead's versions suggests that Rapa and Bill's debate is being conducted on two potentially opposed levels."⁷⁷

For Allen, the debate correlates directly to the two versions of the Treaty of Waitangi, signed by the British queen and a number of Māori chiefs in 1840. There were two versions of the Treaty, one in English and one in Māori, and as Allen points out, in regard to both the dual-language story and the two versions of the Treaty, "No matter how accurate the translation, there are discrepancies between the culturally defined connotations of Maori and English expressions."⁷⁸ Allen reads these two texts together, showing how Rapa's internal monologue mirrors the Māori version of the Treaty, while Bill's assertions mirror the English version, the version that has held the most political sway in dominant society. This is significant, Allen asserts, because it "raises, further, the complicated issue of the power of language and representation to affect the real lives of individuals and communities, an issue often avoided in discussions of how Pakeha policies will affect the lives of politically subordinate Maori."⁷⁹ Because it is printed in both Māori and English, then, Mead's story offers bilingual readers the opportunity to explore the gaps in order to place both perspectives on equal footing. The English version of the story, just like the English version of the Treaty, should not be the only version

⁷⁶ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 60.

⁷⁷ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 60.

⁷⁸ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 60-61.

⁷⁹ Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 63.

taken into consideration. In order to acknowledge and reconcile the differences in representation that exist between languages, both versions must be given equal amount of attention and respect.

Mead seems to know that simply speaking within the Pākehā discourse is not enough. Writers must invite Pākehā to enter a different literary terrain, they must encourage readers to engage with them on Māori terms, within a Māori epistemology, as represented by the “marae on paper.” This becomes most clear when Mead’s story is recontextualized eight years later in *Contemporary Maori Writing* (1970).⁸⁰ This anthology, edited by Margaret Orbell, brings together twenty-seven stories and poems by Māori writers, most of which had been first published in *Te Ao Hou*. Orbell’s collection moves these texts out of the bilingual “marae” (although most of the stories and poems were not originally published in both languages) and into a distinctly Western genre, the collection or anthology. Orbell explains that the writers she has brought together “are the first generation of Maori writers to make much use of literary forms that are European in origin” (although J.C. Sturm is conspicuously absent), and so, for Orbell, it seems natural to place these European “literary forms” into a collection based on a European model.⁸¹ Orbell commends this move, explaining to her (presumably Pākehā) reader:

As Maori society became less communal and traditional in nature, so that the individual was thrown more on his own resources and was forced to make a personal choice from among an ever-increasing number of alternatives, the old literary forms lost much of their significance. Despite the survival of oratory on formal occasions, the printed word is now the medium of literary communication. New truths must be expressed in new forms.⁸²

⁸⁰ S.M. Mead, “Show Us the Way,” *Contemporary Maori Writing* (Wellington: Reed, 1970) 116-20.

⁸¹ Margaret Orbell, “Introduction” to *Contemporary Maori Writing* (Wellington: Reed, 1970) 7-8 at 7.

⁸² Orbell, “Introduction,” 7.

Orbell does not simply acknowledge the fact that Māori are in a state of transition, moving from rural communities into cities, sometimes giving up traditional values in exchange for mainstream Pākehā ones, but she seems to be celebrating that transition. She concedes that the “oral literature” was appropriate for Māori of the past, when poets and storytellers were not expected to be original, but instead needed to provide “forceful and ingenious [statements] of recognised truths.”⁸³ As Māori cast off their traditional ways, however, the writer is now “thrown more on his own resources and was forced to make a personal choice from among an ever-increasing number of alternatives.”⁸⁴ The writer, then, becomes more individualistic, asserting more agency, finding the will and the power to choose whatever life he wants, “from an ever-increasing number of alternatives.” The world is opening up for him, and Orbell sees this as the thing that makes Māori writing interesting to Pākehā readers: “The rapidity of the changes,” she writes, “gives urgency to their writing...In the attitudes that they have in common, and also in the ways in which they differ, the writers in this collection provide a convincing portrait of Maori life.”⁸⁵ Like editors before her, Orbell is interested in Māori writing because of what it has to offer a Pākehā readership. Orbell asserts: “They are significant new voices in New Zealand literature,” inserting them precisely into the literary tradition outlined in the previous chapters of this study.⁸⁶

Although this move played a key part in the rise of the Māori voice in New Zealand literature by getting Pākehā readers to read Māori writing, it also presented a potentially limiting effect. Rather than simply offering the stories to readers, Orbell

⁸³ Orbell, “Introduction,” 7.

⁸⁴ Orbell, “Introduction,” 7.

⁸⁵ Orbell, “Introduction,” 7-8.

⁸⁶ Orbell, “Introduction,” 8.

articulates how they ought to be read and understood. She offers one correct reading, and by implication, forecloses all possible alternatives. Clearly, Orbell has brought these stories together because they reinforce some notion of what “Māoriness” looks and sounds like to her. In this way, the stories cannot offer a nuanced look at what it means to be Māori, not because the writers are incapable, but because the social pressures of the time inhibited their ability to speak for themselves. By placing these stories into a recognizably Pākehā genre, Orbell is able to contain them. The writers are allowed to speak, but only to say what Orbell allows them to say. Readers are free to listen, but only because Orbell has sanctioned the message.

Placing Mead’s story in an English-language anthology is a significant move, especially in light of Allen’s discussion of the potential for resistance that comes from reading across the white spaces of Mead’s story. This kind of reading is only possible when both the Māori and English versions are available. In its original version in *Te Ao Hou*, the story’s resistance, according to Allen, is in the gaps that become plain when reading across the page, from Māori to English and back again, line by line. The discrepancies between words, images, and allusions invite bilingual readers to participate in the telling of the story. Wherever there is a gap or a discrepancy, the reader can decide which of the possible meanings to attach to it. The reader might choose to read the story from a Māori perspective, performing an “indigenized” reading, or she might perform a “Westernized” reading, through the lens of traditional European literary tropes and generic conventions. Or she might do some combination of both. The important thing is that the opportunity is there; the space is opened up for discussion, for contention, for argument. Mead’s story does not offer only one way of reading Māori in his story; he

asks questions and encourages his readers to come up with answers. It allows readers to approach each version of the story, looking for ways the versions agree and disagree with one another. The reader becomes an active participant in the creation of meaning; he or she is able to translate the terms and interpret the story in a way which values both Māori and English without necessarily privileging one over the other. Orbell's English-only version of the story removes the possibility for performing a dual-language reading, and so like Davin, she gives more credence the English language than to te reo Māori. Moreover, once Mead's story is taken out of the context of *Te Ao Hou* and placed in Orbell's anthology, it represents Māori in way that is recognizable and unthreatening for Pākehā readers.

Rewriting Māori

Over time, different writers and critics have espoused notions of how Māori ought to be depicted, how writing ought to look and sound. Critics like C.K. Stead have had a very particular notion of what writing about Māori and by Māori ought to be like. In 1985, Stead published a controversial review of Keri Hulme's novel, *the bone people* (1984), in which he criticized the author for identifying as Māori. Hulme's novel won the 1984 Pegasus Award, an award meant for a Māori writer, and in his review, Stead questioned whether Hulme fulfilled that criteria. As he points out: "Of Keri Hulme's eight great-grandparents one only was Māori," the basis from which Stead thinks ethnic and cultural authenticity ought to be drawn.⁸⁷ He goes on: "Hulme was not brought up speaking Maori, though like many Pakeha New Zealanders she has acquired some in

⁸⁷ C.K. Stead, "Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* and the Pegasus Award for Maori Literature," *Ariel* (1985): 101-08 at 103.

adult life. She claims to identify with the Maori part of her inheritance,” but he is quick to point out, this is “not a disadvantageous identification at the present time.”⁸⁸ Stead suggests that Hulme does not fit the traditional role of “Māori”—she did not grow up in a rural Māori community, she did not speak Māori at home—and his argument seems to suggest that she is simply cashing in on her “Māori” capital.

A number of critics and writers, both Māori and Pākehā, came to Hulme’s defense. In the early 1990s, Stead was asked to edit *The Faber Book of Contemporary South Pacific Stories* (1994). This collection includes significant voices from across Oceania, but a number of writers are conspicuously absent. In “A Note on Absences,” placed at the front of the text, Stead explains that Samoan New Zealander Albert Wendt (1939-), as well as Māori writers Patricia Grace (1937-), Witi Ihimaera (1944-), and Keri Hulme (1947-) (whom he refers to as Māori-Pākehā) had agreed to include some of their stories in the collection, but that “at the last minute, and in unison, these four asked that their stories be withdrawn.”⁸⁹ Ihimaera outwardly questioned the choice to have Stead, as a Pākehā, edit the collection of Polynesian writers. Furthermore, Keri Hulme pointed out, in a letter she wrote to the publishers, that “unless [the people at Faber and Faber] are aware of the extensive history of insult and attack that surrounds Karl Stead’s relations with Māori and Polynesian writers, I doubt [sic] very much that you will understand the current matter.”⁹⁰ In the previous chapter, I drew attention to the fact that while Stead’s edited anthology of New Zealand short stories included the first anthologized Māori writer, he neglected to make any mention of it, and instead devotes

⁸⁸ Stead, “Keri Hulme’s *The Bone People*,” 103.

⁸⁹ C.K. Stead, “A Note on Absences” to *The Faber Book of Contemporary South Pacific Stories*, ed. C.K. Stead (London: Faber and Faber, 1994) xv-xvii at xv.

⁹⁰ C.K. Stead, “A Note on Absences,” xv.

his introduction to a discussion of oft-discussed Pākehā writers. His attack on Keri Hulme also contributes to this “extensive history.” In an article published in 1989 (aptly titled, “Why C.K. Stead Didn’t Like Keri Hulme’s *the bone people*”), Margery Fee opened the issues Stead raised for further discussion. She explains that while “[many] critics would dismiss Stead’s points as merely anti-Maori or anti-feminist,” she feels that “that is too simple, since he is transmitting ideas about race and equality that have evolved over centuries, and have become, for most people, common sense.”⁹¹ Fee thinks Stead is “right to look sharply at Hulme’s claims to write as a Māori” because doing so forces us to confront these assumptions.⁹² Fee begins her article by pointing out that

Stead raises here two very controversial questions. First, how do we determine minority group membership? Second, can majority group members speak as minority members, Whites as people of colour, men as women, intellectuals as working people? If so, how do we distinguish biased and oppressive tracts, exploitative popularizations, stereotyping romanticizations, sympathetic identifications and resistant, transformative visions?⁹³

Her discussion is based on the “[fairly] widespread agreement [which] exists in the academic community that the biological contribution to race, gender and class differences is negligible: these differences are, rather, strongly rooted social constructs.”⁹⁴ Stead, on the other hand, has a specific idea of what it means to be a “Māori” text; if is not in language (te reo Māori, not English), or form (traditional waiata, not the novel), then it must be “by virtue of the racial antecedents of the authors.”⁹⁵ Fee points out the danger in this logic. “White writers,” she says, “can choose to write as whatever they like: [but] minority writers are usually forced into the position of speaking for their minority,

⁹¹ Margery Fee, “Why C.K. Stead Didn’t Like Keri Hulme’s *the bone people*: Who Can Write as Other?” *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 1 (1989): 11-32 at 12.

⁹² Fee, “Who Can Write As Other?” 12.

⁹³ Fee, “Who Can Write as Other?” 11.

⁹⁴ Fee, “Who Can Write As Other?” 13.

⁹⁵ Stead, “Keri Hulme’s *The Bone People*,” 103.

whether they want to or not.”⁹⁶ Their agency as writers is limited to what is expected of them as representative voices within their minority. They are not free to write with authority from any subject position other than their own. Their writing is necessarily political; it is expected to address concerns related to their unprivileged position, and to somehow exhibit characteristics that qualify it as belonging to that particular minority.

For Stead, this formulation might not seem problematic. In fact, the same principles could be applied when determining any national literature. In 1953, Davin wondered what it was that made a writer part of New Zealand’s national literary canon, what characteristics one must possess to be deemed a “New Zealand short story writer,” whether it has to do with one’s nation of birth, one’s concern for local issues, or one’s pattern of speech. Just as Davin attempts to articulate what it means to be a “New Zealand short story writer,” Stead attempts to articulate what it means to be a “Māori writer.” He argues that “*The Bone People*...is a novel by a Pakeha which has won an award intended for a Māori,” his line of thinking follows Davin’s.⁹⁷ The problem, then, is not necessarily in Stead’s conclusion, but rather in his inability to acknowledge the historical context of his argument and his own privileged position within it. Stead is an outsider attempting to articulate a tradition to which he does not belong, and which has been historically oppressed and defined by the more politically powerful Pākehā. Stead’s intention tends to perpetuate this history, offering the Māori a fully formed identity category, rather than allowing them to create one for themselves. As Fee puts it, “an awareness of the power of the dominant discourse to eradicate difference [is] a power

⁹⁶ Fee, “Who Can Write As Other?” 15.

⁹⁷ Stead, “Keri Hulme’s *The Bone People*,” 104.

Stead uses without any apparent awareness of its oppressive function.”⁹⁸ For Hulme, as well as those who support her claim to Māori identity, “‘actual’ Maoriness, like an ‘actual’ family, has nothing to do with biology and everything to do with solidarity of feeling.”⁹⁹ In this understanding, cultural identity is not just linked to inherited qualities; it evolves according to one’s relationship to other people, within a network of social orders. Writers, both Māori and Pākehā, belong to a number of social groups, and each must be allowed to define those groups and their position within them for themselves. Fee argues that labeling Hulme as a Pākehā “discredits her vision, marginalizes her message, and buries her in a tradition that can safely contain her.”¹⁰⁰ This is the effect of attempting to define a minority literature from a position of power. What starts as a genuine attempt at comprehension can become an attempt to name and contain. This move characterizes much of the critical reception of Māori writing by Pākehā critics throughout the twentieth century.

Conclusion

Despite Stead’s concerted efforts to foreclose possibilities of agency—to see people as either belonging to one category or another, as being either Māori or Pākehā (or not existing at all)—there are writers and critics who are attempting to forge a new language with which to talk about identity in Aotearoa New Zealand. For Fee, Hulme proposes “her own mediatory perspective as a model for all New Zealanders.”¹⁰¹ Hybridity—if not in blood, then in “solidarity of feeling”—can be used as a way of conceptualizing an identity that fits the cultural constructions of neither Pākehā nor

⁹⁸ Fee, “Who Can Write As Other?” 27.

⁹⁹ Fee, “Who Can Write As Other?” 18.

¹⁰⁰ Fee, “Who Can Write As Other?” 18.

¹⁰¹ Fee, “Who Can Write As Other?” 24.

Māori. In recent years, as Melinda Webber discusses in her book *Walking the Space Between: Identity and Māori/Pākehā* (2008), “this concept of hybridity has been reappropriated from negative racial discourse to represent a more open-minded view of self-identification.”¹⁰² She offers a quote from Homi Bhabha’s *Nation and Narration* (1990), which is worth replicating here:

[The] importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original movements from which the third emerges; rather hybridity...is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom...the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to a something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.¹⁰³

Webber emphasizes that this “third space is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a productive, and not merely reflective, space that brings about new possibility. It is a space of negotiation, interrogation, and self-determination.”¹⁰⁴ In other words, it requires a dialogue, between the multiplicity of inward voices competing within one person, or between the multiplicity of outside voices, deliberating what it means to be Māori, who ought to write as Māori, and what that writing ought to look like. Thus, writers like Keri Hulme (descendant of both Māori and Pākehā), or Albert Wendt (a Samoan poet and writer who immigrated to Aotearoa New Zealand), or Alan Duff (a Māori writer who speaks openly against the preservation of Māori traditionalism),¹⁰⁵ demonstrate that identity is always complex—it never fits unproblematically into rigid categories—and that in the end, our fixation on such categories produces a narrow and exclusionary vision

¹⁰² Melinda Webber, *Walking the Space Between: Identity and Māori/Pākehā* (Wellington: NZCER Press, 2008) 25.

¹⁰³ Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990) 211. Quoted in Webber, *Walking the Space Between*, 26.

¹⁰⁴ Webber, *Walking the Space Between*, 26.

¹⁰⁵ See Alan Duff, *Once Were Warriors* (Auckland: Tandem Press, 2009).

of what it means to write in Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as much of the post-colonial world.

The problem, then, with the development of the New Zealand short story canon over the course of the twentieth century, now becomes clear: only one side of what should have been a dialogue was ever given voice. Māori were not able to speak as subjects and so were cast as objects—something that fit the mold of someone else’s vision. When we look retrospectively, it becomes clear that the writing in *Te Ao Hou*, the first outlet for Māori writing, was the first attempt to convey a more informed and nuanced notion of identity—one created through dialogue. Within the paradigm of the “marae on paper,” the Māori identity could exist as a question for readers to answer—a conversation in which readers could become engaged. But when the stories were taken out of this paradigm, the opportunity for dialogue was foreclosed. The project of writers ever since this period has been to reopen this possibility.

CONCLUSION

Much of what I have discussed in this thesis can be extrapolated onto other genres; however, the short story is of particular significance within the temporal, spatial, and cultural context of twentieth-century Aotearoa New Zealand. Ihimaera has demonstrated this in his introduction to *Where's Waari* (mentioned in the introduction to this thesis). This collection, which contains stories from a number of writers, both Pākehā and Māori (and one Australian), spans the colonial period to the present, and in Ihimaera's opinion, "best represents the ways in which Maori identity has been constructed by our writers."¹ By putting together an anthology of stories, rather than a book of academic essays, Ihimaera wants his readers to sift through the stories to see how Māori have been represented: "Waari is in some of [the stories.] In others, the character looks like Waari and has Waari's name – but is it Waari? Is Waari more real for being written about my Maori? And where is Waari going from here?"² For Ihimaera, hybridity means being able to "effectively integrate [one's] dual...heritage without feeling a stranger to either world," and this applies to everyone—Pākehā as well as Māori.³ The freedom that this kind of thinking makes room for would likely have been a welcome change for many of New Zealand's most celebrated figures, such as Sargeson and

¹ Witi Ihimaera, "Introduction" to *Where's Waari?: A History of the Māori Through the Short Story*, ed. Witi Ihimaera (Auckland: Reed Books, 2000) 9-12 at 9.

² Ihimaera, "Introduction," 12.

³ Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 126.

Finlayson, as well as those equally as important but not discussed in this thesis, such as Janet Frame. I would argue that, in addition to other cultural forces operative, the incessant desire to create a canon, to form a cohesive list of “great” New Zealand writers was a task set up for failure and disillusionment. Editors, beginning with Gillespie and coming into fruition with Davin, Stead, and O’Sullivan, have attempted to articulate a New Zealand literary identity that they thought ought to exist in the ethereal mind of greater Western culture. But the writing in *Te Ao Hou* offered a counter-narrative to dominant discourse, one that exposed identity as something fluid and changing, not something static and able to be pinned down, making way for writers like Ihimaera to invite readers to define identity for themselves.

This history has not been discussed at great length by many critics, and so it has been the goal of this thesis to shed light on the significance of this moment, and to read this counter-discourse against the grain of the history. The goal is not to emphasize the dichotomy between these two discourses, to put them into yet another arbitrary binary, but instead to show that literature, and particularly, the genre of the short story, has given writers the space to walk between both worlds, while not feeling like a stranger in each. The short stories in *Te Ao Hou* offered that possibility, and it was something that writers have had to continue fighting for, throughout the Māori renaissance and beyond.

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